

Unit-1

Business Communication

1.0 Objective

Communication is neither transmission of message nor message itself. It is the mutual exchange of understanding, originating with the receiver. Communication needs to be effective in business. Communication is essence of management. The basic functions of management (**Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing and Controlling**) cannot be performed well without effective communication. Business communication involves constant flow of information. Feedback is integral part of business communication. Organizations these days are very large. It involves number of people. There are various levels of hierarchy in an organization. Greater the number of levels, the more difficult is the job of managing the organization. Communication here plays a very important role in process of directing and controlling the people in the organization. Immediate feedback can be obtained and misunderstandings if any can be avoided. There should be effective communication between superiors and subordinated in an organization, between organization and society at large (for example between management and trade unions). It is essential for success and growth of an organization. Communication gaps should not occur in any organization.

Business Communication is goal oriented. The rules, regulations and policies of a company have to be communicated to people within and outside the organization. Business Communication is regulated by certain rules and norms. In early times, business communication was limited to paper-work, telephone calls etc. But now with advent of technology, we have cell phones, video conferencing, emails, satellite communication to support business communication. Effective business communication helps in building goodwill of an organization.

1.1 Introduction:

Business communication skills are critical to the success of any organization despite its size, geographical location, and its mission. Business communication is interlinked with internal culture and external image of any organization. So it is the determining factor to communication inside the organization. Good Business communication practices assist the organization in achieving its goal of informing, persuading, favorable relationship, and organizational goodwill. Organizations can only survive if they accept the rapidly changing

global challenges and the communication processes are structured and delivered. The present workforce is dynamic in nature so communication is a challenge when executed against the backdrop of culture, technology and competition. The success of any business to a large extent depends on efficient and effective communication. It takes place among business entities, in market and market places, within organizations and between various groups of employees, owners and employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and customers, sales persons and prospects and also between people within the organization and the press persons. All such communication impacts business. Done with care, such communication can promote business interests. Otherwise, it will portray the organization in poor light and may adversely affect the business interest. Communication is the life blood of any organization and its main purpose is to effect change to

influence action. In any organization the main problem is of maintaining effective communication process. The management problem generally results in poor communication. Serious mistakes are made because orders are misunderstood. The basic problem in communication is that the meaning which is actually understood may not be what the other intended to send. It must be realised that the speaker and the listener are two separate individuals having their own limitations and number of things may happen to distort the message that pass between them. When people within the organization communicate with each other, it is internal communication. They do so to work as a team and realise the common goals. It could be official or unofficial. Modes of internal communication include face-to-face and written communication. Memos, reports, office order, circular, fax, video conferencing, meeting etc. are the examples of internal communication. When people in the organization communicate with anyone outside the organization it is called external communication. These people may be clients or customers, dealers or distributors, media, government, general public etc. are the examples of external communication.

1.2 Meaning of communication

The word communication has been derived from the Latin word 'communicare' that means 'to share'. Communication may be defined as interchange of thought or information between two or more persons to bring about mutual understanding and desired action. It is the information exchange by words or symbols. It is the exchange of facts, ideas and viewpoints which bring about commonness of interest, purpose and efforts. According to *Keith Davis*, "The process of passing the information and understanding from one person to another." Communication is something so simple and difficult that we can never put it in simple words," says *T.S. Mathews*. But we do need a definition to understand the term. In his book *Communication in Business*, *Peter Little* defines communication as follows: "Communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and / or organizations so that an understanding response results." Another very simple definition of 'communication' has been provided by *W.H. Newman and C.F. Sumner Jr*: "Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, or emotions by two or more persons."

It is essentially a bridge of meaning between the people. By using the bridge a person can safely cross the river of misunderstanding'.

It is the ability of mankind to communicate across barriers and beyond boundaries that has ushered the progress of mankind. It is the ability of fostering speedy and effective communication around the world that has shrunk the world and made 'globalization' a reality. Communication had a vital role to play in ensuring that people belonging to a particular country or a culture or linguistic group interact with and relate to people belonging to other

countries or culture or linguistic group. Communication adds meaning to human life. It helps to build relationship and fosters love and understanding. It enriches our knowledge of the universe and makes living worthwhile.

However, communication incorporates, besides commonality, the concepts of transfer, meaning and information. It implies that there must be a receiver if communication is to occur. The sender of message must consider the receiver while structuring his message from a technical standpoint as well as in delivering it. When the receiver is not considered, there is either no response or there is wrong response. Sharing of understanding would be possible only when the person, to whom the message is meant, understands it in the same sense in which the sender of the message wants him to understand. Thus, communication involves something more than mere transmission of the message or transmission and physical receipt thereof. The correct interpretation of the message is important from the point of view of organizational efficiency. As such, the greater the degree of understanding presents in the communication, the more the likelihood that human action will proceed in the direction of accomplishment of goals.

1.3 Importance and purpose of communication

Just as communication is vital for our existence in civilizes society, so also it is essential for functioning of organization. So without communication there would be no organization. Needless to say, communication is the ingredient that makes organization possible. It is the vehicle through which the basic management functions are carried out. Managers direct through communication; they coordinate through communication; and they staff, plan, and control through communication. Virtually all actions taken in an organization are preceded by communication.

Purpose Of Communication

For instruction: The instructive function unvarying and importantly deals with the commanding nature. It is more or less of directive nature. Under this, the communicator transmits with necessary directives and guidance to the next level, so as to enable them to accomplish his particular tasks. In this, instructions basically flow from top to the lower level.

For integration: It is consolidated function under which integration of activities is endeavoured. The integration function of communication mainly involves to bring about inter-relationship among the various functions of the business organization. It helps in the unification of different management functions.

For information: The purposes or function of communication in an organization is to inform the individual or group about the particular task or company policies and procedures etc. Top management informs policies to the lower level through the middle level. In turn, the lower level informs the top level the reaction through the middle level. Information can flow vertically, horizontally and diagonally across the organization. Becoming informed or inform others is the main purpose of communication.

For evaluation: Examination of activities to form an idea or judgement of the worth of task is achieved through communication. Communication is a tool to appraise the individual or team, their contribution to the organization. Evaluating one's own inputs or other's outputs or some ideological scheme demands an adequate and effective communication process.

For direction: Communication is necessary to issue directions by the top management or manager to the lower level. Employee can perform better when he is directed by his superior. Directing others may be communicated either orally or in writing. An order may be common order, request order or implied order.

For teaching: The importance of personal safety on the job has been greatly recognized. A complete communication process is required to teach and educate workers about personal safety on the jobs. This communication helps the workers to avert accidents, risk etc. and avoid cost, procedures etc.

For influencing: A complete communication process is necessary in influencing others or being influenced. The individual having potential to influence others can easily persuade others. It implies the provision of feedback which tells the effect of communication.

For image building: A business enterprise cannot isolate from the rest of the society. There is interrelationship and interdependence between the society and an enterprise operating in the society. Goodwill and confidence are necessarily created among the public. It can be done by the communication with the different media, which has to project the image of the firm in the society. Through an effective external communication system, an enterprise has to inform the society about its goals, activities, progress and social responsibility.

For employees orientation: When a new employee enters into the organization at that time he or she will be unknown to the organization programs, policies, culture etc. Communication helps to make people acquainted with the co-employees, superior and with the policies, objectives, rules and regulations of the organization.

1.4 Dimensions of Communication

In an organization, communication flows in 5 main directions-

1. Downward
2. Upward
3. Horizontal /Lateral
4. Diagonal
5. Grapevine Communication

1.4.1 Downward Communication: Communication that flows from a higher level in an organization to a lower level is a downward communication. In other words, communication from superiors to subordinates in a chain of command is a downward communication. This communication flow is used by the managers to transmit work-related information to the employees at lower levels. Employees require this information for performing their jobs and for meeting the expectations of their managers. Downward communication is used by the managers for the following purposes –

- Providing feedback on employees' performance.
- Giving job instructions.
- Providing a complete understanding of the employees' job as well as to communicate them how their job is related to other jobs in the organization.

- Communicating the organizations mission and vision to the employees.
- Highlighting the areas of attention.

Organizational publications, circulars, letter to employees, group meetings etc are all examples of downward communication. In order to have effective and error-free downward communication, managers must:

- Specify communication objective.
- Ensure that the message is accurate, specific and unambiguous.
- Utilize the best communication technique to convey the message to the receiver in right form

Upward Flow of Communication: Communication that flows to a higher level in an organization is called upward communication. It provides feedback on how well the organization is functioning. The subordinates use upward communication to convey their problems and performances to their superiors.

The subordinates also use upward communication to tell how well they have understood the downward communication. It can also be used by the employees to share their views and ideas and to participate in the decision-making process. Upward communication leads to a more committed and loyal workforce in an organization because the employees are given a chance to raise and speak dissatisfaction issues to the higher levels. The managers get to know about the employees' feelings towards their jobs, peers, supervisor and organization in general. Managers can thus accordingly take actions for improving things.

Grievance Redressal System, Complaint and Suggestion Box, Job Satisfaction surveys etc all help in improving upward communication. Other examples of Upward Communication are -performance reports made by low level management for reviewing by higher level management, employee attitude surveys, letters from employees, employee-manager discussions etc.

1.4.2 Lateral / Horizontal Communication: Communication that takes place at same levels of hierarchy in an organization is called lateral communication, i.e., communication between peers, between managers at same levels or between any

horizontally equivalent organizational member. The advantages of horizontal communication are as follows:

- It is time saving.
- It facilitates co-ordination of the task.
- It facilitates co-operation among team members.
- It provides emotional and social assistance to the organizational members.
- It helps in solving various organizational problems.
- It is a means of information sharing.
- It can also be used for resolving conflicts of a department with other department or conflicts within a department.

1.4.3 Diagonal Communication or crosswise communication: Communication that takes place between a manager and employees of other workgroups is called diagonal communication. It generally does not appear on organizational chart. For instance - To design a training module a training manager interacts with an Operations personnel to enquire about the way they perform their task. The Accounts people of an organization visiting different employees in various departments for their IT calculation, bonus for workers etc. fall under diagonal communication.

1.5 Channels of communication

A breakdown in the communication channel leads to an inefficient flow of information. Employees are unaware of what the company expects of them. They are uninformed of what is going on in the company.

This will cause them to become suspicious of motives and any changes in the company. Also without effective communication, employees become department minded rather than company minded, and this affects their decision making and productivity in the workplace.

Eventually, this harms the overall organizational objectives as well. Hence, in order for an organization to be run effectively, a good manager should be able to communicate to his/her

employees what is expected of them, make sure they are fully aware of company policies and any upcoming changes.

Therefore, an effective communication channel should be implemented by managers to optimize worker productivity to ensure the smooth running of the organization.

1.5.1 Formal Channels of Communication

The messages which are circulating on regulated, preset channels, of an organization are creating the formal communication. The content of the communication is related to the organization's activity, to the work and to anything which is related to those. The formal communication can consist in verbal messages, nonverbal messages, written, under the shape of letters, telephone messages, radio messages, printed, internal notes. Even some gestures can consist in formal communication. The messages are transmitted by the authorized ones: on official channels, these arrive to the ones who need to react, to people or machines which need to know the content of these messages.

Usually, all formal communications are recorded and kept in the organization's evidence. Are retained copies of these by the transmitter, by the receiver, by all of the desks from the organization which need to know and keep the information. Examples of formal communications are given by work commands, reports and financial evidence, reports over sells / inventory, statements referring to the company's policies, post descriptions, etc.

The formal communication network is formed out of formal channels, created by setting a formal system of responsibilities according to the hierarchical structure of the organization. The perfect network is the one which contains communication channel from bottom up, downwards and horizontally. Often the direction of horizontal communication is missing or it is inefficient and in this way the accuracy of the information decreases. The situation is appearing because of the lack of permanent circulation of the information between departments, although this is vital for the organization in conditions of existent competition, or the lack of specialists in organizational communication.

The number of communication channels available to a manager has increased over the last 20 odd years. Video conferencing, mobile technology, electronic bulletin boards and fax machines are some of the new possibilities. As organizations grow in size, managers cannot rely on face-to-face communication alone to get their message across. A challenge the managers face today is to determine what type of communication channel should they opt for in order to carryout effective communication.

In order to make a manager's task easier, the types of communication channels are grouped into three main groups: formal, informal and unofficial.

- A formal communication channel transmits information such as the goals, policies and procedures of an organization. Messages in this type of communication channel follow a chain of command. This means information flows from a manager to his subordinates and they in turn pass on the information to the next level of staff.
- An example of a formal communication channel is a company's newsletter, which gives employees as well as the clients a clear idea of a company's goals and vision. It also includes the transfer of information with regard to memoranda, reports, directions, and scheduled meetings in the chain of command.

- A business plan, customer satisfaction survey, annual reports, employer's manual, review meetings are all formal communication channels.

1.5.2 Informal Channels of Communication

Informal communication arises out of all those channels that fall outside the formal channels and it is also known as grapevine. It is established around the societal affiliation of members of the organization. Informal communication does not follow authority lines as in the case of formal communication.

Informal communication takes place due to the individual needs of the members of an organization and subsists in every organization. Normally, such communication is oral and may be expressed even by simple glance, sign or silence. Informal communication, is implicit, spontaneous multidimensional and diverse. It often works in group of people, i.e. when one person has some information of interest; he passes it on to his informal group and so on.

An organization can make efficient use of informal channels to fortify the formal channels of communication. It acts as a valuable purpose in expressing certain information that cannot be channeled via the official channels. It satisfies the people desires to identify what is happening in the organization and offers an opportunity to express dreads, worries and complaints. Informal communication also facilitates to ameliorate managerial decisions as more people are involved in the process of decision-making.

In spite on many advantages, informal communication has certain disadvantages. Informal communication contains facts, deceptions, rumors and unclear data. The informal channels of communication may transmit completely imprecise information that may harm rather than help an organization. In addition, it is impossible to fix the responsibility for its origin or flow of information. However, for the efficient working of any organization both formal and informal communications are required.

An example of an informal communication channel is lunchtime at the organization's cafeteria/canteen. Here, in a relaxed atmosphere, discussions among employees are encouraged. Also managers walking around, adopting a hands-on approach to handling employee queries is an example of an informal communication channel. Quality circles, team work, different training programs are outside of the chain of command and so, fall under the category of informal communication channels.

1.5.3 Grapevine Communication (Informal Communication)

Grapevine is an informal channel of business communication. It is called so because it stretches throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels. Man as we know is a social animal. Despite existence of formal channels in an organization, the informal channels tend to develop when he interacts with other people in organization. It exists more at lower levels of organization. Grapevine generally develops due to various reasons. One of them is that when an organization is facing recession, the employees sense uncertainty. Also, at times employees do not have self-confidence due to which they form unions. Sometimes the managers show preferential treatment and favour some employees giving a segregated feeling to other employees. Thus, when employees sense a need to exchange their views ,they go for grapevine network as they cannot use the formal channel of

communication in that case. Generally during breaks in cafeteria, the subordinates talk about their superior's attitude and behaviour and exchange views with their peers. They discuss rumours about promotion and transfer of other employees. Thus, grapevine spreads like fire and it is not easy to trace the cause of such communication at times.

Example of Grapevine Network of Communication

1. Suppose the profit amount of a company is known. Rumour is spread that this much profit is there and on that basis bonus is declared.
2. CEO may be in relation to the Production Manager. They may have friendly relations with each other.

Advantages of Grapevine Communication

1. Grapevine channels carry information rapidly. As soon as an employee gets to know some confidential information, he becomes inquisitive and passes the details then to his closest friend who in turn passes it to other. Thus, it spreads hastily.
2. The managers get to know the reactions of their subordinates on their policies. Thus, the feedback obtained is quick compared to formal channel of communication.
3. The grapevine creates a sense of unity among the employees who share and discuss their views with each other. Thus, grapevine helps in developing group cohesiveness.
4. The grapevine serves as an emotional supportive value.
5. The grapevine is a supplement in those cases where formal communication does not work.

Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication

1. The grapevine carries partial information at times as it is more based on rumours. Thus, it does not clearly depicts the complete state of affairs.
2. The grapevine is not trustworthy always as it does not follow official path of communication and is spread more by gossips and unconfirmed report.
3. The productivity of employees may be hampered as they spend more time talking rather than working.
4. The grapevine leads to making hostility against the executives.
5. The grapevine may hamper the goodwill of the organization as it may carry false negative information about the high level people of the organization.

A smart manager should take care of all the disadvantages of the grapevine and try to minimize them. At the same time, he should make best possible use of advantages of grapevine.

1.6 Functions of communication

The most basic functions of communication in an organization are to inform, control, motivate and emotional expression.

1.6.1. Information

An organization needs a vast amount of information to function and operate a business. The top management would require timely and accurate information for the various departments to make effective decisions. Information is dispersed throughout an organization through

written or verbal communication. A human resources representative or business owner may send out a memo explaining a change in the company's health plan. A business meeting may be used as a way to communicate a new office procedure. A webinar allows a company to conduct a meeting over the Internet with employees or customers who cannot attend in person. The idea of informing within an organization is to provide data and information so that employees can effectively complete their job. Information ensures that an employee is aware of the rules and procedures of an organization. It also eliminates job uncertainty for workers when they are fully informed.

1.6.2 Control

The management of any organization will always have plans with long, medium or long term objectives for the months and years ahead. To achieve these objectives, the daily & monthly activities must proceed as planned in order to achieve the objectives for the period. Communication acts to control member behavior in several ways. Organizations have authority hierarchies and formal guidelines that employees are required to follow. When employees, for instance, are required to first communicate any job related grievance to their immediate boss, to follow their job description, or to comply with company policies, communication is performing a control function. But informal communication also controls behavior. When work groups tease or harass a member who produces too much (and makes the rest of the group look bad) they are informally communicating with, and controlling the member's behavior. A company uses communication as a way to maintain control over employees and their work environment. Written human resources policies and procedures dictate how employees are permitted to act in the workplace. Job descriptions outline the parameters of an employee's job functions. Performance reviews control whether an employee receives a raise or attains a promotion.

1.6.3 Motivation

Managers use communication to motivate workers to achieve peak performance. By clarifying the expectations of employees and providing incentives for meeting or exceeding expectations, communication can help companies reach specific objectives. For example, by communicating to salespeople that they'll receive a 10 percent bonus if they reach their annual sales goal, it helps the company reach its overall sales goals. Communication fosters motivation by clarifying to employees what is to be done, how well they are doing and what can be done to improve performance if it's subpar. We saw this operating in our review of goal-setting and reinforcement theories. The formation of specific goals, feedback on progress toward the goals, and reinforcement of desired behavior all stimulate motivation and require communication.

1.6.4. Emotional Expression and Interdependence

Emotional appeal is when emotions or arguments are used to persuade others instead of facts or logic. Organizations can use emotional appeals when delivering bad news. Last year, the CEO spoke to the entire company at an emergency meeting. He explained how devastated he was over the need to have a corporate downsizing. He used emotion to explain that it was better for the overall security of the company to eliminate some positions. For many employees, their work group is a primary source for social interaction. The communication that takes place within the group is a fundamental mechanism by which members show their

frustration and feelings of satisfaction. Communication therefore provides release for the emotional expression of feelings and for fulfillment of social needs.

1.7 Technology and Business Communication

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.

1.8 The Role of the Manager in effective business communication

Business communication is no longer about how to write a letter, email or use effective writing skills. It has also extended to other areas in the business, for example, excellent relationships within the business. A manager should not only concentrate on successful communication with its external clients, customers and stakeholders. The employees of the business actually are internal clients and should also be treated with care. Many scholars refer to this as internal marketing, a very important feature of good business communication. Employees' well-being and work satisfaction play a large role in their productivity and how loyal they will be towards the business. The role of the manager is to ensure good relationships with and among employees. A healthy working environment is equally important. Previous research has indicated that employees also have other career aspirations than only a salary.

Unhappy employees as a result of poor communication processes in the business can negatively affect the corporate image of the business and make the business less successful. The manager of the business should also keep track with changes in society, especially the ever changing business environment. Communication processes in the business should reflect these changes.

Anyone involved in management – whether it's for a large or small company – knows well the relational complexities involved. Sometimes you have to give criticisms on an employee's performance, other times you get the privilege of praising another employee's performance. You're often tasked with overseeing projects both large and small, while directing a diverse group of individuals and personalities in the process. Needless to say, communication skills are essential for any management position.

While communication in management is not always easy, you may find yourself having to work with difficult people, or with unmotivated people. But if you come to the table with the right tools to do the job, you will have an effective team of individuals proud of the work they do for you, and you can feel your own sense of pride in developing these key business relationships in the workplace.

Key Areas of Communication in Management

- **Relationship Building**

Relationship building is a key discipline to master. It helps you establish trust and friendship with your employees. They will come to you with problems, and when the time comes that

you must give negative feedback they will actually be able to hear you out. On the flip side of that coin, when it comes time to give positive feedback, your employees will take it to heart and it will motivate them to do better work. In any work environment, as a manager is important to build these relationships early on.

- **Employee Engagement**

One aspect of the manager-employee relationship has to do with including employees in on project management and development - allowing them to give their input. This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to accept every idea that comes across your desk, but the fact that you are sincerely listening to concerns positions you as a respected and trusted leader within the company. In short, if employees truly feel like they are a part of the process, they will connect to projects in a more meaningful way, and do high-quality work.

- **Employee Recognition**

Every manager should learn how to properly recognize employees in the workplace. However, it's not enough to simply recognize and praise an employee in your office, you must make every effort to make recognition a very public event. Recognizing an employee for their hard work shows that you value their contributions to the organization. Again, this is another communication strategy that will motivate employees to do better.

- **Employee Coaching**

Finally, there is the discipline of employee coaching. Unfortunately, not every employee candidate is going to walk into the office with a flawless performance record. They may fall down and make a mess a few times before really grasping the tools needed to succeed in the workplace. You, as a manager, are an instrumental part of that success. Successful managers should be having in-depth conversations with employees about performance about once every quarter at least. It's important that you keep these conversations as informal as possible, so you can actually connect with the employee you're trying to coach.

- **Communication is Motivating**

Communication is a life force. If employees know where they stand in the work place, and they feel comfortable in that environment, they will be motivated to do good work. Solid communication skills are not just good for the life of the company, but they help you understand how everything is going within the company. It gives you some real-world "data," so to speak.

1.8.1. Effectiveness in Managerial Communication

It is essential for employees to communicate effectively with each other for better understanding as well as increased productivity at workplace. Employees doing everything on their own are generally overburdened and eventually fail to deliver their best. Effective managerial communication enables the flow of information and knowledge among employees in its desired form. Managers need to interact with their team members to extract the best out of them. Problems remain unsolved if employees do not communicate with each other. Discussions go a long way in reducing confusions and also improve the relations

among employees.

There are some tips for effective managerial communication at workplace:

- Remember a manager's task is not only to sit in closed cabins and shout at subordinates. He needs to interact with his team members on a regular basis. Speak to your colleagues more often. Find out what they are upto? Treat all your team members as one. There is absolutely no harm in taking lunch with your team members. This way you tend to discuss lot many things apart from routine work.

- **Promote the concept of morning meetings at workplace.** Morning meetings help you interact with your team members on an open platform where everyone has the liberty to express his/her views. Communicate with your team members and help them plan their day. Let them come out with their problems. Walk up to their workstations once or twice in a day.
- **Increase your listening skills.** A good listener is always a good communicator. It is really important to listen to the other person carefully before speaking. Interrupting a conversation breaks the momentum and the message loses its impact.
- **Working in a team leads to effective managerial communication.** Employees working in isolation hardly interact with their fellow workers and superiors. Make sure your team members discuss things amongst themselves and work together. Instruct them to keep you in the loop as well. The employees must mark a cc to their immediate reporting managers to keep them updated of the latest developments at the workplace.
- **Master the art of writing emails.** Also train your team members how to write an official mail. There is a huge difference between a personal and official mail. The subject line needs to be relevant for people to open the mail.
- Do not call your team embers one by one for any kind of communication. Address them together.
- **Think before you speak.** Make sure whatever you communicate is relevant. Avoid using complicated words and terminologies in your speech. The message has to be clear and precise for effective managerial communication. Be straightforward and communicate clearly as to what you expect out of your team members.
- **No communication is complete unless the message is understood clearly by the recipients.** There should be absolutely no room for confusion in effective communication. Once you are through with your speech, give some time to your team members for them to ask whatever they have not understood.

1.9 Barriers in Business Communication

For any kind of communication to be successful, it is essential that the receiver attributes the same meaning to the message as intended by the sender of the message. But all acts of communication are not perfect or successful. At times, some meaning is lost as the message encounters various barriers along its passage between the sender and the receiver. Such barriers may arise at any of the stages through which a message passes during the process of communication. This is also called miscommunication.

Some of the common problems that lead to the failure of communication are: noise, cultural differences, complexity of subject matter, personal biases, semantic problems, socio-

psychological barriers, filtering, information overload, poor retention, poor listening, goal conflicts, slanting, inferring, etc.

Types of barriers

Barriers to communication can be classified into the following broad categories: 1) Physical or environmental barriers, 2) Physiological or biological barriers, 3) Semantic or language barriers, 4) Personal barriers, 5) Emotional or perceptual barriers, 6) Socio-psychological barriers, 7) Cultural barriers, and 8) Organizational barriers.

Physical or Environmental Barriers

Physical barriers are those barriers which are caused due to some technical defects in the media used for communication and/or due to certain disturbances in the surrounding environment.

Often, the term ‘noise’ is used as a blanket term to refer to the physical barriers in general. But noise, in its literal sense, is also one of the factors that give rise to the physical barriers during the process of communication.

Besides noise, wrong selection of medium, lack of acoustics, poor lighting, frequent movements of hands, fiddling with a pen, or even serving of tea during an important conversation- all of these are also responsible for creating physical barriers in the communication process.

Noise

Noise is the first major barrier to communication. Communication is distorted by noise that crops up at the transmission level.

The meaning attributed to the word ‘noise’ in the field of Communication is derived from the realm of Physics. In Physics, noise refers to “a disturbance, especially a random and persistent disturbance, which obscures or reduces the clarity of a signal”.

The modern-day connotation of the word ‘noise’ is “irrelevant or meaningless data” as is apparent from its usage in the field of Computer Science.

For example, the noise of the traffic around a school obstructs the smooth flow of information between the teacher and the students. It makes oral communication difficult. Similarly, poor signal or static while talking over the cell phone or while using the public address system or while watching TV also distorts the sound signals and disrupts communication. Bad weather conditions may also sometimes interfere with the transmission of signals and may lead to breakdown of the communication channels.

As discussed above, noise is not only the disruption of sound signals, but it also includes all the barriers that may arise at any of the various stages of communication. In a broad sense, it denotes semantic barriers, perceptual barriers as well as psychological barriers.

Time and Distance

Time and distance may also obstruct the smooth flow of information. Today, because of technological advancements, we have faster means of communication available to us and this in turn has made the world a smaller place. But at times, these means of communication may not be easily accessible because of unavailability or due to technical/technological problems. This may lead not only to a physical but also a communication gap between the transmitter and the receiver.

Time differences between people living in two different countries may affect communication between them. Even people working in different shifts in the same organization may also face problems in communicating effectively.

Improper seating arrangement in a classroom or in a conference hall may also act as a barrier to effective communication as it is difficult to maintain eye contact with one's audience.

Wrong Choice of Medium

This can also create a barrier to effective communication. For example, if an expert uses charts or graphs or PowerPoint presentations to orient the illiterate workers or volunteers to a new method of working, they are bound to be ill-equipped to infer any information or instructions from such sophisticated presentations.

Surroundings

Adverse weather conditions affect not only the means of communication, but also have an impact on the sender and the receiver of the message. When two people have to communicate with each other under extreme weather conditions, whether too hot or too cold, their surroundings does have a direct repercussion on the effectiveness of the exchange that takes place between them.

Thus, environmental factors determine people's mood and also influence their mental agility and thereby their capacity to communicate effectively. Extreme heat and humidity make people either hyper or listless and thus cause immense stress which in turn affects clear thinking and the attitude of the communicator; whereas, extreme cold weather induces laziness and also impedes the ability to think clearly and respond sharply, thereby causing communication failure.

Physiological Barriers

Physiological barriers are related to a person's health and fitness. These may arise due to disabilities that may affect the physical capability of the sender or the receiver. For example, poor eyesight, deafness, uncontrolled body movements, etc.

Physical defects in one's body may also disrupt communication. While communicating, a person uses—

his vocal (speech) organs to produce sound/speech

his hand and fingers to write

his ears to take in the spoken words

his eyes to absorb the written words

Flawless functioning of these body organs is inevitable for effective communication to take place. In case of any defect in any of these organs, the successful completion of communication will be difficult to accomplish.

Speaking can be adversely affected by stammering, fumbling, utterance of improper sounds due to defective vocal organ/s, etc.

Semantic or Language Barriers

Semantics is the systematic study of the meaning of words. Thus, the semantic barriers are barriers related to language. Such barriers are problems that arise during the process of encoding and/or decoding the message into words and ideas respectively.

Both the oral and the written communication are based on words/symbols which are ambiguous in nature. Words/symbols may be used in several ways and may have several meanings. Unless the receiver knows the context, he may interpret the words/symbols according to his own level of understanding and may thus misinterpret the message.

The most common semantic barriers are listed as under:

a. Misinterpretation of Words

Semantic problems often arise because of the gap between the meaning as intended by the sender and that as understood by the receiver. This happens when the receiver does not assign the same meaning to the word/symbol as the transmitter had intended.

Words are capable of expressing a variety of meanings depending upon their usage, i.e. in the context in which they are used. The association between the word/symbol and the meaning assigned to it is of arbitrary nature.

For example, the word 'yellow' when used as an adjective can have multiple connotations depending upon its usage. Words have two levels of meaning- literal (descriptive) and metaphorical (qualitative). 'Yellow', besides being a primary colour, also stands for 'freshness', 'beauty', 'sickness', 'decay', etc. Hence, the receiver is free to interpret it in any of these ways based on his own imagination and experience.

But for communication to be perfect, it is essential that the receiver must assign to it the same meaning which the sender had in his mind while encoding the message. Therefore, there is always a possibility of misinterpretation of the messages. Mostly, such problems arise when the sender does not use simple and clear words that can convey the exact meaning to the receiver.

b. Use of Technical Language

Technical or specialized language which is used by people or professionals who work in the same field is known as jargon. Such technical language can be a barrier to communication if the receiver of the message is not familiar with it. For example, in the computer jargon, 'to burn a CD' means 'to copy the data on a CD'. To a layman, the word 'burn' may have a very different connotation.

c. Ambiguity

Ambiguity arises when the sender and the receiver of the message attribute different meanings to the same words or use different words to convey the same meaning. Sometimes, wrong and speculative assumptions also lead to ambiguity. A sender often assumes that his audience would perceive the situation as he does or have the same opinion about an issue or understand the message as he understands it, and so on. All such assumptions may turn out to be wrong and cause communication failure.

Personal Barriers

Communication is interpersonal in nature. Thus, there are certain barriers that are directly linked to the persons involved in the communication process, i.e. the sender and the receiver, which influence the accurate transfer of the message. These are called personal barriers.

Personal barriers have to do with the age, education, interests and needs or intentions that differ from person to person.

In any business organization, the attitude of the superiors and the subordinates play a vital role in determining the success of communication. If the superiors have a hostile attitude, then there are chances that they may filter the information or manipulate the message, sometimes intentionally, in order to achieve certain selfish motives. Many superiors are not open to suggestions and feedback as they presume that their subordinates are not capable of advising them. Also, they often tend to keep too busy with work and do not pay much attention to communication. Due to this, the downward flow of information within the organization is badly affected and this in turn leads to poor performance.

Emotional or Perceptual Barriers

Emotional or perceptual barriers are closely associated with personal barriers. Personal barriers arise from motives and attitudes whereas emotional or perceptual barriers have an added dimension that includes sentiments and emotions as well.

If the receiver does not evaluate the information with an open mind, i.e. objectively, his judgment/evaluation would be colored with his biases and/or his emotions, thus inducing him to read too much into a message. This would interfere with the exact transfer of information and cause misinterpretation.

Such a barrier may also emerge at the time of encoding the message. Over enthusiasm on the part of the sender may lead him to invest his message with meaning/s which he may actually not have intended to.

Indolence, apathy, or the tendency to procrastinate, either on the part of the sender or the receiver, also lead to withholding of important information thus creating a barrier. Extreme emotions like euphoria, excitement, anger, stress, depression, etc. also get in the way of effective communication. All these factors may create biases in the mind of the sender or the receiver.

Socio-Psychological Barriers

Socio-psychological barriers can also be considered as one of the offshoots of the personal barriers, akin to the perceptual barriers. We need to study it as a subcategory of personal barriers because a person's attitude is shaped not only by his instincts and emotions, but also by his approach towards and his interaction with the people around him, and hence the need for this fine distinction between the personal, the perceptual and the socio-psychological barriers.

b. Difference in Perception

Moreover, in a communication situation, the communicators have to deal with two aspects of the reality- the one as they see it and the other as they perceive it. The mind filters the message i.e. the words/symbols/ signs and attributes meaning to them, according to individual perception.

Each individual has his own distinctive filter, formed by his/her experiences, emotional makeup, knowledge, and mindset which s/he has attained over a period of time. Because of this difference in perceptions, different individuals respond to the same word/symbol/sign based on their own understanding of the situation and ascribe meaning to it on the basis of their unique filter.

At times, this difference in perception causes communication gap, i.e. distortion, in the message. In face-to-face communication, this gap can be easily eliminated as there is immediate feedback. But in written communication, the semantic gap between the intended meaning and the interpreted meaning remains unidentified, as the feedback is delayed or sometimes there is no feedback at all.

c. Prejudices

Besides, a person with deeply ingrained prejudices is very difficult to communicate with. He is not responsive to discussion or to new ideas, information, viewpoints and opinions. He has a closed mind and tends to react antagonistically, thus ruling out all possibilities of communication. An unreceptive mind can, hence, be a great barrier in communication. To overcome this barrier, people should be receptive of new ideas and must learn to listen considerately with an open mind.

e. Information Overload

Furthermore, information overload leads to poor retention and causes information loss. So, whenever there is some important information to be conveyed, the communicators must use

the written channel of communication. On the basis of the above discussion, we may thus conclude that the socio-psychological factors do have a profound impact on the effectiveness of communication.

Cultural Barriers

Cultural differences give rise to a great deal of complexity in the encoding and the decoding of messages not only because of the difference in languages, but also because of plenty of culture-specific assumptions at work in the mind of the sender as well as the receiver. People belonging to different cultures may attach different meanings to words, symbols, gestures, and behaviour or they may perceive each others' social values, body language, attitude to space distancing and time, social behaviour and manners, etc., i.e. the entire culture in general, very differently depending upon their own standards, attitudes, customs, prejudices, opinions, behavioral norms, etc., i.e. their own distinct culture.

Thus, cultural barriers arise when people belonging to different cultures insist on preserving their cultural identities and at times, judge the other cultures as inferior to their own.

Organizational Barriers

Organizational structure greatly influences the flow of information within an organization. Some major organizational barriers are as follows:

a. Goal Conflicts

There may be goal conflicts within the organization between the superiors and the subordinates, among people working in the different departments, among the colleagues, etc. This may create a hostile atmosphere within the organization and can lead to serious communication breakdown.

b. Organizational Policies

These are also to a great extent responsible for determining the kind of rapport that people working in the same organization share with each other. If the organizational policy is such that it restricts the free flow of information in all directions then communication would not be successful. In some organizations, there may be rules to restrict the flow of certain messages and this may deter employees from conveying those messages, however important they may be.

If an organization favours the open door policy, the subordinates would not feel shy or reluctant to approach their superiors directly. But in the organizations where the formal channels of communication have to be strictly adhered to, the superiors and the subordinates share an awkward relationship. They experience a lot of discomfiture while interacting with each other. Because of this, the objective of communication may never be accomplished.

c. Organizational Hierarchy

The hierarchical structure of the organization may also impede the flow of information and this can cause delay in taking decisions. When the message passes along the chain of

command in an organization, there are chances of filtering and distortion of the message at almost every level before it reaches the intended receiver. Thus, the hierarchical structure of the organization is also one of the important factors that may create a barrier to effective communication.

1.9.1 Filters in Business Communication

What is Filtering?

Filtering is altering the interpretation of the message by applying certain influences or biases. The receiver will filter the message according to their experience and as a result the interpretation of the message can be very different from what was intended. The consequence of filtering is that there can be misunderstanding which can lead to an unexpected response.

For example, the project manager may ask a team member if the document has been completed. The team member may interpret this as asking whether it has been written, and not whether it has also been reviewed and signed off.

Causes of Filtering

Some of the common areas that cause filtering are:

- **Language:** the receiver interprets the message based on their translation of the language to thoughts and ideas.
- **Culture:** of the recipient and their understanding of the culture of the environment they are in (the workplace, the organisation, the industry, the local area and country).
- **Semantics:** the receiver interprets the message based on their understanding of the meaning of the words used.
- **Knowledge base:** the receiver utilises a different knowledge base on which to interpret the message.
- **Implication:** the interpretation of the message may be based on assumptions. An extreme example of implication is sarcasm, where the opposite of what is meant to be interpreted is said

5 types of filters:

1. Distractions.
2. Emotional states.
3. Beliefs and expectations.
4. Differences in style.
5. Self-protection.

Distractions:

- When you say something to your partner do you have his/her attention?
- External things like noisy kids, a hearing problem, or background noise can be a problem.
- Internal factors are such things as preoccupation, feeling tired, planning what else is to be done that day, etc.
- Make it easier to pay attention to your partner. Ask for their attention.

Emotional states:

- Moods greatly affect communication.

- Studies have shown that we tend to give people more benefit of the doubt when we're in a good mood and less when we're in a bad mood.
- When we're in a bad mood we are more likely to perceive whatever our partner says or does more negatively no matter how positive he/she is trying to be.
- Don't use a filter such as a bad mood as a reason to treat your partner badly.
- Talking about how you feel may be the best first step in starting a conversation, especially if it is about important matters.

Beliefs and expectations:

- Many studies have shown that we tend to see what we expect to see in others and in situations.
- It takes humility to recognize and admit that you do this.
- It has been shown that expectations not only affect what we perceive but can influence the actual behavior of those around us. For example, if you believe that someone is an extrovert, he is more likely to sound like an extrovert when talking with you, even if that person is normally introverted. We "pull" behavior from others consistent with what we expect.
- This is one reason why old habits and feelings and patterns of communication come back with full force during holidays when we are with the family we grew up in.
- We can easily get into "mind reading", thinking that we know what someone else means or wants.

