

ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
COURSE CODE: 1043
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BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The course Business Communication (Mgmt 212) introduces students to theory and process of communication, treatment of communication problems within the context of the organization, barriers of communication and guidelines for overcoming those barriers resulting in effective communication, report writing, types of communication and medium of communication.

The success of an organization depends on the communication skills of all employees. Your ability to communicate effectively increases productivity, both yours and your organization's: You can anticipate problems, make decisions, coordinate workflow, supervise others, develop relationships and promote products and services. In general communication enables organizations to function. There fore, the objectives of this course are to:

- Enable students understand the importance of effective communication in the real world of business
- Help students identify problems of effective communication and its impact on the overall organizational goal achievements.
- Introduce students to the basic skills and ways of improving communication
- Help students improve interpersonal communication
- Enable students understand the significance of effective communication in undertaking managerial functions.

MODULE INTRODUCTION

As you may remember you have studied overview of communication as a tool for leadership in your previous course, *Introduction to Management (Mgmt 211)*, Module II. There you have come across the introductory part of communication. Here in this course, you will deal with detailed discussions on Business Communication in organizations. This course takes your previous course: *Introduction to Management* as a prerequisite and your success on this course will lay a ground for successful completion of *Management Information Systems* and *Systems Analysis and Design* courses, which you will take in the future.

This module is organized into nine chapters. The first chapter gives you an overview about communication in general and business communication in particular. In the chapter you will be introduced to meaning of communication, significance of communication, process of communication, barriers of communication, and types of communication. The second chapter discusses Media of Communication such as oral, written and non – verbal communication. The third chapter deals with Speech, which is one of oral communication media. The fourth chapter discusses Telephoning Vs Face –to – face communication detailing characteristics, and advantages and disadvantages of each of the media. The fifth chapter discusses Active Listening as a skill for communication addressing causes for poor listening & guidelines for effective listening. The sixth chapter presents you Interview. There you will get introduced to types of interview, and general guidelines for effective interview. The seventh chapter acquaints you with Meeting covering topics like objectives of meeting, preparation of a meeting, conducting a meeting and how to write minutes of a meeting. The eighth chapter presents you business letters, detailing the conventional parts of business letters, detailing the conventional parts of business letters, characteristics of good letters and types of business letters. The final chapter introduces you Business Report, discussing its definition and function of business report, main parts of the report, preparation and organization of business report. Under each of the chapters, self check exercises are incorporated for you to check how much you understood them.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION

Introduction

As you have studied in the course, *Introduction to Management*, managers have three basic jobs: to collect and convey information, to make decision and to promote interpersonal unity. To put it in short, managers are expected to work together to achieve organizational goals. All of these jobs happen through communication. Effective managers are able to use a wide variety of media & strategies to communicate. This chapter gives you general overview of communication from its definition and meaning to types of communication. The chapter will also introduce you to the communication process and the major causes of communication error so that you would improve your communication skill.

Chapter Objectives

On completion of this chapter you should be able to:

- Define communication
- Explain the significance of communication in business organizations
- Highlight the difference between formal and informal communication channels.
- Discuss the process of communication
- Identify major communication barriers between people and within organizations
- List factors that contribute to effective business communication

Chapter out Line

- 1.1 Definition and meaning of Communication
- 1.2 Significance of communication
- 1.3 Elements of the communication process
- 1.4 The process of communication
- 1.5 Barriers of communication

1.6 Guidelines to overcome communication barriers

1.7 Types of communication in organizations

1.7.1 Internal and External Communication

1.7.2 Formal and Informal Flow of Communication

1.8 Principles of Communication

1.1. Definition and Meaning of Communication

Dear reader, try to define communication in your own words you may use the following space for your answer

Different writers define communication in different ways. Let's look at various possible ways of defining communication. When people are asked to define communication, some define communication as "the process of transferring ideas from one person to another". When you see this definition on surface it seems sound. However, it is incorrect way of defining communication. Why do you think it is so? Because the words *transferring* and *from one person to another* inaccurately imply that communication is like pouring liquid from a pot to another pot.

In other words, the definition implies a simple, one way action where person A takes knowledge from his or her head and simply pours (transfers) it into the head of person B, the same way the water poured to a pot. Person B may refuse to accept A's ideas and may, instead, wish to present his or her own ideas (give feedback) unlike the pot. The Latin root of *communicate* is *communicare*, which means "to make common to many, share". According to this definition, when people communicate, they express their ideas and feelings in a way that is understandable (common) to each of them. They share information with each other. So, what is the correct way of defining Communication?

Hamilton and Parker (1987), define communication as "the process of people sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways."

Bovee and Thill (2000) defined communication as the process of sending and receiving messages. They distinguished communication and *effective communication*. According to Bovee and Thill,, effective communication occurs when individuals achieve a shared understanding, stimulate others to take actions, and encourage people to think in new ways.

1.2. Significance of Communication

In order to show the importance of communication to organization it is better to define what organization is. An organization is a group of people associated for business, political, professional, religious, athletic, social, or other purposes. Its activities require human beings to interact, react-communicate. They exchange information, ideas, plans, make decisions, rules, proposals, contracts and various agreements which all of them can not happen without communication. Communication is the life blood of every organization. Whether an organization is large or small, the sharing of information among the parts of an organization, as well as between the organization and the out side world, is the glue that binds the organization together. As a member of an organization, be it formal or informal organization, you are a link in the communication chain. Whether you are a top manager or an entry level employee, you have information that others need to perform their jobs. At the same time, others have information that is crucial to you. Communication skills are important because it is through communication that you gain the information you need to make successful decisions at work. The success of an organization depends on communication skills of its employees. Researches indicate that communication skills were rated “extremely important” relative to other kinds of abilities by the surveyed organization. Researches conducted on business organizations also show that “inability to communicate” and “poor communication skills” were the most frequently mentioned reasons for not hiring a job applicant. From this you can see that communication affects even your personal life.

1.3. Elements of the Communication Process

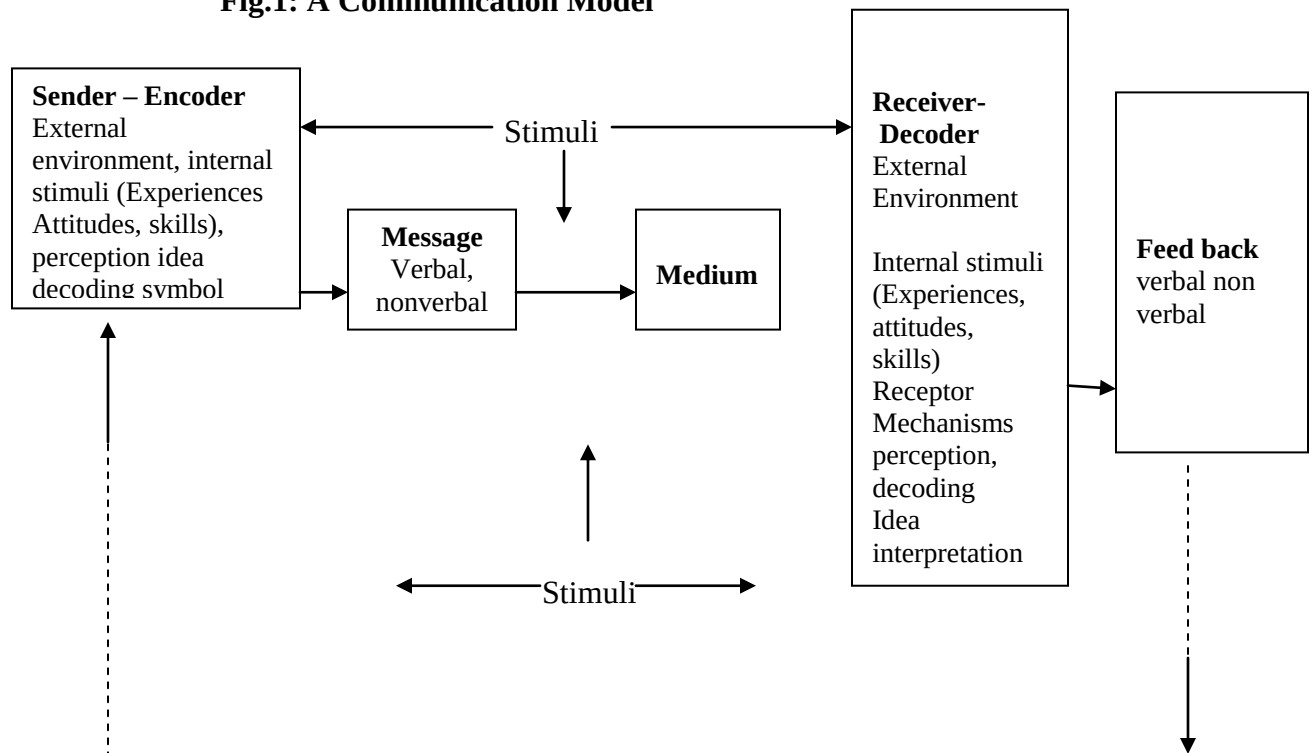
Dear learner, the various elements of communication are briefly described below to help you understand the process of communication: The process of communication involves five elements:

- sender-encoder

- message
- medium
- receiver-decoder
- feed back

The following figure illustrates how these factors interact in the communication process, affected by various internal and external conditions and decisions.

Fig.1: A Communication Model



Let us discuss now each element one by one:

Sender: the person who transmits, spreads, or communicates a message or operates an electronic device is the one who conceives and initiates the message with the purpose of informing, persuading, influencing, and changing the attitude, opinion, or behaviour of the receiver (audience listener). He /she decide the communication symbols, the channel, and the time for sending the message after carefully considering the total situation in which communication takes place.

Ideas or Thoughts: the raw form of telling the ideas that the sender wants to share with a receiver by changing them to messages using symbols.

Encoding: is changing the raw idea from its mental form into symbols, that is, patterns of words, gestures, pictorial forms or signs (physical or sounds) of a specific visual /oral language. The sender must choose certain words or non verbal methods to send an intentional message. This activity is called encoding. The words and channels that a communicator chooses to deliver a message can make a tremendous difference in how that message is received. Consider the simple act of a manager's offering feed back to an employee whether the words are respectful or abrupt and whether the message is delivered in person or in a memo can make a big difference in how the feed back is received.

Message: It is the information, written, spoke or nonverbal, which is to be sent from one person to another. Here, the word "person" stands for the two ends of a system, and may represent an individual, or a group of individuals, or even electronic machines.

The most important characteristic of a message as an element of communication is that it is organized, structured, shaped, and selective – a product & pre- writing or pre – speaking stage. It exists in the mind of the sender (communicator)

Medium: is the carrier of the message such as written words, in the form of written communication, and spoken words and gestures in the form of face-to-face discursion.

Channel: is the carrier of the medium like a memo or a letter, which carry the written words, and air, radio, telephone, television etc that carry the spoken words.

Receiver: is the targeted audience of the message. A receiver is any person who notices and attachés some meaning to a message. In the best of circumstances, a message reaches its intended receiver with no problems. In the confusing and imperfect world of business, however, several problems can occur. The message may never get to the receiver. It might be delivered but lie buried under a

mountain of papers on the recipients desk. Even worse, a message intended for one receiver might be intercepted by another one.

Decoding: This is the act of translating symbols of communication into their ordinary meanings; however, the total meaning would consist of meanings of the words (symbols) together with the tone and the attitude of the sender as treated by the structure of the message and the choice of words used by him (the sender).

Feed back: This is the loop that connects the receiver in the communication process with the sender, who, in turn, acts as a feed back receiver and, thus, gets to know that communication has been accomplished. In communication, feed back plays an important role. It helps the communicator know if there are any corrections or changes to be made in the proposed action. It also ensures that the receiver has received the message and understood it as intended by the sender failure to answer a letter or to return a phone call can suggest how the non communicative person feels about the sender.

Check Point

- ✓ Define Effective Business communication?
- ✓ Explain Significance of communication in Business?
- ✓ List elements of Communication?

1.4. The Process of Communication

Communication involves participants (a sender & a receiver), message to be sent a medium to carry the communication signals & the environments in which the message is sent & received. These elements act & interact in the five-step process. Whether you are speaking or writing, listening or reading, communication is more than a single act. Instead, it is a chain of events that can be broken in to five phases as:

- The sender has an idea.
- The idea becomes a message.

- The message is transmitted.
- The receiver gets the message.
- The receiver reacts & sends feedback to the sender.

A) The Sender Has an Idea

The sender is the individual who initiates the communication. This person is sometimes known as the ‘encoder’, two things must happen before the sender wants to send a message: First, an internal or external stimulus prompts you to send a message. This prompt may arrive in the form of letters, memorandum, pencilled note, electronic mail, fax, telex, or even casual conversation in the hallway, Regardless of the stimulus source; it could be a business transaction, a written question, a meeting, an interview, or unexpected request for a favour. Whatever the case might be, you will start thinking of ideas for the message.

It is important to remember, however, that a stimulus alone may not be enough to trigger communication. The second requirement to send message is sufficient motivation. Think of times when a manager asks a question, and some of the people present were fairly sure they knew the answer (were stimulated), but did not respond. Why didn’t they respond? Probably because they were not sufficiently motivated; i.e. they saw no personal benefit in answering. Or they saw greater benefit in not answering.

B) The Idea Becomes a Message

After being stimulated & motivated to communicate, the sender must decide how best to convey a message to the specific receiver. The message is the information or core idea being transmitted. The process of putting a message into the form in which it is to be communicated is called ‘encoding.’ It consists of both verbal (written or spoken) symbols & nonverbal (unspoken) symbols. Verbal information is the part of the message that is heard. Nonverbal information entails such things as body language & the surrounding environment. Whenever you compose a message, you need to consider what content to include, how the receiver will interpret it, & how it may affect your relationship. A simple ‘thank you’ message will be relatively easy. In contrast, to inform 200

employees of bad news about salaries will require much more complicated, carefully planned message. To some extent, your choice of words also depends on your cultural background. When you choose your words, you signal that you are a member of a particular club and that you know the code. The nature of your code-your language and vocabulary-imposes its own limits on your message. For example, the language of a lawyer differs from that of an accountant or a doctor, and the difference in their vocabularies affects their ability to recognize and express ideas.

Several things can go wrong when you're formulating a message. Typical problems involve indecision about message content, lack of familiarity with the situation or the receiver, emotional conflicts, or difficulty in expressing ideas.

Indecision about content

Deciding what to say is the first difficulty in the communication process. Many people make the mistake of trying to convey everything they know about a subject. When a message contains too much information, it is difficult to absorb. If you want to get your point across, therefore, you have to decide what to include and what to leave out, how much detail to provide, and what order to include and what to leave out, how much detail to provide, and what order adequate background, you will create confusion. And if you recommend actions without first explaining why they are justified, your message may provoke an emotional response that inhibits understanding. Include only the information that is useful to the receiver, & organize it in a way that encourages its acceptance.

Lack of familiarity with the situation or the receiver

Can you deliver your message equally well when you are not very familiar with the subject you are talking about: or when you do not know the receiver very well? Creating an effective message is difficult if you don't know how it will be used. Let's say you're writing a report on the market for sports equipment. If you don't know the purpose of the report, it's hard to know what to say. Some of the things you should be clear about before writing the report are:

- What sort of sports equipment should you cover?
- Should you include team sports as well as individual sports?

- Should you subdivide the market geographically or according to price ranges?
- How long should the report be?

Unless you know why the report is needed, you really can't answer these questions intelligently. You are forced to create a very general document one that covers a little bit of everything.

Lack of familiarity with your audience is an equally serious handicap you need to know something about the biases, education, age, status, and style of the receiver in order to create an effective message. If you're writing for a specialist in your field, for example, you can use technical terms that might be unfamiliar to a layperson. If you're addressing a lower-level employee, you might approach a subject differently than if you were talking to your boss. Decisions about the content, organization, style, and tone of your message all depend, at least to some extent, on the relationship between you and the audience. If you don't know the audience, you will be forced to make these decisions in the dark. As a result, at least part of your message may miss the point. Hence, ask why you are preparing the message & for whom you are preparing it.

Emotional conflicts

Another potential problem in developing the message arises when the sender has conflicting emotions about the subject or the audience. Let's say you've been asked to recommend ways to improve the organization of your department. You conclude that the best approach is to combine two positions. But this solution will mean eliminating the job of one of your close associates. As you prepare your report, you find yourself apologizing for your recommendation. Even though you believe your position is justified, you cannot make a convincing case. Thus, in business communications try to maintain your objectivity.

Difficulty of expressing ideas

Most of us might think that to write and to speak are not so difficult. We only learn that they do not come easy when we have to make public speeches or when we are required to write an influential letter on a particular matter. Lack of experience in writing or speaking can also prevent a person from

developing effective messages. Some people have limited education or a lack of aptitude when it comes to expressing ideas. Perhaps they have a limited vocabulary or are uncertain about questions of grammar, punctuation, and style. Or perhaps they are simply frightened by the idea of writing something or appearing before they lack expertise in using language.

Problems of this sort can be overcome, but only with some effort. The important thing is to recognize the problem & take action. An inability to put thoughts into words can be overcome through study & practice.

C) The Message is Transmitted

The third step in the communication process is physical transmission of the message from sender to receiver. How will you send your message? Should one write or speak? What is the appropriate channel for any given message? The channel is the means used to convey the message. The forms of communication may be verbal, or nonverbal. Beyond that, you can convey a message by phone, computer, face-to-face exchange, or other medium.

D) The Receiver Gets the Message

The receiver is the individual to whom the message is directed, also known as 'decoder'. When the encoder's message is picked up, the receiver tries to make sense out of it; i.e. to decode it. Decoding is the process the receiver goes through in trying to interpret the exact meaning of a message. Everyone tries to read between the lines in an effort to interpret what the sender means by the message. If you send a letter, the recipient has to read it before she/he can understand it. If you're giving a speech, the people in the audience have to be able to hear you, and they have to be paying attention.

But physical reception is only the first step. The receiver also has to absorb the message mentally. In other words, the message has to be understood and stored in the receiver's mind. If all goes well, the message is interpreted correctly. The receiver assigns the same basic meaning to the words as the sender intended and responds in the desired way.

Like transmission problems, problems during the reception phase often have a physical cause. Competing sights and sounds, an uncomfortable chair, poor lighting or some other irritating condition may distract the receiver. In some impairment, for example, or even a headache, can interfere with reception of a message. These annoyances don't generally block communication entirely, but they may reduce the receiver's concentration.

Perhaps the most common barrier to reception is simply lack of attention on the receiver's part. We all let our minds wander now and then, regardless of how hard we try to concentrate. People are especially likely to drift off when they are forced to listen to information that is difficult to understand or that has little direct bearing on their own lives. If they are tired or concerned about other matters, they are even more likely to lose interest. Is the communication process complete once the receiver has the message?

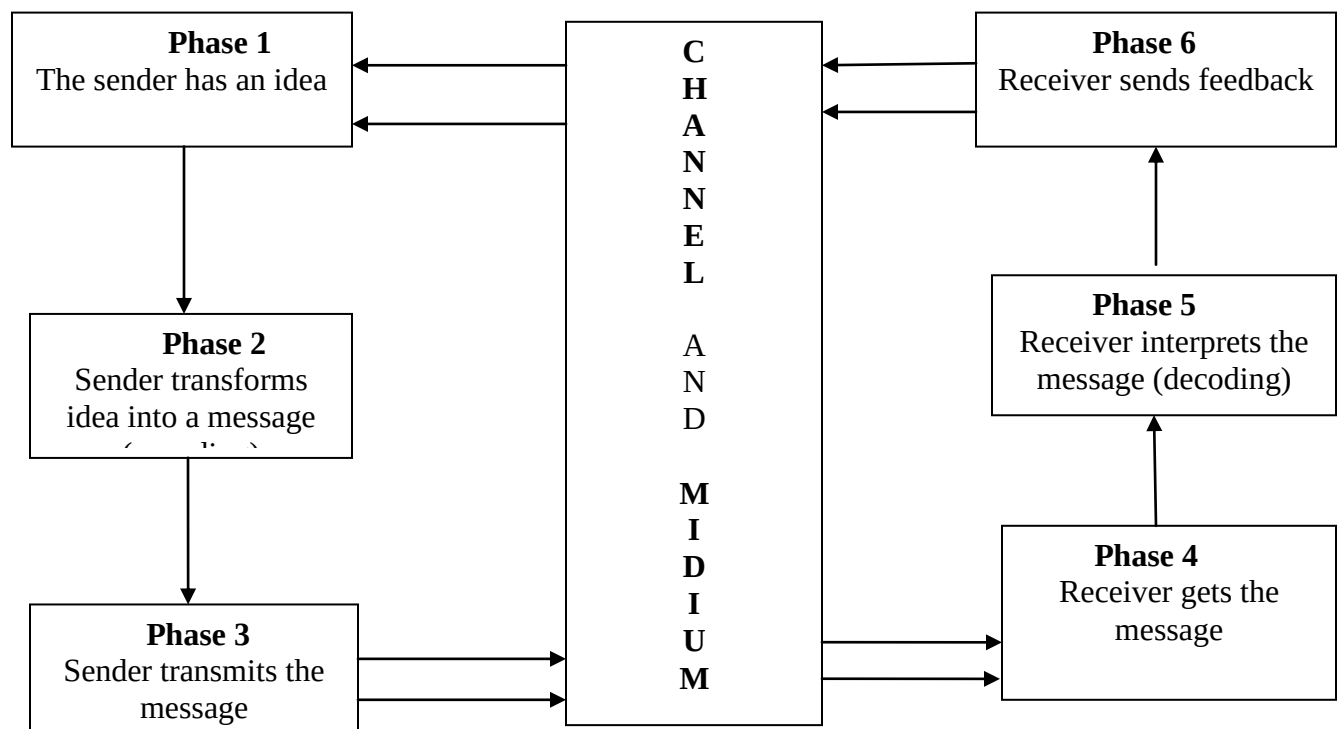
E) The Receiver Reacts & Gives Feedback to the Sender

Feedback is the receiver's response to a message. It is the final link in the communication chain. However, the feedback response involves a reversal of the communication process so that the receiver now becomes the sender & the sender becomes the receiver. After getting the message, the receiver responds in some way and signals that response to the sender. The signal may take the form of a smile, a long pause, a spoken comment, a written message, or an action. Even a lack of response is, in a sense, a form of response.

Feedback is a key element in the communication process because it enables the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message. It provides guidance for the next message that you send to the receiver. If your audience doesn't understand what you mean, you can tell by the response and refine the message. Feedback plays an important role by indicating significant communication barriers: differences in background, different interpretations of words, and differing emotional reactions. So when the receiver of the message has made feedback and the sender is sure that the message has been communicated in the way intended, we say communication has existed.

Therefore, from the above phases, you can think of communication as a process consisting of identifiable links, with ultimate objective of influencing behaviour, attitudes, & beliefs. Each element of the communication process is critical: the sender, encoding, channel, the receiver, decoding, & feedback. The communication process is illustrated in the figure below.

Fig.2 Process of Communication



The process is repeated until both parties have finished expressing themselves. To say a given communication is effective each step should be successful.

1.5.Barriers of Communication

No two persons are exactly alike mentally, physically, or emotionally. Thus the innumerable human differences plus cultural, Social & environmental differences may cause problems in conveying an intended message. Although all communication is subject to misunderstandings, business communication is particularly different. Various characteristics of the sender, receiver, &

communication situation can create barriers to effective communication. The major barriers of communication include the following:

1. Channel selection: Communication may be oral, written, visual or audio-visual. The different communication channels can be personal barriers in that some individuals always seem to incline toward a particular channel even though a more effective one exists. All the media have their relative merits and limitations. While a properly chosen medium can add to the effectiveness of a communication, an unsuitable medium may act as a barrier to it.

Consider, for example, a superior who uses a written memo to let you know about the recent denial of a promotion. The more effective channel in this case might have been face-to-face meeting in which you can ask questions. If a salesperson is required to submit a report based on the comparative sales figures of the last five years, he will fail to communicate anything if he writes a lengthy paragraph about it. He has to present the figures in a tabular form, or preferably make a bar diagram, which would make communication an instantaneous process. An employee desirous of expressing his regrets for his earlier misconduct with his supervisor should meet him personally. Whatsoever a lengthy letter he might write, it can never be as effective as an earnest look on his face. But if he does not meet him personally, his written explanation will most probably be misinterpreted. In offices, if memos are frequently issued to employees to ask them to explain minor things late arrivals or early departure they become a source of irritation. A manager using a memo to complement an employee for a creditable achievement or to congratulate another employee for a wedding is surely creating communication barrier through the wrong choice of medium.

2. Physical barriers: these include noise, and time & distance.

a. Noise: Anything that interferes with communication & distorts or blocks the message is noise. Noise is quite often a barrier to communication. In factories oral communication could be difficult by the loud noise of machines. Electronic noise like ear-splitting often interferes in communication by telephone. The word “noise” is also used to refer to all kinds of physical interference like illegible handwriting, smudged copies of duplicated typescript, poor telephone connections, use of jargons (terms that have a precise meaning among specialists,

but are unfamiliar to others), distraction that prevents the receiver from paying attention, a worn printer ribbon that makes a document hard to read, etc.

b. Time & Distance: Time and distance also act as barriers of communication. Modern communication facilities like fax, telephone and internet are not available everywhere. This is especially so in most companies of our country. Even when these technologies are available, sometimes mechanical breakdowns render these facilities ineffective. In such cases the distance between the transmitter and the receiver becomes a barrier. There is a kind of communication gap between persons working in different shifts of a factory. Can you imagine how difficult it would be to send an urgent message to a business partner living in England if it had to be done through postal mail?

3. Semantics: refer to the different uses & meanings of words and symbols. Words and symbols may not have similar uses and meanings for different individuals from different cultural group, language and living style so it may create some barrier in the communication process. Semantic barriers include:

- a) **Interpretations of words:** Do you remember a situation where you and your friend understood a word communicated by somebody else in a different way. The knowledge each have about a subject or word affects the meaning we attach to it. Individuals have their own network of words & meanings available for recall that overlap, but do not correspond exactly, with those of other individuals using their own networks can attach different meanings to words. Receivers decode words & phrases in conformity with their own network, while may be very different from those of senders. Words are capable communicating a variety of meanings. It is quite possible that the receiver do not assign the same meaning to a word as the sender has intended, that may lead to miscommunication. For some, a successful career means having prestigious job title & making lot of money; for others, it may mean having a job they really enjoy & plenty of personal time to spend with family & friends. Different word interpretations especially, noticeable in, “bypassed” instructions & in reactions to denotations, connotations and euphemisms.

- b) **Bypassed instructions:** when the message sender & receiver attribute different meanings to the same words or use different words though intending the same meaning, bypassing often occurs. Example: An office manager handed to a new assistant a letter, with the instruction “Take it to our store room and burn it” In the office manager’s mind (and in the firm’s jargon) the word “burn” meant to make a copy on a photocopier. As the letter was extremely important, she wanted an extra copy. However, the confused employee afraid to ask questions burned the letter and thus destroyed the original existing copy! To avoid communication errors of bypassing, when you give instructions or discuss issues, be sure your words & sentences will convey the intended meaning to the recipient. Also, when you are the recipient of unclear instruction, before acting on it, ask questions to determine the sender intended meaning.
- c) **Denotations, Connotations, & Euphoniums:** Many of us have at some time been surprised that a remark intended as a complement, or joke was interpreted by the receiver as an insult. A statement intended as a good deed can be distorted in to something self-serving. Some of these communication problems may occur because words have both denotative and connotative meanings, and the sender has not considered the receiver’s probable interpretation and reactions.

Denotations: the denotative meaning is the meaning on which most people will probably agree. It often is the dictionary definition. The word informs the receiver & it names objects, people, or events without indicating positive or negative qualities. Such words are car, desk, book, house, water conveys denotative meaning, provided, of course, that the communicators understand the English language & provided that the receiver has a similar understanding of the context in which the word is used.

