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ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

(Ділова комунікація англійською мовою)

Рекомендовано до друку науково-методичною радою Волинського національного університету імені Лесі Українки
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Навчально-методичний посібник «English for Business Communication» («Ділова комунікація англійською мовою») укладений відповідно до вимог дійсних освітньо-професійних програм курсу «Ділова комунікація іноземною мовою» на факультеті економіки та управління. Посібник складається з 10 розділів: Communication Fundamentals; Foundations of Business Communication; Business Ethics. Business Etiquette; Intercultural Comminication; Interpersonal communication and Team Skills; Using Technology in Business Communication; Preparing Reports, Meetings and Presentations; Business Writing: Planning and Organizing; Business Correspondence; Emloyment Communication.

Кожен розділ містить вводні та основні тексти з короткими висновками, завдання для дискусії та письмових робіт.

Призначений для магістрів першого року навчання спеціальностей «Облік і оподаткування», «Фінанси, банківська справа та страхування», «Підприємництво, торгівля та біржова діяльність», «Менеджмент» та «Економіка» денної, заочної та дистанційної форм навчання.

УДК

Передмова

Навчально-методичний посібник «English for Business Communication» («Ділова комунікація англійською мовою») призначений для магістрів факультету економіки та управління спеціальностей «Облік і оподаткування», «Фінанси, банківська справа та страхування», «Підприємництво, торгівля та біржова діяльність», «Менеджмент» та «Економіка» першого року навчання, укладений відповідно до вимог робочих навчальних програм курсу «Ділова комунікація іноземною мовою».

Основною метою даного посібника є формування в магістрів науково-дослідницької професійно-орієнтованої компетентності та передбачає оволодіння культурою ділового письма та спілкування іноземною мовою (англійською) з урахуванням канонів сучасного ділового дискурсу та розвитку підприємницького середовища. Досягнення даної мети передбачає вивчення особливостей функціонування іноземної мови у діловій писемній та усній комунікації, засвоєння специфіки ділового письма, читання, слухання, говоріння через ознайомлення із сучасними оригінальними текстами різних жанрів, виявлення їхніх структурних, змістовних, мовних, комунікативних і риторичних рис; удосконалення умінь і навичок продукувати якісні тексти фахового спрямування іноземною мовою, грамотно їх оформлювати для підвищення ефективності професійної діяльності магістра. Саме на ці аспекти зосереджена увага авторів у навчально-методичному посібнику.

Зміст курсу побудовано на основі оригінальних автентичних матеріалів, його тематика охоплює основні аспекти ділової взаємодії та спрямована на вирішення тих життєвих і професійних ситуацій, які потенційно можуть виникнути в житті молодої особи: працевлаштування, офісний етикет, робота в команді, виступи, презентації тощо.

Книга складається з десяти змістових модулів:
1. Communication Fundamentals.
2. Foundations of Business Communication.
3. Business Ethics. Business Etiquette.
4. Intercultural Comminication.
5. Interpersonal communication and Team Skills.
6. Using Technology in Business Communication.
7. Preparing Reports, Meetings and Presentations.
8. Business Writing: Planning and Organizing.
9. Business Correspondence.
10. Emloyment Communication.

Кожний розділ розпочинається з **Lead-in** (бесіда з 5 -7 запитань для обговорення, метою якої є виявити рівень обізнаності магістрів з даною темою). Далі подаються ключові терміни та вирази з текстів фахового ділового орієнтування, вводні та основні тексти з короткими висновками, завдання для дискусії та письмових робіт. Посібник містить глосарій.

Навчально-методичний посібник призначений для магістрів факультету економіки та управління спеціальностей: «Облік і оподаткування», «Фінанси,

банківська справа та страхування», «Підприємництво, торгівля та біржова діяльність», «Менеджмент» та «Економіка».

Contents

UNIT 1. COMMUNICATION FUNDAMENTALS

LEAD-IN

1. What is communication? Enumerate the main features of communication.

2. What are essential components of communication?

3. What are some possible types of communication?

4. Is communication important for better understanding of yourself and others?

5. Identify the major verbal and nonverbal barriers to communication.

6. Explain how communication skills help you solve problems, learn new things.

7. Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work.

8. Enumerate some essential responsibilities of the communicator to the audience.

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

appropriate	academic environment
channel	business environment
clarity	communication skills
convergence/divergence	communication proficiencies
concise	compilation of information
context	to convey the meaning
credibility	disrespectful forms
decoding	environmental cues
egalitarian	ethical sequence
encoding	to grasp one's message
facet	interpersonal communication
feedback	intrapersonal communication
interference	verbal communication
insights	nonverbal communication
inappropriate	to outline draft
receiver	psychological noise
reciprocity	source message

self-concept	to transfer information

Part 1.

Introductory text: **Why is it important to communicate well?**

No other skill can help your career in as many ways as communication. Communication is an activity, skill, and art that incorporates lessons learned across a wide spectrum of human knowledge. Communication is key to your success – in relationships, in the workplace, as a citizen of your country, and across your lifetime.

Effective communication takes preparation, practice, and persistence. There are many ways to learn communication skills; the school of experience, or "hard knocks," is one of them. But in the business environment, a "knock" (or lesson learned) may come at the expense of your credibility through a blown presentation to a client. The classroom environment, with a compilation of information and resources such as a text, can offer you a trial run where you get to try out new ideas and skills before you have to use them to communicate effectively to make a sale or form a new partnership. Listening to yourself, or perhaps the comments of others, may help you reflect on new ways to present, or perceive, thoughts, ideas and concepts. The net result is your growth; ultimately your ability to communicate in business will improve, opening more doors than you might anticipate.

Communication Influences Your Thinking about Yourself and Others

We all share a fundamental drive to communicate. You share meaning in what you say and how you say it, both in oral and written forms. If you could not communicate, what would life be like? Being unable to communicate might even mean losing a part of yourself, for you communicate your self-concept – your sense of self and awareness of who you are – in many ways. On the other side of the coin, your communications skills help you to understand others – not just their words, but also their tone of voice, their nonverbal gestures, or the format of their written documents provide you with clues about who they are and what their values and priorities may be. Active listening and reading are also part of being a successful communicator.

Communication Represents You and Your Employer

You want to make a good first impression on your friends and family, instructors, and employer. They all want you to convey a positive image, as it reflects on them. In your career, you will represent your business or company in spoken and written form. Your professionalism and attention to detail will reflect positively on you and set you up for success. In both oral and written situations, you will benefit from having the ability to communicate clearly. These are skills you will use for the rest of your life. Positive improvements in these skills will have a positive impact on your relationships, your prospects for employment, and your ability to make a difference in the world.

Communication Skills Are Desired by Business and Industry

Oral and written communication proficiencies are consistently ranked in the top ten desirable skills by employer surveys year after year. In fact, high-powered business executives sometimes hire consultants to coach them in sharpening their communication skills. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the following are the top five personal qualities or skills potential employers seek:

1. Communication skills (verbal and written)

2. Strong work ethic

3. Teamwork skills (works well with others, group communication)

4. Initiative

5. Analytical skills

Knowing this, you can see that one way for you to be successful and increase your promotion potential is to increase your abilities to speak and write effectively. An individual with excellent communication skills is an asset to every organization. No matter what career you plan to pursue, learning to express yourself professionally in speech and in writing will help you get there.

Key takeaways. Communication forms a part of your self-concept, and it helps you understand yourself and others, solve problems and learn new things, and build your career.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the statements?

1. Communication influences your thinking about yourself and others.

2. Communication influences how you learn.

3. Communication represents you and your employer.

4. Communication skills are desired by business and industry.

Defining Communication

Many theories have been proposed to describe, predict, and understand the behaviors and phenomena of which communication consists. When it comes to communicating in business, we are often less interested in theory than in making sure our communications generate the desired results. But in order to achieve results, it can be valuable to understand what communication is and how it works.

The root of the word "communication" in Latin is communicate, which means *to share, or to make common* (Weekley, 1967). **Communication** is defined as the process of understanding and sharing meaning (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between senders and receivers, using one or more written, oral, visual, or electronic media. The essence of communication is sharing – providing data, information, insights, and inspiration in an exchange that benefits both you and the people with whom you are communicating. At the center of our study of communication is the relationship that involves interaction between participants.

The first key word in this definition is *process*. A process is a dynamic activity that is hard to describe because it changes (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). Imagine you are alone in your kitchen thinking. Someone you know (say, your mother) enters the kitchen and you talk briefly. What has changed? Now, imagine that your mother is joined by someone else, someone you haven't met before – and this stranger listens intently as you speak, almost as if you were giving a speech. What has changed? Your perspective might change, and you might watch your words more closely. The feedback or response from your mother and the stranger (who are, in essence, your

audience) may cause you to reevaluate what you are saying. When we interact, all these factors – and many more – influence the process of communication.

The second key word is ***understanding***: "To understand is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know." (McLean, 2003). Understanding the words and the concepts or objects they refer to is an important part of the communication process.

Next comes the word ***sharing***. Sharing means doing something together with one or more people. You may share a joint activity, as when you share in compiling a report; or you may benefit jointly from a resource, as when you and several co-workers share a pizza. In communication, sharing occurs when you convey thoughts, feelings, ideas, or insights to others. You can also share with yourself (a process called intrapersonal communication) when you bring ideas to consciousness, ponder how you feel about something, or figure out the solution to a problem.

Finally, ***meaning*** is what we share through communication. By looking at the context the word is used in and by asking questions, we can discover the shared meaning of the word and understand the message.

Key takeaway. Communication is the process that involves understanding, sharing and meaning.

Features of Communication

(1) Communication is essentially a two-way process. The success or the failure of communication is decided by the feedback we get. Hence, feedback is essential to communication.

(2) Communication is an ongoing process. Communication is essential in all kinds of organizations and at all levels of management. No manager can be effective in his role unless he is able to communicate. Professional and result oriented organizations are always looking for managers who can communicate persuasively and competently.

(3) Communication consists not only of facts but ideas and emotions too. Communication is much more than words. The tone and facial expressions often carry a

greater meaning than words. We can communicate a lot through signs, symbols and gestures. For example, a victory sign made by two fingers communicates better than words.

(4) Communication is a dynamic process. It incorporates the changing shape of the participants and the environment.

(5) Communication is a goal-oriented process. Communication can be effective if both the sender and the receiver are aware of the goal of communication and there is congruence of their goals.

(6) Communication is an inter-disciplinary science. Knowledge derived from several sciences is used in communication. Anthropology (study of body language), Psychology (study of persuasion, perception and attitudes), Sociology and Political science (study of voting behaviour) have provided insights to make communication effective.

Principles for Effective Communication

As the key to efficient business lies partly in communicating effectively, we must therefore make a conscious effort to master it. Effective communication depends mainly on three things: "understandable messages, credibility of the sender, and how the message is affecting the receiver." Effective communication can be achieved by having a thorough knowledge of the communication process in an organisation. And also being aware of the various barriers that exist and taking relevant steps to overcome the same while keeping in focus the objective of the communication, whom it is meant for and under what circumstances it is being made.

The Seven C's of Effective Communication

Figure 1.1

The communication should be clear so the recipient can understand what the sender really wants to communicate. The communication must be complete. It should convey all facts required by the audience. Conciseness is a necessity for effective communication. Concrete communication implies being particular and clear rather than fuzzy and general. Courtesy in message implies the message should show the sender's expression as well as should respect the receiver. Correctness in communication implies that there are no grammatical errors in communication Effective communication must take the audience into consideration, i.e, the audience's viewpoints, background, mind-set, education level, etc.

Essential Components of Communication

The communication model consists of the communication need, sender, message, audience, and response as shown in Figure 1.2.

The Communication Model
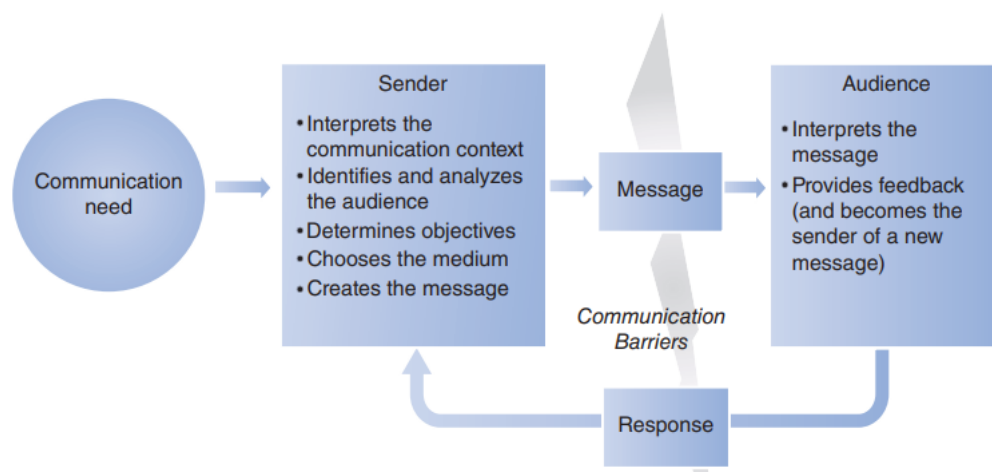
Figure 1.2

Communication Need. A communication need – either from the sender's mind or from an organizational situation— starts the process of communication in organizations. After you and the rest of the executive management team decide to acquire a company, you agree that you'll announce the decision to employees.

Sender. As the message sender, you have a lot of work to do to ensure that the message is received as you intend:

● Interpret the communication context: You'll consider the organizational culture (e.g., how formal the language should be), legal constraints (e.g., whether you should

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avoid making certain statements in writing), and the ethical circumstances (e.g., whether employees will be worried about losing their jobs).

● Identify and analyze the audience: You'll think about the wide range of employees who will receive the message. What is important to them, and how are they likely to react?

● Determine objectives: You'll specify what you want employees to think, do, or feel about your message.

● Choose the medium: You'll choose a way to convey your message, for example, by email.

● Create the message: Finally, you'll write the email and get it ready for distribution.

Message. Whether a communication achieves the sender's objectives depends on how well you construct the message (the information to be communicated). Oral messages might be transmitted through a staff meeting, individual meeting, telephone conversation, voice mail, podcast, conference call, videoconference, or even less formally, through the company grapevine. Written messages might be transmitted through an email, a report, a blog, a web page, a brochure, a tweet, a post, or a company newsletter. Nonverbal messages might be transmitted through facial expressions, gestures, or body movement. Choosing the right medium for your audience, message, and objectives is critical to the success of your communication.

The purpose and content of your message may be clear, but messages often are obstructed by verbal and nonverbal barriers. Employees may misinterpret your email or not read it at all.

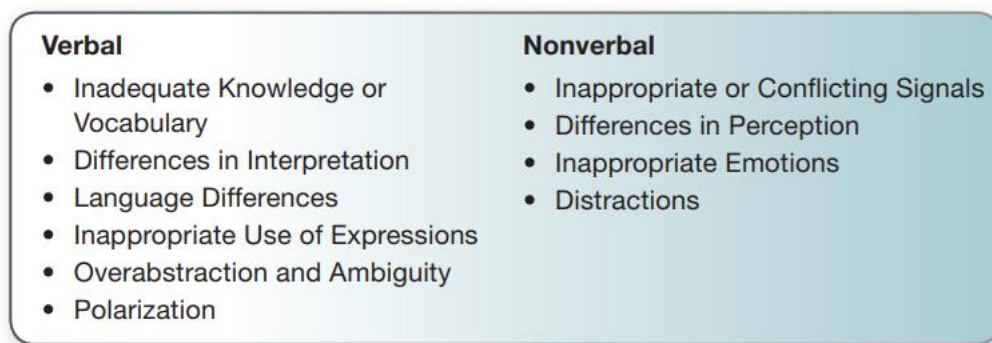**Audience.** As the receiver of your message, the audience filters the communication and reacts by doing the following:

● Interprets the message: Each audience member (in this situation of acquiring a new company, each employee) will filter the message according to his or her knowledge, experience, background, and so on. When communication is successful, the message is interpreted as originally intended.

● Provides feedback: Employees may be happy about the news and apply for a job to work in the new company, or they may believe the company is expanding too rapidly and will gossip about it during lunch. At this point, the audience becomes the sender of a new message – the response.

Response. As a new message, the audience's response to your communication begins the cycle again – and is subjected to the same complexities of the original process.

Communication Barriers

Considering the complexity of the communication process and the many communication channels, your messages may not always be received exactly as you intend. As mentioned earlier, verbal and nonverbal barriers can interfere with the communication process (see Figure 1.3).

Verbal
- Inadequate Knowledge or Vocabulary
- Differences in Interpretation
- Language Differences
- Inappropriate Use of Expressions
- Overabstraction and Ambiguity
- Polarization

Nonverbal
- Inappropriate or Conflicting Signals
- Differences in Perception
- Inappropriate Emotions
- Distractions

Figure 1. 3

Verbal Barriers

Verbal barriers are related to what you write or say. They include inadequate knowledge or vocabulary, differences in interpretation, language differences, inappropriate use of expressions, overabstraction and ambiguity, and polarization.

Inadequate Knowledge or Vocabulary. Assume that you're Sharon Rothstein, global chief marketing officer for Starbucks. In your role, you'll need to inform international employees that several U.S. stores will be closed. The decision may not affect stores in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa directly, but employees should be aware of the move and should hear the rationale from you – not public news organizations. You know all of the background information and are ready to announce the change to staff. Or are you?

Have you analyzed your audience? Do you know whether international employees already know about the closings, so you can decide how much background information to include? Do you know how much detail about the decision to provide? Employees should know why certain stores were selected, but do they need to see the financial performance of each? How personal should your communication be? Are international employees worried about their own jobs? Should you reassure them about the company's plans in other countries, or would that just worry them more? Determining the answers to these questions will be important for you to achieve your communication objectives.

Differences in Interpretation. Sometimes senders and receivers attribute different meanings to the same word or attribute the same meaning to different words. When this happens, miscommunication can occur. Most interpretation problems occur because people ascribe different connotative meanings to a word. Some terms cause an emotional reaction that turns off the receiver and could harm your relationship.

Language Differences. International businesspeople say that you can buy in your native language anywhere in the world, but you can sell only in the local language. To ensure that the intended meaning is not lost in translation, important documents should first be translated into the second language and then retranslated into English.

Inappropriate Use of Expressions. The intended meaning of an expression differs from its literal interpretation. Examples of expressions include slang, jargon, and euphemisms.

● *Slang* is an expression, often short-lived, identified with a specific group of people. Business has its own slang, such as 24/7, bandwidth, bottom line, strategic fit, or window of opportunity. Using slang that your audience understands serves as a communication shortcut. But issues arise when the sender uses slang that receivers don't understand, either because they're excluded from a group or because of language differences.

● *Jargon* is the technical terminology used within specialized groups – sometimes called "the pros' prose."

As with slang, problems arise not when simply using jargon—jargon provides a very precise and efficient way of communicating with those familiar with it. Problems arise when we use jargon just to impress others, which can alienate people.

● *Euphemisms* are expressions used instead of words that may be offensive or inappropriate. Sensitive communicators use euphemisms when appropriate; for example, some consider "passed away" more pleasant than "died." Euphemisms, like slang and jargon, shouldn't be overused. Euphemisms for firing people have become a corporate joke; now companies downsize, rightsize, smartsize, rationalize, amortize, reduce, redeploy, reorganize, restructure, offshore, outsource, and outplace.

Overabstraction and Ambiguity. An abstract word identifies an idea or a feeling instead of a concrete object. For example, communication is an abstract word, but newspaper is a concrete word, a word that identifies something that can be seen or touched. Abstract words are necessary to describe things you cannot see or touch, but we run into difficulty when we use too many abstract words or when we use too high a level of abstraction. The higher the level of abstraction, the more difficult it is for the receiver to visualize exactly what the sender has in mind.

Polarization. Not every situation has two opposite and distinct poles – usually we can see gray areas. Is a speaker telling the truth or lying? What the speaker says may be true, but she may selectively omit information and give an inaccurate impression. Most likely, the answer is somewhere in between. Competent communicators avoid inappropriate either/or logic and instead make the effort to search for middle-ground words to best describe a situation.

Nonverbal Barriers

Not all communication difficulties are related to what you write or say. Some are related to how you act. Nonverbal barriers to communication include inappropriate or conflicting signals, differences in perception, inappropriate emotions, and distractions

Inappropriate or Conflicting Signals. Suppose a well-qualified applicant for an auditing position submits a résumé with a typographical error or shows up to an interview in jeans. When verbal and nonverbal signals conflict, we tend to believe the nonverbal messages because they are more difficult to manipulate than verbal

messages. Many nonverbal signals vary from culture to culture—both within the United States and internationally.

Differences in Perception. Even when they hear the same presentation or read the same report, people will form different perceptions because of their filters. When employees receive an email from the company president, they'll probably react differently based on their experience, knowledge, and points of view. One employee may be so intimidated by the president that he accepts everything the president says, whereas another employee may have such negative feelings about the president that she believes nothing the president says.

Inappropriate Emotions. Although a moderate level of emotional involvement intensifies communication and makes it more personal, too much emotional involvement can hinder communication. For example, excessive anger, prejudice (automatically rejecting certain people or ideas), stereotyping (placing individuals into categories), and boredom can create obstacles to effective communication. These emotions tend to close your mind to new ideas and cause you to reject or ignore information that is contrary to your prevailing belief. Keeping an objective, open mind is important for effective communication – and for you to develop as a person.

Distractions. Noise, or environmental or competing elements, can hinder your ability to concentrate and can affect communication. Examples of environmental noise are extreme temperature, uncomfortable seating, or even your coworker's body odor. Examples of competing noise are too many projects, meetings, or emails. Communication technologies themselves can cause distractions. Can you watch TV, listen to music, and text at the same time? You may think you're good at multitasking, but a Stanford University study concludes the opposite: "Heavy multitaskers are lousy at multitasking."

Key takeaways. The communication model consists of five essential elements: communication need, sender, message, audience, response. The communication is an ongoing, dynamic, emotional, two-way process. Effective communication can be achieved by clarity of expression, completeness of information,

conciseness of message, concreteness in presentation, courtesy towards recipient, correctness of facts, consideration for receiver. Competent communicators try to avoid verbal and nonverbal barriers that might cause misunderstandings. They also choose the best communication media for their messages.

Discussion 2.

1. Draw what you think communication looks like.

2. List three environmental cues and indicate how they influence your expectations for communication.

3. How does context influence your communication? Consider the language and culture people grew up with, and the role these play in communication styles.

4. If you could design the perfect date, what activities, places, and/or environmental cues would you include to set the mood?

5. Prove that each of five components serves an integral function in the overall communication process.

6. Which of the verbal and nonverbal barriers do you find most challenging? What can you do to overcome these barriers at work and in your personal life?

8. What principles does effective communication depend on?

3. Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

- "Why is it important to communicate well?"

- "The key principles of effective communication".

Part 2

Five Types of Communication Contexts

Each context has an influence on the communication process. Contexts can overlap, creating an even more dynamic process. You have been communicating in many of these contexts across your lifetime, and you'll be able to apply what you've learned through experience in each context to business communication.

Intrapersonal Communication. Have you ever listened to a speech or lecture and gotten caught up in your thoughts so that, while the speaker continued, you were no longer listening? During a phone conversation, have you ever been thinking about what you are going to say, or what question you might ask, instead of listening to the other person? Finally, have you ever told yourself how you did after you wrote a document or gave a presentation? As you "talk with yourself" you are engaged in intrapersonal communication.

Intrapersonal communication involves one person; it is often called "self-talk." Your intrapersonal communication can be positive or negative, and directly influences how you perceive and react to situations and communication with others. What you perceive in communication with others is also influenced by your culture, native language, and your world view. For example, you may have certain expectations of time and punctuality. You weren't born with them, so where did you learn them? From those around you as you grew up. What was normal for them became normal for you, but not everyone's idea of normal is the same. Variations in time expectations depend on regional and national culture as well as individual corporate cultures. When you are unfamiliar with the expectations for a business event, it is always wise to err on the side of being punctual, regardless of what your internal assumptions about time and punctuality may be.

Interpersonal Communication. The second major context within the field of communication is interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication normally involves two people, and can range from intimate and very personal to formal and impersonal. You may carry on a conversation with a loved one, sharing a serious concern. Later, at work, you may have a brief conversation about plans for the weekend with the security guard on your way home. What's the difference? Both scenarios involve interpersonal communication, but are different in levels of intimacy. The first example implies a trusting relationship established over time between two caring individuals. The second example level implies some previous familiarity, and is really more about acknowledging each other than any actual exchange of information, much like saying hello or goodbye.

Group Communication. Have you ever noticed how a small group of people in class sit near each other? Perhaps they are members of the same sports program, or just friends, but no doubt they often engage in group communication. "Group communication is a dynamic process where a small number of people engage in a conversation" (McLean, 2005). Group communication is generally defined as involving three to eight people. The larger the group, the more likely it is to break down into smaller groups. To take a page from marketing, does your audience have segments or any points of convergence/divergence? We could consider factors like age, education, sex, and location to learn more about groups and their general preferences as well as dislikes. You may find several groups within the larger audience, such as specific areas of education, and use this knowledge to increase your effectiveness as a business communicator.

Public Communication. In public communication, one person speaks to a group of people; the same is true of public written communication, where one person writes a message to be read by a small or large group. The speaker or writer may ask questions, and engage the audience in a discussion (in writing, examples are an e-mail discussion or a point-counter-point series of letters to the editor), but the dynamics of the conversation are distinct from group communication, where different rules apply. In a public speaking situation, the group normally defers to the speaker. For example, the boss speaks to everyone, and the sales team quietly listens without interruption. This generalization is changing as norms and expectations change, and many cultures have a tradition of "call outs" or interjections that are not to be interpreted as interruptions or competition for the floor, but instead as affirmations. The boss, as a public speaker, recognizes that intrapersonal communication (thoughts of the individual members) or interpersonal communication (communication between team members) may interfere with this classic public speaking dynamic of all to one, or the audience devoting all its attention to the speaker, and incorporate attention getting and engagement strategies to keep the sales team focused on the message.

Mass Communication. Mass media is a powerful force in modern society and our daily lives, and is adapting rapidly to new technologies. Mass communication

involves sending a single message to a group. It allows us to communicate our message to a large number of people, but we are limited in our ability to tailor our message to specific audiences, groups, or individuals. As a business communicator, you can use multimedia as a visual aid or reference common programs, films, or other images that your audience finds familiar yet engaging. You can tweet a picture that is worth far more than 140 characters, and you are just as likely to elicit a significant response. By choosing messages or references that many audience members will recognize or can identify with, you can develop common ground and increase the appeal of your message.

Key takeaways: Communication contexts include intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication. Each context has its advantages and disadvantages, and its appropriate and inappropriate uses.

Define the following terms:

Communication, communication skills, insights, inter-disciplinary science, perception, persuasion, clarity, courtesy, message, channel, interference, source, interpersonal communication, intrapersonal communication, mass communication, public communication, group communication, verbal communication, non-verbal communication.

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

1. Please recall a time when you gave a speech in front of a group. How did you feel? What was your experience? What did you learn from your experience?

2. If you were asked to get the attention of your peers, what image or word would you choose and why?

3. If you were asked to get the attention of someone like yourself, what image or word would you choose and why?

4. Make a list of mass communication messages you observe for a one hour period of time.

The Responsibilities of a Communicator

Whenever you speak or write in a business environment, you have certain responsibilities to your audience, your employer, and your profession. Your audience comes to you with an inherent set of expectations that you will fulfill these responsibilities. The specific expectations may change given the context or environment, but two central ideas will remain: *be prepared*, and *be ethical*.

Communicator is Prepared

As the business communicator's first responsibility, preparation includes several facets which we will examine: organization, clarity, and being concise and punctual. Being prepared means that you have selected a topic appropriate to your audience, gathered enough information to cover the topic well, put your information into a logical sequence, and considered how best to present it. If your communication is a written one, you have written an outline and at least one rough draft, read it over to improve your writing and correct errors, and sought feedback where appropriate. If your communication is oral, you have practiced several times before your actual performance.

The Prepared Communicator is Organized

Part of being prepared is being organized. On any given topic there is a wealth of information; your job is to narrow that content down to a manageable level, serving the role of gatekeeper by selecting some information and "de-selecting," or choosing to not include other points or ideas.

You also need to consider how to link your main points together for your audience. Use transitions to provide signposts or cues for your audience to follow along. Your listeners or readers will appreciate your being well organized so that they can follow your message from point to point.

The Prepared Communicator is Clear

Part of being prepared is being clear. If your message is unclear, the audience will lose interest and tune you out, bringing an end to effective communication. Interestingly, clarity begins with intrapersonal communication: you need to have a clear idea in your mind of what you want to say before you can say it clearly to someone else. At the interpersonal level, clarity involves considering your audience, as you will

want to choose words and phrases they understand and avoid jargon or slang that may be unfamiliar to them.

Clarity also involves presentation. A brilliant message scrawled in illegible handwriting, or in pale gray type on gray paper, will not be clear. When it comes to oral communication, if you mumble your words, speak too quickly or use a monotonous tone of voice, or stumble over certain words or phrases, the clarity of your presentation will suffer.

Technology also plays a part. If you are using a microphone or conducting a teleconference, clarity will depend on this equipment functioning properly – which brings us back to the importance of preparation. In this case, in addition to preparing your speech, you need to prepare by testing the equipment ahead of time.

The Prepared Communicator is Concise and Punctual

Concise means brief and to the point. In most business communications you are expected to "get down to business" right away. Being prepared includes being able to state your points clearly and support them with clear evidence in a relatively straightforward, linear way. It may be tempting to show how much you know by incorporating additional information into your document or speech, but in so doing you run the risk of boring, confusing, or overloading your audience. Talking in circles or indulging in tangents, where you get off topic or go too deep, can hinder an audience's ability to grasp your message.

Be to the point and concise in your choice of words, organization, and even visual aids. Being concise also involves being sensitive to time constraints. The solution, of course, is to be prepared to be punctual. If you are asked to give a five-minute presentation at a meeting, your co-workers will not appreciate your taking fifteen minutes, any more than your supervisor would appreciate your submitting a fifteen-page report when you were asked to write five pages. For oral presentations, time yourself when you rehearse and make sure you can deliver your message within the allotted number of minutes.

Some cultures also have a less strict interpretation of time schedules and punctuality. While it is important to recognize that different cultures have different expectations, the general rule holds true that good business communication does not waste words or time.

Communicator is Ethical

The business communicator's second fundamental responsibility is to be ethical. Ethics refers to a set of principles or rules for correct conduct. It echoes what Aristotle called ethos, the communicator's good character and reputation for doing what is right. Communicating ethically involves being egalitarian, respectful, and trustworthy - overall, practicing the "golden rule" of treating your audience the way you would want to be treated. Communication can move communities, influence cultures, and change history. It can motivate people to take stand, consider an argument, or purchase a product. The degree to which you consider both the common good and fundamental principles you hold to be true when crafting your message directly relates to how your message will affect others.

The Ethical Communicator is Egalitarian

The word "egalitarian" comes from the root "equal." To be egalitarian is to believe in basic equality: that all people should share equally in the benefits and burdens of a society. It means that everyone is entitled to the same respect, expectations, access to information, and rewards of participation in a group. To communicate in an egalitarian manner, speak and write in a way that is comprehensible and relevant to all your listeners or readers, not just those who are "like you" in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity, or other characteristics. In business, you will often communicate to people with certain professional qualifications. Being egalitarian does not mean you have to avoid professional terminology that is understood by nurses or insurance adjusters. An egalitarian communicator seeks to unify the audience by using ideas and language that are appropriate for all the message's readers or listeners.

The Ethical Communicator is Respectful

People are influenced by emotions as well as logic. Most of us have probably seen an audience manipulated by a "cult of personality," believing whatever the speaker said

simply because of how dramatically he or she delivered a speech; by being manipulative, the speaker fails to respect the audience. We may have also seen people hurt by sarcasm, insults, and other disrespectful forms of communication. This does not mean that passion and enthusiasm are out of place in business communication. Indeed, they are very important. If your topic is worth writing or speaking about, make an effort to show your audience why it is worthwhile by speaking enthusiastically or using a dynamic writing style. Doing so, in fact, shows respect for their time and their intelligence. However, the ethical communicator will be passionate and enthusiastic without being disrespectful. Losing one's temper and being abusive are generally regarded as showing a lack of professionalism.

The Ethical Communicator Is Trustworthy

Trust is a key component in communication, and this is especially true in business. Your goal as a communicator is to build a healthy relationship with your audience, and to do that you must show them why they can trust you and why the information you are about to give them is believable. One way to do this is to begin your message by providing some information about your qualifications and background, your interest in the topic, or your reasons for communicating at this particular time. Your audience will expect that what you say is the truth as you understand it. This means that you have not intentionally omitted, deleted, or taken information out of context simply to prove your points. Being worthy of trust is something you earn with an audience. Many wise people have observed that trust is hard to build but easy to lose. A communicator may not know something and still be trustworthy, but it's a violation of trust to pretend you know something when you don't.

Communicate what you know, and if you don't know something, research it before you speak or write. If you are asked a question to which you don't know the answer, say "I don't know the answer but I will research it and get back to you" (and then make sure you follow through later). This will go over much better with the audience than trying to cover by stumbling through an answer or portraying yourself as knowledgeable on an issue that you are not.

The "Golden Rule"

When in doubt, remember the "golden rule," which says to treat others the way you would like to be treated. In all its many forms, the golden rule incorporates human kindness, cooperation, and reciprocity across cultures, languages, backgrounds and interests. Regardless of where you travel, who you communicate with, or what your audience is like, remember how you would feel if you were on the receiving end of your communication, and act accordingly.

Key takeaways. As a communicator, you are responsible for being prepared and being ethical. Being prepared includes being organized, clear, concise, and punctual. Being ethical includes being egalitarian, respectful, and trustworthy and overall, practicing the "golden rule".

Discussion 3. Work in pairs.

1. Recall one time you felt offended or insulted in a conversation. What contributed to your perception? Please share your comments with fellow-students.

2. When someone lost your trust, were they able earn it back?

3. Does the communicator have a responsibility to the audience? Does the audience have a responsibility to the speaker? Why or why not?

Wriring. Write an essay "Responsibilities of the communicator and the audience".

UNIT 2. THE FOUNDATIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

LEAD-IN

1. What is business communication?

2. What is the difference between communication and business communication?

3. What does effective communication mean?

4. Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work.

5. Describe the communication skills employers will expect you to have and nature of communication in an organization by using an audience-centered approach.

KEY TERMS AND PHRASES TO KNOW

Business communication	to compel evidence
stakeholder	to support conclusion
to strengthen	to clarify expectations
vendor	appropriate state
execution	workforce diversity
to opt	to ensure smooth communication
feasible	conscientious approach
credibility	competitive insight
hostile	regulations and guidelines
to yield	internal business communication
acquiring	external business communication
engagement	to build a social circle (bond)
to eliminate	entrepreneurial urge
workload	heavy reliance

Part 1.

***Introductory text:* The Importance of Business Communication**

Business communication can be thought of as a problem-solving activity in which individuals may address the following questions:

- What is the situation?
- What are some possible communication strategies?
- What is the best course of action?
- What is the best way to design the chosen message?
- What is the best way to deliver the message?

Oral and written business communication proficiencies are consistently ranked in the top ten desirable skills by employer surveys year after year. In fact, high-powered business executives sometimes hire consultants to coach them in sharpening their business communication skills. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the following are the top five personal qualities or skills potential employers seek:

1. Communication skills (verbal and written)
2. Strong work ethic
3. Teamwork skills (works well with others, group communication)
4. Initiative
5. Analytical skills

Knowing this, you can see that one way for you to be successful and increase your promotion potential is to increase your abilities to speak and write effectively.

Importance of business communication in an organization can be seen in the following points:

Helps in increasing productivity

Effective business communication increases the productivity of staff by boosting up teamwork. It creates a trustworthy and understanding environment among employers and employees. Effective communication is related to cooperating with employees and understanding their needs and desires. By doing so, employees are able to accomplish their tasks more effectively and efficiently. In addition, the scope of doing mistakes or errors during their work minimizes due to effective communication.

Helps in increasing customers

Customers are an important part of any business and effective business communication can facilitate in attracting new customers and retain the current

customers. A well-defined marketing strategy and public relations campaign run by an organization generates the interest of customers in its goods or services and helps in building the corporate image in customers.

Enhances business partnerships

Business Communication also improves partnerships in business. It plays a significant role in dealing with external business clients or vendors. Vendors may be required to communicate on products regularly for improvements. An effective and harmonious relationship with other businesses determines the further success of an organization. A business unit that has developed its image as an entity for easy partnership through its effective communication can attract other business units for forming business relationships with them.

Facilitates innovations in business

Effective business communication helps in business innovations as well as it facilitates employees to convey their ideas and suggestions openly. Similarly, at the time of launching any new product in the market, effective communication ensures the performance of the sales team, market acceptance of the product, fast delivery of products in the market, etc.

Information exchange

Business communication is required by an organization for exchanging information with internal and external stakeholders. This helps in achieving its goals effectively.

Preparation of plans and policies

Through effective business communication, organizations can make their plans and policies properly. Relevant information is required for preparing these plans and policies. Through communication, different managers source information through reliable channels.

Execution or implementation of plans and policies

To implement or execute the prepared policies and plans in a timely manner, managers are supposed to communicate these throughout the organization. Through

effective communication, they are able to disseminate plans and policies to the internal and external stakeholders.

Boost the efficiency of employees

Effective business communication plays a key role in increasing the efficiency of staff. Through communication, different plans and policies, critical issues, goals of an organization are described to employees that enhance their knowledge and make them efficient to do their tasks effectively.

Goals achievement

Through effective business communication, employees become attentive and productive in doing their jobs that result in the timely accomplishment of their tasks and easy goals attainment.

Helps in solving problems or issues

Through different communication channels, managers get information about different routine and non-routine issues and based upon that they can take required actions to sort out those issues.

Facilitates decision-making

Effective decisions require up-to-date information. Using effective communication, managers can acquire information from different sources and can utilize it for making correct decisions.

Improves worker-management industrial relations

In the workplace, workers and management have an industrial relation. The success of any business depends upon the healthy industrial relation. Business communication plays a significant role in maintaining harmony in this.

Helps in brand and product/service promotions

In today's competitive business environment, lots of companies offer similar kinds of products or services. To sell their products in a good manner, businesses need better communication to promote products and services in an effective way.

Reduces chances of conflicts

Through effective communication different business parties can exchange information in a smooth way. This results in fewer conflicts, controversies, arguments between them.

Increases employee satisfaction level

Effective communication which is fair and smooth creates better mutual bonding and the understanding between employees and management. This helps in increasing the satisfaction level among employees who put their maximum efforts to achieve the goals.

Increases employee loyalty

Through effective business communication, employees are well informed about their performance from time to time. Also, employees get appreciation, rewards in both monetary and non-monetary terms for their better performance. This enhances their loyalty towards the organization.

Enhances efficiency of managers and leads to effective leadership

Effective business communication leads to an increase in the operational efficiency of managers. With the help of fair communication, managers can perform different managerial functions like planning, directing, organizing, controlling, etc. smoothly. Moreover, if communication is effective then only effective leadership can be taken place. For qualitative leadership activities, a proper and smooth system of communication in business is essential.

Proper functioning of different departments

If information is shared smoothly and effectively in inter-departments and intra-departments then different departments of any business like accounts, finance, purchase, operations, HR, IT, and production, etc. can do their tasks more accurately and timely.

Key takeaways: Strong communication skills give you an advantage in the job market. Effective communication yields numerous business benefits. Oral and written business communication proficiencies are among the most desirable skills by employer.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the following statements:

1. Effective communication helps employees accomplish their tasks more effectively and efficiently.

2. Businesses need poor communication to promote products and services in an effective way because of strong competition in the market environment.

3. Business communication plays a significant role in maintaining harmony in relations between management and subordinates.

4. Effective business communication usually provokes conflicts in working environment.

5. Effective business communication influences negatively on the efficiency of the company staff.

6. A proper and smooth system of communication in business is insignificant for qualitative leadership activities.

7. Attracting new customers is a vital part of any business.

Defining Business Communication

Communication is an essential element in the success of any business. The process of transferring information from one person to another, within and outside the business environment, is termed as 'Business Communication.' The term 'Business Communication' is derived from general communication, which is associated with business activities. In other terms, communication between business parties or people for business-related tasks is considered as 'Business Communication.'

Different scholars have given different definitions of **Business Communication**. Few of them are mentioned below:

According to Ricks and Gow defined Business Communication as a system that is responsible to affect change throughout the whole organization.

According to W. H. Business Communication is exchanging business-related different views, ideas, and news within the related parties.

Prof. J. Haste stated that when the communication occurs between either two or more than two business people for the purpose of effective organization and administration of business then it is considered as Business Communication.

Effective business communication is vital for achieving organizational goals.

Effective business communication is the way employees and management communicate to achieve organizational goals. The objective is to improve organizational efficiency by reducing mistakes. Business Communication includes different aspects like marketing, public relations, customer relations, corporate and interpersonal communication, etc.

<div align="center">

Basic elements of Business communication:

</div>

- Sender
- Business information
- Receiver
- Feedback
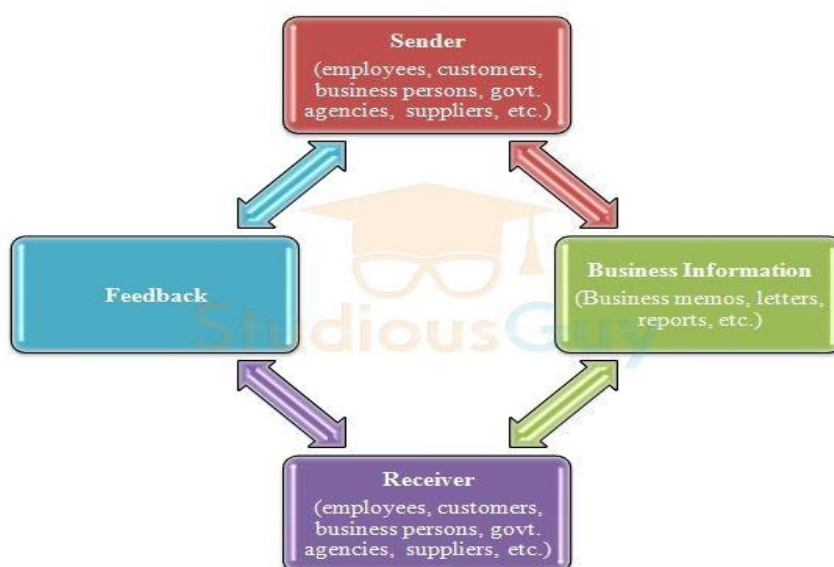
The above elements indicate business communication as a process in which information or news related to business is exchanged between different business parties like customers, suppliers, business clients, employees, etc. for the purpose of effective administration of the business.

Moreover, it involves a regular flow of information and feedback is considered as a crucial and important aspect of business communication. Due to different levels of

hierarchy and involvement of a huge number of people, business communication plays an important role in different management functions i.e. planning, coordinating, organizing, directing, and controlling.

Key takeaways: Communication between business parties or people for business-related tasks is considered as **Business Communication**. Basic elements of Business communication are sender, business information, receiver and feedback.

Discussion 2

1. What is the value of business communication?

2. What is the definition of business communication?

3. What are the basic elements of business communication?

4. Why is business communication beneficial for execution or implementation of plans and policies?

5. Effective business communication is vital for achieving organizational goals, isn't it?

Types of Business Communication along with Examples

There are four main types of business communication in any organization or business i.e.