Differences in style:

- One person may be more expressive and one more reserved.
- Styles are determined by many influences including culture, gender, and upbringing. For example, in one family it may be very normal to raise one's voice when making a point and in another raising one's voice was never done. When people from these two varied backgrounds marry, for one to raise his/her voice may be perceived by the other as threatening.
- In other families there may have been many conversations going on at once around the dinner table while in other families to talk while someone else is talking is considered rude.
- All families develop spoken as well as unspoken rules for conversing, caring, making decisions, and otherwise relating to each other. The key is to become aware of the unspoken and therefore assumed rules that you have grown up with and learn to adapt them to living in your current family.

Self-protection:

- This filter comes from the fear of rejection we struggle with in marriage.
- Fear is the big enemy of secure and warm attachment. It will stop us from saying what we truly feel or want. Even simple statements such as, "Would you like to go see that new movie?" can reflect a fear of rejection. Instead of saying it directly, "I want to go see that new movie; want to go?" we often hide our desire because speaking of it reveals more of who we are and increases the risk of rejection.
- Movies may not matter so much as do feelings, desires, expectations.

2.0 Listening Skills

A good listener will listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said. Effective listening involves observing body language and noticing inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages. For example, if someone tells you

that they are happy with their life but through gritted teeth or with tears filling their eyes, you should consider that the verbal and non-verbal messages are in conflict, they maybe don't mean what they say.

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively messages are easily misunderstood – communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. Listening is so important that many top employers provide listening skills training for their employees. This is not surprising when you consider that good listening skills can lead to: better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes, increased sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative work. Many successful leaders and entrepreneurs credit their success to effective listening skills. Richard Branson frequently quotes listening as one of the main factors behind the success of Virgin. Effective listening is a skill that underpins all positive human relationships, spend some time thinking about and developing your listening skills – they are the building blocks of success.

Listening is Not the Same as Hearing

Hearing refers to the sounds that you hear, whereas listening requires more than that: it requires focus. Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and understand these messages.

2.1 Types of Listening

2.2 Active Listening

Active listening is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice. However, active listening can be difficult to master and will, therefore, take time and patience. 'Active listening' means, as its name suggests, actively listening. That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker. Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the 'active listener' is also 'seen' to be listening - otherwise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener.

Interest can be conveyed to the speaker by using both verbal and non-verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying 'Yes' or simply 'Mmm hmm' to encourage them to continue. By providing this 'feedback' the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly and honestly.

- **Listening is the most fundamental component of interpersonal communication skills.** Listening is not something that just happens (that is hearing), listening is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker. Listeners should remain neutral and non-judgmental, this means trying not to take sides or form opinions, especially early in the conversation. Active listening is also about patience - pauses and short periods of silence should be accepted. Listeners should not be tempted to jump in with questions or comments every time there are a few seconds of silence. Active listening involves giving the

other person time to explore their thoughts and feelings, they should, therefore, be given adequate time for that.

- **Active listening not only means focusing fully on the speaker but also actively showing verbal and non-verbal signs of listening.** Generally speakers want listeners to demonstrate 'active listening' by responding appropriately to what they are saying. Appropriate responses to listening can be both verbal and non-verbal:

2.3 Passive Listening

Passive Listening occurs when a listener does not verbally respond to the speaker. The listener may deliberately or unintentionally send non-verbal messages through eye contact, smiles, yawns or nods. Sometimes passive listening is appropriate. If the speaker wants to vent frustration or express an opinion he may listen passively. Passive listening is mechanical and effortless. It does not require any special effort. You hear what your teacher says and you might be able to tell the difference between major and minor points of the lecture, but that is about it. Lack of enthusiasm and a "careless" attitude during class characterize a student who is a passive listener. Active listeners on the other hand really concentrate on the content of the lecture and not on the lecturer or any random distractions in the room or their mind. They do more than focus on facts, figures, and ideas and actively associate the material presented with their own experiences. The content heard at every lecture is converted to something useful and meaningful for the student. You must pay special attention in class because, unlike when reading a textbook, you only get one chance to hear and understand the information presented to you.

2.4 Barriers to Listening

There are many things that get in the way of listening and you should be aware of these barriers, many of which are bad habits, in order to become a more effective listener. Barriers and bad habits to effective listening can include:

Excessive Talking

Good conversational skills are an asset, and a person with this skill is more likely to achieve professional success. However, talking more than is necessary is a barrier to effective communication. People hesitate to interact with a person who talks excessively without listening to them. They may also get bored, and excessive talking may be perceived as aggression.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a preconceived opinion or feeling, which is usually irrational. Prejudice is very dangerous and has the potential to bring animosity into the team and to break team spirit. The reason for a prejudice may be the speaker's race, religion, age or appearance. A prejudiced person will not make any effort to listen and understand.

Distractions

The four main types of distractions are physical, mental, auditory and visual. Here's how to avoid this common barrier:

It is fine to have personal beliefs and values, but an excessive attachment to them will have a negative impact on your ability to communicate effectively with others. Learn to appreciate the fact that each and every person has his or her own set of beliefs and values.

Misunderstanding

Inability to hear correctly is one of the many reasons for misunderstanding of what the speaker is trying to communicate. This inability to hear is often the result of prejudice. To avoid misunderstanding, always clarify with the speaker to ensure that you have understood correctly.

Interrupting

Interrupting a conversation with improper body language or inappropriate words will have a negative impact in effective communication.

Bringing in Emotions

Emotions erect barriers to effective communication. A listener's senses are not likely to be functioning at their optimum level when he or she is angry. Likewise, it is not possible to understand or appreciate what the speaker is saying if the listener is excessively sad.

Noise

Noise is "any unwanted sound. It is a great impediment to clear communication. It is impossible to listen in a noisy environment. It becomes a frustrating experience for both the speaker and the listener.

Previous experiences

We are all influenced by previous experiences in life. We respond to people based on personal appearances, how initial introductions or welcomes were received and/or previous interpersonal encounters. If we stereotype a person we become less objective and therefore less likely to listen effectively.

Having a Closed Mind

We all have ideals and values that we believe to be correct and it can be difficult to listen to the views of others that contradict our own opinions. The key to effective listening and interpersonal skills more generally is the ability to have a truly open mind - to understand why others think about things differently to you and use this information to gain a better understanding of the speaker.

2.5 Traits of a good Listener

The following attributes of good listening are suggestive of the skills needed.

Concentration: Good listening is normally hard work. At every moment we are receiving literally millions of sensory messages. Our ears are hearing the buzzing of the computer fan, street sounds, music in the background and dozens of other sounds and thousands more signals are knocking at the doors of our senses. We have to repress almost all of these and concentrate on the verbal sounds (and visual clues) from one source - the speaker. And this concentration, if something that most of us have not been thoroughly trained in how to do. You should focus your attention on the words, ideas and feeling related to the subject. Concentrate on the main ideas or points. Don't let examples or fringe comments detract you. All of this takes a conscious effort.

Attention. Attention may be defined as the visual portion of concentration on the speaker. Through eye contact and other body language, we communicate to the speaker that we are paying close attention to his/her messages. All the time we are reading the verbal and nonverbal cues from the speaker, the speaker is reading ours. What messages are we sending out? If we lean forward a little and focus our eyes on the person, the message is we are paying close attention.

Eye contact. Good eye contact is essential for several reasons: First, by maintaining eye contact, some of the competing visual inputs are eliminated. You are not as likely to be distracted from the person talking to you. Second, most of us have learned to read lips, often unconsciously, and the lip reading helps us to understand verbal messages. Third, much of many messages are in non-verbal form and by watching the eyes and face of a person we pick up clues as to the content. A squinting of the eyes may indicate close attention. A slight nod indicates understanding or agreement. Most English language messages can have several meanings depending upon voice inflection, voice modulation, facial expression, etc. Finally, our eye contact with the speaker is feedback concerning the message.

Receptive Body Language. Certain body postures and movements are culturally interpreted with specific meanings. The crossing of arms and legs is perceived to mean a closing of the mind and attention. The nodding of the head vertically is interpreted as agreement or assent. If seated, the leaning forward with the upper body communicates attention. Standing or seated, the maintenance of an appropriate distance is important. Too close and we appear to be pushy or aggressive and too far and we are seen as cold.

Objective: We should be open to the message the other person is sending. It is very difficult to be completely open because each of us is strongly biased by the weight of our past experiences. We give meaning to the messages based upon what we have been taught the words and symbols mean by our parents, our peers and our teachers. Talk to someone from a different culture and watch how they give meaning to words. Or another listening challenge is to listen open and objectively to a person with very different political or religious beliefs. Relatively a few people can listen, understand and appreciate such messages which are very different from their own.

Questioning/Clarifying. Questions can serve the same purpose as restating the message. If you are unclear about the intent of the message, ask for more information after allowing sufficient time for explanations. Don't ask questions that will hurt, embarrass or show up the other person. Only part of the responsibility is with the speaker. You have an important and active role to

play also. If the message does not get through, two people have failed the speaker and you as an active listener.

Leave the Channel Open. A good listener always leaves open the possibility of additional messages. A brief question or a nod will often encourage additional communications

3.0 Speaking Skills

Your voice can reveal as much about your personal history as your appearance. The sound of a voice and the content of speech can provide clues to an individual's emotional state and a dialect can indicate their geographic roots. The voice is unique to the person to whom it belongs. For instance, if self-esteem is low, it may be reflected by hesitancy in the voice, a shy person may have a quiet voice, but someone who is confident in themselves will be more likely to have command of their voice and clarity of speech. Effective speaking is being able to speak in a public context with confidence and clarity, whilst at the same time reflecting on your own personality.

3.1 Confidence

Confidence is not something that can be learned like a set of rules; confidence is a state of mind. Positive thinking, practice, training, knowledge and talking to other people are all useful ways to help improve or boost your confidence levels. Confidence comes from feelings of well-being, acceptance of your body, mind and belief in your own ability, skills and experience. Low-confidence can be a result of many factors including: fear of the unknown, criticism, being unhappy with personal appearance, feeling unprepared, poor time-management, lack of knowledge and previous failures. Confidence is not a static measure, our confidence to perform roles and tasks can increase and decrease.

3.2 Paralinguistic features

Rate

Rate refers to the number of words we utter per minute. Speaking too fast is related to lack of comfort. Recall those speeches of your friends which they rapidly delivered in the class; remember how some of them just wanted to finish their speech and rush back to their seats of safety! A speaker who does not feel sure of himself/herself generally feels intimidated by the challenge of speaking in professional situations. This leads to a feeling of nervousness, and the best solution seems to speak as fast as one can and be finished with the frightening prospect of standing in front of the audience as the breakneck speed of delivery not only reveals the speaker's lack of confidence but also makes it difficult for the audience to comprehend, assimilate, and digest what is being said by the speaker.

Just as too fast a pace causes inconvenience to the audience, so does a pace far too slow. In fact, too slow a pace of your speech is likely to cause monotony and boredom to such an

extent that the audience start feeling sleepy and lose interest in the speech. Moreover, too slow a rate suggests lack of preparedness on the part of the speaker.

Pauses

Pauses are an essential part of all human interactions. We pause between different thought units in our day-to-day interactions with others. Therefore, if we do not pause while we speak in professional situations, it only makes our speech appear unnatural and hasty. Pauses lend credibility to the text of the speech. The speakers who pause suggest that they are quite accomplished, poised, and composed, and are not really worried about not being able to locate an idea once they have paused. Thus, if we pause, we display a sense of security and feeling of assurance that we know how to go further in our speech after a pause. On the contrary, those who do not pause seem to be in a hurry. Moreover, those who rush through their speeches and presentations are nervous about using pauses, as once they stop, they feel they would not know how to resume or reconnect. But then, such speakers are far from being impressive and accomplished. By all means, we must use pause while speaking in professional situations. They make our speech sound natural. Moreover, pauses are also required for the audiences to comprehend what you say, relate it to your earlier statement, and critically participate in the act of communication.

The most crucial thing about pause is their timing. A rightly timed pause is as important as a rightly placed word. Since a pause has to indicate either the emphasis or the conclusion of a thought unit, it is important not to put them at wrong places. Therefore, whenever you pause, pause at the conclusion of a certain thought unit and not in between. Remember, a timed pause adds to the value of what you say and makes it adequately natural and emphatic. A wrongly placed pause, however, distracts the audience. Also remember that though a pause is always a natural breather, both to the speaker and the listeners, silence—a longer pause—makes the audience feel impatient.

Volume

A speaker's volume often decides how he/she is likely to be received by the audience. The speaker who speaks at a low volume is likely to be seen as someone who lacks his/her lack of conviction of ideas. Such a speaker can never appear or emerge to be the master of the situation. Low volume is essentially associated with diffidence, and once you reveal that you lack confidence, you cannot gain control of your audience or command their respect as a speaker. At the other extreme is the speaker who speaks so loudly that the people in the front rows start dreading him/her. A speaker of this type is also likely to be rejected by the audience, simply because it suggests his/her arrogance.

Pitch/Intonation/Voice Modulation

Pitch refers to the rise and fall in human voice. Just like the other aspects of voice, pitch too plays a crucial role in communicating your ideas to others. In fact, it is the pitch—the rise and fall—in your voice which can express all the emotions that are to be conveyed. So that do not confuse volume and pitch, let us understand the difference between the two. Since pitch can express and convey all our moods, emotions, and sentiments, it becomes really important for us to carefully employ the desired pitch patterns. Quite often, we find the speech of a person quite boring because he/she does not use the variety of pitch patterns as per the requirement of the situation. In order to understand this, listen carefully to those songs in which the singer keeps singing in a solemn way until he/she reaches the climax. The change in the initial note and the later part is the change in the pitch patterns. The changes and varieties of pitch patterns can be observed even while we continue to listen to the song at the same volume. It is, therefore, suggested that you employ the variegated pitch patterns quite judiciously in order to keep your listeners engaged and interested in your expression.

Pronunciation and Articulation

Pronunciation plays an important role in expressing our ideas. As discussed earlier, English is not our native language and hence the pronunciation of Indian speakers of English is different from that of the native speaker. An effort should constantly be made to make our speech as close to standard English as possible. In terms of pronunciation, we should stick to RP (Received Pronunciation) English as it is recognized as the standard pronunciation of English worldwide. The chapter on phonetics discusses the different RP sounds of English and also gives you sufficient information regarding word stress, weak forms, and intonation patterns following which you can make your spoken English intelligible to a native listener. Articulation refers to our ability to speak different sounds distinctly. If we are able to speak and enunciate different sounds in a distinct and crisp manner, our articulation is considered appropriate and impressive. On the other hand, if we mix or mumble words, it is regarded as sloppy and inelegant.

3.4 Persuasive speaking

A persuasive speech is a specific type of speech in which the speaker has a goal of convincing the audience to accept his or her point of view. The speech is arranged in such a way as to hopefully cause the audience to accept all or part of the expressed view. Though the overarching goal of a persuasive speech is to convince the audience to accept a perspective, not all audiences can be convinced by a single speech and not all perspectives can persuade the audience.

An example of a persuasive speech is a sales pitch. During a sales pitch, the speaker is trying to convince the audience to buy his or her product or service. If the salesperson is successful, the audience (the person being sold to) will choose to purchase the product or service. However, salespeople understand that just because someone does not make a purchase after the first sales pitch does not mean the pitch failed. Persuasion is often a process. People may need multiple persuasive pitches and a lot of outside information before they are ready to accept a new view.

Persuasive speeches are composed of both logical and emotional appeal. Logic appeals are arguments that present a set of information and show why a conclusion must rationally be true. For example, arguments heard in court are logical arguments. Emotional appeals are appeals that seek to make the audience feel a certain way so that they will accept a conclusion. Negative political ads, for example, often incorporate emotional appeals by juxtaposing an opponent with a negative emotion such as fear.

3.5 Public Speaking

Public speaking is speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain the listeners. The purpose of public speaking can range from simply transmitting information, to motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. A good orator should be able to change the emotions of their listener, not just inform them. In public speaking, as in any form of communication, there are five basic elements, often expressed as "*who is saying what to whom utilizing what medium with what effects?*"

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and even beneficial, but too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here are some proven tips on how to control your butterflies and give better presentations during public speaking:

Know your material. Pick a topic you are interested in. Know more about it than you include in your speech. Use humor, personal stories and conversational language – that way you won't easily forget what to say.

2. Practice. Practice. Practice! Rehearse out loud with all equipment you plan on using. Revise as necessary. Work to control filler words; Practice, pause and breathe. Practice with a timer and allow time for the unexpected.

3. Know the audience. Greet some of the audience members as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers.

4. Know the room. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.

5. Relax. Begin by addressing the audience. It buys you time and calms your nerves. Pause, smile and count to three before saying anything. ("One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand. Pause. Begin.") Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.

6. Visualize yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the audience clapping – it will boost your confidence.

7. Realize that people want you to succeed. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They're rooting for you.

8. Don't apologize for any nervousness or problem – the audience probably never noticed it.

9. Concentrate on the message – not the medium. Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.

10. Gain experience. Mainly, your speech should represent *you* — as an authority and as a person. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

4.0 Reading Skills

4.1 Purpose of Reading

Reading is purposeful. The way you read something will depend on your purpose. You read different texts in different ways. In everyday life, you usually know why you are reading, you have a question and you read to find the answer. You usually know your way around your favourite newspaper, so if you want to know the sports results, you go straight to the correct page, or if you want to know what is on television tonight, you go straight to the television page. You do not start on the first page. When you read a novel, it is different. You start at the beginning and slowly move towards the end. In academic reading, you need to be flexible when you read - you may need to read quickly to find relevant sections, then read carefully when you have found what you want. General efficient reading strategies such as scanning to

find the book or chapter, skimming to get the gist and careful reading of important passages are necessary as well as learning about how texts are structured in your subject.

4.2 Techniques for good comprehension

4.2.1 Skimming and Scanning

Skimming is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. When you read the newspaper, you're probably not reading it word-by-word, instead you're scanning the text. Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading. People often skim when they have lots of material to read in a limited amount of time. Use skimming when you want to see if an article may be of interest in your research.

There are many strategies that can be used when skimming. Some people read the first and last paragraphs using headings, summarizes and other organizers as they move down the page or screen. You might read the title, subtitles, subheading, and illustrations. Consider reading the first sentence of each paragraph. This technique is useful when you're seeking specific information rather than reading for comprehension. Skimming works well to find dates, names, and places. It might be used to review graphs, tables, and charts.

Scanning is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. You search for key words or ideas. In most cases, you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. Scanning is also used when you first find a resource to determine whether it will answer your questions. Once you've scanned the document, you might go back and skim it.

When scanning, look for the author's use of organizers such as numbers, letters, steps, or the words, first, second, or next. Look for words that are bold faced, italics, or in a different font size, style, or color. Sometimes the author will put key ideas in the margin.

4.2.2 Structure of Text

The term "text structure" refers to how information is organized in a passage. The structure of a text can change multiple times in a work and even within a paragraph. Readers are often required to identify text structures on state reading tests. Therefore, it is important that they are given exposure to the various patterns of organization. **There are seven commonly used patterns of organization involved in the structure of text. They are Cause and Effect, Chronological, Compare and Contrast, Order of Importance, Problem and Solution, Sequence and Process and Descriptive.**

4.2.3 Structure of Paragraph

A paragraph consists of several sentences that are grouped together. This group of sentences together discusses one main subject. Paragraphs have three principal parts. These three parts are the topic sentence, body sentences, and the concluding sentence. We will also talk briefly about details in paragraphs.

A topic sentence usually comes at the beginning of a paragraph. It is usually the first sentence in a formal academic paragraph. Not only is a topic sentence the first sentence of a paragraph, but, more importantly, it is the most general sentence in a paragraph. What does "most general" mean? It means that there are not many details in the sentence, but that the sentence introduces an overall idea that you want to discuss later in the paragraph. The second and third sentences are called supporting sentences. They are called "supporting" because they "support," or explain, the idea expressed in the topic sentence. Of course, paragraphs often have more than two supporting ideas. In formal paragraphs you will sometimes see a sentence at the end of the paragraph which summarizes the information that has been presented. This is the concluding sentence. You can think of a concluding sentence as a sort of topic sentence in reverse.

- **Topic Sentence:** states the topic and your view about the topic
- **Supporting Sentences:** provide support for your topic sentences
- **Concluding Sentence:** brings the paragraph to a close

Benefits of Exercise

Topic Sentence

Contrary to what many out of shape people may think, exercise is not a waste of time.

Supporting Point 1

First of all, exercise conditions and strengthens the body's most important muscle, the heart. A stronger heart provides increased energy and stamina.

Supporting Point 2

Exercise also changes the way people look. Muscle tone develops and posture improves as the body becomes stronger.

Supporting Point 3

When people look better and feel better, their self-esteem increases and they feel more confident.

Supporting Point 4

Finally, the fitness gained through exercise helps fight off illness and disease.

Concluding Sentence

Exercise is not just for kids and athletes. Following a regular exercise routine pays off, both physically and mentally.

4.2.4 Essentials of effective Reading

Reading is an astoundingly complex cognitive process. While we often think of reading as one singular act, our brains are actually engaging in a number of tasks simultaneously each time we sit down with a book. There are five aspects to the process of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency. These five aspects work together to create the reading experience.

Phonics

Phonics is the connection between sounds and letter symbols. It is also the combination of these sound-symbol connections to create words. If you think about it, letters are arbitrary. There is nothing innately bed-like about the written word “bed”. It is simply the collection of letters and corresponding sounds that we agree constitute the word “bed”.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is closely related to phonics because both involve the connection between sounds and words. While phonics is the connection between sounds and letters, phonemic awareness is the understanding that words are created from phonemes (small units of sound in language). These may seem like the same thing, but there is a subtle difference in the two. Phonics is used only in written language because it involves letters. Phonemes are sounds only. While they can be represented using letters, they can also be simply the auditory sounds of words. Phonemes are most often learned before a child begins to read because they are centered on the sounds of language rather than written words.

Vocabulary

In order to read words we must first know them. Imagine how frustrating and fruitless it would be to read this article if all of the words were unfamiliar to you. Vocabulary development is an ongoing process that continues throughout one’s “reading life”. Knowing the exact meaning of the word in a text always helps to understand the entire paragraph easily. Context clues provide another method for discovering new words. Context clues are the “hints” contained in a text that help a reader figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Context clues are basically any item in the text that points to the definition of a new word.

Fluency

Fluency is a reader’s ability to read with speed, accuracy and expression. Thus it requires the reader to combine and use multiple reading skills at the same time. While fluency is most often measured through oral readings, good readers also exhibit this skill when they are reading silently. Fluency is intimately tied to comprehension. A reader must be able to move

quickly enough through a text to develop meaning. If he is bogged down reading each individual word, he is not able to create an overall picture in his mind of what the text is saying. Even if the reader is able to move rapidly through a text, if he cannot master the expression associated with the words, the meaning of it will be lost.

Reading Comprehension

Comprehension is what most people think reading is. This is because comprehension is the main reason why we read. It is the aspect of reading that all of the others serve to create. Reading comprehension is understanding what a text is all about. It is more than just understanding words in isolation. It is putting them together and using prior knowledge to develop meaning. Reading comprehension is the most complex aspect of reading. It not only involves all of the other four aspects of reading, it also requires the reader to draw upon general thinking skills. When a reader is actively engaged with a text, he is asking and answering questions about the story and summarizing what he has read.

5.0 Writing Skills

Writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. You might be called upon to write a report, plan or strategy at work; write a grant application or press release within a volunteering role; or you may fancy communicating your ideas online via a blog. And, of course, a well written CV with no spelling or grammatical mistakes is essential if you want a new job.

5.1 Types of Writing

There are four types of writing or four writing styles that are generally used. Knowing all these four different types of writing and their usages are important for any writer. A writer's style is a reflection of his personality, his unique style, his voice and his way to approach his audience and readers.

5.1.1 Expository Writing:

Expository writing is a subject-oriented writing style, in which the main focus of the author is to tell you about a given topic or subject, and leave out his personal opinions. He furnishes you with relevant facts and figures and does not include his opinions. This is one of the most common type of writing styles, which you always see in text books and usually "How – to" articles, in which the author tells you about a given subject, as how to do something. Examples of expository writing include encyclopedia entries, news reports, instruction manuals, informative essays, and research papers.

5.1.2 Descriptive writing:

Descriptive writing is a style of writing which focuses on describing a character, an event or a place in great details. It is sometimes poetic in nature in which the author is specifying the details of the event rather than just the information of that event happened. It is often poetic in nature and it describes places, people, events, situations or locations in a highly-detailed manner.

5.1.3 Persuasive Writing:

Persuasive writing, unlike 'Expository Writing', contains the opinions, biasness and justification of the author. Persuasive writing is a type of writing which contains justifications and reasons to make someone believe on the point the writer is talking about. Persuasive writing is for persuading and convincing on your point of view. It is often used in complain letters, when you provide reasons and justifications for your complaint; other copywriting texts, T.V commercials, affiliate marketing pitches etc. are all different types of persuasive writing, where author is persuading and convincing you on something he wants you to do and/or believe. Persuasive writing is equipped with reasons, arguments and justifications. Here the author takes a stand and asks you to believe his point of view. It often asks for a call or an action from the readers.

5.1.4 Narrative Writing:

Narrative writing is a type of writing in which the author places himself as the character and narrates you to the story. Novels, short stories, novellas, poetry, biographies can all fall in the narrative writing style. Simply, narrative writing is an art to describe a story. In narrative writing, a person, being a narrative, tells a story or event. It has characters and dialogues in it and based on definite and logical beginnings, intervals and endings. Narrative writing often has situations like disputes, conflicts, actions, motivational events, problems and their solutions. Narratives usually progress chronologically, and must have a clear beginning, middle and end. Short stories, novels, personal narratives, anecdotes, and biographies are all examples of narrative writing.

5.2 Importance of writing

Writing is the primary basis upon which your work, your learning, and your intellect will be judged—in college, in the workplace, and in the community. It expresses who you are as a person. Writing is portable and permanent. It makes your thinking visible. This skill helps you move easily among facts, inferences, and opinions without getting confused and without confusing your reader. It also fosters your ability to explain a complex position to readers, and to yourself. Writing helps you refine your ideas when you give others feedback. Writing requires that you anticipate your readers' needs and also demonstrates your intellectual flexibility and maturity. You can evaluate the adequacy of your argument through this. It stimulates you to extend a line of thought beyond your first impressions or gut responses. Writing equips you with the communication and thinking skills you need to participate effectively in democracy. Finally it is an essential job skill.

5.3 Style of Writing

There are many characteristics of good writing. Five of the most important are parallel structure, conciseness, sentence variety, correct spelling and grammar, and effective paragraphing.

- Parallel Structure

Use parallel or consistent structure when writing sentences and paragraphs. For example, avoid mixing forms of verbs in the same sentence. If you use the -ing form of a verb in a list,

use the -ing form for all verbs in the list. Similarly, avoid switching from active to passive voice in a series of clauses. When you read your sentences out loud, you should hear a rhythm being repeated--if something breaks the rhythm, check to see if you need to improve the sentence's parallel structure. The following sentences illustrate this concept:

Poor example: Mrs. Jones is trustworthy, dependable, and *she pays close attention to details.*

Improved: Mrs. Jones is trustworthy, dependable, and *detail-oriented.*

Poor example: Please keep track of your hours, turn in your timesheet, *and keeping a copy for your records is also important.*

Improved: Please keep track of your hours, turn in your timesheet, *and keep a copy for your records.*

- Conciseness

Sentences should be written concisely, since needless words and fillers distract readers from your message.

1. Eliminate opening fillers such as *there are*, *I would like to bring to your attention*, and *this is to inform you that*.

Too wordy sentence: This is to inform you that health insurance rates will increase effective next month.

Improved: Health insurance rates will increase effective next month.

2. Eliminate wordy phrases from your writing.

Wordy Phrases

Concise Substitutes

due to the fact that

because

regardless of the fact that

although

in regard to

about

in the near future

soon

3. Don't turn verbs into wordy phrases.

Wordy Phrases

Concise Verbs

give consideration to

consider

give a recommendation

recommend

conduct a discussion

discuss

4. Eliminate redundancies. The two words in the left column have the same meaning, so only one word is needed.

Redundancies

Concise Substitutes

perfectly clear

clear

exactly identical

identical

dollar amount

amount

- Sentence Variety

Effective writers add interest to their writing by using all four types of sentences-simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. A sentence is classified according to the number of independent and/or dependent clauses it contains. An independent clause is a group of words with a subject and verb that could stand alone as a complete sentence. Dependent clauses can't stand on their own as complete sentences, because their meaning depends upon the independent clause in the sentence.

A **simple sentence** such as *John loaded the software* contains just one independent clause. A **compound sentence** contains two independent clauses: *John loaded the software, and Mary installed the hard drive*. A **complex sentence** contains both an independent clause and a dependent clause. For example, *After the installation was complete, the computer was rebooted* is an example of a compound sentence. Finally, a **compound-complex sentence** contains at least two independent clauses and one dependent clause. Because they are so long, compound-complex sentences should be used sparingly. *After the installation was complete, the computer was rebooted, and the IT department successfully completed the upgrade* is an example of a compound-complex sentence.

John loaded the software, and Mary installed the hard drive. John went to lunch after finishing the job, but Mary skipped lunch to keep working. John started a new project after lunch, and Mary finished installing the hard drive later that afternoon.

Notice how much more interesting the paragraph becomes when we vary the sentence types:

John loaded the software, while Mary installed the hard drive. John finished and went to lunch, but Mary kept working, finally finishing the hard drive installation later that afternoon. John started a new project after lunch.

- Correct Spelling and Grammar

Strong grammatical skills lend credibility to your writing. They also enhance the readability of your documents, since misspelled words and grammatical errors distract readers from your message.

Run-On Sentences are independent clauses joined together without punctuation or a coordinating conjunction. *The manager hired Rahul for the position Ashok was transferred to the main office* is an example of a run-on sentence.

Sentence Fragments are incomplete sentences. To be complete, a sentence must have a subject and a verb, and it must make sense. *Because Human Resources hired twenty people* is an example of a sentence fragment. Although it contains a subject and a verb, the sentence doesn't make sense since the word *because* indicates the sentence is dependent on another clause to complete its meaning. The following sentence would be considered complete: *Because Human Resources hired twenty people, new office furniture had to be ordered.*

Read your document twice—once for grammar, and once for word meanings, comprehension, and flow. Reading the document out loud can also help you to identify errors and evaluate the tone of your document.

- Effective Paragraphing

1. **Cover one subject per paragraph**, and begin each paragraph with a topic sentence stating what the subject is about. Focusing on just one clearly stated subject in each paragraph helps readers understand your message.

2. **Link ideas together by repeating words in sentences.** For example, look at both of these paragraphs, and see how repeating the words *campaign* and *cost* in the second paragraph makes the paragraph more coherent by linking ideas together.

Example:

Without repeating words: John suggested an aggressive marketing campaign for the new product. Direct mailings will be sent to all households in the target market, and this will be very costly. Additional funds were set aside for marketing this year by the corporate office.

With repeating words: John suggested an aggressive marketing campaign for the new product. *The campaign* will involve direct mailings to all households in the target market, and will be very costly. *The high cost* will be partially offset by the additional funds set aside for marketing this year by the corporate office.

5.4 Writing Process

Writing is a process that is made up of several different elements: Pre-Writing, Organization, Writing, Revising, and Editing. However, these different elements overlap with one another; they aren't separate stages. Successful writers are constantly going through these different elements. Skillful writers continually remind themselves of this process, and they constantly monitor their writing, re-engaging themselves with their work. Every writer follows his or her own writing process. Often the process is a routine that comes naturally and is not a step-by-step guide to which writers refer. Being conscious of your own writing process is especially helpful when you find yourself struggling with a particularly tricky piece. Here are five steps towards creating or identifying your personal writing process.

- **Prewriting**

Find Your Idea

Ideas are all around you. You might draw inspiration from a routine, an everyday situation or a childhood memory. Alternatively, keep a notebook specifically devoted to catching your ideas as they come to you. Your own imagination is the only limit to finding your source of inspiration.

Build on Your Idea

Two of the most popular methods of fleshing out your idea are free writing and brainstorming. Free writing means writing every idea that comes into your head. Do not stop to edit your mistakes, just let the ideas flow. Or, try brainstorming. If you're on a computer, try a manual process first to help you visualize your narrative: write your idea in the center of the page and work outwards in all of the different directions you can take your story.

Plan and Structure

Piecing the puzzle together comes next. It's time to sort through your ideas and choose which ones you will use to form your story. Make sure you keep your notes even after your book is published – there may be the seeds for your next story as well.

- **Writing**

Now you have your plan and you're ready to start writing. Remember, this is your first rough draft. Forget about word count and grammar. Don't worry if you stray off topic in places; even the greatest writers produce multiple drafts before they produce their finished manuscript. Think of this stage as a free writing exercise, just with more direction. Identify the best time and location to write and eliminate potential distractions. Make writing a regular part of your day.

- **Revision**

Your story can change a great deal during this stage. When revising their work, many writers naturally adopt the A.R.R.R. approach:

Add: Have you given your readers all the information they need to make sense of your topic? If not, go back to your draft that you kept for additional information and any additional details.

Rearrange: Consider the flow, pacing and sequencing of your topic. Would the sequence be better served if some of the events occur in a different order?

Remove: After making additions to your topic, how is your word count now? Are your readers experiencing information overload? You may need to eliminate passages that don't quite fit.

Replace: The most effective way to revise your work is to ask for a second opinion. Do you need more vivid details to help clarify your work? Is one scene contradicting another? Ask friends or fellow writers to take a look and give you feedback, and if something isn't working rewrite it and replace it.

- **Editing**

It's time to fine tune your manuscript line by line. Check for repetition, clarity, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Editing is an extremely detailed process and its best when performed by a professional.

Review questions:

1. What does the term 'communication' imply? Why is effective communication vital in today's world?
2. Counseling, instructing, giving orders, persuasion are some of the purposes of communication . Discuss.
3. What are barriers to communication? Do you remember any case of poor communication? Specify what went wrong in the case that resulted in poor communication.
4. How does a receiver influence the sender's communication skills? Substantiate your answer with appropriate examples. Whether an organization is small or large , it is communication that binds the organization together. Discuss in detail the formal flow of communication in an organization in the light of the above statement.

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UNIT 2

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Objective: to make the students understand the basic nuances of corporate and how communication plays a vital role in the corporate environment. This chapter also looks into the growing importance of intercultural or cross-cultural communication and it has taken a bigger part in the workplace after the arrival of multi-national companies with different cultural affiliations. This chapter will also guide the students to understand the various day to day means of communication used at work place.

1.1 Introduction

Communication the buzz word in today's world, originates from the Latin word *communico* or *communicare*, which means 'to share'. It can be very briefly summed up that 'communication' essentially means the transfer of ideas, feelings, plans, messages or information from one person to another'. However, communication is considered effective only when it gets the desired action or responses.

Different forms of Communication

Communication is generally classified into the following types.

1. Verbal Communication

Verbal communication stands for both the spoken and written word used in the communication process. It can be further divided into oral and written communication.

- a. Oral communication: a face-to-face interaction between the sender and receiver. Presentations, meetings, seminars are part of oral communication. Telephonic communication can also be included in this category.

- b. Written communication: sender uses the written mode to transmit his messages. Reports, letters, memos, e-mails come under this category.

2. Nonverbal Communication

When a message is communicated without using a word, the process requires non-verbal cues to be transmitted and received. It can be further categorized into two parts

- Body language: personal appearance , walk, gestures, facial expressions, hand movements, postures and eye contact.
- Paralinguistic features: a person's voice, volume, pitch, rate, pauses, articulation, voice modulation, etc.

3. Interpersonal Communication

This is a direct, written or oral communication that occurs between two or more persons.

4. Media Communication

It includes communication that takes place only with the help of electronic media, such as computer, cell phones, LCD, Videos, television, etc. Regardless of the type of communication involved, communication remains an ever continuing process that keeps tickling all the time. It is important to human life as it is our any other day-to-day activity, such as breathing, eating, and sleeping.

1.2 Meaning of corporate communication:

Corporations are the most common form of business organization, and one which is chartered by a state and given many legal rights as an entity separate from its owners. This form of business is characterized by the limited liability of its owners, the issuance of shares of easily transferable stock, and existence as a going concern. Whereas a company could be any entity engaging in business, such as a proprietorship, partnership, or corporation. In this chapter we will understand corporate as any work sector where there is demand for good communication skills.

Corporate communication is the sharing of information within a business to facilitate organizational communication; a business manager/executive will usually need to have or develop considerable interpersonal skills - such as effective speaking, writing and listening - in order to best assist information sharing within their department.

1.3 Constituents of corporate communication

An organization's corporate communications department manages communications with stakeholders both internal and external such as staff, customers, the media, governments and shareholders. Nonprofits even have departments to communicate with their donors and partner organizations. The aim is to present a consistent, positive image to all stakeholders. The corporate communications department tries to ensure that what the organization says about itself is matched by what it does. The corporate communications function, which might be carried out by a single person or a large department, comprises several elements.

Internal Communications

The internal element of corporate communications focuses on aligning staff with the organizational values and purpose. Activities include arranging staff conferences or regular meetings with senior managers, sharing stories on the company intranet or in the company newsletter, and organizing award schemes to reinforce organizational values. Internal communications often liaise with media relations; sharing positive media coverage internally is a way to raise morale.

Media Relations

Media relations professionals ensure that the organization as a whole is represented positively in the media. They are generally not responsible for PR for products and services - that job is for their colleagues in marketing communications. However, the corporate communications team is on the task when the company's reputation is on the line with the risk of negative coverage if a product has a fault.

Public Affairs

Organizations in every sector are subject to laws and regulations at the local, state, and federal level. The job of public affairs staff is to put forth the organization's case for amendments to proposed or existing legislation, and in some cases, to campaign for new laws. Public affairs staff often works with media relations to run integrated campaigns.

Investor Relations

The purpose of investor relations is to reassure shareholders that their investment in the company was a wise move, and that they should continue to hold onto their shares, if not buy more of them. The emphasis of communications is on the financial success of the company and the decisions it makes that will lead to growth. The investor relations team produces regular financial and management reports and briefs for the financial media. The equivalent function for nonprofit organizations is donor relations. In this case, the communications department relays the message that donors gave their money to a good cause and that their money is not being wasted. Donor reports often feature stories about beneficiaries of the organization's activities.

1.4 Corporate social responsibility

A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment is understandable (both ecological and social). Companies express this responsibility through their waste and pollution reduction processes, contributing educational and social programs, and by earning adequate returns on the employed resources.

Corporate social responsibility may also be referred to as "corporate citizenship" and can involve incurring short-term costs that do not provide an immediate financial benefit to the company, but instead promote positive social and environmental change. The idea of CSR first came up in 1953 when it became an academic topic in HR Bowen's "Social Responsibilities of the Business". Since then, there has been continuous debate on the concept and its implementation. Although the idea has been around for more than half a century, there is still no clear consensus over its definition.

