

# **Bachelor of Commerce**

**BCOM 203**

**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**



**Directorate of Distance Education  
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## COMMUNICATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

### STRUCTURE

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### 1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this lesson, you should be able to-



- Define communication and business communication.
- Understand the process of communication.
- Explain nature and significance of business communication.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world which is totally networked with communication. With the advent of fast technology, the world has become a global village. The information sharing among various groups in society at national and international levels has become very smooth, effective and efficient. With the click of small button on computer, you can easily get any information according to your needs and choice. You cannot just think of a world or situation where there is no exchange of ideas, feelings, emotions, reactions, propositions, facts and figures. From time immemorial, communication has been the most important activities of the human lives. The integration of the world economy has been made possible with strong and efficient channel of communication. The nature of communication has gone a significant change during the last decades. Now the economic power lies in the hands of the countries having very sound information technology network. Communication is important from the point of view of understanding it in terms of a process, system, interactional base and structuring. There are various objectives of communication in business organisations.

## 1.2 MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

There are various definitions and meaning interpreted by different scholars. T.S. Matthews says that Communication is something so difficult that we can never put it in simple words. But we do need a definition to understand the concept. In his book *Communication in Business*, Peter Little defines communication as the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/ or organizations so that an understandable response results. W.H. Newman and C.F. Summer Jr. defines communication as, “Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, or emotions by two or more persons”.

Obviously, ‘information’ is the key word in the first definition. But this definition does not indicate the objects about which information is to be transmitted. This is precisely what is provided in the second definition. Communication transmits information not only about tangible facts and determinable ideas



and opinions but also about emotions. When a communicator passes on or transmits some information, he may also, either intentionally or unconsciously, be communicating his attitude or the frame of his mind. And sometimes the latter may be more relevant to the reality that is being communicated.

The following definition offered by William Scott in his book '*Organisation Theory*' should appear comprehensive and specially satisfying to the students of 'business communication' since it touches all aspects of the communication process:

“Administrative communication is a process which involves the transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of eliciting actions which will accomplish organizational goals.”

**This definition emphasizes four important points:**

1. The process of communication involves the communication of ideas.
2. The ideas should be accurately replicated (reproduced) in the receiver's mind, i.e., the receiver should get exactly the same ideas as were transmitted. If the process of communication is perfect, there will be no dilution, exaggeration or distortion of the ideas.
3. The transmitter is assured of the accurate replication of the ideas by feedback, i.e., by the receiver's response which is communicated back to the transmitter. Here it is suggested that communication is a two-way process including transmission of feedback.
4. The purpose of all communication is to elicit action.

It is quite comprehensive definition and covers almost all aspects of communication. But two comments can be made on it:

1. The concept of ideas should be adequately enlarged to include emotions also.
2. Even in administrative communication the purpose may not always be to elicit action. Seeking information or persuading others to a certain point of view can be equally important objectives of communication.

### 1.2.1 THE COMMUNICATION SITUATION

The communication situation can exist in any of the following four components:



1. There is a person (sender or transmitter) desirous of passing on some information;
2. There is another person (receiver) to whom the information is to be passed on;
3. The receiver partly or wholly understands the message passed on to him; and
4. The receiver responds to the message, i.e., there is some kind of feedback.

Two gentlemen greeting each other with folded hands constitute a communication situation, for (a) there is a person desirous of sending a message (greeting); (b) there is another person to receive this message; (c) when the first person folds his hands, the second one understands that he is being greeted; and (d) the second person immediately responds back by folding his own hands.

But if an English speaking person addresses a Hindi-speaking person in English, the communication situation does not exist, for though there is a person desirous of sending a message, the message is not understood and consequently there is no feedback.