1. Internal Business Communication

Internal Business Communication means communication that occurs within the members of the organization. This communication includes both *formal* and *informal* communication. More over different departments that transmit communication by different means to employees come under internal communication. Internal communication should be effective as it is a vital source of viewing and representing organizational issues. Effective internal business communication may increase job satisfaction level, productivity, the efficiency of employees by decreasing their turnover and grievances and helps in increasing profits.

It is further categorized as *internal (upward) communication* and *internal (downward) communication.*

a. *Internal (Upward) Communication:* This type of internal communication involves the bottom to the top management approach. Here, the information flows from subordinates to managers or any person that is on the upper in the hierarchy level.

For example, employees of the HR department of an organization prepare an attrition report and communicate the same to the HR Manager. The attrition report consists of information on the monthly or annual employee turnover of an organization and reasons for the same. This helps the HR Manager to understand the cause of attrition and to take corrective measures on time to reduce employee turnover.

The characteristics of upward internal business communication include:

- It includes bottom to top approach i.e. subordinates to superiors.
- Its nature is participative.

▪ The main purpose is to provide timely feedback, suggestions, making requests, escalating any issues or concerns, etc. to superiors.

▪ The flow of the information is from the lower level to the upper level.

b. Internal (Downward) Communication: In downward communication, the information flows from the top-level management to the employees in an organization. This information is related to passing on instructions to subordinates or employees to do their respective tasks. Downward communication is being used by managers to communicate different goals, procedures and policies, guidelines, decisions, instructions, etc. to their subordinates.

The process of downward communication in business includes passing on messages from the top level to the lower level through the chain of hierarchy. This type of communication can be in oral or written form.

The written form includes different notices, manuals, news display in electronic form, etc. whereas, the oral form of downward communication includes different face-to-face conversations, telephonic communication, meetings, etc.

*For example,* the top-level management may instruct managers of different departments on certain new rules and regulations in the work area that need to be carried out in routine activities of different departments. Like there may be a change in the office working hours or office timings by the management and the same is communicated to employees by circular or notice or through the e-mail system.

The characteristics of downward internal business communication include:

- It includes top to bottom approach i.e. superiors to subordinates.

- Its nature is directive.

- Main purpose is to communicate organizational objective, plans and procedures, instructions, etc. to subordinates.

- The flow of the information is from the upper level to the lower level.

2. Horizontal/Lateral Business Communication

Lateral or horizontal communication is related to communication among co-workers i.e. either ***verbal communication*** or ***written communication.*** This may include inter-departmental communication or communication between cross-departments and can be between people of the same or similar rank in a company. This is a crucial communication to achieve the desired results. So, this communication happens among employees having an equal hierarchy level. To achieve the functional effectiveness of different organizational units, horizontal or lateral communication is required for seeking mutual cooperation and mutual help.
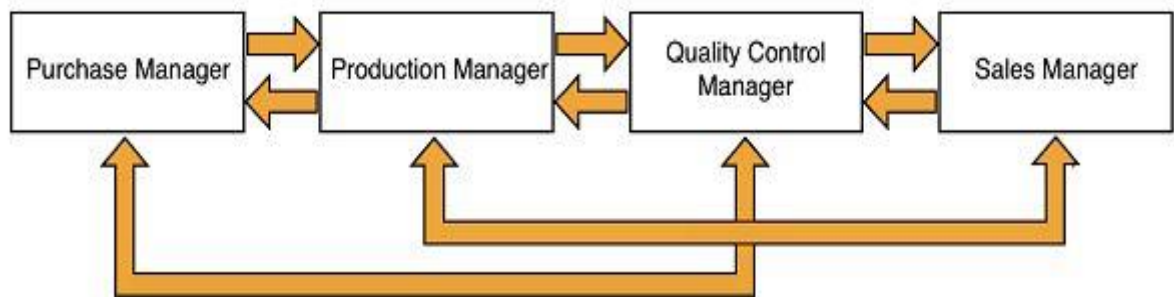
For example, the Marketing head of an organization is supposed to communicate about market trends, customer needs and expectations, product demand scenario, etc. to a production head for production of products accordingly.

Similarly, the HR manager of an organization works with different department heads for different functioning like hiring, training needs of employees, performance appraisals, welfare activities, etc.

External Business Communication

Communication with people who are external to the organization is known as external business communication. These people can be customers or shareholders or suppliers or partners or regulatory bodies, etc.

For example, the purchase department supervisor may communicate with vendors for purchase quotations of raw-material and similarly, the sales department communicates with customers for sales of goods or services.

External communication facilitates increasing sales volume, effective operations, an increase in profits of organization, etc. This ultimately results in increasing corporate image, goodwill and overall performance of the organization by achieving its goals and customer satisfaction.

Key Takeaways: We distinguish four main types of business communication such as internal (upward, downward), external, horizontal/lateral business communication. Each type has its characteristics.

Define the following terms:

Hierarchy, formal (informal) communication, job satisfaction, productivity, grievances, attrition report (rate), employee turnover, verbal (nonverbal) communication, internal communication, external communication, lateral communication.

Discussion 3

1. Give brief characteristic of the main types of business communication.

2. What is the main difference between internal (upward) and internal (downward) communication?

3. Why is lateral (or horizontal) communication considered as crucial for companies especially in reaching the desired results?

4. What does the written form of business communication include?

5. What type of business communication is a vital source of viewing and representing organizational issues?

Business Communication Methods

Different methods of communicating in a business are:

1. ***In-person (Face-to-Face) Business Communication:*** In-person communication is the most common and preferred method of business communication. As it is generally in the form of meetings or conference which is face-to-face communication format. This requires refined in-person skills. This method also includes non-verbal communication i.e. body language. While having a conversation between two or more people in business, body language like gestures, facial expression, etc. also play a vital role in communicating a person's attitude towards others.

Good listening skills are also an element in better in-person communication. Most of the business communication includes listening skills to understand fast discussions.

2. Communication by email system: An e-mail has become the most widely used communication system in any business. Due to its feature of sending and receiving mass or multiple messages at a time, email is considered as one of the preferred methods in business communication. It also increases efficiency as emails can be sent and responded in fast mode. The conversation through email can be among two or more than two people and is the best substitute for formal face-to-face meetings as discussions can be done in an email system.

3. Web conferencing: In the web conferencing method of business communication, the internet is being used for communication in meetings, conferences, presentations, seminars, and imparting training. It includes features like sharing of files, screens, real-time chatting, recording, etc. This can be considered as the most effective way of interacting with people sitting at different locations. Web conferencing

is done by using **the phone (teleconferencing)** or **video equipment (videoconferencing).**

Workplaces also opt for the teleconferencing method of business communication. If it is not feasible for people of an organization or business to attend a physical meeting or conference then communicating through telephone conferencing is an effective method. This also saves travel expenses as people who often require extensive traveling for business purposes so they can communicate through teleconference by sitting in their office.

Videoconferencing is also similar to teleconferencing except in videoconferencing one can see the people whom to communicate with. This requires video conferencing equipment that is arranged by the IT department of a business.

4. Written communication: Written business communication is a formal and detailed form of communication than other methods. Different written communication tools include formal letters, brochures, posters, etc.

5. Other methods: There are other business communication methods like an instant messaging system. This technology is easy to use as one can easily connect with people while working offsite and have conversations without waiting so long.

Functions and Significance of Business Communication

1. Communicating job functions to employees: Informing about assigned job roles is a crucial key function of business communication. Team members having clarity on expected job tasks and how they can contribute to achieving objectives of the organization by fulfilling their job functions, they can contribute more to the completion of their assigned tasks. In the absence of clarity of their roles, employees might not be able to complete their work as expected.

2. Providing adequate feedback: Providing timely and accurate feedback to employees and customers is also an important function of business communication. The performance of employees can be enhanced by providing regular feedback to them regarding their work performance and competencies. This helps them to understand their current skill set, strengths and also they can fill any gap in case of any shortage of required skills. Regular feedback from customers and other stakeholders on products and services of business facilitates the improvement in the production process and quality.

Different informative communication lies in an organization like job descriptions, assigned targets to achieve, performance management, etc.

3. Convincing clients: Business communication is also often used to convince prospective customers, clients and business partners in order to finish a business deal or transaction. This type of communication can be in both oral and written form like a Sales Officer may convince a client on phone call or in written form i.e. providing a mass advertisement in magazine or newspaper for a new product launch or exciting offers on existing products. Both credibility and emotions are an important element of this function of communication. Moreover, this type of communication can be utilized in PR (public relations) activities and to build the organization's brand image.

4. Employee motivation for better decision-making: Communication in businesses is used in a strategic form to enhance the decision-making capability of employees related to their daily activities and for their long-term objectives related to the business. Like if performance-based bonuses or incentives are communicated among employees effectively then it motivates employees to contribute to the

organization's growth more efficiently and they can achieve their work expectations in a timely manner.

5. *Building social bonds:* Communication has a critical role in supporting employees to build a social circle or bond. Some organizations have an open culture or work environment in which employees from all levels can communicate with each other and their superiors freely. Other organizations prefer to follow a hierarchy or chain of command in communication.

When employees have a social bond with people whom they work with like their colleagues, supervisors, clients, etc., then their job efficiency improves as the team spirit increases.

Communication is important to your career

Ambition and great ideas aren't enough; you need to be able to communicate with people in order to succeed in business.

Improving your communication skills may be the single most important step you can take in your career. You can have the greatest ideas in the world, but they are no good to your company or your career if you can't express them clearly and persuasively. Some jobs, such as sales and customer support, primarily about communicating. In fields such as engineering or finance, you often need to share complex ideas with executives, customers, colleagues and your ability to connect with people outside your field can be as important as your technical expertise. If you have the entrepreneurial urge, you will need to communicate with a wide range of audiences, from investors, bankers, and government regulators to employees, customers, and business partners.

Strong communication skills give you an advantage in the job market

As you take on leadership and management roles, communication becomes even more important. The higher you rise in the organization, the less time you will spend using the technical skills of your particular profession and the more time you will spend communicating. Top executives spend most of their time communicating, and business people who can't communicate well don't stand much chance of reaching the top.

Many employers express frustration at the poor communication skills of many employees – particularly recent college graduates who haven't yet learned how to adapt their communication styles to a professional business environment. If you learn to write well, speak well, listen well, and recognize the appropriate way to communicate in any situation, you'll gain a major advantage that will serve you throughout your career.

Benefits of Business Communication to your company

Effective communication yields numerous business benefits. Aside from the personal benefits, communication should be important to you because it is important to your company. Effective communication helps business in numerous ways. It provides:

- Closer ties with important communities in the marketplace

- Opportunities to influence conversations, perceptions, and trends

- Increased productivity and faster problem solving

- Better financial results and higher return for investors

- Earlier warning of potential problems, from rising business cost to critical safety issues

- Strong decision making based on timely, reliable information

- Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages

- Greater employee engagement with their work, leading to higher employee satisfaction and lower employee turnover

What makes business communication effective?

Effective communication strengthens the connections between a company and all of its stakeholders, those groups affected in some way by the company's actions: customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, neighbors, the community, the nation, and the world as a whole. Conversely, when communication is ineffective, the results can range from time wasting too tragic.

To make your communication efforts as effective as possible, focus on making them **practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive**:

- **Provide practical information.** Give recipients useful information, whether it's to help them perform a desired action or understand a new company policy.

•**Give facts rather than vague impressions.** Use concrete language, specific detail, and information that is clear, convincing, accurate, and ethical. Even when an opinion is called for, present compelling evidence to support your conclusion.

•**Present information in a concise, efficient manner.** Concise messages show respect for people's time, and they increase the chances of a positive response.

•**Clarify expectations and responsibilities.** Craft messages to generate a specific response from a specific audience. When appropriate, clearly state what you expect from audience members or what you can do for them.

•**Offer compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations.** Show your readers precisely how they will benefit from responding to your message the way you want them to.

Key takeaways: Strong communication skills give you an advantage in the job market. Effective communication yields numerous business benefits.

Discussion 3.

Do you agree with the statements:

1. Ambition and great ideas are enough to succeed in business.

2. Strong communication skills give you an advantage in the job market.

3. Effective communication provides increased productivity and faster problem solving.

4. Better financial results and higher return for investors are greatly affected by good communication skills of business partners.

UNDERSTANDING THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Business communication is often more complicated and demanding than the social communication you typically engage in with family, friends, and school associates. This section highlights five issues that illustrate why business communication requires a high level of skill and attention.

The Globalization of Business and the Increase in Workforce Diversity

Today's businesses increasingly reach across international borders to market their products, partner with other businesses, and employ workers and executives—an effort

known as globalization. Many U.S. companies rely on exports for a significant portion of their sales, sometimes up to 50 percent or more, and managers and employees in these firms need to communicate with many other cultures. Moreover, thousands of companies from all around the world vie for a share of the massive U.S. market, so chances are you'll do business with or even work for a company based in another country at some point in your career. Businesses are paying more attention to workforce diversity —all the differences among people who work together, including differences in age, gender, sexual orientation, education, cultural background, religion, ability, and life experience. The most successful companies realize that a diverse workforce can yield a significant competitive advantage, but it also requires a more conscientious approach to communication.

The Increasing Value of Business Information

As global competition for talent, customers, and resources continues to grow, the importance of information continues to escalate as well. Companies in virtually every industry rely heavily on knowledge workers, employees at all levels of an organization who specialize in acquiring, processing, and communicating information. Three examples help to illustrate the value of information in today's economy:

● Competitive insights. The more a company knows about its competitors and their plans, the better able it will be to adjust its own business plans.

● Customer needs. Information about customer needs is analyzed and summarized in order to develop goods and services that better satisfy customer demands.

● Regulations and guidelines.

Today's businesses must understand and follow a wide range of government regulations and guidelines covering such areas as employment, environment, taxes, and accounting. No matter what the specific type of information, the better you are able to understand it, use it, and communicate it to others, the more competitive you and your company will be.

The Pervasiveness of Technology

Technology influences virtually every aspect of business communication today. To benefit from these tools, however, you need to have at least a basic level of skills.

If your level of technical expertise doesn't keep up with that of your colleagues and coworkers, the imbalance can put you at a disadvantage and complicate the communication process.

The Evolution of Organizational Structures and Leadership Styles

Every firm has a particular structure that defines the relationships among units in the company, and these relationships influence the nature and quality of communication throughout the organization. Tall structures have many layers of management between the lowest and highest positions, and they can suffer communication breakdowns and delays as messages are passed up and down through multiple layers.

To overcome such problems, many businesses have adopted flat structures that reduce the number of layers and promote more open and direct communication. However, with fewer formal lines of control and communication in these organizations, individual employees are expected to assume more responsibility for communication.

Specific types of organization structures present unique communication challenges. In a matrix structure, for example, employees report to two managers at the same time, such as a project manager and a department manager. The need to coordinate workloads, schedules, and other matters increases the communication burden on everyone involved. In a network structure, sometimes known as a virtual organization, a company supplements the talents of its employees with services from one or more external partners, such as a design lab, a manufacturing firm, or a sales and distribution company.

Regardless of the particular structure a company uses, your communication efforts will also be influenced by the organization's corporate culture: the mixture of values, traditions, and habits that gives a company its atmosphere and personality. Many successful companies encourage employee contributions by fostering open climates that promote candor and honesty, helping employees feel free enough to admit their mistakes, disagree with the boss, and share negative or unwelcome information.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT EMPLOYERS EXPECT FROM YOU

Successful companies know that diverse workforces can create powerful competitive advantages, but they require closer attention to communication in order to eliminate barriers between groups with different communication styles.

Today's employers expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks. Fortunately, the skills that employers expect from you are the same skills that will help you advance in your career:

• Organizing ideas and information logically and completely

• Expressing ideas and information coherently and persuasively

• Actively listening to others

• Communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences

• Using communication technologies effectively and efficiently

• Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and other aspects of high quality writing and speaking

• Communicating in a civilized manner that reflects contemporary expectations of business etiquette, even when dealing with indifferent or hostile audiences

• Communicating ethically, even when choices aren't crystal clear

• Managing your time wisely and using resources efficiently

You'll have opportunity to practice these skills throughout this course – but don't stop there. Successful professionals continue to hone communication skills throughout their careers.

Discussion 4

Sum up and add not less than three key takeaways:

• Communication forms a part of your self-concept, and it helps you understand yourself and others, solve problems and learn new things, and build your career.

• _____

• _____

• _____

Work in pairs.

1. Describe the communication skills employers will expect you to have and the nature of communicating in an organization.

2. Communication is important to your career.

Writing.

Write an essay "What makes business communication effective"

UNIT 3. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION. TEAM AND GROUP COMMUNICATION

LEAD-IN

1. How can you define interpersonal communication?

2. What does effective interpersonal communication involve?

3. What are the most important interpersonal skills?

4. Why are interpersonal communication skills important?

Communication is the expression of an idea that may be VERBAL, VISUAL and VOCAL that is HEARD, READ and PERCEIVED by another person.

93% Rule: Percent of emotional impact of a message:
Words account for only   = 7%
Voice tones & Facial expressions = 93%

70/30 Rule: Listen 70% of the time.
Speak 30% of the time.

Communication is the composite speaking and listening.

bonvictor.blogspot.com

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

Interpersonal	to convey thoughts
to incorporate	to encompass all aspect
gesture	to lead a discussion
self-awareness	to hit a winning shot
to contribute	to avoid (in)direct confrontation
(dis)agreement	to bear smth in mind
meta-perception	to adopt particular strategies

reinforcement	to establish an atmosphere
self-disclosure	to achieve co-operation
assertiveness	forms of reflection
non-verbal vocalization	to give central importance
fidget	core competence
anxiety	to remove distractions
ambiguity	to delay evaluation
untrustworthy	form of threat
suspicious	discrepancy assertion
circumstances	to look for opportunity
assertiveness	to offend smb with smth

Part 1.

***Introductory text:* Defining interpersonal communication**

Interpersonal communication is the ability to convey thoughts, feelings and ideas between two or more people through verbal and nonverbal means. It incorporates all aspects of communication between people including language, tone, body language, gestures and facial expressions.

Interpersonal communication can be as simple as a conversation with a colleague at work asking to borrow a pen or it can be entirely nonverbal, with posture and facial expressions communicating the entire message to the other person. Interpersonal communication also includes the person receiving information and their ability to actively listen and express their feedback through body language and gestures.

Why are interpersonal communication skills important?

Interpersonal communication skills are essential to your success both in and out of the workplace because they encompass all aspects of your communication with other people. The best communicators have a healthy balance of interpersonal communication skills that allow them to interact with others effectively. To succeed in any industry, you need to be able to express effectively your thoughts and ideas to others to get what you want or need. Interpersonal communication skills can allow you

to convey effectively complicated concepts during a presentation, negotiate a good deal and express empathy.

The importance of face-to-face communication in organizations has been recognized by both business managers and organizational theorists for many years. For example, we know from research that managers spend enormous amounts of time in conversation, meetings and discussion. How effective is this major investment in time and energy? What can managers (and, of course, other staff) do to 'improve' their interpersonal communication, and what do we mean by 'improvement'? Various methods have been proposed over the years to develop interpersonal skills**. For example,** in the 1990s many organizations were persuaded of the importance of personal understanding and interpersonal abilities by the best-selling books on 'emotional intelligence'. This concept emphasized self-awareness and the importance of handling relationships: 'a new competitive reality is putting emotional intelligence at a premium in the workplace and in the marketplace' (Goleman, 1996, p. 149). Goleman and others argued that organizations which failed to recognize or value these skills in their employees would simply not generate the trust, co-operation and creativity which are needed for long-term success.

WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION INVOLVE?

One answer to the question posed by the heading to this section is that we need 'good' interpersonal skills so we can respond or react to the other person or persons in ways which appear 'natural' and which are 'effective'. This suggests that we have accurately assessed what the other person is trying to communicate, and that accurate assessment depends upon how we perceive that other person. But what if our perception is misleading?

Suppose that you worked behind the counter in an English bank and offered a male customer either cash or a cheque for a certain amount. Suppose the customer responded 'give me the money' with no change in intonation over these four words. Would you interpret this behavior as 'rude'? Many native English-speakers would – to them it sounds too abrupt or even aggressive. The most common 'polite' English

expression would be to say this phrase with a slight rise in intonation on the last word (assuming that the person does not have a strong regional accent for which different rules might apply). If you interpreted the flat intonation as rude, does this mean that you would deal with this customer in a correspondingly abrupt way? Or perhaps you would not give him quite the same positive greeting you would give to other customers? But suppose your customer came from a Middle Eastern country. He has in fact used the pattern of intonation, which is seen as polite in his native culture. Would you be sufficiently aware of this cultural difference to avoid an inappropriate reaction?

The definition also suggests that we know what the conversation is trying to achieve – unless you know what the goals are, how can you judge what is effective? And most texts on business communication stress the importance of clear goals. For example, Stanton (1996, p. 1) suggests four general objectives which can apply to any spoken communication: to be received; to be understood; to be accepted; and to get action. This line of argument suggests that successful social interaction involves a lot more than just some 'correct' behaviors.

The process of interpersonal communication is complex – unless you understand some basic **features** of this process, you can easily behave in ways which the other person will not accept or appreciate. For example, consider the model of interpersonal communication in **Figure 3.1** (from P. Hartley, 1999). This suggests that there are a number of fundamental processes:

■ Social perception – how person A interprets the behavior and characteristics of person B. An example of this is the bank customer example we discussed above.

■ Social identity – how person A sees him- or herself in terms of their role and status. We communicate in ways which support this sense of social identity.

■ Coding – how A and B choose to express themselves. Do we use slang or jargon or technical words? What non-verbal signals do we use

■ The dual nature of 'the message', which always includes both information and relationship aspects.

■ The influence of the social context.
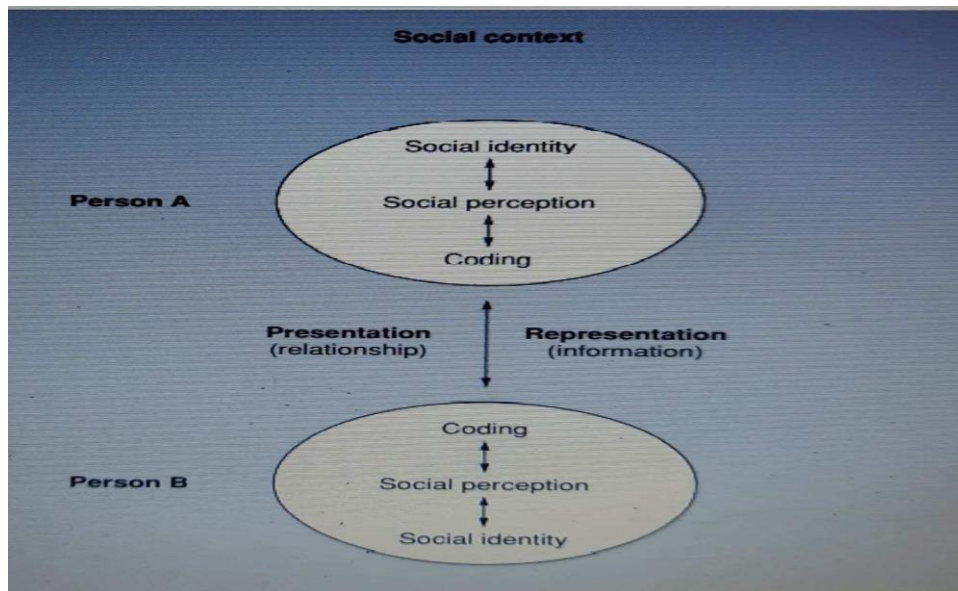
Figure 3.1. **Hartley's model of interpersonal communication**

The more you investigate these processes, the more you realize that effective interpersonal communication demands both social understanding – recognizing the processes – and social skills – being able to use the behaviors and techniques.

Key takeaways:

• Interpersonal communication skills are important because they encompass all aspects of your communication with other people in and out of work.

•To succeed in any industry, you need to be able to express effectively your thoughts and ideas to others to get what you want or need.

•If you want to succeed in your career, you'll need to develop your interpersonal communication skills.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the statements?

1. Interpersonal communication is a complex process, which incorporates some important aspects of communication.

2. The best communicators always interact with others poorly.

3. A new competitive reality is putting emotional intelligence at a premium in the workplace and in the marketplace.

4. To avoid misunderstanding and inappropriate reaction communicators should aware of the cultural differences?

5. Effective interpersonal communication demands only perfect social skills.

Analyze an interpersonal situation where there has been some conflict or ambiguity using Hartley's model. Does the model identify the important processes? Does it miss or neglect anything important?

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY INTERPERSONAL SKILLS?

Suppose you have been asked to nominate someone you know to lead a discussion group. Who would you choose? What do they do to make you think of them? What makes them good at getting people to talk? Do they make you feel that they really are listening and interested in what you are saying? How do they do this? How do they encourage you to contribute? What are the specific behaviors which make them successful? How and when do they smile, nod, invite you to speak, gesture, etc.? If you do this analysis in detail, then you will be doing a social skills analysis – you will define some of the social skills possessed by that individual. This detailed approach to our social behavior was pioneered in Britain by Michael Argyle in the 1970s. He developed the analogy between a motor or physical skill (like playing tennis or riding a bike) and a social skill like having a conversation with someone. He suggested that they had the following features in common (Argyle, 1994):

● Goals. You need to decide what you want to achieve. If you talk to someone, are you trying to persuade them, sell them something, make friends or what? Of course, my goals may differ from yours and this could lead to problems or conflict.

● Perception. You need to perceive what is going on around you and you need to do this accurately to achieve your goals. In a game, are you looking out for the opportunity to hit a winning shot? Will you recognize the opportunity when it comes? If you talk to someone, what do you think they are interested in?

● Translation. In order to perform effectively you have to 'translate' your idea of what you want to do into the correct action. If your customer is obviously not persuaded by your presentation, do you have another strategy? Can you think of another approach?

● Responses. Even if you have the correct idea of what you need to do, can you physically do it?

● Feedback. If you talk to someone, can you work out how interested they are? Can you recognize when they are getting bored or irritated? Can you accurately interpret the feedback you receive? For example, suppose you express your point of view and they lean back and cross their arms. What does this signal mean? Does it mean agreement or disagreement? If you think it means disagreement, then do you try to restate what you think more clearly or in a different way? This example illustrates that there are several problems in reacting to feedback. First of all, did you notice the signals? You might have been concentrating so hard on expressing yourself clearly that you did not notice the other person's NVC. Secondly, did you interpret the signals correctly? And finally, were you able to respond effectively?

There are other important analogies between physical and interpersonal skills:

● We have to learn how to perform effectively, and we can always learn somethin new or some improvement.

● We can benefit from good coaching and tuition.

● As we learn a motor skill, our actions become more fluent and better timed. We become less aware of what we are doing; the action becomes subconscious. The same process can apply to interpersonal skills. For example, if you have to learn interviewing skills, your first interviews are likely to be hesitant and nervous until you gain some confidence. After some successful experience, you will no longer have to concentrate so hard as the behavior will have become more 'automatic'.

● We can let our skills 'lapse' by failing to practice. This is the downside of the previous point. As with a motor skill such as driving a car, we can become lazy and careless – and we can fall into 'bad habits'.

One recent development of this approach comes from Owen Hargie (1997). While endorsing Argyle's main ideas, he developed a more elaborate model – see Figure 5.2. This incorporates the following important ideas:

● The social context is an important influence on our behavior. The skills that are effective in one context may not work in another.

● We gain feedback from our own actions as well as the other person's reactions. We are continually aware of our own behavior and feelings, and this awareness can help us decide what to do next.

● We are influenced by our emotions as well as by our thoughts, and so the term 'mediating factors' is used instead of 'translation'. Note that these authors do not think that social skills are just the same as motor skills. We have already highlighted some important differences – the fact that other people may have different goals, the importance of feelings – and there is another, more complex problem, that of meta-perception.
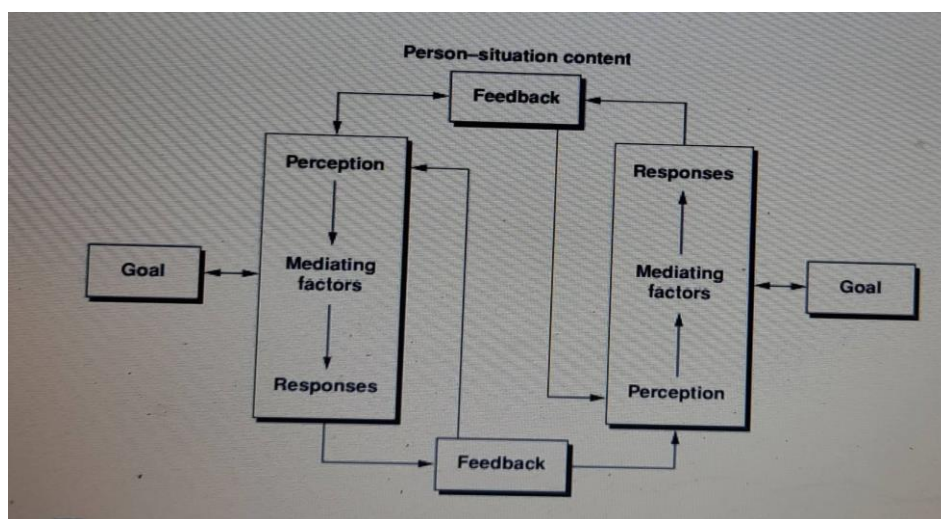
Figure 3.2. **Argyle's Interpersonal Communication Model**

Meta-perception

As well as directly perceiving our own behavior and the behavior of others, we can also reflect on how those other people are perceiving us. This has been called 'meta-perception' and has been shown to be an important factor in determining how people react to one another. For example, if we are having a conversation and I get the impression that you think I am being too 'chatty', then I might become more reserved to counteract this impression. If my initial impression is wrong, then I will probably confuse you or even offend you with my sudden and unexplained change in behavior.

THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

One of the most comprehensive texts on interpersonal skills includes the following topics (Hargie, 1997):

● non-verbal communication (NVC);

● reinforcement;

● questioning;

● reflecting;

● opening and closing;

● explanation;

● listening;

● self-disclosure;

● influencing;

● assertiveness;

● group interaction and leadership;

● humor and laughter.

We shall summarize the essential features of some of these to illustrate the importance of this analysis and approach.

Non-verbal communication The important features of NVC are the following:

● There are a wide range of NVC signals, including facial expression, gaze, gestures, posture, bodily contact, spatial behavior, clothes and appearance, non-verbal vocalizations (paralanguage) and smell.

● We usually react to the combination of these signals. For example, we may decide that someone is lying to us because they fidget, avoid eye contact, hesitate when they talk, etc.

● These signals are ambiguous. For example, the indicators of someone lying are very close to the signals of nerves and anxiety. This problem of ambiguity is very important if you are considering adopting particular NVC strategies.

● There are significant cultural differences in the meaning of non-verbal signals.

● When verbal and non-verbal signals seem to contradict each other, we are usually more inclined to believe the non-verbal 'message'.

Bearing these points in mind, we can suggest some recommendations for the skilled use of NVC in business situations.

Use a combination of signals to show what you mean

For example, some texts suggest that managers should be very careful to choose the right seating position when they want to have a discussion with one of their staff. The usual recommendation is to avoid the direct frontal position as this implies confrontation, and to talk 'at an angle' – across the corner of the desk rather than directly facing the other person across the desk. This will help to establish an atmosphere, but other cues are also important. To achieve co-operation you also need to use appropriate eye contact and gestures. Just sitting at the 'correct' angle will not help the manager who continues to belittle his staff verbally and non-verbally in other ways, perhaps by constantly interrupting them! These other signals will create the lasting impression in the staff.

Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal messages are 'in harmony'

A person who tells you they are listening to you while looking at their watch will not be believed!

Make sure your NVC is appropriate to the culture and the context

A British manager who uses his or her 'native' pattern of eye gaze when dealing with Arab colleagues may well be seen as 'shifty-eyed' and perhaps untrustworthy because Britons do not engage in what Arabs would regard as sufficient eye contact.

Avoid NVC which has a popular interpretation that you do not want

Many popular books on NVC claim that particular signals definitely pass on a specific message. Even if this is not always true, what if the other person believes that it is? For example, one recent British guide for students preparing for selection interviews suggests that a posture of 'folded arms with the fists clenched' shows 'definite hostility' (McBride, 1993, p. 132). Another text suggests that crossed arms and a sideways glance will be perceived as 'suspicious', and that crossed arms indicate 'defensiveness'.

On the assumption that many interviewers probably do believe this is what these gestures mean, the applicant should not use any of them.

Develop your awareness of your own NVC and its likely impact

Perhaps the most important way of developing your NVC skills is through awareness of your own behavior. Does your NVC always reflect what you want it to mean? You can develop this awareness only by reflecting on your own behavior and by getting feedback from others who are prepared to give you an honest response. If you decide to change your behavior then you also need to monitor the effect of change. You need to behave in a way which comes across as 'natural' for you rather than relying on 'textbook techniques'.

Reinforcement

When you use reinforcing behaviors, you use behaviors which encourage the other person to carry on or repeat whatever they happen to be doing. Various experiments have shown how people respond to quite small expressions of praise, encouragement and support, including head nods, grunts and saying 'uh-huh'. For a quick demonstration of the power of these simple cues, ask a friend to listen to you talking for a couple of minutes without showing any signs of support or agreement. First of all, they may find it very difficult if not impossible to do. Secondly, you will find it very disconcerting to speak to what is effectively a 'blank wall'. And this bring us on to the importance of listening, which we talk about later.

Questioning

If you have attended a series of job interviews you will know that some professional interviewers are much better than others at extracting information from you. This will be due in part to their question technique – whether they are asking the right sort of question at the right time. For example, texts on interviewing technique usually distinguish between open and closed questions.

An open question allows the person to answer in whatever way they like. An example is 'What do you think of the government's economic policy?' A closed question asks for specific information or a yes/no response, An example would be 'Do you agree with the government's economic policy?' Open questions encourage people to talk and expand; closed questions encourage short answers. Inexperienced

interviewers often ask too many closed questions and do not get the detailed answers which they really want. We say more on this in the next chapter.

Reflecting

Reflecting is a skill often used by counsellors and other people who have to conduct very personal interviews and who want the other person to talk in some detail about their own feelings and attitudes. Even the most open-ended questions can sometimes suggest the way in which the other person should construct their answer. Reflections are more neutral; they feed back to the speaker some aspect of what they have just said. This invites them to elaborate or extend what they have been saying. You can reflect in different ways and achieve different results. This will depend on whether you are interested in the factual statements that the other person has made or in their feelings about what they are saying. Textbooks often distinguish at least three different forms of reflection:

●identifying a key word or phrase which will encourage the speaker to say more;

● summarizing what you have heard in your own words;

● identifying the feelings which seem to lie behind what the speaker is saying. This last form of reflection is perhaps the most difficult and needs the most skill – you have to sense the underlying emotion accurately and read between the lines.

However, these different strategies focus on rather different aspects of the other person's communication. The first two relate to concentrating on what has been said; the third concentrates on how it was said, trying to interpret the non-verbal accompaniment.

Opening and closing

The ways in which we establish the beginnings and endings of a particular interaction require consideration. For example, sales staff often receive very detailed training on how to start the interaction with the customer. Often this involves making conversation to establish the sales representative as more friendly and helpful than 'just a salesperson'. Consider all the different possible ways of starting a conversation with someone; some ways would be much more appropriate than others in particular circumstances. The choice of opening can be very important in more formal situations

such as an interview, where the opening can establish either a positive or negative atmosphere.

Listening

It is worth emphasizing the importance of listening as it is often taken for granted. Perhaps because we do it so much, it can be dismissed as a 'natural' behavior, which we have all learnt. But educators concerned with the development of interpersonal skills usually give it central importance: 'Listening is a core competence. People who cannot listen cannot relate.' . . . 'Poor listening undermines the ability to communicate with others' (Hayes, 1991, p. 8).

Developing your skills as a listener involves two major steps:

● recognizing (and eliminating) any barriers which prevent you listening with full attention;

● adopting and practicing behaviors which help you listen (and which convince the other person that you are giving them your full attention).

Examples of important common barriers include being distracted by personal stereotypes or other perceptual biases, such as listening selectively for what you expect to hear.

Detailed analysis of the skills which are used by people who are recognized as 'good listeners' shows that they use a variety of techniques. For example, Bolton (1986) talks about three clusters of skills:

● Attending skills, where you show the other person that you are attending to them. NVC can be especially important here.

● Following skills, where the listener uses techniques which encourage the speaker to give a full account of what they want to say. Reinforcing behavior can be very important here, or what Bolton calls 'minimal prompts' like 'mmm', 'uh-uh', 'yes', 'and', etc.

● Reflecting skills, which we talk about in more detail below.

So the typical recommendations to support active or positive listening include the following (P. Hartley, 1999):

● Being receptive to the other person – showing that you are prepared to listen and accept what they are saying. (Of course, this does not mean that you automatically agree with it.) Non-verbal signals are obviously important here and you need to avoid any signs of tension or impatience.

● Maintaining attention – using eye contact, head nods and appropriate facial expression.

● Removing distractions.

● Delaying evaluation of what you have heard until you fully understand it.

One research study which shows how important active listening can be in practical situations comes from Marquis and Cannell (1971). They compared the results of interviews about family illness when the interviewers used one of three techniques: active listening; sensitizing the interviewee by reading out symptoms at the start; and simply going through the questionnaire. Interviewees gave nearly 30 per cent more examples when the interviewer used active listening techniques.

Self-disclosure

When you communicate with other people you can tell them various things about yourself (or you can decide not to). Sidney Jourard coined the term 'self-disclosure': the process of sharing information about ourselves with other people. When you self-disclose, you provide some information to the other person about yourself: how you are feeling, what your background is, what your attitudes and values are, and so on. Jourard was interested in how people came to reveal aspects of themselves to others and what this meant for the way in which they developed relationships with others.

Self-disclosure and relationships

You need to self-disclose to develop a relationship with another person. And this raises several practical issues:

● What do you tell them? What sort of information do you pass on? When is it 'safe' to reveal your personal feelings?

● How quickly do you reveal yourself? There are important social and cultural differences here. For example, in the United States, you are often expected to say a lot about yourself very early in a relationship. In Britain, a more leisurely pace is the norm.

In business, we have to develop good relationships with other people in the organization, and so self-disclosure is an important issue. How far can we (or should we) keep these relationships on a strictly formal basis and not self-disclose? If you develop a very close and open relationship with a group of staff and are then promoted to be their supervisor, can you maintain the relationship at the same level?

Assertiveness

Over the past two decades, assertiveness training has become one of the most popular ways of developing social skills. As well as training courses and workshops, many popular books on business communication use assertiveness principles even if they do not use the term. And some of these endorse it very strongly, even claiming it can 'change your life' (See P. Hartley, 1999, ch. 12).

What do we mean by assertive communication?

The following quotations summarize essential points:

● 'Assertive behavior gives you the right to say what you think and feel calmly and clearly, without giving offence and denying the rights of others to have different views or expectations' (Willcocks and Morris, 1996, p. 2).

● 'The aim of assertive behavior is to satisfy the needs and wants of both parties involved in the situation' (Back and Back, 1999, p. 2). What are the different styles of behavior? Books on assertive behavior usually define three styles of behavior: assertion, aggression and submission (or non-assertion). These are often expressed as a continuum with assertion in the middle.

Aggression —————————- Assertion ——————————- Submission

But a better way of comparing styles of behavior is to look at the two underlying dimensions:

● from indirect expression through to direct expression;

● from coercive behavior through to non-coercive behavior.

This gives Figure 3.3 below. The fourth style is where you express aggression in an indirect way without direct confrontation. Most texts concentrate on the three main styles, and so will we in this chapter (descriptions taken from Hartley, 1999).

	Coercive behaviour
Indirect aggressive	**Aggressive**
Indirect expression **Submissive**	Indirect expression **Assertive** Non-coercive behaviour

Figure 3.3 **Styles of behavior**

Aggressive behavior. Aggressive behavior includes some form of threat which undermines the rights of the other person. It is about winning, regardless of the other person's feelings. The verbal and nonverbal accompaniments to aggressive behavior include loud and abusive talk, interruptions, and glaring or staring eye contact.

Submissive behavior. Submissive behavior gives in to the demands of others by avoiding conflict and accepting being put upon. Verbal and non-verbal accompaniments include apologetic and hesitant speech, soft speech, nervous gestures and a reluctance to express opinions. Submissive individuals will be seen as weak and easily manipulated. They will certainly not inspire confidence in others. The verbal and non-verbal behaviors associated with these styles have been demonstrated quite clearly in research studies as well as from observation of everyday life.

Assertive behavior. The characteristics of assertive behavior are open and clear expression, firm and fluent conversation, and quick, spontaneous answers. The non-verbal components include medium levels of eye contact; appropriate facial expressions; smooth gestures; relaxed but upright body posture; and appropriate paralinguistics.

Using assertive behavior. There are various ways of categorizing assertive behavior. For example, Ken and Kate Back (1999) define six main types of assertive behavior, which can be divided into two levels as summarized in **Box 3. 1.** Other texts concentrate on what they regard as the main assertive techniques. To illustrate the approach, we can quote a typical example from Linehan and Egan (1983). They offer

the 'broken record' technique as a way of resisting influence. This technique simply involves repeating your initial request or response, without being sidetracked, until the other person accepts it. For example, suppose your boss asks you to work late one evening and you are already committed to an important social event. What do you say? If you say, 'I'm sorry, but I can't stay tonight', how do you respond if the boss says, 'But it's really urgent and important.' Applying the broken record technique, you should say, 'I'm sorry about that but I really cannot work late tonight' and continue to do this until your point is accepted.

BOX 3.1 **DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR**

Ken and Kate Back (1999, ch. 7) define six main types of assertive behavior which can be divided into two levels, listed below. The practical implication of their work is that you should normally start by using a low-level assertion. If this is not successful, then you try a high-level assertion. The three types at the lower level are:

■ basic assertion (a straightforward statement of what you need, want, believe or feel);

■ responsive assertion (where you check what the other person needs or is feeling, by asking them in a straightforward way);

■ empathetic assertion (where you make a point of recognizing the other person's point of view or feelings, before you state what you want).

The three high-level types are:

■ discrepancy assertion (where you point out the discrepancy between what you have agreed previously on what seems to be happening or is about to happen);

■ negative feelings assertion (where you point out the effect that the other person's behavior is having upon you);

■ consequence (the strongest form of assertion – where you tell the other person what will happen to them if they do not change their behavior). Back and Back suggests that you should 'use the minimum degree of assertion for achieving your aim'. If you do not, then you may be seen as

aggressive, and you will have fewer options if the other person does not wish to co-operate.

Does assertiveness always work?

Most texts on assertiveness emphasize the possible benefits of this style of behavior. But there are also potential problems:

● Assertive behavior may be 'misread'. It may be seen as aggressive, especially when the person is behaving differently from the way they have acted in the past.

● People have different definitions of assertiveness. For example, untrained women stress the importance of consideration for others, whereas untrained men seem to see assertiveness in terms of power and influence.

● There are issues of gender roles. Male assertion and female assertion can have different consequences, and so reliance on the same techniques may actually work out differently.

● There are situational factors to consider. Certain types of assertiveness may well work better in some situations than others.

● There are cultural differences to consider. Behavior which is culturally acceptable in the United States and Western Europe may not be accepted in cultures that place very different values upon humility and submission.