One of the most contemporary definitions is from the World Bank Group, stating, "Corporate social responsibility is the commitment of businesses to contribute to sustainable economic development by working with employees, their families, the local

community and society at large, to improve their lives in ways that are good for business and for development.”

Core Elements:

The CSR Policy should normally cover following core elements:

1. Care for all Stakeholders:

The companies should respect the interests of, and be responsive towards all stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, project affected people, society at large etc. and create value for all of them. They should develop mechanism to actively engage with all stakeholders, inform them of inherent risks and mitigate them where they occur.

2. Ethical functioning:

Their governance systems should be underpinned by Ethics, Transparency and Accountability. They should not engage in business practices that are abusive, unfair, corrupt or anti-competitive.

3. Respect for Workers' Rights and Welfare:

Companies should provide a workplace environment that is safe, hygienic and humane and which upholds the dignity of employees. They should provide all employees with access to training and development of necessary skills for career advancement, on an equal and non-discriminatory basis. They should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining of labour, have an effective grievance redressed system, should not employ child or forced labour and provide and maintain equality of opportunities without any discrimination on any grounds in recruitment and during employment.

4. Respect for Human Rights:

Companies should respect human rights for all and avoid complicity with human rights abuses by them or by third party⁴.

5. Respect for Environment:

Companies should take measures to check and prevent pollution; recycle, manage and reduce waste, should manage natural resources in a sustainable manner and ensure optimal use of resources like land and water, should proactively respond to the challenges of climate change by adopting cleaner production methods, promoting efficient use of energy and environment friendly technologies.

6. Activities for Social and Inclusive Development:

Depending upon their core competency and business interest, companies should undertake activities for economic and social development of communities and geographical areas, particularly in the vicinity of their operations. These could include education, skill building for livelihood of people, health, cultural and social welfare etc., particularly targeting at disadvantaged sections of society.

1.5 Crisis communication

The effort taken by a company to communicate with the public and stockholders when an unexpected event occurs that could have a negative impact on the company's reputation. This can also refer to the efforts of business or governmental entities to inform employees or the public of a potential hazard such as an impending storm which could have a catastrophic impact.

The crisis can be broadly divided into three chief categories

Immediate crisis– often of the natural disaster or major emergency type (earthquakes, etc.).

Emerging crisis – can be anticipated and minimized at early stages.

Sustained crisis – involves situations that may linger for years.

In many ways, it's analogous to putting out a fire (though nowhere near as dangerous as what actual firefighters do, and for that we salute them). A fire requires three things to burn – heat (energy), fuel, and oxygen or a catalyst like oxygen (speed). Take away any one of those elements and the fire goes out. Firefighters most often deny fire its heat through the use of water, taking away its energy. For smaller fires, we can choke its ability to burn quickly with carbon dioxide (in many fire extinguishers) or cut off fire's access to fuel (dry powder fire extinguishers).

In a crisis communications situation, something has gone wrong and your brand is on fire. There's the something you did or something you're responsible for – the fuel. There's the tide of public opinion – the heat, the energy. There's your speed of reaction to it – the catalyst. As with real fires, if you deny the fire any one of these sources, you break the chain reaction that causes fire and it burns itself out.

The three ways to fight these brand fires are similar to the ways we put out their real world fire counterparts:

Knowledge: The crisis communications equivalent of denying fuel for the fire. By providing correct knowledge and information, you take away the rumor mill and word of mouth. Very often in a crisis, people fill in gaps of knowledge with their own suspicions. Take away that speculation with facts, and there's less for their minds to imagine.

Speed: The crisis communications equivalent of denying oxygen for the fire. The faster you react and respond, the quicker you deny a crisis the chance to ramp up and get out of control. Speed is critical in most crises and what could be an explosive backdraft if allowed to build up can instead be controlled to a slow, manageable burn by being ahead of the news cycle and turning a juicy story into "old news".

Ownership: The crisis communications equivalent of denying heat for the fire. Taking responsibility or ownership of a situation, being out in front of the crowds, and being forthcoming about either what you did or what you're going to do to prevent the problem from happening again. This pre-empts the blame cycle where others can pile on to assign blame – by being in front of it and owning it, the most they can do is agree with you.

Finally, as with real world fires, the more effective you are in implementing these crisis communications methods, the smaller the fire will grow and the faster you can put it out. Deny a fire just one of the three factors and it will go out, but it may take a while and still do damage. Deny a fire all three factors and it will vanish nearly instantly. In your crisis communications, be in front with acceptance of responsibility and delivery of knowledge with stunning alacrity, and you may intercept the fire while it's still just a few sparks.

2.0 Intercultural sensitivity

As we begin the next millennium, the importance of effective intercultural relations in both global and domestic contexts is well recognized. To be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures. We will use the term "intercultural sensitivity" to refer to the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences, and we will use the term "intercultural competence" to mean the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways. Greater intercultural sensitivity is associated with greater potential for exercising intercultural competence. When this broader approach is missing in an individual or group while approaching intercultural it leads to intercultural insensitivity.

2.1 Purpose and need to improve intercultural sensitivity

Many businesses today operate on a global scale, and our culturally diverse workforce is made up of people from different countries, ethnic backgrounds, races, religion and family structure. If you are to communicate effectively with all these different people, it is important to keep an open mind and try to learn as much as possible about their various cultures, and be sensitive to them.

What is culture? Culture is a shared system of beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations and norms of behaviour. Members of a culture often have similar beliefs and theories on how people should behave, think and communicate, and they all tend to act on those beliefs in much the same way.

From group to group, cultures differ considerably. When you communicate with someone from a different culture, you normally do so using the theories and beliefs of your own

culture. However, when your audience receives your message, they do so based on the assumptions of their own culture. As a result of basic cultural differences, misunderstandings could easily occur, and often do.

How can one improve inter/cross-cultural communication skills?

- By recognising cultural differences.
- By being willing to accept that other people have different beliefs and assumptions.
- By being open-minded enough to know that not everyone has the same standards and theories
- By learning more about people from different cultures.
- By constantly making an effort to improve your inter-cultural communication skills.

Acknowledging cultural differences

If you are to communicate effectively across cultures, you must not judge other people by your own standards. It is essential to retain an open mind, and remember that your own cultural background is not necessarily superior to anyone else's.

Many people assume that other people's attitudes and lives are like our own, but this is not so. Your aim should be to try to treat people not in the way you wish to be treated, but rather treat them the way they want to be treated.

Ethnocentrism: Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own cultural background is superior to all others. This creates a barrier to effective communication because the mind remains closed to new information. Ethnocentric people tend to form pre-conceived judgments of different cultures based on one experience, or based on limited evidence. Perhaps they tend to take stereotyping a little too far and don't keep an open mind so they cannot move beyond a certain stage. For example, when talking to Barbra Horsky, instead of looking at her as a special human being with unique qualities, ethnocentric people believe

they are simply talking to "an Israeli". Perhaps they believe that all Israelis are Jews who are outspoken, demanding and aggressive, simply because of preconceptions and limited previous experience. Therefore despite Barbra's many unique personal qualities, the ethnocentric person cannot see beyond their fixed ideas, even when those ideas are wrong, so their mind remains closed.

If you want to avoid ethnocentrism, you should:

- Recognise differences. Accept and acknowledge that there are distinctions between your own cultures and those of other people.
- Avoid assumptions. Bear in mind that others may not act in the same way as you, nor will they have the same fundamental theories or beliefs.
- do not pre-judge. If people act differently to you, do not automatically assume that they are wrong, that their way is unacceptable, or that your cultures and customs are more superior to theirs.

Checklist for communicating effectively across cultures

- If you are to communicate effectively in a culturally diverse workforce, here is a checklist of points to remember. If you follow these tips you will be able to communicate with anyone from any culture:
- Show respect.
- Learn how respect is communicated in different cultures (gestures, eye contact, symbols, signs, etc).
- Show empathy.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the recipient and imagine their feelings and their point of view.
- Do not prejudge. Accept differences without judging, and learn to listen.
- Be open-minded. Accept that you may have to change your habits or mind-set when communicating across cultures.

- Avoid distractions. Do not be distracted by things like appearance or dress.
- Be patient. Sometimes persistence will be necessary when communicating with someone from a different culture.
- Look for similarities. Try to find common ground, parallels, and connections.
- Send clear messages. Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal communications are quite clear, reliable and consistent.
- Recognise your prejudices. Learn to appreciate and accept when your theories and beliefs are different from other people.
- Treat people as individuals. Do not treat one person as being a stereotype of a particular group, but rather as a unique human being with individual qualities and attributes.

2.2 Different stages of intercultural sensitivity

Bennett describes six stages of development in intercultural sensitivity. The stages provide a good framework for determining how to work with and improve the capacity for intercultural sensitivity and collaboration. Some of his stages of "cultural sensitivity" include behaviors or adaptations the authors include under the definition of "cultural competence."

Stages of Intercultural Sensitivity

1. Denial: Does not recognize cultural differences
2. Defense: Recognizes some differences, but sees them as negative
3. Minimization: Unaware of projection of own cultural values; sees own values as superior
4. Acceptance: Shifts perspectives to understand that the same "ordinary" behavior can have different meanings in different cultures
5. Adaptation: Can evaluate other's behavior from their frame of reference and can

adapt behavior to fit the norms of a different culture

6. Integration: Can shift frame of reference and also deal with resulting identity issues

1. The first stage of the model is "denial." It means that people in this stage are very unaware of cultural difference. If mainstream agency staff is in this stage of intercultural sensitivity, a huge problem can be expected in the delivery of education, health, and social services for ethnic minorities, a gap that does currently exist when these groups are compared to Anglo Americans. The task for staff at this first stage of intercultural sensitivity is to recognize cultural differences that are escaping their notice.

2. Whereas in the first stage we do not "see" cultural differences, in the second stage of cultural competence we do perceive cultural differences; however, differences from ourselves or the norms of our group are labeled very negatively. They are experienced as a threat to the centrality and "rightness" of our own value system. This stage is called "defense."

If staffs of mainstream agencies achieve the second level of intercultural sensitivity, they still fail to communicate effectively with ethnic minorities. If they cannot communicate effectively, they cannot do the more complex task of collaborating effectively. The task in the second level of cultural sensitivity is recognize and to become more tolerant of differences and to see basic similarities among people of different cultures. However, little improvement in services can be expected if staffs are below the third level of intercultural sensitivity.

3. In the third stage of intercultural sensitivity, minimization, we try to avoid stereotypes and even appreciate differences in language and culture. However, we still view many of our own values as universal, rather than viewing them simply as part of our own ethnicity. The task at the third level of intercultural sensitivity is to learn more about our own culture and to avoid projecting that culture onto other people's experience. This stage is particularly difficult to pass through when one cultural group has vast and unrecognized privileges when

compared to other groups. This problem is so invisible that persons in mainstream agencies are often mystified when representatives of ethnic minorities consistently withdraw from collaborative activities.

4. A reasonable goal for many mainstream agencies is to ensure that all staff members achieve at least the fourth developmental level in intercultural sensitivity. The fourth stage in Bennett's model requires us to be able to shift perspective, while still maintaining our commitments to values. The task in this stage is to understand that the same behavior can have different meanings in different cultures. The comparisons that follow in the Toolkit can be particularly helpful for staff of mainstream agencies to improve their intercultural sensitivity in this stage of development. In order for collaboration to be successful long-term, this stage of intercultural sensitivity must be reached by the participants of the collaborative process. This stage is called "acceptance."

5. The fifth stage of intercultural sensitivity, adaptation, may allow the person to function in a bicultural capacity. In this stage, a person is able to take the perspective of another culture and operate successfully within that culture. This ability usually develops in a two-part sequence. It requires that the person know enough about his or her own culture and a second culture to allow a mental shift into the value scheme of the other culture, and an evaluation of behavior based on its norms, not the norms of the first individual's culture of origin.

6. In the sixth stage, the person can shift perspectives and frames of reference from one culture to another in a natural way. They become adept at evaluating any situation from multiple frames of reference. Some representatives in cross-cultural collaboration may reach this level, but most probably will not. Stage six requires in-depth knowledge of at least two cultures (one's own and another), and the ability to shift easily into the other cultural frame of reference. The task at this level of development is to handle the identity issues that emerge from this cultural flexibility. This final stage of intercultural sensitivity is called "integration."

3.0 Multicultural workforce

3.1 Meaning of multicultural workforce

A multicultural workforce is one in which a wide range of cultural differences exist among the employees in the organization. While a number of major and minor traits are used to describe cultural differences, the most common traits used to identify the level of multiculturalism evident in a given workforce often boils down to "age, sex, ethnicity, physical ability, race and sexual orientation.

3.2 What are the different types of culture existing at workplace

Benefits of Workplace Diversity

An organization's success and competitiveness depends upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize the benefits. When organizations actively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues, develop and implement diversity plans, multiple benefits are reported such as:

Increased adaptability

Organizations employing a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing, and allocation of resources. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.

Broader service range

A diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g. languages, cultural understanding) allows a company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

Variety of viewpoints

A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences. The organization can draw from that pool to meet business strategy needs and the needs of customers more effectively.

More effective execution

Companies that encourage diversity in the workplace inspire all of their employees to perform to their highest ability. Company-wide strategies can then be executed; resulting in higher productivity, profit, and return on investment.

Challenges of Diversity in the Workplace

Taking full advantage of the benefits of diversity in the workplace is not without its challenges. Some of those challenges are:

Communication - Perceptual, cultural and language barriers need to be overcome for diversity programs to succeed. Ineffective communication of key objectives results in confusion, lack of teamwork, and low morale.

Resistance to change - There are always employees who will refuse to accept the fact that the social and cultural makeup of their workplace is changing. The “we’ve always done it this way” mentality silences new ideas and inhibits progress.

Implementation of diversity in the workplace policies - This can be the overriding challenge to all diversity advocates. Armed with the results of employee assessments and research data, they must build and implement a customized strategy to maximize the effects of diversity in the workplace for their particular organization.

Successful Management of Diversity in the Workplace - Diversity training alone is not sufficient for your organization’s diversity management plan. A strategy must be created and implemented to create a culture of diversity that permeates every department and function of the organization.

3.3 How to be successful at multicultural workplace

Ward off change resistance with inclusion. - Involve every employee possible in formulating and executing diversity initiatives in your workplace.

Foster an attitude of openness in your organization. - Encourage employees to express their ideas and opinions and attribute a sense of equal value to all.

Promote diversity in leadership positions. - This practice provides visibility and realizes the benefits of diversity in the workplace.

Utilize diversity training. - Use it as a tool to shape your diversity policy.

Launch a customizable employee satisfaction survey that provides comprehensive reporting. - Use the results to build and implement successful diversity in the workplace policies.

As the economy becomes increasingly global, our workforce becomes increasingly diverse. Organizational success and competitiveness will depend on the ability to manage diversity in the workplace effectively. Evaluate your organization's diversity policies and plan for the future, starting today.

4.0 Meetings

A meeting is a formal or informal deliberative assembly of individuals called to debate certain issues and problems, and to take decisions. Formal meetings are held at definite times, at a definite place, and usually for a definite duration to follow an agreed upon agenda.

Types of Meetings

Status

This kind of meeting is to bring everyone up to date on the state of the other peoples' portions of a project. The participants are those reporting progress and those hearing it. An agenda is required for this kind of meeting. It should last no more than fifteen minutes.

Action

These meetings solve a particular problem. There are two kinds of action meeting, decision making meetings and brainstorming meetings.

Decision making

This should be an uncommon occurrence since decisions are usually taken by one person. A meeting may be needed if the decision is not clear cut and the decision maker wants suggestions or advice from others affected by it. For example a number of designs may be submitted from which a choice must be made.

Brainstorming

The purpose of this meeting is to come up with a variety of possible solutions to some particular problem. Participants may include junior people as well as experienced designers. Ideas from one person can inspire ideas in others people.

One method is to get everyone to write down many ideas in a short time. This prevents people evaluating and rejecting ideas too soon. At the end of a brainstorming session or in a separate meeting the evaluation of all the ideas takes place.

4.1 Characteristics of meeting

A successful meeting has four characteristics:

- The meeting must have a clear purpose and should stick to the agenda.
- The meeting must start and end on time.
- Participants must be properly prepared
- Minutes must be taken.

4.3 Conducting Meetings

Running an effective business meeting can help the company produce results and meet important goals. To make sure you have an effective meeting, here are some tips on how to conduct effective meetings.

Outline your key meeting points with an agenda.

An important part of conducting an effective business meeting is meeting planning. Have your key points written or typed out. You can also give the participants a copy of your agenda so that they will know what to expect and they can prepare for the meeting themselves. In your agenda, you should state your goal for the meeting. This should be the main end result you are aiming for, such as coming up with a new idea or discussing an important issue. Try to limit the amount of points on your agenda. You should cover the most important things in your meeting.

Follow the agenda when you conduct the meeting: Make sure to follow your meeting plan. If the meeting starts to go off course or off topic, steer the meeting back to the topic at hand.

Start your meeting immediately: Start the meeting in time. This will help establish your role as the leader as well as utilize the time you have.

Set a time limit for your meeting: Meetings shouldn't run too long; 30 minutes or shorter is a good length. Keeping the meeting short will ensure that you are more efficient and use the time wisely, and your participants will be more focused when they know the meeting is short. When your time limit has run out, end your meeting. You can always cover other points in the next meeting.

Encourage the meeting participants to add feedback and input: Ask questions and let people at the meeting volunteer answers. Do not force participation, but gently encourage them to give input. If 1 person comments, guide the others by saying something like, "Well done. Does anyone else have something to contribute," or "Let's hear a suggestion from someone else."

Do not call upon those that rarely speak as this may make them feel uncomfortable. Encourage them indirectly by saying, "I value the opinion of everyone here. Does anyone else want to add something?" and glance at the person you want to speak up. He may be encouraged to share his thoughts, and if he isn't, then he hasn't been embarrassed from being called upon.

Summarize the key points at the close of the meeting: Briefly go over what was discussed so that the participants will leave with it in their mind. Give out any assignments or instructions before closing, and end on time. Be sure to thank everyone for their attendance and participation.

Steps for an Effective meeting

Notice of Meeting

Let everyone involved know that you are requesting a meeting for a particular reason, and give them the date, time and location for this. This is known as a Notice of Meeting and can take the form of a memo, letter, poster and/or email communication.

Example Notice of Meeting in Memo format:

To: Ima Member, Mia Swell
From: Team Player
Subject: New group project
Date: 14 February 2004
The group project is about to be launched. A meeting will be held on 01 March 2004 at 10am in meeting room 2 to decide what our starting point is.
Please circulate all Concept Study Reports prior to the meeting and come prepared both to discuss these and to volunteer for individual tasks.

AGENDA

Before the meeting starts (sometimes given at the same time as the Notice of Meeting), you need to let all those invited to attend the meeting what it is that's to be discussed and the order that these items will be mentioned in. Known as an Agenda, this lets

everyone prepare for the meeting in advance so that they can bring up any important points at the relevant time.

A formal agenda should always contain the following information:

1. The word Agenda
2. The name of the organisation, group or person calling the meeting
3. The date and time of the meeting
4. The meeting venue
5. Apologies
6. Minutes of the Last Meeting
7. Matters Arising
8. Your meeting's topics listed one after the other
9. Any Other Business
10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The first 4 points here make up the header section for the Agenda, so the order of the information may vary - as in the example agenda shown above, where the word 'Agenda' appears after the rest of the header information.

A numbered list should then be given, with 5 of the points fixed as shown in the list above, and any points specific to this particular meeting listed in the middle of them. That is, start with Apologies (who can't attend the meeting), Minutes of the Last Meeting (even for a first meeting - this just becomes 'not relevant') and Matters Arising (points still to be addressed from the previous meeting's minutes).

Next come specific points for this meeting, and then round off with Any Other Business (sometimes abbreviated to AOCB - for Any Other Current Business) where any relevant

items not already discussed in the meeting can be mentioned. Finally, the last point on the Agenda should be a note of when the next meeting will be.

Example of an Agenda

Agenda	
Group Leaders Start-up Meeting	
Date:	26 February 2004
Time:	2.00 pm
Venue:	Conference Room
1.	Apologies
2.	Minutes of Last Meeting
3.	Matters Arising
4.	Planning
5.	Co-operation and Team work
6.	Research and Testing
7.	Evaluating
8.	Any Other Business
9.	Date and Time of Next Meeting

Minutes

During the meeting itself, it is important that all points raised are noted so that a summary of the full meeting is recorded. These are the Minutes and they should show what was discussed, more especially what was agreed (or ruled out), and any action points - a note of something that has to be carried out, by whom, and usually with a deadline.

Like the Notice of Meeting and Agenda, the Minutes should contain some fixed information and follow a standard layout. The headings in the Minutes should follow those in the Agenda for this meeting, after stating:

1. The name of the meeting
2. Its venue, date and time

3. Who was in attendance
4. Who sent apologies (this one sometimes appears as heading 1)

The Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising are then used as headings with relevant information recorded against each. All topics listed in the Agenda then follow, before the Minutes round off with Any Other Business and close with the Date of Next Meeting.

Minutes of the Group Leaders Start-up Meeting

Date: 26 February 2004

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: Conference Room

In Attendance: Ahmin Charge (Chair), Teem Player, Lee Derr, Sue Pervisor

Action

Apologies

Apologies were received from Noel T'Day.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were distributed, and signed as a true record of it.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Planning

AC explained the importance of planning ahead and requested questions in this area. A discussion ensued, but there were no problems or concerns voiced in relation to planning.

Research and Testing

TP reported that initial research was going well, and shared the early findings. AC suggested this would be of benefit to other team members, and LD and SP both agreed this should be passed on. TP

Any Other Business

There was no other business.

5.0 Communicating through Visuals

Is a picture really worth a thousand words? In this age of multimedia and mass communication, it often seems so. As humans, we are biologically wired to process the world visually. We understand images instantly—long before we learn the language to describe them. That is why visual communication is the most powerful medium for transferring volumes of information recent

research supports the idea that visual communication can be more powerful than verbal communication, suggesting in many instances that people learn and retain information that is presented to them visually much better than that which is only provided verbally. These are welcome findings to anyone whose work involves using visual presentations to persuade or instruct others. Even more welcome is the news that presenters, today, have more resources than ever available to them for creating and displaying the most visually rich programs possible.

Communicating effectively in the visual age

Visual communication is everywhere today, from electronic media like Web pages and television screens to environmental contexts such as road signs and retail displays.



5.1 Visual signs

5.2 Advantages of visual signals

The visual communication is very useful to compare. When a consumer decides to buy a product, he will visualize the product with competitor's product. Visual media always supported with signs and symbols this can be analyzed again and again. This facilitates the comparison. This facilitates to memorize things. Visual communication is a good tool to memorize things. It is a good way to teach kids with the help of visual pictures. The same can be done in marketing activities. Visual communication becomes a bird's eye. That is a bird watches the world on a tree can see every angles and it can wrist its neck in different way. The same application is possible for a consumer to see things in different way.

Advantages:

- Effective over long distances
- Can be used while moving
- Fast -- speed of light
- Effective in all directions (independent of wind)
- Passive signals require no expenditure of energy

5.4 Limitations

Disadvantage of visual communication is discussed as; the cost of going visual communication is very high. There should be a high consumption of time and needs experts to be appointed. Preparation of visual communication objects takes lot of hard work and dedication. Visual media alone is inefficient. It is done with the help of other media such as audio, computer based media etc. The visual media lacks the content. It gives the idea but does not tell the whole story. If the sender wants something to add other media support is necessary. Designing a good visual communication is very difficult. Sometimes it may lead to failure. So most organizations prefer audio-visual communication.

Review Questions and Assessment

Corporate Communication

1. 'A free flow of information ensures the success of an organization'. Elaborate this statement in the light of flow of communication in any organization.
2. 'Growth and success of an organisation broadly lies in continuous, multi-directional, and multi-level flow of communication.' Elaborate the statement citing suitable examples from your own experience.
3. 'Whether an organisation is big or small or large, it is communication that binds the organisation together.' Discuss in detail the formal flow of communication-in an organisation in the light of the above statement.
4. Discuss any four barriers to communication and substantiate your answer with one example for each.

Meetings

1. Keeping in view the environment hazard that plastic causes, the management of your company is planning to ban the use of plastic carry bags in the organisation's campus. Assuming yourself as the Head, Planning and Development of your company plan a meeting adhering to all formalities like notice, agenda, minutes etc.

Communicating through Visuals

1. Visit a nearby shopping mall in your town and observe the use of colour, layout and design they have put into work to attract customers.
2. Observe the visual signs on your way from home to workplace and note down which visual could attract your attention and which could not. Try find out the reasons. It could be busy traffic, trees obstructing or rain too much sunshine etc.

Unit 3

Technical Writing

1.0 Objective

Technical Writing deals with writing that occurs on the job and allows readers to take actions. In that context Technical Writing focuses on critical thinking, rhetorical analysis, effective writing and effective document design. The objective is as follows:

1. To develop business writing ability by acquiring skills in objective or non-personal writing.
2. To develop these learned skills by practice and review of the written work of other students.
3. To strengthen your understanding and ability to apply communications strategies.
4. To learn to organize and deliver communications according to the nature of the material and the identified audience need.

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4. To learn to organize and deliver communications according to the nature of the material and the identified audience need.
5. To gain knowledge of international and intercultural barriers to business communications.
6. To examine the issues of technology that impact business communications, including design strategies, on-line network resources, and presentations.

1.1 Introduction

Technical writing aims to convey complex information to a specific audience. It is a field of professional writing on technical subjects. Technical writing is a category of technical communications—which is a broader field that involves documenting, sharing, interpreting, and/or publishing specialized scientific, technological, organizational and/or other information. Technical writers are typically responsible for assembling documents such as handbooks, field guides, textbooks, user manuals, catalogs, web pages, software or equipment instructions, and policies and procedures manuals. Technical writing is bound by many of the basic concepts as other writing genres. For example, your technical writing has an audience and you (as the writer) have a reason for communicating with that audience. Sometimes you are sharing information on product problem with R&D who shares predictably similar levels of expertise, and so you will address them differently. Other times you may find yourself interpreting information for a mainstream non-specialist audience whose level of expertise is less predictable and more variable.

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1.2 Importance of technical writing

The most critical skill required in today's business environment is the ability to communicate, both verbally and in writing, and technical writing is a major component of work environment. Through technical correspondence, companies maintain

- Customer-client relations
- Completion of works as per schedule
- Regular maintenance of machineries
- Total quality management

Good technical writing results in relevant, useful and accurate information geared to specifically targeted audiences in order to enable a set of actions on the part of the audience in pursuit of a defined goal. The goal may be using a software application, operating industrial equipment, preventing accidents, safely consuming a packaged food, assessing a medical condition, complying with a law, coaching a sports team, or any of an infinite range of possible activities. If the activity requires expertise or skill to perform, then technical writing is a necessary component.

1.3 Characteristics of Technical Writing

Technical writing is different from usual writing. People often confuse technical writing with essay and creative writing. However, these are totally different styles of writing. Use of flowery words, double meaning hints and explaining the same thing in a different way is often found in essays. On the other hand, technical write ups are precise and essentially focus on the subject, which is explained in the most convincing manner. Yet the data is concise and

the language used is straightforward.

Nowadays, technical writing is used in diverse fields including robotics, chemistry, software and others. An educational textbook on subjects like physics or biology is also a form of technical writing. In order to become a successful technical writer, one must know the characteristics of technical writing. They are as follows:

Clarity

It is essential that the technical writer understands the reader's background and needs. Making the documentation too technical can confuse the reader. The document is meaningless if the intended audience does not understand what the writer wants to communicate. Writers who are well aware of their audiences are in a position to give a solution to their problems. The profession of technical writing demands simplicity of language and clarity of expression. One must avoid unnecessary words that may put the readers in a quandary. The written document must be clear and concise so that the text becomes easier to grasp and understand.

Descriptiveness

Electronic products such as digital cameras or Computers often come with manuals that tell how to operate it. As the customers may come from a non-technical background, care must be taken that the manual is not difficult to understand. Certain key concepts to operate the product must be explained as easily as possible for the targeted readers. If you use pure jargon, the customer will possibly never know what you want to say. Explaining the product in layman's terms is absolutely necessary. Good technical writing conveys ideas in the most effective manner. A well-written technical document always contains answers to anticipated problems in the product or application. This aspect of technical writing is commonly seen in articles that are related to troubleshooting a particular software or product.

Accuracy

Accuracy is an important characteristic of any technical document. A slight mistake can have grave consequences. For instance, if you forget to mention some important features of a new mobile phone, the customers may think that there is nothing special in that phone and will not prefer to buy it. Effective communication requires quality content and language that is accurate and readable. Technical writing does not mean that you translate information unquestioningly. In this profession, one must know for whom the document is being written and whether it is accurate.

Correctness

The grammatical structure of your technical document should be correct and free from any kind of ambiguities. The intended meaning will not be communicated to the reader if the document has ambiguous sentences. The reader is sure to get annoyed, if your document is replete with misspellings and incorrect construction of sentences. Hence, apart from providing correct technical information, ensure that the data is grammatically correct.

Format

The way you present your technical data is also very important from the user's point of view. For instance, suppose you have explained complex technical data in the most simple manner, yet it won't hold the attention of the user if it is presented as one big paragraph. The point is, you should be creative when it comes to formatting your technical data. Your technical data must be divided into sub heads. If it is an instruction manual, then instead of sub heading go for bulleted format. However, if the sequence of instructions holds priority, one should go for numbered list. Key points pertaining to precautions or warnings may be emphasized using bullets. A document presented in a well-organized manner is very easy to read and the important data that the user is looking for is available at a glance. To make data easily accessible, one can give technical specification of any product in a tabular form. You also need to complement your descriptive technical data with a graphic image of the product in focus.

1.4 Techniques of Good Technical Writing

A good starting point is to look at six principles of technical writing. Reviewing these basics can provide a great platform from which we can launch forays into specific areas of interest and documentation.

Use Good Grammar:

Your readers expect technical documents to be written in standard English. Certain grammatical errors can actually cause your reader to misinterpret the information. However, because technical documents must be precise and accurate, readers expect documents to be professional, polished, and flawless.

One grammatical rule to adhere to is subject-verb agreement. Note the choice of verbs below:

One employee *is* absent.

Two employees *are* absent.

This subject-verb agreement is easy to make because in each sentence, the subject is obvious: *employee* in the first sentence agrees with *is* and *employees* in the second sentence agrees with *are* . The real challenge is when the subject is not as obvious. In the following sentences, which verb would you select?

Either of the levers *is* clearly marked.

Either of the levers *are* clearly marked?

You must decide if the subject is *either* or *levers* . If you selected *either* as the subject and *is* as the verb, you made the correct choice. A list of indefinite pronouns that are always singular is listed below:

Each, either, everybody, everyone, neither, one, anyone, anybody, someone, somebody, no one, nobody

The following indefinite pronouns are always plural:

Both, few, many, several

Just to keep your life interesting, the following pronouns can be either singular or plural.

All, more, most, none, some

You may wonder how some pronouns can be both singular and plural. Review the following examples:

Some of the information *is* inaccurate.

Some of the figures *are* inaccurate.

Writing Concisely:

In technical writing, clarity and brevity is your goal. Why take 32 words to express what could be stated in 14 or 15? The dictates of effective technical writing suggest that the average length for a sentence is 15-20 words. How do you achieve clarity and conciseness?

One of the best ways is to look for multiword phrases that can be replaced by one or two words.

Similarly, when you streamline sentences, your readers don't have to wade through extra verbiage. How would you streamline the sentence below?

"To obtain maximum performance from your computer, you should endeavor to follow the maintenance program furnished in the manual accompanying your computer."

Answer: To enhance your computer's performance, follow the manual's maintenance program.

Using the Active Voice:

Imperative sentences, or command sentences, are written in the active voice. The active voice is more natural to people when they speak, but technical writers often turn to the passive voice when writing technical documents. One of the main reasons you should use the active voice rather than the passive in technical writing is the active voice more closely resembles the way people remember and process information.

Compare the following sentences:

Staff hours are calculated by the manager on the actual work load.

The manager calculates staff hours on the actual work load.

In the active voice sentence, the subject acts. In the passive voice sentence, something is done to the subject.

Another reason to avoid the passive voice sentence is you run the risk of omitting the doer of the action. Note the absence of the "doer" in the following sentence:

Using Positive Statements

Technical writers should word instructions as positive statements. Whenever possible, phrase commands in a positive manner. Compare the following:

Negative: Do not close the valve.

Positive: Leave the valve open.

Telling your readers what NOT to do is a negative statement. It is also abstract rather than concrete. Your readers have to take time to think about what is true (positive) so they can determine what is NOT true (negative).

One exception to this rule is when a negative statement is clearer than a positive one. Keep in mind studies show it is almost 50% harder for your readers to understand the meaning when you use negatives.

Avoiding Long Sentences:

Short sentences are easier to understand than long sentences. For this reason, it is best to write your technical documents in short sentences. If you are asking your readers to perform several actions, begin the step with an active verb. This highlights the action itself. Compare the following sentences:

Example of a sentence with multiple steps within the sentence:

For Forte applications, create an empty workspace, populate it with application source code, and compile the workspace.

Example of a sentence with multiple steps set apart:

For Forte applications, perform the following steps:

- Create an empty workspace.
- Populate it with application source code.
- Compile the workspace.

Another tip when separating steps into distinct bullet points is to make sure that the action verbs in each bulleted item are in the same tense. For example, if the first step was worded, "*Creating an empty workspace* ," then the next bullet would be, "*Populating it with application source code* ," and the third bullet point would be, "*Compiling the workspace* ."

Using Standard Punctuation:

Your readers expect standard punctuation when they read your documents. Complicated or "creative" punctuation will confuse them. One suggestion is to select syntax that minimizes the need for punctuation. You may wish to divide compound or complex sentences into shorter sentences to avoid excessive or confusing punctuation.

One example of this is deciding where to place your commas, fullstops, colons, and semicolons when using quotation marks. Commas and full stops always go *inside* the closing quotation mark.

Examples:

We are "struggling young artists," but we hope to become successful.

Most corporations adopt the belief, "the customer is always right."

On the other hand, semicolons and colons are always placed *outside* the quotation marks.

Examples:

These actors can deliver "box office hits": Shahrukh Khan, Ranbir Kapoor, Amir Khan.

Look in the manual under "text messaging"; the directions are very clear.

2.0 Report Writing

2.1 Objective of Report Writing

A report is written for a clear purpose and to a particular audience. Specific information and evidence are presented, analysed and applied to a particular problem or issue. The information is presented in a clearly structured format making use of sections and headings so that the information is easy to locate and follow. The report brief may outline the purpose, audience and problem or issue that your report must address, together with any specific requirements for format or structure.

2.2 Types of Reports

Different types of reports used in business are:

Informational reports. These reports present facts about certain given activity in detail without any note or suggestions. Whatever is gathered is reported without giving any thing by way of either explanation or any suggestion. A vice-chancellor asking about the number of candidates appearing at a particular examination naturally seeks only information of the fact (candidates taking up the examination) of course without any comment. Generally such reports are of routine nature. Sometimes they may fall under statutory routine category. A

company registrar asking for allotment return within the stipulate period is nothing but informational routine, falling under statutory but routine report.

Analytical reports. These reports contain facts along with analytical explanations offered by the reporter himself or may be asked for by the one who is seeking the report. Such reports contain the narration of facts, collected data and information, classified and tabulated data and also explanatory note followed by the conclusions arrived at or interpretations. A company chairman may ask for a report on falling trends in sale in a particular area. He will in this case be naturally interested in knowing all the details including that of opinion of any of the investigator.

Research reports. These reports are based on some research work conducted by either an individual or a group of individuals on a given problem. Indian oil company might have asked its research division to find some substitute for petrol, and if such a study is conducted then a report shall be submitted by the research division detailing its findings and then offering their own suggestions, including the conclusions at which the division has arrived at as to whether such a substitute is these and if it is there can the same be put to use with advantage and effectively. All details shall naturally be asked and has to be given. In fact such a report is the result of a research.

Statutory reports. These reports are to be presented according to the requirements of a particular law or a rule or a custom now has become a rule. The auditor reports to company registrar has to be submitted as per the requirements of country legal requirement. A return on compensation paid to factory workers during a period by a factory has to be submitted to competent authorities periodically. These reports are generally prepared in the prescribed form as the rules have prescribed.

Non statutory reports. These reports are not in the nature of legal requirements or rules wants, therefore, the reports are to be prepared and submitted. These reports are required to be prepared and submitted: (i) for the administrative and other conveniences, (ii) for taking decision in a matter (iii) for policy formulations, (iv) for projecting the future or (v) anything alike so that efficient and smooth functioning maybe assured and proper and necessary decision may be taken with a view to see that everything goes well and the objectives of the organization are achieved with assured success.

Routine reports. These reports are required to be prepared and submitted periodically on matters required by the organization so as to help the management of the organization to take decisions in the matters relating to day to day affairs. The main objectives of routine reports are to let the management know as to what is happening in the organization, what is its progress where the deviation is, what measures have been taken in solving the problems and what to do so that the organization may run smoothly and efficiently. Routine reports are generally brief. They only give the facts. No comments or explanations are usually offered in such reports. Generally forms are prescribed for preparation and submission of such reports.

Special reports. Such a type of report is specially required to be prepared and submitted on matters of special nature. Due to an accident a death of the foreman has occurred in a factory. The factory manager may ask for a detail report from the head foreman. Such a report is classified as special reports. These reports contain not only facts and details but they may contain suggestion, comments and explanations as well.

2.3 Format of a Report

Report has two formats:

1. Memo Format, when it is written within your department or company.
2. Letter Format, when it is written for outside your company.

Short Reports are usually one page (two pages maximum).

2.4 Parts of a report

There are usually 4 parts.

1. Summary
2. Background (which is optional and not always necessary)
3. Body (main contents) The content may even include a simple, small chart or diagram (if it contains lots of information, is complex or several pages, then include it in the “attachments” section).
4. Recommendation or Conclusion (use either one, depending on the subject/purpose of your report).

Sample Memo Report

TO: Rajesh Gupta, Marketing Executive

FROM: Ravi Sampat, Market Research Assistant

DATE: January 14, 2014

SUBJECT: Fall Clothes Line Promotion

Market research and analysis show that the proposed advertising media for the new fall lines need to be reprioritized and changed. Findings from focus groups and surveys have made it apparent that we need to update our advertising efforts to align them with the styles and trends of young adults today. No longer are young adults interested in sitcoms as they watch reality television shows. Also, it has become increasingly important to use the internet as a tool to communicate with our target audience to show our dominance in the clothing industry.

Internet Advertising

XYZ Company needs to focus advertising on internet sites that appeal to young people. According to surveys, 72% of our target market uses the internet for five hours or more per week. The following list shows in order of popularity the most frequented sites:

- Google
- Facebook
- Myspace
- EBay

Shifting our efforts from our other media sources such as radio and magazine to these popular internet sites will more effectively promote our product sales. Young adults are spending more and more time on the internet downloading music, communicating and researching for homework and less and less time reading paper magazines and listening to the radio. As the trend for cultural icons to go digital, so must our marketing plans.