Connotations: in addition to more literal denotative meanings, some words have connotative meanings that arouse qualitative judgments & personal reactions. The

term 'meeting room' is denotative. Director's lounge, executive suite, boardroom, though they each denote a meeting place, also has connotative meanings. The word 'student' is denotative; bookworm, scholar, dropout, are connotative. Some words have favourable connotations in some contexts but unfavourable meanings in other instances. Compare, for example, fat check & fat girl; free enterprise & free (rude, bold) manners; cheap products & cheap price.

The communicators' different backgrounds & interests also affect the connotative meanings for words. On hearing that a particular person is 'cool' members of one generation may take it to mean the person is fun to be with, while members of earlier generation may believe it means that the individual is unemotional & insensitive.

Euphemisms: tactful writer & speakers are euphemisms whenever possible to replace words that might have blunt, painful, lowly, or distasteful connotations. Euphemisms are mild, innovative expressions with which most people do not have negative associations. Expressions like the following have obvious connotative advantage: maintenance worker or staff member instead of janitor, slender instead of skinny; restroom instead of toilet. Instead of saying an employee was fired, a communicator may use such euphemism as laid off, terminated, or a victim of reorganization or staff cutbacks.

To communicate effectively you need to be aware of the usual connotative meanings of various terms and also to realize that some people may have their own unique meanings because of their experiences & background. Thus choose your words carefully, considering both their connotations and other denotations to convey the idea you want and achieve the desired results.

4. Perception of reality: The reality of an object, an event, or a person is different to different people. Reality is not a fixed concept; it is complex, infinite and continually changing. Besides, each human being has limited sensory perceptions-touch. Sight, hearings, smell, and taste and each person's

mental filter are unique. People perceive reality in different ways. No two persons perceive reality in identical manners. We make various abstractions inferences and evaluation of the world around us.

- a. **Abstracting:** the process of focusing on some details & omitting others. In countless instances, abstracting is necessary and desirable – for both written and oral communications. Whether you write a memo, letter or report or converse by telephone, you will be limited somewhat by time, expense, space. And purpose. You will need to select facts that are pertinent to accomplish your purpose and to omit the rest. We often use abstracting while preparing business reports & application letters. Precise writing is nothing but the art of abstracting. So how is abstracting considered a barrier to communication? Abstracting poses a grave barrier to communication for details, which look pertinent to one reporter, may look insignificant or trivial to another. You as a communicator must also anticipate the likelihood that others may not be abstracting as you are. Their points may be as important as yours though they select differently from the infinite details in reality. For example, when reporting on an event-a football game or an accident, no two witnesses give exactly the same descriptions. The participants will perceive different details than the observers, but all or several observers may mention some parts of the whole. Juries often determine which witness's details are the most credible. Differences in abstracting occurs not only when persons describe events but also when they describe people, equipment, project, or animals. We do not give allowances for these differences, and misunderstandings arise. Very often we yield to the “allness” fallacy.

The allness-fallacy states that we believe that whatever we know or say about an object or event is all that is worth knowing or saying about it. The more we delve into some subjects the more we realize there is so much more to learn and to consider. And unfortunately the less we know the more sure we feel that we know it all. Even experts on certain subjects admit they don't know all the answers; they continue to study all available facts, though they sometimes disagree among themselves. Unfortunately, it is true of some people that the less they know, the more sure they are that they know it

all. Thus, it is best for us to avoid assuming we know all about any subject or circumstances simply because we have a few facts. Otherwise we may have an inadequate, erroneous impression of the whole.

- b. **Inferring:** What we directly see, hear, feel, taste, smell or can immediately verify and confirm & constitutes a fact. But the statements that go beyond the facts and the conclusions based on facts are called inferences. They are conclusions made by reasoning from evidences or premises. A very simple example of inferring is when we drop a letter in the post box, we assume that it will be picked up by someone and be delivered to the destiny we desired. “If enough rain fall during the summer, we can infer that the price of ‘teff’ will go down.” We infer that the gas station attendant pumps gasoline (not water) into our car’s tank.

For business & professional persons inferences are essential & desirable in analyzing materials, solving problems, & planning. Systems analysts, marketing specialists, advertisers, architects, engineers, and designers are all required to draw inferences after they have gathered as much factual data as possible. Also, as consumers in our daily activities, we may make inferences that are necessary & usually fairly reliable. When we base our inferences on direct observations or on reasonable evidence, they are likely to be quite dependable; but even so, there are disappointing exceptions. Conclusions we make about things we have not observed directly may be true or untrue.

As intelligent communicator we must avoid faulty inferences. We must realize that inferences may be incorrect & unreliable & may cause miscommunication. We need to anticipate risks before acting on the inferences. Consider this simple example. Suppose that a personnel manager observes a particular new employee has been leaving the office one hour late everyday for the last two weeks. What can be inferred from this observation? The manager might infer that the worker is:

- exceptionally conscientious;

- that he is incapable of doing the required work within the regular time;
- that he has been given more responsibility than should be expected of a new trainee; or

Even that he is searching for some secrets from confidential materials after others have left the office.

Do you suppose the personnel manager should take an action based on any of the above – mentioned inferences or any other possible inference that the manager could make? Before acting on any of these inferences, the manager should get more facts. A wrong inference can surely be a barrier to communication.

- c. **Making frozen evaluation:** another drawback of effective perception is the frozen evaluation- the stereotyped, static impression that ignores significant differences or changes. Stereotyping is the tendency to attribute characteristics of an individual on the basis of an assessment of the group to which the individual belongs. The manager uses those perceived common characteristics to draw conclusions about the characteristics of the individual, rather than acquiring information about those characteristics more directly. It is often based on faulty inferences. To help you assure that your comprehension of reality will be correct, you need to recognize that any person, product, or event may be quite different from others in a group, or may have significant differences today when compared with characteristics yesterday or some time ago. You should recognize individual differences within groups & differences within time periods. In all, we should remember to avoid frozen evaluation made on the basis of what was true for one (for a group) at one time. Changes occur in everything.

5. Attitudes & Opinions: communication effectiveness is influenced also by the attitudes & opinions the communicators have in their mental filters. People tend to react favourably when the message they receive agrees with their views towards the information, the set of facts, & the sender. In addition, sometimes unrelated circumstances affect their attitudes, & responses like:

- a. **Emotional state:** a person's ability to encode a message can become impaired when a person is feeling strong emotions. For example, when you are angry, it is harder to consider the other person's viewpoint & to choose words carefully. Likewise, the receiver will have difficulty-decoding message when her/his emotions are strong. For instance, a person who is elated at receiving good news might not pay close attention to some one else's words or body language. Some one who is angry might pay attention but misinterpret a message in light of her/his anger.
- b. **Favourable or Unfavourable information:** rejecting, distorting, & avoiding are three common undesirable, negative ways receivers react to information they consider unfavourable. For example, if a change in the policy of an organization proves advantageous to employees, they welcome it as good; if it is contrary to their beliefs or benefits, they may reject, or resent the company and their boss, perhaps falsely accusing them of being unfair. Or they may instead, distort, the meaning and misinterpret the true purpose of the policy change. Or they may avoid the message, situation or people by putting off acceptance hoping that the delay will somehow prevent the change & protect them.
- c. **Closed mind:** some people have a closed mind toward receiving new information. The closed-minded person is one of the most difficult to communicate with. Typically this person has only inadequate and mainly incorrect knowledge of the subject. Yet she/he refuses to consider any new facts. Even from an expert who has made a long, careful study of the problem and the proposed change. The closed minded person says in essence: "my mind is made up" "Don't bother me with facts" "I want what I want". Closed – minded people stubbornly reject distort or avoid a viewpoint before they know the facts.
- d. **Status consciousness:** people in the upper areas of organization's hierarchy, those who have more status & power, may be hesitant to listen to those individuals lower in the hierarchy, feeling for example, that people of lower status & power do not possess any useful information. By the same token, people of lower status & power may be reluctant to share information because they believe that people with higher status &

power will not listen. Subordinates are afraid of communicating any unpleasant information to their managers. They may be afraid that they might displease their superiors by telling them unpleasant facts. Or they may fear that unfavourable communication may adversely reflect upon their own competence. The subordinates also find it difficult to offer proposals for the improvement of the organization, for such proposals are not usually encouraged.

- e. **Credibility:** people react more favourably when a communicator has credibility – when they respect, trust, & believe in the communicator. A sender's credibility plays an important role in how a message is received & understood. If the receiver does not consider the sender trustworthy or knowledgeable about the subject being communicated, she/he will most likely be reluctant even to listen to the message. For example, if you may feel that she/he has little knowledge concerning the area of management &, thus, places little weight on anything she tells you concerning the subject. Likewise, a sender may limit what she/he communicates to a receiver who is not considered trustworthy. For instance, if an employee offers idea for a more efficient way to perform a job & his supervisor takes credit for it, then the employee is more likely to withhold future information from the supervisor, as he will probably not trust the supervisor with such information.

6. Information overload: refers to the condition of having too much information to process. The implication is that individuals can effectively process only certain amount of information. An example would be if your professor gave you too much information, too quickly, concerning a term paper's requirements or if a manager gave an employee too much information at one time about a report's requirements. In either situation, the receiver probably does not receive the entire message. Managers need to be aware of potential for information overload & to make appropriate adjustments.

Check Point

- ✓ Describe the process of Communication?
- ✓ Briefly explain barriers of Communication?

1.6. Guidelines to Overcome Communication Barriers

Now having the knowledge of the barriers to effective communication, can you think of alternative ways of avoiding them? The following are ways which are suggested so as to make your communication in the work place as smooth and effective as possible.

There are six factors or themes that contribute to effective communication.

1. Fostering an open communication climate.
2. Committing to ethical communication
3. Understanding the difficulties involved in intercultural communication.
4. Adopting an audience-centered approach to communication.
5. Using technology wisely and responsibly to obtain and share information.
6. Creating and processing messages effectively and efficiently.

Now let us discuss them one by one.

1. Fostering an open communication climate.

An organization's communication climate is a reflection of its corporate culture: the mixture of values, traditions and habits. It affects the quantity and quality of the information that passes through the pipeline. The following are the measures that can be taken to create an open communication climate:

a) Modify the number of organizational levels.

One way to foster an open communication climate is to reduce the number of levels in the organizations structure. The fewer the links in the communication chain, the less likely the misunderstandings will occur. In other words, a flat structure (having fewer levels) and a wide span of control are likely to introduce distortion than a tall structure and a narrow span of control.

b) Facilitate feedback

Giving the audience a chance to provide feedback is crucial to maintaining an open communication climate.

2. Committing to ethical communication

Ethics are the principles of conduct that govern a person or a group. Ethical people are generally trustworthy, fair and impartial, respecting the rights of others, and concerned about the impact of their actions on society. Ethics plays a crucial role in communication. Ethical communication includes all relevant information, is true in every sense and is not deceptive in any way. In order to maintain ethical communication follow the guidelines below:

a) Recognize ethical choices.

Every company has responsibilities to various groups- customers, shareholders, suppliers, neighbours, the community and the nation. What's right for one group may be wrong for another. Moreover as we attempt to satisfy the needs of one group, we may be presented with an option that seems right on the surface but somehow feels wrong.

b) Make ethical choices.

Laws provide ethical guidelines for certain types of messages. Look at the consequences of the decision and opt for the solution that provides the greatest good to the greatest number of people, and one that we can live with.

c) Motivate ethical choices.

Organizations can foster ethical behaviour:

- by helping top managers become more sensitive communicators
- by using ethics audits
- by rewarding ethical actions

3. Understanding the difficulties involved in intercultural communication

More and more businesses are crossing national boundaries to compete on a global scale and the make up of the global and domestic work force is changing rapidly. Global companies must understand the laws, customs and business practices of many countries, and they must deal with business associates and employees.

4. Adopting an audience-centred approach to communication

Using an audience-centred approach means keeping the audience in mind all times when communicating. Since audience is taken care of, every possible step is taken to get the message across in a way that is meaningful to the audience. Empathizing with and being sensitive to the audience's feelings is the best way to overcome such communication barriers as differences in perception and emotional interference.

5. Using technology wisely and responsibly to obtain and share information

In today's world, information moves through an array of media at the speed of a neural impulse. Technology has such an impact on business communication. When used wisely and responsibly, technology helps to improve the effectiveness of business communication.

6. Creating and processing messages effectively and efficiently.

The sixth guideline is to plan messages, generate ideas, organize the thoughts, and turn the words into effective business messages. In order to create messages effectively and efficiently, consider the following issues:

a) Learn about the audience

Creating an effective message is difficult if the audience is unfamiliar, or if we don't know how the message will be used. We need to know something about the biases, education, age, status and style of the receiver in order to create an effective message.

b) Adapt the message to the audience

Decisions about the content, organization, style, and tone of the message depend on the relationship between the sender and the audience.

c) Develop and connect ideas

Include only the information that is useful to the audience, and organize it in such a way that encourages its acceptance. To make message memorable;

- Use telling statistics.
- Use words that evoke a physical, sensory impression.
- Tie the message to the audience's frame of reference.
- Keep messages as brief and as clean as possible.
- Highlighting and summarizing key points.

d) *Reduce the number of messages*

Organizations save time and money by sending only necessary messages. If a written message merely adds to the information overload, it is probably better left unsent or handled some other way – by a quick telephone call or a face to face chat. By holding down the number of messages, organizations will maximize the benefits of their communication activities.

e) *Choose the correct channel and medium*

The careful choice of channel and medium helps focus the audience's attention on message. The choice of a communication channel and medium depends on the:

- Message
- Audience
- Need for speed
- Situation.

f) *Strengthen the communication skills*

Recognizing the importance of efficient communication, many companies today train employees in communication skills. Companies offer seminars and workshops on handling common oral communication situations (such as dealing with customers, managing subordinates, and getting along with co-workers), as well as training in computers and other electronic means of communication.

Check Point

- ✓ What are factors contributing to effective communication?

1.7. Types of Communication in Organizations

1.7.1. Internal and External Communication

Each organization has its own approach to transmitting information, both within the organization and to the outside world. Depending on where the business communication occurred we can categorize communication into Internal and External.

Internal Communication

Internal communication involves transmission of information within the organization. Among various ways of communicating with companies are memos, Reports, Meetings, face-to-face discussions, teleconference, videoconference, notices, etc. Internal communication is a vital means of attending to matters of company concern.

External Communication

External communication is communication with people outside an organization. It is the organization's means of establishing contact with the outside world. External communication could include business letters, press releases, advertisements, leaflets, invitations, telegrams, telemessages, proposals, etc. Messages to persons outside the organization can have a far-reaching effect on its reputation & ultimate success. The right letter, proposal, or personal conversation can win back a disgruntled customer, create a desire for a firm's product or service, help negotiate a profitable sale, encourage collections, motivate performance, in general create good will.

1.7.2 Formal And Informal Flow Of Communication

To maintain a healthy flow of information, effective managers use both formal and informal communication channels.

Formal Flow of Communication

The formal communication is communication that flows along the organization's lines of authority. Formal channels of communication are intentionally defined & designed by the organization. They represent the flow of communication within the formal organizational structure. Typically, communication flows in four separate directions: downward, upward, horizontal, & diagonal.

A. Downward Communication

Communication that involves a message exchange between two or more levels of the organizational hierarchy is called vertical communication. It can involve a manager & a subordinate or can involve several layers of the hierarchy. It can flow in a downward or an upward direction.

Formal messages that flow from managers & supervisors to subordinates are called downward communication. Usually, this type of communication involves job directions, assignment of tasks & responsibilities, performance feedback, certain information concerning the organization's strategies & goals. Speeches, policy & procedure manuals, employee handbooks, company leaflets, briefings on the organization's mission & strategies, staff meetings, & job descriptions are all examples of downward communication.

Higher level management communicates with lower level employees through such means as memorandums, conferences, telephone conversations, company news letters, policy manuals, bulletin, board announcements and video tapes. One of the problems with written downward communication is that management may assume that what is sent downward is received and understood. Unfortunately that is not always the case.

Most downward communication involves information in one of five categories:

- *Job instructions* – directions about what to do or how to do it. “When you stock the shelves, put the new merchandise behind the old stock.”

- *Job rational*-explanations of how one task relates to other tasks. Explaining the relationship between a task & other organizational tasks. “We rotate the stock like that so the customer won’t wind up with state merchandise.”
- *Policy & procedures*: practice of the organization or rules, regulations and benefits of the organization. “Don’t try to argue with unhappy customers. If you can’t handle them yourself, call the manager”
- *Feedback*-Information about how efficiently a person is performing. “You are really catching on fast. If you keep up the good work, you’ll be an assistant manager by the end of the year”.
- *Indoctrination*- Information aimed at motivating employees by impressing the organizations mission upon them and specifying how they should related to it. Efforts to encourage a sense of mission & dedication to the goals of the organization. “If everyone will put in a little extra effort, we can become the number one producer of X components.”

Downward communication across several levels is prone to considerable distortion. As much as 80% of top management’s message may be lost by the time the message reaches five levels below. There are usually three main reasons for the distortion. One reason is that faulty message transmission may occur because of sender carelessness, poor communication skills, & the difficulty of encoding a message that will be clearly understood by individuals at multiple levels. Another is that managers tend to overuse one-way communication methods, such as, memos, manuals, & newsletters, leaving little possibility for immediate feed back regarding receiver understanding. Finally, some managers may intentionally or unintentionally filter communications by withholding, screening, or manipulating information. A major problem with managers & downward communication is their assumption that employees don’t need or want to know much about what is going on. Intentional filtering typically occurs when a manager seeks to enhance personal power over subordinates by tightly controlling organizational information.

B. Upward Communication

Formal messages also flow upward from subordinates to supervisors and managers. Without upward communication, management would never know how their downward messages were received & interpreted by the employees & would miss out on valuable ideas; workers would not get the chance to be part of the company. To solve problems & make intelligent decisions, management must learn what's going on in the organization. Because they can't be everywhere at once, executives depend on lower-level employees to furnish them with accurate, timely reports on problems, emerging trends, opportunities or improvements, etc. It is very important because it provides higher management with the information needed for decision making. It also cultivates employee loyalty by giving employees an opportunity to be heard, to air their grievances, and to offer suggestions. Finally upward communication provides the feedback necessary to let supervisors know whether subordinates received and understood messages that were sent downward.

The following types of messages are valuable when communicated upward:

- What subordinates are doing: highlights of their work, achievements, progress, & future job plan. "We'll have that job done by closing time today".
- Outlines of unsolved work problems on which subordinates now need aid or may require help in the future. "We are still having trouble with the air conditioner in the accounting office".
- Suggestions of ideas for improvements within departments in the organization as a whole. "I think I have figured a way to give people the vacation schedules they want and still keep our staffing up"
- How subordinates think & feel about each other and their jobs, their associates & their organization. "I am having a hard time working with Getachew. He seems to think I am mad at him. Or "I am getting frustrated. I have been in the same job for over a year now, and I am seeking for more responsibility".

Forms of upward communication include one – to – one meeting with one’s immediate supervisor, staff meetings with supervisors, suggestion systems, grievance procedures, employee attitude survey, progress reports, inquiries, etc.

The distortion that characterizes downward communication also plagues upward communication. First, individuals are likely to be extremely selective about the information that they transmit upward. Information favourable to the sender is very likely to be sent upward. In contrast, information that is unfavourable to the sender will probably be blocked, even when it is important to the organization. Subordinates are more likely to filter information when they do not trust their superiors, perceive that their superiors have considerable influence over their careers, & have a strong desire to move up. Second, managers do not expend sufficient effort in encouraging upward communication. Managers often behave in manners that exacerbate the situation, usually through punishing the bearer of bad news or allowing themselves to be isolated from subordinates at lower levels.

C. Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication involves exchange of information among individuals on the same organizational level, such as across or within departments. Thus, it generally involves colleagues & peers. Horizontal information informs, supports, & coordinates activities both interdepartmentally & interdepartmentally. Considerable horizontal communication in organizations stems from staff specialists, in areas such as engineering, accounting, & human resources management, who provide advice to managers in various departments. Horizontal communication is important to help coordinate work assignments, share information on plans and activities, negotiate differences and develop inter personal support, thereby creating a more cohesive work unit. The more that individuals or departments within an organization must interact, with each other to accomplish their objectives the more frequent and intense will be the horizontal communication. Horizontal communication is especially important in an organization for the following purposes:

- To coordinate task when several employees or departments are each working on part of an important project.
- To solve problems such as how to reduce waste or how to increase the number of items assembled each hour.

- To share information such as an easier way to perform a task or the results of a new survey.
- To solve conflicts such as jealousy or disagreements between co-workers.
- To build rapport: peer support.

Three major factors tend to impede necessary, work-related horizontal communication. First, rivalry among individuals or work units can influence individuals to hide information that is potentially damaging to them selves or that may aid others. Second, specialization may cause individuals to be concerned mainly about the work of their own unit & to have little appreciation for the work & communication needs of others. For example, scientists in research and development unit that is focused on long-term projects may find it difficult to interrupt their work to help with current customer problems identified by the sales department. Third, motivation may be lacking when subordinate horizontal communication is not encouraged or rewarded.

D. Diagonal Communication (cross channel communication)

Cross channel communication is the exchange of information among employees in different work units who are neither subordinate nor superior to each other. Staff specialists use cross channel communications frequently because their responsibilities typically involve many departments within the organization. Because they lack line authority to direct those to whom they communicate, they must often rely on their persuasive skills, as for instance when the human resource department encourages employees to complete a job satisfaction questionnaire. Some organizational structures employ teams comprised of members from different functional areas, even different levels of the hierarchy. With more & more firms reducing the number of management layers & increasing the use of self managed work teams, many workers are being required to communicate with others in different departments & on different levels to solve problems & coordinate work. For instance, a team might be formed from all functional areas (accounting, marketing, operations, & human resources) to work on a specific product project to ensure that all points of view are considered.

Check Point

- ✓ Describe internal and external communication in an organization?
- ✓ Explain all formal flow of communication in an organization?

Informal Communication (Grapevine)

Formal organization charts illustrate how information is supposed to flow. In actual practice, however, lines and boxes on a piece of paper cannot prevent people from talking with one another. Every organization has an informal communication network –a grapevine-that supplements official channels.

As the following examples, show not all informal messages are idle rumours. Informal communication can serve several useful functions:

Confirming- some informal communication confirms formal messages. You have probably heard this sort of confirmation yourself. The boss is really serious about cutting down on long-distance calls this time. I heard him yelling about it when I walked past his office.”

Expanding- Information communication can fill in the gaps left by incomplete formal messages. You might say to an experienced co worker “the invitation to the office party says ‘casual dress ‘what mean –jeans and T- shirt or sport coat and tie?”

Expediting- Informal networks can often deliver messages more quickly than official channels can. Canny job hunters, for example, often use personal contacts to learn about openings within an organization before the vacancies are published.

Contradicting- sometimes informal networks contradict official messages. You might learn from a friend in accounting that the deadline for purchases on this year budget is not as firm as it sounded in the comptroller’s recent memo.

Circumventing- Informal contacts can sometimes help you bypass official channels that are unnecessary cumbersome and time consuming. Your tennis partner who works

in duplicating might sneak in an occasional rush job for you instead of putting it at the end of the line.

Supplementing-sometimes even management realizes that informal communication can get the job done better than the more formal variety can. Paradoxical as it seems, many companies elevate informal communication to an official policy by encouraging open, unstructured contacts between people from various parts of the organization.

One classical study investigated four possible configurations for grapevine chains. **Single strand** chain communication moves serially from person A to B to C and so on (each tells one another). With the **gossip chain** person A seeks out and tells others (one tells all). When following the **probability chain**, person A spreads the message randomly; as do individuals F and D (each randomly tells others). In the **cluster chain**, person A tells selected individuals and one of these tells selected others (some selected others). The study found that the cluster chain was the most predominant form, which suggests that individuals who are part of grapevines are likely to be selective about the persons to whom they relay information and that only some of these persons will in turn pass the information further.

Despite the fact that grapevines sometimes create difficulties when they carry gossip and false rumors, they are a fact of life in organizations and it is unrealistic for managers to think that they can eliminate grapevine. The type of information the grapevine carries depends on the “health” of the organization. If an organization's managers are fairly open with employees and send all necessary information through formal channels, the grapevine usually carries only personal interest items.

1.8. Principles Of Communication

To compose effective messages you need to apply certain specific communication principles. These principles tie in closely with the basic concepts of the communication process and are important for both written and oral communications. They provide guidelines for choice of content and style of presentation-adapted to the purpose and receiver of your message. Called the “seven C’s,” they are completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness.

1. Completeness: Your business message is “complete” when it contains all facts the reader or listener needs for the reaction you desire. Remember that communicators differ in their mental filters; they are influenced by their backgrounds, viewpoints, needs, experiences, attitudes, status, and emotions.

Completeness is necessary for several reasons: **First**, complete messages are more likely to bring the desired results without the expense of additional messages. **Second**, they can do a better job of building goodwill. **Third**, they can help avert costly lawsuits that may result if important information is missing. **Last**, papers that seem inconsequential can be surprisingly important if the information they contain is complete and effective. In high-level conferences, in courtrooms, and in governmental hearings, the battle often centres on an ordinary-looking message that becomes important because of the complete information it contains.

As you strive for completeness, keep the following guidelines-in mind:

- Answer all questions asked. The first important guideline to make your message complete is to answer all questions that are asked. When ever you reply to an inquiry, try to answer all questions-stated and implied.
- Give something extra, when desirable.
- Check for the five W’s (who, what, where, when and why) and any other essentials.

Answer All Questions Asked

The first important guideline to make your message complete is to answer all questions that are asked. Whenever you reply to an inquiry, try to answer all questions-stated and implied. A prospective customer’s reaction to an incomplete reply is likely to be unfavourable. The customer may think the respondent is careless or is purposely trying to conceal a weak spot. In general, “omissions cast suspicions, whether you are answering an inquiry about your product or recommending a former employee for a new job. If you have no information on a particular question, say so clearly. If you have unfavourable information in answering to questions, handle your reply with both tact and honesty.

Give something extra, when desirable

This is the second commonly recommended guideline that makes your message complete. The words “when desirable,” in the above heading, are essential. At times it might not be at all important for you to give extra message for a question that is asked. Doing so might even complicate the situation and the message may not be addressed in an effective way. But in some instances you must do more than answer the question. For instance you might be required to give additional information to a customer’s specific questions. The customer may not know what she/he needs, or their questions may be inadequate.

Check for the five W’s and any other Essentials

The third way to help make your message complete is to answer, whenever desirable, the “five W” questions who, what, where, when why-and any other essentials, such as how. The five-question method is especially useful when you write requests announcements, or other informative messages. For instance, to order (request) merchandise from a supplier, make clear what you want, when you need it, to whom and where it is to be sent, and how payment will be made. To reserve a hotel hall, specify the accommodations needed (what), location (where), sponsoring organization (who), date and time (when), event (why), and other necessary details (how).

2. **Conciseness:** Conciseness is saying what you have to say in the fewest possible words without sacrificing the other **C** qualities. A concise message saves time and expense for both sender and receiver. Conciseness contributes to emphasis. By eliminating unnecessary words, you help make important ideas stand out. To achieve conciseness it is recommended to observe the following suggestions:

- Eliminate wordy expressions
- Include only relevant statements
- Avoid unnecessary repetition.

Eliminate Wordy Expressions

The elimination of unnecessary words from your statements is the first thing that helps your message to be concise. This important guideline can be explained by emphasizing on five points.

1. *Use single – word substitutes instead of phrases whenever possible without changing meanings.* Have you ever realized that some messages communicated could have been shorter and yet more meaningful? here below are some examples

Wordy	Concise
• Consensus of opinion	Consensus
• Date of the policy	Policy date
• During the year of	During
• In accordance with your request	As you requested
• In due course	Soon
• In spite of the fact that	Although

Have you noted how concise we can be by using the words in the second column as replacements to the phrases in the first column?

2. *Omit trite, unnecessary expressions,* such as “allow me to say,” in reply I wish to state,” please be advised,” Also, instead of “please find attached” (or “enclosed”), use concise statements like “attached are,” “enclosed is,” or “the enclosed list includes.”
3. *Omit “which” and “that” clauses whenever possible.* As much as possible you should avoid these two clauses in your statements as they making it more understandable to the receiver of the message. Look at the simple example below.

Wordy: She bought desks that are of the executive type.