Key takeaways:

• The process of interpersonal communication can be complex. Unless you understand some basic features of this process, you can easily behave in ways which the other person does not accept or appreciate.

•There are a number of important interpersonal skills, including non-verbal communication (NVC), listening, self-disclosure and assertiveness.

•Effective interpersonal communication must be based on flexible behavior which is appropriate to the specific context.

Discussion 3

1. What social skills are the most important in modern business organizations?

2.   What are the different styles of behavior?

3.   Can assertiveness be confidently recommended without worrying about cultural and social context?

4.   Do you agree with the statements "Listening is a core competence. People who cannot listen cannot relate".

5.   What does self-disclosure mean? Is it necessary to self-disclose to develop a relationship with another person?

Think of someone whom you would regard as socially skilled at work (study). What do they do which you see as skillful? Make some notes on this and compare it with the techniques described above in the unit.

Part 2.

Team Skills

LEAD-IN

1. Both traditional and innovative company structures can rely heavily on teamwork, don't they?

2. How can you define **a group** and **a team**. Is there any difference?

3. How can you characterize effective teams.

4. List the professional (i.e., work-related) groups you interact with in order of frequency.

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of team work?

6. Are teams always successful?

7. What is a key reason that teams fail to meet their objectives?

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

decision-making process	to share a mission and the responsibility
futile argument	to generate pressures
cubicle	to evaluate alternatives
self-oriented roles	to explore options
team-maintenance roles	to break down barrier
task-facilitating roles	to discuss the pros and cons

to evolve	to lead to win–lose (lose–lose) outcomes
disruptive antics	to clarify values
homogeneous teams	to overcome many obstacles
groupthink	to shake the hard-won camaraderie

Introductory text   WHY FORM GROUPS AND TEAMS?

Businesses are constantly looking for ways to do jobs better at less cost. They are forming teams for the following reasons:

● Better decisions. Decisions are generally more accurate and effective because group members contribute different expertise and perspectives.

● Faster response. When action is necessary to respond to competition or to solve a problem, small groups and teams can act rapidly.

● Increased productivity. Because they are often closer to the action and to the customer, team members can see opportunities for improving efficiency.

● Greater buy-in. Decisions arrived at jointly are usually better received because members are committed to the solution and are more willing to support it.

● Less resistance to change. People who have input into decisions are less hostile, aggressive, and resistant to change.

● Improved employee morale. Personal satisfaction and job morale increase when teams are successful.

● Reduced risks. Responsibility for a decision is diffused, thus carrying less risk for any individual.

Despite the current popularity of teams, however, they are not a panacea for all workplace problems. Some critics complain that they are just another management fad. Others charge that teams are a screen behind which management intensifies its control over labor.

Defining Team and Teams Communication

The teamwork interactions among the employees represent one of the most essential elements of interpersonal communication. Collaboration is working together to meet complex challenges. It has become a core job responsibility for roughly half

the workforce. No matter what career path you pursue, it's a virtual guarantee that you will be expected to collaborate in at least some of your work activities. Your communication skills will pay off handsomely in these interactions, because the productivity and quality of collaborative efforts depend heavily on the communication skills of the professionals involved.

A team is a unit of two or more people who share a mission and the responsibility for working to achieve a common goal. Problem-solving teams and task forces assemble to resolve specific issues and then disband when their goals have been accomplished. Such teams are often cross-functional, pulling together people from a variety of departments who have different areas of expertise and responsibility. The diversity of opinions and experiences can lead to better decisions, but competing interests can lead to tensions that highlight the need for effective communication. Committees are formal teams that usually have a long life span and can become a permanent part of the organizational structure. Committees typically deal with regularly recurring tasks, such as an executive committee that meets monthly to plan strategies and review results.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams

When teams are successful, they can improve productivity, creativity, employee involvement, and even job security. Teams are often at the core of participative management, the effort to involve employees in the company's decision making. A successful team can provide a number of advantages:

● Increased information and knowledge. By pooling the experience of several individuals, a team has access to more information in the decision-making process.

● Increased diversity of views. Team members can bring a variety of perspectives to the decision-making process as long as these diverse viewpoints are guided by a shared goal.

● Increased acceptance of a solution. Those who participate in making a decision are more likely to support it and encourage others to accept it.

● Higher performance levels. Working in teams can unleash new levels of creativity and energy in workers who share a sense of purpose and mutual

accountability. Effective teams can be better than top-performing individuals at solving complex problems. Although teamwork has many advantages, it also has a number of potential disadvantages. At the worst, working in teams can be a frustrating waste of time. Teams need to be aware of and work to counter the following potential disadvantages:

● Groupthink. Like other social structures, business teams can generate tremendous pressures to conform with accepted norms of behavior. Groupthink occurs when peer pressures cause individual team members to withhold contrary or unpopular opinions. The result can be decisions that are worse than the choices the team members might have made individually.

● Hidden agendas. Some team members may have a hidden agenda —private, counterproductive motives, such as a desire to take control of the group, to undermine someone else on the team, or to pursue a business goal that runs counter to the team's mission.

● Cost. Aligning schedules, arranging meetings, and coordinating individual parts of a project can eat up a lot of time and money.

Analyzing Positive and Negative Team Behavior

Team members who are committed to achieving the group's purpose contribute by displaying positive behavior. How can you be a good team member? The most effective groups have members who are willing to establish rules and abide by them. Effective team members are able to analyze tasks and define problems so that they can work toward solutions. They offer information and try out their ideas on the group to stimulate discussion. They show interest in others' ideas by listening actively. Helpful team members also seek to involve silent members. They help to resolve differences, and they encourage a warm, supportive climate by praising and agreeing with others. When they sense that agreement is near, they review significant points and move the group toward its goal by synthesizing points of understanding.

Not all groups, however, have members who contribute positively.

Negative behavior is shown by those who constantly put down the ideas and suggestions of others. They insult, criticize, and aggress against others. They waste the

group's time with unnecessary recounting of personal achievements or irrelevant topics. The team clown distracts the group with excessive joke-telling, inappropriate comments, and disruptive antics. Also disturbing are team members who withdraw and refuse to be drawn out. They have nothing to say, either for or against ideas being considered. To be a productive and welcome member of a group, be prepared to perform the positive tasks. Avoid the negative behaviors.

Key takeaways:

- Team work has many advantages and disadvantages.

•Effective teams have a clear sense of purpose, open and honest communication, consensus-based decision making, creativity, and effective conflict resolution.

•Effective teams can pool knowledge, take advantage of diverse viewpoints, and increase acceptance of solutions the team proposes.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the statements?

1. A team is a unit of two or more people who work independently and they are responsible for achieving their own goals.

2. Effective teams perform better than individuals at solving complex problems.

3. A successful team can provide a number of advantages.

4. Groupthink is a positive phenomenon in business teams.

5. Frustrating waste of time is a main disadvantage of working in teams.

GROUP DYNAMICS

The interactions and processes that take place among the members of a team are called group dynamics. Productive teams tend to develop clear norms, informal standards of conduct that members share and that guide member behavior. Group dynamics are influenced by several factors: the roles that team members assume, the current phase of team development, the team's success in resolving conflict, and the team's success in overcoming resistance.

Group dynamics are the interactions and interpersonal processes that take place in a team.

Team Roles Members of a team can play various roles, which fall into three categories (see Table 1). Members who assume self-oriented roles are motivated mainly to fulfill personal needs, so they tend to be less productive than other members. "Dream teams" composed of multiple superstars often don't perform as well as one might expect because high-performing individuals can have trouble putting the team's needs ahead of their own. In addition, highly skilled and experienced people with difficult personalities might not contribute for the simple reason that other team members may avoid interacting with them. Far more likely to contribute to team goals are members who assume team-maintenance roles to help everyone work well together and those who assume task-facilitating roles to help the team reach its goals.

Each member of a group plays a role that affects the outcome of the group's activities.

Team Roles (Functional and Dysfunctional)

Dysfunctional: Self-Oriented Roles	Functional: Team-Maintenance Roles	Functional: Task-Facilitating Roles
Controlling: Dominating others by exhibiting superiority or authority	**Encouraging:** Drawing out other members by showing verbal and nonverbal support, praise, or agreement	**Initiating**: Getting the team started on a line of inquiry
Withdrawing: Retiring from the team either by becoming silent or by refusing to deal with a particular aspect of the team's work	**Harmonizing:** Reconciling differences among team members through mediation or by using humor to relieve tension	**Information giving or seeking:** Offering (or seeking) information relevant to questions facing the team
Attention seeking: Calling attention to oneself and demanding recognition from others	**Compromising:** Offering to yield on a point in the interest of	**Coordinating:** Showing relationships among ideas, clarifying issues, summarizing

Diverting: Focusing the team's discussion on topics of interest to the individual rather than on those relevant to the task	reaching a mutually acceptable decision	what the team has done **Procedure setting:** Suggesting decision-making procedures that will move the team toward a goal

Phases of Team Development

Groups generally progress through several stages on their way to becoming productive and reaching their objectives:

1.Orientation	2. Conflict	3. Brainstorming	4.Emergence	5. Reinforcement
Team members get to know each other and establish roles.	Different opinions and perspectives begin to emerge.	Team members explore their options and evaluate alternatives.	The team reaches a consensus on the chosen decision	The team re-establishes harmony and makes plans to put the decision into action.

Teams typically evolve through a number of phases on their way to becoming productive. A variety of models have been proposed to describe the evolution toward becoming a productive team. Here is how one commonly used model identifies the phases a problem-solving team goes through as it evolves:

1. Orientation. Team members socialize, establish their roles, and begin to define their task or purpose. Team-building exercises and activities can help teams break down barriers and develop a sense of shared purpose. For geographically dispersed virtual teams, creating a "team operating agreement" that sets expectations for online meetings, communication processes, and decision making can help overcome the disadvantages of distance.

2. Conflict. Team members begin to discuss their positions and become more assertive in establishing their roles. Disagreements and uncertainties are natural in this phase.

3. Brainstorming. Team members air all the options and fully discuss the pros and cons. At the end of this phase, members begin to settle on a single solution to the problem. Note that while group brainstorming remains a highly popular activity in today's companies, it may not always be the most productive way to generate new ideas. Some research indicates that having people brainstorm individually and then bring their ideas to a group meeting is more successful.

4. Emergence. Consensus is reached when the team finds a solution that all members are willing to support (even if they have reservations).

5. Reinforcement. The team clarifies and summarizes the agreed-upon solution. Members receive their assignments for carrying out the group's decision, and they make arrangements for following up on those assignments. You may also hear the process defined as forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning, the phases identified by researcher Bruce Tuckman when he proposed one of the earliest models of group development. Regardless of the model, these stages are a general framework for team development. Some teams may move forward and backward through several stages before they become productive, and other teams may be productive right away, even while some or all members are in a state of conflict.

Resolving Conflict

Conflict in team activities can arise for a number of reasons: competition for resources, disagreement over goals or responsibilities, poor communication, power struggles, or fundamental differences in values, attitudes, and personalities. Although the term conflict sounds negative, conflict isn't necessarily bad. Conflict can be constructive if it forces important issues into the open, increases the involvement of team members, and generates creative ideas for solving a problem. Teamwork isn't necessarily about happiness and harmony; even teams that have some interpersonal friction can excel with effective leadership and team players committed to strong results. As teamwork experts Andy Boynton and Bill Fischer put it, "Virtuoso teams

are not about getting polite results." In contrast, conflict is destructive if it diverts energy from more important issues, destroys the morale of teams or individual team members, or polarizes or divides the team. Destructive conflict can lead to win–lose or lose–lose outcomes, in which one or both sides lose, to the detriment of the entire team. If you approach conflict with the idea that both sides can satisfy their goals to at least some extent (a win–win strategy), you can minimize losses for everyone. For a win-win strategy to work, everybody must believe that (1) it's possible to find a solution that both parties can accept, (2) cooperation is better for the organization than competition, (3) the other party can be trusted, and (4) greater power or status doesn't entitle one party to impose a solution. The following seven measures can help team members successfully resolve conflict:

● Proactive behavior. Deal with minor conflict before it becomes major conflict.

● Communication. Get those directly involved in a conflict to participate in resolving it.

● Openness. Get feelings out in the open before dealing with the main issues.

● Research. Seek factual reasons for a problem before seeking solutions.

● Flexibility. Don't let anyone lock into a position before considering other solutions.

● Fair play. Insist on fair outcomes and don't let anyone avoid a fair solution by hiding behind the rules.

● Alliance. Get opponents to fight together against an "outside force" instead of against each other.

Six-Step Procedure for Dealing with Conflict

Destructive conflict can lead to win–lose or lose–lose outcomes.

Conflict is a normal part of every workplace and every team. Although the word alone is enough to make your heart begin to thump, conflict is not always negative. When managed properly, conflict can improve decision making, clarify values, increase group cohesiveness, stimulate creativity, decrease tensions, and undermine dissatisfaction. Unresolved conflict, however, can destroy productivity and seriously

reduce morale. You will be better prepared to resolve workplace conflict if you are able to implement the following six-step procedure for dealing with conflict.

1. Listen. To be sure you understand the problem, listen carefully. If the other person doesn't seem to be listening to you, you need to set the example and be the first to listen.

2. Understand the other's point of view. Once you listen, it is much easier to understand the other's position. Show your understanding by asking questions and paraphrasing. This will also verify what you think the other person means.

3. Show a concern for the relationship. By focusing on the problem, not the person, you can build, maintain, and even improve the relationship. Show an understanding of the other person's situation and needs. Show an overall willingness to come to an agreement.

4. Look for common ground. Identify your interests and help the other person identify his or her interests. Learn what you have in common, and look for a solution to which both of you can agree. Understand how you can contribute positively to team performance, including resolving workplace conflicts, avoiding groupthink, and reaching group decisions.

5. Invent new problem-solving options. Spend time identifying the interests of both sides. Then brainstorm to invent new ways to solve the problem. Be open to new options.

6. Reach an agreement based on what is fair. Seek to determine a standard of fairness that is acceptable to both sides. Then weigh the possible solutions, and choose the best option.

Positive and Negative Group Behaviors

Positive Team Behaviors	Negative Team Behaviors
Setting rules and abiding by them	Blocking the ideas and suggestions of others
Analyzing tasks and defining problems	Insulting and criticizing others
Contributing information and ideas	Wasting the group's time

Showing interest by listening actively	Making inappropriate jokes and comments
Encouraging members to participate	Failing to stay on task
Synthesizing points of agreement	Withdrawing, failing to participate

Avoiding Groupthink

Conflict is normal in team interactions, and successful teams are able to resolve it using the methods you have just learned. But some teams avoid conflict. They smooth things over and in doing so may fall victim to groupthink. This is a term coined by theorist Irving Janis to describe faulty decision-making processes by team members who are overly eager to agree with one another. Several conditions can lead to groupthink: team members with similar backgrounds, a lack of systematic procedures, a demand for a quick decision, and a strong leader who favors a specific outcome. Symptoms of groupthink include pressure placed on any member who argues against the group's mutual beliefs, self-censorship of thoughts that stray from the group's agreement, collective efforts to rationalize, and an unquestioned belief in the group's moral authority. Teams suffering from groupthink fail to check alternatives, are biased in collecting and evaluating information, and ignore the risks of the preferred choice. They may also neglect to work out a contingency plan in case the preferred choice fails.

Effective teams avoid groupthink by striving for team diversity in age, gender, background, experience, and training. They encourage open discussion, search for relevant information, evaluate many alternatives, consider how a decision will be implemented, and plan for contingencies in case the decision doesn't work out.

Reaching Group Decisions

The way teams reach decisions greatly affects their morale and commitment, as well as the implementation of any team decision. In U.S. culture the majority usually rules, but other methods, five of which are discussed here, may be more effective. As you study these methods, think about which would be best for routine decisions and which would be best for dealing with emergencies.

● *Majority.* Group members vote and a majority wins. This method results in a quick decision but may leave an alienated minority uncommitted to implementation.

● *Consensus.* Discussion continues until all team members have aired their opinions and, ultimately, agree. This method is time-consuming; however, it produces creative, high quality discussion and generally elicits commitment by all members to implement the decision.

● *Minority.* Typically, a subcommittee investigates and makes a recommendation for action. This method is useful when the full group cannot get together to make a decision or when time is short.

● *Averaging.* Members haggle, bargain, wheedle, and negotiate to reach a middle position, which often requires compromise. With this method, the opinions of the least knowledgeable members may cancel the opinions of the most knowledgeable.

● *Authority rule with discussion.* The leader, boss, or manager listens to team members' ideas, but the final decision is his or hers. This method encourages lively discussion and results in participatory decision making. However, team members must have good communication skills. This method also requires a leader who is willing to make decisions.

Key takeaways:

- Teams typically evolve through a variety of phases, such as orientation, conflict, brainstorming, emergence, and reinforcement.

- Conflict is normal in team interactions.

Define the following terms:

Groupthink, consensus, communication skills, positive (negative) team behavior, destructive conflict, solution, frustration.

Discussion 2

1. What are the reasons of team and group forming?

2. Name the main characteristics of effective teams?

3. What are the main characteristics of ineffective teams?

4. Speak about steps of team development.

5. Conflict in team activities can arise for a number of reasons. Name some of them.

6. What steps for dealing with conflicts do you know? Are they useful?

7. What is groupthink? How can team avoid it?

Writing.

Write an essay on one of the topics:

1. Interpersonal communication and team skills.

2. Dealing with conflicts in groups and teams.

3. Advantages and disadvantages of team communication.

4. Group dynamics.

UNIT 4. BUSINESS ETHICS. BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

LEAD-IN

1. What is ethics?

2. Give the examples of unethical business communication.

3. What are typical ethical topics in business?

3. Should companies encourage an ethical culture?

4. What is transparency?

4. What is copyright? Why are issues of copyright law so important for business communicators?

5. What elements are required to ensure ethical business communication?

7. Prove, that business communication is governed by a wide variety of laws designed to ensure accurate, complete messages.

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

to conceal	to adhere to stringent laws
assault	to abide by the Law
to deceive	to compete interests
deceptive	conventional standards
defamation	to damage the reputation
to discriminate	to document sources
to distort	ethical dilemmas
endnotes	ethical lapses
ethics	ethical position
ethical / unethical	an explicit ethics policy
to exaggerate	financial meltdown
fraud	to flout company guidelines
footnotes	to give credits
lawsuit	inclusive language
legal / illegal	to incorporate ethics

legislation	public backlash
libel	quotation marks
misleading	questionable ethics
misquoting	rigorous scrutiny
to omit	stealth marketing
plagiarism	to take responsibility
privacy	to violate a copyright
to refrain from	written code of ethics
references	
regulations	
to sue	
slander	
stunt	
transparency	
valid	
virtue	

Part 1.

Introductory text: What is Ethics? Committing to Ethical Communication

Ethics refers to conventional standards of right and wrong that prescribe what people should do. These standards usually consist of rights, obligations, and benefits to society. They also include virtues such as fairness, honesty, loyalty, and concern for others. Ethics is about having values and taking responsibility. Ethical individuals are expected to follow the law and refrain from theft, murder, assault, slander, and fraud.

Ethical behavior is a companywide concern, but because communication efforts are the public face of a company, they are subjected to particularly rigorous scrutiny from regulators, legislators, investors, consumer groups, environmental groups, labor organizations, and anyone else affected by business activities.

Businesses today are well aware of the criticism heaped on them following the financial meltdown, and many are striving to develop an ethical culture. Smart companies

continue to incorporate ethics into their organizations and also to be more socially responsible. PepsiCo, for example, is striving to produce more healthful foods and beverages and also to reduce the company's impact on the environment through initiatives focused on water, energy, and packaging. Being ethical makes good business sense. Ethical companies endure less litigation, less resentment, and less government regulation.

Many business organizations are implementing policies and procedures to encourage an ethical culture. Companies are establishing codes of ethics, appointing ethics compliance officers, and instituting ethics training programs. Ethics codes typically cover five elements: responsibility, respect, fairness, honesty, and compassion. Companies are also developing Web-based programs and workshops that teach employees how to relate to each other, to the company, to customers, and to business partners. These trainings sometimes include ethical decision-making models and role-playing scenarios that help employees respond appropriately to dilemmas.

Typical ethical topics include workplace romance, e-mail appropriateness, Internet use, integrity, confidentiality, security, and harassment. If you join a large organization, you will probably be expected to sign a document assuring that you will comply with the company's code of ethics. In addition, you will be expected to comprehend the laws that apply to your job. Managers who conduct applicant interviews, for example, must know which questions are legal and which are not.

As a business communicator, you should understand basic ethical principles so that you can make logical decisions when faced with dilemmas in the workplace. Professionals in any field must deal with moral dilemmas on the job. However, just being a moral person and having sound personal ethics may not be sufficient to handle the ethical issues that you may face in the workplace.

Ensuring Ethical Communication

Ensuring ethical business communication requires three elements: ethical individuals, ethical company leadership, and the appropriate policies and structures to support employees' efforts to make ethical choices. Moreover, these three elements need to work in harmony. If employees see company executives making unethical decisions and flouting company guidelines, they might conclude that the guidelines are

meaningless and emulate their bosses' unethical behavior. Employers have a responsibility to establish clear guidelines for ethical behavior, including ethical business communication. Many companies establish an explicit ethics policy by using a written code of ethics to help employees determine what is acceptable. For example, Gap Inc. (the owner of the Gap, Banana Republic, and Old Navy retail chains), publishes a detailed Code of Business Conduct for its employees, addressing such areas as conflicts of interest, product integrity, health and safety, protection of company assets and information, and political activities by employees.

A code is often part of a larger program of employee training and communication channels that allow employees to ask questions and report instances of questionable ethics. To ensure ongoing compliance with their code of ethics, many companies also conduct ethics audits to monitor ethical progress and to point out any weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Key takeaways. Ethics are the accepted principles of conduct that govern behavior within a society. Businesses usually implement policies to encourage an ethical culture, establish codes of ethics, which typically cover five elements: responsibility, respect, fairness, honesty, and compassion.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the statements?

1.   Being ethical makes good business sense.

2.   Being a moral person and having sound personal ethics is sufficient to handle the ethical issues that you may face in the workplace.

3.   It is essential for business organizations to develop training programs and workshops that teach employees how to relate to each other, to the company, to customers, and to business partners.

4.   Ethics audits help monitor ethical progress.

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Goals of Ethical Business Communicators

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Taking ethics into consideration can be painful in the short term. In the long term, however, ethical behavior makes sense and pays off. Dealing honestly with colleagues

and customers develops trust and builds stronger relationships. The following guidelines can help you set specific ethical goals. Although these goals hardly constitute a formal code of conduct, they will help you maintain a high ethical standard.

Abiding by the Law. Know the laws in your field and follow them. Particularly important for business communicators are issues of copyright law. Under the concept of fair use, individuals have limited rights to use copyrighted material without requiring permission. To be safe, you should assume that anything produced privately after 1989 – including words, charts, graphs, photos, music – is copyrighted.

Telling the Truth. Ethical business communicators do not intentionally make statements that are untrue or deceptive. In recent corporate scandals some executives have landed in jail or lost their jobs for lying. On a personal level, however, we all may lie and deceive in various ways. We say things that are not so. We may exaggerate to swell the importance of our assertions. We may minimize our responsibility when things go wrong. We may withhold information that leads to misunderstanding or fraud. All of these are examples of lying. Being truthful to yourself is a cornerstone of ethical behavior.

Labeling Opinions. Sensitive communicators know the difference between facts and opinions. Facts are verifiable and often are quantifiable; opinions are beliefs held with confidence but without substantiation.

Being Objective. Ethical business communicators recognize their own biases and strive to keep them from distorting a message.

Communicating Clearly. Ethical business communicators feel an obligation to write clearly so that receivers understand easily and quickly. Some states have even passed "Plain English" (also called "Plain Language") laws that require businesses to write policies, warranties, and contracts in language comprehensible to average readers. Plain English means short sentences, simple words, and clear organization. Communicators who intentionally obscure the meaning with long sentences and difficult words are being unethical.

Using Inclusive Language. Ethical business communicators use language that includes rather than excludes. They avoid expressions that discriminate against individuals

or groups on the basis of their sex, ethnicity, disability, race, sexual orientation, or age. Language is discriminatory when it stereotypes, insults, or excludes people.

Giving Credit. Ethical communicators give credit for ideas by (a) referring to originators' names within the text; (b) using quotation marks; and (c) documenting sources with endnotes, footnotes, or internal references. Don't suggest that you did all the work on a project if you had help. In universities or on the job, stealing ideas, words, graphics, or any other original material is unethical. Members of the International Association of Business Communicators have developed a code of ethics with 12 guidelines (articles) that spell out criteria for determining what is right and wrong for members of its organization.

Unethical Communication

Ethical communication includes all relevant information, is true in every sense, and is not deceptive in any way. In contrast, *unethical communication* can distort the truth or manipulate audiences in a variety of ways. Any time you try to mislead your audience, the result is unethical communication.

Examples of unethical communication include:

● Plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or other creative products as your own. Note that plagiarism can be illegal if it violates a copyright , which is a form of legal protection for the expression of creative ideas.

● Omitting essential information. Information is essential if your audience needs it to make an intelligent, objective decision.

● Selective misquoting. Distorting or hiding the true intent of someone else's words is unethical.

● Misrepresenting numbers. Statistics and other data can be unethically manipulated by increasing or decreasing numbers, exaggerating, altering statistics, or omitting numeric data.

● Distorting visuals. Images can be manipulated in unethical ways, such as making a product seem bigger than it really is or changing the scale of graphs and charts to exaggerate or conceal differences.

● Failing to respect privacy or information security needs.

Failing to respect the privacy of others or failing to adequately protect information entrusted to your care can also be considered unethical (and is sometimes illegal). The widespread adoption of social media has increased the attention given to the issue of transparency, which in this context refers to a sense of openness, of giving all participants in a conversation access to the information they need to accurately process the messages they are receiving.

A key aspect of transparency is knowing who is behind the messages one receives. Consider the promotional event that Netflix staged in Toronto to announce the launch of its streaming video service in Canada. The outdoor news conference seemed to attract dozens of curious people who were excited about the availability of Netflix. However, many of these people who "spontaneously" showed up were actually paid actors with instructions to "look really excited, particularly if asked by media to do any interviews about the prospect of Netflix in Canada." The company apologized when the stunt was exposed.

A major issue in business communication transparency is stealth marketing, which involves attempting to promote products and services to customers who don't know they're being marketed to. The controversial practice of stealth marketing involves marketing to people without their knowledge. A common stealth marketing technique is rewarding someone to promote products to his or her friends without telling them it's a form of advertising. Critics – including the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Word of Mouth Marketing Association – assert that such techniques are deceptive because they don't give their targets the opportunity to raise their instinctive defenses against the persuasive powers of marketing messages.

Aside from ethical concerns, trying to fool the public is simply bad for business. As LaSalle University communication professor Michael Smith puts it, "The public backlash can be long, deep, and damaging to a company's reputation."

Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses

Some ethical questions are easy to recognize and resolve, but others are not. Deciding what is ethical can be a considerable challenge in complex business situations. *An ethical dilemma* involves choosing among alternatives that aren't clear

cut. Perhaps two conflicting alternatives are both ethical and valid, or perhaps the alternatives lie somewhere in the gray area between clearly right and clearly wrong.

Every company has responsibilities to multiple groups of people inside and outside the firm, and those various groups often have competing interests. For instance, employees generally want higher wages and more benefits, but investors who have risked their money in the company want management to keep costs low so that profits are strong enough to drive up the stock price. Both sides have a valid ethical position.

In contrast, *an ethical lapse* is a clearly unethical choice. For example, homebuyers in an Orlando, Florida, housing development were sold houses without being told that the area was once a U.S. Army firing range and that live bombs and ammunition were still buried in multiple locations around the neighborhood. By depriving buyers of vital information, the seller engaged in unethical communication. With both internal and external communication efforts, the pressure to produce results or justify decisions can make unethical communication a tempting choice.

Key takeaways. The main goals of ethical communicators are abiding by the Law, telling the truth, labeling opinions, communicating clearly, using inclusive language, being objective, avoiding plagiarism, respecting privacy, etc. Any time you try to mislead your audience, the result is unethical communication. Transparency gives audience members access to all the information they need in order to process messages accurately. The controversial practice of stealth marketing involves marketing to people without their knowledge. An ethical dilemma is having to choose between alternatives that may all be ethical and valid. An ethical lapse is making a choice that you know to be unethical.

Discussion 2. Answer the following questions.
1. What are the key goals of ethical communication in business?
2. Why should business communicators use inclusive language?
3. What are the main rules of giving credit?
4. What examples of unethical communication can you enumerate?

5. What is stealth marketing? What does it involve as a major issue in business communication transparency?

Tools for Doing the Right Thing

It's easy to fall into ethical traps because of natural self-interests and the desire to succeed. In composing messages or engaging in other activities on the job, business communicators can't help being torn by conflicting loyalties. Do we tell the truth and risk our jobs? Do we show loyalty to friends even if it means bending the rules? Should we be tactful or totally honest? Is it our duty to make a profit or to be socially responsible? Acting ethically means doing the right thing given the circumstances. Each set of circumstances requires analyzing issues, evaluating choices, and acting responsibly. Resolving ethical issues is never easy, but the task can be made less difficult if you know how to identify key issues. The following questions may be helpful.

● Is the action you are considering legal? No matter who asks you to do it or how important you feel the result will be, avoid anything that is prohibited by law. Giving a kickback to a buyer for a large order is illegal, even if you suspect that others in your field do it and you know that without the kickback you will lose the sale.

● How would you see the problem if you were on the opposite side? Looking at all sides of an issue helps you gain perspective. Consider the issue of mandatory drug testing among employees. From management's viewpoint, such testing could stop drug abuse, improve job performance, and lower health insurance premiums. From the employees' viewpoint, mandatory testing reflects a lack of trust of employees and constitutes an invasion of privacy. By weighing both sides of the issue, you can arrive at a more equitable solution.

● What are alternate solutions? Consider all dimensions of other options. Would the alternative be more ethical? Under the circumstances, is the alternative feasible? Can an alternate solution be implemented with a minimum of disruption and with a good possibility of success? Let's say you wrote a report about testing a new product, but your boss changed the report to distort the findings. Should you go to the head of the company and reveal that the report is inaccurate? A more tactful alternative would

be to approach your boss and ask whether you misunderstood the report's findings or whether an error might have been made.

● Can you discuss the problem with someone whose advice you trust? Suppose you feel ethically bound to report accurate information to a client even though your manager has ordered you not to do so. Talking about your dilemma with a coworker or with a colleague in your field might give you helpful insights and lead to possible alternatives.

● How would you feel if your family, friends, employer, or coworkers learned of your action? If the thought of revealing your action publicly produces cold sweats, your choice is probably unwise. Losing the faith of your friends or the confidence of your customers is not worth whatever short-term gains might be realized. Perhaps the best advice in ethical matters is contained in the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. The ultimate solution to all ethics problems is treating others fairly and doing what is right to achieve what is good. In succeeding chapters you will find additional discussions of ethical questions as they relate to relevant topic.

Ensuring Legal Communication

In addition to ethical guidelines, business communication is also bound by a wide variety of laws and regulations to ensure accurate, complete messages, including the following areas:

● Promotional communication. Marketing specialists need to be aware of the many laws that govern truth and accuracy in advertising.

● Contracts. A contract is a legally binding promise between two parties, in which one party makes a specified offer and the other party accepts. Contracts are fundamental to virtually every aspect of business, from product sales to property rental to credit cards and loans to professional service agreements.

● Employment communication. A variety of local, state, and federal laws govern communication between employers and both potential and current employees.

For example, job descriptions must be written in a way that doesn't intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against women, minorities, or people with disabilities.

● Intellectual property. Intellectual property includes patents, copyrighted materials, trade secrets, and even Internet domain names. Bloggers in particular need to be careful about IP protection, given the carefree way that some post the work of others without offering proper credit.

● Financial reporting. Finance and accounting professionals who work for publicly traded companies (those that sell stock to the public) must adhere to stringent reporting laws. For instance, a number of corporations have recently been targets of both government investigations and shareholder lawsuits for offering misleading descriptions of financial results and revenue forecasts.

● Defamation. Negative comments about another party raise the possibility of defamation, the intentional communication of false statements that damage character or reputation. Written defamation is called libel; spoken defamation is called slander. Someone suing for defamation must prove (1) that the statement is false, (2) that the language is injurious to the person's reputation, and (3) that the statement has been published.

● Transparency requirements. Governments around the world are taking steps to help ensure that consumers and other parties know who is behind the information they receive, particularly from online sources. The European Union, for instance, outlaws a number of online marketing tactics, including "flogs," short for "fake blogs," in which an employee or a paid agent posing as an independent consumer posts positive stories about a company's products. In the United States, the FTC recently adopted a requirement that product-review bloggers disclose any relationship – such as receiving payments or free goods – they have with the companies whose products they discuss in their blogs.

If you have any doubts about the legality of a message you intend to distribute, ask for advice from your company's legal department. A small dose of caution can prevent huge legal headaches and protect your company's reputation in the marketplace.

Key takeaways. Responsible employers establish clear ethical guidelines for their employees to follow. Business communication is governed by a wide variety of laws designed to ensure accurate, complete messages.

Define the following terms:

Ethics, ethical communication, unethical communication, codes of ethics, moral dilemmas, ethical dilemmas, ethical lapse, fraud, copyright, Plain English, inclusive language, plagiarism, transparency, stealth marketing, defamation, libel, slander, intellectual property, promotional communication, employment communication.

3. Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

- "Committing to ethical and legal communication in business".

- "Common unethical business practices".

- "Effective ethics training for employees".

Part 2
BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

LEAD-IN

1. What is etiquette?

2. What is the difference between business ethics and etiquette?

3. What are the key aspects of business etiquette?

4. Why do you think people are more likely to engage in rude behaviors during online communication than during in-person communication?

5. Prove that business etiquette is vitally significant to your career.

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

appropriate / inappropriate	acronym-filled messages
behavior	to adjust one's style
courtesy	to be aware of
grooming	contentious point

habits	to ease into a conversation
to haunt	to be an embarrassment to the company
indiscretion	to get on your soapbox
instantaneous	to be a huge drain on morale
to interrupt	to invade someone's privacy
insult	to leave positive impressions
level-headed	morale-draining disruption
obnoxious	personal appearance
to offend	personal demeanor
profanity	shabby treatment
respectful / disrespectful	social setting
rude	to stir up emotions
upbeat and bubbly	to treat with respect
urgent	unassailable truths

Introductory text: **Developing Your Business Etiquette**
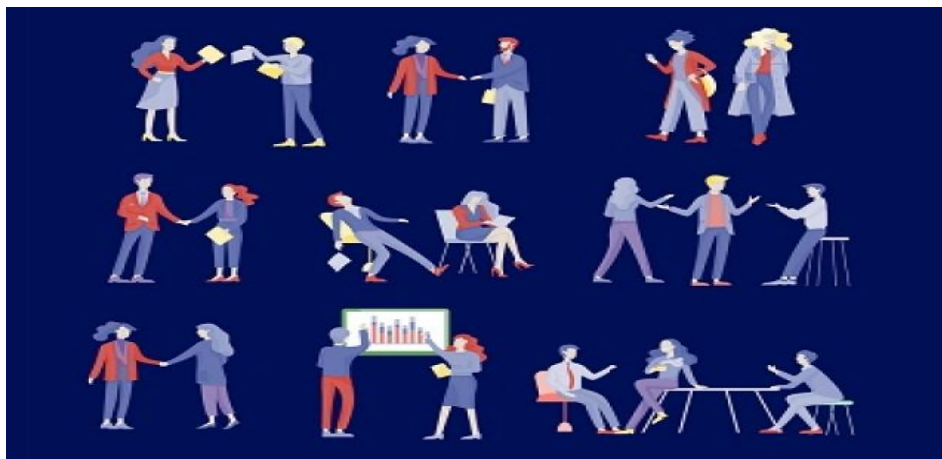
Etiquette is an essential element of every aspect of business communication. Etiquette is now considered an essential business skill. Nobody wants to work with someone who is rude to colleagues or an embarrassment to the company. Moreover, shabby treatment of others in the workplace can be a huge drain on morale and

productivity. Poor etiquette can drive away customers, investors, and other critical audiences – and it can limit your career potential.

Long lists of etiquette rules can be difficult to remember, but you can get by in most every situation by being aware of your effect on others, treating everyone with respect, and keeping in mind that the impressions you leave behind can have a lasting effect on you and your company – so make sure to leave positive impressions wherever you go.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE IN THE WORKPLACE

Workplace etiquette includes a variety of behaviors, habits, and aspects of nonverbal communication. Although it isn't always thought of as an element of etiquette, your personal appearance in the workplace sends a strong signal to managers, colleagues, and customers. Pay attention to the style of dress where you work and adjust your style to match. Expectations for specific jobs, companies, and industries can vary widely. The financial industries tend to be more formal than high technology, for instance, and sales and executive positions usually involve more formal expectations than positions in engineering or manufacturing. Observe others, and don't be afraid to ask for advice. If you're not sure, dress modestly and simply – earn a reputation for what you can do, not for what you can wear.

Grooming is as important as attire. Pay close attention to cleanliness and avoid using products with powerful scents, such as perfumed soaps, colognes, shampoos, and after-shave lotions (many people are bothered by these products, and some are allergic to them). Shampoo your hair frequently, keep your hands and nails neatly manicured, use mouthwash and deodorant, and make regular trips to a barber or hair stylist.

If you work in an office setting, you'll spend as much time with your officemates as you do with family and friends. Personal demeanor is therefore a vital element of workplace harmony. No one expects (or wants) you to be artificially upbeat and bubbly every second of the day, but a single negative personality can make an entire office miserable. Rude behavior is more than an etiquette issue, too; it can have serious financial costs through lower productivity and lost business opportunities. Every

person in the company has a responsibility to contribute to a positive, energetic work environment.

Given the telephone's central role in business communication, phone skills are essential in most professions. Because phone calls lack the visual richness of face-to-face conversations, you have to rely on your attitude and tone of voice to convey confidence and professionalism.

Mobile phones are a contentious point of etiquette in today's workplace. They can boost productivity if used mindfully, but they can be a productivity – and morale-draining disruption when used carelessly. Be aware that attitudes about mobile phones vary widely, and don't be surprised if you encounter policies restricting their use in offices or meeting rooms.

Nearly half of U.S. companies already have such policies. Like every other aspect of communication, your phone habits say a lot about how much respect you have for the people around you. Selecting obnoxious ring tones, talking loudly in open offices or public places, using your phone right next to someone else, making excessive or unnecessary personal calls during work hours, invading someone's privacy by using your camera phone without permission, taking or making calls in restrooms and other inappropriate places, texting while someone is talking to you, allowing incoming calls to interrupt meetings or discussions – all are disrespectful choices that will reflect negatively on you.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE IN SOCIAL SETTINGS

From business lunches to industry conferences, you may represent your company when you're out in public. Make sure your appearance and actions are appropriate to the situation. Get to know the customs of the culture when you meet new people.

For example, in North America, a firm handshake is expected when two people meet, whereas a respectful bow of the head is more appropriate in Japan. If you are expected to shake hands, be aware that the passive "dead fish" handshake creates an extremely negative impression. If you are physically able, always stand when shaking someone's hand. When introducing yourself, include a brief description of your role in the company. When introducing two other people, speak their first and last names

clearly and then try to offer some information (perhaps a shared professional interest) to help the two people ease into a conversation.

Generally speaking, the lower-ranking person is introduced to the senior-ranking person, without regard to gender.

Business is often conducted over meals, and knowing the basics of dining etiquette will make you more effective in these situations.

● Start by choosing foods that are easy to eat.

● Avoid alcoholic beverages in most instances, but if drinking one is appropriate, save it for the end of the meal.

● Leave business documents under your chair until entrée plates have been removed; the business aspect of the meal doesn't usually begin until then.

● Just as in the office, when you use your mobile phone around other people in public, you send the message that people around you aren't as important as your call and that you don't respect your caller's privacy.

● If it's not a matter of life and death, or at least an urgent request from your boss or a customer, wait until you're back in the office.

● Finally, always remember that business meals are a forum for business, period.

● Don't get on your soapbox about politics, religion, or any other topic that's likely to stir up emotions.

● Don't complain about work, don't ask deeply personal questions, avoid profanity, and be careful with humor – a joke that entertains some people could easily offend others.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE ONLINE

Electronic media seem to be a breeding ground for poor etiquette. Learn the basics of professional online behavior to avoid mistakes that could hurt your company or your career.

Here are some guidelines to follow whenever you are representing your company while using electronic media:

● Avoid personal attacks. The anonymous and instantaneous nature of online communication can cause even level-headed people to strike out in blog postings, social networks, and other media.

● Stay focused on the original topic. If you want to change the subject of an email exchange, a forum discussion, or a blog comment thread, start a new message.

● Don't present opinions as facts, and support facts with evidence. This guideline applies to all communication, of course, but online venues in particular seem to tempt people into presenting their beliefs and opinions as unassailable truths.

● Follow basic expectations of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Sending careless, acronym-filled messages that look like you're texting your high school buddies makes you look like an amateur.

● Use virus protection and keep it up-to-date. Sending or posting a file that contains a computer virus is rude.

● Ask if this is a good time for an IM chat. Don't assume that just because a person is showing as "available" on your IM system that he or she wants to chat with you right this instant.

● Watch your language and keep your emotions under control. A moment of indiscretion could haunt you forever.

● Avoid multitasking while using IM and other tools. You might think you're saving time by doing a dozen things at once, but you're probably making the other person wait while you bounce back and forth between IM and your other tasks.

● Never assume privacy. Assume that anything you type will be stored forever, could be forwarded to other people, and might be read by your boss or the company's security staff.

● Don't use "reply all" in emails unless everyone can benefit from your reply. If one or more recipients of an email message don't need the information in your reply, remove their addresses before you send.

● Don't waste others' time with sloppy, confusing, or incomplete messages. Doing so is disrespectful.

● Respect boundaries of time and virtual space. For instance, don't start using an employee's personal Facebook page for business messages unless you've discussed it beforehand, and don't assume people are available to discuss work matters around the clock, even if you do find them online in the middle of the night.

Key takeaways. Etiquette is an essential element of every aspect of business communication. Personal appearance can have a considerable impact on your success in business. Given the telephone's central role in business communication, phone skills are essential in most professions. Like every other aspect of communication, your phone habits say a lot about how much respect you have for the people around you.

You represent your company when you're out in public, so etiquette continues to be important. When you represent your company online, you must adhere to a high standard of etiquette and respect for others. Respect personal and professional boundaries when using Facebook and other social networking tools.

Define the following terms:

Etiquette, etiquette rules, behavior, "dead fish" handshake, grooming, morale, privacy, profanity, phone skills, sloppy messages, virtual space, workplace etiquette.

DISCUSSION

1.   Explain the importance of business etiquette, and identify three key areas in which good etiquette is essential.

1) Which of the following is the best characterization of etiquette in today's business environment?

a) Business etiquette is impossible to generalize because every company has its own culture; you have to make it up as you go along.

b) With ferocious international competition and constant financial pressure, etiquette is an old-fashioned luxury that businesses simply can't afford today.

c) Ethical businesspeople don't need to worry directly about etiquette because ethical behavior automatically leads to good etiquette.

d) Etiquette plays an important part in the process of forming and maintaining successful business relationships.

2. If you forgot to shut off your mobile phone before stepping into a business meeting and you receive a call during the meeting, the most appropriate thing to do is to:

a) Lower your voice to protect the privacy of your phone conversation.

b) Answer the phone and then quickly hang it up to minimize the disruption to the meeting.

c) Excuse yourself from the meeting and find a quiet place to talk.

d) Continue to participate in the meeting while taking the call; this shows everyone that you're an effective multitasker.