Television Advertising

It used to be common to advertise for our products on shows like *KBC(Kaon Banega Corerapati)* and *DID(Dance India Dance)* for our target audience, but even the face of television is changing. Young adults are tuning into reality television shows for their entertainment. Results from the focus group show that our target audience is most interested in shows like *Indian Idol*, and *Sa Re Ga Ma*, At Blue Incorporated, we need to focus our advertising budget on reality television shows and reduce the amount of advertising spent on other programs.

By refocusing our advertising efforts of our new line of clothing we will be able to maximize the exposure of our product to our target market and therefore increase our sales. Tapping into the trends of young adults will help us gain market share and sales through effective advertising.

Sample Report

Report of Committee on Declining Sales

A Committee comprising three members was constituted in accordance with the Board Resolution passed at the Board meeting held on April 30. 2014 to study the causes of declining sales of our refrigerators and to suggest measures for the promotion of their sales. The three members of the committee were:

Mr. Nitin Kapadia, Senior Marketing Manager

Mr. Narinder jain, Marketing Officer

Mr. Naresh Chugh, Marketing Officer

Work done:

- The committee personally interviewed the dealers, retailers and actual users, to know the causes of declining sales.
- The committee reviewed the literature on refrigerator sales in magazines and newspapers to know the general trends of the market region-wise.
- The committee studied the sales record of the last three years.

Findings:

The data revealed by magazines and newspapers show a negative growth around 6% in 165 litre refrigerators whereas 190 to 230 litre category has registered an astounding growth of 128% . The dealers attribute these trends to the exchange offers which has spread to 2-3 million units refrigerators all over India. The direct purchasing which used to command significant position is losing ground.

The present market share of various major companies in India is as follows:

Whirlpool	27%
Videocon	18%
Godrej	15%
BPL	12%
Kelvinator	10%
Voltas	7%
Allwyn	6%
Others	5%

The committee studied the distribution network, which is of critical importance, and finds that distributors and dealers pay less attention to promotion of sales of our refrigerators. The reasons for lack of their interest are higher discounts and credit period allowed by other companies. Other companies usually allow them 5% to 7% discount whereas our company allows only 4% .They are given 45days to 90 days credit by other companies , whereas our credit period is limited is upto 30 days.

As far as advertisement is concerned, other companies spend a lot of money on advertising on television network. Our company's advertisement campaigns have not been as aggressive as theirs, during the last 3-4 years. It has been carried out through newspapers only.

The committee found that users of the refrigerators also reported against the quality of compressors. Other companies have improved their technology due to collaborations with foreign enterprises, like Videocon with Toshiba.

The committee collected the data regarding prices of different refrigerators in different cities and found that prices of our refrigerators are slightly higher.

Recommendations:

1. There is no need to reduce or increase the prices of refrigerators under present conditions.
2. The dealer's margin should be increased from the present 4% to 6% to induce them for promotion of sales. Besides, the credit period be increased upto 60 days, considering the policy of other competitors.
3. As early as possible, an exchange scheme should be introduced by which customers can purchase new model refrigerators by surrendering an old one and paying some cash.
4. Budget should be made for TV advertising.

Mr. Nitin Kapadia, Senior Marketing Manager

Sample Report

As the secretary of a youth club, prepare a report on the literacy drive undertaken by your club. The report will be submitted to the secretary, Dept of Mass Education, Odisha.

To: The Secretary, Dept of Mass Education, Odisha

From: Mr. S.K.Das, Secretary, Friends Club, Bhubaneswar

Date: 7 January 2014

Sub: Literacy drive in Banki Block

The Friends club, Bhubaneswar organized a literacy drive in three villages of Banki Block in Cuttack District for two weeks with effect from 7. 12. 2013 to 21. 12. 2013. The villages selected are Haripur, Mohanaand Kesura. Mr. Rakesh Mohanty, the President of the club was the leader of the drive and 24 members of the club worked as active campaigners and participants. Each village was entrusted to eight members .The chairman and BDO of Banki Panchayat Samiti supported and helped as in this program. The targeted-group in each village consisted of 10 illiterate boys and girls and 10 illiterate adults. The club provided out of its own financial resources black boards, chalk, slates, paper and pencils. The children were taught for three hours from 10 am and the adult for two hours from 7 pm every day. The club members devoted One hour daily to motivating and educating the people on the aims and objectives of the campaign.Thanks to the hard work put in by the members of the club and active cooperation of the village the target was reached in just 14 days. A test was conducted on the last day. It showed that all the children as well as adults were able to learn how to write their signatures, read and simple words and sentences in Odia and a little practical arithmetic for their daily as it is heartening to mention that the drive was , by and large, a success

S. K. Das
Secretary

2.5Structure of a report

Good reports often contain a five-stage structure:

1. Introduction
2. Background Information

3. Development
4. Discussion
5. Conclusion

1. Introduction

In the introduction you can introduce the aim and subject of the report. You tell the reader what to expect, what issue is being explored or evaluated, and if necessary, why. It is often helpful to

summarize very briefly the main finding of the report at this point, as this can stimulate the interest of the reader. Grab the attention of the reader and encourage them to read on.

2. Background Information/Context

In this area you would present an overview of the historic, economic, political or social influences and/or the micro factors that enable the reader to put the report's discussion issues into context or perspective.

3. Development

In this broad area of the report, you would outline key issues, ideas, and practices that are the main focus of the report. You might also present relevant data or information to illustrate or explain what has happened. You might also include the ways a particular model is currently applied, or the way a particular scheme developed.

4. Discussion

The discussion section is the heart of the report – and usually is the most important in terms of the mark you receive! This is where you present your analysis of the issues presented earlier in the report. This is where you interpret, explain and discuss the issues you outlined earlier in the report. In an academic report this is often done by reference to relevant theories, models and practices.

5. Conclusions or Summary or Recommendations

This section should bring the report to a close by pulling together the main points emerging from the report and by giving a relatively brief resume of the main or overall conclusions or recommendations reached. The reader will be left in no doubt what your position is on the topic discussed in the report.

2.6 Editing and Proofreading

Check through your work for style and correctness. Use the checklist below to help you correct and improve your report. Editing Checklist

Have you:

- clarified the purpose and audience?
- selected the most appropriate text type (memo report, long report, etc)?
- used the correct format?
- explained the purpose of the report?
- defined the problem?
- included all the information needed?
- deleted unnecessary information?

- presented factual and objective information?
- organised the information logically and clearly?
- formatted appropriate headings and subheadings?
- written language appropriate to the purpose and audience?
- used ‘spell check’ and ‘grammar check’?
- written paragraphs with clear subjects and purposes?
- summarised the contents and findings?
- made recommendations that offer solutions to any problems mentioned?

3.0 Business Proposals

3.1 Definition and Purpose of Business proposal

A business proposal is a written document sent to a prospective client in order to obtain a specific job. A business proposal is a written proposal presented from a vendor that is intended to elicit business from a prospective buyer. It differs from a business plan, which is primarily constructed to obtain start-up capital by detailing the organization and operational aspects of the business to demonstrate its profit potential. A business proposal is also unique because it contains much more than figures and statistics represented by pie charts and graphs. In fact, the former involves proposal writing, which is designed to identify and target a specific market and solidly demonstrate how the bidder can deliver custom solutions to the needs of buyers within that market.

3.2 Types of Business Proposal

A **solicited business proposal** is quite different and much more detailed. A company or government agency may publish a request for bid proposals on a certain project, also known as a Request for Proposal (RFP) or an Invitation for Bid (IFB). Since the project is usually offered to multiple candidates simultaneously, the business proposal submitted by the winning bidder will generally meet the specific requirements of the proposal.

An **unsolicited business proposal** can be thought of as collateral marketing material, such as a brochure. They are largely broad spectrum in that they don't address a particular company by name or attempt to close a sale. Instead, this kind of informal business proposal is created to introduce a product or service to potential customers through direct mail distribution, by leaving the material behind after a “cold” sale call, or making printed information available at trade shows.

Difference between Unsolicited and Solicited Proposals

The difference between these two proposals can be identified through their names. Solicited proposals are presented as an answer to a need. Unsolicited proposals are used to initiate the sales process, they usually show the customers why they would need this product. Solicited proposals are often welcomed; however due to the increasing number of unsolicited proposals

today, customers don't pay attention to them. Solicited proposals are presented because they are wanted by the customer; but an unsolicited proposal is like telling the person how you can help even if they do not require you to help. Solicited proposals are submitted because they are needed, on the other hand, unsolicited proposals are submitted even if they are not needed. It is the proposal that usually tells the person that they should need the product they are proposing.

3.3 Characteristics of a Business Proposal

The key elements which are required to make the business proposal successful are given below:

Solutions: After you have written a lead paragraph on the company's needs and problems, follow up with a solid presentation of how your business can provide solutions. The key here is to promise solutions you can deliver.

Benefits: All winning business proposals, clearly outline for the company the benefits to be gained from doing business with you. If your small business can offer complete confidentiality and meet tight deadlines state it in your benefits section.

Credibility: This is often the overlooked portion of a business proposal but all winning proposals glow with credibility. If you have worked with clients in the same field or have an award-winning business, then third-party endorsements will build credibility.

Samples: A business proposal with samples and evidence of your ability to deliver is vital to gaining the winning bid. A small sample of your work can show your ability to do the job.

Targeted: A winning business proposal is all about communication. Speak in a language spoken by your intended audience. If the proposal evaluators are from an engineering background or financial department use the appropriate jargon.

Ultimately, the best business proposal is none. When your company is well-positioned and unique in the marketplace then it is only you who can meet the needs of the company requesting the bids. If a retail craft chain is looking for a web design firm and your company specializes in web creation for the crafts industry you might be able to circumvent the proposal process.

In the end, you may not win all bids, but will win business that best matches your company to the prospective business. A win-win for all parties involved.

3.4 Sample business proposal

MEMORANDUM

To: Amit Jha, Senior Vice President, Human Resources

From: Kiran Saha, Intern, Purchasing Department

Subject: Proposal to Add a Wellness Program

Date: April 24, XXXX

Health care costs are rising. In the long run, implementing a wellness program in our corporate culture will decrease the company's health care costs.

Research indicates that nearly 70% of health care costs are from common illnesses related to high blood pressure, overweight, lack of exercise, high cholesterol, stress, poor nutrition, and other preventable health issues. Health care costs are a major expense for most businesses, and they do not reflect costs due to the loss of productivity or absenteeism. A wellness program would address most, if not all, of these health care issues and related costs.

Benefits of Healthier Employees

Not only would a wellness program substantially reduce costs associated with employee health care, but our company would prosper through many other benefits. Businesses that have wellness programs show a lower cost in production, fewer sick days, and healthier employees. Our healthier employees will help to cut not only our production and absenteeism costs but also potential costs such as higher turnover because of low employee morale.

Implementing the Program

Implementing a good wellness program means making small changes to the work environment, starting with a series of information sessions. Simple changes to our work environment should include healthier food selections in vending machines and in the employee cafeteria. A smoke-free environment, inside and outside the building, could be a new company policy. An important step is to educate our employees through information seminars and provide health care guides and pamphlets for work and home. In addition, the human resources department could expand the current employee assistance program by developing online materials that help employees and their families to assess their individual health goals. Each health program is different in its own way, and there are a variety of programs that can be designed to meet the needs of our individual employees. Some programs that are becoming increasingly popular in the workplace are the following:

- Health promotion programs
- Subsidized health club membership
- Return-to-work programs
- Health-risk appraisals and screenings

Obstacles: Individual and Financial

The largest barrier in a wellness program is changing the habits and behaviors of our employees. Various incentives such as monetary bonuses, vacation days, merchandise rewards, recognition, and appreciation help to instill new habits and attitudes. Providing a healthy environment and including family in certain programs also help to encourage healthier choices and behaviors. The costs of incorporating a wellness program will be far less than rising costs associated with health care in the long run. An employee's sense of recognition, appreciation, or accomplishment is an incentive that has relatively low or no costs. The owner of Unique Ovens Bakery, James Mathur, has stated that his company gained financially after providing programs including free healthy lunches for employees. James said he believes that higher morale and keeping valuable employees have helped his business tremendously. It is important that our company be healthy in every way possible. Research shows that 41% of businesses already have some type of wellness program in progress and

that 32% will incorporate programs within the next year. Our company should always be ahead of our competitors. I want to thank you for your time and I look forward to discussing this proposal with you further next week.

4.0 Note Making

4.1 Introduction

Note-making is a useful learning aid. Good notes highlight and condense relevant information, helping you to pick out the key points on a particular subject. They can also help you translate other people's ideas into your own words, providing a sound platform for better understanding and recall. With such obvious benefits, it's important that you find a note-making technique that works for you.

Some of the things notes can help with:

- Notes can help you to understand and remember material you have read, seen or heard.
- Notes can help you shape your own ideas, giving you somewhere to refine material for later development
- You can use notes to plan and organise your content when preparing to write (e.g. draft, presentation, reports etc.).
- You can use notes to condense, refine and organise material to help your recall

4.2 Note Writing Technique

Note making can be defined as a systematic method of writing down quickly, briefly and clearly the important points of reading a text. It is a productive skill which integrates both reading and writing skills.

Note making is used to

- Keep a record of the main points of a reading text for future use and reference
- Revise for an exam
- Update information
- To analyse a text

4.2.1 Reading strategy

A careful reading plan is to identify the central idea, important points and supporting details. It would enable you to understand the text quickly and make appropriate notes.

- Read the text quickly in order to identify its purpose, scope, central idea, logical organization and different writing techniques like narration, description, explanation and so on.
- Recognize the key lexical items related to the topic
- Identify the relationships among the units within the text

- Read the key points and signal words
- Ignore irrelevant matter and concentrate on the main parts
- Deduce meanings of words and phrases from their context and infer relationships
- Interpret graphic aids used in the text

4.2.2 Indenting

Do not write full sentences. Use abbreviations wherever necessary. Help with abbreviations.

1. Use standard abbreviations and symbols

Capitalized first letters of words

Ex: U.P., USA, USSR, UK

Common abbreviations

Ex: Sc (Science), Geog (Geography), Mr, Mrs, Dr, Govt

2. Write the first few and last few letters of a word with an apostrophe in between

.can't(cannot) w'out(without),

Use the first letters of the phrases

Kilogram	Kg
Cubic Centimetre	cc
Atomic Mass Unit	AMU
Per annum	P A
Curriculum Vitae	CV

3. Use the first few letters of words or phrases

Approximately	Approx
Difference	Diff
Different	Diffrt
Edition/edited	Ed
Professor	Prof
Assistant	Asst
Month	Mnth
Subject	Sub
Reference	Ref
Minute	Min
Temperature	Temp
Hour	Hr

4. Generally used abbreviations

e.g.	Example
viz	Namely
et al	and others
N.B.	Take note that
i.e.	That is
cf	compare with, refer to

Do not get over enthusiastic with abbreviations. You should not abbreviate every word. As a general rule the heading should not be abbreviated. You may use abbreviations in subheadings.

Your notes should look like this:

Heading

- 1. Sub heading
 - A. Point 1
 - B. Sub Sub heading
 - a)Sub point 1
 - b)Sub point 2
 - C.Point 3

- 2.Sub heading 2
 - A.Point 1
 - B.Sub – sub heading
 - a)Sub point 1

4.3 Topicalising

After reading the passage carefully and identifying the central idea, the main points or supporting details, these should be rephrased. The topic, the main point or the main supporting details should be written as they appear in the text. In the text, these ideas appear in full sentences but while making notes a word or phrase is used to represent an entire section of the text. While rephrasing a section of the text or a sentences, unnecessary or redundant words/phrases should be removed.

4.4 Schematizing

Scientific and technical texts may contain in information in the form of figures, classifications, contrasts, processes and so on. Hence, it is sometimes more convenient to schematize notes, organize notes in the form of tables and diagrams for accurate and easy read back.

4.5 Organizing Technique

The nature and organization of notes depends largely on the type and length of a text. When a text is small the notes may contain just a few phrases. However, when the text contains a lot of information the notes have to be organized in the terms of heading and subordinate points. As the notes have to be read and understood at a large stage, it is very important to organize them in such a manner that the essence of the text can be recalled whenever required.

Sample Note Making

About 2500 million years ago the earth on which we live was a ball of gas which on cooling, grew smaller and became liquid. The liquid continued to cool, giving of some of its heat by radiation and when liquid grew colder they solidified. The crust of the earth is the solid

matter resulting from this cooling, but probably inside the earth there is still a mass of molten material which has not cooled as much as the outer crust.

The crust on which we live and from which we obtain almost everything that we have is not quite rigid. Volcanoes such as Etna and Stromboli in the Italian island remind us from time to time of the force and heat below the ground. Various places on the earth are subject to earthquakes, the country that has suffered most all these is Japan. The study of the earthquakes, the science of seismology, has shown that the origin of many of them is under the bottom of the sea and near the coast of a continent or large island. In an earthquake, the surface of the land may move suddenly in any direction, bringing houses down, changing straight railway track into a useless zigzag, altering the courses of rivers, changing the shapes of hills and sometimes causing an immense sea wave to rush on the nearest sea shore and add to the destruction. This tidal wave, as it is called, is wrongly named because it has nothing to do with the tide.

Notes

1. Formation of the Earth

- a. About 2500 million yrs. Ago — Earth – a ball of gas
- b. gas cooled – became liquid
- c. Liquid cooled — turned solid — that is earth's crust

2. Volcanoes and Earthquakes

- a. Volcanoes proves heat and force below the crust
- b. Earthquakes origin — under the bottom of the sea and near the coast of a continent

3. Effect of Earthquake

- a. Destruction — houses and hills
- b. Alteration — path of river and railway tracks
- c. Cause tidal wave

5.0 Dynamics of Non-verbal communication

5.1 Body Language

Good communication is the foundation of successful relationships, both personally and professionally. But we communicate with much more than words. In fact, research shows that the majority of our communication is nonverbal. Nonverbal communication, or *body language*, includes our facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, and even the tone of our voice.

The ability to understand and use nonverbal communication is a powerful tool that will help you connect with others, express what you really mean, navigate challenging situations, and build better relationships at home and work.

Nonverbal communication, or body language, is a vital form of communication. When we interact with others, we continuously give and receive countless wordless signals. All of our nonverbal behaviors—the gestures we make, the way we sit, how fast or how loud we talk, how close we stand, how much eye contact we make—send strong messages.

The way you listen, look, move, and react tell the other person whether or not you care and how well you're listening. The nonverbal signals you send either produce a sense of interest, trust, and desire for connection—or they generate disinterest, distrust, and confusion.

It takes more than words to create fulfilling, strong relationships. Nonverbal communication has a huge impact on the quality of our relationships. Nonverbal communication skills improve relationships by helping you:

- Accurately read other people, including the emotions they're feeling and the unspoken messages they're sending.
- Create trust and transparency in relationships by sending nonverbal signals that match up with your words.
- Respond with nonverbal cues that show others that you understand, notice, and care.

Unfortunately, many people send confusing or negative nonverbal signals without even knowing it. When this happens, both connection and trust are lost in our relationships.

5.1.1 Types of nonverbal communication and body language

There are many different types of nonverbal communication. Together, the following nonverbal signals and cues communicate your interest and investment in others.

Facial Expressions

The human face is extremely expressive, able to express countless emotions without saying a word. And unlike some forms of nonverbal communication, facial expressions are universal. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are the same across cultures.

Body Movements and Posture

Consider how your perceptions of people are affected by the way they sit, walk, stand up, or hold their head. The way you move and carry yourself communicates a wealth of information to the world. This type of nonverbal communication includes your posture, bearing, stance, and subtle movements.

Gestures

Gestures are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. We wave, point, beckon, and use our hands when we're arguing or speaking animatedly—expressing ourselves with gestures often without thinking. However, the meaning of gestures can be very different across cultures and regions, so it's important to be careful to avoid misinterpretation.

Eye Contact

Since the visual sense is dominant for most people, eye contact is an especially important type of nonverbal communication. The way you look at someone can communicate many

things, including interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. Eye contact is also important in maintaining the flow of conversation and for gauging the other person's response.

Touch

We communicate a great deal through touch. Think about the messages given by the following: a firm handshake, a timid tap on the shoulder, a warm bear hug, a reassuring pat on the back, a patronizing pat on the head, or a controlling grip on your arm.

Space

Have you ever felt uncomfortable during a conversation because the other person was standing too close and invading your space? We all have a need for physical space, although that need differs depending on the culture, the situation, and the closeness of the relationship. You can use physical space to communicate many different nonverbal messages, including signals of intimacy, aggression, dominance, or affection.

Voice

We communicate with our voices, even when we are not using words. Nonverbal speech sounds such as tone, pitch, volume, inflection, rhythm, and rate are important communication elements. When we speak, other people "read" our voices in addition to listening to our words. These nonverbal speech sounds provide subtle but powerful clues into our true feelings and what we really mean. Think about how tone of voice, for example, can indicate sarcasm, anger, affection, or confidence.

5.1.2 Use Your Body Language Effectively

Effective communication involves more than talking to your audience. Your body language plays an important role in communication. Body language, proximity, and eye contact are three main areas of focus in nonverbal communication. If you are maintaining this properly you can avoid the barriers of communication.

Facial expressions:

Keep smile always in your face because it transmits friendliness, warmth, and approachability. Smiling is often contagious and others will react favorably. They will be more comfortable around you and more open to the information you are offering.

Posture:

You communicate numerous messages by the way you hold yourself while presenting. A person who is slouching or leaning with arms across their chest may be perceived as being uninterested or unapproachable. Stand erect, while you communicate with others. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest.

Gestures:

A lively speaking style captures attention, makes the material more interesting, and facilitates understanding. Use natural movements to emphasize topics and free, easy arm and hand movements to add personality to your presentation. If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring and stiff. Gesturing too often can also be distracting for some learners.

Maintain eye contact:

While you converse with others keep an eye contact with them. This will help you to build a rapport with the person with whom you communicate. When they feel that you see them as individuals, they are more likely to trust you

Enhance voice quality:

Enhance your voice quality. If you are speaking very low, this will not be audible. Soft or monotone voice can cause boredom or disinterest among listeners so try to modulate your pitch. You can try both low and high pitch in your voice to keep them away from monotonous.

Nonverbal Behavior**Interpretation**

Brisk, erect walk	Confidence
Standing with hands on hips	Readiness, aggression
Sitting with legs crossed, foot kicking slightly	Boredom
Sitting, legs apart	Open, relaxed
Arms crossed on chest	Defensiveness
Walking with hands in pockets, shoulders hunched	Dejection
Hand to cheek	Evaluation, thinking
Touching, slightly rubbing nose	Rejection, doubt, lying
Rubbing the eye	Doubt, disbelief
Hands clasped behind back	Anger, frustration, apprehension
Locked ankles	Apprehension
Head resting in hand, eyes downcast	Boredom
Rubbing hands	Anticipation
Sitting with hands clasped behind head, legs crossed	Confidence, superiority
Open palm	Sincerity, openness, innocence
Pinching bridge of nose, eyes closed	Negative evaluation
Tapping or drumming fingers	Impatience
Patting/fondling hair	Lack of self-confidence; insecurity
Stroking chin	Trying to make a decision
Looking down, face turned away	Disbelief
Biting nails	Insecurity, nervousness
Pulling or tugging at ear	Indecision

5.2 Paralanguage

Being more aware of the subtle nuances of verbal communication can contribute significantly to better conversation and will promote a deeper understanding and connection with others as you become a more active speaker and listener. Paralinguistic communication is the study of voice and how words are said. When you open your mouth to speak, you reveal much about yourself that often has nothing at all to do with the words you are speaking. Paralinguistic signals and cues refer to every element and nuance of your speech. Paralinguistic communication can be much more subtle than other forms of nonverbal communication. For example, a loud, booming voice is not at all subtle. However, a firm voice that conveys conviction is more nuanced than a pointing finger, big gestures, or invading someone's personal space.

Voice Qualities

When speaking, a person's voice has many qualities: articulation, nasality, accent, pitch, range of voice and resonance. Listeners will perceive a variety of subconscious clues in vocal qualities: A person speaking overly loud will seem aggressive and overbearing; a person speaking slightly faster than normal will seem confident and knowledgeable; and a person burbling with laughter while speaking will seem joyful and happy. Knowing how emotional content is conveyed and perceived via paralanguage can help anyone improve their communication skills, as nonverbal communication is even more important to getting a message across than the words used.

Vocal Characteristics

Vocal characteristics include tone variations, inflections, the speed at which you speak, whether your voice projects and whatever emotion you may be conveying through tone and inflection and so on. Words and phrases can mean entirely different things depending on which words are emphasized by the inflection of your voice. A speaker's ability to balance these nonverbal indicators to enhance the meaning of words and message cannot be overstated. Those who use their voice in their work (teachers, lawyers, actors) often receive some voice training to aid them professionally.

Voice Qualifiers

Types of voice qualifiers are expressed by listeners using a broad spectrum of descriptions: bright, soft, round, light, cold or hot, strength or weakness, breathy, texture, thick, old or child-like and attitude (angry, chilling, convincing). Intensity of voice matters to listeners, if your voice is too loud or soft. Whether a voice is pitched high or low will convey meaningful clues to listeners as well. A voice qualifier is the style of speech used, yelling out a phrase or whispering under the breath.

5.3 Implication of non-verbal communication across culture

General Appearance and Dress

All cultures are concerned for how they look and make judgements based on looks and dress. Americans, for instance, appear almost obsessed with dress and personal attractiveness. Consider differing cultural standards on what is attractive in dress and on what constitutes modesty. Note ways dress is used as a sign of status?

Body Movement

We send information on attitude toward person (facing or leaning towards another), emotional state (tapping fingers, jiggling coins), and desire to control the environment (moving towards or away from a person).

Posture

Consider the following actions and note cultural differences:

- Bowing (not done, criticized, or affected in US; shows rank in Japan)
- Slouching (rude in most Northern European areas)
- Hands in pocket (disrespectful in Turkey)
- Sitting with legs crossed (offensive in Ghana, Turkey)
- Showing soles of feet. (Offensive in Thailand, Saudi Arabia)
- Even in US, there is a gender difference on acceptable posture?

Gestures

Impossible to catalog them all. But need to recognize: 1) incredible possibility and variety and 2) that an acceptable in one's own culture may be offensive in another. In addition, amount of gesturing varies from culture to culture. Some cultures are animated; other restrained. Restrained cultures often feel animated cultures lack manners and overall restraint. Animated cultures often feel restrained cultures lack emotion or interest.

Even simple things like using hands to point and count differ.

Pointing : US with index finger; Germany with little finger; Japanese with entire hand (in fact most Asians consider pointing with index finger to be rude)

Counting: Thumb = 1 in Germany, 5 in Japan, middle finger for 1 in Indonesia.

Facial Expressions

While some say that facial expressions are identical, meaning attached to them differs. Majority opinion is that these do have similar meanings world-wide with respect to smiling, crying, or showing anger, sorrow, or disgust. However, the intensity varies from culture to culture. Note the following:

- Many Asian cultures suppress facial expression as much as possible.
- Many Mediterranean (Latino / Arabic) cultures exaggerate grief or sadness while most American men hide grief or sorrow.
- Some see “animated” expressions as a sign of a lack of control.
- Too much smiling is viewed in as a sign of shallowness.
- Women smile more than men.

Eye Contact and Gaze

In USA, eye contact indicates: degree of attention or interest, influences attitude change or persuasion, regulates interaction, communicates emotion, defines power and status, and has a central role in managing impressions of others.

- Western cultures — see direct eye to eye contact as positive (advise children to look a person in the eyes). But within USA, African-Americans use more eye contact when talking and less when listening with reverse true for Anglo Americans. This is a possible cause for some sense of unease between races in US. A prolonged gaze is often seen as a sign of sexual interest.
- Arabic cultures make prolonged eye-contact. — believe it shows interest and helps them understand truthfulness of the other person. (A person who doesn’t reciprocate is seen as untrustworthy)
- Japan, Africa, Latin American, Caribbean — avoid eye contact to show respect.

Touch

USA — handshake is common (even for strangers), hugs, kisses for those of opposite gender or of family (usually) on an increasingly more intimate basis. Note differences between African-Americans and Anglos in USA. Most African Americans touch on greeting but are annoyed if touched on the head (good boy, good girl overtones).

Islamic and Hindu: typically don’t touch with the left hand. To do so is a social insult. Left hand is for toilet functions. Mannerly in India to break your bread only with your right hand (sometimes difficult for non-Indians)

Islamic cultures generally don’t approve of any touching between genders (even hand shakes). But consider such touching (including hand holding, hugs) between same-sex to be appropriate.

Many Asians don’t touch the head (Head houses the soul and a touch puts it in jeopardy).

Basic patterns: Cultures (English , German, Scandinavian, Chinese, Japanese) with high emotional restraint concepts have little public touch; those which encourage emotion (Latino, Middle-East, Jewish) accept frequent touches.

6.0 Telephone Etiquettes

6.1 Different Telephone Etiquettes

Presenting a professional image, both in person and on the telephone, is very important in the Office Skills profession. Taking care of your customers over the telephone and making them feel well informed and appreciated is essential. Whether you are the front office receptionist or an executive secretary, the following phone tips should always be followed.

1. Speak clearly. A picture paints a thousand words but the caller on the other end of the phone can only hear you. They cannot see your face or body language. Therefore, taking the time to speak clearly, slowly and in a cheerful, professional voice is very important.
2. Use your normal tone of voice when answering a call. If you have a tendency to speak loud or shout, avoid doing so on the telephone.
3. Do not eat or drink while you are on telephone duty. Only eat or drink during your coffee break or lunch break.
4. Do not use slang words or Poor Language. Respond clearly with “yes” or “no” when speaking. Never use swear words.
5. Address the Caller Properly by his or her title. (i.e. Good morning Mr. Bhatt, Good afternoon Ms. Sunita). Never address an unfamiliar caller by his or her first name.
6. Listen to the Caller and what they have to say. The ability to listen is a problem in general but it is very important to listen to what the caller has to say. It is always a good habit to repeat the information back to the client when you are taking a message. Verify that you have heard and transcribed the message accurately.
7. Be patient and helpful. If a caller is irate or upset, listen to what they have to say and then refer them to the appropriate resource. Never snap back or act rude to the caller.
8. Always ask if you can put the caller on hold. If you are responsible for answering multiple calls at once, always ask the caller politely if you may put them on hold. Remember that the caller could have already waited several minutes before getting connected to you and may not take lightly to being put on hold. Never leave the person on hold for more than a few seconds or they may become upset and hang up.
9. Always focus on the call. Try not to get distracted by people around you. If someone tries to interrupt you while you are on a call, politely remind them that you are on a customer call and that you will be with them as soon as you are finished.

Whether at work, at home, or on your mobile phone, here are 8 solid telephone etiquette tips everyone should be displaying at all times.

6.2 Some like Situations

6.2.1 Answering a business telephone call

Receptionist: Good Morning, Unique Home Service is speaking. How can I help you?

Prakash: Good Morning. This is Prakash. Can I speak to Mr. Sanjiv, please?

Receptionist: Certainly, hold on a minute, I'll put you through.

Shyam: Hello, Mr. Sanjiv's office. Shyam is speaking.

Praksh: Hello, this is Praksh speaking from Hiteck Publishing House. I would like to speak to Mr. Sanjiv, please.

Shyam: I'm afraid, Mr Sanjiv isn't in at the moment. Can I take message?

Prakash: Yes, could you ask him to call me later?

Shyam: Alright. I'll ask him to call you.

6.2.2 Booking an airline ticket

A: I would like to book a flight.

B: I can help you with that. Where are you traveling to?

A: I am traveling to Singapore.

B: What date will you be traveling?

A: I want to fly on June 14th.

B: Do you want to fly out of Los Angeles International or Burbank Airport?

A: I would like to fly out of Los Angeles International Airport.

B: Would you prefer a morning or an afternoon flight?

A: I would rather fly in the morning.

B: Well, I have you booked on a flight that will fit your schedule. The tickets will arrive by mail in a few days.

6.2.3 Dealing with a complaint

Customer: Good morning!

Manager: Good morning. Can I help you?

Customer: Yes. I want to complain because my room is too noisy. The people in the next room have loud parties every night and I have not been able to sleep very well. Also, the hotel bed is very uncomfortable.

Manager: I'm so sorry, but this week there is a tennis tournament going on in town and the hotel is full of younger people, who are unfortunately quite noisy.

Customer: I understand, but it is very uncomfortable. If you don't take action, I will move to another hotel.

Manager: Don't worry. This situation will be solved.

Customer: Ok. I hope so.

Manager: Since you've been so inconvenienced by this incident, I'd be glad to offer you a free room for your next visit at our hotel. In fact, I'll give you a voucher right now. You can use it anytime you wish.

Customer: Oh, that's just great! I am so glad that we could work this out. I do want to keep coming back here.

7.0 Communication challenges in today's workplace

Good communication practices are at the heart of every successful business. Without successful internal communications, work processes slow down or grind to a halt and customers are not served properly. When processes do break down, you'll more than likely find some common communication issues at the root of the problem for managers and employees alike.

Mistaken or Confusing Information

Verify the information being conveyed before sharing it. If your information is unclear, confusing or flat out incorrect, the message sent will be wrong. Double-check information you plan to share in the workplace to ensure its authenticity, clarity and correctness. When you share information that is wrong or confusing, people will not receive the intended message.

Too Much, Too Little, Too Late

One of the major communication problems at work is that there is usually not enough information, there is too much information or it is delivered after-the-fact. For communication to be helpful, it must be timely and in the amount needed for people to become knowledgeable without causing them to overreact or misconstrue.

Misinterpretation

When communication is vague or ambiguous, it can lead to misinterpretation or misapplication in the workplace. To convey material effectively, it must be concise, clear and to the point. Have a clear understanding of the facts, the order of information and its intended use before sending a message that can't be retracted.

Listening Skills, Questions and Feedback

Verbal communication requires focused listening skills of the audience. When you don't have the full attention of your audience, your message won't be received. For face-to-face meetings, a good practice is to avoid distractions during the meeting. Have people leave their cell phones at their desks and hold the meeting in a conference room or other quiet location. Allow interaction after the meeting to develop clarity and obtain feedback. Answering questions honestly can help to clear up any confusion or misunderstandings.

Communication Barriers

Differences in background or experience causes barriers between some employees. Without some common ground, employees may find relating to or understanding what other staff members are talking about difficult. Cultural differences may also cause difficulties in non-verbal communications, causing mixed messages.

Misinterpretations and Assumptions

Communication is open to interpretation and is sometimes interpreted incorrectly. People often make assumptions based on the information they hear or read, whether or not they hear or read it correctly. Nonverbal cues also lead people to make assumptions that can impede communication. For example, an employee who avoids eye contact may cause others to assume she is hiding something when she may simply feel inferior or shy.

Poor Listening Skills

Sharing information is only part of the communication process. Strong listening skills are essential to effectively communicating and understanding the message being shared. Employees who fail to listen or who don't know how to actively listen to their colleagues are likely to miss information or not know what is going on.

Lack of Factual Communication

Factually-based communication is essential to effective communication in the workplace. If employees communicate false information or share information they aren't sure about, they are likely to cause delays in task completion. Managers who share false information or share information without verifying it first are likely to upset the employees.

Attitude

Negative attitudes interfere with the communication process in the workplace. In some cases, two employees may dislike one another or distrust each other, creating a wall between the two when they try to communicate. Other employees simply take an indifferent attitude toward work in general, causing them to not care about what is said during normal workplace communication.

Lack of Follow Through

Once information is dispersed in the office environment, specific actions take place based on the communications. For example, after a meeting to discuss the direction of a project, the attendee's likely need to complete tasks based on what you discussed in the meeting. If the communication doesn't leave employees with a clear sense of how to follow through with actions, you are likely to see a breakdown and unfinished work.

8.0 Network Etiquette

8.1 Guidelines for Effective Network

In today's marketplace, over 60 percent of jobs are secured through networking. Use these rules to build a solid network of professionals who can help you achieve your career objectives.

1. Don't Expect It to Be Easy

Connecting with the right people in the right way is challenging and time-consuming. It's important to have realistic expectations when building your network; it will not be an easy or lackadaisical process and it will take motivation, perseverance and follow through. The opportunities and contacts are out there, but they won't be found without research, time, persistence and a positive attitude.

2. Start with the Basics

Beginning your networking efforts can seem overwhelming, with so many companies, contacts and industries, it's sometimes difficult to tell where to start. Make it easy on yourself; start with what, and in this case, who, you know. Make a list of your family and friends, then, send them an email detailing your current employment situation. Keep it upbeat and positive, and outline your most recent role and the career direction in which you're looking to move. Provide specific job titles and industries that interest you and attach your resume. Be sure to express your gratitude for their help in advance, and tactfully request that they pass your contact information along to any relevant connections.

3. Don't Limit Yourself

When adding to your network, don't limit yourself to only professionals in your current industry or field. For example, if you're looking for an accounts payable manager opportunity, do not only network with other accounts payable managers, but with staff accountants, CFO's, CEO's, executive assistants, operations managers, human resources professionals, marketing professionals, and the list goes on. The key to creating a meaningful connection is finding a common thread, no matter what the position, level or industry. To diversify your network, attend a variety of events, both those specifically dedicated to networking and those that are simply social. New contacts are everywhere, and whether you're at a networking event, you never know when you'll meet your next boss, co-worker or potential referral.

4. Create a Wide and Deep Network

Quality, not quantity, is important when building your network. One of the biggest mistakes job seekers make when building a professional network is cultivating numerous shallow, superficial contacts and neglecting to develop lasting, deep relationships with a select group of individuals. Remember, at its core, networking is simply learning about, and from, other individuals and then utilizing this knowledge to grow, professionally and personally. The most rewarding and beneficial networking relationships are a result of consistent and meaningful interactions.

5. Follow Through

In a job search, and in networking, the one thing that separates the good, from the great, is follow through. What good is attending a networking event, collecting 20 business cards, and filing them away in your desk drawer? This type of "networking" will do nothing to grow your personal and professional connections. To capitalize on each formal, and informal, networking opportunity, send personalized "Nice to meet you" cards to every person you met at the event, and with whom you had any sort of conversation.

6. Start Now and Always Be Networking

Don't wait until you are looking for a career change to begin building your network. Networking should be an ongoing and natural process that helps you gradually build a solid, yet constantly growing, group of individuals from which you gain valuable professional and personal information, insight and support. Waiting until you're unemployed or voluntarily making a career change to begin building your network puts you at an immediate disadvantage, and the sooner you can start sparking and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships with a variety of professionals, the better. You will network your entire career; why not begin honing your skills now?