Concise: She bought executive – type desks.

4. *Avoid overusing “It is,” “It was,” “There is,” “There was,” “There are,” “There were” at sentence beginnings.* The example below shows how a wordy (long) sentence can be made concise.

Wordy: It was known by Ato Abebe that we must reduce the price by 12 birr per unit.

Concise: Ato Abebe knew we must reduce the price by 12 birr per unit.

Wordy: There are four rules that should be observed.

Concise: Four rules should be observed.

5. *Whenever possible, use a verb in the present tense and active voice using present tenses and active voices will make your messages to be over simple and understandable.* Remember! The objective of communication is to make the receiver of the message understand what is said perfectly, not to make your message long and complicated.

Business people are not impressed by speakers who use difficult words and expressions but are rather interested in the content of the message. They want short and precise messages. Example:

Wordy: The total balance due will be found on page 2 of this report.

Concise: The balance due is on page 2 of this report.

6. Include only Relevant Statements

The effective, concise message should omit not only unnecessarily wordy expressions but also irrelevant material. To be sure you include only relevant facts. Observe the following suggestions:

- Stick to the purpose of the message.
- Prune irrelevant words and rambling sentences
- Omit information obvious to the receiver; do not repeat at length what that person has already told you.

- Avoid long introductions, unnecessary explanation, excessive adjectives and prepositions, pompous words, gushy politeness.
- Get to the important point tactfully and concisely.

Wordy: At this time I am writing to you to enclose the post paid appointment card for the purpose of arranging a convenient time when we might get together for a personal interview. (30 words; 5 prepositions)

Concise: Will you please return the enclosed card and name a convenient time for an interview? (15 words; 1 preposition)

Avoid Unnecessary Repetition

Do you easily get fed up with somebody's talk if she/he repeats the message over and over again? Sometimes repetition is necessary for emphasis. But when the same thing is said two or three times without reason, the message becomes wordy and boring. Here are three ways to eliminate unnecessary repetition:

- Use a shorter name after you have mentioned the long one once: Instead of the "Arba Minch Textile Factory", "Arba Minch factory",
- Use pronouns or initials rather than repeat long names: instead of "Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation" "EEPCO", Instead of "The Federal Inland Revenue Authority" "FIRA"
- Cut out all needless repetition of phrases and sentences

3. CONSIDERATION

As discussed in chapter two, the interrelationship of the message sender and receiver profoundly affects communication effectiveness. Consideration means that you prepare every message with the recipient in mind and try to put your self in his/her place. Try to visualize your readers (or listeners)-with their desires, problems, circumstances, emotions, and probable reactions to your request. Then handle the matter from their point of view. This thoughtful consideration is also called "you-attitude,"

empathy, the human touch, and understanding of human nature. It does not mean, however, that you should overlook the needs of your organization.

In a broad but true sense, consideration underlies the other six C's of good business communication. You adapt your language and message content to your receiver's needs when you make your message complete, concise, concrete, clear, courteous, and correct. However, in all four specific ways you can indicate you are considerate:

- Focus on “you” instead of “I” and “we.”
- Show reader benefit or interest in reader.
- Emphasize on positive, pleasant facts.
- Apply integrity & ethics.

Focus on ‘you’ instead of ‘I’ & ‘we’

Your receivers are usually more concerned about themselves than about you or the company you represent. They are more likely to read your message when they see their name and the pronoun “you” rather than “I,” “we,” or “us.”

Usually it is very desirable to get the attention of your reader into the first paragraph or the attention of the person hearing you in the first few minutes or even seconds. If psychologically desirable, begin with “you” or “your,” and keep your reader in the message (tactfully) until you finish. The opposite of you-attitude is we-attitude, in which the writer views every matter from his or her own (or the organization's) standpoint rather than from the reader's. Examples below contrasts the “we” attitude” and the “you – attitude”.

Show Reader Benefit or Interest in Reader

Whenever possible and true, show how your readers will benefit from whatever the message asks or announces. They will be more likely to react favorably and do what you suggest if you show that benefits are worth the effort and cost. In situations where actual direct reader benefit is impossible or

irrelevant to the subject matter, the message should at least show interest in and concern for the reader's needs or viewpoint.

Even a simple request gets better response when a reader-benefit plug accompanies it. For example, an insurance company that wanted to update its address files sent to half of its policyholders a double postcard with this message.

Emphasize the positive, pleasant Facts

A third way to show consideration for your reader (or listener) is to emphasize the positive. This means:

- Stressing what can be done instead of what cannot be done. And
- Focusing on words your recipient can consider favorably.

The reader (or listener) wants to know what you can do for him/her. For most people negative words like no, wont, cannot, never, impossible trigger unpleasant emotional reactions. By making clear what you can or will do, you (by implication) often make clear what you cannot do, without using a single negative word. Furthermore, whenever possible and helpful, tell why or how.

Negative-Unpleasant

It is **impossible to open** an
account for you.

Positive-Pleasant

As soon as your signature card
reaches us, we **will gladly open**
an account for you.

Sometimes you will have to be very careful in your word choice. Some people may find some words to be impolite when your intention was not to create such a perception. Be very careful not to offend your customers (or any individual for that matter) by the words you have chosen. Among the positive words to which people react favorably are: cordial, happy, help, generous, loyal, pleasure, thanks, thoughtful. Words with negative connotations that often arouse unfavorable reactions include blame, complaint, failed, fault, negligence, regret, reject, trouble, unfair, and many others. For example, in the following opening of a letter the negative words (underlined) focus on ideas you'd rather not have

the reader think about. We regret that, since you closed your account, your name will be missing from our long list of satisfied customers. We sincerely hope that. Despite the best efforts of our fine staff, there were no occasions on which you felt we failed to serve you properly.

A better opening expresses appreciation for the customer's patronage in the first paragraph, as shown below. Then the second paragraph welcomes him/her to other services. Having you as a member of XYZ Savings Bank was a pleasure. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you. We noticed recently that you closed your account with us. Perhaps you reached that particular goal for which you were saving, or it may be that an emergency arose which called for a large outlay of cash. Whatever the reason, we were happy to have some small part in your financial program. You are cordially invited to use our other profitable, timesaving services that can provide benefits for you in various ways.

Apply Integrity & Ethics

To be truly considerate, you need also to apply integrity – high moral standards, personal honour, truthfulness, & sincerity – to your written & oral messages. Integrity is indispensable in our jobs, in business transactions, in social & political activities, in everything we-do. Without it business communications would prove worthless, & our confidence in people would be shattered.

Ethics is concerned with what is right human conduct. Codes of ethics provide standards enabling us to determine the fundamental distinction between right & wrong human behavior.

Because you are an agent of your company, you help build your company's image. To make this image one of integrity & ethical conduct required consistently fair standards & honesty in communications with persons outside & inside your organization.

When you show consideration for your customers, you try to let them know you are aware of & are doing something about their interest & needs. This does not mean that, however, you yield to the temptation of showing favoritism, allowing deviation for one customer that you would not allow for all other customers in similar circumstances, or arranging money kickbacks & bribes to obtain

government or commercial business. Studies have shown that the behavior of superiors & pressures from top management to meet competition & increase profits were the chief factors influencing executives to make unethical decisions. Typical examples include misrepresenting contents of products, substituting materials without customer knowledge after the job contract has been awarded, scheduling inaccurate delivery dates to get a contract, so on. Therefore, an ethical boss can be an important influence for ethical employee communications.

4. CONCRETNESS

Communicating concretely means being specific, definite and vivid rather than vague and general. The following guidelines should help you compose concrete, convincing messages

a) Use specific facts and figures

If possible, try to substitute an exact fact or figure for a general word to make your message more concrete and convincing using specific facts and figures whenever possible adds up to the content of your message. The receiver of your message would be very comfortable with your speech when you can support some of your ideas with facts. For instance you will lend your ears more to a person who tells you that currently around 10 million people in Ethiopia are in need of food assistance than a person who tells you a lot of people in Ethiopia are facing drought.

b) Put Action in your verbs

Strong verbs can activate other words and help make your sentences definite. Generally use active rather than passive verbs, because active verbs help make your sentences more specific, personal, concise and emphatic. Look at the following comparison between active and passive verb.

Table 2: Comparison of Active and Passive verbs

Passive (subject receives the Action)	Active (subject performs the action)
Tests <u>were made</u> by us	We <u>made</u> tests
A full report <u>will be sent</u> to you by the supervisor	The supervisor will send you a full report (or you <u>will receive</u> a full report from the supervisor)
These figures are <u>checked</u> by the research department	The research department checks these figures

C) Choose Vivid, Image- Building words

Among the devices you can use to make your messages forceful, vivid, and specific are comparisons, figurative language, and concrete instead of abstract nouns. Sometimes adding a comparison helps your recipient build a meaningful picture.

E.g. **Vague:** - There are a great many solder joints in the space craft, and each must have just the right amount of solder.

Clear: - The spacecraft has 2.5 million solder joints. If an extra drop of solder had been left on these joints, the excess weight would have been equivalent to the payload of the vehicle.

Still another way that makes your message concrete is to use concrete nouns instead of abstract nouns, especially as subjects of your sentences concrete nouns represent subjects your recipient can touch, see, smell, feel, hear, or taste.

Abstract nouns as subjects designate intangible concepts. They bring only vague “pictures,” if any, to a persons mind.

Abstract – Consideration was given to the fact that.....

Concrete – The committee considered.....

5. CLARITY

Clarity means getting your messages across so that the receiver will understand what you are trying to convey you want that person to interpret your words with the same meaning you have in mind.

Accomplishing that goal is difficult because, as you know, individual experiences are never identical and words may have different meanings to different persons. Some ways that help you make your message clear include:

a) Choose short, familiar, conversational words

When you have a choice between a long word and a short one, use the short, familiar word that your reader or listener will quickly understand. Also, use synonyms in stead of Latin terms if they, though short, may be unfamiliar to your message receivers.

b) Construct effective sentences and paragraphs

Arranging your words in well constructed sentences and paragraphs is also an essential task that requires adaptation to your reader. Important characteristics to consider are length, unity, and coherence.

Short sentences are preferred. The suggested average sentence length should be about 17 to 20 words. Because of pleasing variety of length is desirable, you can have a range of from 3 to 30 or more words. But when a sentence exceeds 40 words, try to rewrite it in to more than one sentence. Please also note that it is important that your sentences are not too short either.

In a sentence – Whether simple, compound, or complex unity means that you have one main idea and any other ideas in the sentence must be closely related to it.

In a coherence sentence the words are correctly arranged so that the ideas clearly express the intended meaning. Place the correct modifier as close as possible to the word it is supposed to modify.

c) Include Examples, Illustrations, and other visual Aids, when desirable

When you have a complicated or lengthy explanation in a letter, speech, or report, you will often find you can improve the clarity by giving your recipients an example, analogy, or illustration. Furthermore, visual aids, such as headings, tabulations, itemizations, pictures, charts-are definite aids to clarity and easy understanding. Also, typographical aids can be useful some important statements may be underlined, numbered, colored, or typed in all CAPITALS or *italics* or on short lines with wider margins.

6. COURTESY

Courtesy messages help to strengthen present business friendships, as well as make new friends. Courtesy stems from sincere you-attitude. It is not merely politeness with mechanical insertion of “pleases” and “thank- yous.” To be courteous, considerate communicators should follow a number of guidelines these guide lines are:

a) Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative

Tact instead of Bluntness

Though few people are intentionally abrupt or blunt, these traits are a common cause of discourtesy. Some times they stem from mistaken idea of conciseness, some times from negative personal attitudes. Avoid expressions like

Tactless /Blunt

Your letter is not clear at all: I can’t understand it.

Tactful

If I understood your
letter correctly it seems that it
needs some clarification.

Thoughtfulness and appreciation

Writers who send cordial, courteous messages of deserved congratulations and appreciations (to person both inside and outside the firm) help build goodwill. The value of goodwill or public esteem for the firm may be worth thousands or millions of birr.

Sometimes, silence can also be considered significantly discourteous. A thoughtful, courteous businessperson –no matter how busy-should not ignore answering customers or colloquies inquire. Even a short, courteous note written at the bottom of the request and returned promptly, a tactful phone call by the secretary is usually better than no reply.

b) Omit expressions that irritate, hurt or belittle

The thoughtful business communicator should avoid expressions that might offend the reader or listener. Such expressions are discussed here in two groups: irritating, and questionably humorous.

Irritating expressions

We don't believe

We are amazed you can't

Why have you ignored

questionably humorous

you should know

you are delinquent

you failed that

c) Grant and apologize good-naturedly

Whenever you grant a customer's request, begin your letter with the best news first and inject a courteous, ungrudging tone.

7. CORRECTNESS

The correctness principle comprises more than proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. A message may be perfect grammatically and mechanically but still insult or lose a customer and fail to achieve its purpose. The term correctness, as applied to a business message, means the writer should:

Use the right level of language

As you may probably know, the English language is becoming a world language. It is very important for you to have the right level of the language to communicate (oral or written) correctly. The three levels of language- formal, informal and substandard overlap because of our ever changing language. English with almost a million words has the richest largest vocabulary on earth. Some words once considered substandard have moved into the informal level, and some once-informal words are now acceptable on a formal level.

Maintain acceptable writing mechanics

Acceptable writing mechanics include correct punctuation, capitalization, syllabication, and spelling-plus correct sentence and paragraph structure. The two common weaknesses in writing mechanics that deserve special though brief, attention are incorrect spelling and careless omissions.

Business executives and customers expect you to spell correctly and may begin to question your overall ability if you misspell-especially the customers name and everyday words like convenience, questionnaire, stationery, personnel and accommodation. Another way to maintain correct writing mechanics is to double-check for any careless omissions of punctuation marks or words needed for grammatical accuracy.

Choose non-discriminatory expressions

Another important requirement for correctness is “equal treatment of the sexes” and nonbiased toward people of different races, ethnic origins, and physical features. Conscientious business communicators (as well as authors) should be continually alert to use non-discriminatory expressions whenever possible. Try to choose non-discriminatory language when you refer to occupational roles and achievements, personal characteristics, physical and mental attributes humanity at large, names and various title designations.

Check accuracy of figures, facts and words

Absolute accuracy is essential for effective writing and oral messages. When figures, facts and some words are incorrectly used, they can cause serious problems. To be sure of the accuracy of facts, communicators should verify all statements before writing and again before signing or approving, messages. One erroneous digit-creating for instance, Birr 100,000 instead of 10,000 makes a difference of birr 90,000 and may result in lawsuit. In addition a wrong figure in account number muddles up records and leads to untold problems.

Apply all other pertinent C qualities

We need to use the other C's in the communication process to keep the correctness of our message to have the right response from the receiver.

Check Point

- ✓ How informal Communications help an organization?
- ✓ Briefly explain principles of communication?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Communication is the process of people sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings with each other in commonly understandable ways
- Communication is the life blood of every organization
- The process of communication involves five elements: sender-encoder, message, medium, receiver-decoder, feed back.
- The communication process has five phases: The sender has an idea, the idea becomes a message, the message is transmitted, the receiver gets the message, and the receiver reacts & sends feedback to the sender.
- The major barriers of communication include the following: Improperly chosen Channel selection, Physical barriers, semantics, perception of reality, attitudes & Opinions, Information overload. The ways of avoiding or overcoming the barriers include: Fostering an open communication climate, Committing to ethical communication, Understanding the difficulties involved in intercultural communication, adopting an audience-centered approach, using technology wisely and responsibly to obtain and share information, and creating and processing messages effectively and efficiently.
- Communication can be divided into two based on when it is made: Internal and external. Internal communication involves transmission of information within the organization. External communication is communication with people outside an organization. Communication also can be divided into formal and informal communication. The formal communication is communication that flows along the organization's lines of authority. However, lines of communication or organizational structures cannot prevent people from talking with one another. We call that communication an informal communication network –a grapevine-that supplements official channels.
- To compose effective messages you need to apply certain specific communication principles, called the “seven C’s,” They are completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness.

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 1

Choose the best among the given choices.

1. An individual who initiates the communication

- A. Receiver
- B. Decoder
- C. Encoder
- D. Encoding
- E. All

2. The means used to convey the message

- A. Channel
- B. Decoding
- C. Encoding
- D. Message
- E. All

3. The dictionary meaning of the word or the meaning of the word on which most people probably agree is called

- A. Denotative meaning
- B. Connotative meaning
- C. Sarcastic meaning
- D. Idiomatic meaning
- E. All

4. Top managers hesitate to listen to those individuals lower in the hierarchy is called

- A. Credibility
- B. Status consciousness
- C. Closed mind
- D. Unfavourable information
- E. None

5. The conditions of having too much information to process is called

- A. Information overload
- B. Perceptions of reality
- C. Over using one channel
- D. Barriers of channel selection
- E. None

6. People tend to react favourably when the message they receive agree with their view towards the information, the set of facts and the sender.

- A. Channel selection
- B. Interpretation of words
- C. Bypassed instruction
- D. Attitude and opinions
- E. None

7. The following statements are true about perceptions of reality except

- A. Reality is not a fixed concept
- B. Human being has limited sensory perception
- C. Each person mental filter is unique
- D. Two persons perceive reality in the same way

8. Which one of the following is wrong about non verbal communication?

- A. Information conveyed by action
- B. Receiver gives more weight to verbal communication
- C. Non verbal communication can stand alone
- D. Non verbal communication conveys the emotional state of the sender
- E. None

9. _____ refers to a message being cut out and probably be distorted before it is passed on to the intended receiver

- A. Information overloads
- B. Poor listening
- C. Incorrect filtering
- D. Message competition e) none

10. For which one of the following horizontal communication is used

- A) Coordinating tasks
- B) Sharing information
- C) Solving problems
- D) Resolving conflict
- E) All
- F) None

11. When individuals from different units and different organizational level communicate each other

- A) Downward communication
- B) Upward communication
- C) Horizontal communication
- D) Diagonal communication
- E) All

12. Among the following one is not true about grapevine?

- A) Not flow along the official path
- B) Communication takes place without task requirement
- C) It is not deliberately designed
- D) It is intentionally defined and designed by the organization
- E) None

13. The following messages are valuable when communicated upward. Expect

- A) What subordinates are doing
- B) Feedback on employee's performance appraisal
- C) Suggestions for improvements within departments
- D) How subordinates think about their job
- E) None

14. Most downward communication involves in the following information's. Except

- A) Job instructions related to specific tasks
- B) Rules and regulations of the organizations
- C) Outlines of unsolved problems on which subordinates need aid
- D) Explaining the relationship between a task and other organizational tasks
- E) None

15. They are important guidelines to eliminate unnecessary words from your statement except

- A) Omit unnecessary expressions

- B) When ever possible use passive voice
- C) Omit that close when ever possible
- D) Avoid over using “it is” & “there are” at a sentence beginnings
- E) None

16. Among the following one is not true about consideration

- A) Prepare a message with a recipient in mind
- B) Focus on I & We
- C) Whenever possible show reader benefits
- D) Stress what can be done instead of what cannot be done
- E) None

17. _____ means being specific, definite & vivid.

- A) Consideration
- B) Completeness
- C) Concreteness
- D) Conciseness
- E) None

CHAPTER TWO

MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

Medium (singular form of media) is the method used to deliver a message. As a business communicator, you can often choose whether to put your message in writing as a letter or memo. You can deliver it by hand or send it via regular mail or use delivery services like fax or electronic mail. Or you can communicate it orally, either over the phone or in person. You might also opt for non-verbal form of communication.

Whether you are a leader or a participant in a certain discussion or decision, you will use both written and oral means of communication. Frequently a position paper or a request for action will be written, and then followed by an oral discussion of the proposal. Persuasion of either the leader or the listener is a central purpose in these media.

In numerous business meetings a written problem-solution organization is presented as background, and then followed by oral discussion that may lead to a decision. That decision is then further supported and defended orally against opposition by others. In this chapter, you will get introduced to various media of communication: oral, written, and non-verbal. The detailed discussion on these media will be presented in the next consecutive chapters.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- Know basic forms of communication and select the best form of communication for your message
- Differentiate between verbal and non-verbal communication
- Have understanding of situations under which we will use each of the media types
- Recognize the importance of media in business communication
- Adapt your message to your audiences using various communication media

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 2.1 The Basic Forms (Media) of Communication
- 2.2 Nonverbal Communication
- 2.3 Types of nonverbal Communication
- 2.4 Oral communication Media
- 2.5 Written communication Media

2.1 THE BASIC FORMS (MEDIA) OF COMMUNICATION

Communication occurs in many forms. You can pick up the phone and have a conversation with your supervisor or leave him e-mail message if he is not available. In turn, he can respond to your message in the form of his choice. The form in which a message is communicated changes constantly. The two basic forms of communication are non-verbal communication and verbal communication. The most basic form of communication is non-verbal communication.

2.2 NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non verbal communication is all intentional and unintentional messages that are neither written nor spoken. All the cues, gestures, facial expressions, spatial relationships, and attitude toward time that enable people to communicate without words. Anthropologists theorize that long before human beings used words to talk things over, our ancestors communicated with one another by using their bodies. They gritted their teeth to show anger; they smiled and touched one another to indicate affection. Although we have come a long way since those primitive times, we still use non-verbal cues to express superiority, dependence, dislike, respect, love and other feelings.

Non verbal communication differs from verbal communication in fundamental ways. For one thing, it is less structured, so it is more difficult to study. Even experts do not really know how people learn non-verbal behaviour. No one teaches a baby to cry or smile, yet these forms of self-expression are almost universal. Other types of nonverbal communication, such as the meaning of colours and certain gestures, vary from culture to culture.

Non verbal communication also differs from verbal communication in terms of intent and spontaneity. When you use verbal communication, you plan your words. You have a conscious purpose; you think about the message, if only for a moment. However, when you communicate nonverbally, you sometimes do so unconsciously.

2.3 TYPES OF NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Under our definition of communication, the types of non verbal communication are almost limitless. However, in this part of our discussion, we will cover only those types of non verbal communication those are most applicable to business communication:

- Facial expressions and eye contact
- Other body movements and gestures
- Clothing and personal appearance
- Distance and personal space
- Physical environment
- Time

Facial expressions and eye contact

The eyes and face are especially helpful means of communicating nonverbally. They can express hidden emotions – anger, annoyance, confusion, enthusiasm, fear, hatred, joy, love, interest, sorrow, surprise, uncertainty and others. They can also contradict verbal statements.

Direct eye contact (but not staring) is usually desirable when two people converse face to face. The people whose eyes droop or shift away from the listener is thought to be shy or perhaps dishonest and untrustworthy. But we must be careful not to over generalize.

Although the eyes and the face are usually a reliable source of meaning, people sometimes manipulate their expressions to stimulate an emotion they do not feel or to mask their true feelings.

Other Body Movements and Gestures

Movements and gestures of other parts of the body are more closely tied to culture than facial expressions and eye contact. Therefore, it is extremely misleading to isolate single body movements (such as crossing the legs) and give it a precise meaning. You should keep in mind, however, that your body movements and gestures may be given specific meaning by others regardless of your intentions. For example, poor posture during an interview may be interpreted as disrespect, lack of enthusiasm, or indicative of poor work habits. The way a person stands may indicate self confidence, status, friendliness, and mood and so on. Even weak or overly strong hand shakes will be given some significance by many people.

Skilled communicators also make sure that their body movements and gestures do not contradict their verbal messages. Stress may cause us to send non-verbal indicators that contradict the confident message we are trying to convey. Such stress indicators include rubbing the eyes, pulling on the cheeks, rubbing the back of the neck, or rubbing the forehead. Suppose you were a customer trying to negotiate a price reduction on a certain item. Any non-verbal stress indicators employed by the salesperson would probably indicate to you that the salesperson was weakening, and you would renew your efforts to reduce the price.

As a business or professional person, you can improve your communication techniques by monitoring your conscious and unconscious body movements and gestures. Ask colleagues and family for feedback, and review a video tape of yourself (taped during a meeting, interview, or oral presentation).

Clothing and personal Appearance

Clothing and personal appearance also communicate non verbal messages. Your appearance and clothing help others determine your status, credibility and persuasiveness. Clothing, jewellery, hairstyles, cosmetics, fingernails, neatness, stature are parts of personal appearance. They can convey impressions regarding occupation, age, sex, nationality, social and economic level, job status, and good or poor judgment, depending on circumstances. If your goal is to make a good impression, adopt the style of the people you want to impress.

Distance and personal Space

The informal distance rules for conversing in various situations differ from culture to culture, family to family, and person to person. When others violate an individual's personal space requirements, that person becomes uncomfortable and will move to correct the distance. Many people are completely unaware of their personal distance requirements because, as we mentioned earlier, such requirements usually fall into the informal level of culture. For example, in Ethiopia some of us unknowingly or knowingly hug a person we don't know without worrying about his or her distance requirement.

Knowledge of distance requirements of individuals is important to your business or professional success. Although there may be times when you wish to deliberately ignore the unwritten rules of appropriate distances (for example, to demonstrate power or status), generally you will want to improve communication by making sure every one feels comfortable.

Physical Environment

Dear learner, have you ever noticed how some rooms and offices seem friendly and inviting, while other rooms (or buildings) seem cold and unfriendly? Do you feel comfortable talking to your boss in his or her office? If you don't, you may simply be reacting to the fact that the office is the boss's territory, which gives the boss the upper hand.

Your negative reaction, however, may be caused by the room itself. Physical environments not only reveal to visitors characteristics of the owner of the territory, but also actually affect how a person communicates.

Psychologists state that each person reacts emotionally to the environment with "approach" (positive) or "avoidance" (negative) behaviours. Various researches have found that when participants perform tasks in "ugly" rooms, they experience "monotony, fatigue, headache, discontent, sleep, irritability, and hostility". However, when performing tasks in "attractive" rooms, participants experience "feelings of pleasure, comfort, enjoyment, energy and desire to continue the activity."

You may notice that in some factories and business firms, lower status employees may work in small, crowded, unattractive areas. Thoughtful managers can help improve morale and efficiency when they perceive employee attitudes, toward surroundings and follow suggestions for improving appearance.

Time

Time is another non verbal communication factor in the business world. If you have an appointment to discuss a production problem with a supervisor, do you arrive thirty minutes late? What non verbal messages would this behaviour communicate to you? Your interpretation of time depends on your cultural and regional background, on the situation and on the other people involved. Whether it is acceptable to arrive late for an appointment often depends on whether you are meeting with someone of equal rank, some one more important, or some one less important. Also, any one who is consistently late for appointments or in completing work assignments is often deemed inconsiderable or even undependable.

Check Point

- ✓ What is Media of communication?
- ✓ List basic forms/medium of communication?

2.4 ORAL COMMUNICATION MEDIA

Although you can express many things nonverbally, there are limits to what you can communicate without the help of language. If you want to discuss past events, idea, or abstractions, you need symbols that stand for your thoughts. Verbal Communication consists of words arranged in meaningful patterns. Verbal communication can further be divided into two categories oral communication and written communication. Here, under this topic, we will discuss oral communication.

Primary oral communication media include face – to – face conversation (the richest medium), telephone calls, speeches, presentations and meetings. Your choice between a face –to – face conversation and a telephone or video conference call would depend on audience location,

message importance, and your need for the sort of nonverbal feedback, the only body language can reveal.

The chief advantage of oral communication is the opportunity it provides for immediate feed back. This is the medium to use when you want the audience to ask questions and make comments or when you are trying to reach a group decision. It is also the best channel if there is an emotional component to your message and you want to read the audience's body language or hear the tone of their response.

2.5 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION MEDIA

Written messages also take many forms. They might be informal like the notes you use to jog your own memories or formal like elaborate reports you submit to your supervisor. Regardless of the form, written messages have one advantage. They let you plan and control the message.

A written format is appropriate when the information is complex, when a permanent record is needed for future reference, when the audience is large and geographically dispersed, and when immediate interaction with the audience is either unimportant or undesirable.

Although many types of written communication are specialized, the most common are letters, memos, and reports. Most letters and memos are relatively brief documents, generally one to two pages. Memos are the work horses of business communication, used for the routine, day – to – day exchange of information within the organization. You often use memo to designate responsibility, communicate the same material to many people, communicate policy and procedure, confirm oral agreements or decisions, and place specific information on record. In contrast, letters frequently go to outsiders, and they perform an important public relations function in addition to conveying a particular message.