### 1.2.2 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

How do we describe communication process? “The transmission of the sender’s ideas to the receiver and the receiver’s feedback or reaction to the sender constitute the communication process”. The main steps of this cycle are as follows:

1. Input : the information or ideas the sender wants to give the receiver.
2. Channel : letter, fax, phone call, electronic mail, etc.
3. Message : the actual message that is sent.
4. Output : the information the receiver gets
5. Feedback : the receiver’s response (or non-response) to the message
6. Brain drain : the possibility of misunderstanding at any step (or Breakdown)

We can illustrate this process with the help of the following illustrations:

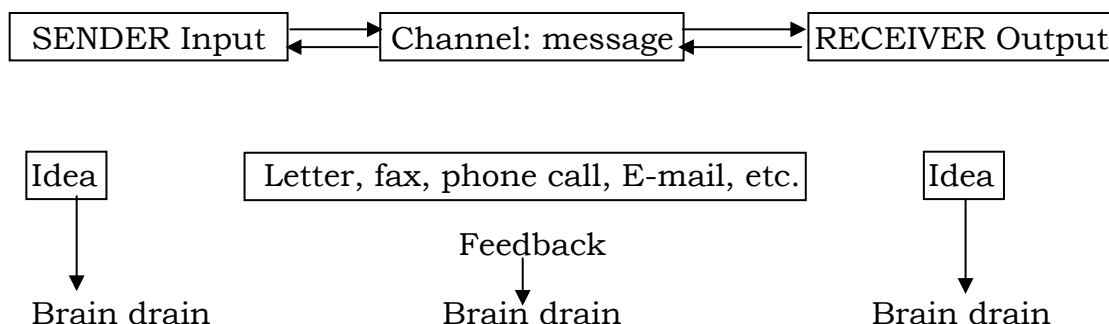


FIG. 1.1: COMMUNICATION PROCESS

There are several barriers to the understanding of a message, and, as the figure suggests, misunderstanding can occur at any stage.

Let us take the following illustration 1.1:

**Input:** I want to know the balance in my current account at the end of October.

**Message:** Kindly send me a statement of my transactions in current account No. .... during October.

**Output:** He needs a statement of his transactions in current account No. .... during October.

**Feedback:** A statement of the transactions is issued.

If the action desired in the message is satisfactorily performed or the information is faithfully received (ensured by the feedback), we say the *communication loop* has been closed. But breakdowns in the communication cycle are quite frequent. The breakdown may be due to one or more of the following:

- Improper formulation of the message in the mind of the sender;
- Improper statement of the information in the message; and
- Improper statement of the message by the receiver.

### 1.2.3 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

The main objective of all communications in an organization is the general welfare of the organization. Effective communication is needed at all stages in order to ensure this welfare. At the planning stage, information is needed on the various aspects of the enterprise, the feasibility of the project being



undertaken, finances involved, manpower required, marketing conditions, publicity campaigns, etc. At the execution stage, orders are issued to the employees to start work, the workers associated with the project are constantly motivated and kept involved, a sense of discipline is cultivated among them and their morale is kept high. All this requires constant two-way communication between the managers and the employees. Then at the assessment stage, the manager is again required to communicate with various sources, both internal and external, to assess the success of the project, and if a need is felt, to envisage modifications in the future plans. In view of this elaborate and complex commercial structure, communication can be used for any or more of the following objectives:

- Information
- Education
- Advice
- Warning
- Order
- Raising morale
- Suggestion
- Motivation
- Persuasion

#### 1.2.3.1 Information

Passing or receiving information about a particular fact or circumstance is one of the most important objectives of communication. It can be done either through spoken or written language or by using any other system of signs or signals. Managers need complete, accurate and precise information to plan and organize; employees need it to translate planning into reality.

Information on the following aspects is very essential for the existence and welfare of any organization:

- Consumer response to its products in comparison with competing products with reference to quality as well as price.
- Whether they are being produced in conformity with the latest trends?





- The nature of the various financial institutions and the terms and conditions on which credit is offered by them.
- How better quality raw materials can be procured on easier terms, or if there are any cheaper substitutes available?
- What kind of effect, the rules and regulations of the government and the changing political scene can have on the product policy of the organization?
- Information about the efficiency, suitability, relative merits and the expenses involved on the advertising media.
- Information about the latest developments in the fields of science and technology.

Information about the precise nature of every employee's job, its scope, and the procedures governing it should be readily available with every employee as well as in the files of the organization.

Managers whose primary job is planning need detailed information of the following kinds:

- Information about the political, social and economic conditions.
- Information about the cultural milieu; geographical and climatic information.
- Information about the production and sale capacity of the organization; detailed information about the members of the staff, their academic and professional qualifications, their efficiency and reliability, their limitations, etc.
- Information about the rival companies and their products, their strong and weak points, their past and present performance.