8.2 Exchanging business cards

Business Card Etiquette in China

- Have one side of your business card translated into Chinese using simplified Chinese characters that are printed in gold ink since gold is an auspicious colour.
- Ensure the translation is carried out into the appropriate Chinese dialect, i.e. Cantonese or Mandarin.
- Your business card should include your title. If your company is the oldest or largest in your country, that fact should be highlighted on your card.
- Hold the card in both hands when offering it.
- Never write on someone's card unless so directed.

Business Card Etiquette in India

- If you have a university degree or any honour, put it on your business card.
- Always use the right hand to give and receive business cards.
- Business cards need not be translated into Hindi as English is widely spoken within the business community.

Business Card Etiquette in Japan

- Business cards are exchanged with great ceremony.
- Invest in quality cards.
- Always keep your business cards in pristine condition.
- Treat the business card you receive as you would the person.
- Make sure your business card includes your title. The Japanese place emphasis on status and hierarchy.
- Business cards are always received with two hands but can be given with only one.
- During a meeting, place the business cards on the table in front of you in the order people are seated.
- When the meeting is over, put the business cards in a business card case or a portfolio.

Business Card Etiquette in the UK

- Business card etiquette is relaxed in the UK and involves little ceremony.
- It is not considered bad etiquette to keep cards in a pocket.
- Business cards should be kept clean and presentable.
- Do not feel obliged to hand out a business card to everyone you meet as it is not expected.

8.3 Shaking Hands

A handshake is more than just a greeting. It is also a message about your personality and confidence level. In business, a handshake is an important tool in making the right first impression. While the art of handshaking does vary within cultures, in the United States the “rules” are pretty universal.

1. Begin with an oral introduction of yourself

Before extending your hand, introduce yourself. Extending your hand should be part of an introduction, not a replacement for using your voice. Extending your hand without a voice greeting may make you appear nervous or overly aggressive.

2. Pump your hand only 2-3 times

A business handshake should be brief and to the point. Consider a handshake a short “sound bite” greeting, not a lengthy engagement. Holding on for more than three or four seconds can make other people feel uncomfortable.

3. Shake from your elbow

If you shake from the shoulder, using your upper arm instead of just your forearm, you risk jolting your handshake partner. The idea is to connect, not be overbearing.

4. Do not use a forceful grip

A handshake should be a friendly or respectful gesture, not a show of physical strength. An uncomfortable handshake is never a pleasant experience for anyone. Imagine you are opening a door handle and use about the same level of grip in your handshake.

5. Avoid offering a “Fish Hand”

A limp hand is never a good idea when it comes to a business handshake. Do return the grip, but do not get into a power struggle, even if the other person squeezes too hard.

6. Forget “lady fingers”

This is not a Southern Cotillion, this is business. Offering only your fingers to shake may be appropriate in some social settings, but in business settings you are an equal, not a “lady.” Extend your entire hand, and be sure to grasp using your entire hand as well.

7. One hand is better than two

Avoid the urge to handshake with two hands. It is always better in business introductions to use only one hand – your right hand – for the shake. The use of two hands with strangers is seen as intrusive, and too personal. In fact, a two-handed shake is called the “politician’s shake,” because it appears artificially friendly when used on people you barely know.

8. Shaking a sweaty hand

If you shake hands with someone who has sweaty palms, do not immediately wipe your hands on your clothing, handkerchief, or tissue. This will further embarrass the other person, who is probably already aware they have sweaty hands. You can discretely wipe them on something after you are out of site, and wash them later.

8.4 Dinning Etiquette

Pre-Dinner Etiquette

- Arrive on time
- Call ahead if you know you will be late
- Wait 15 minutes before calling to check on the arrival status of your dinner partners

Sitting Down

- Do not place any bags, purses, sunglasses, cell phones, or briefcases on the table
- When you are all seated, gently unfold your napkin and place it on your lap, folded in half with the fold towards your waist
- Keep utensils in the same order they appear on the table
- Do not rearrange to accommodate yourself if you are left-handed
- Wait for all parties to arrive before beginning any part of the meal

Place Setting

- Solids on your left:
 - Forks
 - Butter plate
 - Napkin (may also be on your plate)

Liquids on your right:

- Glasses/Cups
- Knives
- Spoons
- Whether basic or formal place setting, use your utensils from the outside in
- Dessert utensils may be above the place setting or served with dessert

Eating Styles

- Continental or European style: cutting the food with the right hand and using the left hand to hold the food while cutting and when eating.
- American style: cutting the food with the right hand and holding the food with the left, then switching hands to eat with the right hand.
- Resting and finished utensil positions

Ordering

- When in doubt, follow the lead of the host
- Don't order the most expensive item
- Order simply
- Avoid finger foods or difficult foods that are difficult to eat
- In general, don't order alcohol at a business meal

Do's and Don'ts of Dining

General Etiquette

- Turn off cell phones and beepers
- Have proper posture
- Keep elbows off the table
- Do not apply makeup or comb your hair at the table

Utensils

- Remember never to hold a utensil in a fist
- Do not talk with your utensils
- Set the utensils on your plate, not the table, when you are not using them
- Do not use both hands simultaneously to hold utensils and cups

Napkins

- Use your napkin frequently
- Do not use your napkin as a tissue
- If you have to sneeze, turn your head away from the table

While Eating

- Wait for everyone to get their meal before starting yours
- Don't talk with your mouth full
- Don't chomp ice
- Take small bites
- Cut your salad into bite size pieces if necessary
- Try to pace yourself to finish at the same time as everyone else
- If you leave the table, excuse yourself and place your napkin on your seat
- When you are finished eating, place your napkin neatly to the left of your plate, but do not push your place setting away from you

Review questions:

1. Assume that Kinetic Udyog Limited is paying for your education. The agreement is that you serve them for five years after doing your MBA. They want a report on the progress of your work and the quality of training that you have received so far. Write this report, which will be circulated to the members of the board of directors. Your report should contain the following elements only.
 - Introduction
 - Discussion
2. What is the difference between note taking and note making? How useful are these skills for you?
3. A speaker speaks about 120-150 words per minute whereas an average person can take down notes of only 25 words per minute. What does this statement reflect?
4. The commissioner of traffic Control in your city is looking to set up new traffic lights at the main crossings in the city, besides making the entire traffic operation more efficient and reliable. The commissioner's office has invited proposals to carry out the task in an efficient and cost-effective way. Draft a proposal to this effect.

UNIT4

PRESENTATION SKILLS



Objective:

To help the students achieve mastery over presentation skills which will definitely equip the students with an edge in the recruiting process where too much of emphasis is given on the process of delivery. Here the students will be apprised with the fine nuances of Presentation skills, Group Discussion skills, building resume, writing Job application with ease and Interview skills.

Introduction

Presenting information clearly and effectively is a key skill to get your message or opinion across and, today, presentation skills are required in almost every field. Whether you are a student, administrator or executive, if you wish to start up your own business, apply for a grant or stand for an elected position, you may very well be asked to make a presentation. This can be a very daunting prospect. This chapter is designed to help.

A presentation is a means of communication which can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting or briefing a team. To be effective, step-by-step preparation and the method and means of presenting the information should be carefully considered. A presentation concerns getting a message across to the listeners and may often contain a 'persuasive' element, for example a talk

about the positive work of your organization, what you could offer an employer, or why you should receive additional funding for a project.

BASIC TIPS

- **Dress smartly:** don't let your appearance distract from what you are saying.
- **Smile.** Don't hunch up and shuffle your feet. Have an upright posture. Try to appear confident and enthusiastic.
- **Say hello and smile when you greet the audience:** your audience will probably look at you and smile back: an instinctive reaction.
- **Speak clearly,** firmly and confidently as this makes you sound in control. Don't speak **too quickly:** you are likely to speed up and raise the pitch of your voice when nervous. Give the audience time to absorb each point. Don't talk in a monotone the whole time. Lift your head up and address your words to someone near the back of audience. If you think people at the back can't hear, ask them.
- **Use silence** to emphasize points. Before you make a key point pause: this tells the audience that something important is coming. It's also the hallmark of a confident speaker as only these are happy with silences. Nervous speakers tend to gabble on trying to fill every little gap.
- **Keep within the allotted time** for your talk.
- **Eye contact is crucial to holding the attention of your audience.** Look at everyone in the audience from time to time, not just at your notes or at the PowerPoint slides. Try to involve everyone, not just those directly in front of you.
- **Walk around a little and gesture with your hands.** Bad presenters keep their hands on the podium or in their pockets! Don't stand in one place glued to the spot hiding behind the podium! Good presenters will walk from side to side and look at different parts of the audience.
- You could try to **involve your audience** by asking them a question.
- Don't read out your talk, as this sounds boring and stilted, but **refer to brief notes** jotted down on small (postcard sized) pieces of card. **Don't look at your notes too much** as this suggests insecurity and will prevent you making eye contact with the audience.
- It's OK to use **humour**, in moderation, but better to use anecdotes than to rattle off a string of jokes.
- Take along a **wristwatch** to help you keep track of time – the assessor may cut you off as soon as you have used the time allocated, whether or not you have finished.
- It can be very helpful to **practice at home** in front of a mirror. You can also record your presentation and play it back to yourself: don't judge yourself harshly when you replay this - we always notice our bad points and not the good when hearing or seeing a recording or ourselves! Time how long your talk takes. Run through the talk a few times with a friend.
- **It's normal to be a little nervous.** This is a good thing as it will make you more energized. Many people have a fear of speaking in public. Practicing will make sure that you are not too anxious. In your mind, visualize yourself giving a confident successful performance. Take a few deep slow breaths before your talk starts and make a conscious effort to speak slowly and clearly. Research by T Gilovich (Cornell

University) found that **people who feel embarrassed are convinced their mistakes are much more noticeable than they really are**: we focus on our own behaviour more than other people do and so overestimate its impact. This is called the spotlight effect. If you make a mistake, don't apologize too much, just briefly acknowledge the mistake and continue on.

- **Build variety into the talk** and break it up into sections: apparently, the average person has a three minute attention span!

According to Professor Woodcock the flow of presentation should include the mentioned components.



Any good presentation should have a beginning, middle and an end. Use short sentences.

Consider:

- Who are the audience?
- What points do I want to get across?
- How much time have I got?
- What visual aids are available? Power-point projector? Flip chart? Don't necessarily use these. Sometimes the best presentations are the most informal.

Introduction

- **Welcome** the audience.
- **Say what your presentation will be about:** the aims and objectives.
- The introduction should catch the attention. Perhaps a provocative statement or a humorous anecdote:
 - “Genetically-modified crops could save millions of people from starvation”
 - “The first day of my vacation job went with a bang, but it wasn't my fault that the microwave exploded.

The Middle should outline your argument or develop your story

- In five minutes **you will only have time for two or three main points** and allow everything else to support these. List your main headings and any key phrases you will use.
- **Don't try to say pack too much content in** or you will talk non- stop trying to get all your content and the audience will switch off with information overload long before the end.
- Use graphics or anecdotes to add variety.

Conclusion

- Briefly **summarise** your main points.
- **Answer any questions.**
- **Thank the audience** for listening. Look at the audience again, **smile** and slow down.
- **The end should be on a strong or positive note** – not tailing away to “..well that's all I've got to say so thank you very much for listening ladies and gentlemen”. You could try something along these lines:
 - “Hang-gliding is brilliant, so try it – you'll believe a man can fly!”
 - “The danger is increasing – if we don't all act soon it could be too late!

The above has been neatly summarised as "**Tell them what you will tell them (introduction), tell them (development), and tell them what you told them (conclusion)**"

In preparing your talk, first jot down any interesting points you want to include in your talk, put these in a logical sequence, then try to find an interesting title, and a good introduction and ending.

USING POWERPOINT, OVERHEAD PROJECTOR OR FLIP CHART

You may be allowed to use an overhead projector (OHP), data projector, or flip chart as part of your talk, If you think that you might like to use one, then it's wise to try to practice on one beforehand so you know what you are doing!

- Before you start **check the computer and the lighting:** make sure no bright lights are illuminating the screen.
- **Stand to one side** of the projector/flip chart, so the audience can see the material.

- **Face and speak to your audience, not the screen.** Inexperienced PowerPoint presenters have their backs to the audience most of the time!
- **All too often the slides are just a security blanket for the speaker,** not visual aids for the audience.
- **Don't use too many slides:** three or four should be sufficient for a short presentation. For a 15 minute session 8 would be the absolute maximum and probably less. Don't have too much text on each slide - no more than about 40 words. Each slide should last for at least 2 minutes. The more slides and the more words on each slide, the less the audience will listen- whereas the less and simpler slides you have, the better you will communicate. Plan your presentation carefully and only use slides where they will clarify points.
- **Don't try to write too much** on each slide: 30 to 40 words in a large font size is ample for one transparency. Use note form and bullets rather than full sentences. It is very hard for a member of the audience to read slides and listen simultaneously - they are unlikely to do either well. **The best slides contain just one word.**
- **Slides can contain prompts** to remind you of what you will say next.
- **Press w to blank the scene or** to black it out (pressing any key restores the slides) when talking about a point which does not require a slide thus reducing the distraction for the audience.

- **Use a large (about 24 point) SANS font** such as Verdana or Lucida Sans. **DON'T PUT EVERYTHING IN UPPER CASE AS THIS LOOKS CRUDE.** Check that the slides are easy to read from a distance.
- **Use colour and bold for emphasis** but don't use too much colour. Have a good contrast e.g. dark blue text on a cream background.
- **Pictures, especially tables, diagrams and charts** are good. Power-point is excellent for the delivery of pictures and diagrams and they will help to break up and add variety to the long streams of text seen in many (bad!) presentations.

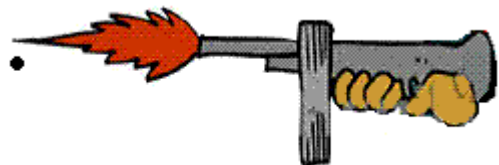
Dark blue on white or cream gives a good contrast,

whereas red text on a green background is harder to read

- A little **humour** can grab the attention of the audience.
- **Don't get carried away with flashy PowerPoint transition effects** as these may distract attention from the content.

The average PowerPoint slide contains 40 words

- If using **PowerPoint** use the **Format| Apply design template** command. Gives you a wide range of nicely preformatted slide designs to choose from and saves you a lot of time.
- **Write down your main points on a postcard sized piece of card** as a prompt and also as a backup in case the technology fails!
- **Too many bullets can machine gun your audience to sleep!** Good presentations will have a variety of slides: some with bullets, some without and many with images and charts. Twenty slides with 5 bullets on



each means you are trying to get across one hundred points, whereas the average person will absorb *at most* 5 points from a presentation.

What is Audience Analysis?

Audience analysis is the process of examining information about your listeners. That analysis helps you to adapt your message so that your listeners will respond as you wish.

In everyday conversations you adapt your message to your audience. For example, if you went to a party the night before, you would explain the party differently to your friends and family. To your best friend you might say, "We partied all night and there were tons of people there." To your mother you might say, "Oh, I had fun with my friends." And to your significant other you might say, "It was fun, I had a great bonding time with my friends." In each of these situations, you are adapting your message to your listening audience.

There are three phases in audience analysis: adaptation before, during, and after the speech.

Using the word "A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E" as an acronym we can determine some general audience analysis categories that these surveys should include.

A nalysis - Who are they? How many will be there?

U nderstanding - What is their knowledge of the subject?

D emographics - What is their age, sex, educational background?

I nterest - Why are they there? Who asked them to be there?

E nvironment - Where will I stand? Can they all see & hear me?

N eeds - What are their needs? What are your needs as the speaker?

C ustomized - What specific needs do you need to address?

E xpectations - What do they expect to learn or hear from you?

I. Audience Analysis - Adapting to your audience before you speak

When we analyze our audience, there are three ways to do this; **demographic analysis**, **attitudinal analysis**, and **environmental analysis**.

Examples of Demographic Analysis Questions:

- *What is the age of people in the audience?*
- *Are there significant cultural differences within the audience?*
- *What is the educational level of the audience?*
- *How many males and females are there in the audience?*

Demographic Analysis involves **age, gender, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, and educational level**. Aristotle noted more than 2,000 years ago that few things affect a person's outlook more than his or her age.

As college students we watch the same kinds of shows and listen to the same types of music and have a common history. We all remember "The Office," *Back to the Future*, Lady Gaga, and the Iraq War. These are all things that we have in common. If I were to do a speech about any one of these topics, I know that I may not have to explain who or what to an audience of my own age. Age is a very important factor and can be very helpful in picking a topic.

Gender is another characteristic. It is important to find out the ratio of men to women in the class. Also, make sure that you do not use any sexist language, stereotypes or make jokes about gender. If you were to insult men in front of a class of 12 men, then in most cases these 12 men are not going to listen to you for the rest of your speech. You may have also lost your credibility.

Culture is the shared knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms of a group. It is very important to be sensitive to students of other culture's feelings. You may do or say something that may offend them. **Ethnicity** is a person's national or religious heritage. There may be a student from China Town in Chicago, or a student from Little Italy in New York. A person's **race** is a person's biological heritage. It is important to learn as much as possible about these students before your speech, so you are sure not to offend them or anger them.

Another touchy subject is **religion**. Be very careful when you speak about different religions because people feel very strongly about their beliefs.

And finally, the **education** background of your listeners can help your choice of vocabulary, language style, and your use of examples. This can help you select and narrow your topic.

Attitudinal Analysis addresses the audience's **attitudes, beliefs, and values**.

- An **attitude** defines what a person likes or dislikes. When you choose a topic, it is important to find out your audience's attitudes toward the subject. If you are doing a speech on rap, does your audience like rap.
- A **belief** is what you believe to be true or false. You may believe that rap is destroying the minds of young teenagers.
- And a **value** is "a person's beliefs or standards." You may value the future and the young minds that will be running the future. It is very important to find out before your speech what people's attitudes are about your subject. If you know these three things, it will be much easier to bring your audience to the responses that you want.

Sample Attitudinal Analysis Questions

- What are the audience's beliefs, and attitudes, toward the topic?
- What are the relevant audience values and motives in regard to this topic?

Environmental Analysis is finding out things like the **seating arrangement, the number of people likely to attend, and the room lighting**. The way the **seats are arranged** will affect the audience's response. It is also important to know **how many people** will be there for the speech. And the way the **room is lighted** will affect the way the audience responds. If it is dark and the speaker is showing overheads, there will not be conversation. But if the room is light and open, the audience may feel more free to talk. The seating arrangement, the number of people and the room lighting are all factors that will affect the speech.

Sample Environmental Analysis Questions

- *How many will be in the audience?*
- *How will the seating be arranged?*
- *Will there be a podium? a microphone?*
- *Will there be noise and distractions?*
- *Will I have access to A.V. equipment?*

Types of Audiences You May Encounter

Neutral

Your audience may be indifferent or not directly involved in the topic you are discussing in your paper. In this situation, you will want to find a way to get your audience to care or to become invested without offending them.

Here are some considerations for a neutral audience:

- The audience may be on the fence at this point, so you want to tread carefully when you are writing.
- Include background information to familiarize the audience with the topic.
- Try to relate to something they may be familiar with to get them to care.

Hostile

Members of your audience may not always be willing to hear or read what you have to say about a topic. That's okay. It is impossible to make everyone feel the same way about a topic.

Here are some considerations for a hostile audience:

- Always consider the ideas and opinions that do not agree with your own.
- Consider who the individuals are that you may disagree with and why they may feel the way they do.
- Play devil's advocate with yourself. Ask yourself (or have someone else ask you) what you might be leaving out.
- Try to find a common ground, a starting point where either your audience can relate to you or you can relate to them.
- Think of reasons of why they support their point-of-view.

Uninformed

Sometimes your audience may not be familiar with or understand your topic. If this is the type of audience that you are addressing, then you will need to figure out what and how much information to give them.

Here are some considerations for an uninformed audience:

- Think about what is essential for the audience to understand what you are talking about.
- Don't bog the audience down with too much background information. Make sure you are still sticking to the main point you want to make in the paper.
- Decide what definitions the audience will need to understand the topic.

Expert

This type of audience is well-informed on the topic that you are writing about. In this case, you will need to make sure that you have done your homework and present information that is reliable.

Here are some considerations for an expert audience:

- Since your audience is familiar with the topic, don't waste their time by giving them background information they already have.
- Be specific with the point you are trying to make about the topic.
- Do your research. Don't think that a brief overview of sources will be enough to convince this audience.

Business

If you are writing for an audience in the business world, then you will want to be direct and concise. Often, this audience does not have time to read extra information and is only interested in the point you are trying to make. Time is money; don't waste either.

Here are some considerations for a business audience:

- Don't waste time painting a picture or telling a story. Get right to the point.
- Be polite, especially if you are trying to tell your audience something that they may not want to hear.
- Always make sure your audience feels as though you are considering them, not focusing on yourself.
- Be clear and concise. Keep it short.
- Give the audience the information in shorter straightforward paragraphs that will be easy to follow.

Rehearsing your Presentation

Rehearsing your presentation is essential for practising and assessing your timekeeping, body language (such as eye contact and hand gestures), voice projection, pace of speech and logical order of content. It gives presenters a chance to amend their presentation and envisage how they will go about presenting on the day.

It may be useful to record your voice on a mobile phone, or video yourself and watch it back, noting good points and areas for improvement.

Things to think about when you rehearse:

- Ideally rehearse in the venue that your presentation will take place in, or at least visit it to familiarise yourself.
- Ask friends to sit and watch your presentation, and to give feedback at the end. You might ask them to use the [Assessing Oral Presentations document](#) to help them to structure their feedback.
- Look at your watch or clock before and after your rehearsal to ensure you haven't gone over your allocated time.
- Ask your friends to sit far back while you rehearse and ask them whether you are loud and clear enough for them to hear, and whether your visual aids are easy to see/read.
- Practice using your visual aids. Click through your PowerPoint presentation (if you choose to use this) several times, to ensure that you are familiar with the order of the slides and know how to move forwards and backwards through the slides
- Practice using your prompt cards with keywords or phrases to help you remember what to say next. Then edit them to make them more useful.
- Ask friends to let you know if your gestures or movement are distracting. (See [the Body Language](#) section for suggestions).
- Ensure that all the equipment you need is available and you feel confident about using it.
- Reflect on your rehearsal presentation; think which aspects you are happy with and how you will improve on it for the 'real thing'. This [How Did my Presentation Go? document](#) will enable you to record your thoughts.

Handling Questions

Many presentations today are followed up with a question and answer period. To some people this can be the most exciting part of the presentation. To others it can be their worst nightmare. In fact, there are some presenters who purposely avoid the question and answer period all together. Below provided is a 5 step approach to handling questions along with some additional tips to make your next question and answer session go smoother.

1. Listen to the entire question

Listen to the entire question BEFORE you begin to answer any questions. Too many people start responding to a question before the entire question is even asked. Not waiting to hear the entire questions can result in you providing a response which had nothing to do with the question. Force yourself to LISTEN to the entire question and make sure you understand the question.

2. Pause and allow yourself time to value the question and listener. REPEAT the question out loud so the entire audience can hear it. It is important that everyone "hear" the question or the answer you provide may not make sense to some of the people. By repeating the question, this will allow you some additional time to evaluate the question and formulate a response.
3. Credit The Person for asking the question. You may say something like, "That was a great question" or, "Glad you asked that question" or even, "I get asked that question by many people". One word of caution. If you credit one person with asking a question, be sure to credit EVERYONE for asking a question. You don't want people to feel their question was not as important.
4. Respond to the Question honestly and the best you can. If you do NOT know an answer to a question, do not try to fake it. Be honest, and tell them you do not know but DO promise to research the answer for them and DO get back to them.
5. Bridge to the next question by asking them a question. "Does that answer your question?", "Is that the kind of information you were looking for?". This is critical.. Once they respond to you, "YES" you now have permission to go on to the next person. This also gives them one more opportunity to say, "No" and allow them to clarify their question more by asking it again.
6. Parroting: this technique might help if you need some time to reflect on a particular question. You ask the question to repeat the question and while he/she does so you plan your answer. But this technique must be adopted with restraint.
7. If you can't answer a question, just say so. Don't apologize. You then may:
 1. Offer to research an answer, and then get back to the questioner later.
 2. Suggest resources which would help the questioner to address the question themselves.
 3. Ask for suggestions from the audience.

Delivering an effective presentation

An effective presenter needs to be flexible, energetic and enthusiastic. This guide will help you turn your written presentation into an imaginative public performance.

Presentation as performance

Making a presentation puts you on public display. An audience not only listens to your ideas, it also responds to the way you use your voice and your body. You need more than a well written presentation to make an impact. You will also need to deliver it in a lively, flexible and interesting way. In this leaflet we suggest many ideas for invoking energy in your presentation style.

To begin with, imagine that you are in the audience for your presentation. What might:

- grab your attention?
- stimulate your imagination?
- inspire your confidence?
- develop your understanding?

Now think about ways to encourage these things.

Six steps to becoming an effective presenter

1. Practice

The more familiar you are with your material the more you will be able to inspire your audience's trust and confidence. Do more than practice reading through your material to yourself. If possible, stand up in a room and deliver your presentation to the walls. Get used to hearing your own voice filling a room. Familiarize yourself with the words and phrases in your presentation. Play around with different volumes and see how well you can hear your own voice. Above all, familiarize yourself with the main thrust of your argument and explore how the individual elements of your presentation piece together. This will help you to keep to your chosen objectives and avoid distractions when it comes to your actual delivery.

To read or to learn?

Should you read out your presentation from detailed notes or present it completely from memory? Find a way to compromise between these two approaches. There are dangers in each.

Reading

Reading tends to focus your thoughts on your notes, thus losing contact with your audience. Reading can also reduce your voice to a monotone, removing energy and enthusiasm from your delivery. Directly addressing your audience is much more engaging.

Learning

Learning is fine until you lose your way; for example, a member of the audience asks a question or your overhead projector bulb blows. Always have some form of notes to keep you on the right track. Also, if you over learn your notes you might lose a sense of energy and enthusiasm. Always work for a sense of confident spontaneity.

Find a way of making notes to support your presentation style. The most common form of note making is to use index cards. These can be read at a glance. Use them as visual

prompts to guide you through your presentation. Use one card for each main idea, including details of the supporting information for each point. Connect your cards together with a tag or a piece of string so that they can't get out of order.

2. Assert yourself

An effective presenter needs to be assertive, not aggressive. There are two important Ps.

Posture

It is important to appear confident at all times. Different postures create different moods. A very formal, upright and still posture will create a very different atmosphere from a relaxed and active one. Remember to match your physical behaviour to the objectives underpinning your presentation. If you want to be either formal or informal, make deliberate choices about your physical style and stick to these.

Presence

Have the confidence to fill your space in front of an audience. Avoid apologizing for your presence by saying "sorry" (although you must be polite if circumstances demand— e.g. the session is running over time, or the microphone has stopped working). Also, avoid physical apologies by hiding behind a desk or lectern. You must be confident that the audience wants to listen and that you have something interesting to tell them. Don't be afraid to wait for an audience to settle down before you start speaking or to ask for quiet if this does not happen.

3. Make contact with your audience

One of the key challenges faced by the presenter is to establish links with her/his audience (a poor presenter appears to be speaking to an empty room). Making contact helps to maintain an audience's interest and encourages them to believe that you are genuinely interested in talking to them. You can make contact with your audience in a number of ways, including:

- eye contact;
- gestures;
- spoken contact;
- your use of language.

Eye contact

Eye contact is part of everyday communication and an audience can feel uncomfortable if they are denied it. Making eye contact with individuals gives them a sense of involvement in your presentation and helps to convey your objectives on a personal level. Make sure that you share eye contact with all members of a small audience and all areas of a large audience. Regularly shift your focus around the room, not so that you look nervous, but to help involve as many people as possible in your talk.

A handy tip: if you can't make eye contact in a large group, don't look at the floor or ceiling (this looks like boredom or rudeness). Try looking at people's foreheads. The people sat around them will read this as eye contact even if the individual won't.

Gesture

People use their arms and hands in every day conversation to add emphasis or to help describe events. Presenters will therefore look rather awkward if they keep their hands in their pockets or rooted firmly at their sides. Use gestures to welcome your audience, to add emphasis to your main points or to indicate an ending. Try to use open gestures which move away from your body, extending them out to your audience. This helps to break any audience/presenter divisions. Make sure that all gestures are controlled and precise; too much movement will appear nervous and unfocused. Always watch against distracting your audience from the content of your presentation. You should continually be trying to find ways to help them listen and understand.

Spoken contact

Acknowledge your audience by making verbal contact with them. At the beginning of your talk ask if they can see and hear you, or check that lighting and sound levels on audio-visual equipment are satisfactory. During your presentation, ask rhetorical questions that you can then answer (e.g. "How do we know this was true?" or "So, what does this prove?"). At the end of your talk give the audience an opportunity to ask questions or to clarify detail— this encourages them to take ownership of your material.

The use of questions is an important tool. Questions involve your audience's mind in a more stimulating way than simply asking them to sit and listen to your talk. Draw an audience in with clear, focused questions.

Language

Your use of language is particularly important in developing and sustaining a relationship with your audience. Try using language that involves your audience. For example, asking questions such as "What can *we* learn from this?" or "How did *we* arrive at this conclusion?" involves your audience in an exploratory process or discussion. When looking at visual aids, introduce them by saying "If *we* look at this slide we can see that ." or "This slide shows *us* that...". Use language that is welcoming and involving throughout your presentation.

4. Use your voice

Your voice is a very flexible and powerful tool. You can use it in many different ways by varying the:

- volume;
- pace;
- pitch.

Volume

Make sure that your voice is loud enough for your audience to hear clearly. Speaking too loudly or too quietly can make it difficult for your audience to follow your presentation. Listen to people speaking in normal conversation. They tend to raise or lower their volume for emphasis. For example, they may speak loudly when giving an instruction but softly when apologising. To add energy to your presentation, use these colourful changes to your best advantage: a conspiratorial whisper can draw an audience in; a loudly spoken exclamation can make them sit up and listen.

Pace

Make sure that the speed of your delivery is easy to follow. If you speak too quickly or too slowly your audience will have difficulty following your talk. To add life to your presentation, try changing the pace of your delivery. A slightly faster section might convey enthusiasm. A slightly slower one might add emphasis or caution.

Pitch

The pitch of your voice also varies in day to day conversation and it is important to play on this when making a presentation. For example, your pitch will rise when asking a question; it will lower when you wish to sound severe.

Play around with the volume, pace and pitch of your voice when practicing your presentation. Find different ways of saying the same sentence. Explore different ways of adding emphasis to your main points. Always try to convey enthusiasm and energy through your use of your voice.

5. Breathe

Always remember to breathe steadily and deeply. If you are anxious about making a presentation your breathing will become fast and shallow. This will affect the quality of your voice and your ability to speak clearly for extended periods of time. Try to take a few deep breaths before you make your presentation, making a conscious effort to slow your breathing down and taking in more air with each breath. During your presentation, use pauses after questions or at the end of sections to allow comfortable breathing patterns. Don't be afraid to slow down the pace of your presentation if your breathing becomes uncomfortable.

6. Drink

It is a good idea to have some liquid to hand to quench your thirst if you are speaking for a long time. However, be careful not to gulp ice-cold water before you go on as this constricts your throat and affects the quality of your voice. Drink a warm (not hot) cup of tea to relax your throat and ease your speaking voice.

And finally ... a note about humour

Only use humour if you know it will work. Humour needs to be relaxed and confident - if used badly, it will only heighten senses of awkwardness and anxiety if these are already present. Use humour if you know you can and if you feel it is appropriate to do so.

Conclusion

Continually explore your personal style using any or all of the above suggestions in different combinations for different effects. Above all, remember two main points:

- Be yourself— even in the most formal of surroundings you will need to be yourself. No one will be impressed if you try to perform like a classical actor or act like a stand-up comedian;
- Avoid any behaviour that might be off-putting to your audience— always be deliberate and clear in your use of your voice and physical actions.

Using visual aids

Your visual aids should be clear and concise, providing a stimulating addition to your spoken word.

Introduction

Visual aids can be a very powerful tool to enhance the impact of your presentations. Words and images presented in different formats can appeal directly to your audience's imagination, adding power to your spoken words.

Think of using visual aids for the following reasons:

- if they will save words - *don't describe your results - show them;*
- if their impact would be greater than the spoken word - *don't describe an image - show it.*

Think about using a variety of different visual images. Try using photographs, tables, diagrams, charts, drawings, key words, or video sequences. Be creative and deliberate in your choice of images to achieve the most impact.

Think of your next presentation. How can you display your material visually? What techniques might help you present your argument or results in a stimulating way? What might add emphasis to your spoken words?

When to use visual aids

Words and images can be used throughout your presentation from the introduction to the conclusion. However, remember to restrict their use to key moments in your presentation; an over use of visual aids can be hard to follow.

Think about using visual aids at the following times:

Introduction

- display the title of your presentation;
- define particular technical terms or units;
- indicate a structure to your presentation by listing your main points;
- display an image which encapsulates your theme(s);
- highlight a question you intend answering during the course of your presentation;

Main points

- highlight new points with an appropriate image or phrase;
- support technical information with clearly displayed data;
- indicate sequence by linking points together;
- offer evidence from your research to support your argument;

Conclusion

- summarise your main points on a slide;
- present your conclusion in a succinct phrase or image;
- display your key references to allow your audience to read more on your topic.

Different types of visual aids

There are many different types of visual aids. The following advice will help you make the most of those most commonly used.

PowerPoint (or equivalent)

Microsoft PowerPoint is probably now the most commonly used form of visual aid. Used well, it can really help you in your presentation; used badly, however, it can have the opposite effect. The general principles are:

Dos	Don'ts
use a big enough font (minimum 20pt)	make it so small you can't read it
keep the background simple	use a fussy background image
use animations <i>when appropriate</i>	but don't over-do the animation - it gets distracting
make things visual	use endless slides of bulleted lists that all look the same

For more detailed guidance see the [Using PowerPoint](#) study guide.

Overhead projector slides/transparencies

Overhead projector slides/transparencies are displayed on the overhead projector (OHP) — a very useful tool found in most lecture and seminar rooms. The OHP projects and enlarges your slides onto a screen or wall without requiring the lights to be dimmed. You can produce your slides in three ways:

- pre-prepared slides : these can be words or images either hand written/drawn or produced on a computer;
- spontaneously produced slides: these can be written as you speak to illustrate your points or to record comments from the audience;
- a mixture of each: try adding to pre-prepared slides when making your presentation to show movement, highlight change or signal detailed interrelationships.

Make sure that the text on your slides is large enough to be read from the back of the room. A useful rule of thumb is to use 18 point text if you are producing slides with text on a computer. This should also help reduce the amount of information on each slide. Avoid giving your audience too much text or overly complicated diagrams to read as this limits their ability to listen. Try to avoid lists of abstract words as these can be misleading or uninformative.

White or black board

White or black boards can be very useful to help explain the sequence of ideas or routines, particularly in the sciences. Use them to clarify your title or to record your key points as you introduce your presentation (this will give you a fixed list to help you recap as you go along). Rather than expecting the audience to follow your spoken description of an experiment or process, write each stage on the board, including any complex terminology or precise references to help your audience take accurate notes. However, once you have written something on the board you will either have to leave it there or rub it off - both can be distracting to your audience. Check to make sure your audience has taken down a reference before rubbing it off - there is nothing more frustrating than not being given enough time! Avoid leaving out of date material from an earlier point of your presentation on the board as this might confuse your audience. If you do need to write 'live', check that your audience can read your writing.

Paper handouts

Handouts are incredibly useful. Use a handout if your information is too detailed to fit on a slide or if you want your audience to have a full record of your findings. Consider the merits of passing round your handouts at the beginning, middle and end of a presentation. Given too early and they may prove a distraction. Given too late and your audience may have taken too many unnecessary notes. Given out in the middle and your audience will inevitably read rather than listen. One powerful way of avoiding these pitfalls is to give out

incomplete handouts at key stages during your presentation. You can then highlight the missing details vocally, encouraging your audience to fill in the gaps.

Flip chart

A flip chart is a large pad of paper on a stand. It is a very useful and flexible way of recording information during your presentation — you can even use pre-prepared sheets for key points. Record information as you go along, keeping one main idea to each sheet. Flip back through the pad to help you recap your main points. Use the turning of a page to show progression from point to point. Remember to make your writing clear and readable and your diagrams as simple as possible.

Video (DVD or VHS)

Video gives you a chance to show stimulating visual information. Use video to bring movement, pictures and sound into your presentation. Always make sure that the clip is directly relevant to your content. Tell your audience what to look for. Avoid showing any more film than you need.

Artifacts or props

Sometimes it can be very useful to use artifacts or props when making a presentation (think of the safety routine on an airplane when the steward shows you how to use the safety equipment). If you bring an artifact with you, make sure that the object can be seen and be prepared to pass it round a small group or move to different areas of a large room to help your audience view it in detail. Remember that this will take time and that when an audience is immersed in looking at an object, they will find it hard to listen to your talk. Conceal large props until you need them; they might distract your audience's attention.

Designing visual aids

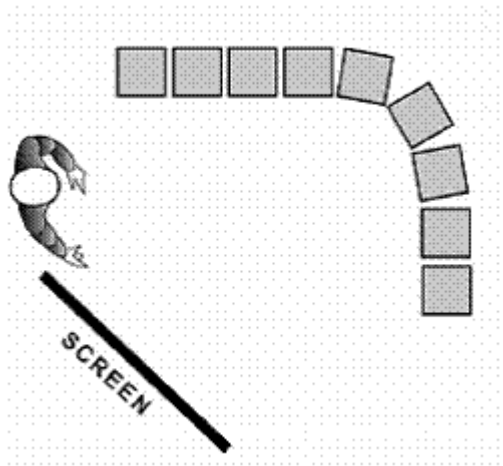
There are many different rules for designing visual aids, some of which will apply directly to different kinds of equipment. In general, sticking to the following guidelines will produce high quality visual images:

- use one simple idea for each visual;
- make the text and diagrams clear and readable;
- avoid cluttering the image;
- keep your images consistent (use the same font, titles, lay out etc. for each image);
- make sure your images are of a high quality (check for spelling and other errors).

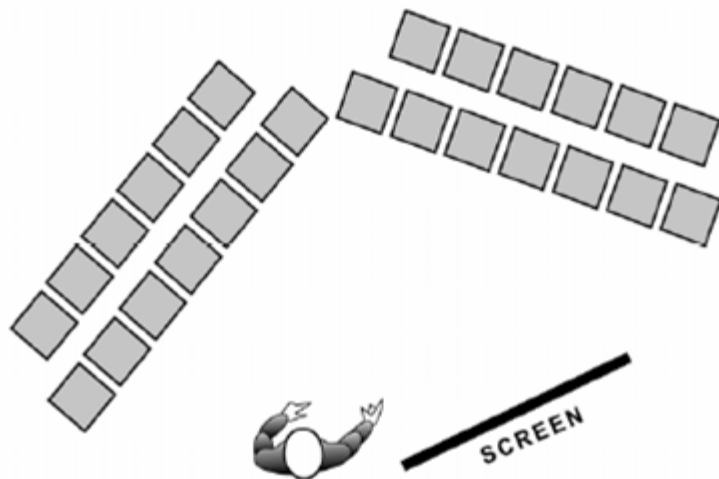
Always remember that an audience should be able to understand a visual image in a matter of seconds.