3. Your company has established a designated "quiet time" from 1:00 to 3:00 every afternoon, during which office phones, IM, and email are disabled so that people can concentrate on planning, researching, writing, and other intensive tasks without being interrupted. However, a number of people continue to flout the guidelines by leaving their mobile phones on, saying their families and friends need to able to reach them. With all the various ringtones going off at random, the office is just as noisy as it was before. What is the best response?

a) Agree to reactivate the office phone system if everyone will shut off their mobile phones, but have all incoming calls routed through a receptionist who will take messages for all routine calls and deliver a note if an employee truly is needed in an emergency.

b) Give up on quiet time; with so many electronic gadgets in the workplace today, you'll never achieve peace and quiet.

c) Get tough on the off enders by confiscating mobile phones whenever they ring during quiet time.

d) Without telling anyone, simply install one of the available mobile phone jamming products that block incoming and outgoing mobile phone calls.

4. Constantly testing the limits of your company's dress and grooming standards sends a strong signal that you:

a) Don't understand or don't respect your company's culture.

b) Are a strong advocate for workers' rights?

c) Are a creative and independent thinker who is likely to generate lots of successful business ideas?

d) Represent the leading edge of a new generation of enlightened workers who will redefine the workplace according to contemporary standards.

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

1. *Etiquette in the Workplace, Participating in Meetings.* In group meetings, some of your colleagues have a habit of interrupting and arguing with the speaker, taking credit for ideas that aren't theirs, and shooting down ideas they don't agree with. You're the newest person in the group and not sure if this is accepted behavior in this company, but it concerns you both personally and professionally. Should you go with the flow and adopt their behavior or stick with your own communication style, even though you might get lost in the noise?

Writing. In a two-paragraph email message or post for your group blog, explain the pros and cons of both approaches.

2. *Telephone Skills.* Late on a Friday afternoon, you learn that the facilities department is going to move you – and your computer, your desk, and all your files – to another office first thing Monday morning. However, you have an important client meeting scheduled in your office for Monday afternoon, and you need to finalize some contract details on Monday morning. You simply can't lose access to your office at this point, and you're more than a little annoyed that your boss didn't ask you before approving the move. He has already left for the day, but you know he usually checks his voice mail over the weekend, so you decide to leave a message, asking him to cancel the move or at least call you at home as soon as possible. Plan your message (use an imaginary phone number as your contact number and make up any other details you need for the call). As directed by your instructor, submit either a written script of the message or a podcast recording of the actual message.

3. *Etiquette in the Workplace.* As the local manager of an international accounting firm, you place high priority on professional etiquette. Not only does it communicate respect to your clients, it also instills confidence in your firm by showing that you and your staff are aware of and able to meet the expectations of almost any audience. Earlier today, you took four recently hired college graduates to lunch with an important client. You've done this for years, and it's usually an upbeat experience for everyone, but today's lunch was a disaster. One of the new employees made not one, not two, but three calls on his mobile phone during lunch. Another interrupted the client several times and even got into a mild argument. The third employee kept making sarcastic jokes about politics, making everyone at the table uncomfortable. And the fourth showed up dressed like she was expecting to bale hay or work in coal mine, not have a business lunch in a posh restaurant. You've already called the client to apologize, but now you need to coach these employees on proper business etiquette.

Writing. Draft a brief memo to these employees, explaining why etiquette is so important to the company's success – and to their individual careers.

Unit 5. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

LEAD-IN

1. What is the purpose of communication?

2. How can culture influence the communication process?

3. Why do you think intercultural communication is important for business?

4. Name the reasons for studying intercultural communication.

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

hostility	intercultural communication
subgroups	social boundaries
stereotypes	cultural background
subcultures	culture laden
tolerance	intercultural barriers
multinational	to gear smb up
ethnocentrism	cultural relativism
workforce	corporate culture
perception	communication codes
validity	to base smth on
belief	to be incorporated into
turn-taking	biased perception
attitude	even-handed approach
back-channel	uncertainty avoidance
code-switching	to tend to favour
entrepreneurial	to bridge cultures

Part 1.

*Introductory text***: Understanding intercultural communication**

Why does a corporation like IBM have 420,000 employees representing 184 languages and 96 nationalities in markets worldwide? Today, businesses operate across borders and social and political boundaries. People are increasingly connected throughout the world through the internet, communication technologies and the ease

of airline travel. Competitive, sustainable businesses can continually open new markets and build their presences and brands with professionals who can interact successfully with anyone, anywhere.

Organizations from the largest Fortune 500 multinational corporations to the smallest entrepreneurial start-ups must be effective at transcending the differences of geography and culture. They must employ professionals who are trained in communicating across boundaries and working with people from different backgrounds.

What is Intercultural Communication in Business?

Intercultural communication is sharing information across boundaries, including geographic, cultural, social, ethnic, religious and educational backgrounds. Intercultural communication must occur among individuals within organizations, company representatives and external business partners and constituents.

This unit examines communication between different cultures – intercultural communication, also known as cross-cultural communication. This is complex for a number of reasons. First, we know how difficult it is to communicate across social boundaries because of factors which will be discussed, such as social stereotypes. Second, the concept of culture is itself complex. It is a socially sensitive subject as people, usually subconsciously, tend to approach it from the viewpoint of their own culture.

We start by looking at the general problems of communicating across social boundaries and then define and discuss some of the key concepts associated with cultural analysis. We follow this by showing how cultural factors affect cross-cultural communication, and explain management's responsibility in bridging cultures and some strategies they can use to overcome cross-cultural problems.

Communicating across social boundaries

Researchers who have adopted what is known as ***the social identity approach*** argue that most of the time people think, feel and act as members of some sort of group. In other words, we do not necessarily act towards another individual in terms of their unique personality characteristics; we consider (perhaps subconsciously) our own

group memberships and theirs and then we decide to act towards them in a particular way. From this point of view, many face-to-face meetings between individuals are really experienced as examples of what psychologists have called intergroup communication (communication *between* groups) rather than just communication between individuals.

How far this happens depends on how *relevant* the social identities are to the people in the situation. For example, if you are meeting a manager and you happen to be an elected staff representative, then you will be very conscious of those group memberships, even if the meeting is not about specific staff business. There are a number of important practical issues which follow from this perspective:

• Research on intergroup communication has shown that there may be predictable negative consequences unless the group members work very hard on their communication.

• If we are using 'group labels' to categorize the other people we meet, then we will probably also attach social stereotypes which may be misleading.

Research on intergroup communication

Much of this research has examined situations where two groups are in competition or in conflict. Typical processes include the following:

• Individual perceptions become biased and discriminatory. Group members tend to develop biased perceptions within each group. For example, they will exaggerate the value of their own efforts in comparison to those of the other group.

• Group processes change to 'gear themselves up' for conflict. For example, there will be more emphasis on conformity to group norms, and a more authoritarian leadership style is likely to emerge.

• Discriminatory and antagonistic behaviour will lead to escalation of conflict. The groups will actually discriminate against one another at every available opportunity. The developing climate of hostility has obvious implications for communication. All communication from the 'other side' will be treated with suspicion, and scrutinized for evidence of their 'real intent'. Unfortunately, these

processes can occur even when there is little direct advantage to either side from competing.

Stereotyping

A stereotype is a generalization about a group of people based upon their group membership:

'To stereotype is to assign identical characteristics to any person in a group, regardless of the actual variation among members of that group' (Aronson, 1999, p. 307). Early research suggested that 'stereotypical beliefs are rigid, unresponsive to reality, and generally resistant to change'. However, more recent studies have shown how the specific context influences whether or how far people make stereotyped judgements (Oakes *et al.*, 1999, p. 64).

We know that many stereotypes have been very stable over time, but that may reflect a stable social context rather than the stereotypes being 'fixed' cognitive structures. For example, Oakes *et al.* researched Australian students' perceptions of their own national stereotype. This remained much the same between 1992 and 1996, including characteristics such as being happy-go-lucky, pleasure-loving, sportsmanlike and talkative. There was major change in 1997: some characteristics disappeared (including being sportsmanlike); the stereotype became less positive and more complex; and there was much less agreement. These changes appeared to be linked to broader changes in Australian society, which had 'become more divided' as a result of political changes, with 'a sense of deteriorating intergroup relations' (Oakes *et al.*, 1999, p. 73).

The link to communication

Jandt (1998) suggests four ways in which stereotypes can damage communication:

• They can make us assume that a widely held belief is true when it is not. This can be important when stereotypes are continually reinforced by the media.

• If we accept a stereotype, then we may believe that every individual in that group conforms to the stereotype.

• Stereotypes can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you are labelling someone according to the stereotype, then you will behave towards that person according to that label. They may well respond in ways which react to the labelling, rather than their genuine character.

• We can interpret others' behaviour according to the stereotype, and ignore other possible interpretations of their behaviour.

When stereotypes are applied to cultures, they usually take the form of an overgeneralization about some characteristic of that group. For example, Italians are seen as emotional while the British are seen as unemotional. While it is true that certain behaviours have a greater value, and thus frequency, in some cultures than others, it is wrong to overgeneralize. While the British may value an unemotional 'stiff upper lip' attitude, it is dangerous to characterize all or most British people as unemotional. This is particularly so when one cultural group does not value the characteristic attributed to another. See example 5.1 of how this type of problem emerged in one multinational company. Stereotypes can be positive but still have some negative impact. For example, Jandt (1998) examined the stereotype of Asian American groups in the United States. He noted that 'Asian Americans of all groups are most often portrayed in the press as industrious and intelligent, enterprising and polite, with strong values, and successful in schools and business and in science and engineering'. Evidence reported in other media also supported this stereotype, such as the fact that Asian American students usually scored higher than white students on maths exams. However, this positive stereotype had some negative impact. Asian American students complained that teachers were too ready to advise them to pursue careers in maths and sciences. Teachers stereotyped them in this scientific and convergent thinking mould and did not explore or suggest possible careers in the creative arts or in management.

Example 5.1. THE NEED FOR INTERCULTURAL TRAINING

Kim and Paulk (1994) analyse the difficulties experienced between Japanese and American co-workers in an American subsidiary of a large Japanese multinational organization. The main issues were summarized under three categories: language and communication; work style/orientation; and management style/orientation. Apart from problems caused by the Japanese managers' difficulties

with the English language and the 'rapid' American speech, major language and communication difficulties included the following:

_ The Americans complained that the Japanese 'lacked verbal clarity' whereas the Japanese complained that the Americans 'lacked intuitive understanding'.

_ The Americans complained that the Japanese 'gave vague and unspecific instructions' whereas the Japanese complained that the Americans 'needed exact and detailed instructions'.

_ The Americans complained that the Japanese 'relied on written communication'.

All these difficulties represent different cultural perspectives and approaches to communication.

Both groups commented on their efforts and strategies to understand the other's perspective, although Kim and Paulk comment that the problems 'have not been addressed seriously by the company leadership', despite the considerable evidence that 'intercultural strain can be reduced through effective language and cultural instructions' (ibid., p. 140).

This type of research raises many questions for multinational organizations, including the following:

_ Are they aware of the effect of cultural differences?

_ Do they understand the experience of the cultural minority person?

_ Do they know enough about intercultural training?

Key takeaways. Intercultural communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between people whose cultural backgrounds could lead them to interpret verbal and nonverbal signs differently. Every attempt to send and receive messages is influenced by culture, so to communicate successfully, you need a basic grasp of the cultural differences you may encounter and how you should handle them.

Discussion 1.

1. What are the common stereotypes of the different cultural groups in the workforce in your region?

2. How do these stereotypes affect relations between members of different groups?

3. How are these stereotypes reinforced by local/national media?

Analysing Cultures: Basic Concepts

One of the problems we face in defining culture is that the various human sciences have differing views on culture. Also, in certain contexts it can be an emotionally

charged word, particularly when certain cultures are considered superior to others. Even if we try to choose a 'neutral' descriptive definition, different authors will emphasize different aspects.

Consider the following examples:

Culture is defined as a historically transmitted system of symbols, meaning and norms.

(Collier, 1997)

Culture is the 'system of knowledge' that is shared by a large group of people.

(Gudykunst, 1991, p. 44)

An ensemble of social experiences, thought structures, expectations, and practices

of action, which has the quality of a mental apparatus.

(Clyne, 1994, p. 3)

This brings in the idea of a '**community**', which can be a whole nation or a small group. There is also the idea of sub-groups within the larger community. These cultures-within-a-culture are often referred to as **subcultures**. Subcultures may have very different sources of identity. For example, in South Africa the two most important cultural determinants are language and ethnic identity. In other instances, religion, political affiliation and geographical location also play a part.

Whatever the textbook definition, the everyday reality is that organizations are becoming more multicultural in two senses: workforces are becoming more diverse, and organizations are more likely to communicate with customers and clients from different cultures. In addition, many companies operate internationally. They face the challenge of adapting to local cultures while still maintaining their international image.

Another intercultural complication is that even where we have common institutions or ideas, the perception of these by different communities may be different. For example, a country may have a common legal system but some communities may see this as a fair method of regulating affairs whereas others may see the system as discriminatory. A further complication is that the situation is not static. Factors such as urbanization are bringing about significant changes as people adapt to new ways of living. As culture is spread by communication, our communication is thus 'culture laden'. It is the cultural assumptions in our communication that raise difficulties when we communicate across cultures.

Cultural relativism (relativity)

The concept of cultural relativity derives mainly from the field of anthropology. In its extreme form it holds that cultures can be evaluated only in terms of their own values and institutions. From this perspective, we cannot even apply our own concepts of 'truth' and 'consistency' to other cultures. This suggests that the concepts used by people can be interpreted only in the context of their own way of life. But can we understand a culture only if we work from within that culture and accept its values, even if we see them as illogical and contradictory? This extreme view suggests that all cultural values are equally tenable. The weakness of this view is that we would then have to accept Nazism and apartheid as valid cultures and judge them by their own standards!

A less extreme view is that if we are to understand another culture, we need to compare it, but not judge it, with reference to some other culture, usually our own. It is important that we should not take our own culture as the standard by which other cultures are judged. We need to encourage tolerance, and be skeptical of any claims for universal objective standards. Thus, we can discuss whether the religious beliefs of 'culture A' are more or less consistent than those of 'culture B'. From a practical viewpoint, this less extreme form of cultural relativism has more to offer when considering intercultural communication.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the view that uncritically presupposes that one's own culture is the criterion against which all other cultures must be judged. It is almost always used in a negative sense to describe attitudes that refuse to recognize the validity of values that differ from their own. It is difficult to avoid some measure of ethnocentrism as many cultural values are considered to be universal values or truths.

Key takeaways: All cultures differ from one another in many aspects and it is rather important not to be judgmental. It is essential to compare different concepts and be tolerant for a successful intercultural communication.

ANALYSING AND COMPARING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

One way of examining cultural difference is to look for the fundamental characteristics of different communities, in terms of their norms, beliefs and attitudes.

Norms

A **norm** is a rule, standard or pattern for action. Unfortunately, the term can be used in two different ways, with very different interpretations:

1) to describe what is normal or usual behaviour in some community or culture;

2) to set out an ideal or standard to which, it is thought, behaviour ought to conform, or which some legislating authority lays down.

One of the main problems in cross-cultural communication is that people take norms in the sense of 1 above as norms in the sense of 2. For example, the Ten Commandments are essentially norms of the Judeo-Christian communities but are often spoken of as if they were universal norms (in sense 2). Cultural relativists argue that there are no universal norms but only cultural or community norms.

When we talk about ideals or standards, we can also think about these at different levels. For example, we can consider the traditional customs of a particular community (and how they come to be regarded as essential to its survival and welfare), or the moral attitudes of a community or social group, or the manners and customs of a community or social group. Examples of the first level are the Christian ideals of family and marriage, which have been incorporated into the laws of most Christian countries. An example of the second level would be the moral attitude of the Catholic Church towards abortion. The third level covers more transient standards – for example, teenage youths placing a high value on 'being a regular gang member'.

One practical difficulty here is deciding what force these different norms have. Are we talking about norms which people should obey, or rules which people must obey? And what happens if you disobey them? For example, in UK society, respect for the aged could be considered a norm; but contravention is not punishable by law and is merely considered bad manners. But what counts as 'good manners' is also subject to social change.

Attitudes and beliefs

Your attitudes predispose you to respond in some preferential manner. Beliefs within attitudes are usually considered to have three components:

- a knowledge component, i.e. something that is true or false;

- an emotive component, i.e. something which under suitable conditions will arouse feelings;

- a behavioural component, i.e. something that predisposes you to act in a certain way.

Attitudes are likes and dislikes; they are cognitive states. They are expressed in statements such as 'I like John Smith' or 'I don't like modern art'. As attitudes are mental states, and not directly observable, we can determine someone's attitudes only from their own statements or from their behaviour.

As an example of how fundamental beliefs can have profound effects on cultural norms and behaviour, we can use Alan Goldman's analysis of the impact of *ninsengei* on communication in Japanese multinational organizations. Goldman defines *ninsengei* as a 'metaphor and symbol of a quality, style and construct for interaction permeating Japanese social and corporate cultures'. Based upon Confucian philosophy, it incorporates ideals of reciprocal caring and concern for in-group benefit which 'breeds conciliatory, win–win game plans for negotiating, delivering persuasive oral reports, or managing conflict' (Goldman, 1994, p. 49). It also incorporates respect for hierarchical status and a complex set of rules of etiquette which govern how relationships are expressed. Goldman shows how these fundamental values underpin behaviours which are very different from typical Western styles. For example, the American negotiator who bases his style on confrontation, assertiveness and direct communication is likely to find his Japanese counterpart using the completely opposite pattern of behaviour. The potential for misunderstanding and conflict is obvious.

See E*xamples 5.2* for more of important cultural differences.

Dimensions of culture

One of the most widely quoted studies of cultural differences suggests that culture varies along four main dimensions (Hofstede, 1994). In his 1997 revision of this book,

Hofstede added a fifth (long-term versus short-term orientation), but here we concentrate on the original four:

- individualism–collectivism;

- power distance;

- uncertainty avoidance;

- masculinity–femininity.

Individualism–collectivism

An individualist culture values individual effort and ability. A collectivist culture values the group over the individual. There is likely to be a strong emphasis on maintaining and achieving good group relationships. If there is a conflict between your individual feelings and the group needs, then you will be expected to meet the group requirements.

The emphasis in an individualist culture is on the individual to achieve and do their best. If you come from a collectivist culture then you may find it difficult to come to terms with the level of individual competitiveness and aggressiveness of more individualistic cultures. The United States is usually quoted as the typical example of a highly individualist culture and contrasted with more collectivist cultures such as Japan.

Example 5.2. DIFFERENT CULTURAL APPROACHES TO RHETORIC

Anderson (1997) compares Arab and American conceptions of 'effective' persuasion and concludes that they differ in three important respects:

_ they frame their arguments differently;

_ they use different organizing principles;

_ they use different types of justifications.

She analyses a specific 'debate' conducted through ads placed in the US press by the Mobil oil company and the Saudi foreign minister, and comments that 'While Mobil imposed a unitary perspective based on "objective facts", the Saudi ad concentrated on illustrating competing interpretations of reality' (p. 105). She describes the ads as 'mirror images' of each other in terms of their tactics and the mutual criticisms which followed. She concludes that cross-cultural understanding needs more than just understanding the words: 'It also requires an understanding of the different cultural rules for what constitutes "reasonable" political debate' (p. 106).

High- and low-context communication

Some authors suggest that the individualism–collectivism dimension is the most important value dimension by which to compare cultures. It can certainly have very powerful implications for communication. For example, consider the theory that the predominant form of communication in an individualistic culture is low-context communication, where 'the mass of information is invested in the explicit quote' (Hall, 1976, p. 70). In other words, in a low context message, you spell things out very clearly and directly – you say very directly and explicitly what you mean. It is no accident that the many advice books on effective communication from the United Kingdom and United States have very clear and direct titles, such as Say What You Mean, Get What You Want (Tingley, 1996) or How to Get Your Message Across (D. Lewis, 1996). In contrast, a high-context communication is one where most of the message is embedded in the situation and it is not made explicit in what is said. For example, Japanese business people find it very difficult to say 'no' directly because of their cultural norms. They will signal that they are unwilling to accept the offer or proposition in various subtle ways. The Western business people who are trying to 'close the deal' will become very frustrated if they are waiting for a clear verbal response, which could never come.

Power distance

The second dimension, power distance, is about how people use and respond to power differences. For example, if you are a manager, do you expect your staff simply to obey every instruction that you issue? How would you react if one of your staff challenged or disagreed with one of these instructions? Would you listen to what they have to say by treating them as an equal partner in a dialogue?

In a culture where there is high power distance, the more powerful people will be obeyed as a matter of course. They will not be argued with, especially in a public situation. Where there is low power distance, powerful people will be expected to defend their ideas. Ideas will be accepted if they are convincing, regardless of who produces them.

Uncertainty avoidance

Hofstede (1994, p. 113) defines uncertainty avoidance as 'the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations'. In a society with strong or high uncertainty avoidance, you are likely to find many rules and regulations which ensure that people 'know exactly what to do' in as many situations as possible. Where the rules do not seem to apply or where others make requests which are 'outside the rules', then members of such a culture can become very uncomfortable.

Masculinity–femininity

Men and women are expected to behave very differently in different cultures. However, this dimension is not just about sex roles. Cultures high on the masculinity index will typically value aggressive, ambitious and competitive behaviour. A low-masculinity culture will have friendly and compassionate behaviour where conflict is resolved by compromise and negotiation.

Classifying cultures by dimensions

Some examples of cultural differences using these dimensions are the following:

• English-speaking and northern European cultures tend to show low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance. Japanese culture has high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance

• German-speaking, Caribbean and Latin American cultures show high masculinity, with English-speaking cultures in the middle, and northern European cultures low on this dimension.

One important issue is the reliability of these classifications. They offer a snapshot of a culture at a particular time; the picture may change. For example, Jandt (1998) quotes recent research which suggests cultural change. A sample of Japanese students in 1995, using the original Hofstede questionnaires, scored much higher on individualism and lower on power distance than the original sample. This could be explained by a general change in Japanese culture *or* by the suggestion that Japanese college students are much more likely to value individualism and equality than Japanese society as a whole.

Work by Trompenaars (1994) also suggests that differences can be more complex. His research found that on some issues the Unites States and Germany differed strongly from Japan, while on others Germany and Japan differed from the United States. See an *Example 5.3.* for differences across managers.

Example 5.3. IS THE ORGANIZATION A SYSTEM OR A GROUP?

Should the company be seen 'as a system designed to perform functions and tasks in an efficient way' or 'as a group of people working together'? What is your response? And what impact do different answers to this question have on behaviour?

Managers certainly differ in their response. The percentage supporting the company as a system ranged from 25 per cent in Malaya and 36 per cent in Japan to 74 per cent in what was then Czechoslovakia and 75 per cent in Hong Kong (Trompenaars, 1994).

Key takeaway: National cultures differ in terms of fundamental dimensions which have implications for communication.

Discussion 2:

1. What are cultural assumptions? Are they important for successful cross-cultural communication? How?

2. How do norms, attitudes and beliefs influence intercultural communication? Give your own examples.

3. What dimensions of cultures can you name? Name examples of cultural differences using these dimensions.

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

"Characterize your national culture in terms of dimensions."

"What stereotypes and culture differences can you single out in your culture? How do they effect intercultural communication?"

Part 2

DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL BACKGROUND: EFFECTS ON COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Consider an organization with business practice based on the European–American pattern. It incorporates the norms and values of Western industrial civilization. If this

organization is employing workers from different cultural backgrounds, what does the organization assume about their perceptions? Does it assume that once people move into the workplace they will readily understand, believe and accept the dominant norms and values?

This section focuses upon communication codes, but it is worth emphasizing that there are many aspects of culture which affect business and which may not be understood and accepted by the entire workforce. These include:

- history;

- experience with and attitudes towards institutions;

- traditions and customs;

- experience with and attitudes towards technology and the workplace;

- arts and religion;

- patterns of recreation and use of time.

Communication codes

In intercultural communication, the different codes used will be a major factor in the success or failure of that communication.

Language

We can highlight some of the main issues by looking at how the English language is used. 'For better or worse, English has become the most global of languages, the lingua franca of business, science, education, politics and pop music' (Bryson, 1990, p. 2). This growth is likely to continue, as it is reinforced by technological change such as the World Wide Web. English has been adopted by many non-English organizations as their international language. However, we must not forget the linguistic diversity in many cultures. For example, South Africa is linguistically complex as it has eleven official languages and four major indigenous black languages. In addition, there are minor languages and dialects. There are also substantial minorities who use other African, European and Asiatic languages such as Portuguese and Hindi. The language situation is in a state of flux because of changes that have taken place since the 1994 constitution came into effect.

Because language is both the means of communication and the carrier of culture, there can be a fear that adopting English as a common language of communication will lead to the so-called 'hegemony of English'. This is not just a local attitude: it must be considered in the formulation of both national and business language policies.

There are general points which arise out of the general acceptance of English as a global language of communication:

•If English is the common language of communication, then it ceases to be the sole property of England and/or the United States. The 'Englishes' of the countries that have adopted English must be considered equally valid and acceptable dialects.

• Many people are happy to use English as a common language of communication but are not interested in it as a carrier of English culture.

The English language as the language of business

If English has become the leading international language for business, then which variety of English has become dominant? Are we actually talking about American English or are there a number of variants? We can point to countries where English has a very different status:

• as the dominant language for all purposes, as in United States, Australia, New Zealand, etc.;

• as one of many languages but with some official status, as in India, Singapore, Malaysia or Nigeria;

• as the typical language used for international communication, as in Japan, Korea or Taiwan.

We could draw finer distinctions to emphasize the complexity: Tom McArthur (1998) concludes that World English is used in '113 distinct territories' and he suggests eight categories of use. Global English or World English is a more or less standard English which is used for science, technology and business.

But there are significant differences in the way that English is used in these different contexts which have implications for communication. Bloch and Starks (1999) suggest the following differences and examples.

Differences in punctuation

Once you recognize these differences, then they are not a major barrier to understanding.

Code-switching

People can switch languages in systematic ways to reflect what they want to talk about. For example, in the Philippines, professional people often mix English and Tagalog in the same conversation.

Different norms for turn-taking

Turn-taking is the way conversation moves from one person to another. For example, I can pause as a way of inviting you to speak or I can ask you a question or use a gesture to offer you the turn. There are cultural differences in how this is done. For example, there are very different norms for interruptions. Japanese speakers use interruptions more to show agreement than disagreement, whereas British speakers will interrupt for both. If people bring their native norms to a cross-cultural conversation in English, there is the strong possibility of misunderstanding.

Different norms for format

There are also differences in written communication, such as the different format to Japanese business letters where date, sender and receiver are at the bottom of the page.

Grammatical differences

Grammatical differences may create both misunderstanding and possible tension if the speaker or writer does not use the expected word or phrase. For example, it is polite in Indian English to say 'we hope that you could join us' whereas a native speaker would say 'can'.

Style differences

The 'most problematic of the differences' (Bloch and Starks, 1989, p. 84) are those where the speaker or writer fails to recognize the contextual rules of the situation and uses an inappropriate tone or content. This often reflects different politeness strategies used in different cultures. For example, Asian job applicants often give an impression to native English selectors of being too 'casual' or 'detached' and therefore not very interested or committed, simply by the way they use English to express their

norms of politeness. We can see from this that second-language users often have special communicative problems.

In a spoken language, much information can be conveyed by tone, which can often modify or even negate the meaning of the words. For example, it is possible to say 'You've had it' in such a way that it means 'You have not had it and are not likely to get it.' This meaning by intonation causes special problems for people who are not first-language users of a language. Business communication relies heavily on a common language between senders and receivers, so it is particularly important in structuring messages for the sender to be aware of the language experience and competence of the receiver(s).

Example 5.4 THE GENDER ISSUE IN ENGLISH: AN ANSWER FROM ANOTHER CULTURE?

In times of particular sensitivity to sexist language, English suffers from a lack of a personal pronoun to cover both male and female. This leads to clumsy constructions such as 'he or she' and 's/he'. In several black South African languages there is no such problem as the pronoun yena covers both male and female cases. This does, however, lead to interference problems with their mother tongue, so native black speakers are likely to use English constructions like 'my sister has stayed at home, he is very sick'. Perhaps there is a case for importing yena into the English language.

Dialect and accent

The variations in dialect and accent are obviously important in cross-cultural meetings. For example, in South Africa, among first-language English speakers there is comparatively little variation. The two main groups that have affected the English of native English speakers were the 1820 settlers (Eastern Cape) and the Natal settlers.

While there are dialect differences, the main differences are in accent. Thus, the South African English as used by native English speakers may be considered as a single dialect which is not all that different from Standard (British) English. With non-native speakers a number of different dialects have been identified, including a number of varieties of Township English. As in Britain, most people still consider some dialects 'better' than others. Extreme dialects, particularly when they are coupled with very strong accents, are regarded as inferior for business purposes.

As far as accent is concerned, in South Africa the main distinction tends to be between English first-language speakers and English second-language speakers. Thus, people are described as 'speaking with an Afrikaans [or Indian, etc.] accent'. Again, the main cross-cultural problem is that certain accents are more highly regarded than others.

Language functions

We have already suggested that people use their first language for a wide variety of functions: to express emotions, to give instructions, to exchange small talk at a social occasion, etc. Each of these functions requires a different approach with different conventions.

The linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein spoke of different 'language games'. That is, each function is a separate 'language game' with its own rules, strategies, conventions and ideas as to what is considered the correct thing to do. This can cause problems for people learning a second language. Unless they live fully in the society of the target language group, they may have difficulty in adapting to all the language functions. For example, a student whose second language is English may understand the university lectures easily but not be able to join in the small talk at the student canteen.

Written and spoken language differences

As well as differences in the spoken language and non-verbal codes, we can also expect differences in written documents which reflect cultural values. Clyne (1994, pp. 160ff.) reports a series of studies which highlight cultural differences. For example, he compared the essays of secondary school children in German and Australian schools and found very clear differences in teachers' expectations, which they used as a basis for awarding high or low marks. The English tutors placed much greater emphasis on strict relevance to the topic and a clear linear structure. The German writers were much more likely to digress from the main topic, and to give unequal emphasis to different parts of the discussion. In contrast, the native English writers were much more likely to define the key terms right at the beginning of the essay, to give equal attention to different topics in the essay, and to use more 'signposts' to indicate how the argument

was progressing. He suggests that these differences in style reflect different cultural approaches to academic argument and debate.

Second-language users often use the written form as a model for the spoken form or vice versa. The two versions have different conventions and often differ in level of formality. Thus, a lecturer will often use a personal, informal approach to liven up lectures. A student who takes down his or her words verbatim may be criticized for using the lecturer's style in a written assignment.

Phonological aspects

A major problem for second-language speakers of English is the phonetic differences between the first and second language. An instance of this is the difference in vowel structures. For example, South African English has about twenty-one vowel sounds while a typical South African black language has about five. Thus, black South Africans speaking English have difficulties in both pronouncing and recognizing the different vowel sounds. An example would be interpreting 'bed' as 'bad' because of first-dialect interference.

Paralinguistics

Different cultures use different patterns of what linguists call 'back-channeling'. When you back-channel you show the speaker that you are listening and you encourage them to continue speaking. Examples of phrases used are 'oh', 'right', 'I know', 'really'. European and Latin American women tend to use 'mm': South-East Asian women tend to use 'oh' or 'ah'. It has been suggested that these are two very different ways of expressing politeness.

Key takeaways: We use a variety of codes to communicate, including verbal and non-verbal codes. Social rules and expectations are associated with these codes, and they influence how the codes are interpreted (e.g. perceptions of accent). Our communication will reflect our attitudes and feelings and we need to make sure that we do not send out ambiguous or misleading signals.

HOW INTERCULTURAL BARRIERS CAN BE OVERCOME

To provide a complete framework for analysing and understanding intercultural communication, Michael Clyne (1994) suggests that we need:

- general, global description of each culture in terms of its rules for communication. In detail, this would include the rules which govern how writing is organized in business, which communication media are used in which situations, and the rules for linguistic creativity – that is, how you express humour and irony in that culture;

- general description of the values which influence how people interact in that culture;

- full description of how that culture manages turn-taking in a conversation;

- full description of how the different cultures involved deal with the same action.

Although we now have a lot of useful research information on some of these issues, we are a long way from achieving this full analysis of intercultural communication. The most practical way forward is for organizations to take account of the existing research and adopt a systematic problem-solving approach. We suggest that solutions to the problems lie in five main areas:

- awareness of the problem;

- realistic evaluation of the problem;

- developing positive and constructive attitudes;

- developing a corporate culture;

- managing cultural diversity in an organization.

From an individual perspective, Stella Ting-Toomey (1999) advocates that we become 'mindful' communicators, paying particular attention to the meaning that people from different cultures will attach to behaviour in particular contexts.

Making people aware of the problem

We need to make people aware of the concept of cultural relativism and of the dangers of ethnocentrisms. Once people realize that other cultures may have different value systems, there is a sound basis for communication. Discussion of these

differences will also lead to a greater understanding of differing attitudes. Initially, it is usually better to discuss these matters in small groups rather than in large meetings.

Taking a realistic approach to the problem

Each organization will have its own set of problems, and attempts based on trying to accommodate all cultural differences are as likely to fail as those based on ethnocentrisms. Attempts to accommodate all cultural aspects within an organization could be impractical.

In addition, too great an emphasis on the need to recognize and accommodate cultural differences tends to emphasize human differences rather than the common needs and aspirations of people within the work situation. Management should aim for an even-handed and fair approach which leads to the developing of constructive attitudes and a shared corporate culture.

Once the various groups in an organization have identified the differences that cause difficulties in communication, they are in a position to identify the problems within the organization. Thus, the organization would come to appreciate that they can provide a solution that will function in their own work environment. They can develop a corporate culture that all employees can accept and identify with.

Example 5.5 *WHEN TALK IS DIFFERENT*

Carbaugh (1997) suggests that the cultural emphasis in Finland on the 'importance' of 'proper speech' in public is governed by implicit rules which are contrary to American patterns. As a result, Americans are seen as 'superficial'. For example, the American use of superlatives ('fabulous', 'magnificent', etc.) is 'troubling to some Finnish ears' (p. 223).

Friday (1997) contrasts the negotiating styles of American and German managers within the same multinational organization. Although both favoured direct confrontation and assertiveness, the Americans were reluctant to launch direct personal attacks on other individuals, a tactic which was an accepted practice for the German managers. McDaniel and Samovar (1997) compare the different cultural backgrounds of Mexican, American and Japanese employees in industries along the US/Mexican border. Numerous cultural differences led to different behaviours: they observed divergent attitudes to status and formality, differences in non-verbal communication, and differences in negotiating styles. For example, the Mexicans and the Japanese adopted a similar indirect approach

to negotiations, whereas the Mexicans and Americans used much 'closer' non-verbal communication than the Japanese.

In all these examples, the real problem is that the cultural differences may remain unrecognized and stereotypes therefore unresolved.

Developing an appropriate corporate culture

Many well-meaning attempts to develop an 'inclusive' corporate culture have foundered because management has attempted to formulate a corporate culture without consultation with the constituent groups. With the best will in the world, management may not be able to avoid some ethnocentrism if they do not interact with staff from different cultures. It is often those things that are taken for granted in a culture that cause problems in cross-cultural communication.

Improving intercultural communication

Improving intercultural communication is a management responsibility which extends over a range of activities listed below. These are just some of the areas in a business which may have cultural assumptions built into them, including:

- company policy and working conditions;

- training;

- industrial relations and the work of the personnel or human resources department;

- the house journal and other publications;

- customer relations.

The organization must set up effective consultation procedures. Albert Koopman suggests that managers should 'get out of our ivory towers, "value trade" with our workforce and change our perceptions' (Koopman *et al.*, 1987, p.9). Thus, the comments below cannot be a quick-fix solution to intercultural communication, but do identify problem areas and provide an agenda for consultation. Each organization must identify its own problems and set its own agenda.

Company policy

As mentioned previously, management should enter the process of improving cross-cultural communications with as few preconceptions as possible. The company

must be committed to improving intercultural relationships through genuine consultation and negotiation. The ultimate aim is to build a corporate culture to which all employees can subscribe.

Training

Training programmes often have a built-in cultural bias. Thus it is necessary to see that training programmes are based on the real entry standards of participants rather than on any preconceived ideas. For example, the following problems were noted with many training initiatives adopted by South African organizations:

- Training simply 'adapted' overseas programmes. These would tend to favour white South Africans, with their closer association with Western norms.

- Training made unjustified assumptions about the language competence of the people taking the course.

- Training made unjustified assumptions about the technological experience of the people taking the course.

Industrial and staff relations

Industrial relations policies can have very different fundamental principles. Western models are usually based on the work culture of European and US industry, reflecting the hierarchy of supervision with a gradation of status and privilege for each level. Some organizations have as many as thirteen levels in the hierarchy. By contrast, the Japanese industry goes more for a team approach, with fewer levels in the hierarchy. Thus, in the field of industrial relations there is a need to adapt the systems to the corporate culture of the organization.

Key takeaways: Problems in intercultural communication can be overcome if we know enough about the underlying factors. Improving intercultural communication is a management responsibility which needs careful and genuine attention.

Discussion 3:

1. What are communication codes?

2. What aspects of culture affect business communication?

3. What should management do to improve intercultural communication in the workplace?

4. How can intercultural barriers be overcome?

Writing

    Write an essay on one of the topics:

    "The English language as the language of business"

    "Cultural background effects communication in the workplace"

UNIT 6. USING TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

LEAD-IN

1. What informational technologies do you know?

2. What technological tools can you name?

3. Why is modern technology important for business communication?

KEY TERMS AND PHRASES TO KNOW

milestone	medium-scale companies
accuracy	to participate in the fierce competition
subsequent	to communicate instantly
broadcast	to carry on a business relationship
software	a digital means of communicating
hardware	to raise revenues
intranet	wide access
to converge	person-to-person communication
emergence	managerial functions
to eradicate	perform the functions
retrieval	integrated operating system
to envisage	the labour cost
to scatter	with reference to
utility	cohesive system
to proofread	efficiency level of employees
to undergo	upper and lower-case letters
disbursement	the level of productivity

*Introductory text***: TECHNOLOGY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

Looking back on the history of communication, we suggest five major milestones:

- the invention of writing – this enabled people both to record events and to send messages;

- written media for the mass audience – the development of printing in the fifteenth century enabled mass production of books and other documents. This brought many fundamental social changes, including the spread of literacy and education and the development of newspapers;

- instantaneous person-to-person communication by electrical means – the development of the electrical telegraph enabled people to communicate instantly at a distance thanks to telegraph operators using the Morse code. This paved the way for the subsequent invention of the telephone;

- instantaneous mass media – the development of the radio, and later television, meant that groups and individuals could broadcast to a mass audience simultaneously;

- communication with multiple and simultaneous senders and receivers, as enabled by computer developments. People now communicate with computers, computers communicate with people, and computers communicate with computers.

Technology has changed business in many ways, but its effect on communication is arguably the most significant. The use of technology in daily business operations is constantly evolving, and one such example is the use of technology in business communication. Being in touch is very important to businesses, that is why it is no wonder why a lot of resources is spent in improving the communication procedures of various businesses. The revolution of the Internet has allowed businesses to have more options as far as business communication was concerned. It made the technologies of software, hardware, and network converge into one cohesive and solid system, which made the optimization of various business procedures faster. Indeed, the employees and the organizations as a whole greatly benefit from the use of technology in business. With a feasible business plan, organizations can save a lot of money and raise the level of productivity of the staff if the use of technology were well-planned and executed. Even medium-scale companies now have a chance to participate in the fierce competition among larger businesses. This is just one proof that technology in business communication is capable of increasing worker productivity. If you come to think about, the advantages do not need an employee to undergo a radical adjustment. On the contrary, tasks are made simpler and more convenient for the user.

Communication is Faster

Whether you need to speak with an employee who is traveling in another state or country or you need to communicate with your supplier half way around the world, technology allows you to do so instantaneously. In fact, thanks to email and text

messages, you can now send messages to people in other time zones before you forget without worrying that you will wake them up. In fact, the Internet has allowed business people to communicate easily regardless of time zone and language issues.

Expanded Communication Opportunities

Technology allows individuals to communicate and carry on a business relationship without ever meeting face to face, so people in all parts of the world now have the chance to interact with a company in a rural part of India. For example, technology allowed for the emergence of the virtual assistant, a worker who completes tasks for her client online without having ever met him, in the 20th century.

Cost-Cutting Procedures

In addition to migrating to a digital means of communicating, a business can save a lot with technological advances in business communication. Business software products that combine voice and data no longer have the need for multiple lines that can add a bulky amount to communication expenses. In addition, minimal technical support is needed since most of the installation, operations, and maintenance procedures can be done with little or no supervision at all.

Network Convenience

The use of modern technology in business communication eradicates the complexity that is involved in monitoring network traffic. This is because all the communication data travels at the same stream. Therefore, there is only one network that needs to be monitored, and this lessens the work of network administrators, giving them more time to work on other tasks. The benefits of technology in business communication are almost immeasurable, since its advantages are long term and all-encompassing. Businesses can use this to their advantage to increase productivity, to raise revenues, to build better relationships with customers, and to survive longer in the business arena.

Key takeaway: The development of different technological tools has greatly contributed to business communication and made it easier and more successful.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

In this age of communication, information and wide access to it is considered as wealth. One of the keys to such a source lies in the application of information retrieval techniques which have contributed a lot for the emergence of new communication technology.

The use of new communication technology can tackle some of the basic problem, namely, accuracy, cost, speed, quality, quantity in the light of wide corporate business operations. So, the search for alternative methods has become imperative in the modern complex business organization, where communication has to go to vast geographical territory, both inside and outside the country. Over the traditional media like radio, television, computer, audio and video cassettes, video disk, telephones and many mechanical devices have been successfully used as a means of communication in many organizations. They are also helpful in managerial functions like planning, control, direction, motivation etc.

Business world must adopt new technologies for the cause of communication to serve the community as social responsibility or, it will be difficult to survive in the competitive scenario.

Communication network

The word '**Network**' means anything in the form of the Net which may have many lines crossing each other. A network in connection with the computer environment means '**link**' between a number of computers within the organization and outside. Computer network is a series of interconnected points or channels communicating with each other. Interconnections of a number of computer and/or peripheral devices at distributed locations that transmit information necessarily to perform the functions of the network are potential business standards.

The interconnection is the sum total of various channels and is known as the computer communication network. Thus, a well knitted computer network envisages multi-channels. So, it represents an integrated operating system. A modern complex organization may have many disseminating centers interconnected by various centers and reflects a potential network.

Features of networking

1. It helps to establish and maintain external communication with outside organization.

2. Redefines the role of management and transforms the manager's role altogether.

3. Employees can interact with the other co-workers of any department.

4. The ultimate objective of developing networking in organization is achieved by making employees more productive.

5. The business information is always online, it is real time and constantly improving the quality of data.

6. It connects more computers or terminals and makes communication possible between the group of networks and individual networks.

7. The networking system permits the distribution of information timely, quickly, efficiently and particularly in the case of multi-national corporations where global work-force operated in several countries.