#### 1.2.3.2 Sources of information

1. A great deal of internal information is readily available in the old files of the organization. Past performance of the organization as well as its employees can be easily known from the old files.
2. Valuable information about the efficiency and reliability of the employees can be gained from personal observation.



3. Mass media of communication like the radio, television, cinema, newspapers, journals are all the time throwing information. It is very important to expose ourselves to these media. Apart from magazines meant for general reading, there are journals exclusively devoted to specialized fields. These journals constitute a very important source of information.
4. A good library is a storehouse of information. It is only in a library that we can gain access to reference books, research publications, files of old journals, pamphlets, government publications of various kinds, statistical reports, etc. Now there are libraries of tapes, records and films also.
5. The membership of chambers of commerce is supposed to be very useful these days. They keep their members abreast of all developments that have any bearing on their activities.
6. Large business houses often sponsor national and international seminars and conferences. Participation in such seminars and conferences proves to be a very educative experience.
7. Information can also be gathered through personal interviews with prominent people in the political field, experts in professional fields and the members of general public.
8. Information about the popularity of a company's products and their general perception in the market is often collected by circulating carefully prepared questionnaires among the consumers and the retailers.
9. Trade fairs and exhibitions have become a regular feature of the twentieth-century life. They are organized with one particular theme at the center. They may highlight agricultural development, book production, electronic industry, or any other such theme. All information related to that theme is collected at one place. In this way they become an important source of information.
10. Current electronic communication media, in particular, internet computer network now offers access to latest information on all subjects under the sun almost at the flick of your finger.



### 1.2.3.3 Advice

Giving advice is another important objective of communication. Information is always factual and objective. But advice, since it involves personal opinions, is likely to be subjective. Information is neutral in itself. When it is offered to a person, he may use it as he likes. But advice is given to him either to influence his opinion or his behaviour. It may prove helpful, but it may also lead to disaster.

Commercial activities in the modern world have become extremely complex. Each individual activity needs specialized handling, which cannot be expected from people working single-handed. However competent a businessman may be, he cannot have specialized knowledge of all branches like finance, taxation, publicity, engineering, public relations, etc. If he wants to run his business successfully, he will have to seek expert advice quite frequently.

Within the organization, the supervisory staff is required to advise the junior employees. Supervisors being in close contact with their superiors (usually the board of directors) are well familiar with the policies and functioning of the organizations. They are, therefore, in an excellent position to guide, counsel or advise their subordinate staff.

Advice, by its very nature, flows horizontally or downwards. Expert advice from outside flows horizontally. The board of directors advising one another on some policy matter are also engaged in a kind of horizontal communication. But advice soon starts flowing down to the management personnel, the supervisory staff and the subordinate staff or the operatives.

While offering advice, the adviser should keep the following points in mind:

1. Advice should be both man-oriented and work-oriented, i.e., it should be related to a specific piece of work, and should be given in such away that it suits the individual needs of the recipient. It means that while explaining the complexities of a job, the adviser ought to keep in mind the understanding power of the person he is advising.
2. Advice should not be given to a person to make him feel conscious of his inferior knowledge or skill. If the adviser assumes a patronizing tone, the other person is bound to resent it. So the adviser ought to be very friendly in his attitude.



3. The only justified motive of giving advice is the betterment of the worker. The adviser should genuinely feel this motive. And he should give this very feeling to the worker. He should so mould his tone and phrase his language that he makes the other person feel absolutely at ease.
4. If the subordinate staffs are given freedom to react, advice can become a two-way channel of communication. It may perhaps bring about some excellent suggestions for the improvement of the organisation's functioning.

#### 1.2.3.4 Counselling

Counselling is very similar to giving advice. Only, counsel is objective and impersonal. The counsellor is a man of greater skill or knowledge on some specific subject and he offers his counsel without any personal interest or involvement. Advice has a personal touch about it; counsel is almost professional. Advice is often unsought and is unwelcome; counsel is eagerly sought.

A number of large business houses now have their counselling departments, which offer the employees advice on domestic or personal problems. Even an efficient employee may become tardy and indifferent if he is facing some personal problems at home. This may adversely affect the working of the organization. It may also affect other employees and lower their morale. Such employees are encouraged to consult the counselling department, which has on its staff a panel of doctors, psychologists and social workers. These experts hold a series of sittings with the employees and thrash out their problems. The employees are restored to their mental and physical health and the conditions in the organization are brought back to the normal.