Room layout

Remember that your audience needs to be able to see you as well as your visual aids. Try to involve every member of your audience by changing the layout of your room. Below are some suggested layouts to help maximize contact between you, your audience and your visual aids.



Speaking to small audiences



Speaking to larger audiences

Try these arrangements in different settings. Use them to create different atmospheres; for example, an intimate setting might suggest an informal tone, whilst placing yourself at a distance might suggest a more formal relationship.

And finally ... practice

Always check your equipment to make sure that it:

- works;

- is equipment you are familiar with (How do you start the slide show? How do you change the pad? Should you use permanent or waterproof pens?).

There is nothing worse than a presenter struggling with their visual aids. Be familiar enough with your tools to ensure that you won't be thrown if something goes wrong. A confident use of visual aids will help marry them to your spoken presentation helping them become part of an impressive performance.

Summary

Use visual aids to display complex information clearly and introduce variety into your delivery technique. Make sure that you are familiar with the equipment required to create and display visual aids, and deploy visual aids creatively in your presentations mixing techniques and media to create an impact.

Group Discussions

Group discussions are now being used as an important step in the selection of candidates both in private and government organizations. Regarded as an effective tool in the recruitment process besides job interviews, a GD plays a pivotal role in selecting the best and most suitable candidates from many who apply for the same post. It is also used as a tool to study the behavioral and attitudinal responses of the participants.

Definition: a GD is a formal discussion which involves six to fifteen members/participants who sit in a group to discuss a topic or a case given for this purpose. It is a methodology used by organization to gauge whether a candidate possess certain personality traits/skills that are desired of him/her. It is like a football or hockey game where all the players pass



the ball to their team players and aim for a common goal. In a game of football the team which has a better coordination and skills wins the game and so is the case in GD.

2.1 Characteristics of group discussion

Group discussions are unstructured and less formal compared to meetings or conferences wherein specific roles are assigned to the participants. In a group discussion, an individual's thought process is influenced by the views and opinions of the other members. It also depends on where and in which direction the mood of the discussion moves. In a group discussion, each participant is free to speak his views. A successful discussion involves both listening and speaking.

Some of the salient features common to all group discussions are as follows:

(i) **Interface:** A basic feature of group discussions is the interaction among the various members of the group. They see, hear and communicate with each other orally by paying attention to each other.

(ii) **Leader and Members:** Group discussions are effective only when there is a group of members and a leader. The leader has to summarize facts and information, integrate them, stimulate thinking and agree to a unanimous solution of the problem. The members of the group become actively related to each other in their respective roles.

iii) **Participation:** The effectiveness and efficiency of a group discussion depend, to a large extent, upon the active participation of the members.

(iv) **Interpersonal Attraction:** Another characteristic feature of a group discussion is interpersonal attraction. As long as interaction continues, the likes, dislikes, behavior and temperament of members are known to each other. Among them, empathy develops and as such they share each other's problems.

(v) **Pressure to Conform:** In a group discussion, there is always an element of pressure to conform to norms. The pre-defined and established standards are always enforced and followed.

(vi) Conflict: A conflict is a difference or disagreement among the members of the group, which often arise during deliberations and discussions. A conflict is inevitable and usually develops when alternative solutions are present. It can stimulate the members to find new solutions to the problem. Thus, conflict is not necessarily bad. But if it arises due to the political behavior of the members it will have dysfunctional consequences.

2.2 Purpose of group discussion

Group discussions may serve various purposes. Some of them are:

- (i) To reach a solution on an issue of concern
- (ii) To generate new ideas or new approaches to solving a problem
- (iii) For selecting candidates after the written test for employment or for admission to educational institutes
- (iv) To provide us with an avenue to train ourselves in various interpersonal skills

2.3 Advantages of group discussion

The advantages of group discussions are as follows:

- (i) It provides a deeper understanding of the subject.
- (ii) It improves the ability to think critically.
- (iii) It provides different approaches to solving a problem.
- (iv) It helps the group in taking a decision.
- (v) It gives an opportunity to hear the opinions of other persons.
- (vi) It enables a participant to put across his/her viewpoint.
- (vii) It enhances confidence in speaking.
- (viii) It can change your opinion and show you things from a different perspective.

2.4 Conducting an effective group discussion

An effective group discussion generally has a number of elements:

- All members of the group have a chance to speak, expressing their own ideas and feelings freely, and to pursue and finish out their thoughts
- All members of the group can hear others' ideas and feelings stated openly
- Group members can safely test out ideas that are not yet fully formed
- Group members can receive and respond to respectful but honest and constructive feedback. Feedback could be positive, negative, or merely clarifying or correcting factual questions or errors, but is in all cases delivered respectfully.
- A variety of points of view are put forward and discussed
- The discussion is not dominated by any one person
- Arguments, while they may be spirited, are based on the content of ideas and opinions, not on personalities
- Even in disagreement, there's an understanding that the group is working together to resolve a dispute, solve a problem, create a plan, make a decision, find principles all can agree on, or come to a conclusion from which it can move on to further discussion

2.5 Types of group discussion

GD is classified based on the following:

- **Method of conduct**
- **Nature of topic**

Based on the Method of Conduct

Bases on the method of conduct, group discussions can be further classified into the following:

(i) Structured Group Discussion: In this type of group discussion, the topic is given to the participants by the selectors and a time-frame is allotted to complete the discussion. This is the most commonly followed technique for a group discussion.

(ii) Unstructured Group Discussion: In unstructured group discussions, unlike in the case of structured group discussions, the candidates themselves decide the topic with mutual consent. This formal method of group discussions is rarely used.

(iii) Role Play: In this type of group discussion, the candidates are given specific roles to play in the backdrop of a given situation. Within the framework of their role, the participants have to solve the problems inherent in the situation given to them.

(iv) Group Discussion with a Nominated Leader: Generally, no-one is nominated as leader of a group discussion and all participants are treated as equal. But in this type of a group discussion, a person is nominated as a facilitator or a leader of the group. He may

summarize the discussion or solutions discussed at the end of the group discussion. Sometimes the leader is nominated by the group members themselves.

Based on Nature of the Topic

Group discussions can also be categorized based on the topic allotted for the discussion to the participants. There are three kinds of topics-controversial topics, abstract topics and case study topics.

(i) Controversial Topics: These are topics which are controversial and which have the potential to generate an argument. Such topics generally make the discussion lively as arguments and counter arguments are presented. This gives the evaluators more opportunities to evaluate the candidates.

Examples of such topics include 'Should the examination system be scrapped' or 'How ethical is cloning?'

(ii) Abstract Topics: There is a growing trend of assigning abstract topics, that is, topics which are vague or unclear. These topics enable the evaluators to evaluate the creative ability of the candidates. Every candidate can have his own interpretation of the topic. Some such topics are 'Zero', 'One and one make eleven'.

(iii) Case Study Topics: Here, a situation is provided to the participants which may depict a problem faced by the organization or the managers. Participants need to analyze the situation and think of various alternatives to solve the problem. This kind of a group discussion tests the ability of the candidate to think of solutions keeping the situational factors and constraints in mind.

2.6 Body language in group discussion

Your ability to use your own body language to emphasize your chosen words is paramount in all human interactions..

1. Eye Contact

Eye contact is one of the most important aspects of dealing with others, especially people we've just met. Maintaining good eye contact shows respect and interest in what they have to say. We tend to keep eye contact around 60-70% of the time, (however, there are wide cultural differences, so be careful in other countries). By doing this you won't make the other people feel self conscious, like they've got a bit of vegetable stuck between their teeth or a dew drop hanging from the nose. Instead, it will give them a feeling of comfort and

genuine warmth in your company. Any more eye contact than this and you can be too intense, any less and you give off a signal that you are lacking interest in them or their conversation.

2. Posture

Posture is the next thing to master. Get your posture right and you'll automatically start feeling better, as it makes you feel good almost instantly. Next time you notice you're feeling a bit down, take a look at how you're standing or sitting. Chances are you'll be slouched over with your shoulders drooping down and inward. This collapses the chest and inhibits good breathing, which in turn can help make you feel nervous or uncomfortable.

3. Head

Head position is a great one to play around with. When you want to feel confident and self-assured keep your head level both horizontally and vertically. You can also use this straight head position when you want to be authoritative and want what you're saying to be taken seriously. Conversely, when you want to be friendly and in the listening, receptive mode, tilt your head just a little to one side or other. You can shift the tilt from left to right at different points in the conversation.

4. Arms

Arms give away the clues as to how open and receptive we are to everyone we meet and interact with, so keep your arms out to the side of your body or behind your back. This shows you are not scared to take on whatever comes your way and you meet things "full frontal". In general terms the more outgoing you are as a person, the more you tend to use your arms with big movements. The quieter you are the less you move your arms away from your body. So, try to strike a natural balance and keep your arm movements midway. When you want to come across in the best possible light, crossing the arms is a no-no in front of others. Obviously if someone says something that gets your goat, then by all means show your disapproval by crossing them!

5. Legs

Legs are the furthest point away from the brain, and consequently they're the hardest bits of our bodies to consciously control. They tend to move around a lot more than normal when we are nervous, stressed or being deceptive. So best to keep them as still as possible in most situations, especially at interviews or work meetings. Be careful too in the way you cross your legs. Do you cross at the knees, ankles or bring your leg up to rest on the knee of the other? This is more a question of comfort than anything else. Just be aware that the last position mentioned is known as the "Figure Four" and is generally perceived as the most defensive leg cross, especially if it happens as someone tells you something that might be of a slightly dubious nature, or moments after (as always, look for a sequence).

6. Body Angle

Angle of the body in relation to others gives an indication of our attitudes and feelings towards them. We angle toward people we find attractive, friendly and interesting and angle ourselves away from those we don't - it's that simple! Angles include leaning in or away from people, as we often just tilt from the pelvis and lean sideways to someone to share a bit of conversation. For example, we are not in complete control of our angle neither at the cinema because of the seating nor at a concert when we stand shoulder to shoulder and are packed in like sardines. In these situations we tend to lean over towards the other person.

7. Hand Gestures

Hand gestures are so numerous it's hard to give a brief guide...but here goes. Palms slightly up and outward is seen as open and friendly. Palm down gestures are generally seen as dominant and possibly aggressive, especially when there is no movement or bending between the wrist and the forearm. This palm up, palm down is very important when it comes to handshaking and, where appropriate, we suggest you always offer a handshake upright and vertical, which should convey equality.

8. Spatial Relations

Distance from others is crucial if you want to give off the right signals. Stand too close and you'll be marked as "pushy" or "in your face". Stand or sit too far away and you'll be "keeping your distance" or "stand offish". Neither is what we want, so observe if in a group

situation how close all the other people are to each other. Also notice if you move closer to someone and they back away - you're probably just a tiny bit too much in their personal space, their comfort zone. "You've overstepped the mark" and should pull back a little.

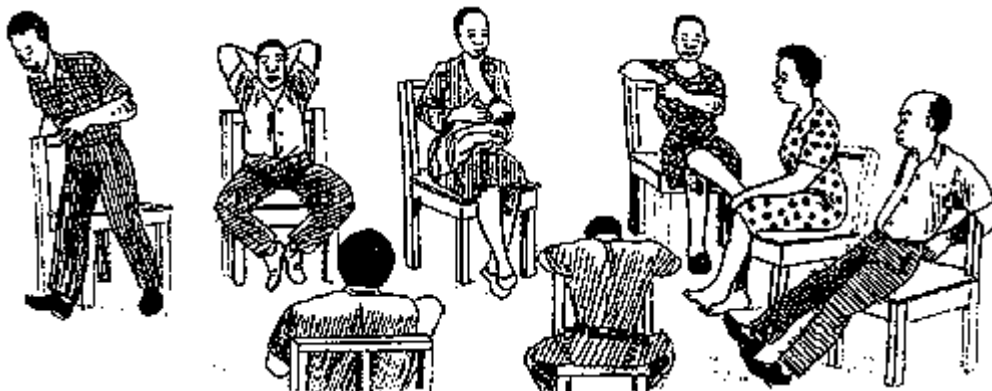
9. Ears

Yes your ears play a vital role in communication with others, even though in general terms most people can't move them much, if at all. However, you've got two ears and only one mouth, so try to use them in that order. If you listen twice as much as you talk you come across as a good communicator who knows how to strike up a balanced conversation without being me, me, me or the wallflower.

10. Mouth

Mouth movements can give away all sorts of clues. We purse our lips and sometimes twist them to the side when we're thinking. Another occasion we might use this movement is to hold back an angry comment we don't wish to reveal. Nevertheless, it will probably be spotted by other people and although they may not comment, they will get a feeling you were not too pleased. There are also different types of smiles and each gives off a corresponding feeling to its recipient which we'll cover next time.

Some negative body languages



2.7 Skills Evaluated during group discussion

In today's context, the educational institutes and organizations are interested in team players rather than individual contributors. During the Group Discussion, the panel essentially evaluates the

candidate's potential to be a leader and also his/her ability to work in teams. Remember that institutes are typically on the lookout for candidates who will inspire to lead and succeed and for that you need to be a good team player.

Here is a sample list of skills assessed during a group discussion:

Leadership skills:

Leadership is one of the key skill on which candidates are assessed during a Group Discussion.

Inherent ability to lead a team is desired out of a Manager.

Example:

Initiate the group discussion and give proper directions to the discussion.

Intervene and guide the group when the discussion goes off track.

Encouraging all members to participate in the discussion & share their opinion.

Moderate group if discussion gets chaotic..

Communication skills:

The participating candidates are also assessed in terms of clarity of thought, expression through word and aptness of their language. One should be able to speak without any hesitation and at the same time should not sound harsh.

Example:

Hold attention of the group by using simple language.

Explain ideas in precise way with clarity.

Speak fluently and put forward your ideas without hesitation.

Interpersonal skills:

Candidates are also evaluated on their Interpersonal skill such as adaptability, maturity, co-ordination, interaction with peers. While participating in GD one should give due consideration to other members view point and should not be pushing too hard to make his own point alone be heard. At the same time if a candidate raises an absurd or irrelevant point one should politely reject the point by giving proper reasoning. One should try to coordinate as much as possible with all group members. One should not sound rude or inflexible in accepting good points raised by others.

Keep your cool throughout the Group Discussion.

Do not take things personally even if someone provokes you.

Persuasive skills:

This is very important attribute expected in a Manager doesn't come easily in a candidate. In our daily life also we have seen many people who are not heard much even though have a very good points or idea. Due to their inhibitions they don't speak much once someone tries to counter their point.

Example:

To persuade the group to accept the points made by them (only if it is valid and genuine one. Remember you should not be over persuasive as well)

To make people accept your view point without hurting or making fun of any other members.

Persuade the group to analyze the problems from different perspectives and help other member's ideas to be heard and understood.

Analyze and persuade others to see the problem from multiple perspectives without hurting the group members.

Problem solving skills:

One important aspect of Group Discussion is it is very spontaneous and dynamic in nature. You need to recollect all your thoughts on the fly and present them to the group. Also while other members are speaking you need to be listening carefully because that could trigger an altogether new point in your mind and may give you a chance to speak again. You need to be really involved in the discussion to handle the counter arguments and answer them well while speaking.

Example:

Analyze the problem from different angles.

Answer the counter arguments without hurting any group member.

Should be able to think and speak spontaneously.

Resolve difficult situations by proper moderation and reasoning.

Listening & Conceptualizing Ability:

After making one's point heard to the group, one should be attentive and listen carefully when other are speaking. Should try to gather as much ideas and facts being put forward. Assimilate the points raised by others and try to add something new to the discussion.

Example

At the end a good listener who has good conceptualizing ability could very well summarize the outcomes of discussion in few sentences.

Attitude:

Attitude is another important parameter of most of the Group Discussion. Candidates are expected to:

- have positive attitude,
- encourage others for participation,
- not to put someone down during the discussion
- be good listeners when others are speaking
- accepting other view points (if it's a valid one)
- not showing stubbornness and harshness
- should speak maturely
- should not raise voice unnecessarily

Example:

One should handle Group Discussion very maturely and should not raise his voice too much that he sounds harsh.

Should be supporting for other members and should be easy going.

Should show keen interest in discussion and be an avid listener.

Reasoning Ability:

Candidates are expected to substantiate the points raised by them through proper reasoning. Just raising a point without able to justify the same during a GD would not help and may result in negative marks as well. Also another member could use the same point and well justify it with reasoning. One should logically be able to think of pros and cons of points made by him and put forward the same to the group.

Example:

While bringing up any point is prepared with answers such as:

-What is the point you are raising? How is it going to help with the problem under discussion? Why you feel so? Give Any Examples?

Say Scams in India, Just saying scams are not good without backing the sentence with any justification is as good as not raising the point. One should say scams are not good because it's hurting the Indian economy badly and hindering the growth of our Nations. Examples: Foreign institutions are not willing to invest due to scams in country and poor Governance. Also these scams adversely impact the business by attracting organizations with lesser capability to execute projects.

Team Player:

Corporate world is all about working as a team, if the team succeeds everyone in the team succeeds; similarly a failure of team is failure of each members of the team. Candidates participating in GD are also evaluated for their ability to work in a team.

Example:

- Be polite and cordial in your communication.
- Accept others viewpoint and encourage each member to put forward their points.
- Don't lose your cool if someone counter argues the points which you had raised and accept ideas politely.

Avoid any arguments.

Help the group to achieve its goal on time at the same time fostering participation from each member

General Awareness:

The topics given in Group Discussion are mostly of current affairs; at times any abstract topic is given. If the topic is from current affairs it is expected of the candidate to be aware of the happenings around the world. The idea a candidate put forwards clearly demonstrated his maturity and interests in the current affairs impacting the society, nation or the world.

Example:

While speaking on any topic the points which you raise or put forward to group clearly demonstrates your knowledge about the topic, thus defining you as an intellectual who has avid interest in happenings around him.

2.8 Successful group discussion techniques

Dos

- Organize your thoughts. Pre-plan what you are going to say.
- Speak. It is important for the evaluator to hear you speak.
- If you have any doubts regarding the subject, seek clarifications.
- In the case of group discussions for selection to jobs or educational institutes, make sure that you are dressed in formal attire.
- Be assertive without being authoritative or dominating. Keep your language formal. Simple spoken English without too much of jargon is most desirable.
- Maintain a formal posture which reflects enthusiasm.
- Try and maintain eye contact with as many people as possible.
- Try to make friends by speaking to those who have been ignored by the rest of the group.
- Watch your body language. Your gestures and mannerisms odd to or subtract from what you are trying to say.
- Be clear and fluent in what you are saying.
- Refrain from extreme emotions. Maintain your cool. Do not take personal offense to anything that is being said.
- Always be polite. Avoid using strong phrases like 'I strongly object.....'
- Listen receptively. Do not listen with a desire to contradict or refute. Instead, listen to positively analyze what is being said.
- It may be useful for you to summarize the points made till a particular time and then present your views.
- Stick to the discussion topic. Do not speak irrelevant things.
- Remember that the discussion is notion argument. Be polite even if you disagree.

Don'ts

- Do not try to be someone you are not. Be as natural as possible.
- Do not use too many gestures. They can be intimidating to the other participants.
- Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- Do not try to stand out by putting the other person down.
- Do not ridicule the idea or statement of another participant by referring to it as stupid.
- Do not impose your ideas on anybody. Respect others' opinions.
- Do not shout. Use a moderate tone and a medium pitch.
- Do not lose objectivity and make personal attacks.
- Do not attempt to be a leader by trying to conclude when the group has not reached any conclusion.

But you should do it by showing respect for the other person even if you do not accept his/her point of view as correct. Courtesy in discussion indicates our level of culture and sophistication. Here are the guidelines for all GD participants:

1. How to join in the discussion

- I'd like to raise the subject of.....
- What I think is.....
- I think it is important to consider the question of.....
- I could say a word about.....
- May I make a point about.....

2. To support what some other participant has said

Remember that you should not say that you support so and so or I agree with him/her. You should support the views of the person not the person

- I'd like to support Miss Natasha's point of view about
- That is just what I also think.....
- I agree fully with what Mr. Richard has just said. I am in complete agreement with fee slashing.

3. To support disagreement

Again remember that you are opposed to the idea, and not the person who holds it. You can disagree by using polite expressions, instead of curt expressions such as "You are wrong", you can say

- Please allow me to differ.....
- I would like to differ.....
- I think differently on this issue.....
- I do not agree; in my opinion.....

4. To make a point very strongly

- I am convinced that.....

- You can't deny that.....
- Anybody can see that.....
- It is quite clear to me that.....

5. To bring a discussion back to the point

- That's very interesting, but I don't think it is indeed to the point.
- Perhaps, we could go back to the point.
- Could we stick to the subject, please?
- I am afraid we are drifting from the point.

Also called a CV or vita, the curriculum vitae is, as its name suggests, an overview of your life's accomplishments, most specifically those that are relevant to the academic realm. In the United States, the curriculum vitae is used almost exclusively when one is pursuing an academic job. The curriculum vitae is a living document, which will reflect the developments in a scholar/teacher's career, and thus should be updated frequently.

3.1 Purpose of Curriculum Vitae

Are you among those who think that the purpose of a CV is to find you a job? Well, you are all wrong! "The purpose of the CV is to land you an interview. It makes all the difference: the CV should not be seen as only an accessory, but rather as a key destined to open the door to the office of a potential employer for you. It therefore plays a vital role: if you want to land an interview, your CV needs to elicit the desire to meet you.

3.2. Preparation of Curriculum Vitae

Personal details

Normally these would be your **name, address, date of birth** (although with age discrimination laws now in force this isn't essential), **telephone number and email**.

British CVs **don't usually include a photograph** unless you are an actor. In European countries such as France, Belgium and Germany it's common for CVs to include a passport-sized **photograph** in the top right-hand corner whereas in the UK and the USA photographs are frowned upon as this may contravene equal opportunity legislation - a photograph makes it easier to reject a candidate on grounds of ethnicity, sex or age. If you do include a photograph it should be a head and shoulders shot, you should be dressed suitably and smiling: it's not for a passport!

Education and qualifications

Your degree subject and university, plus A levels and GCSEs or equivalents. Mention grades unless poor!

Work experience

- **Use action words such as developed, planned and organised.**
- **Even work in a shop, bar or restaurant will involve working in a team, providing a quality service to customers, and dealing tactfully with complaints. Don't mention the routine, non-people tasks (cleaning the tables) unless you are applying for a casual summer job in a restaurant or similar. Try to relate the skills to the job.** A finance job will involve numeracy, analytical and problem solving skills so focus on these whereas for a marketing role you would place a bit more emphasis on persuading and negotiating skills.

- *All of my work experiences have involved working within a team-based culture. This involved planning, organisation, coordination and commitment e.g., in retail, this ensured daily sales targets were met, a fair distribution of tasks and effective communication amongst all staff members.*

Interests and achievements

- Keep this section **short and to the point**. As you grow older, your employment record will take precedence and interests will typically diminish greatly in length and importance.
- **Bullets** can be used to separate interests into different types: sporting, creative etc.
- **Don't use the old boring clichés** here: "socialising with friends".
- **Don't put many passive, solitary hobbies** (reading, watching TV, stamp collecting) or you may be perceived as lacking people skills. If you do put these, then say what you read or watch: *"I particularly enjoy Dickens, for the vivid insights you get into life in Victorian times"*.
- Show a **range of interests** to avoid coming across as narrow: if everything centers on sport they may wonder if you could hold a conversation with a client who wasn't interested in sport.
- **Hobbies that are a little out of the ordinary** can help you to stand out from the crowd: skydiving or mountaineering can show a sense of wanting to stretch yourself and an ability to rely on yourself in demanding situations
- Any **interests relevant to the job** are worth mentioning: current affairs if you wish to be a journalist; a fantasy share portfolio such as Bull bearings if you want to work in finance.
- Any **evidence of leadership** is important to mention: captain or coach of a sports team, course representative, chair of a student society, scout leader: *"As captain of the school cricket team, I had to set a positive example, motivate and coach players and think on my feet when making bowling and field position changes, often in tense situations"*
- Anything showing evidence of **employability skills** such as team working, organising, planning, persuading, negotiating etc.

Writing about your interests

Reading, cinema, stamp-collecting, playing computer games

Suggests a solitary individual who doesn't get on with other people. This may not be true, but selectors will interpret the evidence they see before them.

Cinema: member of the University Film-Making Society

Travel: travelled through Europe by train this summer in a group of four people, visiting historic sites and practicing my French and Italian

Reading: helped younger pupils with reading difficulties at school.

This could be the same individual as in the first example, but the impression is completely the opposite: an outgoing proactive individual who helps others.

Skills

- The usual ones to mention are languages (good conversational French, basic Spanish), computing (e.g. "good working knowledge of MS Access and Excel, plus basic web page design skills" and driving ("full current clean driving license").
- If you are a mature candidate or have lots of relevant skills to offer, a skills-based CV may work for you

References

- Many employers don't check references at the application stage so unless the vacancy specifically requests referees it's fine to omit this section completely if you are running short of space or to say "References are available on request."
- Normally two referees are sufficient: one academic (perhaps your tutor or a project supervisor) and one from an employer (perhaps your last part-time or summer job). See our page on Choosing and Using Referees for more help with this. How long should a CV be?

There are no absolute rules but, in general, a new graduate's CV should cover no more than two sides of A4 paper.

3.3 Essential elements of Curriculum Vitae

Whether a potential employer asks to see your curriculum vitae, CV or resume, they're looking for one thing – a document that proves why you're the ideal candidate to invest their time and money in. Essentially it's a sales brochure, pinpointing the interesting USPs (unique selling points) that make you stand out from the crowd.

There's no universally accepted format, but your CV should cover these elements:

- Your details - Include your name, address, phone numbers and email address so any interested employers can contact you easily. Information such as nationality, age and driving license status are optional.
- Personal statement - One paragraph that immediately captures the attention of your reader and entices them to find out more about you. Be careful not to cram too much in. Instead take your main skill and relate it to the job you're after to show employers why you meet their needs.
- Work experience - List your most recent position first, continuing in reverse chronological order including the name, location, website and dates of your employment for each company you have worked for. Aim to use bullet points wherever possible to highlight your responsibilities and achievements in each role so

the person scanning your CV can quickly match up your experience with their job description.

- Education - Again, in reverse chronological order, give brief details of your academic and professional qualifications along with the grades you achieved. If you're looking for your first job since leaving education, include this information above any work experience.
- Skills - Whether you realise it or not you will have picked up many skills over the years, some tangible, some less so. Include every IT package or programme you have used as well as any foreign language skills you have gained, and state whether you're at a basic, intermediate or advanced level. Skills such as communication and project management are harder to substantiate and should be backed up with examples.
- Hobbies and interests - Including these is optional and often used to fill up space at the end of the document. The idea is to give the interviewer a more rounded picture and, perhaps, something more personal to discuss at an interview.
- References - It's not necessary to list referees on your CV, but you should state that details are available on request. If this is your first job, it's a good idea to nominate tutors or mentors. You'll obviously need to choose references that you're confident will give positive remarks, but you should also make sure they would be easily contactable by potential employers when the time comes.
- A clear and simple layout - Always keep your CV to two pages of A4. It should be clear to anyone reading your CV where to find the information they're looking for, with enough 'white space' to ensure they're not overawed at first glance.

The purpose of this document is not to get you the job, but to get you an interview. Always remember you're not writing a CV for yourself, you are writing it for your reader. As you write your CV, put yourself in their shoes. Keep it short, to the point and, above all else, interesting.

Due to the high volume of applications they receive, a recruiter will generally spend at most 20 seconds initially reviewing each CV, so it's important to get it right. If you follow the structure outlined above, you're on the right track to presenting the information in a clear, concise and persuasive way.

Things to watch out for

Time spent making sure your CV is crisp and relevant is always time well spent. There are plenty of simple mistakes that are often overlooked that will turn your readers off before they've gone much further than your name and address.

- Resist the urge to jazz up your CV with images or colour .
- Steer clear of long paragraphs.
- Careful use of bold type can be effective, but don't overdo it.
- Underlining should be reserved for website links only.
- Use typefaces like 'Times New Roman' or 'Arial' - they're easier to read.

- Avoid using font sizes smaller than 11pt, employers won't strain their eyes to read it.
- Don't use txt speak and only use abbreviations if they're universally known.

And finally...

Check for spelling or typographical errors. Any errors are your responsibility and are one of the first things employers use to weed out the weaker candidates. Even if the role you're after doesn't require a high level of literacy, spelling errors scream lack of care, which is an undesirable quality for any recruiter. Don't put all your faith in a spell checker as many are set to American settings as a default. If you're not sure about a word, look it up in a dictionary.

Before you distribute your finished document or upload it to the Internet, get someone to look over it. Professional CV checkers see hundreds of CVs every day and can immediately spot things that may put off a potential employer.

3.4 Appearance of Curriculum Vitae

Fonts

- **TIMES NEW ROMAN is the standard windows "serif" font. A safe bet - law firms seem to like it but it isn't easy to read on the screen.**
- **Sans fonts** are preferred globally- sans fonts don't have the curly bits (called serifs) on letters. **ARIAL** is a standard Windows "sans" font and is now used by the BBC web site which used to use Verdana. As you can see sans fonts are cleaner and more modern than Times or **Cambria** and also look larger in the same "point" size (the point size is simply how big the letters are on the page). However Arial and Times New Roman are so common that they're a little boring to the eye.
- Classier choices might be **VERDANA** or **LUCIDA SANS** which have wider letters than most fonts but if you are running out of space then Arial is more space saving, as is **TAHOMA** which is a narrower version of Verdana. Notice how, in the example to the right, Verdana looks bigger and easier to read than Times New Roman. **CALIBRI** is now the standard MS Word font but is smaller and perhaps less clear than Arial, Verdana or Lucida Sans (see the examples to the right again). Never use **COMIC SANS** of course!
- **FONT SIZE** is normally 12 points for the normal font with larger sizes for subheadings and headings.
- Or 10 points. **Favorite CV body text font is 10 point Verdana or Lucida Sans with 12 or 14 points for sub headings.**
- 14 points is too big for the normal body font - wastes space and looks crude.
- and 8 or 9 points too small to be easily readable by everyone, especially in Times New Roman which should not be used in sizes less than 11 points
- Although many people use 12 points, some research on this suggested that **smaller point size CVs** (within reason) were perceived as **more intellectual!**
- **Most CVs are now read on screen** rather than on paper. It's no coincidence that **Serif fonts are rarely used on the web** - they are much less readable on screen (Times Roman

Unnecessary use of complex words or hard to read fonts give a bad impression: people who use simple, clear language are rated as more intelligent.

was first used on Trajan's column, 2,000 years ago!), and some fonts, such as **Verdana**, were designed with screen readability in mind.

3.5 Types of Curriculum Vitae

There are two types of CV that one can prepare while applying for jobs

3.5.1 Functional CV

This type of CV mainly focuses on your skills and experience. If you keep changing your career quite often and there are gaps in your employment history, it is advisable to prepare this type of resume.

3.5.2 Chronological CV

A chronological CV gives your work history in the chronological order, that is in the sequence of occurrence. Nowadays, a reverse chronological order is in practice, as employers prefer this type as they get to know what you are doing now and where and when you have worked in different organizations.

3.6 Dos and Don'ts of CV writing

Curriculum Vitae are a self-marketing tool and getting an interview can depend on how good your CV is. Your CV is your chance to show an employer you have the skills and experience needed, and that you are the right person for the job. However, the way you present your CV can have an overwhelming influence over whether your CV is even read, let alone get you that all important interview. You will need to consider what to include, how much detail is needed and how to make your CV stand out from all the others.

Do...

- Construct your CV with your prospective employer in mind. Look at the job advert or specification and think about what the job involves, and what the employer needs. Find out about the main activities of the employer.
- Tailor your CV to the job. Your CV shouldn't be your life story but should be tailored for the job you're applying for, focusing on the parts that are important for that particular job.
- Make your CV clear, neat and tidy. Get somebody to check your spelling and grammar. No-one wants to read a CV that is squashed together and includes too much information. Your CV should be easy to read with space between each section

and plenty of white space. Use left-justified text as it's easiest to read, using black text on good quality white or cream paper.

- View your experience in a positive light. Try to look objectively at your experiences (even the bad ones) and identify what you learned or what skills you developed in the process. This is the picture you should present to the employer.
- Place the important information up-front. Put experience and education achievements in reverse chronological order.
- Include experience and interests that might be of use to the employer: IT skills, voluntary work, foreign language competency, driving skills, leisure interests that demonstrate team skills and organization/leadership skills.
- Put your name and email address on every page - in case the pages of your CV get separated.
- Use positive language. when describing your work achievements use power words such as 'launched', 'managed', 'coordinated', 'motivated', 'supervised', and 'achieved'.
- Quote concrete outcomes to support your claims. For example, 'This reduced the development time from 7 to 3 days' or 'This revolutionized the company's internal structure, and led to a reduction in overheads from £23,000 to £17,000 per year'.
- Make use of the internet for sample CVs and CV templates - to help maximize the impact of your CV and to get inspiration for layout and tone.

Don't...

- Hand-write or type your CV. This looks unprofessional and old fashioned.
- Include information which may be viewed negatively – failed exams, divorces, failed business ventures, reasons for leaving a job, points on your driving license. Don't lie, but just don't include this kind of information. Don't give the interviewer any reason to discard you at this stage.
- Include anything that might discriminate against you – such as date of birth, marital status, race, gender or disability.
- Include salary information and expectations. Leave this for negotiations after your interview, when the employers are convinced how much they want to employ you.
- Make your CV more than two pages long. You can free up space by leaving out or editing information that is less important. For example, you do not need to include referees – just state they are available on request. Don't include all of the jobs you have had since school, just the relevant ones. Add details about your most recent qualifications, which are more relevant, but summarize the rest.
- Dilute your important messages. Don't bother with a list of schools you attended with grades and addresses, don't include a long list of hobbies, or a long work history. Concentrate on demonstrating that the skills they need, what you have achieved by applying the skills you have and what benefits your clients have gained from your work.
- Use jargon, acronyms, technical terms - unless essential.
- Lie - employers have ways of checking what you put is true, and may sack you if they take you on and find out you've lied to them.

SAMPLE CV

<p>Michael Faraday</p>	<p>Gauss Road, Canterbury, Kent CT9 9ZZ mf999@kent.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel. 01234 5667 Mob. 0777 777777</p>		
<p>Profile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well developed project management and IT skills combined with a flexible attitude to work. • Strong organisational skills in a variety of situations to achieve deadlines. • Have initiative and can work independently or as part of a team. • Get on well with people at all levels, easily making good working relationships. • Adaptable and quick to learn new skills. 		
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Education</h2>		
<p>University</p>	<p>2005-2008 THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT BEng (Hons) Computer Systems Engineering (IEE accredited). I achieved a 2:1 in my first and second years.</p>		
<p>Selected Course Modules</p>	<p>First year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Object-Oriented Programming 68% • Computer Systems 55% • Further Object-Oriented Programming 63% • Introduction to Electronics 59% • Robotics Project 61% • Digital Technologies 62% • Engineering Mathematics 54% • Engineering Analysis 71% 	<p>Second year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating Systems and Architecture 58% • Microcomputer Engineering 66% • Image Analysis and Applications 56% • Computer Interfacing 71% • Instrumentation & Measurement Systems 63% • Digital Implementation 63% • Digital Signal Processing 67% 	<p>Final year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project • Embedded Computer Systems • Product Development • Digital Systems Design • Digital Control and Robotics • Computer Networks and Communication

<p><i>Projects</i></p>	<p>Group project based on sampling and study of an ECG signal via a single amplification circuit and software filtering and analysis systems. This required good communication between team members to ensure all work was accomplished within the specification. My role was to design and implement the software filtering system using Lab View.</p> <p>Final year project involved development and construction of a Controller Area Network (CAN) based system suitable for demonstrating the fundamentals of CAN Bus from an automotive perspective. I achieved a 2:1 grade</p> <p>Electronics prize for a project to build a Digital Heart Rate meter in 2nd year.</p>
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Page 2

<p><i>Tommy Flowers School, Manchester 1998 - 2005</i></p>	<p>2005 A Levels: Electronics B, Physics C, Mathematics D</p> <p>2003 9 GCSE passes at grade A to C including Mathematics, English and Science</p>
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<p><i>Computing and Other Skills</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications: Lab View, MATLAB, Or CAD Capture and Layout, Microchip MPLAB, Model Sim (VHDL using the Altera MAX+plus II 10 compiler), Tina Electronic package, Web design using Dreamweaver, MS Office. • Programming Languages: Java, C++, SQL, , TLearn, • Operating Systems: Windows Xp, Vista, Symbian, Linux. • Can assemble Intel based PC's from component parts and fault diagnose hardware. Set up a home Ethernet network including wireless networks and firewalls/routers. • Full current clean driving licence • Speak basic conversational Spanish and French
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<p>Work</p>	<p>July - Sept. 2007 Wheatstone Engineering (technician), Manchester. I worked on a mobile communications project and I was doing SMT Soldering and fault finding and manufacturing of prototype boards.</p>
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	<p>July 2004-September 2004 Tesco (Shop Assistant), Manchester Duties involved taking orders and stock control, generally dealing with customers and organising other assistants. I built a strong positive relationship with customers and staff.</p>
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was vice captain of the university hockey team. This involved organising squads, training sessions and competitions. • While at school I took part in many group activities the most important of which was the Young Enterprise Scheme. This scheme involved working in a group to manage and run a successful company and produce a viable product. The chosen product was a magazine which was demonstrated and sold at a nearby shopping centre. • When in the Scouts, I was in charge of a group of 5 younger scouts. Scouts provided me with a variety of life skills including first aid and survival skills, but also gave me responsibility and leadership over groups of others at a young age. • Member of the Institute of Electronics and Technology (IET)
References	I am happy to supply these on request

4.0 Job Application Letter/Cover Letter

The covering letter or cover letter (as it covers or the first page attached with the CV) is vital to your CV. This is why it is the first page and not an addition. Your covering letter demonstrates your writing style better than your CV (which is usually more brief and factual).

4.1 Purpose of a cover letter

The covering letter puts flesh on the bare bones of the CV. It points out to the employer the information showing that you have the qualities the job calls for, and makes a statement about yourself and your suitability for the job. It should give the personal touch that your CV will intrinsically lack.