Letters and memos are organized according to their purpose; the relationship between writer and reader dictates their style and tone.

Reports and proposals are factual, objective documents that may be distributed to either insiders or outsiders, depending on their purpose and subject. Reports are generally longer and more formal than letters and memos, and they have more components. Generally, written communication increases the sender's control but eliminates the possibility of immediate feedback

Table 3: Media of Communication

When choosing among the following channels and media consider the urgency, formality, complexity, confidentiality, emotional content and cost of sending your message as well as your audience's expectations and your need for a permanent record.	
An Oral Channel is Best When • You want immediate feedback from the audience • Your message is relatively simple and easy to accept • You don't need a permanent record • You can assemble the audience conveniently & economically • You want to encourage interaction to solve a problem or reach a decision Oral Media include • Face – to – face conversation, speeches, meetings • Telephone and voicemail	A Written Channel is Best When • You don't need immediate feedback • You do need a permanent verifiable record • Your message is detailed, is complex and requires careful planning • You are trying to reach an audience that is large & geographically dispersed • You want to minimize the chances for distortion that occur when a message is passed orally from person to person Written Media include • Letters, memos, reports, proposals • Electronic mail

• Audiotape and video tape • Teleconference and video conference	• Regular and special mail • Faxes
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Check Point

- ✓ What is Verbal Communication?
- ✓ List categories of verbal Communication?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Medium is the method you use to send your message. There are various media through which you can send your message. They are generally divided into three: Oral media (communicating a message orally either over the phone or in person), written media (putting a message in writing as a letter, memo or any report) or using electronic devices such as electronic mail or fax), and non-verbal media (sending message through media which does not use words- facial expression, gesture, other body movements).
- Verbal communication uses words arranged in meaningful patterns. The two major types of verbal communication are oral and written communication.
- Oral communication consists of face-to-face conversation, telephone calls, speeches, presentations and meeting. Their choice depends on audience location and message importance.
- Written messages might take formal or informal forms. The most common types of written communication media are letters, memos and reports.
- Non-verbal communication is all intentional or unintentional messages that are neither written nor spoken. Non-verbal communication media include gestures, facial expressions, spatial relationships and attitudes toward time.

SELF-CHECK EXERCISE 2

Choose the best among the given alternatives

1. Which of the following is not a medium through which a message is sent
 - A. Speech
 - B. Teleconference
 - C. Fax
 - D. Letter
 - E. None of the above
2. Which of the following is the most basic form of communication
 - A. Telephoning
 - B. Using body movements
 - C. Electronic mail
 - D. Memo
 - E. None of the above
3. An oral channel is the best under the following situations except
 - A. You do not need a permanent record
 - B. You want immediate feedback
 - C. You do need a permanent and verifiable record
 - D. Your message is relatively simple
 - E. None of the above
4. Which of the following statements does not characterize non-verbal communication?
 - A. Nonverbal communication is spontaneous and is difficult to plan
 - B. Nonverbal communication sometimes is made unconsciously out of your mind control
 - C. Nonverbal communication is structured
 - D. Nonverbal communication is difficult to learn and study
 - E. Nonverbal communications vary from culture to culture
5. Brief documents usually used for internal communication within an organization and also Coined as “work horses” are said to be
 - A. Letters
 - B. Memos
 - C. Proposals

CHAPTER THREE

SPEECH

INTRODUCTION

Dear student, this is the third chapter of the course. The chapter is designed to discuss the important basic points that would enable you to have fundamental knowledge on speech. In this chapter, you will learn about the meaning, type, importance, parts of speech, the characteristics of a good speaker and the guidelines for an effective delivery of speech.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After studying the material in this unit, you will be able:

- Define speech
- Identify the different types of speech
- Describe the importance of speech
- Understand the characteristics of a good speaker
- Identify the different parts of speech
- Understand the general guidelines for an effective delivery of speech

CHAPTER OUTLINE

3.1 Types of speech

3.2 Parts of speech

3.3 Characteristics of good speaker

3.4 Guidelines for an effective delivery of speech

Speech is the process of establishing a common understanding among people within a business environment by means of spoken language. The widely applied means of oral communication in face- to- face business situations are listening short talks and presentations, conducting interview and meetings. Speech is one of the media of communication that we use to deliver message or information for many peoples at once.

3.1. TYPES OF SPEECH

Although there are many different types of oral presentations, they can be divided into three general categories: Presentation to inform, persuade and to entertain. Since entertainment is rarely the purpose of speeches by entry level employees and supervisors, we will discuss only informative and persuasive presentations.

INFORMATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Informative presentations occur continually in business and professional organizations. Although there is some overlap between informative and persuasive presentations, informative presentations are intended to increase understanding, not to change an attitude. The majority of informative presentations are informal in nature, most employees are expected to organize and present informal briefings and reports to colleagues and supervisors as a normal part of their jobs.

TYPES OF INFORMATIVE PRESENTATIONS

The basic purpose of an informative presentation is to promote understanding of ideas.

Many types of informative presentation are used in business situation. Although, the names given of various informative presentations differ greatly from company to company here we will discuss some of them. Examples of informative presentations are:

- Oral briefing
- Oral report
- Instruction
- Community good will

Oral Briefing

Oral briefing is designed to present a summary of fact's in a short period of time (usually fifteen minutes or less). A briefing may be given to an individual (such as an employee, supervisor, of client). Many briefings are informal; when an employee or supervisor informally presents information to colleagues at a weekly meeting other briefings are more formal, such as a briefing

on the status of a particular project given to an entire department. Since briefings last only a short time, few visuals are required.

It is impossible to supervisors to observe all events or situations themselves. Consequently, informative briefings and reports presented by their employees are the only way supervisors can stay up to date on the tremendous amount of information they need to make sound decisions.

Oral Report

Oral report is designed to present complete details and requires a longer period of time (usually more than fifteen minutes). A report may be a research report on the feasibility of producing a new item, an analytical report examining various ingredients such as those used to strengthen a type of plastic, a demonstrative report explaining how to use a new machine or company product, or an investigative report examining a problem area. Often decision making groups are required to prepare both written and oral reports on a problem and their recommendations for solving it. Like the briefings reports may be informal or formal but tend to be more formal than the most briefings.

If the report includes recommendations, the recommendations should be presented in an informative (not persuasive) manner and include both advantages and disadvantages. The detailed information presented in a report can be simplified by the use of visual aids.

Supervisors use briefings and reports to communicate company policies and operational procedures down ward to employees. Employees use briefings and reports to:

1. Communicate ideas and proposals upward to supervisors and horizontally to fellow workers and
2. To present information or demonstrate product use to clients.

Instructions

This is aimed at making clear a process or policy or even the philosophy of a company mostly to younger (newly coming) employees. It requires listeners to follow the explanation, learn from the instructions and then apply it within the organization.

Community good will

These are made by organizations that realize the value of remaining in contact with the community. Sensitive organizations spend considerable time and money to support their public relation offices that are meant to after and leave a positive company image in the minds of the community.

Check point

- ✓ What is Speech?
- ✓ List types of informative Speech?

PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS

The basic purpose of a persuasive presentation is to influence choices. Persuasion (specifically, selling ideas) was listed earlier as one of the most often used communication skills by people in entry level jobs, it may very well be one of the least effectively used.

Business people view persuasion as coercion. They feel that the only way to get people to do what they want is by force or trickery. Neither of these methods is effective and neither is really persuasion.

“Persuasion is communication intended to influence choice” but it is not the same as coercion. To coerce is to eliminate or exclude options. To inform is to increase the number of person’s options or choices (**the more you know, the more choices you have**). To persuade is to limit the options that are perceived as acceptable”

There is no force or trickery in persuasion. The receivers of the persuasive message must weigh the logic and evidence and make their own decision. Once that decision has been made, they alone are responsible for it, although the sender helped influence the decision.

In business your ability to achieve the company's goals depends on your ability to persuade others. If you cannot use force or trickery or cannot expect listeners to be persuaded by information alone, how do you persuade them?

3.2. PARTS OF SPEECH

Speech has three main parts:

1. Introduction
2. Body and
3. Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Introduction is to take place at the first few minutes of our speech. The introduction of an oral presentation should:

- (1) capture the attention of your listeners
- (2) Motivate them to listen by showing the importance or benefit your presentation will have for them
- (3) Convince them that you are qualified to speak on the subject, and
- (4) Explain the purpose of your presentation.

Capture the attention of your listeners

As you begin your presentation, listeners' attention may be focused on many personal things. So in this introductory part you are expected to direct the attention from individual concerns and thoughts to your presentation. Some common techniques for gaining attention are:

- Reveal one or more startling facts
- Tell joke or humorous story relating directly to the topic

- Briefly cite two or three specific incidents or examples that relate to the topic.
- Quote or paraphrase a well-known publication or expert.
- Briefly demonstrate the item or skill you will be discussing in your presentation.

Convince the audience of the benefit to them

Capturing the initial attention of your listeners does not guarantee that they will listen to the remainder of your presentation. To keep their attention you must convince them that the presentation will benefit them in some way- that is, will help them satisfy personal or job-related needs.

Assure the audience that you are qualified to speak on the subject

The speaker is expected to demonstrate his qualification to speak on the topic by referring to his personal experience, the detailed research he has done on the topic, the interview he has conducted with knowledgeable people or the articles and books he has read that were written by experts. By doing so the speaker should have to convince the audiences as he has the knowledge on the topic.

Explain the purpose of your presentation

Here the speaker is expected to state the purpose and a summary of the main points to be covered. The average listener finds it much easier to follow and remember the ideas contained in the presentation when the introduction lists the key points that will be covered.

BODY

In the main body of the speech the main points that are summarized in the introduction part need to be discussed in detail. Most speakers cover, two, three or four main points in their presentation.

Researchers have found that people are “capable of accurately receiving and remembering only seven facts, ideas or “bits” of information at a time”. Therefore, organize the information into seven or fewer key ideas or main points.

The number of main points that should be included depends on (1) how many points are needed to adequately develop the topic (2) the time limit and (3) the knowledge and interest of the audience.

The main points can be organized in a variety of methods. The arrangements that seem to be most relevant to business and professional situations are:

Topical arrangement

This arrangement is used to break a topic into clusters, divisions, or parts. No spatial, chronological, or casual relationship exists between the main points in a topical arrangement; each is merely one of several topics pertaining to the same subject. It is probably the easiest, and therefore, the most popular method of arrangement. It is most effective when arranged in one of the following ways:

- a) From the most to the least popular
- b) From the most to the least impressive
- c) From the known to the unknown
- d) From the familiar to the unfamiliar

Spatial or geographical arrangement

This arrangement organizes main points according to their spatial location, such as front to rear, north to south, bottom to top, left to right. The lay out of a manufacturing plant could be described by its left, center and right wings.

Chronological or time arrangement

This arrangement is used to present events in the order (or by the date) of their occurrence and to present steps in the order in which they occur or in the order in which they should be followed.

Problem- Solution arrangement

This arrangement divides the speech in to two basic categories: The analysis of the problem and the explanation of one of several solutions.

THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion normally contains two parts: a summary and a closing thought or statement. The summary can be general (referring to the overall topic of the presentation) or specific (listing the main points covered). The intent of the summary is to clarify for the listeners any confusions about the purpose and main points of your presentation.

The closing thought or statement serves as a final attention getter. Its purpose is to give the audience a thought or challenge that will keep them thinking about your presentation long after it is completed.

Check Point

- ✓ Describe Persuasive Speech?
- ✓ Briefly explain parts of speech?

3.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SPEAKER

Every good speech requires careful preparation. The speaker must be ready to cover the subject thoroughly and must carefully organize the presentation. Here below are the guidelines of being a good speaker:

1. Know the subject
2. Know the audience
3. Be well organized

The oral presentation must be well organized logically starting from the planning process. If you have the following points, it will be easier:

- i. Decide on the order that will be followed
- ii. Set down the basic ideas you want to express (and consider different ways of arranging them). Thus organize the information in a form of introduction, body and conclusion.
- iii. State what you want to discuss clearly (problem? process? project?)

4. Involve your listener
 - i. Tell a real story
 - ii. Tell a hypothetical story
 - iii. Present statistics
 - iv. Use of quotation
 - v. Tell a joke
5. Plan your conclusion

3.4. GUIDELINES FOR AN EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF SPEECH

As we have seen speech is series of thoughts in the mind. There are about seven guidelines for speech:

- a) Look at your audience
- b) Speak clearly
- c) Use appropriate gestures
- d) Check your postures and appearance
- e) Make clear transition
- f) Vary your volume and speed
- g) Watch and listen for feedback

A. LOOK AT YOUR AUDIENCE

Do not get frightened to look at the audience. The easiest way to do this is to look at the audience. This does not mean a periodical quick look at the group. Rather it means talking with them and looking at them. Do not look podium platform or over the heads. Be alert for the audience's feedback and make the necessary adjustment. Make good eye contact (it helps to build a link between you and the audience). All these will permit you to relate your information to them not at them. Look at these in the middle section, then those to the right, and then those to the left. Let your eyes rest on different sections of the audience and a mass of faces. For the effectiveness of your delivery of speech you need to have a clear eye contact with your audience and you need to make sure that whether your audiences are following you or not.

B. SPEAK CLEARLY

The speech is related to accent. Accent is pronounced noticeably. Pronunciation means saying words correctly, while enunciation means saying words distinctly. Both are necessary if you are to be understood and wish to make a good impression on others. Your accent of words phrases and sentences needs to be in line with the accent of your audiences and it should be easily understandable.

C. USE APPROPRIATE GUESTURE

Gesture adds to the message you communicate. Although, gestures have vague meanings, gestures are strong. They are natural aid to speaking. It should be clear that you could use bodily movements to help your speaking. Which movement you should use, however, is hard to say. They are related to personality, physical make up, and the size and the nature of the audience. A speaker appearing before a formal group generally should use relatively few body actions. A speaker appearing before an informal audience should use more what you should use on a given occasion is a matter for your best judgment. Your body movement while you are on presentation has a significant impact on the effective delivery of your speech so need to consider these things in your presentation.

D. CHECK YOUR POSTURE AND APPERANCE

Obviously, speaker will dress and stand in a manner appropriate for the presentation .Do not let your appearance, posture, or destructing gestures over ride your message. It is important for you to dress properly, stand correctly and bring the focus of the audience for your message and not to destrutions, have others tell you whether your posture needs improvement. Another is to practice speaking before a mirror or with video type equipment. In your efforts to improve your posture, keep in mind what must go on with your body in order for good posture.

E. MAKE CLEAR TRANSITION

It is possible to cover topics faster so that the audience may not follow them properly. There fore, it is vital that you watch your transitions .At the end of a major point, slow down or pause for a moment. Then, instead of abruptly starting the next idea, tell the audience that you are now moving from your expiations of ‘communication goals’ to communication skills. Statements like these are called transitions and they tell the audience to switch gears and prepare for the next item in the speech. Transitions provide a rest for listeners and also give a clear signal about where you were and where you are going now .Some common transitions that might be used are:

- ‘Now let’s turn to another point...’

- How ever, there is another aspect that we should look at today.....’
- ‘now with our understanding of...we can discuss ...’

Thus, when the transition is stated slowly, you look at the audience and incorporate gesture with the transition. The audience will understand what is being said and will know what will be said.

F. VARY YOUR VOLUME AND SPEED

A boring speech may put your audience to sleep .Some ideas need to be started forcefully; others need to be noted softly, respectfully. Look a good piece of look that is fast ,slow ,high, low, loud or soft ,so should a speech reflect changes that match with the content of the idea .A speech could be as boring and monotonous as a piece of music that proceeds at one volume level and speed only .As a general rule ,you should present the easy parts of the message at a fairly quick rate and hard to understand information at a lower (slower pace). The reason for varying the speed of the presentation should be apparent .Easy information presented slowly is irritating, hard information presented rapidly may be difficult to understand. By observing your audiences condition in the presentation you should vary your volume and speed of voice to hold their attention.

G. WATCH AND LISTEN FEEDBACK

You can and should train your self to watch the audience as you speak and to be sensitive to its changing moods .The alert speak will be on the look out for a feed back. If the audience looks confused on a particular point you can assist by interjecting a statement like ‘let me repeat that...or perhaps I can state this concept in another way ...’ Besides helping the audience to understand the message , such statements indicate that the alter speaker is paying attention to the audience .Also if the audience laugh’s longer than expected at a humorous comment ,the speaker pauses and permits the audience and to catch up .By looking at the people in the audience and interpreting their feed back ,you can keep the message on target .Successful interaction with the audience is ,to a large extent the element that makes your audiences glad for coming to hear you .

Thus, to deliver the speech, check your volume, keep your head up, use conversational tone, and hide your nervousness. Stand as ease, avoid mannerisms, use the time allotted. Observe audience reaction carefully select the closing words .Conversational tone refers to the usage of simple language to the audience, where as mannerism is articulation of word not clearly and over usage of ah, uh etc.

Check Point

- ✓ What are the characteristics of a good speaker?
- ✓ List guidelines for effective delivery of speech?

CHAPER SUMMARY

- Speech is the process of establishing a common understanding among people within a business environment by means of spoken language
- There are three types of oral presentation: Presentation to inform, persuade and to entertain.
- Informative presentations are intended to increase understanding, not to change an attitude while the basic purpose of a persuasive presentation is to influence choices.
- Speech has three main parts: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. The Introduction part intends to capture the attention of your listeners, convince the audience of the benefit to them, assure the audience that you are qualified to speak on the subject, and explain the purpose of your presentation. In the main body of the speech the main points that are summarized in the introduction part need to be discussed in detail. The conclusion normally contains a summary and a closing thought or statement.
- A good speaker knows the subject and the audience, and is well organized. The guidelines for effective delivery of speech are: Look at your audience, Speak clearly, Use appropriate gestures, Check your postures and appearance, Make clear transition, Vary your volume and speed, and Watch and listen for feedback

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 3

Choose the best among the given alternatives

1. If a person writes down a speech in such a way that the material to be presented is put in the order in which it took place this can be considered as
 - A) General organization
 - B) Cause to effect
 - C) Chronological organization
 - D) None
2. From which part of speech the detailed idea of the speech can be best obtained
 - A) Conclusion
 - B) Body
 - C) Introduction
 - D) All E) None
3. Which one is different from others?
 - A) Look at your audience
 - C) Vary your volume and speed
 - B) Speak clearly
 - D) Make clear transition
 - E) None
4. The arrangement used to present events in the order of their occurrence is
 - A) Problem solution arrangement
 - C) Spatial or geographical arrangement
 - B) Chronological arrangement
 - D) Topical arrangement
 - E) None

Fill the blank space with appropriate terms or words

5. _____ contains two parts, a summary and a closing thought or statement
6. _____ is aimed at making clear a process or policy or even philosophy of a company mostly to younger employees.
7. The main idea of a speech is found in _____ part.
8. _____ is designed to present complete details and requires a short period of time.
9. The basic purpose of _____ is to influence choices.

CHAPTER FOUR

TELEPHONING VERSUS FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

Dear student, this is the fourth chapter of the course. The chapter is designed to discuss the importance of and/or basic points that would enable you to have the fundamental knowledge on telephoning vs. face-to-face communication.

In this chapter, you will be learning about the meaning of face-to-face conversation and telephoning, checklists for effective face-to-face communication, the procedures to be followed by the caller and the receiver, merits and demerits of telephoning and face-to-face communication.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Chapter, you will be able:

- Identify characteristics of face-to-face conversation and telephoning
- Understand the checklists for effective face-to-face communication
- Identify and understand the procedures to be followed by the caller and the receiver before and during telephoning
- Describe the merits and demerits of face-to-face conversation and telephoning
- Understand the importance of face-to-face and telephone conversation for business organizations

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 4.1. Characteristics of face to face and telephone conversation
- 4.2. Checklists for effective face-to-face communication
- 4.3 Telephone conversation

4.4 Procedure to be followed by the caller and the receiver

4.5 Merits and demerits of telephoning Vs face to face communication

If you aim at a success of your secretarial career, and whatever career may follow that, your success will depend on much more than your practical skills no matter how good your short hand or typing skills, or your ability to present documents effectively you will not get for if you can not get along with people.

Oral communication is the life – blood of our personal and business lives. Our ability to communicate is a process which begins in childhood; the roles we play become gradually more complex as we become adults and assume more responsibility.

The essential ingredient is you, and it is important in this respect to recognize that you play two roles in oral communication: listening as well as speaking.

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF FACE TO FACE AND TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

CHARACTERISTICS OF FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATION

In your business life you will probably spend much more of your time talking and listening to colleagues and clients than writing and listening to colleagues and clients than writing and reading. Problems will need to be discussed, information requested, instructions given. We spend much of our lives speaking to other people, but something strange happens to many of us when we are asked to speak in front of a group or in a formalized situation. To achieve co-operation and effective teamwork, good human relations skills must be developed.

Face – to – face communication can take a variety of forms:

- Private discussion
- A conversation over lunch
- A gossip in the lift

- A chance meeting in the corridor
- An informal gathering of staff
- Instructing subordinates
- Dealing with clients
- Formal meetings
- Interviews/ seminars

In face – to – face communication, you have various means of conveying information- intonation of the voice, facial expressions, gesture, posture and movement. These factors add impact to a meaning, and they combine to provide an instant impression in a way that written communication or telephone calls cannot.

The Following are characteristics of face-to-face communication:

- It takes different forms like private discussion , formal meetings, dealing with clients etc
- It requires two groups, speaker and listener
- It is natural for the parties involved in it
- It is supported by non verbal cues to convey information like intonation of voice, facial expression, gesture, posture and body movement
- It is supplemented by verbal language
- It provides immediate feedback
- It needs no charge for conversation
- More reliable and effective

CHARACTERISTICS OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

- It requires electronic device-telephone
- It requires two people to involve –the caller and the receiver
- It is persuasive
- It gives immediate feedback
- It needs charge for conversation

- Overcomes the limitation of distance
- Sharing of information within a very short period of time
- Facilitates information exchange

Check Point

Describe characteristics of telephone communication?

Describe characteristics of face to face communication?

4.2 CHECKLISTS FOR EFFECTIVE FACE – TO – FACE COMMUNICATION

1. Plan what you will say-prepare supporting notes and gather any relevant documents.
2. Consider the person to whom you will be speaking, take account of their position, background, knowledge and experience
3. Speak appropriately to the situation – Be chatty, friendly, informal or formal, etc, in accordance with the situation and the topic.
4. Be open – minded – consider the matter from the other person's point of view and be as open minded as possible, but have counter – arguments ready just in case they are required.
5. Consider the location – you will feel more comfortable in a familiar environment. Try to avoid distractions like telephone calls or other interruptions.

4.3 TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

The telephone is a channel that a modern manager can not do without. Ever since Graham Bell made it possible for people at far away places to get connected, the telephone has been an essential tool for business and social communication.

It is a form of instant communication which achieves quick responses, but it takes imagination to use a telephone effectively. As you cannot see the other person or know that he/she is thinking, your communication will be only as effective as your words and the way they are used, for example intonation, style of delivery. It is ear –to – ear communication which means that it doesn't allow the use of body language unlike that of face -to – face communication.

In any organization, the person on the telephone represents the company. That person gives an impression of the company to the outside world; whether making or receiving the call. There can be nothing more damaging for public relations, or better for losing business than a telephone call which leaves the caller frustrated and no better informed than before he or she started. The impression any organization wishes to convey to the outside world is of an efficient, friendly, progressive company eager to give product and service and ensure good public relations.

It is a very useful channel for quick local, national, and international communication. But it has a severe limitation – communicators and communicates have to depend exclusively on voice. The total absence of visual and near – total absence of other non-verbal support (except notably for tone of voice) makes it imperative that we follow certain guidelines when we use the telephone channel for one – to – one calls or conference calls.

4.4 PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE CALLER AND THE RECIEVER

As well other successful written and oral communication, telephoning requires preplanning by the caller and desirable behaviour during the conversation by both persons who are conversing. As some commercial advice “Reach out and touch some one”. Though you are not meeting face –to – face, your conversation will be voice – to – voice and you want it to be as favourable as possible.

Before telephoning

1. Know the specific purpose of your call
2. Know the name and occupation (if pertinent) of the person you are calling
3. Consider the best time to call, from the stand point of that person and your company. Usually, avoid calling just before lunch or at closing time. If you are calling long distance, be sure to consider time zones, consult your phone director map choose discount times whenever possible and desirable.
4. Plan your opening statement

5. Jot down the questions you want to ask Try to limit your call to one main point. If you are calling to sell something, know your sales psychology and have factual suggestions for listener benefits
6. Have paper and pen handy for note – taking, taking telephone messages require both oral and written communication skills. A pencil and telephone message pad should be kept by the telephone. The message pad provides headings which act as a reminder to obtain the necessary information from the caller.

During telephoning

- Introduce your self
- Announce your name the organization and greet the caller
- Be polite avoid a barking tone
- When you answer a phone call with clear pleasant voice answer promptly, usually with your name/department/ organization and greet the caller.
- If the person you are calling is not there you can leave a message with your number and time to have your call returned.
- If the call is to be directed, make sure the caller is not made to wait on the line for long
- If the person called is not available, make a note of the caller's name, telephone number and message and communicate to the person concerned.
- Keep personal talk on the official line to the minimum
- Calls cost money; especially long distance ones make your talk cost – effective.
- Make sure that the calls are returned promptly
- End the conversation with a “thank you” or a good day”

4.5 MERITS AND DEMERITS OF TELEPHONING VS FACE – TO – FACE CONVERSATION

Table 4: Merits and demerits of face – to – face conversation

Merit	Demerit
Supplemented by verbal language	In accuracy due to non-permanent record
Natural for communicators	Less concise
It needs no charge for the conversation	It depends on the location of communicators

More reliable and effective	Immediate response may lead communicators to unconscious action
It enables more people to participate at once	Unwise use of both verbal and non-verbal language may be the cause for quarrel
It avoids misunderstanding when two communicators talk Uses non verbal language like facial expression etc ace-to-face	In face-to-face communication the communicator may be influenced by external environment i.e. status, physical appearance etc

Table 5: Merits and demerits of telephone conversation

Merits	Demerits
Sharing of ideas easily in a short period of time	It cannot be supplemented by verbal language
Over come the limitation of distance	It is not very effective when the receiver is not present at the time of dialling
It takes no time to get feedback	It is less interactive
It is persuasive	Not applicable to longer and complex messages
Possible to access information without consuming too much power ,time and cost	It requires being a good listener
Facilitate effective person-to-person or organization to organization information exchange etc	Since it is faster it is difficult to reply one by one to all information etc

Check Point

- ✓ What are the procedures to be followed before and during telephoning?
- ✓ Explain the merit and demerits of telephoning and face to face communication?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- In business environments we spend much of our time talking and listening to colleagues and clients than writing and reading. Problems will need to be discussed, information requested, instructions given etc. To achieve co-operation and effective teamwork, good human relations skills must be developed.
- The Following are characteristics of face-to-face communication: It takes different forms like private discussion, formal meetings, dealing with clients etc, requires two groups, speaker and listener, it is natural for the parties involved in it, it is supported by non verbal cues to convey information like intonation of voice, facial expression, gesture, posture and body movement, and it is supplemented by verbal language.
- The other most important point that the chapter incorporate is the guidelines the caller and receiver should follow before and during telephoning. The guidelines you should use **before telephoning** are: Know the specific purpose of your call, Know the name and occupation (if pertinent) of the person you are calling, Consider the best time to call and others. **During telephoning:** Introduce your self, Announce your name the organization and greet the caller, Be polite avoid a barking tone, When you answer a phone call with clear pleasant voice answer promptly, usually with your name/department/ organization and greet the caller and others.
- Finally, we looked at in detail the merits and demerits of face to face and telephone conversation. Understanding and evaluating the respective advantage and disadvantage of face to face and telephone conversation enables us to choose the best way to have communication with others. It also enables the user to get prepared to any inconveniences that may result during the conversation

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 4

Instruction I: Choose the best among the following alternatives

1. Face to face communication can take all forms except,
 - A. Private discussion
 - B. Formal meetings
 - C. A gossip in the lift
 - D. Interview
 - E. None
2. One is not the merit of face to face communication
 - A. Immediate feed back
 - B. Supplemented by verbal language
 - C. More reliable and effective
 - D. Overcome the limitation of distance
 - E. None
3. Which one is different from others
 - A. It is less interactive
 - B. It requires being a good listener
 - C. Each cannot be supplemented by verbal language.
 - D. Less concise.
 - E. None
4. All are the procedures to be followed by the caller before telephoning except,
 - A. Know the specific purpose of your call.
 - B. Know the name and occupation of a person you are calling.
 - C. Consider the best time to call.
 - D. Introduce yourself.
 - E. None.