#### 1.2.3.5 Order

Order is an authoritative communication. It is a directive to somebody, always a subordinate, to do something, to modify or alter the course of something he is already doing, or not to do something. Whatever be the nature and size of an organization, orders are absolutely necessary for it. *The downward flow of information is dominated by orders.* We can classify orders in various ways:

##### (a) *Written and oral orders*

*Written orders* are usually given when:



1. the order is of a highly responsible nature;
2. the task is repetitive in nature, and it is cumbersome and inconvenient to issue oral orders every time the task is to be done;
3. the person being ordered is remotely situated and it is not possible to give him oral orders.

*Oral orders* are given when:

1. The job is required to be done immediately;
2. It is an ordinary job and there is no need of maintaining any written record;
3. There is a kind of permanent superior-subordinate relationship between the giver and the receiver of the order and the order-giver does not feel the need of entering into the cumbersome process of issuing written orders.

**(b) *General and specific orders***

If orders are related to one particular activity, they are specific. If there are a number of activities having operational similarities, general orders may be issued to cover all of them.

**(c) *Procedural and operational orders***

Procedural orders specify procedures to be adopted. They are general by nature. Operational orders are more closely related to the job in hand. They specify how a particular job is to be done.

**(d) *Mandatory and discretionary orders***

Mandatory orders have to be obeyed. Discretionary orders are usually in the nature of recommendations. They suggest what is desirable, what should be done. But it is up to the receiver; to see their feasibility and to decide whether he ought to carry them out or not. The Head Office may issue discretionary orders to the branch manager, for the branch manager, being present on the spot, knows better whether the orders are to be carried out or not.

**An effective order possesses the following characteristics:**

- It must be clear and complete.
- Its execution should be possible.



- It should be given in a friendly way.

### ***Steps in the order-giving operation***

Paul Pigors has outlined the following seven steps in a complete order-giving operation:

- *Planning:* Before an order is given, the order-giver should be sure about the following points:
  - (i) Exactly what action is required?
  - (ii) Is it feasible?
  - (iii) Who is to perform it?
  - (iv) In how much time is it to be performed?
- *Preparing the order-receiver:* This should, in fact, be considered a part of planning. Preparing the order-receiver is necessary for the satisfactory accomplishment of any specific order. But it also requires continuous education of the receiver so that he receives the order in the right spirit and correctly interprets the intention and motives behind issuing it.
- *Presenting the order:* This is the stage at which the order is to be written (if it is a written order) and issued. At this stage it is ensured that the order is clear and complete.
- *Verification of reception:* After the order has been issued, the order-giver should watch out for the reaction of the receiver, whether the order has been properly understood and the receiver is going in the right direction.
- *Action:* If planning and presentation of the order have been done correctly, the order-receiver is likely to execute it in the correct spirit.
- *Follow-up:* But the order-giver should not remain content with the information that the order is being executed. He should confirm whether it is being executed correctly. Sometimes, during the process of execution, the person entrusted with it may run into some unforeseen difficulties. If proper follow-up is being conducted, the order-giver will take



steps to remove those difficulties or issue fresh orders on adopting a different course of action.

- *Appraisal:* When the order has been executed and the work is over, it is time to appraise or assess it to see whether it has been done satisfactorily or there has been something wrong with its execution.
- Order is a directive to a subordinate to do something in a particular way.
- Orders may be— written or oral, general or specific, procedural or operational, mandatory or discretionary.

### 1.2.3.6 Instruction

Instruction is a particular type of order in which the subordinate is not only ordered to do a job but is also given guidance on how to do it. If the accounts officer asks one of his clerks to prepare a voucher, he has issued an order. If he shows the clerk how to prepare a voucher and then asks him to prepare more, he has issued instructions. All instructions are implied orders, but all orders cannot be instructions.

### 1.2.3.7 Suggestion

Suggestion enjoys one great advantage over other means of communication like advice or order. Advice comes from an expert; order comes from a higher authority. In either case, the recipient of the communication is slightly conscious of his inferiority and may resent it. Accepting a suggestion is at his discretion, so a suggestion is usually welcome.