4.2 Format of a cover letter

Suggested structure for your covering letter:

First Paragraph

- **State the job you're applying for.**
- **Where you found out about it** (advert in The Guardian newspaper etc. - organisations like to know which of their advertising sources are being successful)
- **When you're available to start** work (and end if it's a placement)

Second Paragraph

- **Why you're interested** in that type of work
- **Why the company attracts you** (if it's a small company say you prefer to work for a small friendly organisation!)

Third Paragraph

- **Summarise your strengths** and how they might be an advantage to the organisation.
- **Relate your skills to the competencies required in the job.**

Last Paragraph

- Mention any **dates that you won't be available for interview**
- **Thank the employer** and say you look forward to hearing from them soon.

If you start with a name (e.g. "Dear MrBloggs") you should end with "*Yours sincerely*". If you start with "Dear Sir or Madam" you should end with "*Yours faithfully*".

4.3 Guidelines to write a cover letter

<p>No more than one side of A4</p> <p>If longer, it becomes an essay, not a business letter!</p>	<p>State the job you are applying for and where you found out about it.</p> <p>Large organisations may have many different vacancies at one time.</p>	<p>Say why you are interested in the job and the employing organisation.</p>
<p>Spell and grammar check it VERY CAREFULLY!</p> <p>A single spelling mistake could rule you out.</p>	<p>COVERING LETTERS</p>	<p>Make it personal to the job and employer.</p> <p>Do careful research to find out what makes them special.</p>
<p>If emailing put your covering letter in the main email and send your CV as an attachment.</p>	<p>Mention your USPs (Unique Selling Points).</p> <p>The skills and attributes that make you stand out from other candidates.</p>	<p>Relate your skills to the job.</p>

4.4 Guidelines to write email cover letter

Put your covering letter as the body of your email. It's wise to format it as plain text as then it can be read by any email reader.

Emails are not as easy to read as letters. Stick to simple text with short paragraphs and plenty of spacing. Break messages into points and make each one a new paragraph with a full line gap between paragraphs. DON'T "SHOUT" (WRITE IN UPPER CASE!) Your CV is then sent as an attachment. Say you'll send a printed CV if required.

If you don't know the name of the person you are writing to, it's probably best to use the formal *Dear Sir or Madam* and to sign off *Yours Sincerely* or *Yours Faithfully*

If they have already emailed you, reply back in the same style, so if they have signed their email "Jenny", write *Dear Jenny*, but if they have signed it "Ms Smith", write *Dear Ms Smith*.

If they have emailed you and addressed you *Hi Dave*, then it's OK to reply *Hi Jenny*.

Also mirror the way they sign off, if they use "*regards*", "*best wishes*", then it's safe to do the same.

5.0 Interview skills

Interviews are about presenting yourself in a positive and confident manner and we have interview skills and tips to help you. Many candidates are often worried that by "overselling" themselves they may appear arrogant and, as a result, they opt for mainstream answers which can sometimes appear fairly vague.

The purpose of the interview

Firstly, it is for the interviewer to see if you match the requirements of the job. These will naturally vary with different jobs but are likely to include:

- Your personal qualities
- How well you express yourself
- Your motivation and enthusiasm

The recruiters will already have an indication of these from your initial application but now the interview will assess you in person.

It is also your chance to meet somebody from the organisation and assess them: are they offering what you want?

There aren't right or wrong answers to interview questions: how you come across is as important as what you say. Be yourself – if you have to put on a completely false act to get through the interview, is this really the right job for you?

5.1 The interview process

5.2 Characteristics of the Job Interview

The success of a company largely depends on its employees. Employers know this, which is why they seek the best candidates to fill available positions. If you were lucky enough to snag a job interview, you must gain your interviewer's confidence to give yourself the best chance to land the position. Positive traits that define your character are powerful selling tools.

Professionalism

Every workplace has standards of professionalism that it expects employees to follow. The interviewer scrutinizes your behaviors to see how you carry yourself and whether you will be a good fit for the company. This includes how your resume is constructed, how you dress for the interview and whether you arrived on time. A well-constructed resume that effectively sums up where you have been professionally and educationally might indicate good organizational abilities. Arriving to the interview punctually and appropriately dressed shows dependability and professionalism.

Good Communication

In a chaotic or unpleasant work atmosphere, ineffective communication is often the culprit. For a smooth operation, employers want workers who are good communicators. Display active listening while the interviewer speaks and articulate your responses so your messages are effectively conveyed. Avoid interrupting the interviewer, speak clearly and concisely and respond to questions correctly.

Flexibility

Things do not always go as planned in the workplace. Also, emerging trends often require companies to adapt in an effort to stay current. Your prospective employer wants employees who are flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions and who are willing to expand their skills and abilities. During the interview, if asked about relocation, try to keep an open mind. If you are worried about relocation or traveling costs, your employer might be willing to pay for it.

Interpersonal/Teamwork Abilities

The ability to get along with your co-workers is paramount to a productive work atmosphere. Though personalities vary in the workplace and clashes are sometimes inevitable, how employees handle conflict and team assignments is important to employers. To gauge your ability to work with others, the interviewer may ask you to demonstrate how you managed conflict or successfully worked on a project with others before. It is possible to productively work with someone you do not like. Therefore, your response should show how you got the work done without allowing your emotions to get in the way.

Positive Thinking

During the interview, maintain confidence and a positive mindset. If you doubt your abilities or see only the worst possible outcome, your interviewer might pick up on it as well. Employers want positive employees with the ability to think quickly on their feet. Focusing on the negatives makes it difficult to see the brighter side of situations. If asked how you deal with problems, say that after acknowledging them you concentrate on finding workable solutions.

Demeanor and Ethics

Your interviewer looks at your overall demeanor and work ethics, which includes whether you display genuine interest in, and enthusiasm, for the position, and whether you are truthful. Any sign of disinterest, boredom, or untruth may cost you the job. The interviewer may ask questions to gauge your integrity. For example, she asks why you resigned from your last job. Tell the truth without speaking negatively about your former employer. If you lie and the interviewer calls your previous employer for verification, she might question your character. Also, refrain from putting on an act during the interview by saying only what you think the interviewer wants to hear. Let your personality speak for itself by being who you are while remaining friendly, courteous and professional.

5.3 Planning and Purpose

Preparation for the interview

Abraham Lincoln once said: *"Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the ax."* Preparation is indeed the key ingredient for interview success.

Careful planning and preparation will make sure that your interview goes smoothly and will also help to calm your nerves!

- **Research very carefully the career area** for which you are applying.
- Remind yourself **why you are interested in this career, and this employer:** enthusiasm is important.
- **Re-read your application form** as if you were the interviewer. Try and **anticipate the questions** they will ask. Think about any awkward points that might be picked up on, and how you will handle them.
- **Prepare some questions to ask** the interviewer.
- **Plan how you will get to the interview.** Leave plenty of time in case
 - of traffic jams or delayed trains.
- **Dress neatly** and smartly.
- Take a small, neat **notepad** and pen to write down important information the interviewer may tell you, and after the interview, the questions you were asked, so you can work out better answers to any you fluffed.
- **Research the employer** - here are some things you may be able to find out from the employers web site or via Google.
 - What is the size of the organization?
 - How long has it been in business?
 - What are its products and/or services?
 - What sort of reputation or public image does it have?
 - Who are its main competitors?
 - Where is it based? Single or multiple locations? UK or multinational?
 - What is the organizational structure like?
 - What are its future plans and prospects?
 - What is the organisational culture?
 - What types of training, development and appraisal are offered?

<p>Preparation. Carefully research the job, industry and employer. Prepare answers to likely questions.</p>	<p>Dress very smartly! Shows your interest in the job and commitment.</p>	<p>Body language. Smile, make eye contact, and shake hands.</p>
<p>Competency questions. Describe a situation where you worked in a team. Give an example of your leadership skills.</p>	<p>INTERVIEW SKILLS</p>	<p>Questions about your CV or application form. Make sure you read these again carefully beforehand!</p>
<p>Hypothetical Questions How would you deal with an irate customer? A staff member who was caught stealing?</p>	<p>Sell your USPs (Unique Selling Points). The skills and attributes that make you stand out from other candidates.</p>	<p>Have questions to ask What training would I receive? What is a typical career path in this job?</p>

Common Body Language Interview Mistakes to avoid

From eye contact to posture to the way you fix your hair, avoid these 10 physical slip-ups in your next job interview.

Bad Posture

Leaning back is lazy or arrogant, leaning forward is aggressive and slouching is just lazy. Instead, experts say to aim for a neutral position, sitting tall as if a string were connecting your head to the ceiling.

Breaking Eye Contact

"Hold eye contact one extra eyelash," says charisma coach Cynthia Burnham. She says we tend to feel uncomfortable holding eye contact once a personal connection has been created. Don't stare, but try to hold your interviewer's gaze for one extra second before breaking away. "Do this especially when shaking hands," she says.

Chopping and Pointing

Cynthia Burnham, a California-based charisma coach, says chopping or pointing motions can "cut up" the space between you and your interviewer in an aggressive way.

Crossed Arms

"Arms crossed over your chest signal defensiveness and resistance," says Karen Friedman, communications expert. "When they're open at your sides you appear more approachable."

Excessive Nodding

"Sometimes we undermine how powerful or in focus we are by nodding like a bobble-head doll," says Burnham, a habit that's particularly common in women. "Nod once or twice with a smile of agreement. But find your still center and stay there."

Fidgeting

"Stop fidgeting!" says Amanda Augustine of The Ladders. "The nervous energy will distract the interviewer. You want [him or her] focused on what you have to say, not the coins jingling in your pocket or the hangnail on your finger."

Hands Behind Back

It's important to appear approachable and open, so don't try to control gestures or fidgeting by keeping your hands still. This is especially important when you begin to speak, says Friedman. "Keeping your hands in your pockets or behind your back inhibits movement and makes you appear stiff."

Mismatched Expressions

"If your tone isn't matching your facial expression you could find yourself in hot water," says communications coach Matt Eventoff. "If someone asks what you're most passionate about and your face is in deadpan while you answer, it's not going to translate well."

Shifty Eyes

Friedman says distracted or upward eye movements can suggest someone is lying or not sure of themselves. "It's important to look someone directly in the eye to convey confidence and certainty."

Staring

"It's important to be confident and look the interviewer in the eye," says Amanda Augustine, job search expert at The Ladders. "But then break away. Locking eyes with someone for an extended period of time can be interpreted as aggressive, not to mention creepy."

Types of interview

Competency-based interviews

Many large graduate recruiters now use competency-based (also called "structured" or "situational") interviews in which the questions are designed to help candidates give evidence of the personal qualities which are needed to perform well in the job. Usually, you will be expected to give an example of how you have demonstrated these qualities in the past in reply to questions such as:

Describe a situation where you had to.....

- show leadership
- make a difficult decision
- work as a member of a team
- shown initiative
- change your plans at the last minute

- overcome a difficult obstacle
- refuse to compromise
- work with others to solve a problem

Structured interviews can seem unfriendly and off-putting to candidates. They do not give opportunities for discussion - when you have answered one question as far as you feel able, the interviewer will move on to another topic. The advantages of these interviews is that they are standardized - important when many different interviewers are assessing a large number of graduate applicants - and that they are based upon the skills essential for the job. See the [Competency-based applications](#) and [Competency-based interviews](#) pages for more detailed help with this

"Traditional" interviews

These are more like a conversation - but **a conversation with a purpose**. It is up to you to show that you are the right person for the job, so bear this in mind when replying to the questions. These interviews will probably be **based largely around your application form or CV**. The interviewer may focus on areas of particular interest or relevance - such as vacation jobs or projects.

Interviewers often expect interviewees to talk much more than the candidates themselves expect to. So **don't be too brief in your answers** - but don't rabbit on for too long either. Watch the interviewer and pause from time to time - he or she will either encourage you to continue or will introduce another question.

It's OK to pause briefly. A short gap to gather your thoughts shows thoughtfulness, assertiveness and self confidence.

Be polite, but **don't be afraid to enter into a discussion** and to stand your ground. Some interviewers will deliberately challenge your replies in order to stimulate this kind of discussion.

5.11 Types of interview questions

Interview questions can be broadly divided into four categories.

1. Competency
2. Chronological
3. Technical
4. Case studies

Competency

These questions are structured to reflect the competencies sought by an employer for a particular job rather than your life story, and are likely to be more detailed and persistent than those asked in a strictly chronological interview. The competencies sought by big employers are well described, and should be self-evident from any perusal of their recruitment literature or website. Smaller organisations may send you a job description and an 'ideal person specification', which will list quite clearly the competencies required for the job in question – the skills, experience, knowledge and other attributes that the organisation is looking for in its ideal candidate.

While no interview can ever be entirely objective, the competency-based interview is structured so that each candidate is questioned about his or her ability to do the job in question. It can be helpful to imagine the whole process as a series of levels, each question being slightly more probing than the last.

The organisation may, for example, be looking for someone with organisational skills, and may choose to ask you a series of questions designed to steadily probe not only your own experience in this area, but your understanding of the skills involved. The questions may follow a pattern such as:

- Would you describe yourself as an organised person?
- How have you demonstrated organisational skills?
- What did you do?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What makes a good organiser?
- Why are organisation skills important?
- Surely ... (challenge) ...?

When you are preparing for interviews it is important to anticipate such lines of questioning and to think about what you have done in the relevant context. A range of examples from across your experience can help to provide evidence of your competencies. You might find the S.T.A.R. acronym useful – Situation, Task, Action and Result – when structuring your answers. When you use the S.T.A.R. structure, make sure at least 50% of your answer focuses on the actions you took, demonstrating your skills

Although the interviewers will be asking most of the questions, the interview is your opportunity to ensure that you convey your suitability for the job. If you have prepared well, you will already know what messages you want to convey, and it is up to you to make the most of every question put to you. A question commenting on your choice of university, for example, provides you with an ideal opportunity to highlight your ability to weigh up several options and to exercise your judgement, as well as to mention any other motivating factors that you feel reflect well on you – such as the opportunity to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, or your desire to be stretched intellectually.

'Difficult' questions

Questions often perceived as being particularly difficult include those that appear to take a 'negative' tone, for example:

- *What is your biggest weakness?*
- *What would you say has been your greatest failure?*

and those which ask you to think about yourself in a different way. These might include:

- *How would your friends describe you?*
- *If you were an animal/biscuit, what would you be?*

The rules for answering these, and other, questions are the same as for answering any question. They are asked to see how you will react and to probe your self-awareness.

1. Relax
2. Be honest
3. Emphasize the positive and what you have learnt from something that may not have gone according to plan

You might, for example, in answer to "What is your biggest weakness?" reply that your strengths lie in your ability to think problems through clearly, and that you can sometimes be frustrated with people who don't work logically – but have learned to appreciate the different insights that they can bring to a project. This answer outlines a 'weakness', but turns the question around, so that you are able to stress both your strengths and your ability to learn from a situation. In some instances it can be helpful to give an actual example.

The strategy can also be used with questions in the second category, that ask you to think about yourself in a different way. These questions focus very much on your relationships with other people – particularly those close to you. Your answer could, therefore, easily cover your loyalty, your understanding or your readiness to help. Sometimes it can be difficult to say, "My friends think I'm loyal...", without sounding rather presumptuous, and you may find it easier to preface these glowing attributes with, "I think that my friends would say...", or, "I hope that my friends would say...". If asked to compare yourself to an animal or biscuit (or colour, or piece of furniture...), think about the personal qualities that you want to emphasize, and explain your choice. A custard cream, for example, holds up well under pressure, is liked by everyone, and has a fine attention to detail.

If this is an area that you are concerned about, you may like to look at some of the books available for reference at the Careers Service – you might find *Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions* (Martin John Yate) particularly helpful.

- *Why will you leave this job?*
- *Do you think equal opportunities are important?*
- *What criticisms of this organisation would you make?*

- *At what point would you compromise your principles in this job?*

These and similar questions can all be answered well. Think about the answers you might give – what is the question seeking to reveal and why is your answer important to the interviewer

Chronological

As the name suggests, these interviews will take you chronologically through your experiences to date, and are likely to use your CV or completed application form as a basis.

You will be expected to be able to talk about anything that you have mentioned in your application, and perhaps to explain why you have made certain decisions, or what achievement has given you the greatest satisfaction. In forming your answers, think about the key skills and requirements of the role you are applying for, so that you describe your experiences in a way that is the most relevant possible.

Technical

If you have applied for a job or a course which requires specific technical knowledge (e.g. in engineering or IT), it is likely that at some stage in the selection process you will be asked some technical questions, or have a separate technical interview. Questions may focus on what you are doing in your final-year project and why you are approaching it as you are, or on real or hypothetical technical situations. Be prepared to illustrate your knowledge to the full, but, equally, to admit to what you don't know.

Case Studies

Used largely by consulting firms, these can take a number of forms, from straightforward brainteasers (“How many telephone boxes are there in New York?” or “Why are manhole covers round?”) to the analysis of a hypothetical business problem. In all cases you will be evaluated on how you analyze the problem, how you identify the key issues, how you pursue a particular line of thinking, and whether you can develop and present an appropriately-structured response, possibly also using a framework (e.g. 3C – Customer, Company, Competition) for organising your thoughts. There is no single absolutely right way to solve each problem, and how you reach your solution will probably be more important than the solution itself.

5.12 Telephonic interview

They are **real interviews** held over the phone rather than face-to-face. You will usually be interviewed by a member of the graduate recruitment or HR team.

A telephone interview will usually be given to candidates who have passed **the online application** and/or **psychometric test** stage of the graduate recruitment process and are used to sift out applicants to be invited to a face-to-face interview or assessment centre.

You are more likely to have a telephone interview with one of the large corporate recruiters than with a small or medium sized company. Telephone interviews are used by all kinds of employers – banks, accountancy and law firms, consultancies, retailers, manufacturing companies etc

Companies that use telephone interviews include Tesco, HSBC, Corus, BT, Lloyds of London, Shell, Glaxo Smith Kline. They are especially common for **sales-related jobs**, such as recruitment consultancy and particularly (surprise!) telesales, where verbal communication skills are paramount.

Advantages of telephone interviews

For the employer:

- They are **time and cost-effective** - most last about 20-25 minutes.
- They **test your verbal communication skills** and telephone technique.

For Candidates:

- **You can refer (quickly!) to your application form**, take notes – even hold on to your teddy bear for moral support.
- **You don't need to dress up** or smarten up.
- **You don't need to spend time traveling** to interview or wonder if the employer will pay your expenses.

Disadvantages of telephone interviews (from the perspective of the Candidate)

- **You can't see the interviewer** to gauge their response.
- **Tension** – you never know when an employer might call to interview you.
- **They can seem to go very quickly**, without giving you much time to think about your answers - so be well prepared!

Tips

- **Keep a copy of your application** and information on the company handy, plus a pen and notepad to take notes. Have your **laptop turned on** if your application is on this.
- Before the call, make a list of your USP's (**unique selling points**): the things that make you better in some ways than most of the other people who will be applying.
- **Don't just read out your notes** as this will sound stilted.



- **It's useful to have a glass of water to hand during a phone interview** (but move the phone away from your mouth when you swallow ...). You will be doing a lot of talking and you don't want your mouth to dry up at a crucial moment!
- **Smile when you dial!** (and, more importantly, when you speak): it really does make a difference to your tone of voice.
- Although the interviewer can't see you, **you may find it easier to come over in a "professional" manner** if you are sitting at a desk or table rather than lounging in bed.
- In a face to face interview, you **show that you are listening via non-verbal signals** such as nodding your head. Over the phone you have to show this by the occasional "OK", "uh-huh", "I see", "I understand", "yes" or similar interjections.
- **Listen very carefully** to the interviewer and try to answer with a **lively tone of voice**. Speak clearly and not too fast.
- **Reflect back what the speaker is saying in other words**. This shows you're listening carefully and checks you understand. It is often the most useful way of giving positive feedback to someone: "I hear what you're saying and take it seriously". You can't keep saying "uh-huh" or "yes" for too long without it sounding false.
- Immediately after the interview, **write down the questions you were asked** and any ways in which you could have improved your responses.

5.13 Interview through videoconferencing

A video conference interview is an ideal component of a long-distance job search. It minimizes travel and other expenses while giving an employer the opportunity to meet with a candidate using a human-like interaction. Video conference interviews can connect many participants who are in different locations. Given the number of remote working relationships and the advances that technology brings to the workplace, video conference interviews may connect job-seekers to companies they may not have previously considered.

Preparation

A video conference interview is like any other face-to-face interview. The only difference is that you're using technology to bridge the distance between you and the interviewer. Prepare by practicing interview questions and answers at least several days before your scheduled interview. Don't skimp on your preparation just because you aren't going to be in the same room as the interviewer. In addition, test your computer's webcam to ensure that it's working properly. An effective way to rehearse your interview responses is to practice with your webcam running. That way, you'll not only see your reflection, but you'll be able to gauge whether your office seat is positioned correctly so the interviewer can see you clearly.

Appearance

Wear an interview suit, and not just the jacket and tie or the jacket and blouse. If you have to reach across your desk or stand up to retrieve something beyond arm's length, you don't want the interviewer to sense that you're not taking the video conference interview seriously by dressing only from the torso up. Dark colors are best for video conferences. Wear a dark suit and pastel shirt or blouse; stark white shirts or blouses are not as appealing on camera. Men should wear a tie and women should wear a comfortably fitting blouse with a modest neckline. As you would in a face-to-face interview, refrain from wearing too much makeup, too much jewelry, loud prints and stripes, or anything else that's distracting. Being on camera will only magnify distractions.

Equipment

Turn on your computer and webcam long before your interview in case there are any glitches you need to resolve before the interview starts. Do a test run immediately before the interview starts, and double check your microphone and speakers to be sure they're in working order.

Materials

Have a copy of your resume at your fingertips, your email box up and running, and easy access to electronic versions of your resume and reference files. You may have to quickly

email the interviewer a copy of your resume or your list of references; you don't want to leave her hanging while you boot up. Keep a notepad and pen or pencil handy to take brief notes during the interview; however, avoid rearranging papers or tapping your pen during the meeting, because those can be very distracting noises that a microphone will magnify.

Etiquette:

- Hesitate slightly: Be prepared for a very slight delay in receiving the audio and video. This takes a few moments to get used to. Try and get into the habit of hesitating slightly before speaking to assure that the other person has finished speaking, and again when you complete what you have to say so that other participants know that you are done.
- Speak clearly and listen carefully.
- Each participant in the videoconference should introduce themselves, and state their location if there are various offices involved, at the beginning of the interview or anytime a new participant joins the session. Jot down this information so you can use your interviewers' names during the interview, and address your questions and comments as appropriate.
- Videoconference interviews also differ from in-person meetings in that there is no opportunity for a handshake to begin or end the session. Therefore, to wrap things up, summarize your main points, thank the interviewers for their time, let them know you are interested in the job, and ask about next steps. Pay attention to the time without obviously glancing at your watch and follow the interviewer's cues that the session is drawing to a close.

Body Language:

- Look straight into the monitor at the interviewer. It will give the impression that you are looking into their eyes.
- Most people find that it only takes a few minutes to get comfortable in a Videoconference Interview. Focus on the person you are talking to and soon you will forget the camera is running. Avoid excessive motion. Rocking in your chair or rapid arm movements will appear

as a blur to the other person. Don't be unnaturally stiff however. Relax just as you would if you were speaking to someone in person.

- Speak naturally. The microphones will pick up your audio without you having to raise your voice. There is no need to shout.
- Show your energy and enthusiasm. Remember that the camera will stay static. Image and voices are all you have to make yourself interesting and stand out. Don't forget to smile!.

Review Questions and Assessment

5.0 Interview skills

Imagine that you are going to sit for an interview for tech Mahindra for the position of a middle level manager. Along with other frequently asked questions, prepare answers for the following set of questions.

- Tell me the time you took the lead on a project .what did you do?
 - Describe the worst project you worked on.
 - Tell me a time you had to stick to a decision you had made even though it made you very unpopular.
 - Give an example of something very innovative that you have done, which made a difference in the workplace.
 - What happened the last time you missed the deadline of a project.
2. How will you combat your nervousness before and during an interview?
 3. Discuss the interview process and the various stages that a candidate has to face for getting a job.

Job Application

Assuming that you have the required qualifications and skills for the posts advertised, draft a job application letter in response to the following classifieds:

World Mega soft Pvt. Ltd. Mumbai, seeks talented and enthusiastic software Engineers and Software Architects for its new branch office in Gurgaon. The candidates having 3-5 years of experience possessing expertise in SDP in Services, provisioning, Charging/ Billing, Fraud Management, Revenue Assurance, NMS, SIP,IMS, IPTV may apply. The candidates are required to have competence in Java, XML, RMI, C++, Visual Basic and Unix/ Solaris. The candidates must have excellent communication abilities and outstanding customer facing skills.

Group Discussion

1. Read and prepare arguments for the following topics.

- To lead a successful life one should live in a hostel for atleast a year.
- There is no right or wrong in life.
- Peace cannot be attained through violent means.
- Children of today are not the same as those of yesteryears.
- Corruption is necessary evil in a democratic system.
- Television and computers are stealing the warmth and creativity of people.

2. Participate in a GD on any of the topics given below.

- Sky is the limit.
- It is easier to speak than listen.
- Aggression has become a way of life.
- History has no relevance in school studies.
- A borderless world is the need of the hour.
- Vegetarian food is better for both physical and mental health.
- The 20-20 matches have killed the spirit of cricket.

- The internet has increased crimes all over the globe.
- It is better to be happy than successful in life.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

1. Assume that you have associated yourself with Samsung as its sales executive. The company has asked you to give a presentation on the latest mobile set launched by it, to a group of potential customers. Write the text of your speech, discussing the essential features of this mobile set and describing its functions, utility , and added features.
2. “PowerPoint slides are used not just for decorative purposes; they must be functional.” Discuss and substantiate.

UNIT-5

Business letter

1.0 Objective

Business letter will illustrate your commitment to the objective at hand, as you demonstrate the proper techniques of writing a skillful business letter. A letter must be in the desired format, showing a dedication to the requirements, and an understanding that words and letters can make a difference in the lives of others. Your words have meaning, and you need to choose them wisely. Business letters can be informational, persuasive, motivational, or promotional.

1.1 Introduction

Now-a-days business operations are not restricted to any locality, state or nation. Today production takes place in one area but consumption takes place everywhere. Since the businessmen as well as customers live in far off places they don't have sufficient time to contact each other personally. Thus, there arises the need for writing letters. In the past the situation was not so. Business letters were not essential in olden days. But now the importance of letters has increased because of vast expansion of business, increase in demand as well as supply of goods.

1.2 Essentials of effective correspondence

- **Help in maintaining proper relationship**

Now-a-days business activities are not confined to any one area or locality. The businessmen as well as customers are scattered throughout the country. Thus, there is a need to maintain proper relationship among them by using appropriate means of communication. Here business letters play an important role. The customers can write letters to the businessman seeking information about products and businessmen also supply various information to customers. This helps them to carry on business on national and international basis.

- **Create and maintain goodwill**

Sometimes business letters are written to create and enhance goodwill. Businessmen at times send letters to enquire about complaints and suggestions of their customers. They also send letters to inform the customers about the availability of a new product, clearance sale etc. All this results in cordial relations with the customers, which enhances the goodwill of the business.

- **Help in expansion of business**

Business requires information regarding competing products, prevailing prices, promotion, market activities, etc. If the trader has to run from place to place to get information, he will end up doing nothing. It will simply result in loss of time. But through business letters, he can make all enquiries about the products and the markets. He can also receive orders from different countries and, thus enhance sales.

1.3 Elements of good letter

The most important element of writing a good letter is your ability to identify and write to your audience. If you are addressing your letter to the department of human resources, avoid using highly technical terms that only engineers would understand. Even if your letter is addressed to an engineering company, chances are that the personnel in human resources does not have an engineering background.

The next element is to make sure you present your objective in a clear and concise manner. Don't be vague about your objective; most people will not have the patience to sit there and guess at the meaning of your letter. Most don't have the time to read a long-winded letter either, so stick to one page and just get to the point without going into unnecessary details.

Another important element to remember is to remain professional. Even if you are writing a letter of complaint, remain polite and courteous. Simply state the problem(s) along with any other relevant information and be sure to avoid threats and slander.

Remember to introduce yourself if your audience is unaware of who you are.

In most cases, the business letter will be the first impression that you make on someone. Though business writing has become less formal over time, you should still take great care that your letter's content is clear and that you have proofread it carefully.

Business writing should be clear and concise. Take care, however, that your document does not turn out as an endless series of short, choppy sentences. Keep in mind also that "concise" does not have to mean "blunt"—you still need to think about your tone and the audience for whom you are writing.

Strive to be exact and specific, avoiding vagueness, ambiguity, and platitudes. If there are industry- or field-specific concepts or terminology that are relevant to the task at hand, use them in a manner that will convey your competence and experience. Avoid any language that your audience may not understand. Your finished piece of writing should indicate how you meet the requirements you've listed and answer any questions raised in the description or prompt.

1.4 Layout of a business letter

The essential parts of a business letter are as follows:

1. **Heading** -The heading of a business letter usually contains the name and postal address of the business, E-mail address, Web-site address, Telephone Number, Fax Number, Trade Mark or logo of the business (if any)

2. **Date** - The date is normally written on the right hand side corner after the heading as the day, month and years. Some examples are 28thFeb., 2003 or Feb. 28, 2003.

3. **Reference**- It indicates letter number and the department from where the letter is being sent and the year. It helps in future reference. This reference number is given on the left hand

corner after the heading. For example, we can write reference number as AB/FADept./2003/27.

4. Inside address - This includes the name and full address of the person or the firm to whom the letter is to be sent. This is written on the left hand side of the sheet below the reference number. Letters should be addressed to the responsible head e.g., the Secretary, the Principal, the Chairman, the Manager etc. Example:

M/S Bharat Fans
Bharat Complex
Hyderabad Industrial Complex
Hyderabad
Andhra Pradesh - 500032

The Chief Manager,
State Bank of India
Utkal University Campus
Bhubaneswar,
Orissa- 751007

5. Subject - It is a statement in brief, that indicates the matter to which the letter relates. It attracts the attention of the receiver immediately and helps him to know quickly what the letter is about. For example,

Subject: Your order No. C317/8 dated 12th March 2003.

Subject: Enquiry about Samsung television

Subject: Fire Insurance policy

6. Salutation - This is placed below the inside address. It is usually followed by a comma (,). Various forms of salutation are:

Sir/Madam:

For official and formal correspondence

Dear Sir/Madam: For addressing an individual

Dear Sirs/Dear Madam: For addressing a firm or company.

7. Body of the letter - This comes after salutation. This is the main part of the letter and it contains the actual message of the sender. It is divided into three parts.

(a) Opening part - It is the introductory part of the letter. In this part, attention of the reader should be drawn to the previous correspondence, if any. For example - with reference to your letter no. 326 dated 12th March 2003, I would like to draw your attention towards the new brand of television.

(b) Main part - This part usually contains the subject matter of the letter. It should be precise and written in clear words.

(c) Concluding Part - It contains a statement of the sender's intentions, hopes or expectations concerning the next step to be taken. Further, the sender should always look forward to getting a positive response. At the end, terms like Thanking you, With regards, With warm regards may be used.

8. Complimentary close - It is merely a polite way of ending a letter. It must be in accordance with the salutation. For example:

Salutation

Complimentary close

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| i. Dear Sir/Dear Madam Y | ours faithfully |
| ii. Dear Mr. Raj Y | ours sincerely |
| iii. My Dear Akbar Y | ours very sincerely (express very informal relations.) |

8. Signature - It is written in ink, immediately below the complimentary close. As far as possible, the signature should be legible. The name of the writer should be typed immediately below the signature. The designation is given below the typed name. Where no letterhead is in use, the name of the company too could be included below the designation of the writer. For example:

Yours faithfully
 For M/S Acron Electricals
 (Signature)
 SUNIL KUMAR
 Partner

1.5 Type of Business Letters

Business letters are written for the fulfillment of several purposes. The purpose may be to enquire about a product to know its price and quality, availability, etc. This purpose is served if you write a letter of enquiry to the supplier. After receiving your letter the supplier may send you details about the product as per your query. If satisfied, you may give order for supply of goods as per your requirement. After receiving the items, if you find that the product is defective or damaged, you may lodge a complaint. These are the few instances in which business correspondence takes place. Let us learn the details about some important business letters.

i. Business Enquiry Letter

Sometimes prospective buyers want to know the details of the goods which they want to buy, like quality, quantity, price, mode of delivery and payment, etc. They may also ask for a sample. The letter written to sellers with one or more of the above purposes is known as an enquiry letter.

Points to be kept in mind while writing letters of enquiry-

- Letters of enquiry should clearly state the information required, which may be asking for a price list or a sample.
- Write specifically about the design, size, quantity, quality, etc. about the product or service in which the buyer is interested.
- The period or the date, till which information is required, may also be mentioned.

ii. Quotation Letter

After receiving the letter of enquiry from a prospective buyer, the sellers supply the relevant information by writing a letter that is called quotation letter. These letters are written keeping in view the information asked for like price list, mode of payment, discount to be allowed etc. Businessman should reply to the inquiries carefully and promptly.

iii. Order Letter

We have studied about letters of enquiry and reply to enquiry i.e., quotation letter. The prospective buyer after receiving the reply to his enquiry letter may decide to place an order with that business house which offers goods at minimum price and at favourable terms and conditions. Letters written by a buyer to the seller giving the order to purchase the goods is called order letter.

iv. Complaint Letter

A complaint letter is written when the purchaser does not find the goods up to his satisfaction. It is normally written by the purchaser when he receives wrong, defective or damaged goods or receives incorrect quantity of goods. It can also be written directly to the transit authority when the goods are damaged in transit. Thus, we may define a letter of complaint as the letter that draws the attention of the supplier or any other party on account of supply of defective or damaged goods.

Points to be considered while writing a complaint letter-

- Complaint letters should be written immediately after receiving the defective goods.
- Mistakes as well as difficulty due to mistake should be mentioned clearly
- Proposal to correct the mistakes should be made
- Suggestions on how the complaint should be dealt with, i.e., mention of compensation, replacement, discount, cancellation etc, should be made.
- Mention period in which the corrective action should be taken
- Request to be careful in future.

v. Recovery Letter

The letter written by the seller for collection of money for the goods supplied to the buyer is called recovery letter. The aim of recovery letter is to collect money without annoying the customers. The letter should include information regarding the amount of arrears, argument for payment, and last date for payment. The language of recovery letter should be polite, so that the customer is not offended and future transactions with him are not adversely affected.

Sample business letter

Mrs. Sabitha Gouri
22/72 Golden Tower
Gandgi Road
Hyderabad 5300264

May 26, 2014

The Tiny Tots Toy Company

156 Pyramid Way
College Park,
Mumbai7420115

Dear Customer Service Representative:

I recently purchased one of your Tiny Tents (Model # 47485) for my three-year old. Unfortunately, after viewing the components that came with the product, I discovered that four of the parts were missing. Also, the instructions that came with the tent are incomplete. Both of these situations have resulted in the tent remaining unassembled and unacceptable as a toy for my daughter.

I am writing to request replacements for the missing parts, and a copy of the full set of assembly directions for the model I purchased. If reasonable arrangements are not made within ten business days, I will return the tent to the store I purchased it from and expect a full refund. To assist you in processing my request, I am including a copy of my sales receipt and a list of the missing parts.

I have purchased other toys manufactured by your company in the past, and have always been impressed with the quality and selection Tiny Tots has made available to its customers. I sincerely hope this is a one-time incident, and that any future purchases I make will live up to the standard my family has come to expect from your company.

Yours Sincerely

Signature
Mrs. Sabitha Gouri

1.6 The Seven Cs of Business Letter writing

1. Correctness

At the time of encoding, if the encoder has comprehensive knowledge about the decoder of message, it makes the communication an ease. The encoder should know the status, knowledge and educational background of the decoder. Correctness means:

- Use the right level of language
- Correct use of grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Accuracy in stating facts and figures

2. Clarity

Clarity demands the use of simple language and easy sentence structure in composing the message. When there is clarity in presenting ideas, it's easy for the receiver/decoder to grasp the meaning being conveyed by the sender/encoder.

3. Conciseness

A concise message saves time of both the sender and the receiver. Conciseness, in a business message, can be achieved by avoiding wordy expressions and repetition. Using brief and to the point sentences, including relevant material makes the message concise. Achieving conciseness does not mean to lose completeness of message.

4. Completeness

By completeness means the message must bear all the necessary information to bring the response you desire. The sender should answer all the questions and with facts and figures. and when desirable, go for extra details.

5. Consideration

Consideration demands to put oneself in the place of receiver while composing a message. It refers to the use of You attitude, emphasizes positive pleasant facts, visualizing reader's problems, desires, emotions and his response.

6. Concreteness

Being definite, vivid and specific rather than vague, obscure and general leads to concreteness of the message. Facts and figures being presented in the message should be specific.

7. Courtesy

In business, almost everything starts and ends in courtesy. Courtesy means not only thinking about receiver but also valuing his feelings. Much can be achieved by using polite words and gestures, being appreciative, thoughtful, tactful, and showing respect to the receiver. Courtesy builds goodwill.

Memoranda

2.1 Meaning of Memoranda

A memo (or memorandum, meaning "reminder") is normally used for communicating policies, procedures, or related official business within an organization. It is often written from a one-to-all perspective (like mass communication), broadcasting a message to an audience, rather than a one-on-one, interpersonal communication. It may also be used to update a team on activities for a given project, or to inform a specific group within a

company of an event, action, or observance. A short message or record used for internal communication in a business.

2.2 Letter Vs Memo

Business memos are internal documents sent to employees to convey information about the company, while business letters are external communiqués, often related to sales activities or customer needs or to query a vendor or government agency. The formatting is different for both, and learning how to properly create each will help you more effectively communicate your message. Memos are often sent to notify staff members about a meeting or new policy the company feels is important enough to warrant more than word-of-mouth dissemination. Memos are often informal, with less attention to structure, formatting, grammar and quality of paper. Letters are more formal documents sent to people outside your company. They can include requests for information or clarification from a government agency; responses to customer complaints or queries; or pitches or proposals to vendors, customers or the media. Letters are usually put on high-quality paper, rather than copy paper, and are carefully proofread to avoid even the smallest mistake.

- A letter is a short or long message that is sent by one person to another while a memo is a short message that is sent by a person to another.
- A letter is more formal and contains more information while a memo is informal and is very short.
- A memo is more concise and to the point as compared to a letter.
- A letter is exchanged between businesses and their clients while a memo is exchanged between individuals within an organization.
- A memo usually has a header that states where it is from and who it is intended for while a letter may or may not have this feature.

2.3 Structure of a Memo

Begin a memo with this standard heading:

TO: This is where the name of the recipient goes, along with their title in the company.