Advantages of networking

1. Data transfer between computers is easy and convenient.

2. Easy and quick access, immediate availability of information which helps in increased production.

3. It minimizes the labour cost of doing paperwork.

4. It saves lot of time and efforts of the employees as the technology permits face to face interaction.

5. Easy to inform any changes in organization policies or practice across the employees who scattered at different location.

Intranet

An internet connection within the organization is known as **intranet**. It is also referred to a system with restricted audience. Through the intranet system, a well managed and structured information is transferred to selective individuals within the organization. The intranet has access to internet but the internet has no access to the intranet. The intranet has limited or private accessibility. *Intra* means within and with

reference to the computer network, it refers to private networking within an organization.

The intranet is an internal website used in an organization to disseminate business related information and data to employees. In recent years, many business organizations have been searching for different ways and means to improve employee communication. The application and usage of intranet is a practical solution for distribution of materials more efficiently and thus reduce overhead costs.

Advantages of intranet

1. Cuts corporate communication cost up to 60 per cent.

2. Increases productivity and efficiency level of employees.

3. It provides a way for people to easily retrieve the information they need and at any time.

4. Any member of an organization has an opportunity to access the technology of intranet and to have access to information within the organization irrespective of their hardware technology.

5. Intranet converts the conventional paper office into an electronic office by creating electronic documents for potential business communication.

6. Intranet removes barriers to free flow of communication within the organization and allowing individuals and groups to communicate and share knowledge.

Internet

Net is the short form of internet, a new name given to the world-wide network. The internet is a conglomeration of a number of smallest networks and other smaller inter-connected machines distributed over the entire globe. Internet is a window to the

global superhighway and to the cyberspace. So, it is a global system of connected independent group of computers. The internet is a two-way communication method. Exploring internet potential brings the world on the screen of the users' computers. The basic principle of the Net is that the sender and the receiver are on the same line of the system.

To explain simply the internet is like the telephone system which is an instrument of global contact. There are many variant ways to connect to the Net. Similarly, there are different types of programs to run. Internet really is a way or path for various computers to communicate. The success of a product in the market depends upon its quality and capacity to compete and sell in the world market. In a global marketing set up, there is a need to inform the potential global customer about the availability of a particular product with certain specifications, price, utility and other features.

Advantages of internet

1. Sending and receiving the messages through internet across the globe.

2. Getting information stored on the computers for future reference.

3. Reading newspaper, magazines and newsletters.

4. Downloading articles and other materials of our interest.

5. Participating in e-banking, i.e., operating one's bank account through e-mail facility.

6. Shopping through internet save the time of customers.

7. Updates your company with latest technology across the globe.

E-mails

Electronic Mail or e-mail is a system of electronic correspondence by which users send and receive message over a network of computer and telecommunication links. The message may consist of short notes and greetings, or extensive text files plus graphics and photographic images, video clips or sound. Thus, e-mail is an 'electronic post office'. It lets people communicate even in the absence of the receiver at the other end. It means that you can send e-mail message at any time or whenever you want. The person, to whom you have sent the message, can read the same whenever he wants.

Thus, the sender and the receiver don't have to connect themselves at the same time to communicate for that particular message.

Advantages of e-mail

1. It permits sending to and receiving messages from others having e-mail address.

2. It transmits the message almost immediately. Thus, its speed is very fast.

3. It does not require the presence of the receiver of the message at the other end. The message is delivered into his mailbox and it can be checked by the receiver by opening his mailbox at any time.

4. It directly reaches the concerned individual's electronic mailbox.

5. It ensures a higher degree of secrecy of the message.

6. It is a very cheap medium of communication. Hard copy letters and memorandums can often be replaced by electronic mail.

7. Message can be sent at any time, day or night, decreasing problems brought about by differences in time zone.

8. Identical message can be sent to many people simultaneously.

E-mail etiquettes

1. Timely respond to e-mail message.

2. For convenience of receiver provide clearly worded subject lines for all messages.

3. Use short paragraph for gaining reader's attention.

4. Be complete and concise and avoid rambling.

5. Use upper and lower-case letters. It is easier to read. All capital letter is considered 'Shouting', which should be avoided.

6. Avoid inappropriate and unpleasant language.

7. Avoid adding too many attachments to your message.

8. Always write personal name if your mail system allows it. Personal names attached to your address signify you better than your e-mail address.

9. Reread and proofread the message before sending.

10. Use spell check for correct spelling and ensure that the message is free from grammatical error.

SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE (SMS)

Short Message Service (SMS) is the facility to send and receive the text messages to and from mobile telephone. SMS is a communication protocol allowing the interchange of short text messages between mobile telephone devices. SMS text messaging is the most widely used data application on the planet, with 2.4 billion active users, or 74% of all mobile phone subscribers sending and receiving text messages on their phones. The text may be in the form of words or numbers or an alphanumeric combination. With SMS, an active mobile handset is able to receive or submit a sort message at any time, independent of whether a voice or data call is in progress.

Merits

• Message can be sent at any time.

• It is helpful in urgency.

• It saves cost and time both.

Demerits

• Delay in delivery of message due to network conjunction.

• Very short words or sentences sometimes misinterpreted by receiver.

Teleconferencing

Teleconferencing is electronic communication between two or more people at two or more locations. In its simplest form, it is the telephone conference call that has been available for many years. With speakerphones in each office, the number of participants can be greatly increased. When using two way calls, all participants can speak with all other participants. In one way communication calls, oral messages (for example, statements from a company president) are delivered simultaneously to many locations.

Advantages

1. Easy to use.

2. Easily available.

3. Easy to participate from any telephone line in the world.

4. Take only few minutes to set up a conference hall.

5. Costs, energy and time are saved.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Disadvantage</u></p>

A major limitation of teleconferencing is that it can't replace the face-to-face interaction between people. Where people prefer face-to-face interaction, teleconferencing will not serve the real purpose.

Videoconferencing

A real time video session between two or more users or between two or more locations. Videoconferencing allows people at different locations to see and hear each other at the same time. It is fully interactive and almost like face-to-face meetings. Depending of the level of technology used, it may connect two locations interactively or it may be broadcast video with the broadcasting site transmitting its image to many sites that may be able to communicate back through standard telephone line. With more complex system and equipment it is possible to have more than two locations connected together so that they can all see and hear one another, very much like an actual meeting.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Advantages</u></p>

1. It serves as a substitute for face-to-face communication.

2. Communication in real time.

3. It overcomes transcending barriers of distance.

4. It leads to saving in travelling costs of executives.

5. It leads to saving in time of holding meetings.

6. It facilitates rapid expansion of knowledge of people sitting at different places.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Disadvantages</u></p>

1. The person that you want to talk to should have a computer as well as the hardware and software required for conferencing.

2. Computer is not portable like cellular phone. Hence, it affects the portability of your conferencing.

3. The privacy of a videoconference is not always guaranteed.

Key takeaway: Different technological advancements have both advantages and disadvantages, but they are undoubtedly helpful for business communication.

Discussion 1:

1. Discuss the importance of technology advancement in business communication.

2. What do you understand by communication network? Describe its features also.

3. What are the different advantages of communication network?

4. Distinguish between intranet and internet.

5. Explain the merits of intranet.

6. Discuss the advantages of using internet.

7. "E-mail is an electronic post-office." Explain this statement.

8. List e-mail etiquettes while sending or receiving mail.

9. What are the advantages of e-mail?

10. Distinguish between video and teleconferencing with examples.

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

'Compare the efficiency of technological tools in modern business: their advantages and disadvantages.'

'Describe the role digital media play in the changing world of business in contrast to traditional paper-based messages.'

Part 2

IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information technology has tremendously paved the way of business organizations towards innovation and growth. Over the past years, there have been improvements in productivity and efficiency with the adoption of information based systems. In the following sections, we will understand how information technology is important and its application in various functions of business.

Figure 6.1. Importance of technology.

Advantages of Information Technology in Business:

• Office Automation: This involves using computer and communication technology for managing organizational information. It includes usage of computers, telephones, email and machines.

• Communication: Information technology has made it easier for the organizations to communicate with the customers, suppliers and employees.

• Business Analysis: Business Analysis is aimed at providing solutions to various complex business problems. Information technology suggests various tools and techniques which are customized according to a given problem

• Better organized data: Information Systems have made it easier to compile and organize data at one place to be made available to various users as per their needs.

• Reduction in Cost: Owing to data availability at one place, automation, faster problem solving with accuracy and speed results in decrease in cost.

• Productivity improvement: Again automation, higher speed, accuracy and reliability of data leads to improvements in productivity

Information Technology in different areas of business

Information technology has got role to play in almost functional areas of the business. It can be said that it has to play an imperative part now. Let us understand in detail how business enterprises use IT in different functions of business.

Figure 6.2. Usage of IT in different areas of business

▪ Finance & Accounting

Information technology is used in finance and accounting functions of the firms. All the financial information pertaining to daily entries of sales, purchases, salary disbursements, etc. are easily handled in various financial softwares. For example, firms are primarily dependent on Tally software for journal entries as well as preparation of financial statements. Business enterprises also use software packages for various processes like payroll, billing, budgeting, etc.

▪ Human Resource Management

The firms can easily rely on IT tools as far as the function of Human resource management (HRM) is concerned. Beginning from the functions of recruitment to employee exit, information technology is a great help to companies. Owing to availability of easy communication on internet, HR managers can get the resumes of perspective employees on their E-mails. Besides this, they can take aptitude tests and interviews of the candidates online. Other areas whereby IT can be utilized for daily attendance, maintaining information of employees, compensation management, performance appraisal, etc. This saves on unnecessary human effort as well as costs on paper work. Firms also make use of HRM softwares for these discussed activities.

▪ Marketing

Marketing function in current scenario has evolved a lot recently. This is to be attributed to the information technology and development of communication facilities. Marketing department is the face of the company. It deals with creating, communicating and delivering value to the customers. IT has provided wings to marketing. The companies can reach to its customers through using tools like digital marketing and Customer relationship management (CRM). ***Digital marketing*** is promotion of products and services using digital channels to reach consumers. This include:

- Social media marketing-Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Mobile Phones- SMS, MMS
- Television & Radio Channels
- Electronic Billboards

Customer-relationship management (CRM) is a tactic to manage a company's relations with current and potential customers. The objectives of CRM are customer retention, increasing sales, improving customer service and thereby increasing profitability. There are many softwares available at the disposal of firms to manage CRM. These softwares store information about current and prospective customers. Such information consists of the data about the products the customers buy, when do they buy, how much quantity is bought, etc. These softwares also assist in sales forecasting.

Sales

Technology has got an important role to play in driving sales growth. It helps increasing market penetration. It enables automatic order placement. For example, Swiggy, Myntra, Amazon, etc. are online platforms whereby the customers place order on the website using laptop or a smartphone. Companies usually use an ERP for managing sales which handles issues starting like customer inquiry handling, pricing control, order control and sales invoice processing etc. It is integrated with various other resource planning softwares used by firms.

Electronic Business (E-Business)

The terms "E-business" and "E-commerce" are used interchangeably these days. But they are different. The term '*E*' is common in them which means electronic. Electronic Business means the use of internet, extranet, web, and intranet to conduct businesses. Electronic commerce (e-commerce) is the marketing, buying and selling of products or services over the Internet. It involves the entire scope of online product and service sales. On the other hand, E- business is basically purchasing or selling of goods and services or other business activities on the Internet. It also refers to the processes and tools that allow organizations to use Internet-based technologies and infrastructure, both within and outside the organisation in conducting daily business processes.

Scope of E- Business

The scope of E-business is increasing day by day. This has to be attributed to increase in the number of 3G/4G mobile internet users and a large number of smartphone users. The other reasons contributing to this growth is need for automation, reduction in the cost of internet facilities and provision of banking payment services online.

Figure 6.3. Scope of E-business.
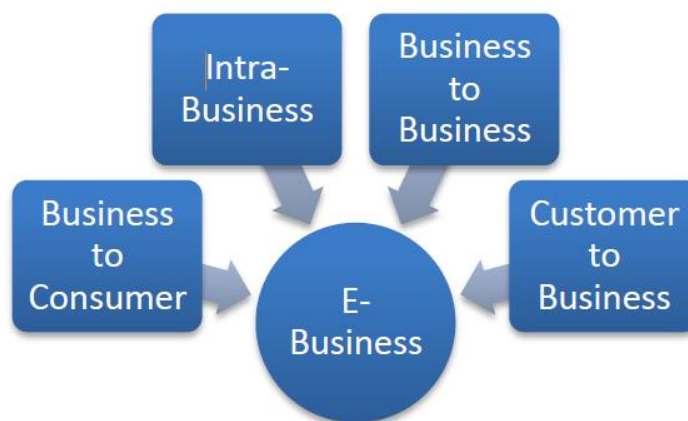
E- business involves interaction amongst different parties: business to business (B2B), business to consumer (B2C), Intra-Business (in this type of e-business model, parties involved in the electronic transactions are from within a business firm), consumer to business (C2B).

Scope of E-business is also found in following industries:

- Banking

- Insurance

- Travel Services

- Recruitment Service Industry

- Online Learning

- Online Entertainment

- Online Shopping

- Online Publishing

Key takeaways: Information Technology (IT) has got a pervasive role in business as well as daily life. IT is useful in various areas of business. E-business has evolved a great way for increasing profits of firms.

Discussion 2:

1. Explain in brief in what functional areas of business IT can be used?

2. What is digital marketing? What does it include?

3. What is the difference between E-business and E-commerce?

4. What is the scope of E-business?

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

'IT technology in business communication.'

'Advantages and disadvantages of online shopping'

UNIT 7. PREPARING REPORTS, MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

LEAD-IN

1. Why are reports important in business?

2. What types of reports do you know?

3. What are business meetings?

4. Why presentations are essential for business?

KEY TERMS AND PHRASES TO KNOW

compliance	to convey information
feasibility	multifarious activities
concise	rational analysis
turgid	sobriety tests
readability	comprehensive analysis
lucrative	core skills
agenda	to reach a decision
findings	hooked up
to persuade	to give presentations
convening	statutory report
engaging	research proposal
fluent	accuracy of facts
confident	poetic embellishment
signpost	considerable expenditure
sequence	vital importance
implicit	notice of meeting
ghostwriter	roll call
inference	to deliver a presentation

Introductory text: **WHAT IS A REPORT?**

Reports are documents designed to record and convey information to the reader. Reports are part of any business or organization; from credit reports to police reports, they serve to document specific information for specific audiences, goals, or functions.

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The type of report is often identified by its primary purpose or function, as in an accident report, a laboratory report, a sales report, or even a book report. Reports are often analytical, or involve the rational analysis of information. Sometimes they simply "report the facts" with no analysis at all, but still need to communicate the information in a clear and concise format. Other reports summarize past events, present current data, and forecast future trends. While a report may have conclusions, propositions, or even a call to action, the demonstration of the analysis is the primary function. A sales report, for example, is not designed to make an individual sale. It is, however, supposed to report sales to date, and may forecast future sales based on previous trends.

Business managers, often, are required to write business reports of one sort or another. In fact, such writing can be lucrative and the organizations that do not have the need or budget to hire a full time manager look for hiring such business executives who can discharge the work on part time basis. Therefore, if you have read many business reports, you know they tend to be dull and turgid. They do not have communication balance that they need to have. While writing a business report won't let you use all your creativity, you can apply the principles of good writing to create a document that communicates the meaning with its underlying spirit and at the same time it needs to be readers' friendly.

As always, knowing to whom the report is more critical, implicit in that knowledge is the question, "What do they want to know?" As a rule, readers of business reports are looking for two things: the bottom line and how will it affect them. It is also safe to say that your readers are busy, often extremely so, use these facts to well structure the report.

All too often business reports start with some sort of introduction that includes a bit of history and, perhaps, the approach taken to getting the results or items being reported. Usually, however, the readers already have this information, so start with the bottom line. This might involve money or it may be the action the report recommends, or both.

Make sure assertions and recommendations are backed up with solid information. History and methods can often be used as back-up information, but it will

usually need to be rewritten so it fits. Business readers scan for the information they need. Well-written headlines and subheads will help or guide them to the parts of the report they actually need.

If possible, write in the first person, as a ghostwriter. Avoid the passive voice like the plague. Even if the samples you are given use a lot of passive language, use the active voice; chances are the company will be delighted.

Groups of numbers should probably go into some sort of table or chart. They not only break up large blocks of text, they also can clarify the information. Once you have a handle on the information, create an abstract or executive summary. Include the recommended action and put this section right up front.

Now you have been introduced with a business report that communicates the needed information easily. A complete business report must concentrate on: understanding the readers' expectations; objectives and specifications for the research report; facts, conclusions, inferences, and judgments; moving data to messages objectively; organizing; using guideposts for clarity; writing clearly; writing user-friendly audit reports; editing and writing concisely

A **report** is a 'basic management tool used in decision-making'. Hence, it is extremely important for business executives. In a one-man business, the functions of reporting and decision-making are combined in one man-the proprietor. He knows his business inside out and is capable of making on-the-spot decisions. Therefore, he does not need any reports. But large-scale organizations are engaged in multifarious activities, which are being handled by different departments. Their top executives cannot keep a personal watch over all these activities. So, they have to base their decisions on the reports they get from the heads of various departments. For large organizations, reports are just indispensable.

Types of Business Reports: We can classify business reports in various ways. On the *basis of legal formalities* to be complied with, we can have informal reports, and formal reports.

- **Informal reports.** An informal report is usually in the form of a person-to-person communication. It may range from a short, almost fragmentary statement of

facts on a single page, to a more developed presentation taking several pages. An informal report is usually submitted in the form of a letter or a memorandum.

- **Formal reports.** A formal report is one, which is prepared in a prescribed form and is presented according to an established procedure to a prescribed authority.

Formal reports can be statutory or non-statutory: A report prepared and presented according to the form and procedure laid down by law is called a *statutory report*. Reports submitted at the Statutory Meeting of Shareholders, Directors' Report to the Annual General Meeting, Annual Return, Auditors' Report are statutory reports. Formal reports which are not required under any law but which are prepared to help the management in framing policies or taking other important decisions are called *non-statutory reports*.

On the *basis of the frequency* of issue, a report can be periodic or special.

•**Periodic or Routine reports** are prepared and presented at regular, prescribed intervals in the usual routine of business. They may be submitted annually, semi-annually, quarterly, monthly, fortnightly, weekly or even daily. Generally, such reports contain a mere statement of facts, in detail or in summarized from, without an opinion or recommendation. Branch Manages of banks submit periodic reports to the Head Office on the quantum of business transacted during a particular period.

•**Special reports** are related to a single occasion or situation. Reports on the desirability of opening a new branch or on the unrest among staff in a particular branch are special reports. Special reports deal with non-recurrent problems.

On the basis of function, a report can be informative, or interpretative.

If a report merely presents facts pertinent to an issue or a situation, it is **informative.** On the other hand, if it analyses the facts, draws conclusions and makes recommendations, it may be described as **analytical**, **interpretative**, or **investigative.**

If a report presents production figures in a particular period, it is informative. But if it goes into the causes of lower production in that period, it becomes analytical, interpretative or investigative.

On the basis of the nature of the subject dealt with, we can have a problem-determining report, or fact-finding report, or performance, or technical report, etc.

In a **problem-determining report**, we try to determine the causes underlying a problem or to ascertain whether the problem actually exists. In a **technical report**, we present data on a specialized subject, with or without comments.

On the basis of the number of persons entrusted with the drafting of reports, we can have reports by individuals, and reports by committees or sub-committees.

Reports submitted by the Branch Manager, Personnel Manager, Marketing Manger, the Company Secretary, The Auditor, the Solicitor, etc., are **reports by individuals**. These reports are naturally related to the work in their own departments.

Sometimes reports are needed on subjects that concern more than one department, or they are so important that it is thought advisable to associate more than one person with them. In such cases, committees or sub-committees are formed to prepare reports. These reports are formal in style and impersonal in tone and are prepared after a careful and cautious deliberation of the members.

Research Proposals and Report: Because research is a cost to the organization in terms of personnel time and monetary expenses, superiors want to know, what they will gain in return for expending these resources. Thus, a **research proposal** is a structured presentation of what you plan to do in research, why you plan to conduct the research, and how you plan to accomplish it. The proposal gives those concerned with your research effect on opportunity to evaluate your research approach. Every step of your proposal should be developed with extreme care. Once it has been accepted, any substantive changes you may wish to make must receive prior approval.

Research proposal formats vary depending upon the desires and needs of those who will appraise your work. It includes the following sections:

• *Heading*: Provide a neutral, descriptive title for your project, being careful not to promise more than you can deliver. Include as a subtitle "A Research Proposal," your name, and the submission date. The subtitle (but not the title) may be omitted from this page if you include a separate title page that includes this information.

• *Introduction*: Establish a definite need for your study. Include here the background information about the problem, explaining enough to establish a situation and to orient the reader. For credibility, include any information from published

sources that help to establish a need for your project. (More complex research proposal may contain a separate "Review of Literature" section, which would then immediately precede the "Procedures" section.)

•*Problem:* On the basis of what you said in the previous section, a problem needs answering. Introduce the problem statement and then, using neutral language, state in question form the specific problem to be investigated (avoid yes-or-no questions because your problem is probably more complex than that). Then introduce the sub-problems, listing them in logical order. Taken together, the answers to your sub-problems must provide a complete and accurate answer to your problem statement.

• *Scope*: The scope of the problem describes the boundaries you have established for your research problem. It may rely on geographical boundaries, a segment of a universe, a time period, or any combination of these. The scope (also called "delimitations") indicates those parts of the topic that normally might be considered a part of such a study but that you do not wish to include in your study. Your report title and problem statement must reflect any major delimitations imposed on your study. If you are using any terms in your study that may be subject to different interpretations or that may be unfamiliar to the reader, define them here.

•*Procedures*: Explain how you will conduct your investigation. Describe your sources of data and methods of collection. To ensure that adequate data is available to answer your problem, you should have identified most of your secondary sources prior to writing your proposal. Likewise, you should be certain that people whose help is needed for your study are available and willing to cooperate. Regardless of how you organize this section, plan your procedures carefully and present them in such a way that the reader has confidence that they will enable you to provide an accurate and complete answer to your problem statement.

• *Conclusion*: Don't leave the reader hanging by ending your report abruptly. Include an appropriate ending paragraph that provides a sense of closure for your research proposal.

•*Reference*: Include here the published sources (including Internet citations) to which you actually referred in your proposal in your proposal. The author/year style of

citation shown in Model 18 is typical for business reports, but you should use the citation style preferred by your reader or organization. (If your list of sources is extensive, begin the list on a separate page – as would be done in the final research report.)

Characteristics of A Good Report

1. **Precision:** In a good report, the writer is very clear about the exact purpose of writing it. *His investigation, analysis and recommendations are directed by this central purpose.* Precision gives a kind of unity and coherence to the report and makes it a valuable document.

2. **Accuracy of facts:** The scientific accuracy of facts is very essential to a good report. Since reports invariable lead to decision-making, *inaccurate facts may lead to disastrous decisions.*

3. **Relevance:** The facts presented in a report should be not only accurate but relevant also. While it is essential that every fact included in a report has a bearing on the central purpose, it is equally essential to see that nothing relevant has escaped inclusion. *Irrelevant facts make a report confusing; exclusion of relevant facts renders it incomplete and likely to mislead.*

4. **Reader-orientation:** A good report is always reader-oriented. While drafting a report, it is necessary to keep in mind the person(s) who is (are) going to read it. A report meant for the layman will be different from another meant for technical experts.

5. **Objectivity of recommendations:** If recommendations are made at the end of a report, they must be impartial and objective. *They should come as a logical conclusion to investigation and analysis.* They must not reveal any self-interest on the part of the writer.

6. **Simple and unambiguous:** A good report is written in a simple, unambiguous language. It is a kind of scientific document of practical utility; hence it should be free from various forms of poetic embellishment like figures of speech.

7. **Clarity:** A good report is absolutely clear. Clarity depends on proper arrangement of facts. The report writer must proceed systematically. He should make his purpose clear, define his sources, state his findings and finally make necessary

recommendations. He should divide his report into short paragraphs giving them headings, and insert other suitable signposts to achieve greater clarity.

8. Brevity: A report should be brief. It is difficult to define brevity in absolute terms. Nor can brevity be laid down as a rule. All that can be said is that a good report is as brief as possible. Brevity should not be achieved at the cost of clarity. Nor should it be at the cost of completeness. Sometimes the problem being investigated is of such importance that it calls for a detailed discussion of facts. Then this discussion should not be evaded. Brevity in report is the kind of brevity one recommends for a précis. *Include everything significant and yet be brief.*

9. Grammatical accuracy: The grammatical accuracy of language is of fundamental importance. It is one of the basic requisites of good report as of any other piece of composition. Who is going to read a report if its language is faulty? Besides, faulty construction of sentences makes the meaning obscure and ambiguous.

Selecting a suitable type of report: Before a writer undertakes to prepare a report, he must consider the following points:

- What kind of report is requested or expected?
- How much time has been allowed to prepare the report?
- What is the purpose of the report?
- What exactly is to be examined?
- What facts are to be furnished?
- For whom is the report meant?

1. The reporter may have been instructed to prepare a specific kind of report or there may be precedents to follow. But in majority of instances he will have to decide for himself whether he is to prepare an informal or a formal report, or if it is a formal report, whether it is a statutory or non-statutory report. It is important that a reporter, right in the beginning, is clear about the lines along which he is to plan the content, form and style of the report.

2. The length of time the writer has been allowed to prepare the report can give him valuable guidance of the type of report expected. An informal report highlighting some important aspect of a problem may be acceptable if the time is short.

3. The purpose of a report is perhaps the most important factor to bear in mind before deciding the type of report needed. If the writer has been asked to prepare a report on whether his company should set up a new branch that involves considerable initial expenditure or on advisability of merging into or collaborating with another company, these are matters of vital importance and they need very carefully written formal reports.

4. Just as it is important to keep in mind the purpose of the report, it is also important to be constantly aware of what exactly is to be examined, to be studied. Such an awareness will eliminate much redundant labour, at the same time it will help in the inclusion of all that is pertinent to a problem and will help in making the report a document complete in all respects. Let us suppose the Development Manager of a bank has been asked to report on the feasibility of setting up a branch of the bank in a new colony. Exactly what is to be examined? (a) What type of colony is this – residential, commercial or industrial? (b) If it is primarily industrial or business houses? (c) If it is residential area, what is its population, what is the general standard of the resident, and what could be their saving capacity? Will the study of these facts suffice? Or, has something of crucial importance been overlooked?

5. While studying the old file of the company or conducting a market survey, the proprietor is likely to come across a number of interesting facts that appear to be relevant but in reality, are not. The temptation to include them in the report will have to be resisted.

6. The last point to be kept in mind is: who is going to read the report? If the report is going to the Research Director, it ought to contain a detailed, step-by step account of the investigations carried out, along with detailed, minutely described findings. On the other hand, if the report is going to the Managing Director, who you know has implicit faith in you and is more interested in your recommendations, it is these recommendations, which will have to be emphasized both in the beginning and at the end.

Structures of Business Reports

Business reports are used extensively in organizations, and it is valuable for any executive to develop an effective report writing style. Business reports come in many

forms, from lengthy formal reports to the shorter variations used within departments. Therefore, the writing style should reflect the nature of the report content. A report can be organized in three ways: Letter form; Memorandum form; and Letter text combination form.

I. Letter form: In the case of brief, informal reports, the arrangement followed in business letter is adopted. Its main parts are: heading or the title, date, address, salutation, the body, complimentary close, and signature. It is usually written in the first person – I or we. The body of the letter can be further divided into the following parts:

- **Introduction:** The introductory paragraphs present the terms of reference and the subject of study. Here the writer states the problem confronting him in the light of the terms of reference and the relevant circumstances.

- **Findings:** The next few paragraphs present the finding of the investigation.

- **Recommendations:** Recommendations that logically follow the findings are given in the last paragraph of the body.

II. Memorandum form: Adopting the memorandum form is a simpler way of presenting the report, since here the formalities of the letter form are done away with. The data is mentioned at the top. It is followed by the name of the person to whom the report. Next follows the actual text and the conclusion. As in the letter form, the text of the report is divided into paragraphs with headings and sub-headings. Large business houses have different types of printed forms to send reports. This simplifies the procedure and ensures uniformity of style.

III. Letter-text combination form. Long reports are usually written in the letter–text combination form.

Structure of Formal Reports

In general, long formal reports follow a recognized structure, made up of a title page, table of contents, executive summary, introduction section, the main body of the report, conclusions section, recommendations and appendices.

Title Page: The title page, as its name suggests, identifies the report, so that it can be distributed to those individuals who are authorized to receive it. The title page

should also contain sufficient information to enable the report to be retrieved easily once it is in storage. This page should be attractively laid out, as it is the first page that the reader sees, and first impressions are important!

Table of Contents: The table of contents lists the main sections or chapters that appear in the report and the page number for each.

Executive Summary: The executive summary plays an important role in the business report. Its function is to provide busy individuals with an overview of the report contents. Therefore, the summary should be interesting enough to encourage the executive to return to the report when he/she is less busy! The normal length of the summary is between 350 – 550 words, and the summary should contain the objective(s) of the report, main findings, conclusions or recommendations. However, some extensive reports concentrate on presenting an overview of the conclusions or recommendations.

Introduction Section: The introduction should set out the aims and objectives of the report and provide background information about the matter being investigated or discussed. In addition, the author(s) of the report should explain how the data presented in the report has been gathered, and how the report itself is structured.

Main Body of Report: This section presents the main findings concerning the report's subject matter. These findings should be laid out in a clear and logical fashion, so that it is easy for the reader to follow the author(s) train of thought. It is usual to put the most important findings at the beginning of the section. It is important to use a system of headings, sub-headings and numbers to break large chunks of text down into smaller paragraphs.

Conclusions Section: In the section, the main findings are assessed. Any conclusions presented should be fair and unbiased, and should not be used as a means of highlighting the author's subjective opinions.

Recommendations: Recommendations for further action should only be made when the specific aims of the report, or terms of reference, dictate that recommendations be provided in the final report. Any recommendations made should

be presented in order of importance and be written in a very precise manner, so that the readers are clear about the author's intentions.

Bibliography: If the report is based on extensive research, the works consulted by the writer are given in the bibliography. The bibliography may also include works recommended for further study.

Appendices: There are times when large amounts of data or statistics cannot be easily inserted into the main findings. Therefore, this information can be placed in an appendix at the end of the report. Clear references should be made to the appendix in the main body of the report. This approach is very valuable where several long tables of data must be contained in the report.

Glossary: It is the list of technical words used in the reports and their explanations. Whether these words are to be given in the beginning or the end or in footnotes is entirely a matter of the writer's choice. Besides, whether the glossary is needed all depends upon who is going to read the report. If it is going to be read by knowledgeable people who are already familiar with the terms, there is no need to include the glossary in the report.

Signature: A report must be dated and signed by the person(s) who has (have) submitted it. In the case of a report prepared by a committee or a sub-committee, if it is very important, all the members may sign it, otherwise the signature of the Chairman will suffice. If the report is not unanimous, it may be signed only be the assenting members. The dissenting members may submit a separate minority report or they may sign the majority report with a note of dissent.

Finally, it is wise to proof-read the report before it is printed to ensure that there are no spelling errors, and that the page numbers indicated in the table of contents match exactly the pages on which headings appear in the report!

Key takeaways: Thousands of reports, long or short, formal or informal, crucial or ordinary, special or routine are written everyday. A supervisor, at the end of the day, reports to the manager the progress of the work carried on in his supervision. The manager of bank sends a periodic report to the Head Office on the state of deposits,

advances, overdraft limits, etc. Business reports play an increasingly important role in the successful management of the contemporary organization.

Discussion 1:

1. How would you define report?

2. Describe the types of business report.

2. What purpose is served by the business report?

4. What are the characteristics of a good report?

5. What are the guiding principles for writing report?

6. Do you agree that "The single most significant characteristic of the business report is the ability to define the structure of a report."

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

'Write a note on the need and importance of business report. What are the ideal features of such report.'

'As Sales Manager of your company draft a report on increasing competition from rival enterprises and suggestions to overcome it.'

Meetings

A meeting is a group communication in action around a defined agenda, at a set time, for an established duration. Meetings can be effective, ineffective, or a complete waste of time. If time is money and effectiveness and efficiency are your goals, then if you arrange a meeting, lead a meeting, or participate in one, you want it to be worth your time (Mosvick, R. K., 1996).

Meetings can occur face-to-face, but increasingly business and industry are turning to teleconferencing and videoconferencing options as the technology improves, the cost to participate is reduced, and the cost of travel including time is considered. Regardless how you come together as a team, group, or committee, you will need to define your purpose in advance with an agenda (Deal, T., and Kennedy, A., 1982).

A meeting is formally arranged gathering for the purpose of discussing an issue concerning a large number of persons.

Objectives of meeting

A meeting may have any of the following objectives:

• To inform and explain the information to the members.

• To understand the situation.

• To get feedback from the members.

• To exchange ideas and experience among the members.

• To persuade members to accept changes.

• To resolve conflicts and confusions.

• To take decisions of matters affecting the group or the organization.

• To generate a positive attitude among the participants.

Types of meeting

On the basis of function:

1. For giving information: This type of meetings is conducted for sharing information and gathering views and opinions of the participants or members on that information.

2. For consultation: The consultative meetings are held to consult the members for their views and opinions to reach an effective decision.

3. For execution of ideas: This type of meetings is held to gather new ideas or suggestions for the execution of a task. When the cooperation of the members is required for the effective dealing with a task such meetings are held.

On the basis of their formality:

1. Structured meeting: Like parliament, state assemblies, company shareholder's meetings, management-union negotiations, university senate, councils and executive bodies.

2. Semi-structured meeting: Like committees, managing councils and general bodies of voluntary organizations, briefing sessions, advisory bodies and management meetings.

3. Unstructured meeting: Like group discussions, ad hoc meetings of task groups and brainstorming sessions.

Procedure of Convening a Meeting

Notice

The word '**notice**' is derived from the Latin word meaning knowledge. The term in relation to a meeting signifies the bringing of knowledge of the meeting to the person concerned. A meeting is to be properly held only when notice of meeting is served to the concerned persons. The notice informs the members as to the date, time and place of the meeting, the issue to be discussed in the meeting and if possible, respective contribution expected from different participants of the meeting.

Agenda

An **agenda** is a list of topics covered in a meeting. A well prepared agenda will assist Chairperson in directing the business of the meeting and ensuring that decisions are reached in an efficient manner. A copy of the agenda must be sent to the members along with the agenda of the meeting. All the items included in the agenda must be serially arranged. If any change is to be done in the order, the approval of the members is needed. Preparing agenda is very useful practice:

1. If it is circulated in advance, it helps the members to come prepared for the meeting.

2. Since agenda has a set order, it helps the chairperson to conduct the meeting smoothly.

3. It ensures that only matters relevant to that particular meeting are discussed.

4. It ensures that every point is properly taken up for discussion.

5. It facilitates the preparation of the minutes.

The following points should be kept in the mind while drafting the agenda:

1. It should be clear and explicit.

2. It should be in a summary form.

3. The routine items should be put first and the other matters later.

4. All the matters of similar or allied character should be placed near each other on the agenda.

5. All the items included in the agenda must be within the scope of the meeting.

6. All the items included in agenda must be written the scope of the notice calling the meeting.

The main parts of an agenda for a standard meeting are listed in Table 7.1. "Meeting Agenda Elements.

Table 7.1. Meeting Agenda Elements

Term	Definition
Title Header	Title, time, date, location, phone number, e-mail contact, and any other information necessary to get all participants together.
Participants	Expected participants
Subject Line	Purpose statement
Call to Order	Who will call the meeting to order?
Introductions	If everyone is new, this is optional. If even one person is new, everyone should briefly introduce themselves with their name and respective roles.
Roll Call	This may quietly take place while introductions are made.
Reading of the minutes	Notes from the last meeting are read (if applicable) with an opportunity to correct. These are often sent out before the meeting so participants have the opportunity to review them and note any needed corrections.
Old Business	List any unresolved issues from last time or issues that were "tabled," or left until this meeting.
New Business	This is a list of items for discussion and action.
Reports	This is optional and applies if there are subcommittees or groups working on specific, individual action items that require reports to the group or committee.
Good of the Order	This is the time for people to offer any news that relates to the topic of the meeting that was otherwise not shared or discussed.
Adjournment	Note time, date, place meeting adjourned and indicate when the next meeting is scheduled.

Minutes of meeting

During the course of meeting, the items or topics listed in the agenda are discussed serially one by one. All the participants express their views/opinions and discuss amongst themselves the pros and cons of each item of agenda. Finally, they

arrive at some conclusions or decisions, which are always kept on official records. We call them as minutes of a meeting.

Thus, minutes are the official records of the proceedings of the meeting. In other words, these are the brief of discussions held and decisions taken at the meeting. It is the duty of an authorized person to retain all such discussions, deliberations and decisions in writing specifically.

The purpose of writing minutes is:

1. To serve as the formal record of discussion.

2. To serve as a background for future discussions.

The minutes of a meeting must contain:

1. Date and the number of meetings.

2. A list of names of those who attended the meeting.

3. A list of those who did not attend and from whom apologies were received.

4. The record of conformation of the previous minutes and any amendments agreed to by the committee.

5. The essential, relevant background to the topic under discussions.

6. A clear and unambiguous record of the decision reached/resolution, and if appropriate, of those individuals/bodies responsible for taking subsequent action.

7. Where discussion of a specific case leads to a policy issue, it is important that a separate minute be written on the policy issue.

Types of minutes

Minutes of resolutions. In this type of minutes, only the resolutions passed at a meeting are recorded and no reference is made to any discussion preceding the resolutions.

• Decision, which are within the power of the committee, are introduced by the words...............'**it was resolved that**............'

• Sometimes the members of the meeting are not empowered to take decision on the given subject. They can only recommend their opinion to the higher authority who can take decision. Such recommendations, which needs to be referred to an officer or

others for approval, are introduced by the words..............**It was resolved to recommend**..............'

Strategies for Effective Meetings

You want an efficient and effective meeting, but recognize that group communication by definition can be chaotic and unpredictable. To stay on track, consider the following strategies:

• Send out the last meeting's minutes one week before the next meeting.

• Send out the agenda for the current meeting at least one week in advance.

• Send out reminders for the meeting the day before and the day of the meeting.

• Schedule the meeting in Outlook or a similar program so everyone receives a reminder.

• Start and end your meetings on time.

• Make sure the participants know their role and requirements prior to the meeting.

• Make sure all participants know one another before discussion starts.

• Formal communication styles and reference to the agenda can help reinforce the time frame and tasks.

• Make sure notes taken at the meeting are legible and can be converted to minutes for distribution later.

• Keep the discussion on track, and if you are the chair, or leader of a meeting, don't hesitate to restate a point to interject and redirect the attention back to the next agenda point.

• If you are the chair, draw a clear distinction between on-topic discussions and those that are more personal, individual, or off topic.

• Communicate your respect and appreciation for everyone's time and effort.

• Clearly communicate the time, date, and location or means of contact for the next meeting.

Key takeaways: There are different types of business meeting in terms of the level of formality (rules and regulations) and the structure. The agenda and the minutes are important documents which can support effective meetings. Both need

careful attention to style and approach. With good planning and preparation, meetings can be productive, engaging, and efficient.

Discussion 2:

1. What is meeting? What are its objectives?

2. What are the different types of meetings?

3. What procedure have you taken for conveying a meeting? Discuss.

4. What is agenda? And why is it important to circulate among the members before the meeting?

5. What are the different points should be kept in the mind while drafting notice and agenda?

Writing

1. Draft a notice and agenda of the 5th Annual meeting of the Board of Directors of a car manufacturing company.

2. Write an explanatory note on content of minutes of meeting.

WHY ARE ORAL PRESENTATIONS IMPORTANT?

One reason why oral presentations are important is that they are now very common. Some organizations now use presentations in meetings where previously they might have circulated lengthy written reports. One advantage is that doing so can speed up the decision-making. A disadvantage is that a poor presentation might not do justice to the ideas that are being presented. So organizations want staff who can present convincingly and will not confuse or irritate an audience.

Presentations are also widely used in recruitment, especially for managerial and supervisory positions. Organizations will select staff who can deliver a convincing presentation. This does not mean that they are looking for people who can 'perform' in a theatrical sense, although this sort of skill can come in handy to people who are addressing large audiences. To quote Gordon Wells: 'as in writing, neither rhetoric nor oratory are necessary, just clear competent "plain speaking". With practice anyone can give the impression of being a fluent, confident speaker' (1986, p. 61). The important words here are '**fluent**', so that the presentation flows and is clearly organized, and

'**confident**'. A speaker who is lacking in confidence may well distract an audience from the main topic.

Electronic presentations

There are two main ways of using presentation software:

- You can prepare and save the presentation on the computer. At the event, you open the file on the computer, which is hooked up to a projector. You can move from point to point and slide to slide by clicking the computer mouse. Of course, you need to be sure that the computer at the event will cope with whatever software you have used. As the technology has advanced, many lecture, board and conference rooms have been equipped to handle this. The quality and convenience of projection have also improved – for example, in the past few years the weight of portable projectors has gone down by 50 per cent, and the size by 80 per cent (from a manufacturer's quote in *OEN*, October 2000). They have also got much brighter, although it is still worth checking that the room will be dark enough for people to see the screen easily.

- You can prepare the presentation on the computer and then print the slides on acetates to use on an overhead projector. This has the advantage that your slides will look professional and uniform in style (assuming the design you select is suitable for acetates). You will have to decide whether to use colour or black-and-white slides.

In making your choice, it is worth remembering points made by Wilder and Fine (1996). If you decide to opt for an electronic presentation, then:

- You need to 'learn how to use the "movement" features' (p. 28). The software will offer various ways of moving between slides, and also bullet points within slides. As well as knowing this, you also need to know how to rescue a mistake. If you press the mouse button too often and move on too far, do you know how to move back? If you make this mistake in a lecture hall watched by 200 people, then you have to think fast if you do not know exactly how to move back.

- You need to do more equipment planning. Wilder and Fine suggest that this depends on the size of the audience.

There are several advantages in using a computer package like Microsoft Powerpoint:

- It is very easy to learn, especially if your demands are fairly simple.

- It is very easy to edit individual slides, or to change the order of slides in the presentation.

- It is very easy to generate a handout for the presentation which summarizes the main points and shows snapshot pictures of the slides you have used.

- It is also useful to type your notes for each slide so that they can be printed out with the slides.

Table 7.2. Planning electronic presentations

Size of audience	Likely needed equipment	Points to watch
Up to 10	One or two large monitors, or small portable projector connected to the PC or laptop.	Can everyone see the screen(s)? Where do you stand to deliver the talk and operate the PC?
10–50	Portable projector, connected to the PC or laptop.	Check that everyone can see the screen. What if the audience wish to take notes? Can you supply a handout to help?
50-plus	You will almost certainly need a professional projection unit.	You may also need some sound reinforcement, so some rehearsal in the location is very important.

Planning the presentation

The most popular advice to would-be or developing presenters is to plan what you are doing in terms of key stages or key areas. Two examples can illustrate this Rasberry and Lemoine (1986) suggest a four-step process:

- Organize the presentation, which includes deciding when, why, where and to whom the presentation will be delivered. It also involves deciding the way you are going to organize the information you wish to communicate.

- Construct the presentation: make an outline of the presentation and assemble the information.

- Practise the presentation, which includes checking that you can complete it in the time allowed and that you have chosen an appropriate style of delivery.

- Deliver the presentation, which includes relaxing yourself before you perform and making sure that you open and close convincingly.