Suggestion is supposed to be a very mild and subtle form of communication. Still, since it flows horizontally or vertically upwards, it may hurt someone's ego to recognize its utility and readily accept it. But enlightened executives should set aside the ridiculous notions of false self-importance and welcome positive, constructive suggestions with an open mind.

Some business houses make a provision for suggestion boxes, which are placed at some convenient place in the office or the factory. Workers are encouraged to drop their suggestions into these boxes. Sometimes these suggestions have to be written on specially prepared cards. If an employee does not want to reveal his name, there is a provision for it. These suggestion boxes are opened at regular intervals, the suggestions received are scrutinized and the employees offering the best suggestions are awarded prizes.



- Suggestions can be voluntary and anonymous; submitted through suggestion boxes.
- Employees should be encouraged to give suggestions.

#### 1.2.3.8 Persuasion

Persuasion is an important objective of communication. It may be defined as an effort 'to influence the attitudes, feelings, or beliefs of others, or to influence actions based on those attitudes, feelings, or beliefs'. Buyers have often to be persuaded to buy a particular article available with the seller in place of the one they actually wanted to buy. In the office or the factory, the lazy, the incompetent and the disgruntled workers have to be persuaded to do their work.

It is better to use persuasion than compulsion. But even persuasion seeks to change beliefs and attitudes, which people do not like at all. So in order to be successful, persuasion has to be indirect and suggestive. The buyers and the workers should be so manipulated that they change their mind without getting conscious of the change, or if they are conscious, they believe that the change is to their advantage. Persuasion is an art, which has to be learnt with great care.

Persuasion needs conviction on your part. You should be genuinely convinced that the alternative course of action being suggested by you is in the interest of the organization as well as in the receiver's interest. You must not try to persuade others from a purely selfish motive. Do not impose yourself on the receiver of your communication. Give indirect hints and subtle suggestions. Bring yourself to the level of the other person. Try to look at the issue from his point of view and mould your arguments accordingly. The art of persuasion consists of four important steps:

1. *Analyzing the situation:* This is the preparatory step. The communicator analyses the situation to find out why the need of persuasion has arisen and what will be the advantages and disadvantages of the new course of action being suggested. He also studies the psychology of the man to be persuaded in order to plan a suitable strategy.
2. *Preparing the receiver:* It is but natural that people resent being persuaded to change their views or behaviour. The receiver has to be prepared for it. This can be done by putting him in a pleasant frame of mind. He may be complimented on some of his outstanding qualities and achievements. An appeal may be made to his adaptability and open-mindedness.





3. *Delivering the message:* The third step is to deliver the message. The message should be delivered stage by stage, with the help of forceful arguments, beginning with those parts of the message, which are easier to accept and delaying the unpleasant parts as much as possible.
4. *Prompting action:* If the first steps have been taken carefully, the receiver of the message will be easily persuaded to adopt a different course of action (or hold a different view).

### 1.2.3.9 Education

Education is an import ingredient of the process of communication. It involves both teaching and learning and extends over considerably long periods. The main purpose of education is to widen knowledge as well as to improve skills. It is carried on at three levels: (a) at the management level; (b) at the level of the employees; and (c) at the level of the outside public.

- *Education for the management:* Knowledge is multiplying fast. Each new day brings with it innovations, which if suitably applied can revolutionise the working of an organization. Managers are required to keep abreast of the latest innovations. In other words, they have to be educated. Their education can take place through books, lectures, seminars, case studies, study tours, etc. Junior managers have to be educated to assume responsibility when they succeed to higher positions.
- *Education for the employees:* Just as the managers are required to keep abreast of the latest innovations in the field of commerce and technology, when these innovations are introduced in the office or the factory, the employees have to be educated to use them. Such a programme of education is called re-orientation. Employees can be educated through talks, demonstrations, bulletins and house organs.
- *Education for the outside public:* The outside public needs knowledge on the new products being introduced into the market, the relative merits of the various brands already existing, the availability of the substitutes, complementary and supplementary products, comparative prices, concessions and discounts, if any. This useful knowledge is offered through advertisements, specially sponsored features in the newspapers, information talks and articles.