Instruction II: Fill the blank space with appropriate terms

5. _____ is the life blood of our personal and business lives.
6. _____ is form of instant communication which achieves quick response but it takes imagination to use.

Instruction III: Write True or False for the following statements

7. In telephone conversation, you have various means of conveying information like intonation of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and posture and body movement.
8. In face to face communication the communicator does not influenced by external environment.
9. The main two roles that you can play in oral communication are listening and speaking.
10. Telephone conversation is an ear-to-ear communication

CHAPTER FIVE

ACTIVE LISTENING

INTRODUCTION

Dear student, this is the fifth chapter of the course. The chapter is designed to discuss the important and/or basic points that would enable you to have the fundamental knowledge on active listening.

In this chapter, you will be learning about the meaning, type, importance of active listening, significance of active listening in organizations and the different causes of poor listening.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After studying the material in this unit, you will be able:

- Define active listening
- Understand the importance of active listening for personal and organizational success
- Identify the different types of active listening
- Understand the different causes of poor listening

CHAPTER OUT LINE

- 5.1 Types of listening
- 5.2 Importance of active listening in organizations
- 5.3. Causes of poor listening
- 5.4. Guidelines for Effective listening

Listening is defined as making an effort to hear some body/ something. Listening is a combination of what we hear, understand and remember. You may physically pick up sound waves with your

ears, evaluate the information and finally you may act based on your hearing and evaluation listening starts from hearing and it goes beyond hearing, since we evaluate and react based on it.

Effective listening is not a passive communication activity. It takes a great deal of effort and motivation to become and remain an effective listener. However, good listening is a prerequisite for success in business and the professions. Effective listening is certainly not the answer to all business problems, but it is one of the first steps leading to solutions. The case cannot be made strongly enough that organizational effectiveness is hampered by employees and managers who do not listen well. Individual career advancement also can be impeded by poor listening. Unfortunately, poor listening is often more apparent to others than it is to the poor listener.

5.1 TYPES OF LISTENING

The three forms of listening are:

1. Content listening
2. Critical listening
3. Active listening

5.1.1. Content listening

The purpose of this type of listening is to understand and retain the speaker's message you may ask questions, but basically information flows from the speaker to you. Your job is to identify the key points of the message. It doesn't matter whether you agree or disagree, approve or disapprove only that you understand. Content listening enables you to understand and retain the message.

5.1.2. Critical listening

This is meant to both understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message at several levels. Logic of the argument, strength of the evidence, and validity of the conclusions the implication of the message for you or your organization, the speaker's intentions and motives the omission of any important or relevant points. Critical listening generally involves interaction as you try to uncover the speaker's point of view. You are bound to evaluate the speaker's credibility as well. It enables you to evaluate the information.

5.1.3. Active/empathic listening

The aim of this type of listening is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants so that you can appreciate his or her point of view, regardless of whether you share that perspective by listening in an active or empathic way; you help the individual vent the emotions that prevent a dispassionate approach to the subject. Avoid the temptation to give advice. Try not to judge the individuals feelings. Just let the other person talk. Active listening is used to drown out the other person.

Regardless of whether the situation calls for content, critical, or active listening, all three types of listening can be useful in work – related situations, so it pays to learn how to apply them.

5.2. IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING IN ORGANIZATION

In business environment, three different sources of information demand effective listening: customers, employees, and supervisors.

By listening to customers, the organization can learn objective information about its products or services. For example, customers can suggest desired product improvements that the research and development department may have overlooked. Listening to customers can tell us a great deal about the competition. Most companies like to compare and contrast themselves with other companies' people, information, goods and services. Customers will communicate their opinion of you, your company, and its competition if they are encouraged. It also increases sales and the level of customer satisfaction.

Listening to employees is a way of showing support and acceptance, which make for a more open climate, and an open climate makes employee satisfaction and productivity more likely. To show that they are listening managers' responses must communicate acceptance. "There is a genuine working together a whole new cooperative spirit--- but the most dramatic change is in the

atmosphere. It was hard to cooperate when you were in a war. The change is almost too good to be true” Joseph Leonard

Perhaps it is obvious that employees of an organization should listen to their bosses since their position depends on pleasing higher authority. However many employees do not recognize how important it is to appear to be listening of course, giving the appearance of listening without actually listening is unwise, but effective listening to a supervisor involves not only good listening skills but also giving a good indication that listening is taking place.

Actually, effective listening can give you some power over your superior. People listen to and agree with powerful people. Therefore, if you want your boss to listen to you, you need to establish a power image.

Your goal in increasing your power over your superior is essentially to create in his or her mind this image of you. You may say “This is a person who is like me in very important ways, who is loyal to me and the organization, who will help me achieve my goal, who will help me feel good in the process, this also is a person who has some expertise I value and need.” Listening and responding play a key role in getting that image established.

Generally effective listening plays crucial role for the success of the organization by increasing interpersonal communication and by creating common understanding between employees and supervisors.

Check Point

- ✓ Explain importance of listening in an organization?
- ✓ List types of listening?

5.3. CAUSES OF POOR LISTENING

People are not born with the ability to listen effectively, listening skills are learned. Unfortunately, many of us have developed poor listening habits. Poor listening can be attributed to several causes, many of them involving bad habits that can be broken.

a) Physical Barriers

Some barriers to effective listening are not directly under our control. A noisy type writer, a duplicating machine, someone's loud voice, or a nearly vacuum cleaner could prevent us from hearing an important message. Visual distractions also pose barriers to effective listening concentration is the key to deal with physical barriers to listening.

b) Personal Barriers

1) Day dreaming

It is the most common listening problem because it affects every one frequently a speaker may mention some person or thing that triggers an association in our minds, and off we go. When we return to reality and start listening again, we may find that the third point is being discussed and we have no recollection of points one and two.

2) False attention

Is a protection technique that everyone uses from time to time to take out the speaker when we are not really interested in what some one is saying, we pretend to listen we nod our heads and make occasional meaningless comments and eye contact to give the impression that we are listening but our mind is a million miles away from the speaker.

3) Prejudgment

Is one of the most common and difficult barriers to listening because it is an automatic process people could not operate in life without holding some assumptions. However, in new situations, these assumptions are often incorrect. In addition, some people listen defensively, viewing every comment as a personal attack. To protect their self-esteem, they may distort a message by tuning out anything that doesn't confirm their view of themselves.

4) Listen selectively out listening

You stay tuned out until you hear a word or phrase that gets your attention once more. The problem with out-listening is that it leaves you not with a memory of what the speaker actually said but with a memory of what you think the speaker probably said.

5) Closed mindedness

If a fault that happen, more outside the class room especially when we are arguing we often refuses to listen to other side of argument, especially when we have already made up our mind we think there is no use in listening since we know all.

6) Personality listening

This is natural for listeners to evaluate the speaker but our impressions should not interfere with our listening some time you may be tempted to tune out. We can find different types of personal barriers that cause poor listening during the communication process and this personal barriers are controllable than physical barriers.

c) Semantic barriers

Refers to the different uses and meanings of words and symbols therefore, they do not necessarily have the same meaning for everyone. For your clarity of the word semantic barriers you can refer from barriers of communication in the previous discussions.

5.4. GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

You can improve your listening ability by becoming more aware of the practices that distinguish good listeners from bad listeners:

- Fight distractions by closing doors, turning off radios or televisions, and moving closer to the speaker.
- Depersonalize your listening so that you decrease the emotional impact of what is being said and are better able to hold your rebuttal until you have heard the total message.

- Listen for concepts and key ideas as well as for facts, and know the difference between fact and principle, idea and example, and evidence and argument
- Stay a head of the speaker by anticipating what will be said next and by thinking about what is already been said.
- Look for unspoken messages often the speaker's tone of voice or expressions will reveal more than the words themselves
- Keep an open mind by asking questions that clarify understanding, reserve judgment until the speaker has finished.
- Evaluate and criticize the content, not the speaker
- Provide feedback, let the speaker know you are with him or her, maintain eye contact, provide appropriate facial expressions.
- Take meaningful notes that are brief and to the point.

One way to assess your listening skills is to pay attention to how you listen when some one else is talking, are you really hearing what is said, or are you mentally rehearsing how you will respond? Above all try to be open to the information that will lead to higher quality decisions, and try to accept the feelings that will build understanding and mutual respect. Becoming a good listener will help you in many business situations especially those that are emotion laden and difficult.

Check point

- ✓ Describe causes of poor listening?
- ✓ What is your advice for effective listening?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Effective listening is not a passive communication activity. It takes a great deal of effort and motivation to become and remain an effective listener. Organizational effectiveness is highly affected by the listening ability of managers and employees. Individual career advancement also can be impeded by poor listening
- There are types of listening: content, critical and active listening. Critical listening is both understanding and evaluating the meaning of the speaker's message at several levels.

- You can improve your listening ability by becoming more aware of the practices that distinguish good listeners from bad. Pay attention to how you listen when some one else is talking, are you really hearing what is said, or are you mentally rehearsing how you will respond? Try to be open to the information that will lead to higher quality decisions, and try to accept the feelings that will build understanding and mutual respect.

SELF-CHECK EXERCISE 5

Choose the best among the given alternatives

1. Which of the following is not one of the characteristics of Active Listener
 - A. He tries to both understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message
 - B. He will draw the implications of the message to him while the speaker is giving a speech
 - C. He will evaluate the logic and the validity of the conclusions of the speech
 - D. He tries to understand the feelings of the speaker, regardless of whether he shares that perspective
 - E. He evaluates the speaker's credibility while listening to his speech.
2. Effective listening is made, not born
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. A noisy machine distracting attention while a supervisor tries to communicate with his subordinate is _____ barrier.
 - A. Physical
 - B. Semantic
 - C. Personal
 - D. Language
4. The word "burn it" may mean "put it on fire", the same word may stand for "get a copy of it." This could be _____ type of barrier
 - A. Personal
 - B. Physical
 - C. Semantic
 - D. Psychological
5. One of the following communication barriers can be overcome by concentration
 - A. Physiological barrier
 - B. Cultural barriers
 - C. Semantic barriers
 - D. Environmental interference
 - E. None of the above

CHAPTER SIX

INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

With in business, professional and governmental organizations, you have many opportunities for one-to-one communication. Much of that will be casual but a considerable amount of time will focus on purposeful two-person (dyadic) communication. Your work might include interviewing which is one of the dyadic (two-person) communications. The interview completes a spectrum of type of dyadic communication from intimate interactions through social communication to serious instrumental communication. All are settings of dyadic communication but each is different from the other in terms of purpose and salient variables. So, the interview can be viewed as a form of dyadic where persons meet with a preconceived purpose and both of whom speak and listen to each other from time to time.

Dear learner, do not forget that interviewing is a form of communication and therefore an understanding of the communication skills and barriers which are covered in the preceding sections of this material are equally important for interviewing success.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Dear learner, after completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain what is meant by an ‘interview’
- Discuss the major types of interview and their purposes
- Explain the essentials of successful interviews
- Determine the responsibilities of the interviewer and the interviewee during an employment interview
- Explain the basic organization of all types of interviews

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 6.1 Definition of interview
- 6.2 Major types of interview
- 6.3 Guidelines for effective employment interview (for the interviewer)
- 6.4 Guidelines for effective employment interview (for the interviewee)

6.1 DEFINITION OF INTERVIEW

The word ‘interview’ refers to all types of planned, face-to-face encounters in which at least one of the participants has a specific objective in mind – **Cheryl Hamilton and Cordell Parker**.

Interviewing, according to this definition, includes gathering information, appraising employee performance, settling grievances and many other interactions which are or at least going to be a part of your work life.

Interview is a two party communication in which at least one person has a specific, serious purpose.—**Ronald B. Adler & Jeanne Marquardt Elmhurst**

This definition makes it clear that interviewing is a special kind of conversation, differing from other types in several ways. Most importantly, interview is always purposeful. Unlike other spontaneous conversations, an interview includes at least one participant who has a serious, predetermined reason for being there. Interviews are also more structured than most conversations. As you will soon learn, every good interview has several distinct phases and always involves some sort of question- and –answer format.

6.2 MAJOR TYPES OF INTERVIEW

There are far too many types of interview situations for us to list them all. However, the basic approach to each type is similar and they possess the same basic features as:

- Most interviews are face-to-face interactions involving a face-to-face encounter between the interviewer and the interviewee.

- All effective interviews are organized into three basic steps or phases: the opening phase, the question-response phase (body of the interview) and the closing phase. (these will be discussed under ‘ the guidelines to effective interviews for the interviewer’)

Dear learner, as you were able to see, there could be various types of interview. For our purpose, an understanding of the following basic types of interview can be easily transferred to other types of interview situations.

In this chapter therefore, we will deal with the three major types of interview namely: Employment interview, Employee appraisal interview, and Grievance interview.

6.2.1. EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

The employment interview is a face-to-face encounter between prospective employee and prospective employer. When you finish all your courses and graduate, you will be having this type of interview. This type of interview is one of the most important because in it some of the most critical organizational and personal decisions are made.

The critical organizational decisions are those to be made by the organization regarding the selection of the best candidate for the job and the critical personal decisions are those made by you (the candidate) regarding the type of job and organization for a career decision.

The ultimate productivity of the organization depends on the ability of its management to recruit and select the best personnel for the job. In addition, your career often depends on your ability to select the right job with the right organization.

An employment interview is basically designed to explore how well a candidate might fit a job. This exploration works both ways: the employer explores who the right person for the job is and the candidate (you) explores the organizations’ and job’s fitness with his/ her qualifications, skills and career choices.

Different types of employment interview can be used by organizations to discover as much as possible about applicants.

Structured interview: - is generally used in the screening stage. The employer controls the interview by asking a series of prepared questions in a set order. Working from the checklist, the interviewer asks the candidates each question, staying within an allotted time period, for which all answers will be recorded (noted). Although useful in gathering facts, the structured interview is generally regarded as a poor measure of an applicant's personal qualities.

Open ended interview: - in contrast, the open ended interview is a less formal and unstructured interview with a relaxed format. The interviewer poses broad, open-ended questions and encourages the applicant to talk freely. This type of interview is good for bringing out an applicant's personality and is used to test professional judgment. Some candidates reveal too much about personal or family problems that have nothing to do with their qualification for employment. So, you should be careful to strike a balance between being friendly and remembering that you are in a business situation.

Group interview: - this is an interview set up where several candidates are interviewed simultaneously to see how they interact. This type of interview is useful for judging interpersonal skills.

Stress interview: - the stress interview is used by interviewers to see how well a candidate handles stressful situations. During a stress interview, you may be asked questions which are specifically designed to make you uncomfortable and to unsettle you. You may also be subjected to long periods of silence, criticism of your appearance, deliberate interruptions or even a hostile reaction by the interviewer. This is a type of interview which is regarded by many managers as inappropriate or unethical.

Dear learner, now you know the specific possible types of interview you might encounter during an employment interview. So keep in mind these interview types so that you can get the best out of your employment (job) interviews that you are going to have in the future. In the next sections we will examine other types of interview like performance appraisal interview and grievance interview. Let us discuss these one by one.

6.2.2. EMPLOYEE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Performance appraisal interviews are scheduled regularly between superior and subordinate to discuss the quality of subordinates' performance. More specifically, these interviews have several functions, including the following:

- Letting the employee know where he/ she stands- this is achieved through the feedback that employees get which includes praising good work, communicating areas that need improvement and conveying to the employee his/ her chance for development.
- Developing employee skill- such interview can be a chance for the employee to learn new skills. If you were a supervisor, among other roles, you should be a teacher to your subordinates. You can use such interviews to show an employee how to do a better job.
- Improving employment relationship- through these interviews as a supervisor, you will be able to improve your relationship with your subordinates and give the subordinate a sense of participation in the job.
- Helping management learn the employees' point of view- the performance appraisal interview should incorporate a two way communication, that is, both upward (from subordinate to superior) and downward (from superior to subordinate). This can help the subordinates to express their perspectives to their supervisors.
- Setting goals for the future- one of the results of every performance appraisal interview should be a clear idea of how both the subordinate and supervisor will behave in the future.

Dear learner, every performance appraisal interview will have the above functions and could follow different styles which will be discussed in the following sections.

Styles of appraisal interviewing

There are three styles of appraisal interviewing which can be used in the appraisal interview situations.

-  Tell and sell
-  Tell and listen (listen and tell)
-  Problem solving

Tell and sell: a tell and sell appraisal interview style can range from a friendly persuasive style to an authoritarian approach. In any case, the manager who tells and sells believes that his/her evaluation is correct and aims at passing along this evaluation to the subordinate. The disadvantage of this style could be the fact that it can be unfair and unproductive if the managers' evaluation is incorrect. For instance, you as a supervisor might believe that your subordinate is unproductive. But this could be due to some external factors whereas you believe that it is because of the persons laziness. In this case your evaluations are incorrect and hence you can be unfairly judging your subordinate.

Despite these disadvantages, this style can work well in the following situations:

- i. with inexperienced employees who are unable to evaluate themselves
- ii. with employees who are very loyal to the organization
- iii. with employees who are not willing to evaluate themselves and who appreciate direction

Tell and listen (listen and tell): this approach adds a new element to the performance appraisal interview, namely, the manager's willingness to hear the employees' point of view. With this style, the manager offers his/her assessment and lets the subordinate react to it. During the final parts of the interview, the manager again takes control in identifying future goals for the employee.

Here, even though there is a two way communication, a pure tell and listen approach could be basically persuasive. The managers' motive to listening is to let the employee have a say but there is no guarantee that the subordinates comment will change the managers' ideas.

The listen and tell is a more employee oriented variation where the manager lets the subordinate to begin the session by describing his/ her beliefs after which the manager will have a turn. This approach has three advantages

- i. it makes the subordinate's contribution more than just a defensive reaction to the manager's evaluation.
- ii. Lets the manager adjust the evaluation and
- iii. It gives the manager an idea of how well the employee knows his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

Problem solving: A problem solving performance appraisal interview style involves the employee to a greater degree than the previous two approaches. In this interview style, the manager and the employee work together to define areas of concern and to develop appropriate solutions. Thus, the problem solving style makes the manager less of a judge and more of a helper. Both the boss and employee realize that their best interests are served by having the employee succeed and they have the attitude that it is possible to leave both parties satisfied. While the interviewer still retains the power that comes with a managerial position, boss and employee cooperate so that neither orders nor threats are necessary.

6.2.3. GRIEVANCE INTERVIEW

The grievance interview is any type of one-to-one encounter involving conflict and its resolution. Examples of situations leading to grievance interviews include employee-employer disputes over working hours or wages, customer-salesperson conflicts and even teacher-student conflicts. The grievance interview is unique in that emotions often run at a much higher level than in the other type of interviews. However, the basic structure of a grievance interview includes most of the same factors that operate in other interview situations. The grievance interview highly requires the interviewer to be a good listener and a problem solver.

Dear learner, from our discussion in the previous chapters of this material, can you recall some points about an active listener and the barriers to active listening? Well, if you can, it greatly helps you to understand what is meant by the requirement of a grievance interview i.e. the interviewer should be a good listener (refer to your discussions on active listening). The various communication skills and barriers and the discussion we have made on them so far will be applicable to the remaining discussions of this material.

When we first began this section, we started with a discussion on the interviews that you are likely to have. So, with the knowledge of it, you will be succeeding in those interviews that you will have in the future. The most important and probably the first interview that you will have is an employment or job interview. We have seen some points concerning such types of interviews and in the following section; we will deal with the general guidelines to an effective employment interview.

Check Point

- ✓ Define Interview?
- ✓ List types of Interview?

6.3. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

The effectiveness of an employment interview shall be examined from two sides: from the side of the interviewer and from the side of interviewee. If we assume that a certain employment interview was successful, it would mean that the employer was able to select the best candidate who fits the job and as well the candidate (may be you) was able to get the right job with the right organization. To these ends, the following are some general guidelines which should be followed by both the interviewer and the interviewee to make the interview situation most successful.

It is better to see these guidelines from two sides:

- Guidelines for the interviewer
- Guidelines for the interviewee

6.3.1. GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWER

The basic organization of interviews is the same for all types. All types will have an opening phase, the question-response phase (body of interview) and the closing phase. At this various phases, the interviewer should follow the guidelines here under to make the interview as much effective as possible. The interviewer will have more responsibility for the manner in which the interview is conducted.

- i. ***Prior to the interview, communicate with the interviewee regarding the time and place of interview***
- ii. ***Determine the environment*** - the nature of interview usually determines the kind of environment that the interviewer should establish. Example: - select an area that is free from phone calls and other interruptions.
- iii. ***Organize the interview carefully***- an interviewer who conducts a poorly planned interview learns very little information about the candidate during the interview. Consequently, their decision will be made based on “gut” reactions which often results in hiring ineffective people. Therefore, interviewer must plan and organize each phase of the interview carefully like in the following manner.

Plan the opening phase

Give the interviewee a brief orientation to the interview. Conclude the opening phase by motivating the applicant to give an honest and carefully thought out answers.

Plan the question-response phase (body)

Asking whatever question comes to mind is an extremely ineffective way to learn and remember information about the applicant. Areas that should be covered include the following:

- Past work experience
- Leadership ability

- Personality characteristics and the like.

Based on these, specific questions for each area can be framed as follows:

- At what age did you commence work?
- How many jobs have you held since you left school?

Plan the closing phase

The closing of an employment interview is as equally important as the opening. This is to make sure that the interviewee leaves with a positive feeling and an accurate understanding of what will happen next. Give the Interviewee a chance to ask questions and thank the interviewee for his/her time and cooperation.

iv. Ask only lawful questions: there are certain questions that interviewers cannot ask of applicants during a pre-employment interview. This is based on the belief that all persons regardless of their race, sex, national origin, religion, age or etc should be able to equally compete for a job and advance in the job market based on their educational qualifications, experience, and specific skills.

To assure this, the interview questions should be framed like in the following manner:

- All questions should be job related
- The interviewer must be able to prove that the questions asked are related to the specific job.
- The same basic questions must be asked of all applicants for the same job position.

v. Listen carefully to the interviewee: some times, an employment interviewer become so preoccupied with the tasks of the interview to the extent that he/she forgets to listen. But listening to the interviewee is very essential as we use the information we get through listening and this information is the basis upon which the selection decisions will be made.

Dear learner, can you give your answer to the following two questions by referring to the discussions you have come across on active listening in this material? Test yourself on how well you can remember the previous discussions by relating them with current ones.

❶ What could be the possible barriers to effective listening that an interviewer might face during an employment interview?

❷ Can you list some of the advantages of active listening?

vi. Clarify and verify the interviewee responses: even though interviewers listen carefully, they can make mistakes if they assume that they understand exactly what the interviewee mean. Since the interviewer and interviewee have different frames of reference or personal differences, it is easy for each to misinterpret the other's meanings. So, when a statement is unclear, the interviewer should clarify the interviewee response by asking further questions. The interviewer should ask questions if he/she does not understand what the interviewee is talking about.

6.3.2. GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE

If you are the interviewee in a certain employment interview, you should not take a passive role in it. You must become actively involved if you hope to find a job that specifically fits with your abilities and interests.

The following are ways to make you an active participant in your employment interviews and be successful in getting the job you want to hold:

i. Plan the initial communication with your interviewer carefully: the initial contact may take a form of a letter, resume, or a phone conversation. However, before contacting this potential interviewer by way of these methods, find out as much as you can about the organization to which you are applying. Try to talk with some one who has been working with the organization, ask for literature such as annual reports that explain the firm (organization) and its policies.

ii. Be prepared for any type of question and interviewer: as an interviewee, you cannot always predict what type of interviewer you will face. Normally, you can expect one or combination of some types of interviewers like the unstructured interviewer, and the structured interviewer.

The unstructured interviewer: expects you to take the initiative during the interview by looking for detailed responses. He/she might ask you an open ended question like “Tell me about yourself”

The structured interviewer: usually expects you to do the opposite of the above situation. He/she plans everything in advance and gives you little chance to be creative in your responses. This type of interviewer usually asks direct and closed ended questions and wants specific to the point answers.

iii. Exercise your responsibility during the interview: appearance is only a part of the first impression the interviewer forms of you. It is your responsibility to add to those impressions with your smile, a firm but gentle handshake and a good and direct eye contact.

iv. Be prepared with the questions you want to ask the interviewer: most interviewers will invite you to ask questions. Therefore you should be able to ask a few questions like: ‘Would the company support me if I pursue my education?’, ‘What is the typical career path of an individual entering your organization at this level?’, ‘Would this position require travels?’

- v. ***Be prepared to follow up the interview if necessary:*** most interviews end with a plan for the future action on the part of one or both of the participants. When the decision will be reached and how it will be communicated is usually specified by the interviewer.

Check Point

- ✓ Briefly explain guide lines for effective interview for interviewer?
- ✓ Briefly explain guide lines for effective interview for interviewee?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Interviewing is a face-to-face conversation in which at least one party has a specific, serious purpose. As such it is perhaps the most common form of planned communication. Interviewing differs from other types of conversations in its purposeful nature and its degree of structure.
- Although there are many types of interviews, the same basic approach can be used in all interviews. Therefore, you should find that the information covered in this chapter can be applied to almost any other interview situations. All effective interviews are organized into basically the same three phases: opening phase, question response phase and the closing phase which all require prior preparations.
- Interviewers are responsible for carefully planning and organizing the interview ahead of time; asking necessary but lawful questions; and listening carefully and respectfully to the interviewees' responses. The interviewer perhaps has the greatest responsibility for the success of the interview. Interviews that are poorly planned, poorly organized and poorly executed result in neither participants learning anything valuable about the other.
- Interviewees are also responsible for contacting their interviewer prior to the interview sessions, planning answers for possible questions, communicating effectively during the interview, and following up the interview when necessary.
- Dear learner the advice offered in this chapter should help you in making your employment interviews the most productive.

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 6

Give your answers for the following questions by filling the blank spaces.

1. The person who asks questions in an interview session is_____
2. In the _____ type of interview, the interviewer expects the interviewee to take the initiative and give detailed explanations for questions raised.
3. All effective interviews are basically organized into three steps:_____, _____ and _____.
4. The type of interview which highly requires the interviewer to be a good listener and problem solver is _____.
5. _____ style of appraisal interview involves the employee's in a greater degree than the other types of interviews.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MEETING

INTRODUCTION

Well planned and productive group communications are essential for conducting modern business, to achieve objectives and results that cannot be accomplished effectively in another way. Meetings have always taken a large part of the average manager's time. In addition the increased use of teams also means that meetings are even more frequent. Just because meetings are common doesn't mean that they are always productive. A survey by one marketing research company showed that meetings executives consider one third of the gatherings they attend to be unnecessary. So, to be productive, any type of meeting will require a good preparation from all participants in general and the chairperson in particular. The chairperson is the one who takes the responsibility for planning and conducting or leading the meeting.

In this chapter, the meanings and objectives of meetings will be dealt. We will also look at the ways of preparing, conducting and keeping record (minute) of a meeting. From this chapter you will learn the importance of communication in a productive meeting and how to be an effective meeting leader and participant.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Learn about meetings and their purposes
- Discuss how to plan meetings
- Explain how to conduct (lead) a meeting
- Discuss how to keep records of a meeting (minute writing)

CHAPTER OUTLINE

7.1 Meeting defined

7.2 Objectives of meetings

7.3 Types of Meeting

7.4 Preparation for a meeting

7.5 Conducting a meeting (the role of the chairperson)

7.6 Minutes of a meeting

7.1. MEETING DEFINED

Numerous writers have given their definition for a meeting. Perhaps you have heard this negative comment from some meeting attendants-“a meeting is an event at which minutes are kept and hours are lost”. In contrast let us use this positive definition:-

“A business meeting is a gathering where purposive discourse occurs among three or more people who exchange information on a common topic or problem, for better understanding or for solving a problem”(**Murphy and Hildebrandt, 1991**)

The key words in the above definition are: ‘purposive’, ‘understanding’, and ‘solving’.