Gallagher et al. (1998) suggest an eight-step approach

1. Set your objective. They suggest that a simple one-sentence objective is a good way of clarifying your purpose, as in their example: 'As a result of my presentation, my audience will understand and be impressed by the new Customer Services system in Central Branch' (p. 130).

2. Analyse the audience.

3. Analyse the setting (including such things as audio-visual facilities, organization of the event etc.).

4. Write down the 'central theme'. Following the example given in 1, they suggest the theme would be 'the new customer system is effective, and could be applied in other branches of Gold Coin Bank' (p. 133).

5. Write your outline.

6. Develop your visual aids.

7. Prepare your delivery notes.

8. Deliver the presentation.

While preparing the presentation you need to be flexible, and constantly need to revisit your objectives. The important thing is to find a method which you can work with – then make sure that it delivers a plan which ensures clear structure in your talk.

Critical issues and skills in presentations

Bringing out the common points in the approaches listed above, we suggest that the most critical questions to raise are as follows:

1. Do you have clear objectives?

2. Do you know your audience? (What are they expecting? What views do they already have on the topic?)

3. Do you have a clear structure?

4. Is your style of expression right?

5. Can you operate effectively in the setting?

Critical skills

Baguley (1994, p. 107) suggests five 'core' skills: *clarity, emphasis, using examples, organization, feedback*.

Clarity

As the size and complexity of the audience increases, so your chances decrease of establishing one simple definition of what your audience will understand. You need to be especially careful with technical terms and jargon. Consider the jargon which accompanies many descriptions of computer software or computer systems and see which of the following speakers you would prefer to explain a new package to you. This example illustrates the point that it is possible to explain in a way that most levels of user will follow if you can use everyday analogies.

Emphasis

Good presenters usually give you a very clear sense of their main points. In other words, they emphasize what they think are the most important parts of what they say. There are various ways of doing this, including the following:

- using NVC to emphasize the verbal message, such as gestures;

- pausing before key points;

- stressing key parts of the sentence;

- using rhetorical devices to emphasize: as in the recent British political party slogan 'We have three priorities: education, education and education'; or by saying 'and if there is one thing I would like you to remember from this talk, it is . . . ';

- signposting that a main point is coming: 'and this highlights one of the most important things I have to say'; 'and so my three main concerns are . . . '

Of course, visual aids can be a major vehicle to convey the emphasis. One final point which is often overlooked is the value of a brief handout which can summarize main points.

Using examples

Baguley suggests that examples on their own are 'not sufficient' (1994, p. 108). He draws on the work of Brown and Armstrong, who suggest that examples should be used to illustrate general rules in a particular sequence, depending on the audience, as follows:

- If the audience is familiar with the topic but needs to review or be reminded of the rule, then you can use either the rule–example or the example–rule sequence.

- If the audience is not familiar with the topic, then you should use the rule–example–rule sequence. In other words, you tell them the rule, give them an example, and then remind them of the rule.

Another important point about examples is that they must clearly highlight the rule and not be open to very different interpretations or contain too much irrelevant detail.

Key takeaways: Presentations are increasingly common in organizations, for example as part of their decision-making and review procedures, and in recruitment and selection. You should be prepared confidently to deliver presentations which are 'fluent', – that is, where the presentation flows and is clearly organized. There are two possible ways of using IT to support your presentation: either to prepare and deliver or just to prepare. If you are confident that the necessary hardware is available, there are considerable advantages in using software such as Powerpoint, including the ease of generating handouts and summaries.

Discussion 3.

1. Explain the characteristics of good presentation.

2. What are the different elements of presentation?

3. What are the different points you consider while designing a presentation?

4. What are the visual aids? Also describe different types of visual aids.

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics:

1. Describe the role of audience during the preparation and the delivery of the presentation.

2. Prepare a five minutes presentation on the following:

a) Leadership is not about being nice. It's about being right and being strong.

b) Every organization of today has to build into its very structure, the management of change.

c) The man who makes no mistakes does not usually make anything.

d) The love of money is the root of all evil.

e) The shortest way to do many things is to do only one thing at once.

UNIT 8. BUSINESS WRITING: PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

LEAD-IN

1. Think about what writing may really mean for your company and which aspects of your business it covers.

2. Can poor writing lead to failures in business?

3. What is Plain English?

4. What are the main features of business writing? How does it differ from Academic writing?

5. Describe the key steps of writing process. How long does each step take?

6. Enumerate the strategies of business writing.

7. Is it important to structure information in business writing?

8. What are the main requirements to satisfy audience's information needs?

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

audience-centered (oriented)	academic writing
blunder	to establish credibility
chunking	to gauge level of understanding
clarity	hard / soft skills
coherent	in the long run
concise	information overload
draft	linking devices
to edit	to maintain the reader's interest
flux	to meet (satisfy) one's audience's needs
gist	news releases
to highlight	to outline content
layout	skeleton outline
medium	substantial text
memo	unbiased language
to omit	

persuasive	
pertinent	
to proofread	
relevant / irrelevant	
to revise	
to shortchange	
semicolon	
signposting	
skipping	
typeface	

Part 1.

Introductory text: Defining Business Writing

People sometimes think of business writing as a 'soft' skill. In fact, you may see communication generally classified as a soft skill, as opposed to the 'hard' skills of finance, law, IT etc. The label 'soft' can give the impression that business writing is an easy option, which it certainly is not. Business writing can influence on the whole business cycle; it can win business, it can lose business and it can communicate the framework by which results can be achieved.

There is no doubt: the written word is unforgiving. It is amazing how many written messages can lead to confusion and misunderstanding – even when a company is writing in its native language. Poor writing can also lead to customer complaints. At the least, these complicate relations with customers – even though we may still be able to convert a complaint to a positive experience. The worst scenarios are where customers walk away from the companies concerned, and tell others about the bad experience they have received or think they have received. That is the impact that ineffective writing can have.

Business writing is in a state of flux. Business writing in English is becoming increasingly diverse in style. Different styles may even coexist within the same company. It can be bewildering for reader and writer alike. Generally speaking, the move in business English writing is not only towards more 'people' words, but also

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towards more informality. This can be a special challenge for cultures that place great emphasis on hierarchy. Informality can also be a challenge for nationalities where there is a distinction between a familiar and a formal form of the pronoun 'you'.

Academic Writing Compared with Writing for Business

These are two almost entirely different genres. The goals are different and they require different approaches.

Academic writing requirements. Students are generally required to write structured essays, research papers and theses. These are largely marked on the basis of how well students have managed to access the right information, process this, show prose-composition skills and accuracy, and conform to a fairly standard presentation format. By and large, the structure involves a beginning (topic and purpose), a middle (evidence and argument, or thesis) and an end (conclusion). The words and tone used must be relevant for the world of academe. This can often require a formal, passive style (objectivity rather than subjectivity); an extensive, specialized vocabulary can gain marks.

Business writing requirements. In the workplace, you certainly need to know how to access the right information and process this when you write. You need to be accurate too. Some companies require you to follow a standard house style. However, even then you may be allowed to make suggestions about how the house style could evolve, in view of changing business circumstances and customers' needs. But here is one very interesting recent evolution in writing business English. There are definitely fewer occasions now when business writing is seen to have the academic-style beginning, middle and end structure (other than in certain formal reports). You will find that you need to develop new literacy skills that your teachers may not have taught you and that you may not have come across previously. This can present a dilemma to businesses.

When writing for global business, it is best to express the gist of what you are saying in really accessible, Plain English (a language that is considered to be clear and concise). It usually avoids the use of uncommon vocabulary and lesser-known euphemisms to explain the subject. Plain English wording is intended to be

suitable for a general audience, it allows for comprehensive understanding to help readers understand a topic).

Do not focus on just translating from your own language into English. The more you do this, the worse things can get.

People may need to shed the shackles of school-driven writing when they enter the workplace. For example, time after time people say, 'We were taught at school that we cannot use "I" and "we" in the same sentence in a letter,' or 'You cannot write "I" in business; it must always be "we".' People can be unable for years to free themselves from this constraint. Many companies feel that a key driver of business success is empowerment of the individual. It is about everyone being given the power and encouragement to make a difference within their organization. There may be 'no I in team', but to embrace the concept of 'I/me' is surely crucial. Surely we have to be allowed to write 'I'. Surely we should also be allowed to write 'we' (even within the same piece of writing), to demonstrate that each of us is an integral part of the total company. You can indeed use 'I' and 'we' within your sentences.

You may have been taught that you cannot begin a sentence with 'And' or 'But'. Actually you can – and many acclaimed writers do.

It is hard to define ideal business communication. Effective written communication is when the correct, concise, current message is sent out to the primary receiver(s), then onwards without distortion to further receivers to generate the required response.

Key takeaways. Writing is a fundamental skill for you as an individual and for your business. Bear in mind that there are differences between academic English writing and business English writing. Be aware that academic writing often has a formal structure and objective slant. Business writing is tending to become more informal, especially because of the rise in e-mail and web writing, where material is presented in bite-sized chunks. Be prepared to unlearn some of the rules you may have learnt at school.

Planning and Organizing Business Writing Process

The task of preparing a written business message or a presentation is easier and more efficient if you have a systematic process to follow. The first thing you should recognize about business writing is that it differs from other writing you may have done. Business writers, however, have different goals.

For business messages and oral presentations, your writing should be:

● Purposeful. You will be writing to solve problems and convey information. You will have a definite purpose to fulfill in each message.

● Persuasive. You want your audience to believe and accept your message.

● Economical. You will try to present ideas clearly but concisely. Length is not rewarded.

● Audience-oriented. You will concentrate on looking at a problem from the perspective of the audience instead of seeing it from your own.

The ability to prepare concise, audience-centered, persuasive, and purposeful messages does not come naturally. Every professional can learn to write more effectively while spending less time and energy creating successful messages. Fortunately, by following the process introduced in this unit, you can learn to create successful messages that meet audience needs and highlight your skills as a perceptive business professional. Whether you are preparing an e-mail message, memo, letter, or oral presentation, the process will be easier if you follow a systematic plan.

The three-step writing process helps ensure that your messages are both effective (meeting your audience's needs and getting your points across) and efficient (making the best use of your time and your audience's time):

*Step 1: Planning (*prewriting*) business messages.*

● To plan any message, first analyze the situation by defining your purpose and developing a profile of your audience. When you're sure what you need to accomplish with your message, gather information that will meet your audience's needs.

● Next, select the right medium (oral, written, visual, or electronic) to deliver your message. Then organize the information by defining your main idea, limiting your scope, selecting the direct or indirect approach, and outlining your content. Planning messages is the focus of this chapter.
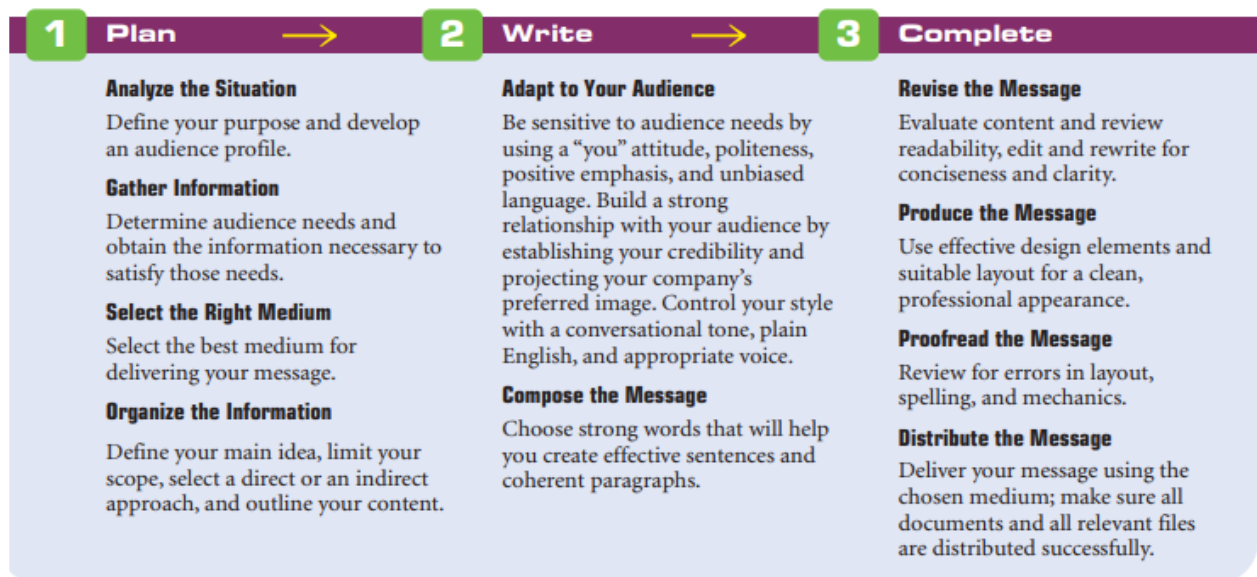
Step 2: Writing business messages

● After you've planned your message, adapt to your audience with sensitivity, relationship skills, and an appropriate writing style. Then you're ready to compose your message by choosing italic words, creating effective sentences, and developing coherent paragraphs.

Step 3: Completing (Revising) business messages

● After writing your first draft, revise your message by evaluating the content, reviewing readability, and editing and rewriting until your message comes across concisely and clearly, with correct grammar, proper punctuation, and effective format.

● Next, produce your message. Put it into the form that your audience will receive and review all design and layout decisions for an attractive, professional appearance. Proofread the final product to ensure high quality and then distribute your message.

This three-step process will help you create more effective messages in any medium. As you get more practice with the process, it will become easier and more automatic.

1 Plan →	**2 Write** →	**3 Complete**
Analyze the Situation Define your purpose and develop an audience profile. **Gather Information** Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs. **Select the Right Medium** Select the best medium for delivering your message. **Organize the Information** Define your main idea, limit your scope, select a direct or an indirect approach, and outline your content.	**Adapt to Your Audience** Be sensitive to audience needs by using a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company's preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice. **Compose the Message** Choose strong words that will help you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.	**Revise the Message** Evaluate content and review readability, edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity. **Produce the Message** Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance. **Proofread the Message** Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics. **Distribute the Message** Deliver your message using the chosen medium; make sure all documents and all relevant files are distributed successfully.

Figure 8.1. The Three-Step Writing Process

As with most aspects of human communication, reality is more complex than some of the advice. Writers need to find the combination of methods that suit their situation rather than relying on a single 'model approach'. The following table demonstrates steps in business writing, proposed by various authors.

Heller and Hindle (1998)	Stanton (1996)	Barker (1999)
Decide what you want to say	Write down your purpose	Create a message
Research the information	Assemble the information	Organize the information
Write your draft	Group the information	Write a first draft
Edit and revise	Put the information into logical sequence	Edit and revise
	Produce a skeleton outline	
	Write the first draft	
	Edit and write the final draft	

Table 8.1 Suggested steps in business writing, as proposed by various authors

OPTIMIZING YOUR WRITING TIME

The more you use the three-step writing process, the more intuitive and automatic it will become. You'll also get better at allotting your time for each task during a writing project. Start by figuring out the total amount of time you have to spend. Then, as a general rule, set aside roughly 50 percent of that time for planning, 25 percent for writing, and 25 percent for completing.

Of course, the ideal time split varies from project to project. Simpler and shorter messages require less planning than long reports, websites, and other complex projects. Also, the time required to produce and distribute messages can vary depending on the media, the size of the audience, and other factors. However, start with the 50-25-25 split as a guideline and use your best judgment for each project.

PLANNING EFFECTIVELY

As soon as the need to create a message appears, inexperienced communicators are often tempted to dive directly into writing. However, skipping or shortchanging the planning stage often creates extra work and stress later in the process. First, thoughtful

planning is necessary to make sure you provide the right information in the right format to the right people. Taking the time to understand your audience members and their needs helps you find and assemble the facts they're looking for and deliver that information in a concise and compelling way. Second, with careful planning, the writing stage is faster, easier, and a lot less stressful. Third, planning can save you from embarrassing blunders that could hurt your company or your career.

Key takeaways. The three-step writing process consists of planning, writing, and completing your message. As a starting point, allot half your available time for planning, one-quarter for writing, and one-quarter for completing your messages – but adjust these percentages for each project. Trying to save time by skimping on planning usually costs you more time in the long run. It is important to develop plans and objectives, but this does not mean that you have to write in a rigid sequence of steps, and you should review your initial plans and objectives as your writing develops, so you need to find an approach to planning and organizing your writing, which suits you.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the statements?

1. One should develop and improve your writing at every opportunity throughout your career.

2. English business writing – in its many forms – is your most common route to market.

3. The three-step writing process helps you create more effective messages.

4. Structuring information is vitally important in business writing.

5. Ten percent of your time should be spent on planning.

6. Planning can save you from embarrassing blunders that could hurt your company or your career.

THE MAIN STRATEGIES OF BUSINESS WRITING

Several research studies have tried to investigate the main strategies used by writers. Some writers seem to use one strategy almost exclusively; others adopt

different strategies for different tasks. We can find examples of successful professional authors who use each of these strategies. The key to successful writing is being aware of what you need to produce rather than following a specific process. As concludes, '*Being a writer is, above all, having control over how you write and trust in your ability to make progress*' (Sharples 1999, p. 128).

This diagram suggests that there are three interlinked aspects, which will create the finished document:

● Style of writing, i.e. choice of words, jargon, the way you address the reader and so on.

● Layout and design, i.e. the design of the page, and the use of any visual aids such as illustrations or diagrams and so on.

● The way the information is structured.

| *'Watercolourist'*	*'Architect'*	*'Bricklayer'*	*'Sketcher'*	*'Oil painter'*
Tend to write 'in one pass' from mental plan	Make detailed plan	Build the text up, sentence by sentence	Produce rough plan	Start by drafting rather than planning, working from broad headings
Tend to review and revise on screen rather than print out drafts	Do a draft, then print out. Revise paper version and then return to computer	Revise on screen as they go	Make frequent revisions and review/revise both on screen and from paper draft	Review drafts on paper

Table 8.2. Main strategies used by writers

One advantage of a clear plan is that the completed document should be easier to understand from the reader's point of view.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURING INFORMATION IN BUSINESS WRITING

We know from decades of research into human perception, cognition and memory that our brain continuously anticipates, organizes and reorganizes the information it receives. A lot of the time we are not conscious of the amount or extent of this processing. As a result, we can be misled by the way information is presented. So our retention and understanding of messages depends on how they are presented. We cannot easily absorb or remember information, which is not clearly structured.

Whenever we write a business document, we need to plan three factors, which influence each other:

● how we are going to structure the document and organize the information;

● how we are going to design the document and lay out the sections and pages;

● what style of writing we should use to express our ideas to the intended audience.
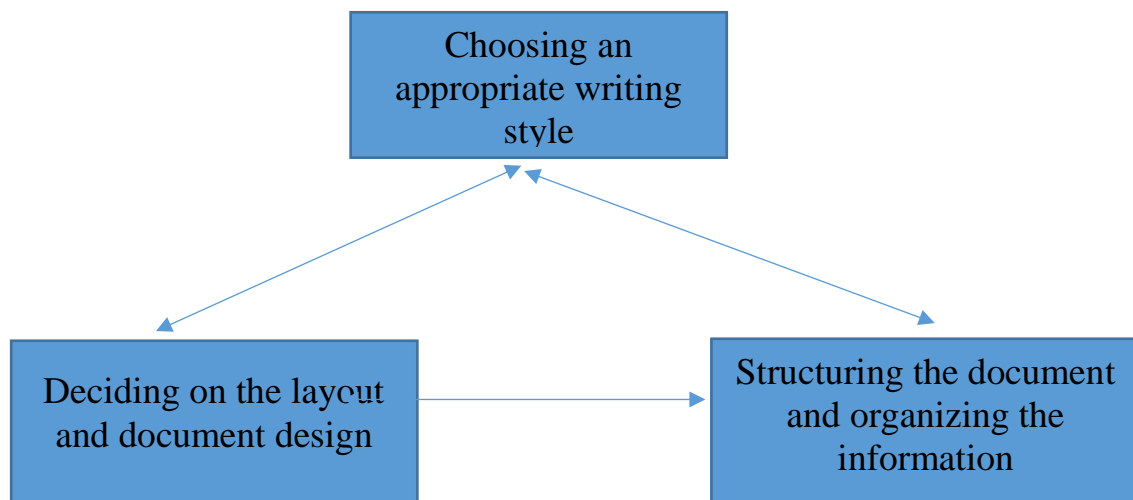
Figure 7.2 Structuring information: the planning triangle

The practical point here is that if we can present information, which is clearly organized and organized in a way, which makes sense to the audience, then that audience will find the information easier to understand and remember.

METHODS AND PRINCIPLES FOR STRUCTURING INFORMATION

There are several different ways of looking at structure: chunking, ordering and signposting. Much of the communication skills training that we have been involved in over the past twenty-plus years has used these three basic principles (Hartley, 1984):

● Chunking is the way that information can be broken down into sections or 'chunks' which make the information easier to digest.

● Ordering is the way we put those chunks into an order, which will make them more or less useful or meaningful.

● Signposting is the way we can offer clues or signals to explain or demonstrate the way the information is structured.

We can illustrate these principles with an everyday example. The news bulletin on US or UK television is usually clearly organized along the following lines:

● The bulletin is presented in a series of specific events with some use of overall categories – for example, the sports stories are clustered together towards the end (chunking).

● The introduction at the beginning lists the main stories or 'headlines' (signposting). This summary is repeated at the end and sometimes also about halfway through.

● The most 'important' stories come first (ordering). There is often a short, amusing story at the end to provide light relief

Discussion 2. Answer the questions.

1. What are the key strategies of business writing?

2. What three factors do we need to plan when writing business documents?

3. What methods and principles of structuring information do you know? Which is the most effective one?

4. Review a document or publication using these three principles. Were the principles used effectively to make the document easy to follow? Would you have preferred a different way of chunking or ordering?

Analyzing the Situation

Every communication effort takes place in a particular situation, meaning you have a specific message to send to a specific audience under a specific set of circumstances. For example, describing your professional qualifications in an email message to an executive in your own company differs significantly from describing your qualifications in your LinkedIn profile. The email message is likely to be focused on one specific goal, such as explaining why you would be a good choice to head up a major project, and you have the luxury of focusing on the needs of a single, personally identifiable reader. In contrast, your social networking profile could have multiple goals, such as connecting with your peers in other companies and presenting your qualifications to potential employers, and it might be viewed by hundreds or thousands of readers, each with his or her own needs.

The underlying information for these two messages could be roughly the same, but the level of detail to include, the tone of the writing, the specific word choices – these and other choices you need to make will differ from one situation to another. Making the right choices starts with defining your purpose clearly and understanding your audience's needs.

DEFINING YOUR PURPOSE

All business messages have a ***general purpose***: to inform, to persuade, or to collaborate with the audience. This purpose helps define the overall approach you'll need to take, from gathering information to organizing your message.

Within the scope of its general purpose, each message also has a ***specific purpose***, which identifies what you hope to accomplish with your message and what your audience should do or think after receiving your message. For instance, is your goal simply to update your audience about some upcoming event, or do you want people to take immediate action?

State your specific purpose as precisely as possible, even to the point of identifying which audience members should respond, how they should respond, and when. After you have defined your specific purpose, take a moment for a reality check. Decide whether that purpose merits the time and eff ort required for you to prepare and

send the message – and for your audience to spend the time required to read it, view it, or listen to it.

Test your purpose by asking these four questions:

● Will anything change as a result of your message? Don't contribute to information overload by sending messages that won't change anything. For instance, if you don't like your company's latest advertising campaign but you're not in a position to influence it, sending a critical message to your colleagues won't change anything and won't benefit anyone.

● Is your purpose realistic? Recognizing whether a goal is realistic is an important part of having good business sense. For example, if you request a raise while the company is struggling, you might send the message that you're not tuned into the situation around you.

● Is the time right? People who are busy or distracted when they receive your message are less likely to pay attention to it. Many professions and departments have recurring cycles in their workloads, for instance, and messages sent during peak times may be ignored.

● Is your purpose acceptable to your organization? Your company's business objectives and policies, and even laws that apply to your particular industry, may dictate whether a particular purpose is acceptable.

When you are satisfied that you have a clear and meaningful purpose and that this is a smart time to proceed, your next step is to understand the members of your audience and their needs.

DEVELOPING AN AUDIENCE PROFILE

The more you know about your audience members, their needs, and their expectations, the more effectively you'll be able to communicate with them.

Follow these steps to conduct a thorough audience analysis:

● Identify your primary audience. For some messages, certain audience members may be more important than others. Don't ignore the needs of less influential members, but make sure you address the concerns of the key decision makers.

● Determine audience size and geographic distribution. A message aimed at 10,000 people spread around the globe will probably require a different approach than one aimed at a dozen people down the hall.

● Determine audience composition. Look for similarities and differences in culture, language, age, education, organizational rank and status, attitudes, experience, motivations, and any other factors that could affect the successful reception and decoding of your message.

● Gauge audience members' level of understanding. If audience members share your general background, they'll probably understand your material without difficulty. If not, your message will need an element of education to help people understand your message.

● Understand audience expectations and preferences. For example, will members of your audience expect complete details or just a summary of the main points? In general, for internal communication, the higher up the organization your message goes, the fewer details people want to see.

● Forecast probable audience reaction. As you'll read later in the chapter, potential audience reaction affects message organization. If you expect a favorable response, you can state conclusions and recommendations up front and offer minimal supporting evidence. If you expect skepticism, you can introduce conclusions gradually and with more proof.

GATHERING INFORMATION

When you have a clear picture of your audience, your next step is to assemble the information that you will include in your message. For simple messages, you may already have all the information at hand, but for more complex messages, you may need to do considerable research and analysis before you're ready to begin writing. Meanwhile, you can often use a variety of informal techniques to gather insights and guide your research efforts:

● Consider the audience's perspective. Put yourself in the audience's position; what are these people thinking, feeling, or planning? What information do they need to move in the direction you would like them to move?

● Read reports and other company documents. Annual reports, financial statements, news releases, blogs by industry experts, marketing reports, and customer surveys are just a few of the many potential sources. Find out whether your company has a knowledge-management system, a centralized database that collects the experiences and insights of employees throughout the organization.

● Ask supervisors, colleagues, customers, or people in your online networks. Fellow workers and customers may have information you need, or they may know what your audience will be interested in. And one of the huge advantages of social media is the ability to quickly locate experts and sources of vital information.

● Ask your audience for input. If you're unsure what audience members need from your message, ask them. Admitting you don't know but want to meet their needs will impress an audience more than guessing and getting it wrong.

UNCOVERING AUDIENCE NEEDS

In many situations, your audience's information needs will be obvious, or readers will be able to tell you what they need. In other situations, though, people may be unable to articulate exactly what is needed. If someone makes a vague or broad request, ask questions to narrow the focus. Asking a question or two often forces the person to think through the request and define more precisely what is required. In addition, try to think of relevant information needs that your audience may not have expressed.

FINDING YOUR FOCUS

You may encounter situations in which the assignment or objective is so vague that you have no idea how to get started in determining what the audience needs to know. In such cases, you can use some discovery techniques to help generate ideas and uncover possible avenues to research. One popular technique is free writing, in which you write whatever comes to mind, without stopping to make any corrections, for a set period of time. The big advantage of free writing is that you silence your "inner critic" and just express ideas as they come to you. You might end up with a rambling mess by any conventional measure, but that's not important. Within that tangle of expressions, you might also find some useful ideas and angles that hadn't occurred to you yet – perhaps the crucial idea that will jumpstart the entire project.

The best discovery option in some cases might not be writing at all, but rather sketching . If you're unable to come up with any words, grab a sketchpad and starting drawing. While you're thinking visually, your brain might release some great ideas that were trapped behind words.

PROVIDING REQUIRED INFORMATION

After you've defined your audience's information needs, be ready to satisfy those needs completely.

One good way to test the thoroughness of your message is to use the journalistic approach:

Check to see whether your message answers who, what, when, where, why, and how. Using this method, you can quickly tell whether a message fails to deliver.

Be Sure the Information is Accurate

The quality of the information you provide is every bit as important as the quantity . Inaccurate information in business messages can cause a host of problems, from embarrassment and lost productivity to serious safety and legal issues. You may commit the organization to promises it isn't able to keep – and the error could harm your reputation as a reliable businessperson. Thanks to the Internet, inaccurate information may persist for years after you distribute it. You can minimize mistakes by double-checking every piece of information you collect. If you are consulting sources outside the organization, ask yourself whether the information is current and reliable. You must be particularly careful when using sources you find online; the simplicity of online publishing and the frequent lack of editorial oversight call for extra care in using online information. Be sure to review any mathematical or financial calculations. Check all dates and schedules and examine your own assumptions and conclusions to be certain they are valid.

Be Sure the Information Is Ethical

By working hard to ensure the accuracy of the information you gather, you'll also avoid many ethical problems in your messages. If you do make an honest mistake, such as delivering information you initially thought to be true but later found to be false, contact the recipients of the message immediately and correct the error. No one can

reasonably fault you in such circumstances, and people will respect your honesty. Messages can also be unethical if important information is omitted. Of course, as a business professional, you may have legal or other sound business reasons for not including every detail about every matter. Just how much detail should you include? Make sure you include enough detail to avoid misleading your audience. If you're unsure how much information your audience needs, offer as much as you believe best fits your definition of complete and then offer to provide more upon request.

Be Sure the Information Is Pertinent

When gathering information for your message, remember that some points will be more important to your audience than others. Audience members will appreciate your eff orts to prioritize the information they need and filter out the information they don't. Moreover, by focusing on the information that concerns your audience the most, you increase your chances of accomplishing your own communication goals.

If you don't know your audience or if you're communicating with a large group of people who have diverse interests, use common sense to identify points of interest. Audience factors such as age, job, location, income, and education can give you a clue. If you're trying to sell memberships in a health club, you might adjust your message for athletes, busy professionals, families, and people in different locations or in different income brackets. The comprehensive facilities and professional trainers would appeal to athletes, whereas the low monthly rates would appeal to college students on tight budgets.

Some messages necessarily reach audiences with a diverse mix of educational levels, subject awareness, and other variables. In these cases, your only choice is to try to accommodate the likely range of audience members.

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

1. Explain why it is important to analyze a communication situation in order to define your purpose and profile your audience before writing a message.

2. Consider the last piece of business or extended writing, which you did. Did you follow three-step process? If not, why not? Would the writing have been more successful if you had adopted a more organized approach.

STRUCTURING DEVICES IN WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

There are a range of devices we can use in documents to make the structure clear to readers. To illustrate how this can be done, we shall concentrate on features of the paragraph: structure, length, unity, coherence, and linking devices. Such features as typefaces and page design can supply similar cues, including the use of headings and subheadings linked to layout on the page.

Structure of paragraphs

Any substantial written business text contains a number of different pieces of information as part of a presentation to achieve some communication objective. Any substantial text without subdivision presents problems for readers – they can have no clear idea of the units of information that go to make up the total information presented.

Subdividing into paragraphs is the most basic method of presenting units of information. A paragraph is a collection of sentences dealing with a single topic or theme.

This sequence is a common structure in paragraphs in business writing as it presents a logical progression:

Situation ⟹ Problem ⟹ Solution ⟹ Evaluation

Sentence	What each sentence does
Any substantial written business text contains a number of different pieces of information that are part of a presentation to achieve some communication objective	Introduces the situation/topic
Any substantial text without subdivision presents problems for readers – they can have no clear idea of the units of information that go to make up the total information presented	States the problem

Subdividing into paragraphs is the most basic method of presenting units of information	Gives the solution
A paragraph is a collection of sentences dealing with a single topic or theme	Gives an evaluation or judgement

Table 8.3 Paragraph structure

Often, only two or three of the components are present, but they follow the same sequence:

● situation – problem – evaluation

● situation – evaluation

The most important point to emphasize is that paragraphs should have a clear and consistent structure.

Length of paragraphs. A paragraph can consist of a single sentence. Short one-sentence paragraphs are often used to emphasize a point. There is no upper limit to the number of words in a paragraph. Good business writing tends to have shorter paragraphs than does literary writing. For long documents such as reports, a maximum of 100 words per paragraph is a rough guideline. For shorter documents such as letters and memos, about 60 words is suitable, but you must not destroy the unity of a paragraph in an effort to reduce its length. To maintain the reader's interest, you should use paragraphs of varying lengths.

Unity. Unity here means that the paragraph deals with a single topic and contains no irrelevant material. Any sentence that does not refer to the topic should be excluded and moved to a new paragraph. This enables the reader to follow your train of thought one step at a time. However, a paragraph may have linking sentences, which connect it with preceding or following paragraphs, and we shall look at those later.

Coherence. It is not sufficient that all sentences in a paragraph refer to the topic; they should also develop the theme in a logical way. Each sentence should follow on naturally from the previous one.

A coherent paragraph weaves sentences together so that the discussion is integrated. The reader never needs to pause to puzzle out the relationships or reread to get the intended meaning. To achieve coherence, use transitional words, use pronouns, and repeat key words and ideas. Transitional words help the reader see relationships between sentences. Such words may be as simple as first and other indicators of sequence.

Consider this variation of the first illustrative paragraph of this section, where we have transposed the last two sentences.

(1) Any substantial written business text contains a number of different pieces of information that are part of a presentation to achieve some communicative objective. (2) Any substantial text without subdivision presents problems for readers – they can have no clear idea of the units of information that go to make up the total information presented. (3) A paragraph is a collection of sentences dealing with a single topic or theme. (4) Subdividing into paragraphs is the most basic method of presenting units of information.

This destroys the coherence of the paragraph: the new sentence (3) comments on the concept of a paragraph before this concept has been fully developed (sentence 4 in the original paragraph).

Linking (transitional) devices

We can use linking to help the reader follow our train of thought. Linking can apply to the sentences within a paragraph and to the paragraphs within a text. Various ways of linking are:

- linking punctuation;
- linking words;
- linking phrases;
- linking sentences.

Linking can slow down the reader, so avoid excessive use. It can also be irritating, particularly where the linkage is obvious.

Linking punctuation

The semicolon is commonly used to show that two statements, which could have been written as separate sentences, are closely related, for example:

The company has applied for an overdraft to finance increased stock levels; this will be essential for the continued expansion of the business.

The clause after the semicolon could have been written as a separate sentence, but the use of the semicolon emphasizes the close relation of the two ideas.

Linking (transitional) words and phrases

Transitional words help the reader see relationships between sentences. Such words may be as simple as first and other indicators of sequence.

These transitional words act as road signs, indicating where the message is headed and letting the reader know what to expect.

Common Transitional Expressions

RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS
addition	also, besides, furthermore, in addition, too
cause and effect	as a result, because, consequently, therefore
comparison	in the same way, likewise, similarly
contrast	although, but, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, still
illustration	for example, for instance, in other words, to illustrate
sequence	first, second, third, then, next, finally
summary/conclusion	at last, finally, in conclusion, therefore, to summarize
time	meanwhile, next, since, soon, then

For example:

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of large businesses. However, it can be adapted for small businesses.

Repeating key words can also provide linking, as in:

The programme has been designed to meet the needs of large businesses. The programme can also be adapted for small businesses.

Similarly, phrases such as '*next in importance is . . . , 'we conclude therefore . . . , 'to sum up'* . . . can all help the transition between sentences and paragraphs.

Linking sentences

Where one topic has been dealt with in detail and a completely new topic is to be explored, it is sometimes necessary to signal this with a transitional sentence at the end of a paragraph. For example, if we have been considering the causes of inflation and wish to move to the cure for inflation, a transitional sentence can make this clear:

"Having examined the causes of inflation we will now examine the possible cures".

To conclude, the most important point is that the structure of your written communication should support your objectives (this also applies to face-to-face communication). We can illustrate this by looking at possible structures for a persuasive letter. The following are some of the elements that may be included. Not all of these elements are required in every case and they do not necessarily follow the sequence given:

● attention-getting introduction;

● statement of situation;

● statement of needs of or advantages to receiver;

● statement of needs of sender;

● visualization of outcome;

● reconciliation of sender's and receiver's needs;

● call for action.

Key takeaways. Many texts divide the writing process into a series of steps and suggest you follow them in that order, moving from preparation and research, to organizing the material, and on to writing and revising.

Define the following terms:

Business writing, academic writing, Plain English, coherence, chunking, linking devices, signposting, blunder, draft, layout, transitional devices.

Discussion 3

1. How would you describe your current style of writing and what would you like to change/improve?

2. How can we decide which structure is 'best' for a given document?

3. If different readers prefer different ways of structuring, how can you meet all their needs?

4. Techniques such as Mind Maps ask you to visualize the structure of your document. Does this visual approach suit everyone?

5. What linking devices work best in business documents?

6. Assuming that we have structured documents to reflect our objectives, what other factors can influence the way they are interpreted by readers?

Writing. Write an essay on one of the topics:
- "Essential Business Writing Skills"
- "Planning and Organizing Business Writing Process"
- "Winning Business through Business Writing".

UNIT 9. BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

LEAD-IN

1. Define business correspondence in your own words.

2. What are the main functions of business correspondence?

3. What types of business correspondence do you know?

4. Which of the followings are not a business correspondence: emails, memos, telephone conversations, letters? Why?

5. What is the difference between business letter and personal letter?

6. What are the characteristics of a good business letter?

KEY   TERMS   AND   PHRASES   TO KNOW

appraisal	bias-free language
annexures	business entity
to bold	complaint letter
brevity	to disseminate information
cost-effective	e-mail transmission
discretion	to enhance goodwill
e-correspondence	infra-office communication
enclosure	inter-office communication
to filer	office circulars
hacker	reference letter
interface	to remove the ambiguity
to italicize	
layout	
memorandum/memo	
outlook	
spam	
recipient	
tagline	
valid	

via	

Part 1.

Introductory text: Meaning and Importance of Business Correspondence

The most convenient way to reach out to people is by sending messages through texts or letters. These are a few types of correspondence used in business. We call this as the business correspondence. Let us get ourselves familiar with business correspondence.

Just as we express our views, opinions, thoughts, and idea through writing. Business persons also feel the need of expressing themselves. It is not always possible for them to remember each and every detail in the business.

They use the simplest way of expressing i.e., written correspondence. A written correspondence in the business world is the business correspondence. Any communication in the form of the letter is correspondence. Any person related to a business expresses oneself though business correspondence. One can also ask any doubt or uncertainty through business correspondence.

A businessman writes and receives letters in his day to day life. A correspondence between two organizations or within an organization comes under this category. A letter to a supplier, complaint letters, letter of inquiry, job application letters are some of its examples.

Functions of Business Correspondence

A business correspondence has numbers of importance. Its most important feature is the ease of reaching and communicating with different parties. It is not always possible to meet persons face to face.

A business correspondence helps to meet some organizational goals. One can achieve the objectives through it. Let us study some of them in details.

1. Maintaining a Proper Relationship

It is not always possible for any business or organization to reach to any person in particular. This will cost any business. Here, the business correspondence will be a rescue for any business.

It helps in maintaining the proper relationships between the parties. Business correspondence strengthens the business. It also helps in the internal communication. It makes communication within the organization more clear and precise.

2. Serves as Evidence

Any written form of communication serves as evidence. A business correspondence helps the person in a business to keep a record of all the facts. These written records will serve as evidence.

3. Create and Maintain Goodwill

It helps in creating and maintaining goodwill between a business and a customer. Any letter to enquire, complaint, suggestion or feedbacks helps a company to grow and maintain goodwill.

4. Inexpensive and Convenient

It is a cheap and convenient form of business communication.

5. Formal Communication

A business communication serves as a formal communication between two persons. It may be a seller and a buyer. It can be between an employee and the employer. The language used is formal and logical.

It helps in removing the ambiguity and the doubts of the person involved in the business. The formal communication in business is followed and acceptable.

6. Helps in the Expansion of Business

A business correspondence helps a business to achieve the set goal. It also ensures the expansion of a business. With no waste of time and proper utilization of manpower and resources, a business can expand.

Any information regarding some resources or any product or market can be easily done. Even the news of the expansion of business can be spread by it.

Types of Business Correspondence

A correspondence is of many types. Let us get ourselves familiar with some of them.

1. Internal Correspondence

It refers to the correspondence between the individuals, departments, or branches of the same organization.

2. External Correspondence

It refers to the correspondence between two individuals. These are not of the same organization. Any correspondence outside the organization is external correspondence. Customer and suppliers, banks, educational institutions, government departments come under this category.

3. Routine Correspondence

It refers to the correspondence on routine manners. A correspondence made for inquiries, orders, replies, acknowledgments, invitation, and appointment letters are routine correspondence.

4. Sales Correspondence

It refers to the correspondence related to the sale. Sales letters, sales reports, invoice, and confirmation of orders are sale correspondence. Delivery letters, statement of accounts etc. are also some of its examples.

5. Personalized Correspondence

It refers to the correspondence based on emotional factors. Letters of the request, recommendation, and congratulations are personalized correspondence. Letter of introduction, granting and the refusal of terms are some of its examples.

6. Circulars

It refers to the communication of common matter to a large number of persons or firms. Circulars, notices of tenders, change of address, an opening of the new branch come under this category. An introduction of new products is also its example.
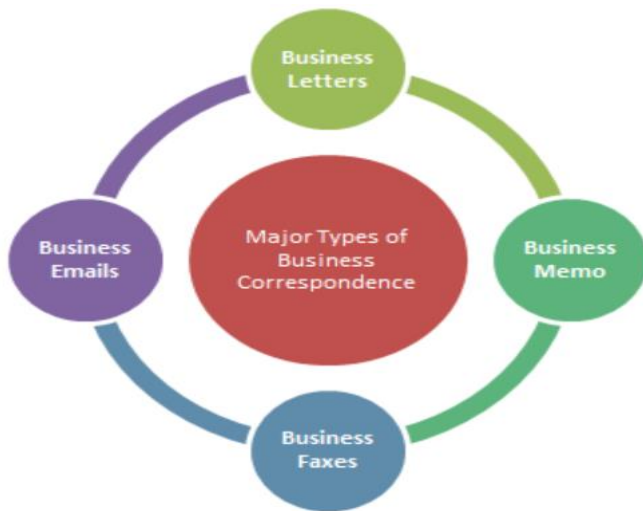
Key takeaways. Business correspondence means the exchange of information in a written format for the process of business activities. A business correspondence has a number of functions and helps to meet some organizational goals. The main types of business correspondence are internal, external, routine, sales, personalized, circulars.

Discussion 1.

Do you agree with the statements?

1. Business correspondence is a way of face-to-face communication.

2. Business records can serve as evidence.

3. Business correspondence makes communication within the organization more clear and precise.

4. Writing business documents is an expensive wau of business communication.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Business correspondence is mostly in the form of letters. People related to any business understand the significance of business letters since this correspondence in business communication can be used by them to express themselves, ask a doubt or clarification regarding any uncertainty.

A business letter is usually a letter from one business entity to another, or between such organizations and their customers or clients and other related parties. The overall style of letter depends on the purpose of the letters and relationship between the parties

concerned. A business letter is sometimes useful because it produces a permanent written record, and may be taken more seriously by the recipient than other forms of communication. It is known fact that rules exist for business letter writing, as some typically posed questions are: How should I end this type of letter? What is the rule for addressing a person you don't know? How should this offer be laid out? and many alike.

Over the period of time, the norms, or conventions, for drafting a business letter have been stabilized. But still the writer of a letter has lot of discretion at his end to word and style the letter. In the following chapter we would discuss the standard form and contents of a business letter, style of writing it, and tips for writing good business letters. Note that the today's business letters with their conversational tone and the application of psychology are the big improvement over the letter of bygone days.

TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

Business Letters are basically of two types:

1. **Formal Business Letter.** Formal business letters are the typical or standard business letters meant for legal or official correspondence. These include letters regarding business deals, order, claim, dispute settlement, agreements, information request, sales report and other official matters.

2. **Informal Business Letter.** Informal Business Letter is used for casual correspondence but doesn't necessarily have to have a casual tone of language. These letters include memorandums, appraisals, interview, thanks, reference letters, cover letter, customer complaint letters, e-mails and others which are less important or regular.

LAYOUT OF LETTERS

Layouts of letters are of two types: Blocked and Semi Blocked. Given below are examples of the two types of layout:

Types of Layout of

Blocked

Semi-Blocked
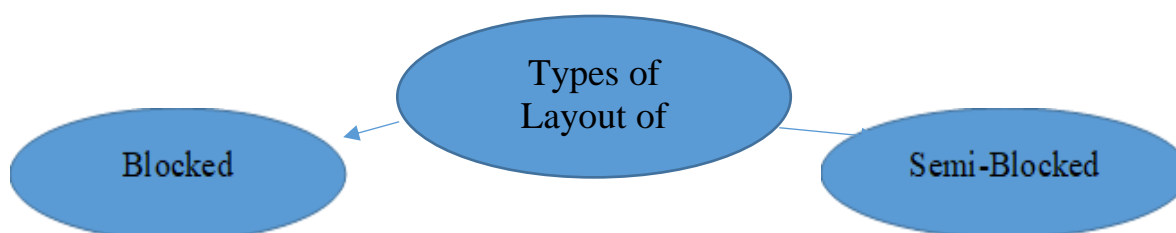
Blocked format. In the blocked format of letter layout, the date of the letter, all references, subject, salutation, the paragraphs in the body of the letter, conclusion and signature, all commence at the left margin as is shown in the specimen below. Another point to note is that in this format no commas are used after inside address, salutation or complimentary close.

Here is an example of the blocked format letter layout:

Sundar Chemicals Limited

Regd. Office: 28 M G Road, Chennai-600 023.

Phone: 011-8387666 email: Secretary@sundarchemical.com

Comp/Mar 01/26

March 15, 2019

The Manager

X Traders & Company

256, Anna Road

CHENNAI-600 070

Ref: Order No. 288/2019

Dear Sir,

We are thankful to you for promptly complying with our request to supply a Digital Printer Model ZX1 as per our Order No.285/2019 dated 10th March 2019.

However, after the machine was installed and a test run was conducted, it was found that clear photocopies were not being produced. We referred the matter to your engineer Mr. Srivasanwho has informed us that this problem is due to some inherent manufacturing defect in this machine.

We are still within the guarantee period of one year within which the machine will be replaced if there are any manufacturing defects.

Therefore, we request you to kindly replace our Printer model ZXI with a new machine that has no defects, at the earliest.

Yours faithfully,

(Maninder Singh)
Administrative Manager

Semi-Blocked Format. This style is often termed as modified block style letter. In the semi-blocked format of a layout of a letter the date of the letter, conclusion and signature are aligned to the right of the letter. The subject or reference is centrally aligned. The paragraphs of the body of the letter all commence with a slight indent and commas are used in the inside address (however a common practice now is to omit the use of comma in the inside address), salutation and complimentary close.

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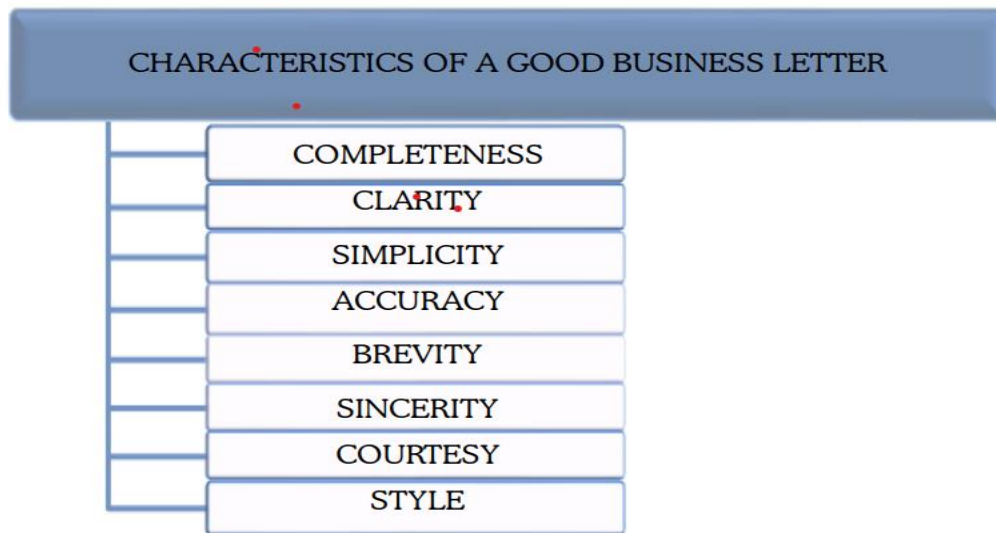
Yours faithfully,

(Maninder Singh)

Administrative Manage

Either of the two formats can be used while drafting letters. However, care must be taken to follow any one format completely throughout the letter. The overall style of letter depends on the purpose of the letters and relationship between the parties concerned. A business letter is sometimes useful because it produces a permanent written record, and may be taken more seriously by the recipient than other forms of communication. As a result of globalisation of commercial activities in recent years, there has been an increased use of American spellings in day-to-day correspondence in respect of international trade, the word 'favour' is spelled as 'favor', 'labour' as 'labor', 'centre' as 'center' etc. Even the rules of grammar are getting relaxed. Both the conventional as well as the simplified American spellings are in vogue, but care must be taken to be consistent with whichever spelling you are following/using.

ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER

The following points are considered as essentials of a good business letter and before writing any letter, these points should be observed by the draftsman.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER

COMPLETENESS

CLARITY

SIMPLICITY

ACCURACY

BREVITY

SINCERITY

COURTESY

STYLE

• **Completeness.** The letter must be complete in itself. It should contain all the information required by the addressee. The important and relevant matter should not be left out. Incomplete letters do not produce the desired effect on the mind of the reader. When a letter is incomplete, an unnecessary delay is caused in seeking clarifications. The writer should try to grasp all the relevant facts and arrange them logically and systematically to incorporate them in the body of the letter.

• **Clarity**. The writer must be clear about what he wants to convey and then he should try to express it in simple and straight forward language. Clear writing and clear thinking should go hand in hand, and person who thinks straight is usually able to write straight. Before writing, the writer should plan the message to be conveyed in order to avoid vagueness. Planning helps to produce the orderly kind of letter that creates a good impression because its message is clear.

• **Simplicity.** Business letter should be in a plain and simple style, clear and easily understood. Accordingly the language of business letters should be very simple. The use of winding expressions and high sounding phrases should be avoided.

• **Accuracy.** A business letter should not have any false or misleading statement. There should be no mistakes which usually creep in a letter due to negligence. Mistakes, however small, should be avoided, as they cause much inconvenience and trouble. All facts and figures references should be as accurate as possible and

documents like bills of exchange, invoices, statements of accounts should be carefully prepared and checked.

• **Brevity.** In a business letter unnecessary words and superfluous matter should be avoided. As brevity in letter is the soul of a commercial correspondence, the writer must see that every sentence he has written in impregnated with an appropriate meaning.

• **Sincerity.** Whether a person is writing a personal letter or a business letter, he needs to write it with sincerity. In other words, he must be himself and not an imitation of somebody else. The business letter may seem to be a common piece of writing, if all letters are modelled to a set style. It must have originality of the sort that expresses the thoughts of its writer in his own style.

• **Courtesy.** In a business letter courtesy should be present everywhere, as it pacifies anger and pays in the long run. Courtesy means that the general tone of the letter should be mild and there should be consideration for the feelings of others. Curt and rude letters have got no place in the business world. Courtesy should not be sacrificed for the sake of brevity. Discourteous and unpleasant language should be avoided even while writing letters of complaint or letters of refusal.

• **Style.** The words used in a business letter and the way in which they are used express the writer's personality and give the letter what is called its style. Style in writing as in other walks of life is a quality peculiar to the individual. It is determined by the background, training, experience of a person and the way he thinks. If one writes with naturalness and ease, the letter so produced will reflect the personality of the writer. It is correctly said, therefore, that Style is the man.

THE ELEMENTS OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER

In spite of the latest technological advancements, the importance of a business letter has not been reduced. Rather we witness that most of the software are available for helping and guiding for producing an effective business letter. In any case, they are only tool and may be used if necessary. However, we must understand the mechanical details of a business letter.

Letterhead

Letterhead, along with other printed materials like business cards and brochures, are a visual representation of any business. A letterhead is the printed stationery, which carries the essential information about the company or the organisation. Since the first contact with a company is usually made through its letterhead, companies spend considerable time, effort and money on getting it designed. A letterhead generally carries a company logo, tagline, the name and address of the registered office, corporate office of the company, Corporate Identity Number (CIN) and its contact numbers and website and e-mail addresses of the company. Sometime the letter head carries the addresses of the various offices of the company like in case of bank, the letter head of branch office caries the branch office address and contact details.

A Letterhead generally carries:

- Company logo
- Tag line
- Name and address of Registered Office, Corporate Office
- Corporate Identity Number (CIN)
- Contact numbers
- E-mail addresses of the company

Reference Number

A reference number helps us in retrieving the letter at a later stage. It may contain the initials of the letter writer, the department from which the letter originates, and the distinctive number allotted to it. It is for an organisation to decide what the contents of a reference number should be. Some business letters show the reference numbers of both the correspondents or display printed pre- numbered stickers for the purpose.

Date

The date must be written in full without abbreviating the name of the month. For example, 1.6.2019 may preferably be written as 1 June, 2019. This removes the possibility of any misunderstanding as Americans are likely to read the date given in numerals as 6th of January, 2019. The date may be written either below the reference number or to its extreme right.

Special Markings

A few spaces below the date, one may show special markings such as Confidential, Air Mail, through Registered Post/Courier/Speed Post etc. When the contents of a letter are confidential, then care should be taken to super scribe the envelope also with the same marking.

Inside Address

The complete name and address of the recipient is written below the special markings. It must be ensured that the inside name and address is exactly the same as that used on the envelope.

Attention Line

If the letter is addressed to a company or one of its departments but the sender wishes it to be dealt with by a particular individual, then an attention line may be inserted either above or below the inside address.

This may read like: For the Attention of Mr. Harish Arora, Manager (Industrial Credits).

Salutation

The choice of a salutation depends on the extent of formality one wishes to observe. The following list shows different salutations in descending order of formality.

Sir

Dear Sir/Madam

Dear Mr./Ms X

'*Dear Sir/Madam'* may be used as a standard salutation. When informality is aimed at, then the surname of the addressee is preferred for use by most correspondents. The use of first name was traditionally avoided in business letters but salutations in business now are becoming increasingly direct.

The use of *"Respected Sir"* should also be avoided, as the word respected, not being an adjective, is grammatically unacceptable.

Subject Heading

It is useful to provide a subject heading in longer letters. This helps the reader find out in the first instance what the contents of the letter are.

Subject headings may be written in initial capitals with rest in lower case and underscored or in capitals as shown:

Sub: Erection Work of Bikaner Project (or)

Sub: ERECTION WORK OF BIKANER PROJECT

The usual place for a subject heading is either above or below the salutation. In brief letters, a subject heading may be redundant, in some circumstances a subject heading may also be useful in short letters as it would ensure that the letter reaches the right person, at the earliest, who would be dealing with that subject matter. It would be of immense help especially if it is addressed to a large organisation which has a central department where all mail are received and sorted.

Main Body

The main body of letter may be divided into three parts. Most business letters begin with a brief introduction, which states the purpose of the letter. This is followed by a longer middle section, which presents relevant facts in a logical and coherent manner. This section may be divided into several paragraphs, each dealing with a separate point and written coherently. The conclusion is a polite rounding off. It may mention the feedback required.

Some of the expressions are given below:

We thank you in anticipation.

We look forward to a favourable response.

We will be glad to furnish additional information.

We expect you will continue to extend patronage to us.

We hope it is the beginning of a long business relationship.

We regret it may not be possible to deliver the goods immediately.

It is not advisable to round off every business letter with the phrase "Thanking You". If the intention is to really thank the recipient, then a complete sentence may be used since a phrase beginning with an "ing" word is neither a complete sentence nor

grammatically acceptable. This again would depend largely on the practice being followed in an organisation.

Complimentary Close

The complimentary close should match the salutation in terms of formality or lack of it. The following table may be helpful.

Salutation	Complimentary Close
Sir	Yours truly
Dear Sir	Yours Faithfully
Dear Mr. X	Yours Sincerely

A common error is to use an apostrophe in Yours (Your's). Care must be taken to avoid it. "Truly" and "sincerely" are often misspelt. It should be remembered that truly does not have an 'e' in it while "sincerely" retains both the 'e's.

Signatory

After leaving four to five spaces for the signature, the name of the sender may be written in capitals within brackets followed by the designation as shown below:

(AMBUJ CHANDNA)

Regional Sales Manager

Enclosures/Copies Circulated

List of enclosures or details of those to whom copies of the letter are being circulated may be given below the designation of the sender. In some cases, copies of the letter may require circulation while keeping the original recipient in the dark. The abbreviation in such cases is suitably changed to bcc in the letters being circulated alone.

Annexures

If we wish to annex some documents with the letter, then information about these may be listed at the end.

Key takeaways. Business letter is one of the effective forms of business correspondence. It can be of two types: formal and informal. There are two formats of business letter layout: blocked and semi-blocked. The essential components of business

letter include letterhead, special markings, inside address, attention line, salutation, subject heading, main body, complimentary close, signatory, enclosures, and annexures (optional).

Discussion 2 Answer the following questions.

1. What are the main types and layouts of business letters?

2. Enumerate the key characteristics of business letters.

3. What are the essentials elements of a good business letter?

4. What expressions are advisable to use in the conclusion of a business letter?

BUSINESS MESSAGES

Businesses messages include messages from the Chairman of the Company to the shareholder, employees or related to sales and purchases, products, and services, confirmation or cancellation of orders, invoices, company announcements and notifications, employee related news such as promotions, awards, increments, bonus, appraisals, resignation and termination. These messages are very crucial for the business be it in the form of an advertisement in print or in electronic mode or in the form of the any other internal or external communication. Good business messages are essential to keep the business relationships in good health too. There are many types of business messages which a business can write to another business on day to day basis.

In business messages, the self-centered approach preparing communication to see each situation form own points of view may lead to a writer oriented approach, resulting the message is prepared on the view point approach wherein the writer places emphasis on himself and his interests rather than on the interest of the readers and stakeholders.

Generally, these type of approaches do not cater the positive responses in the readers, because they too are self-centered resulting the reader does not focus on what you want them to do. It is always advised that to achieve more positive effects of the Business message, the writer should write on the reader's point of view.

The 'You' attitude in Business Writing

The 'you attitude' is writing style that emphasizes readers rather than the writer. To write business letter the writer should not focus or put our self in the place of receivers. However the desires, problems, circumstances, emotions and probable reactions of the recipient are to be taken into consideration. Business letter must be written form 'you viewpoint' instead of 'I or we viewpoint'. You viewpoint emphasize reader's interest and help to win the reader's mind and attention. For example:

I or We attitude: We are sure that our new discount policy will attractive to you.

You attitude : You will surely appreciate new discount policy.

I or We attitude : I am happy to hear that you have selected our Company.

You attitude : Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you.

I or we Attitude : I will give you 10% discount on credit card purchase

You attitude : You can get 10% discount on credit card purchase

Thus it can be stated that by adopting you viewpoint following benefits can be enjoyed:

• Creation of friendly atmosphere

• Motivation the reader

• Establishment of mutual trust

• Can create favorable outcome even in a bad-news situation

• Accomplishment of the goal of the letter

• Enhance goodwill of the firm

To summarize, it can be said that the 'you attitude' is not only important but also essential for effective letter writing and business messages.

Choosing Bias-Free Language

In adapting a message to its audience, be sure your language is sensitive and bias-free. Few writers set out to be offensive. Sometimes, though, we all say things that we never thought might be hurtful. The real problem is that we don't think about the words that stereotype groups of people, such as the boys in the mail room or the girls in the front office. Be cautious about expressions that might be biased in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability.

Generally, you can avoid gender-biased language by leaving out the words man or woman, by using plural nouns and pronouns, or by changing to a gender-free word (person or representative). Avoid the his or her option whenever possible. It's wordy and conspicuous. With a little effort, you can usually find a construction that is graceful, grammatical, and unselfconscious.

Specify age only if it is relevant, and avoid expressions that are demeaning or subjective (such as spry old codger). To avoid disability bias, do not refer to an individual's disability unless it is relevant. When necessary, use terms that do not stigmatize disabled individuals. The following examples give you a quick look at a few problem expressions and possible replacements. The real key to bias-free communication, though, lies in your awareness and commitment. Be on the lookout to be sure that your messages do not exclude, stereotype, or offend people.

Gender Biased	Improved
female doctor, woman attorney, cleaning woman	doctor, attorney, cleaner
waiter/waitress, authoress, stewardess	server, author, flight attendant
mankind, man-hour, man-made	humanity, working hours, artificial
office girls	office workers
the doctor … he	doctors … they
the teacher … she	teachers … they
executives and their wives	executives and their spouses
foreman, flagman, workman	lead worker, flagger, worker
businessman, salesman	businessperson, sales representative
Each employee had his picture taken.	Each employee had a picture taken. All employees had their pictures taken. Each employee had his or her picture taken.

Racially or Ethnically Biased	Improved
An Indian accountant was hired.	An accountant was hired.
James Lee, an African American, applied.	James Lee applied.

Age Biased	Improved
The law applied to old people.	The law applied to people over 65.
Sally Kay, 55, was transferred.	Sally Kay was transferred.
a spry old gentleman	a man
a little old lady	a woman

Disability Biased	Improved
afflicted with arthritis, suffering from …, crippled by …	has arthritis
confined to a wheelchair	uses a wheelchair

Positive Messages

Positive messages include messages where the audience is expected to react in a neutral to positive manner. Positive messages tend to consist of routine or good news. These messages might be items such as congratulations, confirmations, directions, simple credit requests, or credit approvals.

Following messages are considered as positive communication when:

- The receiver likes or expects this news (product shipped on time).

- The receiver needs little education or background to understand the news (travel arrangement for the conference).

- The receiver considers the message routine, even if not completely positive (parking lot closed for three days for new striping).

Negative Messages

Negative messages include messages where the audience is expected to react in a negative manner. Negative messages consist of bad news. In these messages, the sender's goal is to convey the bad news in a manner that preserves the business relationship. While the sender must deliver bad news, the sender wants to avoid an employee quitting or a customer finding another vendor. These messages might be items such as refusal to provide a refund, cancellation of an event, inability to support an event and more.

Following messages are considered as negative communication when:

- The receiver may be displeased (cost for repair is to be borne by receiver, not the company).

- The receiver needs a little persuasion (new log-on procedure takes longer but is more secure).

- The receiver may be somewhat uncomfortable (new performance appraisal system underway but employees are used to the old ways of performance appraisal).

Persuasive Messages

The third, overlapping category is persuasive messages. In this type of message, the audience is expected to need encouragement in order to act as the sender desires. In some cases, the receiver is more like a positive audience; for example, when you're

asking for a recommendation letter or when you're inviting someone to attend an after-hours work function. In other cases, the receiver is more like a negative audience; for example, when you're requesting additional payment as a result of a shared error or when you're providing an extension to an impending due date.

Following messages are considered as persuasive communication when:

- The receiver may be reluctant (please speak to the new employee group).

- The receiver is being asked a favor (please write recommendation letter).

- The receiver may be invited to something somewhat outside regular duties (please supervise a new book club that will meet on campus after work.

BUSINESS REPORTS

The word 'Report' is derived from the Latin "reportare" which means to carry back (re=back+ portare = to carry). A report, therefore, is a description of an event carried back to some who was not present on the scene.

The report is a message to management. It travels from an employee to a supervisor, from a supervisor to an executive, or from the executive to the management. Simply stated, a business report conveys information to assist in decision-making. A report is the means to present this information. Some reports might present the actual solution to solve a business problem; other reports might record historical information that will be useful to assist in future decision-making. Either way, information is being "reported" that will be useful in making decision.

Thus the term report can be defined as an orderly and objective presentation of information that helps in decision-making and problem solving. Note the different parts of this definition:

1. The report must be well-ordered so the reader can easily find information.

2. It must be objective because the reader will use the report to make decision that affect the organization.

3. It must present information-facts and data. Where subjective information are required, as in drawing conclusions and making recommendations they must be presented ethically and be based on the information contained in the report.

4. It must aid in decision making and problem solving. There is a practical, "need-to-know" dimension about business reports that differentiates them from academic or scientific reports.

A business report can be defined as an evaluation or assessment or review of a particular event, issue, period or set of circumstances which is related to a business. The business report can be on compliance status, financial position, report of the Board of Directors of the company, Sales or on any other matters for which the report is required by an expert or authority.

The business report is usually written in response to a request by an authority of the company, Business reports are one of the most effective ways to communicate. Although the scope of the business reports' are broad, however broadly, we can categorise the same in to the following:

Business Report Categories

- Compliance Report
- Corporate Governance Report
- Sustainability Report
- Recommendation Report
- Investigation Report
- Feasibility Report
- Research Report
- Periodic Report
- Situational Report

Writing Effective Business Report

A business report should not be written in essay format and it should be in an abridged style that allows the reader to navigate the report quickly and to identify key elements. It uses appropriate headings and subheadings and, if necessary, bullet points, diagrams and tables. The main function of a business report is to communicate relevant information quickly, clearly, and efficiently. Business reports can range from brief one-or-two-page reports, to reports of a hundred pages or more with several chapters and, quite possibly, a number of appendices. A lengthy report would include a table of contents and possibly an index. However, usually include the following four elements:

To write an effective business report, it is necessary to understand and identify the following:
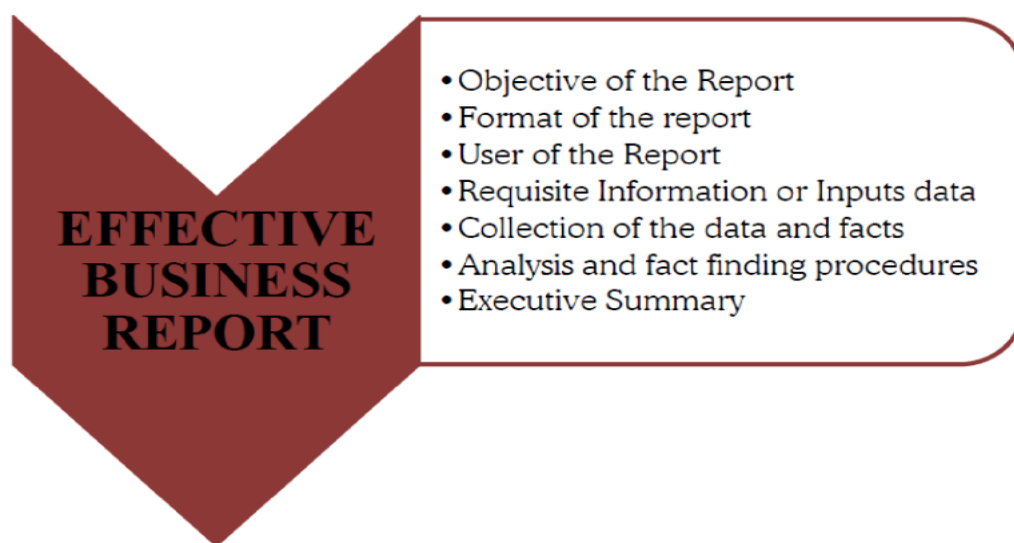
The Executive Summary acts like the Abstract of a regular essay. It will briefly state the purpose of the report, it will briefly describe the methodology used to investigate the issue and it will list the key points and findings that are found in the report.

The Body gives details of the evaluation process. It will describe your methodology and identify particular issues that impacted on your evaluation. It might also allude to, or give a brief preview of your findings. Relevant tables and/or diagrams will appear in the Body.

In the Key Findings/Recommendations section you will identify and discuss/describe your key findings and make your recommendations. Your Conclusion will neatly sum up your findings, and in doing so will ensure that these relate back to the original question or issue that has given rise to the report.

Key takeaways.

Discussion 3.

1. Make you own conclusions (Key takeaways) on business messages and reports.

2. Please, Expand on the topic of business messages and their types.

3. Define business report. Note the different parts of its definition.

4. Speak on essential elements of busimes reports.

5. Give some tips on the topic: How to write an effective business report.

Inter and Intra-Departmental Communication

Inter and intra-departmental communication has largely been a formal affair. The chief executives assumed that they were expected to be direct, brief and functional, wasting little time on niceties. Employees were usually taken for granted - bound by archaic service rules to listen and to comply unquestioningly. No wonder the documents produced were staid and standardised.

Over the years, there has been greater appreciation of the important role the staff play is an organisation. Their stake in the organisation has also gone up with schemes like Employee Stock Option Plans becoming popular as one of the means of compensation. They now take a greater interest in framing of policies, get more respect and enjoy confidence. Inter departmental communication is largely a formal affair. Inter departmental communication will be effective when it is supported by good infrastructural facilities. There are various documents used in inter departmental communication, they are:

1. Memorandum

The term Memorandum (Memos) has often been misunderstood as a part of disciplinary proceedings. Far from it, the word at best means a note or record for future use. It is a useful mode of internal communication. A memorandum (memorandums or memoranda in plural) plays a convenient and flexible role. While much of inter and

infra-office communication is being done over the phone, memorandums are preferred when one needs to convey information in writing. There are minor variations in format but most memos have the same headings. The difference with the letter format is obvious. Inside name and address are done away with. Nor are salutation and complimentary close used. Informal tone and use of personal pronouns is allowed. Numbering is optional. Titles such as Interoffice Communication, Office Memorandum or Interoffice Correspondence may be used in place of more commonly used Memorandum. When addressed to all employees, a memorandum is as good as an Office Circular:

A few specimens of Memos are given below:

Specimen 1

BEEM ELECTRONICS LIMITED

BANGALORE

Ref : 81/C/2019   11th April 2019

Office Memorandum

With reference to his request for grant of Special Casual Leave, Shri P. Sachdeva is informed that Special Casual Leave has been granted to him for four days from 23rd April to 26th April 2019 for enabling him to participate in the District Level AthleticMeet.

Sd/- Ramesh Kumar

Administration Manager

To

Shri P. Sachdeva

Secretarial Department

Through : Company Secretary

Specimen 2

SEETHA ELECTRICALS LIMITED

KANPUR

> **MEMO/17** 21st
> March, 2019
>
> With reference to his letter dated 4th March, 2009 requesting for change of seat on health grounds, Shri Badal Singh is informed that the matter is under consideration and the decision would be communicated to him soon.
>
> Sd/-
>
> Bipin Kumar
>
> Manager (Administration)
>
> To
>
> Shri Badal Singh
>
> Stores Department
>
> Through: Stores Manager

Memos are also issued in the cases of disciplinary actions to be taken against employees and replies thereto. These include memos relating to show-cause notice, charge sheet etc.

2. Office Circulars

Office circulars are for disseminating information to a large number of employees within the organisation. Since it is an internal communication, therefore it has traditionally been brief and business-like formal and devoid of salutation.

A few specimens of office circulars are given below:

Specimen 1

> *Inviting Suggestions*
>
> **SUMAN ELECTRICALS LIMITED**
>
> **PUNE - 411 004**
>
> **Circular No. 345/2019**
>
> 3rd April, 2019
>
> The manual of instruction which was last revised in June 2017 is proposed to be updated. Constructive suggestions are welcome from employees. Suggestions are to be sent to the undersigned latest by 30th April, 2019.

Sd/-
Manager O&M Cell

Specimen 2

Insisting Punctuality
MINI CONDUCTORS LIMITED
PATNA - 800 003
Circular No. 12/2019
25th May, 2019
Employees are requested to strictly adhere to the office timings. Tendencies to move around unnecessarily in corridors and canteens would be viewed seriously.
Co-operation of all the employees is solicited in maintaining decorum and discipline in the office premises.
Sd/-
Bhagat Singh
Manager, Personne

3. Office Orders

Office Orders have a format similar to that of memorandums. What makes them different is the purpose and tone employed. They generally deal with matters affecting rights and privileges of employees. The language used is formal and legally common. Passive verbs are preferred. They carry a number since they remain in force till revoked and are filed for future reference. In addition, they carry a bold, underlined heading to help us identify them. Copies are sent to concerned people:

A specimen office order is given below:

Specimen 1

Order No. 34/4	7th March, 2019
OFFICE ORDER	

Mr. J.K. Saxena, Manager (Credits), Friends Colony branch is transferred to the Regional Office on the same rank and pay. He shall hand over charge to the Chief Manager and report at the Regional Office by 10th March, 2019.

Sd/-

Personnel Officer

cc:

Chief Manager,

Friends Colony branch,

Mr. J.K. Saxena, Manager (Credits

Specimen 2

Transfer order

BRITISH INDIA COMPANY LTD.

KANPUR - 208 002

Ref.: 23/2009/Per   12th January, 2009

Office Order

Shri Kushal Jain is transferred to the Stores Department. He shall report to the Stores Officer latest by 14th January, 2009 after handing over charge of his duties to the Accounts Officer.

Sd/-

Mangal Singh

(Senior Admn. Officer)

To : Accounts Officer cc: Stores Officer

4. Office Notes

Office Notes are exchange between two different departments. Companies follow a particular format for 'notes' of this type. The actual layout of the 'Note' may differ from company to company.

It is a matter of style and individual preference.

A few formats are given below:

Specimen 1

LATEX BALLS LTD.

T.T. PURAM - 695 001

Ref.: LD/ST/3   Date: 18th June, 2019

From: Legal Deptt.

To: Admn. Deptt.

Subject: Additional Stenographer

The Extraordinary General Meeting of the company is to be held on the 18th July, 2019 to transact some urgent business. Therefore two very urgent Board meetings are to be held in quick succession for discussing a detailed agenda.

The preparation of the relevant papers and other documents in connection with the above is to be given top priority. Considering the workload likely to arise on account of this, an additional stenographer may please be posted to this department for a period of one month.

Sd/-

T. Viswanath Manager (Law)

Specimen 2

CLIMAX INSTRUMENTS LIMITED

Ref: ST/1/92   Date: 24.3.2019

From: Stores Deptt.   To: Admn. Deptt.

Subject: Stock taking for the year ending 31.3.2019

The stock taking for the purpose of closing the accounts for the year ending 31.3.2019 would commence on 30.3.2019. All the Departments may be advised to draw their requirements latest by 29.3.2019. Also, there would be no supplies to customers from the stores on 30th and 31st March, 2019.

Sd/-
Ashok Lalla
Stores Suptd

Key takeaways. A memo is different from a letter, both in format and in its effect on the addressee. It is important to note that a memo does not have a salutation and complimentary close. But the subject is clearly written and underlined. Memos are used commonly for issuing instructions to the staff, change in the policy inviting suggestion, giving information, making requests etc.

Writing.

Write an essay: *Tips for Writing Effective Memos*

CONCEPT OF E-CORRESPONDENCE

E-Correspondence is commonly known as 'email-correspondence' or 'electronic correspondence'. It is an electronic method of providing you with important information on your email address. You must supply a valid email address in order to receive information via email. For example: johndoe@company.com.

Concept of Email "Electronic mail" or "e-mail" as it is commonly called is the process of sending or receiving a computer file or message by computer modem over telephone wires to a pre-selected "mail box" or "address" on another computer. E-mail can also be sent automatically to a large number of electronic addresses via mailing lists (through 'mail-merge' option). E-mail messages can range from the simplest correspondence to business presentations, engineering blueprints, book chapters, or detailed contracts. Graphics, files of artwork or photography can be transmitted via this technology as well, though text messages comprise the vast majority of e-mail transmissions.

Today, e-mail stands as a central component of business communication, both within business enterprises and between business enterprises, because of the many advantages it offers over regular mail in terms of efficiency, speed, and 24-hour

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availability. These characteristics have made electronic mail a truly ubiquitous presence across the globe.

Electronic mail, known commonly by its abbreviation 'email', is probably the most used medium of communication today. Today, with email, there's so much more than just written text communication. Ability of the email to securely forward multimedia, photos, software, etc. has made it very popular. It's rightly said that 'necessity is the mother of all inventions', and we humans have always found a way whenever the need arose. The history of email communication is very interesting and intriguing.

Features of Email

– *Electronic :* It is an electronic mode of message transmission as it is sent using HTML (Hyper Text MarkupLanguage)

– *The computer* code used to create web pages.

– *Cost-Effective* : It is one of the cost-effective modes of fast communication. Today with the advent of smart-phones, communicating through emails has become even more cost-effective.

– *Packages* : Packages like 'Messenger' and 'Outlook' help us compose new mails or forward the received ones to one or all of the people whose email addresses are stored in the 'Address Box'. They allow us to change font, sizes and colour of the text; highlight, delete, store or save; align, center or justify the text; italicize, bold, underline or even print what we write or receive as email.

– *Interface:* An interface between email programme and word processing programme allows us to cut, copy and paste material from one place to the other.

– *Attachments* : The 'Attach' option allows us to share documents, worksheets, presentations, pictures and videos along with the mails.

– *Spam :* Unsolicited or Junk mails can be filtered by using the 'spam' option which forbids unwanted mails to enter your inbox. These unwanted mails may be advertisements, job offers, competition forms, etc. which one does not want to receive frequently.

– *Signature* : We can customize our signature as we want it to appear in the complimentary closure of every email. Once you add your signature it automatically

appears at the end of every mail that you compose. One need not write the name, designation, contact no, etc. again and again.

– *Search* : The search option helps us to locate old email communications. This can be achieved by typing the sender's name in the search box and clicking the search button. It will reflect all mails containing the name so typed.

– *Cloud Storage* : A more recent feature is cloud storage. Data can be stored on cloud. This facilitates access and instant updates to multiple users. Google Drive, Dropboxetc are examples companies offering cloud service solutions to enterprises.

– *Changes at the Workplace :* This trend of online work has brought about other changes like virtual workplaces, work from home, flexi-time etc.

Email Etiquette

While a lot of people understand the importance of following certain rules when writing a business letter, they often forget these rules when composing an email message. Here's a refresher.

– *Mind Your Manners :* Think of the basic rules you learned growing up, like saying please and thank you.

– *Address* people you don't know as Mr., Mrs., or Dr. address someone by first name only if they imply it's okay with them to do so.

– *Watch Your Tone* : Merriam-Webster defines tone as an "accent or inflection expressive of a mood or emotion." It is very difficult to express tone in writing, but make sure that you should come across as respectful, friendly, and approachable. You should not sound curt or demanding.

– *Be Concise* : Get to the point of your email as quickly as possible, but don't leave out important details that will help your recipient answer your query.

– *Be Professional* : This means, stay away from abbreviations and don't use emoticons (those little smiley faces). Don't use a suggestive email address for business communications.
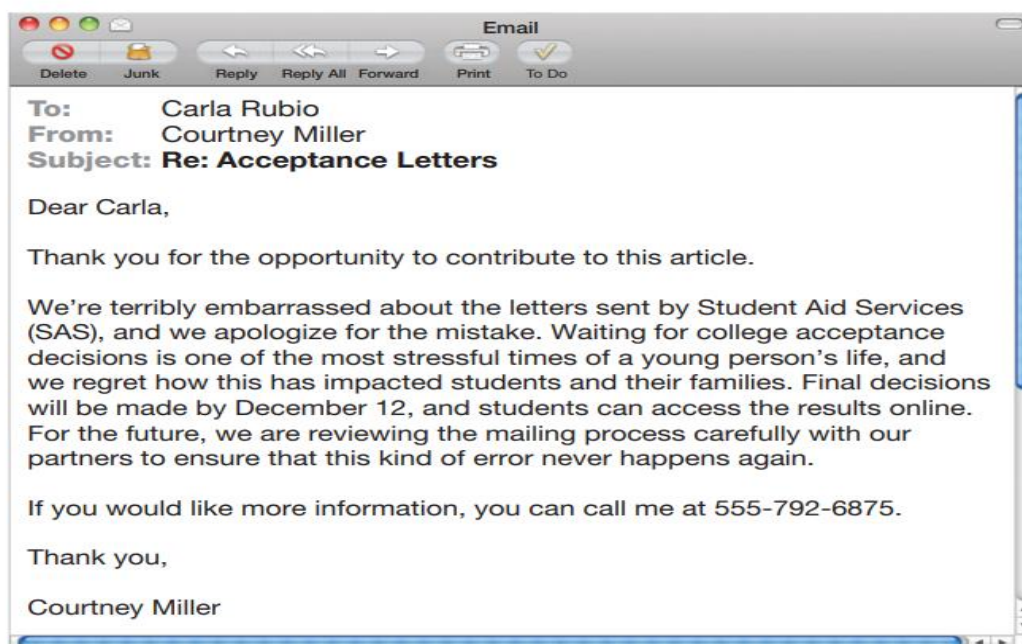
– *Use Correct Spelling and Proper Grammar* : Use a dictionary or a spell checker whichever works better for you. While you can write in a conversational tone (contractions are okay), pay attention to basic rules of grammar.

– *Wait to Fill in the "TO" Email Address:* Career Planning Site visitor Larry Batchelor says, "I never fill in the 'TO' email address until I am completely through proofing my email and I am sure that it is exactly the way that I want it. This will keep you from accidentally sending an email prematurely. In the past, I have accidentally clicked on the send icon, when I really meant to click on the attachment icon."

– *Use a friendly, positive tone in your last paragraph.* In your closing, express appreciation for the assistance, state and justify any deadlines, or offer to reciprocate. Make your closing specific to the purpose and original.
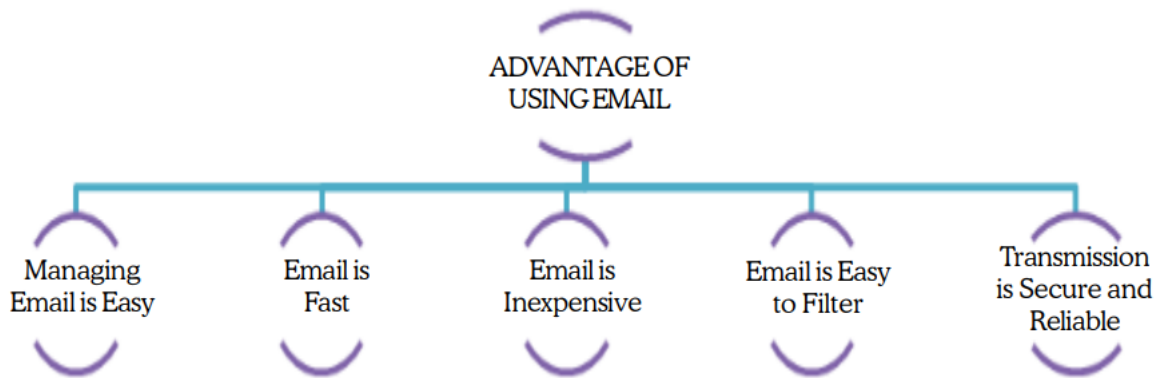
☒ NOT	I need the information by October 1.
☑ BUT	May I please have the product information by October 1, so I can include Kodak products in the next catalog.
☒ NOT	Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.
☑ BUT	Thank you for providing this information, which will help us make a fairer evaluation of Janice Henry's qualifications for this position.
☒ NOT	Let me know how I can help you in the future.
☑ BUT	Please let me know if I can return the favor by attending the meeting with Gupta Associates next week.

Here is an example of e-mail.


```
                                          Email
  Delete   Junk      Reply  Reply All Forward   Print   To Do

  To:       Carla Rubio
  From:     Courtney Miller
  Subject:  Re: Acceptance Letters

  Dear Carla,

  Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this article.

  We're terribly embarrassed about the letters sent by Student Aid Services
  (SAS), and we apologize for the mistake. Waiting for college acceptance
  decisions is one of the most stressful times of a young person's life, and
  we regret how this has impacted students and their families. Final decisions
  will be made by December 12, and students can access the results online.
  For the future, we are reviewing the mailing process carefully with our
  partners to ensure that this kind of error never happens again.

  If you would like more information, you can call me at 555-792-6875.

  Thank you,

  Courtney Miller
```

Advantages and disadvantages of Email

Email has changed the way we do business. Sure, people complain about the amount of Email they receive. But when all is said and done, use of Email has made a positive impact on business and has an edge over other methods of communication.

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ADVANTAGE OF USING EMAIL

- Managing Email is Easy
- Email is Fast
- Email is Inexpensive
- Email is Easy to Filter
- Transmission is Secure and Reliable

Here are five advantages of using Email:

(1)   *Managing Email is Easy:* You can manage all your correspondence on screen and so can your customers. Your proposal can be answered, revised, stored, and sent to others, all without reams of paper involved.

(2)   *Email is Fast:* Mail is delivered instantly from your office to anywhere in the world. No other method of delivery can provide this service. Timely buying and selling decisions can be made in one heartbeat.

(3)   *Email is Inexpensive:* Compared to telephone calls, faxes, or over night courier service, Email is less expensive.

(4)   *Email is Easy to Filter:* The subject line on an Email makes it easy to prioritize messages. The reader can identify critical correspondence quickly and deal with it immediately. Unlike regular mail which needs to be opened and reviewed, or voice mail which requires you to either listen to or scan all your messages for those that require immediate attention.

(5)   *Transmission is Secure and Reliable*: The level of security in transmitting Email messages is very high, and the industry continues to strive to develop even tighter security levels. Email is private. Often telephone and fax messages are not. If the address information is correct, rarely does an Email go astray. Fax machines can be out of order or out of paper and this prevents an important message from being delivered in a timely manner.

Email has been credited for increased efficiency, business readiness, and a host of other advantages tied to increased productivity. However, there are some disadvantages.

Disadvantage of using E-mail

- Time Consuming
- Security
- Impersonal Communication
- Misunderstanding
- Vulnerability
- Internet Connectivity

(1) *Time Consuming* : Writing an email takes less time than it takes to print a letter and mail it off the ease with which an e-mail is send implies that an average person may do more correspondence electronically than he would if all correspondence was done by postal mail. Sometimes the message is better communicated over the telephone or directly. Organizing and reading through emails can also eat up a great deal of time and prove an obstacle in the way of a worker's producitivity.

(2) *Security*: Sensitive information can be easily shared and distributed within a business through email. It does not matter if the email is sent accidentally or deliberately, the damage reamins the same. Moreover, when someone hands you a business letter, you are the only person who receives that letter. An e mail can be intercepted by a hacker or go on an incorrect email address and wind up in someone else's inbox. Your sensitive information and messages are easily accessible to hackers and to even unsuspecting recipients.

 (3) *Impersonal Communication:* While email can be faster, the meaning of the message is often lost in the text. It can make customers or employees forget there are people involved in the transaction, which can affect customer service. Since email recipients cannot see one another, the emails do not have any voice inflection or emotion that can help in proper interpretation.

(4) *Misunderstanding:* Pronouns and popular jargon can lead to conflicts in emails. In addition, email is filled with abbreviations and short descriptions, which can often be misunderstood and/or interpreted the wrong way.

(5) *Vulnerability:* It would take a manual effort on the part of someone to access all his important printed documents and destroy them. But all of your emails and important information can be lost with a simple hard-drive crash. Even if you store your email information on another server, you could lose your data if that site goes down or gets out of business.