### 1.2.3.10 Warning

If employees do not abide by the norms of the organization, or violate the rules and regulations, it may become necessary to warn them. Tardiness, negligence, tempering with the records, mishandling equipment, lack of regularity and punctuality, gossiping, pilfering office stationery and material, spreading rumours, misleading new employees are some of the actions that call for a reprimand or a warning. Warning is a forceful means of communication, for it demands immediate action. But in order to retain its effectiveness, it should be used sparingly and discreetly. While issuing warnings, the following points should be kept in mind:

Some warnings are general. 'No smoking', 'No talking', 'Beware of the dog' are general warnings. They are not aimed at any particular person, nor are they likely to hurt anybody's feelings. Such warnings are usually given in the form of notices. They are almost akin to information.

More often, warnings are given to particular persons. They involve disciplinary action in the form of reprimand. Reprimands are very demoralizing; they may also evoke resentment. Before reprimanding an employee, it is very important to ascertain the truth of the charges leveled against him. Reprimand should never spring from personal prejudices.

Reprimand should not be administered to a person in the presence of others. It will make him feel humiliated and nobody likes to be humiliated. The worker should be summoned in the privacy of the supervisor's room and dispassionately talked to.

It is also useful to investigate the causes of the worker's undesirable behaviour. He may be burdened by some domestic or personal problems. Or he may be nursing some personal grudge against the supervisor or the organization. If the supervisor can succeed in taking him out of his problems, the warning given to him will become constructive.

The aim of giving a warning should be the betterment of the organization. It should not be used to cause disruption. It is very important to be judicious in the choice of words used in administering warnings and reprimands.



### 1.2.3.11 Raising morale

Morale is the sum of several qualities like courage, fortitude, resolution and confidence. High morale and efficient performance go hand in hand. It acts as a kind of lubricant among people, binds them with a sense of togetherness and impels them to work in cooperation with one another in the best interest of their organization.

#### *Factors conducive to the creation of a high morale*

- Every worker gets work suited to his physical and intellectual caliber. He feels his work is important and it is appreciated by the authorities. He is free to do his work as he likes. He is encouraged to give suggestions.
- The atmosphere in the premises is congenial. The superiors are efficient and their attitude is constructive. They enjoy the workers' respect.
- Promotional avenues are available to the workers.
- Genuine grievances of the workers are promptly removed.

### 1.2.3.12 Motivation

Motivation energises and activates a person and channelises his behaviour towards the attainment of desired goals. Motivation and behaviour are intimately related to each other. In order and persuasion, the communicator enjoys an upper hand. But in motivation he keeps himself in the background. He does not order his employees to work; he motivates them so that they work willingly and eagerly. A motivated worker does not need much supervision. He does his work as if it were his own, as if his own interests were closely tied up with the successful performance and completion of the work entrusted to him. An office or factory that enjoys the support of motivated workers shows much better results than another office or factory in which workers are commanded to work.

Monetary incentives are perhaps the most effective form of motivation. People working on contract basis are always motivated to work, for their earnings increase in proportion to their work. People work reluctantly during the office hours but willingly stay back to work overtime. However, it may not be always possible, or even desirable, to offer monetary incentives. Such a practice is likely to set unhealthy



precedents with the implication that whenever such, motives are absent, the workers will just refuse to work.

Though earning money may be the most important motive for working harder, it is not the only motive. Other factors like job satisfaction, prestige, a sense of belonging to a great organization can also induce or motivate workers to work sincerely and efficiently. Motivation as a form of communication deals with these factors.

#### **1.2.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS**

You will understand the significance of business communication from the following points:

##### ***Healthy organizational environment***

The organizations are the social systems formed on the basis of mutual interest. The mutual interests are safeguarded by various activities of planning by the management. They must skillfully apply the communication systems to keep the healthy organizational environment. It must be remembered that the activities of the management and the employees in any business organization are governed by social as well as psychological laws. If the management has to keep the healthy organizational environment and healthy relations with the individuals from outside, other business houses, government authorities, etc., it must use the communication channels and media effectively. Sociologically, organizations are social systems in which people have their individual as well as social roles and status.

##### ***Management-employee relations***

A genuine interest in other people, their groups and organisations is required for strong and stable personal relations and for the success of business activities of the businessman who is genuinely interested in others, shares their hopes, aspirations, successes and disappointments.