‘Purposive’: a meeting is useful when the leader and participants know the reason-“specific purpose” for a meeting.

Dear learner, what is your evaluation of the following memorandum announcing a meeting?

‘To: academic staff

From: Mr John, the vice dean

Subject: meeting on the 5th

Please join the vice dean for a discussion on invigilation duties.

Hope to see you on August 5, at 8:00 in the afternoon’

You may say ‘I don’t know where the meeting will be held, who the other participants will be’ and a number of questions might run through your head as you read the above call for a meeting. Sadly, too many meetings are called in such an imprecise manner.

‘Understanding’: the word understanding in our definition suggests that learning from the information presented at a meeting is a first purpose. You will gain something if there is an effort to understand through asking questions and listening actively.

‘Solving’: solving a problem is the second and major reason for a business meeting.

7.2. OBJECTIVES OF MEETINGS

Meetings are an important setting for oral communication and used for a variety of purpose:

- To provide information to a group of people
- To report on some activity or experience
- To coordinate and arrange activities
- To obtain assistance
- To put forward ideas or grievances for decision
- To create involvement and interest.

As implied above, meetings can be held for two basic purposes:

- To present information
- To help solve problems

What often happens is that both these purposes may occur in one meet; a part of the meeting devoted to giving information and the other devoted to problem solving.

Dear learner, in the following discussions we will see three basic types of meeting that usually help organizations achieve these activities or purposes.

7.3 TYPES OF MEETING

i. Informational Meeting

Informational meetings are held to disseminate information and check on the understanding of those who attend. For example, the following notice appeared in an employee bulletin:

All department purchasing personnel should attend a meeting on Thursday, December 4, at 3 pm in the personnel conference room. The topic will be a discussion of the new staff categories approved by the personnel office.

At this meeting, the staff will learn, ask questions and understand the new categories. No problems will be solved, no recommendations for change in policy will occur; rather, each person will gain improved understanding of the issue. A usual format is to have an opening informative speech by a person highly knowledgeable on the topic followed by a discussion.

Other internal informational meetings may be held to brief employees on changes in procedure, on policy amendments regarding a specific topic (policy) on profit and loss data (present and past facts) and on various other topics.

Dear learner, you can see that these kinds of informational meetings involve purpose and the use of data similar to those of informative speeches (refer to the previous discussions on speech).

Through the discussions however, there is the opportunity to clarify understanding through give and take not so easily achieved when simply listening to an informative speech.

ii. Suggested solution meetings

Here two kinds of decisions are concerned with problems and solutions. The simplest is when a manager wishes to hear about options for solving a company problem. The scenario proceeds like this:

1. There is a feeling that a problem exists
2. A question is phrased that seeks to get to the heart of the issue such as “what should be done to control training costs?”
3. A person or committee is assigned to investigate
4. A meeting is called to discuss possible answers, solutions or recommendation to the question.

Dear learner, one thing that you should notice here is that in this type of meetings, no decisions are reached. The manager and review committee listen to all points of view of attendants, comments on option and perhaps potential final solutions are discussed. But no decision is made. The meeting is informative and explanatory. A final decision may be made at a second, problem solving meeting.

iii. Problem solving meetings

Meetings that result in decisions for action predominate in the business world. When the executive or even a committee has no adequate solution for a problem, he/she or the committee seeks suggested solutions in a problem solving meeting. The problem is presented at the beginning by either the executive or some one previously appointed to prepare a written report on it. The meeting participants suggest solutions, discuss and evaluate them and arrive at a decision on which action is to be taken. The problem solving meeting requires the most careful planning and presiding over by the leader, as well as challenging participation by those attending.

Check Point

Define Meeting?

List types of meeting in an organization?

7.4 PREPARATION FOR A MEETING

Successful meetings are just like interviews, presentations, or letters: they must be well planned.

Planning before calling for a meeting

It is incorrect to assume that one person will always call a group together. Some times a committee is authorized by another group which could be as high as the board of directors. Initial planning involves five factors:

-  Deciding on the purpose of the meeting
-  Decide who the participants should be

- ✚ Planning the date, time and place
- ✚ Planning on the announcement of agenda
- ✚ Plan the physical arrangements

Now let us briefly discuss these five factors that you should plan before calling a meeting.

Consider the problem and determine the purpose

First, you should decide whether the meeting should even be called at all. In one sentence you should write the problem and specific purposes. If the purpose can be better attained by telephone, letter, memo, etc, the participants should not be called together for a meeting. A good meeting topic must be timely, genuine, really important and meaningful. It must present a difficulty that is within the experience of the attendants. Also the problem should be limited adequately so that the attendants are able to solve it-at least partially- within the given time. It should be about a matter that can immediately be decided by the group or about which recommendations can be made to a higher administrative body.

Decide who should participate

Many business committees have a consistent group of attendants. For instance, executive committees may comprise vice president, other committees may be made up of persons working on a given account or a finance committee may consist of members from purchasing to disbursements. Additional members are also invited to supplement the regular members' contributions or to appear to make a specific report.

Regardless of whether or not the meeting is to solve a difficult, top-level problem, the attendants should be those who can make special contribution. Usually the more difficult the problem, the smaller the group-some times five or even fewer. But in some informational meetings, hundreds may be interested and gain useful explanations.

Arrange for the meeting date, time and place

The choice of date, time and place greatly depend on the audience size and make up and the purpose of the meeting.

Announce the agenda

First, what is an agenda? An agenda is nothing but a list of topics that are to be discussed in a meeting. Most often it is the meeting leader (may be you) whom we call the chairperson, who prepares the agenda so the participants know in advance the direction of the meeting.

The announcement should be made or sent early enough to give the participants adequate time to prepare their thoughts on the matter.

Decide on the physical arrangements

As the last step before any meeting, you as the leader of a meeting should consider such physical arrangements as: seating, material, equipment and atmosphere.

Seating: most likely you as the chairperson of a meeting will arrange seating, perhaps in a circle or around a conference table or in a diamond or U-shape so that all attendants will easily be able to see each other and the chairperson.

Material, equipment and atmosphere: items to consider here can be chalkboards, flip sheets; microphones, projector, visual aids, drinking water, glasses and ashtrays (if smoking is allowed) should be accessible and handy.

7.5 CONDUCTING A MEETING

For the success of meetings especially a problem solving meeting, the chairperson's attitude and efficiency-from the beginning statement through the entire discussion-are critically important. The chairperson should be well prepared, able to think and act quickly, get along with others, respect their opinion, know objectives of discussion and the reasoning process, be patient and have a sincere interest in the values of cooperative group action.

Dear learner, this part of our discussion will deal with the procedures that you must follow in conducting a meeting where you are a chairperson. What you will read from this point onwards is equally important to the success of the meeting in which you are the chairperson as the readings from the previous part (i.e. preparation for a meeting).

Begin with appropriate opening statement

Obviously, the chairperson should prepare his/her introducing statement before the meeting. Then, present it to the attendants beginning by stating the problem, indicating the importance of the problem, suggest issues and may be use a quotation.

Stimulate discussion for solution discovery

In general, the chairperson is expected to encourage participation from all attendants and keep the discussion moving forward. To help spark discussion on each topic, write on the board or on the overhead projector the criteria a solution should meet. List on another board the possible solutions of the problem as the participants suggest them. Ask questions and keep the participants from wandering into irrelevant paths.

Maintain an atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation throughout the meeting. If a situation becomes tense or if some members are reluctant to speak or become antagonistic, apply your communication skills to bring about a common understanding and smooth discussions among the participants.

Understand the roles of participants

Attendants or participants could have various roles such as initiator, contributor, opinion seeker, information giver, contributor, recorder, energizer and the like. These can be termed as group task roles.

There are also group maintaining and building roles like encourager, harmonizer, group observer, compromiser, and follower.

Knowing these various roles being played by attendants of a meeting assists the chairperson in knowing how to react, how to handle role statements made during the meeting.

Sort, select, and interpret data for solution evaluation

After the chair person lists suggested solutions on the board he/she should encourage participants and the advantage and disadvantages of each suggested course of action. Here they should be listed separately and care should be taken not to impose the chairperson's own opinions on the

group if he/she wishes to participate. Encourage each group member to feel a sense of responsibility for the success of the analysis. Good listening by everyone to what others offer is extremely important. Dear learner, can you remember the importance of active listening?

State the conclusion and plan of action

Before dismissing the meeting, you as a chairperson should review what the group has accomplished by summarizing what parts of the problem members have solved or partially solved. State the decision (conclusion) clearly and definitely. If the group arrived at various conclusions, they should be listed, preferably in order of importance. Statements should also be made on how the solution the group decided will be carried out. Appointments may be made then announced later in a memo regarding the action.

Follow up on the meeting

It is a mistake to assume that even a satisfying meeting is a success until you follow up to make sure that the desired results have really been obtained. A thorough follow-up involves the following three steps:-

1. Build an agenda for the next meeting

Most groups meet frequently and they rarely conclude their business in one sitting. A smart chairperson plans the next meeting by noting which items need to be carried over from the preceding one, what unfinished business must be addressed?, what progress reports must be shared?, what new information should members hear?

2. Follow up on other members

As a chairperson, you can be sure that the promised outcomes of a meeting usually occur if you check up on other members. If the meeting provided instructions, see whether the people who attended the meeting are actually following the steps that were outlined, check on whether they are being performed. A friendly phone call and personal remark can be used for such follow up purposes.

3. Take care of your own assignments

Most home works that arise out of meetings need continued attention. Don't wait until the last minute because the results will be sloppy and embarrassing.

Check Point

What should be considered to conduct an effective meeting?

7.6 MINUTES OF A MEETING

After the meeting, the secretary of the meeting, who attended prepares a set of minutes for distribution to all attendants and any other interested party.

Definition: minutes are official records of the proceedings of a meeting which summarize what was discussed and what decisions were made.

Generally speaking, minutes should emphasize what was done at the meeting rather than what was said by the participants. Minutes should include the following major items:

- i. Name of the organization, department or group
- ii. Date, time, place of the meeting
- iii. Names of the members present
- iv. Name of any other person present as invited guest
- v. Name of chairperson and (at the end) recording secretary
- vi. Brief summary of reports
- vii. Highlights of solutions presented and decisions made
- viii. Time of adjournment and, if announced, the date for the next meeting

The minutes should objectively summarize discussions and decisions or conclusions reached. The emotions and feelings of any member expressed during the course of discussion is not recorded. However, the names of those who contributed major points and ideas should be recorded. The minute becomes final only when it is read at the end of the meeting or in the next meeting, approved and signed by the members and chairperson. Often it is circulated before hand and then it is conformed at the second meeting including amendments and suggestion of members, if any.

There are three main ways of producing minutes of a meeting:

-  Verbatim minutes
-  Minutes of resolution
-  Minutes of narration

Verbatim minutes: these minutes are used primarily in court reporting where every thing is recorded word for word. Dear learner, have you ever been to a court room? If so, then you must have noticed someone (the secretary) who types every thing said in the court by the judge, the jury, the attorneys of both parties and witnesses. The recording is made without omitting a single word and this is what we call as a verbatim minute.

Minutes of resolution: in this type of minutes recording what we find is the main conclusions. Here, one does not find the discussions which took place in each topic, rather the main decisions or conclusions made based on the discussions. The exact wording of every resolution passed should be recorded.

Minutes of narration: these types of minutes will be a concise summary of all discussions which took place and the conclusions that were reached.

Dear learner, by now you already know what minutes are, the points that they should include and the different ways of recording them. Now is time to see the wording of minutes.

Wording of Minutes

Minutes should be written in a past tense form using a third person reported speech. (Examples- the chairman asked...., the reports were presented and) Go through the following examples of minutes and study the wordings and the format carefully.

Name of the company or

Department, group or committee conducting the meeting

Place of the meeting

Date and time the meeting

A list of members present should be recorded in the following manner

Present: _____ (first should be name of the chairperson)

_____	}	List of the names of other members in their alphabetical order.

Body of the minute:

Following the headings and noting the time the meeting started and ended, the body presents all major decisions reached at the meeting. All assignments of tasks to meeting members should also be included in the body part. Any additional documentation such as tables and charts submitted by the participants should not be overlooked.

The end of the minute:

Here there should be a couple of blank lines for the signature of the chairperson and the secretary who prepares the minute. Before it is being distributed the minute should be read and approved by the chairperson.

The minutes prepared by you and your friend may not be identical. But if you follow the above format, your minutes of a meeting might look similar.

In order to give you a full picture the following is a sample minute, where you can have a closer look at the format, the wordings including the tenses used.

Minutes of ET (executive team) meeting
September 16, 2007
Executive conference room

Present: Ato Alemayehu G. (chairperson), Ato Genetu M., W/rt Hamelmal Z.,
Ato Israel M., W/ro Kelemua G. Also present: Ato Lemlemu A. and
Ato Mehari T.

Review of actions taken at September 4 meeting

1. Ato Lemlemu to prepare a job flow chart of a work order from clients and report to the ET group.
Due: September 29
2. Ato Mehari to present a report on salary compensation currently offered by the company.
Due: September 29

Minutes of September 16 meeting

1. The minutes of September 4 meeting were approved as presented.
2. Job costing and time reporting
Ato Lemlemu presented a brief report on how the new Adware system for agency-client profitability will work. An internal methods team by Ato Lemlemu has been established with the intent of standardizing communication with clients.
3. Training progress—tuition reimbursements
Ato Israel outlined a prolapsed tuition-reimbursements program to be offered to all full-time employees after six months of employment. He proposed that a limit of Br 2000 be instituted.

Action to be taken: the ET group suggested that the proposal wait until the question of agency compensation was solved. The chairperson suggested that a detailed report of all salary compensation be presented before a final decision was made, that the report should be completed by October 20.

The chairperson adjourned the meeting 9 pm and reminded the group that the next meeting would be held on September 29.

Respectfully submitted
Mekdes Girma
Recording secretary

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Meetings are a gathering where purposive discourse occurs among three or more people who exchange information on a common topic or problem, for better understanding or for solving a problem.
- Two basic purposes of business meetings are: to present information and to solve problems
- Effective leadership of a meeting requires careful planning before the meeting on the date, time, place, agenda, physical arrangements and participants, and a good way of proceeding through the meeting.
- During the meeting the leader has responsibilities of beginning with an appropriate opening statement and stimulating discussion for solution discovery, evaluation and choice of action. The chairperson should also encourage opinions, clarify vague statement and maintain an atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation. The leader should also be aware of the various roles of participants and respond quickly and wisely to role statements.
- After the meeting, the chairperson's responsibilities include distributing the minutes and seeing that responsible appointments are made and that a date is set to carry out the necessary action.
- Minutes are official records of the proceedings of a meeting which summarize what was discussed and what decisions were made.
- There are three main ways of producing minutes of a meeting: Verbative minutes, Minutes of resolution, and Minutes of narration.

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 7

Chose the best answer for the following questions

1. Which one of the following type of meeting is used to disseminate information to a number of people
 - a) Informational meeting
 - b) Problem solving meeting
 - c) Suggested solution meeting
 - d) Casual meeting
2. The decision on the physical arrangement while preparing for a meeting involves
 - a) Seating arrangements
 - b) Materials and equipments
 - c) Atmosphere
 - d) All
3. Following up the meeting does not involve one of the following
 - a) Building an agenda for the next meeting
 - b) Recognizing the role of participants
 - c) Following up on other members
 - d) Completing assignments
4. _____ is an official record of the proceeding of a meeting
 - a) Minute
 - b) agenda
 - c) Adjournment
 - d) none
5. One of the following ways of recording minutes lists down every word from every participant
 - a) Minutes of resolution
 - b) Minutes of narration
 - c) Verbative minutes
 - d) All

CHAPTER EIGHT

BUSINESS LETTERS

INTRODUCTION

Making choice of symbols and channels helps to ensure effective communication. This is achieved when the intended meaning of the sender and the meaning perceived by the receiver are one and the same. The concern of this chapter is on the verbal symbols in written communication media that we call as business letters.

Despite the recent growth in electronic communications and the convenience of telephone, letters are still a very widely used medium of communication in businesses. They are cheap to produce and postal delivery is quick and generally reliable. They also provide both the receiver and the sender with a permanent record of what has been discussed and agreed for later reference. Letters may lack the personal touch of meetings or the immediacy of a telephone call, but when matters are relatively straight forward and there is no urgency for a decision- as is the case in most routine business-they are an effective and valuable form of communication.

Business letters are written from one business firm to another or from a business firm to an individual customer. They are the most common form of written messages used by the business to communicate with people and organizations outside the firm. Therefore, business letters are often the main means of establishing business relations with the outside world.

Hence, in this chapter, you will be provided with detailed discussions and explanations on the characteristics of good business letters, the conventional parts of business letters, and the different types of business letters.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Dear student, after you complete reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- Define business letters and explain their purpose

- List and explain the characteristics of good business letters
- Discuss the conventional parts of business letters
- List and discuss the various types of business letters

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 8.1 Business letters defined
- 8.2 Characteristics of good business letters
- 8.3 Conventional parts of business letters
- 8.4 Types of business letters

8.1 DEFINITION

Dear student, can you give your own definition of business letters? You can use the space below to write your definition.

- Business letter is a communication from one person to a company or vice versa and from one company to another.
- Business letter is the medium used for written messages often to the persons outside the firm.
- Business letters are purposeful internal and external medium of communication designed to communicate business messages or information between the letter producer and the reader who could be a supplier, a potential customer or another business firm.

Now take a look at the above ways we used to define business letters and then compare them with your definitions that you gave earlier. If you have missed some points in your definition, do not worry because the coming discussions are geared towards acquainting you with what business letters are and so much more than just defining them.

An effective business letter is a package containing essential facts such as knowledge of business procedure, mastery of the structure of language and logical thinking. You may write a business letter for various purposes. It could be to inform readers of specific information. You might also write such letters to persuade others to take action, to propose your idea, etc. Whatever the purpose you have in mind when you write business letters, there are some essential characteristics that your letter should possess to enable you to communicate in the most effective way. This brings us to the issue of the characteristics of good business letters which will be discussed in the following section.

8.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER

To compose an effective business message, you need to apply certain communication principles. They tie closely with the basic concepts of communication process and are important both for written and oral communication. You may recall these from the discussions you have covered in the first chapter under the principles of effective communication.

They will provide you with guidelines for the choice of content and style of presenting your message specifically adapted to the purpose of your message and the receiver of your message. We will discuss these characteristics that your letter should possess in addition to the 7 C's of effective communication:

1. *Accuracy*: you should strive for accuracy not only in the mechanical and technical details but also in references and statements, dates, spellings, (especially the names of persons or of firms), the use of language and punctuation, and argument. Be accurate in all things and it is much better to rewrite a letter than to send it out containing incorrect material.

2. *Thoroughness*: when you read your letter over before releasing it, you should make sure that it contains the essential points that you want covered. If you are writing a reply letter to a correspondent, be sure that your answer is comprehensive and covers questions that he/she expressed or implied. Do not make it necessary for him/her to write again for information you ought to have given him.

3. *Conciseness*: a concise message saves time and expense for both the sender and the receiver. Conciseness, as you may recall from our discussion in the first chapter of this material, is saying what you have to say in the fewest possible words without sacrificing the other qualities of your message. It will contribute to emphasis and avoids/eliminates unnecessary words so that you can make your important ideas stand out.

4. *Clarity*: to write a letter that will be clear to the receiver, you must first have a definite idea of what you mean to say. If you are vague in your thoughts, how can you expect the reader to grasp it immediately? To be clear, however, does not mean that you should use many words to express an idea. It just means that you should choose and use the right words.

Tip: read your letter over and over again before sending it and do not be satisfied unless and until it possesses clarity.

5. *Promptness*: if you cannot answer a letter promptly, acknowledge its recipients and state that you will give it your early attention. Include a courteous expression of thanks in the letter.

Dear learner, so far you have been able to see the specific characteristics your letter should possess in a detailed manner. Having these characteristics in mind, how can you be able to frame your letter? Here you will be offered an answer to this question. The answer is simply to plan it very carefully following five steps. In our previous discussion on meetings, interviews, speeches, etc., you have gained an insight on the importance of planning. So, here also, you need a thorough planning process to be able to write an effective business letter that possesses the above listed good characteristics. The following discussions are devoted toward enabling you plan your letter.

To communicate effectively, first you should go through the following five basic steps before writing your message.

- ❖ Know the purpose of the message
- ❖ Analyse your audience(reader)

- ❖ Choose the ideas to include
- ❖ Collect all the facts to back up (support) your idea
- ❖ Outline and organize your message

Know your purpose: the first step when you plan for communicating your message is to determine your specific purpose. For example, is it to get an immediate replacement for defective articles? Or is your main purpose to announce your firm's new location? Or to apologize for a serious error? In addition to the specific purpose of each message, all communications have, of course, an underlying general purpose- to build goodwill. For example, in a refusal or a collection letter, the purpose should be two fold- not only to refuse a request or to ask for money, but also to maintain the customers' goodwill.

Analyse your audience: after reading about the communication process and principles at the first chapter of this material, you can realize how much important it is to adapt your messages as much as possible to the recipient's views, mental filter and needs. In your letter, consider the areas on which your recipient is likely to be well informed or uninformed, pleased or displeased, negative, positive or neutral.

Choose the ideas: with your purpose and recipient in mind, the next step you will take is to choose the ideas for your message. If you are answering a letter, you can underline the main points to discuss and jot your ideas briefly in the margin or on a memo pad. If you are writing a complex message, you can begin by listing your ideas as they come to you. Then consider what facts will be most useful for that person.

Collect all the facts: having determined what ideas to include, ask yourself if you need any specific facts, updated figures and the like. Be sure you know your company policies, procedures, product details if the message requires them. Perhaps you should check with your boss, colleagues, subordinate or the files for

an exact percentage, name of an individual, a date, an address or a statement. Sometimes you may also need to enclose a useful brochure, table, and picture or product sample.

Outline and organize your message: before you write the message, outline it (in your mind or on a piece of paper). The order in which you present your ideas is often as important as the ideas themselves. Disorganized writing reflects disorganized, illogical thought processes or careless presentation. Having done so, you need to decide on the organization of your letter where you could have two major alternatives. You can either use a deductive or direct approach where you begin with the main ideas and present discussions next or you can use the inductive or indirect approach in which you start with the relevant statements and later present the main idea.

Check Point

- ✓ What is Business letter?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of good business letter?

8.3 CONVENTIONAL PARTS OF BUSINESS LETTERS

A letter is a written message in a particular format. Properly planned, well designed and neatly typed letters contribute towards the reputation and goodwill of a business organization. The business letter mostly has seven standard parts. They are arranged and discussed here in their top to bottom order:

- The heading
- The date
- Inside address
- Attention line (optional)
- Salutation
- Body
- Complementary close

- Signature block

1. *The heading*: the heading shows where the letter comes from. It includes the organization's name, full address and almost always a telephone number.
2. *The date*: the date establishes correspondence as a matter of record and provides a reference point for future correspondence. It is typed two spaces below the last line of the letter head. It is indicated in either in the upper right-hand corner or upper left-hand corner.

Example: 2 may 2008 or May 2, 2008-07-30

Both methods are acceptable, however, the first method proceeds in the logical order of day, month and year and hence it is conventional.

☞ Reference is a code given to the letter.

3. *Inside address*: it is the name and address of the person or organization to which you are sending the letter. The full address should be written two spaces below the date and two spaces above the salutation. The name of the addressee should be correctly spelled. If the addressee has no professional title such as doctor, or professor, the traditional courtesy titles are used-Mr, Ms, Mrs.

Order of arrangement of the inside address:

- 1st. Person and business
- 2nd. Committee, group or section or other small group
- 3rd. Company
- 4th. Building
- 5th. P.O.Box, street address
- 6th. City state
- 7th. Country

The attention line (optional): to ensure prompt action, sometimes a letter which is addressed to a company is marked to a particular office with in the organization.

The attention line is written two spaces below the inside address and two spaces above the salutation. The attention line is usually underlined.

Example: Attention: Mr Jonathan

Attention: General manager

4. *Salutation*: salutation is similar to greeting. It is placed two spaces below the attention line (if there is any). In most cases, it should match the first line of the inside address. When addressing an individual, use the word dear, followed by a polite title and the name of the person and a colon. When a letter is addressed to an officer by name “Dear sir” is used. If a person has a specific title, it is written before his/her name instead of the usual sir.

☞ Subject: the subject of a letter gives a brief title of the message. Thus, the purpose of the subject line is to let the reader know immediately what the message is about.

5. *Body*: this is the main part of the letter that contains the main message of the letter and the idea of the writer. In the first paragraph, reference to any correspondence which has already taken place, should be given. In the second, the main message should be stated. The paragraphs that follow should contain further details if necessary.

In the closing paragraph, the writer must clearly state what action he/she expects the reader to take or he/she may end the letter indicating his/her expectations, wishes or intentions. The paragraphs are not given any heading unless the letter is very long and deals with several important points.

6. *Complementary close*: this is the polite way of ending a letter. It is typed two spaces below the last line of the letter (body).

Example: sincerely, cordially, faithfully, best regards....

7. *Signature area*: signature is the signed name of the writer. It is placed below the complementary close. The name of the writer is usually typed four spaces below the close line providing enough space for signature.

☞ In the left margin the following should be included

Identification mark: identification mark is put in the left margin to identify the typist of the letter two spaces below the signature

Enclosure: if any thing is attached to the letter, it must be indicated against the enclosure line typed two spaces below the identification mark. The enclosure notation reminds the reader that material is enclosed with the letter.

Example: Enc_____

Enclosure (s) _____

Copy to: copy is used when there are other organizations or individuals are required to receive and know the message.

Dear learner, the following two pages will show you two letter structures having two different formats which are both aimed at increasing your understanding of the discussion you have read on the conventional parts of business letters.

There are two basic and most widely used letter formats which are worth a discussion.

- a. *The full block format*: is becoming very popular format. It can be typed rapidly because none of the parts of the letter are indented as is the case in the modified block format.
- b. *Modified block format*: in the modified block format, the date, the complementary close and the signature block begins at the horizontal centre of the page.

MODEL OF THE FULL BLOCK FORMAT

Arbaminch University,
Arbaminch,
P.O.box 21
SNNP.

} Heading

21/07/2000 } Date

Mr, Ms, Dr
(Manager, Director, etc) }

} Inside address

Dear Sir, Mr____, Ms_____ }

} Salutation

Reference part
Information
Purpose
Conclusion }

} Body of the letter

Sincerely, cordially, faithfully, }

} Complementary close

Name of company,
Signature
Business title }

} signature area

MODEL OF THE MODIFIED BLOCK FORMAT

	Arbaminch University Arbamich, P.O.box 21 SNNP
	July 28, 2000
Mr, Ms, Dr (Manager, director, etc)	
Dear Sir, Mr____, Ms_____	
Reference part Information Purpose Conclusion	
	Sincerely, cordially, faithfully,
	Name of company, Signature Business title

8.4 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

The following are some of the common types of business letters. Dear student, please keep in mind that the purpose and recipient of your letters are the points that you should consider to decide up on which form you can choose. In this section, you can be provided with discussions on

the various types of business letters: Enquiry, claim, adjustment, and employment. Each one of the types will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs. While you are reading through the discussions, try to figure out their differences in terms of their purpose and recipient.

Enquiry letter

Business people periodically make routine requests for information. Those routine enquiries are neutral messages that require no persuasion, and therefore, should be written using a direct plan. The enquiries may be about a product, service, or a person. A letter of enquiry must be written so that the writer will obtain all the information necessary to make a decision about the product, service or person. If you receive such letters in the work place, consider what you or your company would want to know and ask specific questions.