(6) *Whether an organisation depends on internet connectivity*: E-mail depends on the internet connectivity which can get disturbed or disconnected due to various reasons.
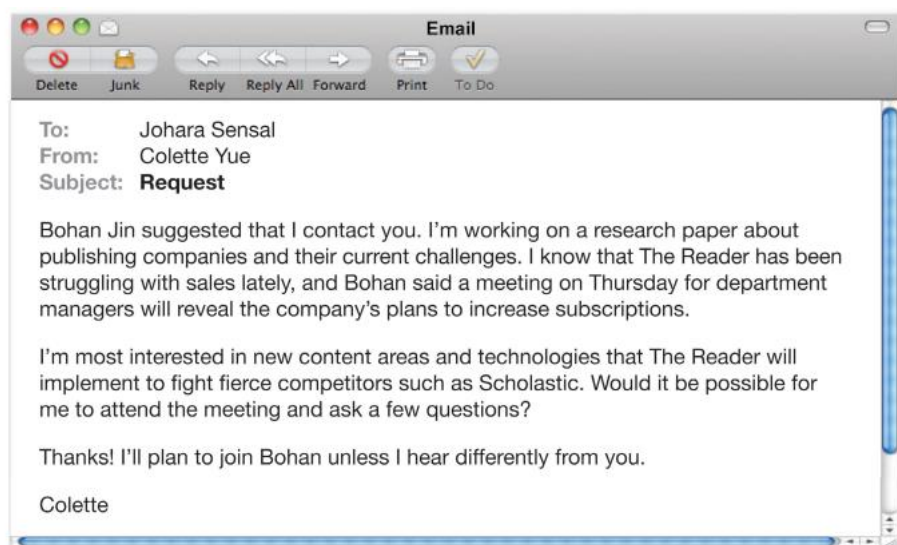
– Email cannot be considered a confidential mode of communication.

– Email should not be considered as a replacement for direct, face-to-face communication.

– Email cannot be relied in case of emergency messages as the receiver may read it at his own convenient time.

– Email depends on the internet connectivity which can get disturbed or disconnected due to various reasons.

Define the following terms:

Business correspondence, business letter, annexures, e-correspondence, hacker, infra-office communication, interoffice correspondence, external communication, internal communication, interface, memorandum, spam

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

1. Analyse the following e-mail. Do you consider it effective?

To: Johara Sensal
From: Colette Yue
Subject: **Request**

Bohan Jin suggested that I contact you. I'm working on a research paper about publishing companies and their current challenges. I know that The Reader has been struggling with sales lately, and Bohan said a meeting on Thursday for department managers will reveal the company's plans to increase subscriptions.

I'm most interested in new content areas and technologies that The Reader will implement to fight fierce competitors such as Scholastic. Would it be possible for me to attend the meeting and ask a few questions?

Thanks! I'll plan to join Bohan unless I hear differently from you.

Colette

2. Do you always check the spelling of the name of the person you are writing to and their correct job title?

3. How can you use the word *you* skillfully?

4. Explain how can a message be conversational and also profession.

5. Define bias-free language. Give the examples of gender-, age-, racially-, disability-bias words and their improved versions.

6. Expand on advantages and disadvantages of using e-mails.

Writing. Write a positive and negative message, business report, a memo, a business letter.

UNIT 10. EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION

LEAD-IN

1. What does job hunting (job seeking, or job searching) mean?

2. Have you ever searched for a job? Were you successful?

3. What ways of job seeking do you know? What are the most reliable?

4. What does job searching process include?

5. What are the main steps of job searching process?

KEY TERMS AND PHRASES TO KNOW

cover letter	job hunting (job seeking, or job searching)
résumé	to search for a job
sophisticated	in reverse time order
potential employer	to attend a career fair
professional background	to be reached
to outperform	a random list of skills
conscientious	the projected graduation date
application documents	to receive awards or honors
applicable qualifications	to provide specific details
to customize	to establish the essential basics
self-centered	to apply for the position
objective	to hold down a job
exaggeration	to be invited for an interview
relevant qualifications	to handle conflict
template	to harbor resentment
to glean	to use accusative language
job candidate	to brag an invitation
to confess	to avoid sounding or looking angry

Part 1

***Introductory text:* INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION**

If you devote a portion of your life to training for a career, nothing is more important at the end of that program than getting a job where you can apply your training. The job application process requires advanced communication skills typically not taught in your core program courses, and the competition for the best jobs is fierce.

Hiring competitions involve two components comparable to a written and oral exam. You must pass the written component (the cover letter and résumé) before you move on to the oral (the interview), and you must out-perform the competition in the written component to get the interview, and in the oral component to get the job. Representing you in your physical absence, your cover letter and résumé mainly assure employers that you have the experience and skills required to be successful in the job. They also prove whether you are literate and conscientious enough to represent the company respectably when writing on their behalf to customers and other stakeholders.

The oral component proves that you can carry a sophisticated conversation, represent the company successfully in face-to-face interactions with customers, and communicate clearly and in a personable manner with managers and co-workers while conducting day-to-day operations.

This chapter covers both components of the hiring process. We begin with the research work you should do in order to prepare effective cover letters and résumés. The advice given here represents a fairly broad consensus of employer expectations, but it can't apply to all because each employer is unique. Doing research and networking are great ways of identifying the company and position that is right for you and increasing your chances of being hired. After examining strategies for job hunting, we'll cover the résumé and cover letter-writing process with the goal of producing job application materials that will considerably increase your chances of getting an interview. Next, we will discuss interview expectations and strategies.

RESUMES

A resume is a document that summarizes your education, skills, talents, employment history, and experiences in a clear and concise format for potential employers. The resume serves three distinct purposes that define its format, design, and presentation:

1. To represent your relevant professional information in writing

2. To demonstrate the relationship between your professional information and the problem or challenge the potential employer hopes to solve or address, often represented in the form of a job description or duties

3. To get you an interview by clearly demonstrating you meet the minimum

qualifications and have the professional background needed to help the organization meet its goals

Regardless of the format, employers have expectations for your resume. They expect it to be clear, accurate, and up to date. This document represents you in your absence, and you want it to do the best job possible. You don't want to be represented by spelling or grammatical errors, as they may raise questions about your education and attention to detail. Avoid providing potential employers with an easy excuse to toss your resume at the start of the process. Do your best work the first time. Table 10.1 highlights some common types of resumes.

Common Types of Resumes

Type	Function	Advantage	Disadvantage
Chronological	Chronological resumes (which list items in reverse time order) focus on work history.	Demonstrates a consistent work history	It may be difficult to highlight skills and experience.
Functional	Functional resumes (also called competency-based	Demonstrates skills that can clearly link to job functions or duties	It is often associated with people who have gaps in their

Type	Function	Advantage	Disadvantage
	resumes) focus on skills.		employment history.
Combination	A combination resume lists your skills and experience first, then employment history and education.	Highlights the skills you have that are relevant to the job and provides a reverse chronological work history	Some employers prefer a reverse chronological order.
Scannable	A scannable resume is specifically formatted to be read by a scanner and converted to digital information.	Increasingly used to facilitate search and retrieval, and to reduce physical storage costs	Scanners may not read the resume correctly.

Main Parts of a Resume

Resumes have several basic elements that employers look for, including your contact information, profile and objective/ goal, education and work experience, and so on. Each resume format may organize the information in distinct ways based on the overall design strategy, but all information should be clear, concise, and accurate. The content in your resume should be carefully selected to present the best, most applicable qualifications for a particular employer (the company and position for which you are applying) or purpose (attending a career fair).

Contact Information

This section is often located at the top of the document. The first element of the contact information is your name. You should use your full, legal name even if you go by your middle name or use a nickname. There will plenty of time later to clarify what you prefer to be called, but all your application documents, including those that relate to payroll, your social insurance number, background checks, transcripts, certificates, or degrees, should feature your legal name. Other necessary information includes your

phone number and email address. For business purposes, do not use an unprofessional email address like teddybears@….com. Create a new e-mail account if needed, with an address suitable for professional use. If you have more than one phone number at which you can be reached, list the one you're most likely or most easily able to answer. (Don't make it confusing for an employer to guess at which number to call you.)

Profile and Objective

This is one part of your resume that is relatively simple to customize for an individual application.

Your Profile should highlight your most relevant qualifications for the job (based on the job ad and your education, prior work experience, etc.). Your profile should be carefully adapted to the job ad and not a random list of skills.

Your objective should reflect the audience's need to quickly understand how you will help the organization achieve its goals. An example of an objective is shown in Figure 10.1. Please note that you should name the company, the position, and specify what you could do for them. Don't say something vague and self-centered such as "To gain a well-paying job in a respectable bank." Doing that would show them, among other things, that you don't understand the rules of the game — and it might eliminate you from the competition immediately.

Objective: To contribute to an increase in sales at ABC Corporation as a sales representative.

Figure 10. 1 Sample objective statement on a resume

Education

You should list your education in reverse chronological order, with your most recent degree/diploma/certificate first. List the school, credential type (e.g., diploma, certificate, degree), and the full credential name. Don't use abbreviations for your university/college or program. For example, if you're completing a BBA-Accounting, spell it out in full (Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting). If you went to

a college or university that may not be known in the area where your potential employer is located, include the city and country alongside the name of the school. List your GPA or your average for the last year if high. (You might have to convert your average into percentages if your school used a different grading system than that used in the country/ area where you are applying for a job.)

If you have a degree/ diploma/ certificate in progress, start with that and provide the projected graduation date.

Work Experience

List, in reverse chronological order, your employment history, including the positions, companies, locations, dates, duties, and skills demonstrated or acquired. You may choose to use active, descriptive sentences or bullet lists, but be consistent. Emphasize responsibilities that are relevant to the specific job for which you're applying, but don't let emphasis become exaggeration. This document represents you in your absence, and if any information is false, at a minimum you could lose your job. Be specific, be precise, and quantify details whenever possible. For example, instead of saying "managed employees during the night shift," you could quantify that statement by saying "supervised 8 employees during 9-hour overnight shifts." Ideally, start each item with an action verb. Use the present tense to describe tasks and accomplishments for positions you currently hold and the past tense to describe positions you no longer hold.

Other Relevant Qualifications

If you have received awards or honors; given presentations; published papers or other materials; or have other qualifications of note and relevance to the position for which you're applying, you can list these in an appropriately named section on your resume. Don't include a list of your personal interests or hobbies unless they relate directly to the field or it could be argued that they bolster your transferable skills. If you are wondering whether or not to include a piece of information, focus on the audience's needs. Will they find this information valuable in making a decision about you as a candidate? Does it reveal something important about your skills, interests, and

qualifications? Does it reveal something new about you that is not already revealed in your resume?

References

You may choose to include references at the end of your resume. If you do, provide individuals' full names, the company name, the position, and full contact information. If you are invited to an interview, three references are typically expected. They can be former professors, managers, etc. (ideally, people with whom you worked in a variety of roles).

Additional Resume Strategies
Length

Your resume should be 1-2 pages long. Since you are pursuing a graduate certificate at Fanshawe and must have prior degrees/ diplomas and probably also some work experience, a 2-page resume would be reasonable. Don't artificially extend your resume (through wordy statements, larger than necessary font size, unnecessary spacing). Also, don't exceed two pages unless you have a really long work history and you need to provide specific, relevant information directly related to the position sought. The person reading your resume may be sifting through many applications and will not spend time reading several extra pages if the content is not directly relevant.

Use Key Words

Just as there are common search terms and common words in relation to each position, job description, or description of duties, your resume should mirror these common terms when and where appropriate.

Follow Directions

If a job description uses specific terms, refers to computer programs, skills, or previous experience, make sure you incorporate that language in your resume (assuming you have those skills or experience). By mirroring the employer's language and submitting your application documents in accord with their instructions, you convey a spirit of cooperation and an understanding of how to follow instructions.

Make it Easy to Read

Make sure your resume is easy to read. Use white space between sections. Use emphasis (such as bolding, italicizing, underlining, or all caps) consistently to draw attention to headings or things of note, but avoid using multiple types of emphasis at one. For example, don't bold, underline, and italicize the heading for your work experience section. Choose an easy-to-read font that is typically used in business documents, such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri. Avoid using less common font types, which may be difficult to read. A font size of 11 or 12 is easier to read for most people. Be consistent and purposeful in the visual design of your resume. Align bullet points consistently. Use the same types of

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bullet points in your resume. Align your resume content consistently. Remember that whoever will be reviewing resumes will likely be looking at many documents in a row and may have to work quickly!

Resume Templates

A template of a chronological resume is shown in Figure 10. 2. *Remember to add a Profile to your Objective (based on the job ad and your skills).*

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Cell Phone
Home Phone/Office Phone
E-mail Address

Objective or Statement of Interest
Clear and concise statement of professional goal that may include job or position and may also indicate a field (financial services, human resources).

Employment Experience
- List in reverse chronological order (i.e., put the most recent position first).
- Note the job title, the company, and dates of employment.
- Include clear statements of work performed as part of your job responsibilities, using language similar to the job announcement.
- If the job announcement emphasizes supervisory experience, for example, this should be an area of emphasis in your descriptions of tasks performed.
- Indicate the most important or relevant job responsibilities or skills involved with those tasks first in priority order.
- Include awards, citations, or commendations that relate to your objective or statement of interest.

Education
List earned degrees and incomplete education if applicable:
- Undergraduate Studies, 86 credits, University of State
- Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Computer Information Systems, Community College of State, 2005
- High School Diploma, City High School, GPA or class rank
- Include technical certificates and completed trainings if they directly relate to your objective or statement of interest.

Community Service
List activities, your role, and, if applicable and space is available, your accomplishments:
- Eagle Scout, Troop #12345, 1998–2001
- Youth Choir Leader, Community Interfaith Church, 1995–2001
- Students in Free Enterprise Team, City High School, 1998–2001

References
List names of references, their positions, and their contact information or include "references upon request."

Figure 10. 2. A functional resume template

Key takeaways:

- A resume is a document that summarizes your education, skills, talents, employment history, and experiences in a clear and concise format for potential employers.

- A resume demonstrates the relationship between your professional information and the problem or challenge the potential employer hopes to solve or address, often represented in the form of a job description or duties.

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•A resume is used to get you an interview by clearly demonstrating you meet the minimum qualifications and have the professional background help the organization meet its goals.

Discussion 1

Do you agree with the statements?

1. The job application process doesn't require advanced communication skills.

2. A resume is an oral presentation of personal information such as education, skills, talents, employment history, and experiences.

3. Preparing resume you should use your full, legal name.

4. If you are invited to an interview, one or two references are typically expected. They can be members of your family or friends.

5. Resume represents you in your absence, and you want it to do the best job possible.

COVER LETTERS

Traditionally, the application letter or cover letter is a formal letter that accompanies your resume when you apply for a position. Its purpose is to support your resume, providing more specific details, and to explain in writing why you are a strong candidate for the specific position to which you are applying. It should not simply reiterate your resume; it's an opportunity for you to make a case for your candidacy in complete sentences and phrases, which gives the reader a better sense of your "voice."

It can be helpful to start by first thinking about the audience and purpose for the application letter. What information does your reader need to glean from your letter? At what point in the hiring process will they be reading it?

As you draft the letter, consider what you would want to say if you were sitting across the desk from your reader. It should be written in a formal, professional tone, but you still want it to flow like natural speech—this will make it easier for your reader to absorb the information quickly.

What to Include

Write your application letter in sections or "blocks." This provides a basic structure for the letter; once you have an understanding of this foundation, you can customize, update, and personalize the letter for different applications and employers.

Introductory Paragraph

Open your letter with a concise, functional, and personable introduction to you as a job candidate. This is your chance to establish the essential basics of your qualifications and to set the themes and tone for the rest of the letter.

- Name the position you're interested in (by exact name and number, if available)
- Clearly state that you are applying for the position—remember that you are requesting (not demanding) that they consider you as a candidate for the position
- Summarize your best qualifications relevant to the position
- Indicate you've enclosed your resume for additional information
- Mention how you heard about the job (job ad, networking, etc.)

Optionally, you might also take the opportunity at the beginning of the letter to express your interest in working for this particular company and/or your passion for and interest in the field—I am particularly interested in this position because… This sets a nice tone and shows that you are engaged and enthusiastic. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge about the company (developed through your research).

Education & Academics Paragraph(s)

The purpose of this paragraph is to paint a detailed picture of your training and credentials and how this is relevant to the position. Your opportunity in this paragraph is to explain the activities and knowledge you have gained and/or are developing that most matter for this position and employer. Carefully consider what the employer will value most about your educational experiences. If you have a lot of project experience or several key experiences that you want to highlight, this information may be written in multiple paragraphs.

This content should NOT be a laundry list of course titles. Instead, describe how your academics/training have shaped your understanding of the field you are entering

and significant skills you are developing, but always tie it back to what the employer is looking for—stay focused on the information your audience members need and what they will care about.

Employment Paragraph (*if applicable*)

It is important for employers to feel that they are hiring responsible, reliable people who know how to hold down a job. If you do have work experience in this field such as a previous internship, this is a perfect time to discuss that. If you have previous work experience, even if it's not related to your field, this is your opportunity to describe the value of that experience—the value for you, but, more importantly, to your reader. Describe your previous work experience that shows you are a good employee and explain how this is relevant to the position. Be specific about the company, the time frame, your responsibilities, and the outcomes/results. Focus on your relevant and transferable skills.

Other Qualifications (*if applicable*)

Awards you've received; publications you've achieved; and your activities and involvement in things outside of your coursework and work experiences, such as student organizations, clubs, and volunteer work, are great pieces of information to include that show you are a well-rounded, motivated person with good time management skills. Personal, human connections are an important part of the job application process, and describing some of these activities and interests can help your reader start to feel a more personal connection. Describe your specific actions and involvement honestly, while still trying to connect to transferable skills and the keywords in the job posting.

Concluding Paragraph

As you conclude the letter, tie everything together, politely express interest in an interview, and end on a positive note. Don't ask for the job here; you're requesting and not demanding an interview.

Letter Formatting

Your application letter should use formal letter formatting.

In today's job market, where many applications are online, the letter might be delivered in a variety of formats. For example, it might be a PDF file uploaded to an online application system or if might be simply sent in the body of an email. Make sure you submit your cover letter in the file format and way the job advertisement specifies.

Key takeaways:

• A cover letter is a formal letter that accompanies your resume when you apply for a position.

•A cover letter should contain an introductory paragraph, education & academics paragraph(s), employment paragraph (if applicable), other qualifications (if applicable), and a concluding paragraph.

Discussion 2

1. What is a cover letter?

2. What paragraphs does it consist of? Characterize them briefly.

3. What is the purpose of cover letter?

4. What paragraph is the most important for employee in the applicant's cover letter?

5. Give some useful tips connected with preparing successful cover?

Define the following terms:

Experience, reverse chronological order, interview, employee, applicant, employment history, to apply, concluding paragraph, references, advertisement.

EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWING

In order to make the transition from an outsider to an insider in the business world, you'll have to pass a series of tests, both informal and formal. One of the most common

tests is known as an employment interview. An employment interview is an exchange between a candidate and a prospective employer (or their representative). It is a formal process with several consistent elements that you can use to guide your preparation.

Employment interviews may not be limited to only one exchange/ interaction. A potential employee may very well be screened by a computer (as the résumé is scanned) and interviewed online or via the telephone before the applicant meets a representative or panel of representatives. The screening process may include formal tests that include personality tests, background investigations, and consultations with previous employers.

Depending on the type of job you are seeking, you can anticipate answering questions, often more than once, to a series of people as you progress through a formal interview process. Just as you have the advantage of preparing for a speech with anticipation, you can apply your research and public speaking skills to the employment interview.

The invitation to interview means you have been identified as a candidate who meets the minimum qualifications and demonstrates potential as a viable candidate. Your cover letter, résumé, or related application materials may demonstrate the connection between your preparation and the job duties, but now comes the moment where you will need to articulate those points out loud.

Use the communication skills gained to date with the knowledge of interpersonal communication to maximize your performance. There is no one right or wrong way to prepare and present at your interview, just as each audience is unique, but we can prepare and anticipate several common elements.

Preparation

Would you prepare yourself before writing for publication or speaking in public? Of course. The same preparation applies to the employment interview. Briefly, the employment interview is a conversational exchange (even if it is in writing at first) where the participants try to learn more about each other. Both conversational partners will have goals in terms of content, and explicitly or implicitly across the conversational exchange will be relational messages. Attending to both points will strengthen your performance.

On the content side, if you have been invited for an interview, you can rest assured that you have met the basic qualifications the employer is looking for. Presumably, you have already researched the organization to prepare your application package. Perhaps you have involved colleagues and current employees of the organization in your research process and learned about several of the organization's attractive qualities, as well as some of the challenges experienced by the people working there. Research the organization more at this stage and try to learn as much as possible about them before your face-to-face meeting.

What to Know	Examples
Type of Interview	Will it be a behavioral interview, where the employer watches what you do in a given situation? Will you be asked technical questions or given a work sample? Or will you be interviewed over lunch or coffee, where your table manners and social skills will be assessed?
Type of Dress	Office attire varies by industry, so stop by the workplace and observe what workers are wearing if you can. If this isn't possible, call and ask the human resources office what to wear – they will appreciate your wish to be prepared.
Company or Organization	Do a thorough exploration of the company's website. If it doesn't have one, look for business listings in the community online and in the phone directory. Contact the local chamber of commerce. At your library, you may have access to subscription sites such as Hoover's Online (http://www.hoovers.com).
Job	Carefully read the ad you answered that got you the interview, and memorize what it says about the job and the qualifications the employer is seeking. Use the internet to find sample job descriptions for your target job title. Make a written list of the job tasks and annotate the list with your skills, knowledge, and other attributes that will enable you to perform the job tasks with excellence.
Employer's Needs	Check for any items in the news in the past couple of years involving the company name. If it is a small company, the local town newspaper will be your best source. In addition, look for any advertisements the company has placed, as these can give

	a good indication of the company's goals.

Table10. 1 Interview Preparation Checklist

Businesses hire people to solve problems, so you will want to focus on how your talents, expertise, and experience can contribute to the organization's need to solve specific problems. The more detailed your analysis of their current challenges, the better. You need to be prepared for standard questions about your education and background, but also see the opening in the conversation to discuss the job duties, the challenges inherent in the job, and the ways in which you believe you can meet these challenges. Take the opportunity to demonstrate the fact that you have "done your homework" in researching the company. Table 10.1 "Interview Preparation Checklist" presents a checklist of what you should try to know before you consider yourself prepared for an interview.

Performance

You may want to know how to prepare for an employment interview, and we're going to take it for granted that you have researched the company, market, and even individuals in your effort to learn more about the opportunity. From this solid base of preparation, you need to begin to prepare your responses. Would you like some of the test questions before the test? Luckily, for you, employment interviews involve a degree of uniformity across their many representations.

Here are eleven common questions you are likely to be asked in an employment interview (McLean, 2005):

1. Tell me about yourself.

2. Have you ever done this type of work before?

3. Why should we hire you?

4. What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?

5. Give me an example of a time when you worked under pressure.

6. Tell me about a time you encountered (X) type of problem at work. How did you solve the problem?

7.   Why did you leave your last job?

8.   How has your education and/or experience prepared you for this job?

9.   Why do you want to work here?

10. What are your long-range goals? Where do you see yourself three years from now?

11. Do you have any questions?

When you are asked a question in the interview, look for its purpose as well as its literal meaning. "Tell me about yourself" may sound like an invitation for you to share your text message win in last year's competition, but it is not. The employer is looking for someone who can address their needs. Answer this question by addressing your core qualifications for the job.

In the same way, responses about your strengths are not an invitation to brag, and questions about your weaknesses are not an invitation to confess. If your weakness is a tendency toward perfectionism, and the job you are applying for involves a detail orientation, you can highlight how your weaknesses may serve you well in the position (although this type of claim might be perceived as a little contrived). If asked about strengths, choose one/ a few that are core competencies for the job. If asked about weaknesses, choose something that is not a core competency and discuss how you are working on overcoming it. For these questions as for most of the others, the best way to answer is by following the so-called "STAR" method (situation – task – action – result): accompany your answer with a story detailing a relevant work/ school situation, and briefly describe the situation, what your task was, what you did, and what the result was. For each question, provide a response that takes about 2 minutes to deliver. Your responses should be neither too long nor too short, and they should be substantial. Make every sentence count.

Questions such as "Why did you leave your last job?" or "How do you handle conflict at work?" can be challenging. Be diplomatic in the way you answer. Even if you harbor resentment, make your answers all about trying to reach your full potential

(first example) and working to find common ground (second example). Do not use accusatory language in describing work experiences, and control your tone and facial expression (avoid sounding or looking angry). You want to be perceived as a personable individual with a positive and constructive attitude.

You may be invited to participate in a conference call, and be told to expect it will last around twenty minutes. The telephone carries your voice and your words but doesn't carry your nonverbal gestures. If you remember to speak directly into the telephone, look up and smile, your voice will come through clearly and you will sound competent and pleasant. If you know that a twenty-minute call is scheduled for a certain time, you can anticipate that your phone may ring may be a minute or two late, as interviews are often scheduled in a series while the committee is all together at one time. Even if you have only one interview, your interviewers will have a schedule and your sensitivity to it can help improve your performance.

You can also anticipate that the last few minutes will be set aside for you to ask your questions. This is your opportunity to learn more about the problems or challenges that the position will be addressing, allowing you a final opportunity to reinforce a positive message with the audience. Keep your questions simple, your attitude positive, and communicate your interest.

At the same time as you are being interviewed, know that you, too, are interviewing the prospective employer. If you have done your homework, you may already know what the organization is all about, but you may still be unsure whether it is the right fit for you. Listen and learn from what is said, as well as what is not said, and you will add to your knowledge base for wise decision-making in the future.

Above all, be honest, positive, and brief. You may have heard that the world is small and it is true. As you develop professionally, you will come to see how fields, organizations, and companies are interconnected in ways that you cannot anticipate. Your name and reputation are yours to protect and promote.

Post Performance

Remember that feedback is part of the communication process: follow up promptly with a thank-you note or email, expressing your appreciation for the

interviewer's time and interest. You may also indicate that you will call or email next week to see if they have any further questions for you.

You may receive a letter, note, or voicemail explaining that another candidate's combination of experience and education better matched the job description. If this happens, it is only natural for you to feel disappointed. It is also only natural to want to know why you were not chosen, but be aware that for legal reasons most rejection notifications do not go into detail about why one candidate was hired and another was not. Contacting the company with a request for an explanation can be counterproductive, as it may be interpreted as a "sore loser" response. If there is any possibility that they will keep your name on file for future opportunities, you want to preserve your positive relationship.

Although you feel disappointed, don't focus on the loss or all the hard work you've done that was not rewarded. Instead, focus your energies where they will serve you best. Review the process and learn from the experience, knowing that each audience is unique and even the most prepared candidate may not have been the right "fit." Stay positive and connect with people who support you. Prepare, practice, and perform. Know that you as a person are far more than just a list of job duties and qualifications. Focus on your skill sets: if they need improvement, consider additional education that will enhance your knowledge and skills. Seek out local resources and keep networking. Have your professional interview attire clean and ready, and focus on what you can control - your preparation and performance.

To summarize, conversations have universal aspects we can predict and improve. We can use the dynamics of the ritual of conversation to learn to prepare for employment interviews and evaluations, both common contexts of communication in the work environment. Employment interviews involve preparation, performance, and feedback.

REVIEW AND EXERCISE

Key takeaways:

- Employment interviews come in all shapes and sizes, and may not be limited to only one exchange but one interaction.

•There is no one right or wrong way to prepare and present at your interview, just as each audience is unique, but you can prepare and anticipate several common elements.

•Employment interviews involve preparation, performance, and feedback

Discussion 3

1. What is interview?
2. What does invitation to interview mean?
3. What questions are usually asked during the interview?
4. Have you ever been invited to the interview? Were you successful?
5. What questions were you asked?

1. Think about an application package you have recently submitted that didn't get you the desired result (you were not invited to an interview). Based on the information presented in this chapter, what do you think you could have done better to secure an interview?

2. Type "weird interview questions" in your internet browser and see what comes up. You might find questions such as, "If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?" (Or: if you were an animal, a fruit, etc.), or, "If you came across a genie who could grant you any wish, what would you ask for?" Why do you think potential employers might ask such questions? How do you think you should approach them?

GLOSSARY

A

Abstract word. A word that identifies an idea or feeling instead of a concrete object.

Active voice. The sentence form in which the subject performs the action expressed by the verb.

Agenda. A list of topics to be covered at a meeting, often including the name of the person responsible for covering each topic and the timing for each topic.

Agenda slide. A slide that presents the topics or main points of a presentation.

Aggregator. A program that collects on-line information from multiple sources and distributes it through one site.

AIDA plan. The process of gaining the reader's attention, creating interest in and desire for the benefits of your product, and motivating action.

Annexures. A supplement or appendix to a written document.

Apology. When the organization takes full responsibility for a crisis and asks for forgiveness.

Applicant tracking system. A system that companies use to track job applicants and résumés.

Audience. The receiver of a message.

Audience analysis. A critical step in communication for the writer to understand what the audience needs and how they may react to a message.

B

Backchannel. A forum such as Twitter for have real-time, online interactions during a presentation.

Bar chart. A graph with horizontal or vertical bars representing values.

Behavioral interviews. Interviews based on the theory that past behavior predicts future performance.

Benefits. Advantages a potential customer receives from a product or service.

Bias-free language. Language that is sensitive to people's sex, race, age, physical condition and many other categories.

Big data. The vast amount of data available today—so much that it is nearly impossible to fully comprehend.

Blog. A website that includes chronological posts and may allow for comments.

Brainstorming. Jotting down ideas, facts, and anything else—without evaluating the output—that might be helpful in constructing a message.

Buffer. A neutral opening statement designed to lessen the impact of negative news.

Business communication. The process of sharing information between people within the workplace and outside a company.

Business correspondence. The exchange of information in a written format for the process of business activities.

Business etiquette. A guide to appropriate behavior in a business setting.

Business report. An organized presentation of information used to make decisions and solve problems.

C

Cascading communication. When information starts at the top of the organization and flows down to each level in sequence.

Central selling theme. The major reader

benefit that is introduced early and emphasized throughout a sales letter.

Chartjunk. Visual elements that call attention to themselves instead of information on a chart.

Cliché. An expression that has become monotonous through overuse.

Cloud. A reference to the Internet, where files are stored on networked servers rather than on individual computers.

Coercion. Force or intimidation used to get someone to comply.

Coherence. When each sentence of a paragraph links smoothly to the sentences before and after it.

Communication. The process of sending and receiving messages.

Competencies. The knowledge, skills, and abilities identified for a specific job.

Complex sentence. A sentence that has one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

Communication need The reason for communicating in organizations—what starts the process.

Compound sentence. A sentence that has two or more independent clauses.

Concrete word. A word that identifies something the senses can perceive.

Conference call. A meeting held using a speakerphone for people in two or more locations (also called a teleconference).

Conflict. Disagreements or arguments that may occur within a team.

Conformity. Agreement to ideas, rules, or principles.

Connotation. The subjective or emotional feeling associated with a word.

Consensus. Reaching a decision that best reflects the thinking of all team members.

Consumer-generated media (CGM). Any media (e.g., video, images, blogs) about a company posted by consumers for public viewing (also called user-generated content).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR). A form of self-regulation whereby a company considers the public's interest (people, planet, as well as profit) in their business practices.

Cover letter. Communication that tells a prospective employer that an applicant is interested in and qualified for a position within the organization.

Crisis. A significant threat to the organization.

Crisis communication. Attempts to protect and defend the company's reputation.

Cross-cultural communication. Communication between cultures—when a message is created by someone from one culture to be understood by someone from another culture (also called intercultural communication).

Cross-tabulation. A process by which two or more items of data are analyzed together.

Culture. The customary traits, attitudes, and behaviors of a group of people.

Curriculum vitae (CV). A longer version of a résumé that is more typical for international (and academic) jobs.

D

Dangling expression. Any part of a sentence that does not logically connect to the rest of the sentence.

Deck. A printed report or slides created in PowerPoint, Keynote, or other presentation

tools.

Defamation. The action of damaging the good reputation of someone; slander or libel.

Denotation. The literal, dictionary meaning of a word.

Derived benefits. Similar to benefits – how marketers refer to benefits customers receive from a product or service.

Direct organizational plan. A plan in which the major purpose of the message is communicated first, followed by the explanation and the details.

Direct quotation. The exact words of another person.

Diversity. A variety of unique people; respecting differences we bring to work.

Divider slide. A slide repeated throughout a presentation, highlighting each topic as it is covered.

Documentation. Identifying sources (to give credit) to another's words or ideas.

Downward communication. The flow of information from managers to their employees.

Drafting. Composing a preliminary version of a message.

E

E-correspondence. Content sent or received electronically, including email, faxes, incoming voice mail messages, internal instant messages, text messages and voice notes.

Editing. The stage of revision that ensures that writing conforms to standard English.

Emotional intelligence. Recognizing and managing our own and others' feelings.

Empathy. The ability to project oneself into another person's position and to understand that person's situation and feelings.

Employee engagement. Creating a culture in which employees feel passionate about their company and are enthusiastic about their jobs.

Employment communication. Written communication and conversation between the employer and the job-seekers.

Ethics. A system of moral principles that go beyond legal rules to tell us how to act.

Ethical dilemma. A situation in which no good ethical choice or decision is possible.

Ethical lapse. A failure to behave in an ethical way in some specific situation.

Ethnocentrism. The belief that one's own cultural group is superior.

Ethos. A persuasive appeal based on credibility.

Euphemism. An expression used in place of words that may be offensive or inappropriate.

Executive summary. A condensed version of the report body (also called an abstract or synopsis).

Exhaustive. Ensuring that items, for example, in a questionnaire, include all possible options for a response.

Expletive. An expression such as there is or it has been that begins a clause and for which the pronoun has no antecedent.

Exploding pie chart. A pie chart with one wedge pulled out for emphasis.

Extemporaneous presentation. A presentation delivered using an unrehearsed, enhanced, conversational style.

Extranet. A private computer network for a select group of people outside of the company (e.g., for customers or franchisees).

F

Factoring. Breaking a problem down to determine what data needs to be collected. (9)

Feature. An aspect of how a product or service works.

Filter. Perception based on one's knowledge, experience, and viewpoints.

Formal communication network. The transmission of information through downward, upward, and lateral paths within an organization.

G

Gender identity. Someone's internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or someone outside of that gender binary).

Generic heading. A report heading that identifies only the topic of a section without giving the conclusion.

Geolocation. Identifying where objects are physically located.

Goodwill message. A message that is sent out of a sense of kindness.

Google Alert. An email update provided by Google when online content matches the user's predefined search terms.

Grapevine. The flow of information through nonofficial channels within the organization (also called the informal communication network).

Group communication. The act of sending and receiving messages to multiple members of a group.

Groupthink. A hindrance to team performance that happens when individuals think too similarly.

H

Hacker. A person who uses computers to gain unauthorized access to data.

Horizontal communication. The flow of information among peers within an organization (also called lateral communication).

I

Impromptu presentation. A presentation delivered without preparation.

Inclusion. Creating an environment where all people are valued and can contribute to their fullest potential.

Inclusive language. The words and phrases you use that avoid biases, slang, and expressions that discriminate against groups of people based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ability.

Indirect organizational plan. A plan in which the reasons or rationale are presented first, followed by the major idea.

Individual ethics. Ethics defined by a person, which are based on family values, heritage, personal experience, and other factors.

Infographic résumé. A graphical version of a résumé.

Infographics. Also known as information graphics, a popular way of showing data visually.

Informal communication network. The flow of information through nonofficial channels within the organization (also called the grapevine).

Information. Meaningful facts, statistics, and conclusions.

Intellectual property. Intangible property that is the result of creativity, such as patents, copyrights, etc.

Intercultural communication. Communication between cultures – when a message is created by someone from one culture to be understood by someone from another culture (also called cross-cultural communication).

Interoffice correspondence. The exchange of correspondence between offices within the Commission.

Interpersonal communication. The process of exchange of information, ideas and feelings between two or more people through verbal or non-verbal methods.

Interface. The place at which independent and often unrelated systems meet and act on or communicate with each other.

Intraoffice communication. Communication that takes place among the employees of a particular office or team.

Intrapersonal communication. Communication with one's self, and that may include self-talk, acts of imagination and visualization, and even recall and memory.

Intranet. A private computer network within a company or organization for employee access.

J

Jargon. Technical terminology used within specialized groups.

L

Lateral communication The flow of information among peers within an organization (also called horizontal communication).

Letter. A written message mailed to someone outside (or external to) an organization.

Line chart. A graph based on a grid, with the vertical axis representing values and the horizontal axis representing time.

Logos. A persuasive appeal based on logic.

M

Main point slide. An optional slide in a presentation shown before an agenda slide to convey the most important message to the audience.

Main points. The major conclusions of a message.

Mashups. Web applications or pages that combine content from different sources.

Mechanics. Elements in communication that show up only in writing (e.g., spelling, punctuation, abbreviations, capitalization, number expression, and word division).

Medium. How a message is transmitted— for example, an email or phone call.

Memo. A written message sent to someone within (or internal to) an organization.

Memorized presentation. A presentation delivered from memory.

Message. The information (either verbal or nonverbal) that is communicated.

Message title. A report heading or slide title that identifies the major conclusion of a section or slide (also called talking heading).

Microblogs. A type of blog used for short messages with timely information.

Mind mapping. Generating ideas for a message by connecting them in a graphical way.

Minutes. An official record of a meeting that summarizes what was discussed, what decisions were made, and what actions participants will take.

Mobile technologies. Technologies that are portable, such as handheld devices.

Multicommunicating. Overlapping conversations using various forms of communication.

Multiculturalism. A philosophy of appreciating diversity among people, typically beyond differences in countries of origin.

Multimedia. The integration of several forms of media (e.g., text, video, and graphics).

Mutually Exclusive. Ensuring that items, for example, in a questionnaire, do not overlap.

N
Networking email. An email sent to a person at a company or in a field of interest for the purpose of obtaining career information or job leads.

Noise. Environmental or competing elements that distract one's attention during communication.

Nonverbal message. What is communicated without words (for example, body language).

O
Online meeting. A meeting held using a web-based service, such as WebEx.

Online reputation. How a company or an individual is represented on the Internet

Organization. The sequence in which topics are presented in a message.

Organizational fit. A match between a prospective employee and a particular organizational culture.

P
Paragraph. A distinct section of a piece of writing, usually dealing with a single theme and indicated by a new line, indentation, or numbering.

Parallelism. Using similar grammatical structure to express similar ideas.

Paraphrase. A summary or restatement of a passage in one's own words.

Passive voice. The sentence form in which the subject receives the action expressed by the verb.

Pathos. A persuasive appeal based on emotion.

Perception. The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.

Personal brand. What you're known for and how people experience you.

Persuasion. Using communication to change another person's beliefs, feelings, or behaviors.

Pie chart. A circle graph divided into component wedges.

Plagiarism. Using another person's words or ideas without giving proper credit

Plain English. A language that is considered to be clear and concise.

Platitude. A trite, obvious statement.

Podcast. Portable audio or video content for individuals to download and listen to at their computer or on a mobile device.

Preview. An overview of what the audience can expect in a message.

Primary audience. The most important receiver of a message (e.g., the decision maker).

Primary data. Data collected by the researcher to solve a specific problem.

Privacy. The state of being free from public attention.

Professional ethics. Ethics defined by an organization.

Proposal. A written sales document typically for discussion by a group of people.

Purpose. The reason for which a message is created.

Q
Questionnaire. A written document containing questions to obtain information from recipients.

R

Receiver benefits. The advantages a reader would derive from granting the writer's request or from accepting the writer's decision.

Redundancy. The unnecessary repetition of an idea that has already been expressed or intimated.

Résumé. A representation of an applicant's education, work history, and other qualifications.

Revising. Modifying the content and style of a draft to increase its effectiveness.

Request for proposal (RFP). A formal, detailed document issued by organizations looking for bids from a variety of sources.

Rhetorical question. A question asked to get the reader thinking about the topic; a literal answer is not expected.

Really Simple Syndication (RSS). A set of web-based formats used to publish frequent updates.

S
Scripted presentation. A presentation delivered by reading from notes.

Secondary audience. Receivers of a message who are not the primary audience but who will also read and be affected by a message.

Secondary data. Data (published or unpublished) collected by someone else for another purpose.

Service recovery. Responding to a service failure in a way that turns an upset customer into a satisfied customer.

Simple sentence. A sentence that has one independent clause.

Situational ethics. Ethics that are based on particular circumstances.

Situational report. A report that is produced only once to address unique problems and opportunities.

Slang. An expression, often short-lived, that is identified with a specific group of people.

Slide tracker. An image on the slide that repeats on every slide after the agenda to show the major divisions of a presentation, highlighting each topic as it is presented.

Social ethics. Ethics defined by society.

Social loafing. The psychological term for avoiding individual responsibility in a group setting.

Social media. A blending of technology and social interaction.

Social networking sites. Websites where communities of people who share common interests or activities can form relationships (a subset of social media).

Social recruiting. Using social media to recruit new talent.

Social résumé. A résumé designed for interactivity and to allow employers to find the candidate online.

Solicited cover letter. A cover letter that responds to a position advertised by a company.

Solicited sales letter. A company's reply to a request for product or service information from a potential customer.

Stacked headings. Two consecutive headings without intervening text.

Style. How an idea is expressed (rather than the substance of the idea).

Summary (academic). A concise, succinct representation of an academic text such as a scholarly book, journal article, and research report.

Survey. A data-collection method that gathers information through questionnaires,

telephone inquiries, or interviews.

Sympathy. Understanding and providing comfort to another person.

Synchronous. Simultaneous or at the same time (antonym: asynchronous).

T
Table. An orderly arrangement of data into columns and rows.

Talking heading. A report heading or slide title that identifies the major conclusion of a section or slide (also called message title).

Team A group of individuals who depend on one another to accomplish a common objective.

Team communication. The exchange of information within a group of colleagues working towards a common goal.

Teleconference. A meeting held using a speakerphone for people in two or more locations (also called a conference call).

Title slide. The first slide of a presentation, which usually includes the title, date, name of presenter, company, and audience.

Tone. How the writer's attitude toward the reader and the subject of the message is reflected.

Topic sentence. The main idea of a paragraph, usually introduced at the beginning of a passage.

Transgender. Someone whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transparency. The process of being open, honest, and straightforward about various company operations.
Typeface. A particular design of type.

U

Unethical communication. Communication used to undermine relationships or encourage social immorality.
Unity. When all parts of a paragraph work together to develop a single idea consistently and logically.

Unsolicited cover letter. A cover letter that is initiated by an individual searching for a job.

Unsolicited sales letter. A way to promote a company's products or services to potential customers who have not expressed any interest.

Upward communication. The flow of information from lower-level employees to upper-level employees or managers.

User-generated content (UGC). Any media (e.g., video, images, blogs) about a company posted by consumers for public viewing (also called consumer-generated media).

V
Verbal message. The part of a communication that uses words to convey meaning.

Videoconference. A video-based meeting using videophones, smartphones, desktop programs, or dedicated services such as telepresence suites.

Visual aids. Tables, charts, photographs, or other graphic materials.

W
Wiki. A website where anyone with access can edit content directly.

Writer's block. The inability to focus one's attention on the writing process and to draft a message.

Y
Yammer. A social network like Facebook but restricted to employees within an organization.
"You" attitude. Emphasizing what the reader wants to know and how the reader will be affected by the message.

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