As organizations need people and people also need organizations, people can use organization and organization can use people to reach their objectives by communication properly with each other. When the objectives of the organization are made clear to the employees, the workers are motivated to work in that direction. It should be made clear that the organization cannot survive, if its objectives are not reached; and if the organization does not survive, there would be no chances of employment opportunities



in it. The employees and the management should develop the link of communication for better mutual understanding and encourage each other to achieve their self-interests.

### ***The external and internal communication network***

Every business finds it necessary to maintain both the internal and external communication. The communication between the management and the workers is an internal communication. The management must be well-informed about the internal activities of the organization. They require the information about the efficiency, qualifications, capabilities and the training of the workers and also about the production, marketing and sales capacity of the organization. The progress and profitability of the organization depends upon how well the management and the employees are informed about these matters and what steps are taken by them in order to improve the situation. When the management is informed about some faults related to job assignments, exact designation of the officers and their decision-making, the responsibilities of the employee, etc., the management making, the responsibilities of the employee, etc., the management will make necessary changes and the business can thrive after the relevant changes are made.

The dynamics of the internal system influence the activities of the external system. Communication about the product studies and market analyses flow smoothly between persons of .equal status, between friends and between persons who support and encourage one another. The conflicts growing out of the internal system of the group can binder the communication regarding external activities. The manager must give attention to both the internal and the external group systems.

The effective internal network of communication is essential today because of the large size of the business houses. They have their branches and sub-branches, which are further divided into functional departments. Some business organizations are spread over the different places in the country. These divisions and branches maintain a link with the management of the central organization. The appointments, designations, relationships, responsibilities, objectives and all the activities and duties determined by the division of work are communicated and assigned to the branches by the central management of the organization. The branch manager who is appointed by the board of directors accepts the responsibilities and assignments, which are assigned by the parent body. Through him, the center gets reports about the various activities of the branch. He has to accept the directives of center, which are given by center after receiving the reports. He acts as the delegate of the board of directors and has to clarify



the objectives and directives of the organization to his subordinates. In some of the multinational corporations, the directors and the managers spend their ninety per cent time in maintaining communication links.

### ***Functionalisation***

The division of work into different kinds of duties can be called functionalisation. For example, the difference between an office supervisor and an operator's assembly or machine shop supervisor is a functional one. This idea of functionalisation is found in most of the business organizations today. Functionalisation naturally leads to specialisation. The most salient feature of this age is specialization. There are specialists who acquire a vast knowledge and experience in their limited subject. This specialized knowledge, training and experience will be useless if it is not communicated. The accountants, engineers, scientists and the experts of many kinds must be able to communicate their knowledge to the management and the employees. The company may get benefit by the advices, suggestions and information provided by these experts.

### ***The complexity of business activities***

Though specialization has brought great benefits to the business organizations, it has rendered modern business activities into an extremely complex phenomenon. As the specialization is most fundamental to modern civilization, the industrial society cannot exist without it. In an organization, planning, finance, accounts, purchase, production, advertising, marketing, stores, sales, labour-welfare, cultural activities, adjustments of complaints and claims and a number of other activities are handled by the people who have developed unique skills and knowledge in their fields. As these functions are assigned to different departments, they have to coordinate among themselves by communicating with one another horizontally. They must communicate with the management to which they are responsible for organization is more complex and difficult to coordinate than the original group of workers, which is not divided into different kinds of duties. The managers and the supervisors must be well versed in communication skills in order to bring coordination among the functionalized group. The productivity gains of the specialization can be achieved only if the harmonious human relationship and coordination of departmental activities are well maintained.

***Trade unions: labour problems***

The businessmen are mostly after productivity gains and other economic and technical benefits. Sometimes, this tendency of the businessmen comes in conflict with the problems, which are primarily human. The employees are now more conscious of their rights than before. They are organized into trade unions, which continuously demand for rights of the employees, better working conditions and dignity of the labour. The progressive employers are convinced that there ought to be some ways of effective communication between the management and the workers to develop better employees satisfaction and a sense of security. If the insecurity and frustration of employees is successfully dispelled by the management, the employees feel motivated for better working. In order to satisfy the security needs of employees, a number of companies have started welfare programmes based on custodial model of organization, which is popularly known as paternalism by which employees depend on the organization for their security and welfare. As the success of the custodial approach depends on the economic resources of the organization, the management must be able to communicate with the employees regarding the financial state of the organization and should motivate them for better work in order to make the organization financially strong enough to support its employees.