FROM: the name of the sender, his/her position, and if the memo is printed, the sender's initials.

DATE: the date the memo is sent.

SUBJECT or RE: the title of the memo. It mentions the situation the memo will address.

2. Next, the memo's content generally follows this structure:

- a. Situation/Problem-** an introduction or the purpose of the memo followed by a description of the issue at hand.
- b. Solution/ Action–** the steps needed to resolve the problem and how they are to be carried out.
- c. Closing-** ends with a polite expression; also, provide a contact number where the recipient can reach you and offer to answer any questions that may arise.

Sample

MEMORANDUM

TO: Suresh Agarwal, Store Manager
FROM: Deepak Dutta, Assistant Manager
DATE: March 18, 2014
RE: Dress Code Issues

A number of our clients have expressed their concern over the way certain sales associates are dressed. Clients complain their clothing does not reflect our store's good image and quality of service, and instead makes them look trashy and unprofessional.

I think it is necessary for us to establish and enforce a dress code for all our store employees. Some of the items that can no longer be considered appropriate are excessively baggy pants and T-shirts, low cut blouses, and any garment that exposes the chest and back.

I would like to discuss this issue with you at your convenience, and also answer any questions you may have. Please contact me at XXX-XXXX.

2.4 Writing strategies of a memo

Step 1

Send your memo only to those individuals who need to see it. For a communications strategy, you will want to include your management team, sales, and anyone who has been, or will be, involved in the communications planning process. If it is confidential, you will want to both limit the audience to only those who need the information, and clearly note that the contents are confidential at the top of the memo.

Step 2

State the purpose of your memo in your opening paragraph. Make your opening statement direct so that the reader clearly understands why he should pay attention. For example, you might write: "This memo details the communication strategy as determined by the task force selected by the agency last month."

Step 3

Write the context of the memo, or the background information. For example, it might be that the communications team had been meeting for several weeks and identified a key objective but could not come up with an agreed-upon strategy.

Step 4

Write your task. This is the action that was taken. In this case, it might be that you were tasked with assembling a smaller group, including several people from outside the communications department, to develop some strategies and solicit feedback.

Step 5

Write your summary segment. If your task was to generate a strategy, your summary would reveal the communications strategy that you, and any others involved, have developed. For example, your strategy might be to initiate public relations activities using a combination of agency resources and in-house personnel to reach your agreed-upon objectives.

Step 6

Write your discussion to provide details that support the summary. You may include reminders that the chosen strategy needs to be feasible, should be the one most likely to be effective, and that the purpose of a strategy is to achieve the stated objectives with the resources available. Include alternative strategies that were reviewed, along with their pros and cons or an explanation of why they were discarded.

Step 7

Write your closing segment. This is where you list action items or offer to be a resource if there are questions or you want to set up a follow-up meeting for further discussion. You also want to note here if there are attachments with the memo. For example, you might include notes from the strategy meeting, or a copy of the communications plan that includes the objective and key messages -- items that are crucial in determining the communications strategy. You may also indicate that selecting tactics appropriate to the strategy will be the next step and give a time frame and responsible party for that.

Notice and Circular

3.1 Difference between Notice and Circular

Notices: It is a form of intra departmental communication. Informational messages are retransmitted to the members of an organization by putting them up as notices for everyone to read. It is generally displayed on the Notice Board of the organization and everyone is expected to go through its contents. In case of legal notice, it is sent by post.

In an organization, the purpose of notice is for :

- 1) Inviting everyone for a meeting.
- 2) Regarding a new rule to be initiated or followed.
- 3) Regarding events to be held.
- 4) Regarding a holiday.
- 5) Regarding deadlines for any particular job assigned.

Circular: It is a written formal document used for inter departmental communication. It serves the same purpose as a notice and may be written for the same reason. The only difference between the two is that the Notice is displayed at one place, whereas the Circular is widely circulated among the members concerned. Usually the signature of the reader is taken as a proof to ensure that the information has been transmitted.

3.1 Salient feature of a Circular Letter

A circular letter is a type of letter that is written to share a particular piece of information with a very large audience. The purpose of a circular letter is very different from a personal letter, which is only used to send a piece of information to one or maybe two people. The main purpose of a circular letter is to announce or reveal new information or perhaps to clarify certain policies in a political situation. Below are some steps on how to write a circular letter.

Step 1.

The first thing to do when you are trying to write a circular letter is to make sure that you know your target audience well. For this type of letter, the readership is going to be very broad so it can be quite difficult to figure out what level of knowledge your audience has. For this situation, you should think about the majority of your readers, and tailor your letter towards them.

Step 2.

You then need to think about the difference between external and internal circular letters. An external letter would be circulated amongst clients or the general public. Whereas an internal circular letter would be circulated amongst a larger group, however it is limited to that group.

Step 3

When it comes to actually writing the letter, you should think about the exact tone and voice that is suitable for the letter that you are writing. For example, only use a stern tone when entirely necessary such as addressing tardiness but not appropriate for a letter to clients.

Step 4

Be careful with the content of your letter. Make sure that you only write about information that has been authorized to be distributed. Because some circular letters will be distributed to a large audience, it would not be wise to disclose confidential contact information.

3.2 Situations requiring Circular letter

Circular letter is written for the following business objectives:

The primary objective of circular letter is to distribute information relating to business. Circular letter usually circulates the following business information:

- Launching a new business
- Expansion of existing business in any new field
- Changing the nature of business
- Opening or closing branches of the business
- Changing the name of the business
- Shifting the address of the business
- Discharging any officer, executive, agent or representative of the business
- Employing any new business executive or agent
- Admission of new partner
- Retirement or death of any existing partner
- Cancellation of any business deal or contract
- Entering into any new business contract
- News regarding increase or decrease of price
- News regarding trademarks, registered brand etc.
- Amalgamation of some business units and
- Winding up of business partly or wholly

Sample Circular Letter

To : All Employees
From : Dinesh Paresh, MD
Date : October 3, 2013

Our success to become a part of Altair Industries last year is something that we need to review in the hope that we can enthuse ourselves in setting our next goals in future. I herewith would like to share with you my thought and plans about the area I believe are important to all of us in years ahead.

Productivity

I am sure that you are all aware of the effort throughout our country to improve productivity. Over the past year, we have made heavy capital investment to improve our position. Productivity, however, depends not only on the acquisition of more efficient equipment but also on the commitment of each employee to see creative ways using resources most efficiently.

Marketing and Sales

You may be aware that our *Target Sales* program has helped us improve our sales by over 15 percent. Although that result is gratifying, it is not large enough to offset the week's position

in which we found ourselves two years ago. Therefore, I am setting a goal of 25 percent increase in sales for this next year.

I hope you share the excitement I feel as we implement these plans. Indeed, you must actively participate if they are to have a chance for success.

Agenda and Minutes

4.1 Notification of Meeting

Memorandum

To: Ashok Sudh

From: Joy Nigam, Team Player

Subject: New group project

Date: 4 April 2014

The group project is about to be launched. A meeting will be held on 10 April 2014 at 10am in meeting room 2 to decide what our starting point is.

Please circulate all Concept Study Reports prior to the meeting and come prepared both to discuss these and to volunteer for individual tasks.

Agenda

Group Leader Start-up Meeting

Date: 10 April 2014

Time: 2 PM

Venue: Conference Room

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Minutes of Last Meeting**
- 3. Matters Arising**

- 4. Planning**
- 5. Co-operation and Team work**
- 6. Research and Testing**
- 7. Evaluating**
- 8. Any Other Business**
- 9. Date and Time of next Meeting**

4.2 Techniques of compiling Minutes

What is the purpose of minutes?

Minutes are written as an accurate record of a group's meetings, and a record decisions taken. They are useful because people can forget what was decided at a meeting if there is no written record of the proceedings. Minutes can also inform people who were not at the meeting about what took place.

The following is a guide for making this task easier:

- Ensure that all of the essential elements are noted, such as type of meeting, name of the organization, date and time, venue, name of the chair or facilitator, main topics and the time of adjournment. For formal and corporate meetings include approval of previous minutes, and all resolutions.
- Prepare an outline based on the agenda ahead of time, and leave plenty of white space for notes. By having the topics already written down, you can jump right on to a new topic without pause.
- Prepare a list of expected attendees and check off the names as people enter the room. Or, you can pass around an attendance sheet for everyone to sign as the meeting starts.
- To be sure about who said what, make a map of the seating arrangement, and make sure to ask for introductions of unfamiliar people.
- Don't make the mistake of recording every single comment. Concentrate on getting the gist of the discussion and taking enough notes to summarize it later. Think in terms of issues discussed, major points raised and decisions taken.
- Use whatever recording method is comfortable for you, a notepad, a laptop computer, a tape recorder, a steno pad, or shorthand. It might be a good idea to make sound recordings of important meetings as a backup to your notes.
- If you are an active participant in the meeting, be prepared! Study the issues to be discussed and have your questions ready ahead of time. If you have to concentrate on grasping the issues while you are making your notes, they won't make any sense to you later.
- Don't wait too long to type up the minutes, especially while your memory is fresh. Be sure to have the minutes approved by the chair or facilitator before distributing them to the attendees.

- Don't be intimidated by the prospect of taking minutes. Concise and coherent minutes are the mark of a professional. The very process of recording minutes can give you a deeper understanding of the issues faced by your organization along with ability to focus on what's important.

Remember that minutes should capture the three points below – nothing more nothing less:

- What was decided
- What was accomplished
- What was agreed and actions for the attendees

The format for your minutes should be consistent and ideally you should be working from one template. If your company does not have a branded template you should suggest this to your manager and design something for them, a simple word template with the following information will suffice:

- The name of the Committee meeting
- The date, time and location of the meeting
- The attendees
- The apologies
- The name of the minute taker
- Each of the agenda items underlined and listed with details on what was decided, what was accomplished and the action points to take forward (with the initials of the person responsible for the action).
- Any other business
- The date of the next meeting

4.3 Key Language Points

1. There are only three main areas of the conversation that you have to capture in your minutes so try to avoid all of the chat and 'he said, she said' dialogue. Unless it is relevant to the key agenda points leave this dialogue out of the minutes.
2. While preparing minutes try to remain neutral when typing up your notes. If an argument took place during the meeting or someone stormed out of the room you wouldn't necessarily put this detail in the minutes at all.
3. Past tense in the 3rd person. This is the grammar to use when writing minutes, for example: *Raghav Ranjan agreed to distribute the minutes as soon as possible*. It is also recommend to use initials rather than full names to save some time but this is a style choice and may not be suitable for all companies.
4. If a report or paper has been circulated during the meeting there is no need to write any of this detail in the minutes. Simply state that the paper was noted by the Committee and any action points arising from the discussion.
5. Proofread your work once finished. Try to get everything on the page as quickly as possible and then go back a day later to tweak the wording and sentence structure. The minutes will probably be proofread by at least two other people before they are finally circulated so be prepared that some of your work will be changed anyway.

5.0 Seminars and Conferences

5.1 Significance

The focus of a seminar is to educate a specific group of people on a particular subject; for example, a seminar for medical professionals may revolve around teaching a new treatment method. The participants must come away from the seminar with the knowledge, so attendees' progress sometimes is tracked individually or as a team.

Conferences focus on a specific subject or field of subjects, but the goal is not necessarily to educate. Conferences are typically a means to showcase new theories, methods and techniques in a particular field or professional group.

Seminars have programs that are similar to those taught in classrooms and even small, focused presentations for learning. Attendees must attend particular seminars and typically have the option to sign up for other related discussions.

Conferences have various offerings. The programs and presentations relate to the main theme, but talks, group discussions and even debates may be available. Attendees either sign up for specific activities or follow the presentations on a set schedule provided by the organizers.

Conference" also refers to meeting for lectures of discussion, whereas a seminar is a meeting on a specific subject, or a meeting of university or college students for study or discussion with an academic supervisor. Conference has no such specific meaning.

5.2 Planning and Preparation

Planning Considerations for a Conference or Seminar

- 1 Set SMART objectives
- 2 Estimates / budgets
- 3 Agree overall budget performance requirement
- 4 Agree human resources, roles and responsibilities
- 5 Agree areas for subject focus

6 Subject developments

- 6.1 Define target audience
- 6.2 Define audience needs
- 6.3 Brainstorm / research potential themes
- 6.4 Agree theme and title
- 6.5 Review competing activities
- 6.6 Agree potential dates
- 6.7 Research / testing

7 Budgeting

- 7.1 Identify deliverables and timings
- 7.2 Venue budget
- 7.3 Entertainment / social event budget
- 7.4 Speaker budget
- 7.5 Promotional budget
- 7.6 Operations budget
- 7.7 Staff accommodation, travel and expenses
- 7.8 Delegate revenue
- 7.9 Sponsorship revenue
- 7.10 Advertising revenue
- 7.11 Exhibition revenue
- 7.12 Cost – benefit analysis
- 7.13 Decision to go ahead

8 Event Venue

- 8.1 Research potential locations and facilities
- 8.2 Shortlist
- 8.3 Select preferred location
- 8.4 Refreshments and catering requirements
- 8.5 Accommodation requirements
- 8.6 Hospitality and check-in
- 8.7 Billing arrangements
- 8.8 Audio – visual requirements
- 8.9 Seating planning
- 8.10 Stage layout planning
- 8.11 Contract with venue
- 8.12 Date for confirming delegate numbers
- 8.13 Confirm delegate special requirements

9 Event speakers, session chairs

- 9.1 Research potential speakers and session chairs
- 9.2 Shortlist / call for papers
- 9.3 Approach speakers and chairs
- 9.4 Confirm availability of speakers and chairs
- 9.5 Finalisation of speakers, chairs and programme
- 9.6 Confirmation of event, travel and accommodation details
- 9.7 Preparation of session briefs
- 9.8 Send PowerPoint presentation templates
- 9.9 Receive copies of presentations
- 9.10 Agree meeting and greeting procedures / speakers' lounge

11 Promotion

- 11.1 Prepare and agree event branding and promotion plan
- 11.2 Agree response procedures
- 11.3 Prepare promotional materials
- 11.4 Prepare PowerPoint slide templates for presentations
- 11.5 Communications to potential delegates
- 11.6 Advertising
- 11.7 Website
- 11.8 Press release / press pack distributed

- 11.9 Telemarketing follow up to key potential delegates
- 11.10 Telephone follow up to key media
- 11.11 Agree contents and design of delegate packs

13 Event administration

- 13.1 Agree booking and enquiry processes
- 13.2 Agree accounting and enquiry processes
- 13.3 Confirmation letters to delegates
- 13.3 Joining instructions to delegates
- 13.4 Produce delegate badges
- 13.5 Produce delegate evaluation form
- 13.6 Agree staff planning
- 13.7 Staff briefings

14 Post-event activity

- 14.1 Thank-you letters
- 14.2 Contract settlement
- 14.3 Promotion / communications

5.3 Symposium

A symposium is a formal gathering in an academic setting where participants are experts in their fields. These experts present or deliver their opinions or viewpoints on a chosen topic of discussion. It would be correct to label a symposium as a small scale conference as the number of delegates is smaller. There are the usual discussions on the chosen topic after the experts have presented their speeches. The chief characteristic of a symposium is that it covers a single topic or subject and all the lectures given by experts are completed in a single day.

Symposium is a bit casual in nature, and there is not much pressure on the delegates to perform or present lectures in the best possible manner as is the case in other academic events. There are lunch breaks, tea, snacks etc to break the ice further.

6.0 Correspondence with Bank

Letters written by customer to bank

Letter from a customer to a Bank for opening an account

The bank allows a customer to open an account only after verifying his identity, signature and after introduction. Writing a letter a customer can reduce his trips to bank and get the details and forms needed for opening an account. The letter should include these details:

1. The desire to open an account and type of account
2. Details like name, address, profession etc.
3. Details like other formalities like introduction
4. Ask about rates of interest and various services
5. Other documents needed for account opening
6. Type of deposit account needed

Letter from customer to a bank asking for overdraft facility

Overdraft means the amount drawn above the credit balance. In times of emergencies, a bank provides overdraft facility to a longstanding, financially sound customer after coming to an agreement. The customer has to pledge his assets and pay an interest to the bank. It is treated as a temporary loan and is issued after the bank inspects the assets. Overdraft can be drawn one or many times upto the limit fixed.

Letter for stopping payment

The customer can stop payment to a cheque by writing to the bank. If the cheque is issued to a wrong payee or for a higher amount or if a duly filled cheque is lost, payment can be stopped by immediately writing to the bank. The letter should include these details:

1. Whether the cheque is lost
2. The cheque number, account number, type of account
3. Name of the payee
4. Whether it is a crossed cheque, a bearer cheque or a self cheque

Letter from a customer to a bank regarding non-payment (dishonour of a cheque)

The bank makes payment to a customer if there is sufficient balance in the account and there is no mistake in the drawing of the cheque. Issuing a check without sufficient balance in the account is a punishable offence. Whenever a situation arises that causes the bank to refuse payment to a cheque, the bank returns it with the memorandum mentioning the reason for it. This is called the bouncing of a cheque.

Letter from a customer to a bank regarding loss of cheque (cheque book)

A letter informing the bank about loss of cheque book includes:

1. Account number and type of cheque
2. The fact of the loss
3. The serial number of the cheque
4. Name of payee, amount and date on the cheque
5. Whether crossed or bearer cheque

Letter from customer to bank regarding instruction for transfer of funds from one account to another

The letter should contain:

1. Name and address
2. Name of account
3. Number of both accounts

4. Amount to be transferred and the date
5. The period for which amount is to be transferred
6. The length of the period

6.1 Correspondence with Media

7.0 Drafting of Advertisement

Come up with a catchy, snappy tagline. Keep it short and sweet; the average product needs no more than six or seven words. If you say it out loud and it sounds like a mouthful, edit it down. Whatever it is, it should grab the consumer's attention and convince him or her that your product is different from everyone else's. Consider using:

- Rhyme – “Do you Yahoo?”
- Humor – “Dirty mouth? Clean it with Orbit chewing gum!”
- A play on words – “Every kiss begins with ‘Kay’”
- Creative imagery – Yellow Pages: “Let your fingers do the walking”
- Metaphor – “Red Bull gives you wings”
- Alliteration – “Intel Inside”
- A personal pledge – Motel 6: “We leave the light on for you”

Avoid the same old. The key to a good advertisement is being memorable. The second your ad borrows a familiar advertising phrase (for example, “new and improved,” “guaranteed,” or “free gift” — is there any other kind?), it becomes interchangeable with thousands of others. What's more, listeners are so used to ad clichés that they don't even hear them anymore.

- Startling the reader into paying attention is especially useful if you have a lot to say. For example, this long, environmentally-oriented announcement wouldn't turn many heads if it weren't for the unusual, confrontational tagline; if the reader wants to get the joke, she or he has to read more.
- Know how to walk the line between controversial and entertaining. Pushing the limits of good taste to help your ad grab attention is common practice, but don't go too far — you want your product to be recognized on its own merits, not because it was tied to a tasteless advertisement.

Use a persuasive technique. There are tried and true methods that advertisers rely on to make their ads stick. These include:

- **Common sense:** Challenging the consumer to think of a good reason why *not* to purchase a product or service.
- **Humor:** Making the consumer laugh, thereby making yourself more likeable and memorable. This pairs especially well with refreshing honesty. Not the most successful business in your class? Advertise that your lines are shorter.
- **Repetition:** Getting your product to stick by repeating key elements. Jingles are the most obvious way to do this, but unless they're very good, they're also the most annoying. If you go this route, brainstorm a more creative, less obvious repetition technique.
- **Exigency:** Convincing the consumer that time is of the essence. Limited-time only offers, fire sales, and the like are the commonest ways to do this, but again, avoid meaningless phrases that will slip under your customers' radar.

8.0 E-mails and E-Filing

The abbreviated form of electronic mail is 'email'. Email is a system used for creating, sending/receiving and storing data in a digital format over a network of computers. Today's email technology uses the store-and-forward model. In this model, users send and receive information on their computer terminals. However, the computer is used only to connect to the email architecture. The creation, transmission and storage of email takes place only when connection with an email architecture is established. Email is one of the important technological developments which has greatly influenced the way we communicate with each other. It would be interesting to study the benefits and limitations of this popular mailing tool.

Advantages of emails

- Emails are easy to use. You can organize your daily **correspondence**, send and receive electronic messages and save them on computers.
- Emails are fast. They are **delivered** at once around the world. No other form of written communication is as fast as an email.
- The language used in emails is simple and **informal**.
- When you **reply** to an email you can **attach** the original message so that when you answer the **recipient** knows what you are talking about. This is important if you get hundreds of emails a day.
- It is possible to send **automated** emails with a certain text. In such a way it is possible to tell the sender that you are on vacation. These emails are called auto responders.
- Emails do not use paper. They are **environment** friendly and save a lot of trees from being cut down.
- Emails can also have pictures in them. You can send birthday cards or newsletters as emails.
- Products can be advertised with emails. Companies can **reach** a lot of people and inform them in a short time.

Limitation of Email

1. **Emotional responses.** Some emails cause upset or anger. A reply in the heat of the moment can't be easily retracted.
2. **Information overload.** Too many people send too much information. They often cite 'need to know' as the justification. Learn how to use email effectively and you'll reduce time wasted on this.
3. **Lacks the personal touch.** Some things are best left untyped. Email will never beat a hand written card or letter when it comes to relationships.
4. **Misunderstandings.** Emails from people who don't take the time to read what they write before clicking 'send'. Time is wasted, either to clarify or, worse, acting on a misinterpretation of the message.
5. **Pressure to reply.** Once it's in your inbox, you feel an ever increasing obligation to act on it.
6. **Spam.** Having to deal with spam and spoofs is one of the worst avoidable time wasters online.
7. **Sucks up your time.** Over checking messages is so common, but it is time wasted on low value, passive activity.
8. **Too long.** How long *is* too long? It's hard to say exactly, but the longer it goes on, the harder it is to take in. Email is suited to brevity.

9. **Viruses.** A virus could seriously affect your computer. If you want to know how to use email effectively, it's worth learning how to deal with these.

8.1 Structure and Content

1. Structure

An email includes at least the three following headers:

- **From:** The sender's email address
- **To:** The recipient's email address
- **Date:** The date when the email was sent

It may contain the following optional fields:

- **Received:** Various information about the intermediary servers and the date when the message was processed.
- **Reply-To:** A reply address.
- **Subject:** The message's subject
- **Message-ID:** A unique identification for the message.

2. Style

- Always fill in the subject line with a topic that means something to your reader.
- Put your main point in the opening sentence. Most readers won't stick around for a surprise ending.
- Never begin a message with a vague "This"--as in "This needs to be done by 5:00." Always specify what you're writing about.
- Don't use **ALL CAPITALS**(no shouting!), or all **LOWR CASE** letters either
- As a general rule, PLZ avoid textspeak (abbreviations and acronyms): *you* may be ROFLOL (rolling on the floor laughing out loud), but your reader may be left wondering WUWT (what's up with that).
- Be brief *and* polite. If your message runs longer than two or three short paragraphs, consider (a) reducing the message, or (b) providing an attachment. But in any case, don't snap, growl, or bark.
- Remember to say "please" and "thank you." And mean it. "Thank you for understanding why afternoon breaks have been eliminated" is prissy and petty. It's *not* polite.
- Add a signature block with appropriate contact information (in most cases, your name, business address, and phone number, along with a legal disclaimer if required by your company). Do you *need* to clutter the signature block with a clever quotation and artwork? Probably not.
- Edit and proofread before hitting "send." You may think you're too busy to sweat the small stuff, but unfortunately your reader may think you're a careless dolt.
- Finally, reply promptly to serious messages. If you need more than 24 hours to collect information or make a decision, send a brief response explaining the delay.

8.2 E-mail Etiquette

There are certain professional standards expected for e-mail use. Here are some things to keep in mind regarding professional e-mail conduct:

1. **Be informal, not sloppy.** Your colleagues may use commonly accepted abbreviations in e-mail, but when communicating with external customers, everyone should follow standard writing protocol. Your e-mail message reflects you and your company, so traditional spelling, grammar, and punctuation rules apply.
2. **Keep messages brief and to the point.** Just because your writing is grammatically correct does not mean that it has to be long. Nothing is more frustrating than wading through an e-mail message that is twice as long as necessary. Concentrate on one subject per message whenever possible.
3. **Use sentence case.** USING ALL CAPITAL LETTERS LOOKS AS IF YOU'RE SHOUTING. Using all lowercase letters looks lazy. For emphasis, use asterisks or bold formatting to emphasize important words. Do not, however, use a lot of colors or graphics embedded in your message, because not everyone uses an e-mail program that can display them.
4. **Use the blind copy and courtesy copy appropriately.** Don't use BCC to keep others from seeing who you copied; it shows confidence when you directly CC anyone receiving a copy. Do use BCC, however, when sending to a large distribution list, so recipients won't have to see a huge list of names. Be cautious with your use of CC; overuse simply clutters inboxes. Copy only people who are directly involved.
5. **Don't use e-mail as an excuse to avoid personal contact.** Don't forget the value of face-to-face or even voice-to-voice communication. E-mail communication isn't appropriate when sending confusing or emotional messages. Think of the times you've heard someone in the office indignantly say, "Well, I *sent* you e-mail." If you have a problem with someone, speak with that person directly. Don't use e-mail to avoid an uncomfortable situation or to cover up a mistake.
6. **Remember that e-mail isn't private.** I've seen people fired for using e-mail inappropriately. E-mail is considered company property and can be retrieved, examined, and used in a court of law. Unless you are using an encryption device (hardware or software), you should assume that e-mail over the Internet is not secure. Never put in an e-mail message anything that you wouldn't put on a postcard. Remember that e-mail can be forwarded, so unintended audiences may see what you've written. You might also inadvertently send something to the wrong party, so always keep the content professional to avoid embarrassment.
7. **Be sparing with group e-mail.** Send group e-mail only when it's useful to every recipient. Use the "reply all" button only when compiling results requiring collective input and only if you have something to add. Recipients get quite annoyed to open an e-mail that says only "Me too!"
8. **Use the subject field to indicate content and purpose.** Don't just say, "Hi!" or "From Laura." Agree on acronyms to use that quickly identify actions. For example, your team could use <AR> to mean "Action Required" or <MSR> for the Monthly Status Report. It's also a good practice to include the word "Long" in the subject field, if necessary, so that the recipient knows that the message will take time to read.
9. **Don't send chain letters, virus warnings, or junk mail.** Always check a reputable antivirus Web site or your IT department before sending out an alarm. If a constant stream of jokes from a friend annoys you, be honest and ask to be removed from the list. Direct personal e-mail to your home e-mail account.
10. **Remember that your tone can't be heard in e-mail.** Have you ever attempted sarcasm in an e-mail, and the recipient took it the wrong way? E-mail communication

can't convey the nuances of verbal communication. In an attempt to infer tone of voice, some people use emoticons, but use them sparingly so that you don't appear unprofessional. Also, don't assume that using a smiley will diffuse a difficult message.

11. **Summarize long discussions.** Scrolling through pages of replies to understand a discussion is annoying. Instead of continuing to forward a message string, take a minute to summarize it for your reader. You could even highlight or quote the relevant passage, then include your response.

8.3 E-Filing

An electronic filing system is a system of organizing files that utilizes hard drive space or network space. The system may either be computer software, an Internet-based program, or a simple file and folder system on the desktop of a computer. Electronic filing systems are used on multiple devices, ranging from our cell phones to our video game consoles to our digital video recorders.

Function

An electronic filing system utilizes an electronic device, such as a computer, to store and organize files for easy access. Simply placing school assignments in a folder on the desktop of your computer creates an elementary electronic filing system. Electronic filing systems offer the ability to organize various types of files on one operating system, or one type of file on a specific operating system. Electronic filing systems are used by gaming consoles, MP3 players, and throughout various applications on a computer.

Features

A computer alone is a vast electronic filing system offering various features. It begins with a large filing system, the hard drive, and splits into smaller and smaller electronic filing systems within the programs and applications on the computer. The "My Documents" folder on a computer is an electronic filing system arranging your documents in order of time created, alphabetically, or most often used, depending on your preferences. Most electronic filing systems offer the ability to search or browse through the files, allowing you to pinpoint the needed file out of the lot.

Benefits

Electronic filing systems allow us to easily find the information and files we need at the time we need them. Libraries and bookstores use electronic filing systems to keep track of the location of books. Thanks to these filing systems we can visit a kiosk, type in the book we are looking for, and be directed to it in a fraction of the time it would take us to fumble through the room trying to figure it out on our own.

Warning

While electronic filing systems relieve us of a lot of stress when they are working, they can cause chaos when they are out of order. Doctor's offices that run on electronic systems are at a loss when the power is out, or when a server tears up and must be replaced. It is always best to have a backup system when the primary system is out of commission.

9.0 Cross Cultural Communication

9.1 Different communication styles

Communicating across cultures is challenging. Each culture has set rules that its members take for granted. Few of us are aware of our own cultural biases because cultural imprinting is begun at a very early age. And while some of a culture's knowledge, rules, beliefs, values, phobias, and anxieties are taught explicitly, most of the information is absorbed subconsciously.

The challenge for multinational communication has never been greater. Worldwide business organizations have discovered that intercultural communication is a subject of importance—not just because of increased globalization, but also because their domestic workforce is growing more and more diverse, ethnically and culturally.

We are all individuals, and no two people belonging to the same culture are guaranteed to respond in exactly the same way. However, generalizations are valid to the extent that they provide clues on what you will most likely encounter when dealing with members of a particular culture.

High-Context vs. Low-Context

All international communication is influenced by cultural differences. Even the choice of communication medium can have cultural overtones. The determining factor may not be the degree of industrialization, but rather whether the country falls into a *high-context* or *low-context culture*.

High-context cultures (Mediterranean, Slav, Central European, Latin American, African, Arab, Asian, American-Indian) leave much of the message unspecified, to be understood through context, nonverbal cues, and between-the-lines interpretation of what is actually said. By contrast, low-context cultures (most Germanic and English-speaking countries) expect messages to be explicit and specific.

Sequential vs. Synchronic

Some cultures think of time sequentially, as a linear commodity to "spend," "save," or "waste." Other cultures view time synchronically, as a constant flow to be experienced in the moment, and as a force that cannot be contained or controlled.

In *sequential cultures* (like North American, English, German, Swedish, and Dutch), businesspeople give full attention to one agenda item after another.

In *synchronic cultures* (including South America, southern Europe and Asia) the flow of time is viewed as a sort of circle, with the past, present, and future all interrelated. This viewpoint influences how organizations in those cultures approach deadlines, strategic thinking, investments, developing talent from within, and the concept of "long-term" planning.

Orientation to the past, present, and future is another aspect of time in which cultures differ. Americans believe that the individual can influence the future by personal effort, but since there are too many variables in the distant future, we favor a short-term view. Synchronistic cultures' context is to understand the present and prepare for the future. Any important relationship is a durable bond that goes back and forward in time, and it is often viewed as grossly disloyal *not* to favor friends and relatives in business dealings.

Affective vs. Neutral

In international business practices, reason and emotion both play a role. Which of these dominates depends upon whether we are *affective* (readily showing emotions) or emotionally *neutral* in our approach. Members of neutral cultures do not telegraph their feelings, but keep them carefully controlled and subdued. In cultures with high affect, people show their feelings plainly by laughing, smiling, grimacing, scowling, and sometimes crying, shouting, or walking out of the room.

This doesn't mean that people in neutral cultures are cold or unfeeling, but in the course of normal business activities, neutral cultures are more careful to monitor the amount of emotion they display. Emotional reactions were found to be least acceptable in Japan, Indonesia, the U.K., Norway, and the Netherlands and most accepted in Italy, France, the U.S., and Singapore.

Reason and emotion are part of all human communication. When expressing ourselves, we look to others for confirmation of our ideas and feelings. If our approach is highly emotional, we are seeking a direct emotional response: "I feel the same way." If our approach is highly neutral, we want an indirect response: "I agree with your thoughts on this."

It's easy for people from neutral cultures to sympathize with the Dutch manager and his frustration over trying to reason with "that excitable Italian." After all, an idea either works or it doesn't work, and the way to test the validity of an idea is through trial and observation. That just makes sense—doesn't it? Well, not necessarily to the Italian who felt the issue was deeply personal and who viewed any "rational argument" as totally irrelevant!

When it comes to communication, what's proper and correct in one culture may be ineffective or even offensive in another. In reality, no culture is right or wrong, better or worse—just different. In today's global business community, there is no single best approach to communicating with one another. The key to cross-cultural success is to develop an understanding of, and a deep respect for, the differences.

9.2 Cross Cultural Strategies

Working across cultures requires a diverse skill set and a different approach from business in general. Regardless of which cultures are being bridged, certain strategies are crucial to international business success. Here are the strategies for interacting with people from different cultures.

1. Learn about the business beforehand. This general business strategy becomes increasingly important when dealing with businesses across cultures. Get on their website, check out their promotional material. Get a feel for the atmosphere, attitude, and angle that

the business has. Many cultural factors are passed down from the societal level to businesses. However, each organization *will* have its own culture, personality, and way of doing things.

2. Observe. Because your mind is processing a lot of information in new environments, your observation skills when working across cultures may be flooded or unfocused. Keep your observation skills engaged and alert to elements that will help you do business. Notice how people act, dress, and treat each other. Especially if you come from a culture that emphasizes verbal communication, make a point of looking for messages that are conveyed without being said. Being able to read a situation will greatly improve your ability to have a successful meeting.

3. Ask questions. Many people don't want to reveal how little they know about other cultures, so they don't ask questions. Ultimately, they limit their ability to work in other cultures. Questions show you are interested in your colleague's culture. This interest and consideration helps build your relationship, which is especially important if your culture has a reputation for trying to culturally dominate others (e.g. the U.S.). Demonstrate that you are working to create synergy between your cultures with questions. In doing so, you create room for the mistakes you may make; people are more willing to look past cultural blunders if they know you are trying to learn.

4. Stay aware of yourself. Some people feel like they have somewhat of an out-of-body experience when in cross-cultural situations because they are focused on everything new outside of themselves. There can be so much going on around you that you forget to focus on yourself as well. Take advantage of down time (and make time for it) so you can get in touch with your body and feelings. What's your gut feeling? Where is it coming from? This process can help you feel more grounded and secure in your experience abroad.

5. Allow for more time. Working across cultures takes more time. Communication may be slowed and logistics may be different. You may be working with a culture with a different concept of time altogether. Expect most things to take longer than they would when dealing with a business from your same culture or country. Also give yourself more time to process all the information before making decisions.

6. Look for individual differences. Overviews of cultures are meant to be guidelines only. Individuals may have values and behaviors that vary greatly from those of their native culture. Many people make the mistake of trying to fit people they are working with into cultural molds, when often they don't fit. People's values and behaviors are influenced in part by their culture, but also by their background, experiences, and personality. Be careful not to attribute too much of what you observe to a cultural difference.

7. Find the humor. Humor heals and helps you through difficult situations. Travel can be stressful, as can new environments and change in general. This stress can limit both your flexibility and your ability to handle cross-cultural situations. Combat stress with humor. Be able to step away (at least mentally) from situations and find the humor in them.

8. Learn to tolerate uncertainty. This is an essential skill, and one that can be extremely difficult for people from some cultures where directness and exactness are valued (e.g. Germany, the US). There will be a great deal of unknowns when doing business across cultures. Definitive, concrete answers may not always be given, especially if you are working with a culture with a high tolerance for uncertainty. Focus on what you *can* determine and try

to let go of minor details that are unclear. (Similarly, if you come from a culture that doesn't place a high value on exactness and are working with someone from a culture that does, try to provide clarification and details when possible.)

9. Go early. If your meeting is face-to-face and you'll be traveling abroad, go at least two days before your scheduled meeting. Give yourself time to adjust; you will have to deal with physical adjustments (jet lag, different foods) as well as a number of cultural adjustments as well. These changes can be overwhelming and should be spread out to make them manageable. Give yourself time to adjust physically and then your mind will be better able to make cultural adjustments that are essential for success.

10. Build your intercultural skills. When working with people from different cultures, you need a solid understanding of the norms of that culture. You also need communication skills and business strategies that can be applied across cultures. The items listed above reflect some of the necessary skills for intercultural work in general. However, individuals should develop a list of skills they need to develop to further their intercultural communication skills based on their own situations and needs.

9.3 Tips to handle Cross Cultural Communication

Here are some simple tips to help you improve your cross cultural communication skills:

Slow Down

Even when English is the common language in a cross cultural situation, this does not mean you should speak at normal speed. Slow down, speak clearly and ensure your pronunciation is intelligible.

Separate Questions

Try not to ask double questions such as, "Do you want to carry on or shall we stop here?" In a cross cultural situation only the first or second question may have been comprehended. Let your listener answer one question at a time.

Avoid Negative Questions

Many cross cultural communication misunderstandings have been caused by the use of negative questions and answers. In English we answer 'yes' if the answer is affirmative and 'no' if it is negative. In other cultures a 'yes' or 'no' may only be indicating whether the questioner is right or wrong. For example, the response to "Are you not coming?" may be 'yes', meaning 'Yes, I am not coming.'

Take Turns

Cross cultural communication is enhanced through taking turns to talk, making a point and then listening to the response.

Write it Down

If you are unsure whether something has been understood write it down and check. This can

be useful when using large figures. For example, a billion in the USA is 1,000,000,000 while in the UK it is 1,000,000,000,000.

Be Supportive

Effective cross cultural communication is in essence about being comfortable. Giving encouragement to those with weak English gives them confidence, support and a trust in you.

Check Meanings

When communicating across cultures never assume the other party has understood. Be an active listener. Summarise what has been said in order to verify it. This is a very effective way of ensuring accurate cross cultural communication has taken place.

Avoid Slang

Even the most well educated foreigner will not have a complete knowledge of slang, idioms and sayings. The danger is that the words will be understood but the meaning missed.

Watch the humour

In many cultures business is taken very seriously. Professionalism and protocol are constantly observed. Many cultures will not appreciate the use of humour and jokes in the business context. When using humour think whether it will be understood in the other culture. For example, British sarcasm usually has a negative effect abroad. Many cultures have certain etiquette when communicating. It is always a good idea to undertake some cross cultural awareness training or at least do some research on the target culture.

Cross cultural communication is about dealing with people from other cultures in a way that minimises misunderstandings and maximises your potential to create strong cross cultural relationships.

review questions

1. Assuming yourself to be the Controller , Software Corporations, prepare an appreciation letter for Mr Sumil who has been working in your company as a software Engineer.
2. assume that as the cultural secretary you are organizing a flute recitation programme in your college/ University . draft an e-mail informing all the teachers, students and staff members of your institute about the event and inviting them to attend the programme .

3. assuming yourself to be the purchase officer of the Budding Brains Incorporations, New Delhi ,prepare a memo to be written to the Section Heads of your organization informing them about the new procedure they should follow for sending the departmental requisitions.