An enquiry about products or services should make receiver of your message glad to respond and should end by requesting. The enquiry may include only one sentence such as requesting a catalogue or it may also have several paragraphs in which questions are asked on the following areas:

- Specifications on the size, shape, quality, quantity of product required.
- Terms of payment and the price
- Sample of the product (if necessary)
- Time required for shipment of goods
- Guarantee on the products
- Availability of supply and accessories
- Cost of installation, repair and maintenance

Dear learner, please have a close look at the following two sample letters for an enquiry and a response to the inquiry. It will some how strengthen your understanding of the above discussion. Look at the following example of an enquiry letter.

A SAMPLE ENQUIRY LETTER

Department of Hydraulics
Arbaminch University,
Arbaminch, Ethiopia
P.O.box 21

March 26, 2007

Mr Yohannes Tigabu
Professor
Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa

Dear Mr Yohannes,

I am a professor in Hydraulics department at Arbaminch University organizing a seminar on management of water resources in the coming June.

Based on your experience in this area, I was wondering if you would be interested in attending. The deadline for admission is May 23. It would be a great honour to have you in attendance.

Enclosed you may please find an admission form and more information about the seminar.

With regards,

Alemayehu Yirga
Professor, AMU
Enclosures (4)

A SAMPLE OF RESPONSE LETTER FOR THE PREVIOUS LETTER OF ENQUIRY

Hydraulics department
Addis Ababa University,
Addis Ababa , Ethiopia

April 2,2007

Alemayehu Yirga
Professor, AMU
Arbamich

Dear Mr Alemayehu,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 26th March.

I would be honoured to attend your symposium on the management of water resources in June. I strongly agree with the fact that your university is doing so much towards the issue and would like to be part of the effort.

I am enclosing the admission sheet sent to me, and the articles I recently published on the subject. Good luck in organizing the event. I cannot wait to be there!

Sincerely,

Yohannes Tigabu,
Professor, AAU

Enclosures (8)

Claim letter

A claim letter is written by the buyer to the seller seeking some type of action to correct a problem with the seller's product or service. A claim letter requests some type of adjustment. Many compliant letters would probably be more successful if they carried an implied claim that the writer wanted some adjustments to be made as a result of a poor product, service or unfair treatment, practices and so on.

Claims should be written as soon as a problem is identified because delaying unnecessarily might not only push you past the warranty date but might also raise suspicions about the validity of your claims.

While writing claim letters, you should be courteous and avoid emotional language. Your reader who becomes angry with the strong language you used in your letter will be less likely to do as you ask. Instead of using an emotional language, begin your claim letter directly telling what the problem is. Once you have identified the problem, give explanations including all possible background information such as the date, the model number, the amount etc.

Dear learner, look at the following two ways of presenting your claims and tell which one of them is wrong and which is right and why?

-
-
1. I delivered this letter to you sometime in the early afternoon on December 3. Although you promised to deliver it by 3 pm in the next day, you failed to do so.
 2. As shown in the enclosed copy of my receipt, I delivered this letter to united express at 3:30 PM. According to the signed documentary displayed in the office, any package received by 4 PM is guaranteed to arrive at 3 PM the following business day. I have not received any yet.

Tell exactly what went wrong and how you are inconvenienced. If it is true and relevant mention some thing positive about the company or its products to make your letter appear reasonable. Finally tell what type of adjustment you expect. Do you want the company to replace the product, repair it, issue a refund, and simply apologize or what? End the letter on a confident note. In some situations you may not exactly know what type of adjustment is reasonable, and then you would leave it to the reader to suggest an appropriate course of action. This might be the situation where you suffered no monetary loss but simply wish to avoid such an unpleasant situation in the future. It could be regarding a discourteous service, long waiting lines, ordering the wrong model because of having received incomplete information. For instance, you can say --- please let me

know how I might avoid this problem in the future. Look at the sample claim letter below regarding a defective product.

A SAMPLE CLAIM LETTER

BIFFA RETAILER
ARBAMINCH,
ETHIOPIA
P.O.BOX 887

March 8, 1999

Mr Yaregal Atnafu
Marketing manager
TTY food complex,
Addis Ababa

Dear Mr Yaregal,

We have ordered 4000 Kg of rice our order number BR/009/99 dated February 23, 1999. Today when the shipment arrived we checked its contents and found only 3400 Kg of packed rice out of which 65 packs were badly damaged. It seems one of the cases was not packed properly or some heavy load had been placed over it in transit.

There is a great demand for your product in the town at this time of the year and we expected to clear the whole stock during the next two months. But it appears some of our customers will have to be disappointed.

With enormous resources at your command we hope you can save the situation by sending the remaining 600 Kg of packed rice immediately by quick transit service.

Regarding the damaged packs, we want your advice. There are two alternatives: either you will allow us to sell them at reduced price in which case we shall send you the total amount realized after deducting our usual 7% commissions or permit us to return them to you at your cost for replacement.

Sincerely yours,

Yeshimebet Amare
Purchasing manager

In the following section i.e. adjustment letters we will look at a sample adjustment letter which is written in response to the above model claim letter. So keep the above example in your mind while going through the discussions that follow.

Adjustment letters

An adjustment letter is written to inform the customer, or the supplier, etc of the actions taken in response to their claim letter. So, the objective of the adjustment letter is customer satisfaction and business reputation. In writing the adjustment letter, you should consider the claims very promptly because any delay will cause further annoyance. In addition you should offer further cooperation and assurance of satisfaction to prompt good will and good relationship with the customer.

If the claim is unclear or unreasonable or unjust, state why you are refusing or partially accepting the claim. The overall tone of your adjustment letter should adopt a gracious and confident approach. Show confidence in the recipient's honesty and in the essential worth of your own company and its products.

Guide lines for writing an adjustment letter

- Respond promptly: your customer is already angry or upset
- Begin the letter directly, telling the reader immediately what adjustment is being made.
- Adopt a courteous tone: use neutral or positive language
- If appropriate, some where in the letter thank the reader for writing and apologize if the customer has been severely inconvenienced or embarrassed because of you company's action.
- Provide information that re-establishes your customers confidence in the product or your company. Be specific enough to be believable.
- Close on a positive note: include additional re-sales, sales promotions, appreciation for the reader's interest in your products, or some other

strategy that implies customer satisfaction and the expectation of a continuing relationship.

Before we wind up our discussion of adjustment letters, it would be very good for you to look at the following sample adjustment letter in response to the previous sample claim letter.

A SAMPLE ADJUSTMENT LETTER

TTY FOOD COMPLEX,
ADDIS ABABA,
ETHIOPIA
P.O.BOX 990

March 13, 1999

Purchasing section
Biffa Retailer
Arbaminch,
Ethiopia

Attention: W/rt Yeshimebet Amare, purchasing director

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter number BR/110/99 dated March 8, 1999. We are very sorry to learn that you have been inconvenienced owing to our mistake.

Your suggestion of quick shipment of 600 Kg of packed rice is fair and we have dispatched them today through quick transit service, as desired by you. We hope they will reach in time for you to keep the dates with your clients. We also agree to bear the transportation cost of the damaged packs. Please send them back soon.

Thank for drawing our attention to this mistake because we have again carefully examined the work of our packaging and dispatch department and introduced further checks to avoid the recurrence of such mistake.

TTY food complex assures that you will not be put in such conveniences again.

Sincerely yours,

Yaregal Atnafu
Marketing Manager

Employment letters

Dear learner can you recall the points discussed about interview, especially employment interviews? If not please refer back to that chapter because what we are about to discuss in this section is closely tied with it. The employment letters' objective is to get you into an interview or written test by your prospective employer. Well planned and organized employment letters will attract the employer for more information about you which will result in you being called for an interview. In this section we will see two major parts of an employment letter. i.e. application letters and resume or curriculum vitae or bio-data which are both necessary when you apply for a job/ when you seek employment in a particular organization.

Application Letter: the purpose of a job application letter is to get an interview. If you get a job through interviews arranged by Arbaminch university placement office or through other contacts, you may not need to write such letters. However, if you wish to work for an organization that is not interviewing in your campus, or when you change jobs, you will be required to write a letter for preparation of a job interview, because the application letter is the first step where you show a specific company what you can do for it. It is a form of advertising and it should be organized like a persuasive message. In your application letter you need to stimulate your reader's interest, it must be neat, clear, polite, purposeful and accurate and technically correct.

When you write your application letter, it is better if you have some knowledge about the organization you are applying because you should be able to write about how your qualification fits into its needs. The application letter should have several paragraphs such as the opening, middle and closing paragraphs.

There are two types of application letter. These are:

- Unsolicited application letter
- In response application letter

Unsolicited application letter: is sent to a company for which you would like to work even though no vacancies are being advertised.

In response application letter (solicited) are letters written in response to an advertisement. These are sent to the company or institution only when they have announced a specific job vacancy by advertisements and called for applications.

BOTH TYPES OF LETTERS SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A BIO-DATA, OR A RESUME, OR CURRICULUM VITAE.

The opening paragraph indicates the specific position the applicant seeks, where the advertisement was seen or how the applicant came to know of the vacant position and why the application qualifies for the position.

The middle paragraph(s) of the application letter presents selling points unless these are mentioned in the opening. This paragraph should give key qualifications that indicate that indicate the applicant can do the job.

Guidelines:

For writing the opening paragraph: To open letters by capturing the reader's attention in business follow suggestions below:

- Present your strongest, most relevant qualifications with an explanation of how they benefit the organization
- Mention the name of a person who is well known to the reader and you has suggested that you apply
- When responding to a job advertisement, identify the publication in which the advertisement appeared and briefly describe how you meet each requirement stated in the advertisement.
- Cite a publicized organizational achievement, contemplated change or new procedure or product; then link it to your desire to work for the organization.
- State that you are applying for a job, and identify the position or the type of work you seek.

For writing the middle paragraph:

- Present your key qualifications for the job, highlighting what is on your resume: job-related education and training, relevant work experience and related activities, interests and qualities
- Adopt a mature and business-like tone:
- Back up your claims of ability by citing specific achievements in educational and work settings (or outside activities)
- Demonstrate knowledge of the organization and a desire to join it by citing its operations or trends in the organization
- Link your education, experience and personal qualifications to the job requirements.

For writing the closing paragraph

- Request for an interview at the reader's convenience
- Request a screening interview with the nearest regional representative
- State your phone number with area code and the best time to reach you
- Express appreciation for an opportunity to have an interview

The Resume (curriculum vitae/bio-data): a resume is a persuasive summary of your qualifications for employment. It is a document which you will use to sell yourself in the job search process. Its purpose is to convince potential employers that they should interview you. A well-designed resume will emphasise your skills, abilities, talents and experience for potential employers.

The type of resume format may depend on your preference and the employer organization you target. It may be chronologically organized around dates of employment and education, starting with the most recent position first. It may also be functional-organized around skills in which employers are interested. The third alternative is the combination of the above two designs which includes a section on employment by dates and a section on skills.

Parts of a Resume

1. *Opening section-* includes:

- Your name, date of birth, address(residential), telephone number
- Job or career objectives
- Summary of basic qualifications

2. *Education*

- List all relevant schooling and training since high school, with most recent first
- List the name and location of every post-secondary school you have attended with the dates you entered and left and the degrees or certificates you obtained
- Indicate your major and minor fields in college work
- State the numerical base for your grade point average, overall or in your major, if your average is impressive enough to the employer
- List relevant required or elective courses in descending order of importance.
- List any other relevant educational or training experiences such as job related seminars or workshops attended and certificates obtained

3. *Work experience*

- List all relevant work experience, including paid employment and volunteer work
- List full-time and part time jobs, with the most recent one first--- State the month, year you started and left each job, list the job titles and describe your functions and responsibilities briefly.

N.B. Note all on-the-job accomplishments such as organization recognitions letters or money.

4. *Activities, honours and achievements*

- List all relevant unpaid activities, including offices and leadership positions you have held, significant awards or scholarships not listed elsewhere, projects you have undertaken that show an ability to work with others, and publications and role in academic or professional organizations.

N.B. Exclude mention of religious or political affiliations.

5. *Personal data*

- Omit data that could be regarded negatively or be used to discriminate against you
- Omit references to age if it could suggest inexperience or approaching retirement
- List job-related interests and hobbies, especially those indicating strength, sociability, or other qualities that are desirable in the position you seek.
- Relate aspects of your training or work experience to those of the target position
- Outline your educational preparation for the job
- Provide proof that you learn quickly, are a hard worker, can handle responsibilities and get along well with others.
- Present evidence of personal qualities and work attitudes that are desirable for job performance
- If asked to state salary requirements, provide current salary or a desired salary range, and link it to the benefits of hiring you.

6. *Reference*

- List three to five references, or offer to supply the names on request.
- Supply names of academic, employment and professional associates- but not relatives
- Provide a name, title, address and telephone number for each reference

- List no names as reference unless you have that person's permission to do so.
- Exclude your present employer if you do not want him or her to know that you are seeking another position, or add "resume submitted in confidence" at the top or bottom of the resume

For illustration, assume that the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation advertised a vacancy for the post of Junior Human Resource Officer on Ethiopian Herald dated August 10, 2008. The minimum requirement for the position was a B.A degree in Business Management. The interested applicants were requested to submit their application letter within 10 working days after this announcement has been made.

Dear learner, look at the following application letter and resume shown below as a sample. They are written by an applicant as a response to the above vacancy announced by Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation.

SAMPLE APPLICATION LETTER

Mekuria Getachew

P.O.box 3030

Addis Ababa

August 12, 2008

Ato Mesafint Fantahun

Human Resource Manager

Addis Ababa

Dear Sir,

This is response to your vacancy announcement on the Ethiopian Herald dated 10th August, 2008 for the post of Junior Human Resource Officer.

I am keenly interested to join your organization because it is such a privilege to work with you and contribute my best to your efforts to connect Ethiopia to the future.

I am qualified enough to take this opportunity because I have requisite educational background and adequate work experience.

I have studied BA in business management in Arbaminch University and graduated with high distinction. During my stay in previous organization, I learned how to organize and prepare various reports using different computer packages, assisting the director of Administration.

I recently completed a three-course sequence at Grace College on Microsoft word and power point. I learned how to apply those programs to speed up letter and report writing tasks.

I would appreciate an interview with you. If you are interested in me, please call me any afternoon between 3 and 5 PM at (0911) 73-86-94 to let me know the day and time most convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Mekuria Getachew

SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE

CURRICULUM VITAE (C.V)

NAME: Mekuria Getachew

DATE OF BIRTH: 20th November, 1985

PLACE OF BIRTH: Awassa

ADDRESS: Addis Ababa

Tel: 0911-73-86-94

E-mail: Meduria_1985@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: To obtain the post of Junior Human Resource Officer

EDUCATION: BA degree in Business Management, with High Distinction, 2007,
Senior secondary school- Awassa Tabor Secondary School, 2003,
Junior Secondary School- Awassa Tabor Junior Secondary School, 1999,
Primary School-Awassa Hayk Primary School, 1995.

EXPERIENCE: Assistant Administrator, EELCO since October 10, 2007 up to present.

ACHIEVEMENTS: Have been selected the “best researcher” in management and awarded, ArbaMinch University.

SKILLS: Computer skills (Word, Excel, Power point, Access), Excellent in interpersonal communications.

LANGUAGE: Fluent in Amharic and English

HOBBIES: Reading, Writing, literature and playing guitar.

REFERENCE:

- Ato Megabi Mengistu, Dean of Faculty of Business and Economics, Arbaminch University. (Tel) 046-881-49-72
- Dr Abebe Darza, Head Of Management Department, Arbaminch University. [E-mail-darza2000@gmail.com](mailto:darza2000@gmail.com)

I certify that the above mentioned information is true to the best of my knowledge.

Check point

- ✓ List the conventional parts of business letter?
- ✓ Briefly explain different types of business letter?
- ✓ List elements of resume?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- In this chapter, you were provided with detailed discussions and explanations on the characteristics of good business letters, the conventional parts of business letters, and the different types of business letters.
- Business letters are purposeful internal and external medium of communication designed to communicate business messages or information between the letter producer and the reader who could be a supplier, a potential customer or another business firm
- There are some characteristics that your letter should possess in addition to the 7 C's of effective communication, these are: thoroughness, conciseness, clarity, promptness and accuracy.
- To communicate effectively, you should go through the following five basic steps before writing your message.
 - Know the purpose of the message
 - Analyse your audience(reader)
 - Choose the ideas to include
 - Collect all the facts to back up (support) you idea
 - Outline and organize your message
- The conventional parts of business letter are: the heading ,the date, Inside address Attention line (optional), Salutation, Body, Complementary close and the Signature block.

- There are different types of business letters, namely, Enquiry letters, Claim letters, Adjustment letters, and Employment letters (including the application letter and the resume) which all have different purposes and recipients.

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 8

Answer the following questions by filling the blank spaces.

1. _____ is one of the characteristics of a good business letter represented by the timeliness or urgency of the response.
2. The letter format in which none of the parts are indented is _____.
3. The part of the business letter which shows to whom the letter is written is _____.
4. The letter which is written in response to a claim letter is _____.
5. An application letter should be accompanied by _____.
6. Look at the following business letter format.

-----B-----

-----C-----

-----D-----

-----A-----

-----E-----

-----F-----

Question: Now indicate the part of Business Letter corresponding to each letter.

- i. A refers to _____
- ii. B refers to _____
- iii. C refers to _____
- iv. D refers to _____
- v. E refers to _____
- vi. F refers to _____

CHAPTER NINE

BUSINESS REPORTS

INTRODUCTION

To carry on efficient operations, businesses need various reports. In almost any kind of responsible business job-whether you are a management trainee, a salesperson, an accountant, a junior executive, or a Vice person, you may have to write reports. Your communication effectiveness and, often your promotion and salary increases are affected by the quality of reports you write.

This chapter is exclusively devoted to written reports. It provides overview of business reports. It includes their meaning, classifications, objectives and main parts. It discusses how to prepare, organize and outline reports.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define what is meant by a business report
- Discuss why businesses need reports and highlight the general purposes of reports
- Identify various classifications of business reports and distinguish among them
- Identify main parts of business report
- Know how to write business reports

CHAPTER OUTLINE

9.1 Definition and Meaning of Business Report

9.2 Objectives of Business Reports

9.3 Classification of Business Reports

9.4 Preparation before writing Reports

9.5 Main Parts of the Report

9.6 Organization and outline of Report Body

9.1 DEFINITION AND MEANING OF BUSINESS REPORT

Dear learner, in your personal or work life you might have come across several types of business reports. So, It might be easy for you to define what business report is. What is Business Report? You may put your answer on the provided space below:

Now, try to evaluate the appropriateness of your definition against the following possible definitions of Business Report.

A Business Report is an impartial, objective, planned presentation of facts to one or more persons for specific, significant business purpose. This means, to be classified as a business report, a report must serve some business purpose. This purpose may be to solve a problem. A business report must be specific enough to be meaningful, broad enough to take in variations found in reports.

A Business Report can be also defined as any factual, objective document that serves a business purpose.

A Business Report is an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves some business purpose.

As you can see from the above definitions, report is about factual information, not opinion. What is the difference between fact and opinion? Factual information is documented and verifiable. Example: *The room is very warm. The temperature on the wall indicates that it is 85 degrees.* Opinion is a perception, an interpretation. Example: *Everyone in the room has removed their jackets; therefore, it must be very.*

You may be surprised at the variety of messages that qualify as reports. The term covers everything from a fleeting image on a computer screen to reprinted forms to informal letters and memos to formal manuscripts. Many reports are delivered orally. In general, however, most business people think of **reports** as written, factual accounts that objectively communicate information about some aspect of the business. Because business reports are a managerial tool intended to inform or to contribute to the decision making and problem-solving process, they must be accurate, complete and unbiased. The report facts may pertain to events, conditions, qualities, progress, results, products, problems, or suggested solutions. They may help the receivers understand a complex business situation; carry out operational or technical assignments; or plan procedures, solve problems and make policy decisions about strategic planning.

The goal in developing a report is to make the information as clear and convenient to use as possible. Because time is precious, you tell your readers what they need to know- no more, no less-and you present the information in a way that is geared to their needs.

9.2 OBJECTIVES OF BUSINESS REPORTS

Organizations use reports to provide a formal, verifiable, link among people, places and times. Some reports are used for internal communication; others are vehicles for corresponding with outsiders. Some serve as a permanent record; others solve an immediate problem or answer a passing question.

Although business reports serve hundreds of purposes, most reports are used for one of the following general purposes:

- To present the facts in an unbiased manner
- To monitor and control operations
- To help implement policies and procedures
- To comply with legal or regulatory requirements e.g. Annual report ArbaMinch university writes to Ministry of Education
- To document work performed for a client e.g. Interim progress reports, final report
- To guide decisions on particular issues e.g. Research reports, justification reports

- To obtain new business or funding e.g. sales proposals

Each of these purposes imposes its own requirements on the report writer. If your readers need information to oversee an operation, you would present your message differently than if you were contributing a decision on a complex issue. In other words, the purpose of a report affects its form.

Check Point

- ✓ **Define business report?**
- ✓ **What is the objective of business report?**

9.3 CLASSIFICATION OF BUSINESS REPORTS

Reports are commonly classified by who initiated the report, why it is being prepared, when it is prepared, and where it is being sent. Here are some common report classifications:

- *Voluntary reports versus authorized reports.* **Voluntary reports** are prepared on your own initiative. Thus, they usually require more detail and support than **authorized reports**, which are prepared at the request of someone else. When writing a voluntary report, you give more background on the subject, and you explain your purpose more carefully. An authorized report, on the other hand, is organized to respond to the reader's request.
- *Routine reports versus special reports.* **Routine or periodic reports** are submitted on recurring basis(daily, weekly, quarterly, annually).They require less introductory and transitional material than do **special reports**, nonrecurring reports that deal with unique situations or one-time events.
- *Internal reports versus external report.* **Internal reports** (used within the organization) are generally less formal than **external reports** (sent to people outside the organization).

In addition to these categories, a report can be short or long, formal or informal. Formal reports are generally long-more than ten pages-and encompass complex problems. Informal reports are generally short. However, meanings of the terms “long” and “short” vary depending upon circumstances. Short, informal reports require fewer elements in their introductions, fewer transitional devices for continuity, fewer headings and usually a more personal writing style than do long, formal reports. Dear reader, keep in mind that a single report may have several classifications. For instance, a monthly sales report is generally an authorized, internal, routine, informal report. Nevertheless, most reports can be placed in two broad categories: *Informational reports* and *analytical reports*. **Informational reports** present facts on a subject, whereas, **Analytical reports** present facts with analyses, interpretations, conclusions, and perhaps recommendations. The purpose of informational reports is to explain, whereas, analytical reports are meant to convince the audience that the conclusions and recommendations developed in the text are valid.

9.4 PREPARATION BEFORE WRITING REPORTS

Before you start writing a report, you need to consider the planning steps. For all reports adequate preparation before writing involves the following *six important planning steps regarding purpose, reader, ideas to include, facts to collect, interpretation and organization*.

1. Define the Problem, Purpose, and Scope

The first planning step is to analyze the problem involved and know the purpose of your report. Ask questions like “What is wanted?” “How much?”, “Why?”, “When?” Answers to those questions will help you determine your problem, purpose, scope, limitations (in time and perhaps in fund), and title of the report. Then try to write your purpose in one concise, clear sentence.

2. Consider Who Will Receive the Report

Visualizing your reader or listener and his or her needs is an extremely important step in business report preparation. Who wants (or needs) this report? Who will read it? How much detail do they prefer? What is the reader’s point of view? Experience? Knowledge? Prejudice? Responsibility? Will the report be sent to several-or perhaps Hundreds of- persons at the same time?

3. Determine Ideas to Include

In short reports this third step usually involves writing down- in no particular order- any general idea you will need to develop in order to meet the report's purpose. If the report is long, a detailed working plan follows. For some reports, formulating hypotheses (Hypotheses are possible explanations or solutions for analyzing a problem) is desirable (even essential) as a basis for determining what information you will need and then you will jot down the tentative topic headings in a preliminary, tentative outline.

4. Collect Needed Material

The fourth step in report preparation is to gather needed facts thoughtfully from reliable sources. They might include primary sources (collecting data from people who are actually closer to the problem) and secondary sources (published materials).

5. Sort, Analyse and Interpret Data

In this fifth step the amount of brain work depends of course on the complexity of your research as determined by purpose and reader needs. In a short, informational report this step may take only a few minutes. In a long, analytical report based on masses of detailed data from many sources, this step may require weeks of study, arranging and analysis between the first sorting and the final interpreting of data. Your analysis and interpretations should of course be objective, free from your own personal bias (if you have any). To be honest, never omit or manipulate relevant facts, though they may be contrary to your own preferences or may require a decision different from what you had expected.

Now is also the time to reconsider the logic of your hypotheses and whether any main ideas in your original, tentative outline should be revised. Occasionally, after investigating your primary and secondary sources, you may find that some points in your tentative outline are not logical or possible to complete. Conversely, some areas that should have been included in the outline may have been omitted. And so you now revise, add, and delete topics where necessary.

6. Organize Data and Prepare Final Outline

After careful analysis and interpretation, you will organize the findings and make the final outline. But before preparing such an outline, you need to know what constitutes a report body and to consider various methods of organizing and outlining.

Check Point

- ✓ List classification of business report?
- ✓ What are the preparations for business report writing?

9.5 MAIN PARTS OF THE REPORT

After you have completed the six preparation steps, you turn to the main parts of the report. These usually contain three sections: Prefatory parts, text (Body) and Supplementary parts.

PREFATORY PARTS

Although the prefatory parts are placed before the text of the report, you may not want to write them until after you have written the text. Many of these parts- such as the table of contents, list of illustrations and executive summary-are easier to prepare after the text has been completed because they directly reflect the contents. Other parts can be prepared at almost any time.

Cover

Many companies have standard covers for reports, made of heavy paper and imprinted with the company's name and logo. If your company has no standard covers, you can usually find something suitable in a good stationery store. Look for a cover that is appropriate to the subject matter, attractive, and convenient. Also, make sure it can be labeled with the report title, the writer's name (optional), and the submission date (also optional).

Think carefully about the title you put on the cover. Give your readers all the information they need: the who, what, when, where, why and how of the subject. Put a title on the cover that is informative but not too long.

The Fly and Title Page

The title fly is a plain sheet of paper with only the title of the report on it. It adds formality to a report.

The title page includes four blocks of information:

- The title of the report;
- The name, title, and address of the person, group or organization that authorized the report (usually the intended audience);
- The name, title, and address of the person, group, or organization that prepared the report;
- The date on which the report was submitted.

Letter of authorization and Letter of Acceptance

If you were authorized in writing to prepare the report, you may want to include in your report the letter of memo of authorization (and sometimes even the letter or memo of acceptance). *The letter of authorization* (or memo of authorization) is a document requesting that a report be prepared.

The letter of acceptance (or memo of acceptance) acknowledges the assignment to conduct the study and to prepare the report. This document is rarely included in reports.

Letter of Transmittal

The letter of Transmittal (or memo of transmittal) conveys your report to your audience. The letter of transmittal says what you would say if you were handing the report directly to the person who authorized it, so the style is less formal than the rest of the report. For example, the letter would use personal pronouns (you, I, And We) and conversational language. The transmittal letter usually appears right before the table of contents.

Table of Contents

The table of contents outlines the text and prefatory and supplementary parts. Be sure the headings in the table of contents match up perfectly with the headings in the text.

List of Illustrations

For simplicity's sake, some reports refer to all visual aids as illustrations or exhibits. If you have enough space on a single page, include the list of illustrations directly beneath the table of contents. Otherwise, put the list on the page after the contents page. When tables and figures are numbered separately, they should also be listed separately.

Synopsis or Executive Summary

A synopsis is a brief overview (one page or less) of a report's most important points, designed to give readers a quick preview of the contents. It is often included in long informational reports dealing with technical, professional or academic subjects and can also be called an *abstract*.

TEXT OF THE REPORT

Apart from deciding on the fundamental issues of content and organization, you must also make decisions about the design and layout of the report. The following are parts you include in your text section:

Introduction

The introduction of a report serves a number of important functions:

- Puts the report in broader context by tying it to a problem or an assignment
- Tells readers the purpose of the report
- Previews the contents and organization of the report
- Establishes the tone of the report and the writer's relationship with the audience

Here is list of topics to consider covering in an introduction, depending on your material and your audience:

- *Authorization*- when, how, and by whom the report was authorized; who wrote it, and when it was submitted.
- *Problem/purpose*- The reason for the report' existence and what is to be accomplished as a result f the report's being written.
- *Background*- The historical conditions or factors that led up to the report.
- *Sources and methods*- The secondary sources of information that were used and the surveys, experiments, and observations that were carried out.
- *Definitions*- a brief introductory statement leading into a list of terms used in the report and their definitions.
- *Limitations*- Factors affecting the quality of the report, such as a budget too small to do all the work that should have been done, an inadequate amount of time to do all the necessary research, unreliability or unavailability of data, or other conditions beyond your control.
- *Report organization*- The organization of the report (what topics are covered and in what order), along with a rationale for following this plan.

Body

The body of the report follows the introduction. It consists of the major sections or chapters (with various levels of headings) that present, analyze, and interpret the findings gathered as part of your investigation. Restrict the body to those details necessary to prove your conclusions and recommendations.

Summary, conclusions and recommendations

The final section of the text of a report tells readers “what you told them.” A long report generally has separate sections labelled “Summary”, “Conclusions,” and” Recommendations”. Here is how the three differ:

Summary-The key findings of your report, paraphrased from the body and stated or listed in the order in which they appear in the body.

Conclusions- An analysis of what the findings mean. These are the answers to the questions that led to the report.

Recommendations- Opinions, based on reason and logic, about the course of action that should be taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY PARTS

Supplementary parts follow the text of the report and include the appendixes, bibliography, and index.

An appendix contains materials related to the report but not included in the text because they are too lengthy or bulky or because they lack direct relevance.

A bibliography is a list of secondary sources consulted when preparing the report. List all the secondary sources you used in the bibliography.

An index is an alphabetical list of names, places, and subjects mentioned in the report and the pages on which they occur. An index is rarely included in unpublished reports.

9.6 ORGANIZATION AND OUTLINE OF REPORT BODY

How a report is organized increases the readability of the report. The report's reader, purpose, and subject matter must be considered when you choose the organizational plan for the entire report body and the text section. Then you will need to outline the topics correctly. The two usual ways to organize a report body are by the deductive (direct) and inductive (indirect) plans. Most business reports are organized deductively because readers wish to know early the recommendation or conclusions.

Deductive Arrangement

The word “, deductive, or direct, means describing up front and explanation in your report the main ideas or main recommendations before presenting detailed evidence and explanation.

In a lengthy report, readers usually prefer the deductive arrangement because it gives them an immediate picture before they delve into the mass of supporting details.

Inductive Arrangement

Here you present the explanation before the main ideas or recommendation. You present much evidence and supporting materials before arriving at the main recommendation or conclusion.

Ways to Organize Report Text Section

One of the most challenging tasks in report writing is to decide on the best way to organize the mass of details in the text section. You must make this decision before you prepare the final outline and, of course, before you begin writing the report. You can develop the text in one (or more) of the following ways:

1. *By criteria or topics*- This is the most common. Your main headings may be the standards, factors, solution options, benefits, or characteristics-criteria-on which a decision rests.
2. *By order of occurrence*- Agendas, minutes of meetings, convention programs, progress reports, and write-ups of events or procedures may follow this chronological arrangement.
3. *By order of location or space*- This organization is useful for any orderly description focusing on space location of units. For example, to illustrate the

political implications of a policy change, you can write about its influence in Europe, the Middle East, and the western hemisphere.

4. *By procedure or process*-While close to the chronological pattern, this method traces the steps of, say, a policy or the operations of a machine or the step-by-step procedure a bank teller might use in handling a deposit or withdrawal.
5. *By order of importance or by alphabetization*- First present the most important ideas, events, or topics and proceed to the less important points.
6. *By order of familiarity*- Always proceed from the simple or familiar to the complex or unfamiliar, because the reader can comprehend better what is known than what is not known.
7. *By sources*- This method is less desirable unless you are sure your reader is most interested in what each source revealed rather than in the criteria of other important ideas.
8. *By problem solution*- This way of organization is structured in such a manner that an initial discussion of the problem followed by a solution.

Methods of Outlining

After you have decided how to organize the body and the text, you will arrange the headings and subheadings in an outline. A good outline, especially for reports two or more pages long, is an essential tool and a real time-saver. It will become your guide for writing the report. In a long, formal report, it also becomes your table of contents. The outline helps you- before you write the report- to see the relationship between topics, compare proportions and headings, check for loopholes in logical order, and eliminate overlapping.

Check Point

- ✓ Briefly describe parts of business report?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- A report is an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves some business purpose
- The functions of Business Report include: a presentation of facts on a subject, a presentation of facts with analyses and interpretations, a presentation of facts with analyses, interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations.
- There are various types of business reports: Voluntary reports, authorized reports, Routine reports, special reports, internal reports, external report.
- Before writing a report, plan your report. For all reports adequate preparation before writing involves the following six important planning steps: *purpose, reader, ideas to include, facts to collect, interpretation and organization.*
- The main parts of a report are: Prefatory part, Text part and Supplementary Parts
- The two usual ways to organize a report body are by the deductive (direct) and inductive (indirect) plans. Most business reports are organized deductively because readers wish to know early the recommendation or conclusions.
- The text of a report can be organized by using one (or more) of the following ways: *By criteria or topics, By order of occurrence, By order of location or space, By procedure or process, By order of importance or by alphabetization, By order of familiarity, By sources, By problem solution.*

SELF CHECK EXERCISE 9

Write True if the statement is correct and False if the statement is incorrect.

1. A business report is an orderly communication of factual and opinion information that serves some business purpose.
2. Authorized reports require more detail and support than voluntary reports
3. All business reports are formal.
4. A monthly sales report produced by a sales representative is generally an authorized, internal, routine, and informal report.
5. The first planning step for preparing your business report is to write down the main ideas without worrying about their orders.
6. Introduction is one of the prefatory parts in Business Report.
7. An appendix which is supplementary part, contains materials related to the report but not included in the text such as questionnaires and detailed statistical calculations.
8. The order in which you first present various evidences and supporting materials, before arriving at the main conclusion is said to be inductive arrangement.
9. In your reporting, always go from unknown to known so that you would draw attention of the reader.
10. In your reporting, first present the most important topics.

CHAPTER TEN

PUBLIC RELATION

Introduction

There is almost no single industry without competition. Media is an industry where the competition is intense and it has been used for various purposes by organizations regardless of their size and country of origin. Hence, businesses and organizations need the media for a rainy day; therefore effective and intimate relationship, in which respect and understanding of each party's interest is carefully considered, must be exercised. Journalists and reporters are a busy person whom getting hold of is difficult in the dog-eat-dog world of the so-called information era. Thus the best possible way of contacting them should be identified by responsible individuals at organizations. This is a vital task which needs extreme care and skills to establish and manage effective public relations.

Chapter Objectives

On completion of this chapter you should be able to:

- Define communication
- Explain the significance of communication in business organizations
- Highlight the difference between formal and informal communication channels.
- Discuss the process of communication
- Identify major communication barriers between people and within organizations

Chapter Outline

10.1. Definition and meaning of Public Relation

10.2. Characteristics of public relation

10.3. Significance of public Relation

10.4. Media Relation

10.1. Definition and meaning of Public Relation

Organizations need to endeavor to enhance public trust through effective public relation; therefore they need to regularly emphasize their positive and fair activities. Accordingly public relation would assist organizations for developing their reputation and reliability in a cost effective manner.

List factors that contribute to effective business communication is Public Relation. The public relations Society of America definitions that: “Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other”, or as some have quipped, not without basis, “Doing good and letting people know it”. Other definitions are more complex, but introduce greater precision.

Public relations is a leadership and management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy, and facilitate organizational change. Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to develop positive relationships and to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectation. Public relations practitioners develop, execute, and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among an organization’s constituent parts and publics.

If we disassemble this definition, we shall find a number of components that make it a useful one even for international practice. First, we should agree that public relations practice includes, as this definition does, the component of management and leadership. Some have said leadership is doing the right thing, and management is doing the thing right. That is simple, but accurate. We have come to understand that practitioners must not only have direct access to top organizational management, but must also possess and exhibit qualities of top management. The remainder of the definition’s first sentence explains why: (1) practitioners must ensure their efforts support and contribute to overall organizational goals and objectives; (2) practitioners must participate actively and influentially in establishing and monitoring organizational values; and (3) practitioners must have the confidence of top management in order to recommend needed adjustments to organizational policies and procedures.

The second sentence of the definition describes the process by which practitioners create an environment in which these lofty responsibilities can be carried out: practitioners, more than any other organizational component, engage in an ongoing communication effort with all the constituencies that matter to the organization. Internally that could include employees, members,

students, volunteers, and so on. Externally, as you probably know, that could include media (general and specialized), community members, and government agencies at all levels, customers and clients, and so forth. Then there are hybrid publics that do not fit neatly into the external/internal categorization such as retirees, alumni, investors, and so on.

The point is that public relations practitioners build long-term relationships with these constituencies through ongoing dialogue. After all, these are the constituencies upon whom the success and prosperity of the organization depend. Implied in this process is the organizational core value that it is genuinely concerned about the values, motivations and welfare of these publics, and is willing to take reasonable measures to harmonize its own operations to address discord. The third and final sentence of this simple but comprehensive definition introduces the specific craft elements of the discipline that enable practitioners to carry out this challenging brief.

That, then, is what this text implies when it uses the simple term *public relations*. Actual practice may vary from nation to nation, from culture to culture. However, the discipline's leading scholars and practitioners, that any definition of the profession should include references to a planned, management-oriented, process-centered program, characterized by ongoing dialogue with internal and external publics, and contributing to and participating in responsible decision-making by top organizational leaders.

10.2. Characteristics of Public Relation

Vergig and his colleagues consolidated a list of characteristics of excellent public relations), and argue that these characteristics “will be generic, normative factors of excellent public relations applicable across cultures and political/ economic systems”. Following is a summary of their conclusions:

1. *Involvement of public relations in strategic management:* The organization sets goals and missions relevant to the environment. Public relations units are involved in the planning process. Relationships are cultivated with relevant publics.

2. *Empowerment of public relations in the dominant coalition or a direct reporting relationship to senior management:* Strategic management of public relations is linked directly with strategic management of the organization.

3. *Integrated public relations function:* All public relations functions are integrated into a single department, or are very closely coordinated by other means.

4. *Public relations as a management function separate from other functions:* While public relations counselors provide advice and guidance to all other management functions on communication and relationship issues, it must remain separate and distinct from those other management functions.

5. *The role of the public relations practitioner:* At least one member of the organization's public relations unit must function as a communication manager (as opposed to a technician) who strategizes and directs communication programs.

6. *Two-way symmetrical model of public relations:* The organization's public relations function is dominated by two-way symmetrical modeling, though elements of the other three models may be evident.

7. *A symmetrical system of internal communication:* Internal organizational communication, central to effective management, must reflect symmetrical patterns. Organizational mission and goals must reflect employee input at all levels.

8. *Knowledge potential for managerial role and symmetrical public relations:* Among the organization's public relations unit must be managers who possess knowledge of public relations theory.

9. *Diversity embodied in all roles.* Organizations, and especially their public relations units, reflect diversity in order to communicate most effectively with varied internal and external publics.

As Vergig and his colleagues point out, the implementation of any or all of these characteristics may prove challenging in cross-cultural contexts. Consequently, the development of a cadre of public relations practitioners capable of accommodating those challenges is essential if an organization hopes to compete in such an environment.

Check Point

- ✓ Define public relation?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of public relation?

10.3. MEDIA RELATIONS

Media are now part of almost everyone's everyday life throughout the globe. Rapid growth of new media and impacts of media, in general, is inexorable, particularly by presence of the internet, interactive and digital media. Once a press release and/or news are aired, it is done and surely would have impacts; however small they are. Technology changed the world and facilitated building up relationship with media and interacting with a wider audience than ever before.

The terms "public relations" and "media relations" are still used interchangeably by many; however they are not exactly the same. Hence, drawing a clear line between the two terms is crucial in order to understand each of which roles better. Media Relation addresses the relationship that firms build up with journalists, editors and analysts; whereas Public Relation expands that relationship further to the general public. However, MR and PR cannot be separated in the dynamics of the twenty-first century and its turbulence.

10.4. The Role of Media Relation on Organizations Image

Organizations continuously strive for developing their image and improving their long-term relationship with key publics. Wells and Spinks (1999a) suggest ethics and honesty enhance positive "media exposure" while dealing with publics. This [positive media exposure] needs to be taken into the core of every organization's activities, in order to increase chances of improving the organization's community image. Thus, well established media relations offer organizations and businesses a higher exposure to publics and community. However, sustaining community image will not happen, unless organizations and conglomerates practice concrete media relation. Therefore, they need to be on-line, in papers, on TV and radios accompanied by positive comments. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to have good news; dissemination of bad news needs to be well structured and justified in order to save the organization image and reputation in public minds.

Media relations take several forms in most companies, ranging from publicity to crisis management. It can include investor relations as well, particularly at smaller companies. While large companies

have positions dedicated exclusively to media relations, this is not always the case at smaller companies, where the responsibility is part of another executive's duties. Even if there is a media relations group, every executive and manager has a degree of media relations responsibility at all times, and at certain times can be at the center of a media relations campaign or crisis. For this reason, it is good for all executives and managers to know how to do good media relations.

The Typical Scenario

In most cases, a company's media relations activities are managed through a **public relations, external affairs or communications department**. Within this group, there is one person who handles **all** inquiries from the press, and manages **all** efforts to gain attention from the press for positive news stories or publicity on behalf of the company. This person is most often called the director of media relations, and he/she is usually the **spokesperson** for the company as well.

While this person handles routine queries (quarterly results, questions about press releases, etc.), there are others who can and will speak to the press in specific circumstances. These occurrences can be positive (record profits, successful product introductions, a beneficial merger) or negative (layoffs, failed product, stockholder lawsuits). These people will be selected, coached and coordinated by the director of media relations and the head of the department. Good media relations means the company can maximize the positive effects of news coverage and minimize the damage from negative news coverage.

Accomplishing this requires:

A Close Relationship with the CEO—The person responsible for media relations must have a good working relationship with the CEO, or report to someone who does. In most companies, the only way to know what is going to happen ahead of time is to find out from the CEO. Fortunately, the CEO typically has a VERY deep interest in how she/he, her/his management team, and the company look in the newspapers, so that kind of relationship usually comes with the territory.

Good Working Relationships with the Management Team—The person in charge of media relations will be coaching senior management in what they say, and recommending stories to them that will require their participation. In addition, media **MUST** deal with the media during a crisis. An

atmosphere of trust between the director of media relations and senior managers is vital, particularly when third parties (media training, PR companies) become part of any campaign.

Good Relationships with the Press—Whether it is local press, national press, industry press, or all three that matter to the company, the director of media relations must have the knowledge of who writes what for whom, what they have written in the past, and how to contact them. Knowing who covers what at a paper is partly just a matter of courtesy, and partly a vital component of the company's credibility with reporters. Subscription services provide the most up to date listings of reporters, with addresses and phone numbers, and that's a good start. But it is up to the director of media relations to build that information into a relationship. Frequent contact is the best insurance, particularly since reporters change assignments and even jobs with some regularity.

So, being in touch directly or indirectly with the CEO, having positive interactions with the management team, knowing where to go within the company to get the information reporters seek, and knowing the reporters who cover the company on a regular basis means media relations are in pretty good shape. If there is something positive and newsworthy going on, the right person knows about it, knows whom to get the information from, knows who to consider for an interview, and knows whom to call about the story. So much for the "good news" part of media relations. What about when the news is bad?

Crisis Management

Reporters have the same reaction to bad news that sharks have to blood in the water—they begin a feeding frenzy. A pleasant walk to the office can change into a nightmare very quickly when someone responsible for media relations turns a corner to see half a dozen satellite uplinks, a swarm of people with microphones, tape recorders and notepads, and a lot of hungry looks whenever a bigwig from the company is spotted. 60 Minutes is a very real thing, and it must dine on something every week, but local stations and newspapers can spoil a media relations person's whole day just as quickly.

OK, that nightmare is the result of not knowing enough about what was going on. What can media relations do when it DOES know what is going on?

The reason it is called “crisis management” is because there are ways of handling even the worst events. There is no escape, but following the guidelines below can minimize the intensity and the duration of the pain for the company, the managers, and the stockholders.

Talk to EVERYONE involved—The first thing media relations people do is gather information necessary to assess the multiple levels at which damage could occur. Later, this information will be used in framing the company’s response, but it is used immediately to determine how wide and deep the damage is or will be. What will this news do to sales? Will it have an effect on ongoing negotiations? What will be the reactions of stockholders and analysts who cover the company? The aim is to construct a response that acknowledges the mistakes that have been made—all of them—and which lays the foundation for the rebuilding process.

Get the Truth Out—Getting the truth from the people within the company is difficult. Asking tough questions can bring out paranoia in colleagues. But getting the truth out there, in the public arena, is an important step in recovery. And the acknowledgement must be complete. There will be resistance to this from every quarter, but once the process begins, there can be no nasty surprises, because these are what sustain and widen the media frenzy. The goal is to build credibility during a period when many angry people do not want to believe a thing the company says, so there can be no further negative revelations that undercut what has been said. This is NOT the time to say anything positive about the company—that comes later.

Framing the Response—The writer of the response (which will take the form of a press release and/or a press conference) ties every admission to the image of the company that he/she hopes will emerge. When the company spokesperson says, “We did not tell the truth,” there is the implied message that the company did tell the truth in the past, and that principle will again guide it in the future. Every lie, mistake, or whatever is aberrant will be corrected. The admission does not try to make this point immediately, but rather it sets the stage for a new company structure. Bit by bit, good media relations moves the company as a whole and most of the employees AWAY from blame and away from involvement in the problem.

Talking Points--Once the response is drafted, it must be approved by the CEO and by senior management. When this approval is granted, the next step is to prepare talking points. The talking

points keep everyone who talks to the media consistent in their responses (“on message”), and helps the company “speak with one voice” in much the way it does when there is a single spokesperson. Having senior managers contradicting each other in the paper or on TV is disastrous during a crisis.

Internal Announcement—This message for employees contains the same information as was in the press release/press conference. It addresses employees as a specific audience and can ask for their continued trust. Nonetheless, the internal release must be written as if it were public, because all it takes is one employee and a fax machine to MAKE it public. The internal announcement should coincide with the press release or the press conference. Vendors and customers should receive explanatory letters from the company, too.

Working the Story—It is not too late to get media training for those who will have to interview with the media. PR firms like Edelman Worldwide and Hill & Knowlton offer such training, and it is worth seeking. They also offer crisis management services, and they should be considered if the crisis extends beyond the company’s locality, or if the company needs help/expertise beyond its own capabilities. For example, if the company does not do government relations on an ongoing basis, but the crisis demands that it have the support of elected officials, it should hire a good PR company. Media relations should offer only trained/effective people for interviews. If the CEO is good at this, they should use him/her: if not, they should NOT. They should be sure, however, that the CEO agrees with each interview proposed, and he/she is aware of when they take place. That goes for senior management, too. They do not need any more surprises either.

Media relations must be absolutely sure that everyone knows that the ONLY answer to a question they don’t know the answer to is “I don’t know,” followed by “Let me find out and get back to you later.” Credibility is the name of the game at this point.

Media relations staff should sit in on all interviews. This will help the interviewee and will put the reporter in the minority. If necessary, media relations should redirect the interview to the issue at hand. Some reporters will try to use interviews as “scavenger hunts” to find new issues to bring up, and it is in the company’s interest to stop this process.

The Rebuilding Process—Media relations should be alert for the point at which the crisis, which has kept building, now begins to subside. This is the signal to begin the rebuilding process. Signs to look for are stories that grudgingly give the company credit for honesty, or which note that no more negatives have emerged since the original admissions. This is when to start thinking about a “morning after” story about what the company is doing differently now than it did before, how the company is moving toward a brighter future, etc. If anyone responsible for media relations can even THINK about this, the crisis is over!

It is good for executives to put themselves in the role of the media relations executive even if that is never their primary responsibility, because it is always PART of their responsibility. Media opportunities and media crises come without warning, and the only way to deal with them is to be prepared ahead of time. The more responsible the position is within a company, the greater the responsibility is to anticipate the needs of media relations. In addition, small entrepreneurial companies don’t have directors of media relations anyway—they have publicity people at best—so an executive may get the job whether he or she wants it or not!

Check Point

- ✓ What is media relation?
- ✓ What is the role of media relation in an organization?
- ✓ What are the considerations to maximize the positive effect of media relation

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Public relations is a leadership and management function that helps achieve organizational objectives, define philosophy, and facilitate organizational change.
- The terms “public relations” and “media relations” are still used interchangeably by many; however they are not exactly the same. Hence, drawing a clear line between the two terms is crucial in order to understand each of which roles better. Media R addresses the relationship that firms build up with journalists, editors and analysts; whereas PR expands that relationship

further to the general public. However, MR and PR cannot be separated in the dynamics of the twenty-first century and its turbulence.

ANSWERS FOR SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

Self-Check Exercise 1

1. C
2. A
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. D
7. D
8. B
9. C
10. E
11. D
12. D
13. B
14. C
15. B
16. B
17. C

Self-Check Exercise 2

1. E
2. B
3. C
4. C
5. B

Self-Check Exercise 3

1. C
2. B
3. E
4. B
5. Conclusion
6. Instruction
7. Body
8. Oral report
9. Persuasion

5. Problem solving

Self-Check Exercise 4

1. E
2. D
3. D
4. D
5. Oral communication
6. Telephoning
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. True

Self-Check Exercise 5

1. D
2. A
3. A
4. C
5. D

Self-Check Exercise 6

1. Interviewer
2. Unstructured
3. Opening, question-response phrase,
closing
4. Grievance interview

Self-Check Exercise 7

1. a
2. d
3. b
4. a
5. c

Self-Check Exercise 8

1. Promptness
2. Full block format
3. Inside address
4. Adjustment letter
5. CV/ resume
6. i. Heading
ii. Inside address
iii. Salutation
iv. Body
v. Complementary
vi. Signature area

Self-Check Exercise 9

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. False | 9. False |
| 2. False | 10. True |
| 3. False | |
| 4. True | |

5. False

6. False

7. True

8. True

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PART I

Department of Management

Instruction: Choose the best answer and encircle the letter of your choice. (0.5 pt each)

1. One of the following refers to a message which is presented in the fewest possible words
 - A. Complete
 - B. Concise
 - C. Clear
 - D. Concrete
2. _____ constitutes the exchange of messages between individuals in different organizational levels who does not have a direct reporting relationship
 - A. Horizontal communication
 - B. Vertical communication
 - C. Lateral communication
 - D. Diagonal communication
 - E. 'A' and 'C'
3. One of the following barriers of communication can be overcome by exercising "conciseness" principle
 - a. incorrect filtering
 - b. information overload
 - c. Difference in perception
 - d. Difference in language
 - e. All
4. In organizing a speech, if one puts its content according to the order in which the material happened or took place, it is _____
 - A. Cause-to-effect reasoning
 - B. Chronological organization
 - C. General organization
 - D. Informational speech
 - E. None
5. Among the barriers of effective communication, the one which might stem from the communication system used can be
 - A. Personal barrier
 - B. Difference in language
 - C. Semantic barriers
 - D. Receiver's capability
6. The communication difficulty which can be overcome by concentration is
 - A. Personal barrier
 - B. Physiological barrier
 - C. Physical interference
 - D. Physical interference
 - E. Emotional interference
 - F. Cultural difference

Business Communication

MGMT 212

Assignment I

72-1-1

7. Organizations are mainly able to identify their weaknesses and work against those weaknesses thereby reduce turnover if they properly utilize one of the following

- A. Survey interview
- B. Performance appraisal interviews
- C. Exit interviews
- D. Informational meetings
- E. Good will speeches

8. While preparing for a meeting, one should

- A. Announce the agenda
- B. Move through the agenda
- C. Stick to the time specified
- D. Keep official records (minutes)
- E. All
- F. All except 'D'

9. In writing a business letter, the writer's address and the date the letter is sent out is presented in the _____

- A. Heading
- B. Inside address
- C. Reference line
- D. Subject line
- E. Complimentary closing

10. _____ are written so as to bring mistakes into the knowledge of those who bear responsibility for them.

- A. Business letters
- B. Adjustment letters
- C. Claim letters
- D. Letters of inquiry
- E. None

11. A written summary of a person's education, employment back ground, skills and job qualification is _____

- A. Application letter
- B. Employment letter
- C. Cover letter
- D. Resume
- E. Job specification

12. Using telephone lines to send and receive messages is preferable because

- A. The speaker will have much more command over the receiver
- B. It is possible to obtain feedback as one speaks directly to the listener
- C. It can incorporate non-verbal messages
- D. There is no time lag between the transmission and reception of messages
- E. All
- F. 'B' and 'D'
- G. None

13. If a receiver has a physical disability that causes a barrier to effective communication, this can be overcome by

- A. Concentration
- B. Recognition and choice of message type and channel
- C. Committing to audience centeredness
- D. It can not be overcome
- E. Fostering an open communication climate
- F. None

14. If the dean of business faculty converses with the dean of faculty of teacher's education on information regarding the evaluation of teachers in both faculties, we can consider this as

- A. Diagonal communication
- B. Lateral communication
- C. Cluster chain
- D. Informational meeting
- E. None

15. Employees are briefed on how their job relates with other jobs in the organization through _____ which flows

- A. Job rationale statements, down ward
- B. Job instructions, downward
- C. Policy & procedures, upward
- D. Job instructions, crosswise
- E. None

16. The main difference between oral and written communication is

- A. One can pick up non verbal cues in oral communication
- B. Written communication can achieve immediate feedback
- C. Oral communication is applicable when the audience is geographically dispersed
- D. Oral communication is more convenient and quicker
- E. All
- F. None

PART II

Instruction: Write true if the statement is correct or false if the statement is not correct. (0.5 pt each)

17. Noise is anything that interferes with communication and distorts or blocks the message.

18. Receiver is an individual to whom the message is directed

19. Feedback does not enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication process

20. If the report includes recommendations, the recommendations should be presented in an informative manner and include both the merits and demerits.

21. In business your ability to achieve the company's goals depends on your ability to persuade others.

22. Listening has a significant effect on personal as well as organizational development.

23. Prejudgment is one of the physical barriers of active listening.

24. Telephone conversation does not require the peoples involved to be good listeners

PART III

Instruction: Write brief explanations for the following questions. (2 Each)

25. As a manager of a given organization you may be expected to communicate with different bodies in and out side of the organization, and while you are communicating your message should give consideration what do we mean by consideration, and what are it says that you can indicate as you are considerate?

26. What is the significance of upward communication for the higher level management?

27. List and describe the different characteristics of face-to-face and telephone conversation?

28. What is the difference and similarity of persuasive and informative presentations?

29. Did you think that keeping the 7'C of business communication add a value in your message being communicated, if yes, How?

30. Distinguish and describe the different types of active listening?

31. w/ Meron Alenu is an executive secretary in Alas trading plc. She was writing a letter regarding one of the defective products that they have delivered and the resultant corrections to be made. But her boss was interfering for he missed an important file and was nagging her about where she has put it. The letter is very urgent and she was expected to mail it right after she finishes writing. Her boss still kept on nagging for the file which she couldn't remember. It was such a bad day for her with a headache, a very urgent letter to be mailed and her boss crying for a lost file. Under all this pressure, she made a mistake and wrote an erroneous amount-\$1,000,000 instead of \$100,000 which as a result would cost the company about \$500,000.

➤ Now take a good look at the above situation and give short answers for the following questions sticking to your knowledge of business communication.

I) what type of business letter was the secretary writing? Justify your answer (2pts)

Answer

Justifications

II) Least only three barriers that the secretary faced in writing the message (2pts)

Barriers: 1.

2.

3.

III) A) From among the 7 c's of effective communication which one did the letter lack due to the Barriers? (1pts)

IV) B) And how? (1pts)