***Globalization and the language problem***

Modern business relationships have spread worldwide and the communication links play a significant role in establishing and strengthening such relationships. Multinational business can help the economic as well as social development, therefore, it can also be regarded as a social institution. When a business expands beyond national boundaries, it is also a step into different legal, political, social, economic and educational environments. With the expansion of business, the communication links are also lengthened because of which the control of the multiple business activities becomes more difficult. It is hard enough to run a multinational business in one language. When there are number of other language in a country and the overall languages are used as a medium of communication, the management faces the compounded difficulties. The complexity of the business increase to the maximum. Under these circumstances, the management has to put its communication skills to their limits.



### ***Competition***

Businessmen seek to obtain profit from the sale of their goods and services and the consumers seek the satisfaction of their wants by buying them in the market. In a free market economy, production is for profit and consumption is for the satisfaction of wants. Both the producers' and the consumers naturally try to promote their own interests. This system works fair/when free competition is present in the market place. The products of common consumption are available in the market in many brands and the buyers are free to buy any of or them. As the decision to buy depends on their own initiative, they cannot be forced to buy a particular product or service. The similar products with different branding from different companies cannot enjoy equal demand from the buyers. A businessman who wants to survive in this world of free competition, should know his competitors, the quality and the prices of their products, the discounts, terms and conditions of sale, the policies of advertising, government laws, etc. If they are not able to communicate better in this respect, their sale will not be satisfactory. A good salesman is efficient communicator who can attract the customer, induce him to buy his goods and services.

### ***Participation and delegation***

Participation, cooperation and team-work of the management and employees can yield best results because of their common commitment to goals that encourage better performance. Participative managers communicate with their employees. They ask for the opinions, views, suggestions and recommendations of the employees in the decision-making process so that they work together as a team. But the benefits of participation in decision-making process may not be substantial if the superiors neglect the delegation of authority. The delegation of authority trains and develops the efficiency of the subordinates and reduces the manager's burden of performing the duties of routine nature. The delegation of authority can be communicated in oral or written form, but it is always better to use the written form in order to avoid the conflict and confusion.

In participatory management, the manager retains the ultimate responsibility of his unit, but he shares the operating responsibility with the employees who actually perform the work. This gives a sense of involvement and satisfaction to the employees who work with high morale to achieve the objectives of the organization as the manager seeks participation of the employees in policy matters and decision making.





## 1.3 MODES OF COMMUNICATION

### THREE MODES OF COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal	Interpretive	Presentational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Two-way communication</b> with active negotiation of meaning among individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One-way communication</b> with no recourse to the active negotiation of meaning with the writer, speaker, or producer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>One-way communication</b> intended for an audience of readers, listeners, or viewers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spontaneous</li> <li>• Usually involves exchange of information</li> <li>• Meaningful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader, listener or viewer interprets what the author, speaker, or producer wants the receiver of the message to understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of information; not exchange</li> <li>• No direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning exists</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants observe and monitor one another to see how their meanings and intentions are being communicated and make adjustments and clarifications accordingly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation differs from comprehension and translation in that it implies the ability to read, listen or view “between the lines,” including understanding from within the cultural mindset or perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the intended audience is successful in its interpretation, the “presenter” needs knowledge of the audience’s language and culture</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speaking and listening</b> (conversation)</li> <li>• <b>Reading and writing</b> (text messages,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reading</b> of authentic texts (websites, stories and other literature, articles, signs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing</b> (messages, articles, advertisements, flyers, brochures, short stories, reports, scripts, PowerPoint presentations);</li> </ul>



messages on social media, letters)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listening</b> to authentic texts(speeches, messages, songs, radio news, ads)</li> <li>• <b>Viewing</b> of authentic materials (videos, movies, presentations, TV shows, commercials, news, plays)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speaking</b> (telling a story, giving a speech, TV or radio news, drama presentations including skits, presentation to jury)</li> </ul>
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## 1.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The process of communication involves the communication of.....
2. When the objectives of the organization are made clear to the employees, the workers are .....to work in that direction.
3. Education is an import ingredient of the process of.....
4. ....may be defined as an effort ‘to influence the attitudes, feelings, or beliefs of others, or to influence actions based on those attitudes, feelings, or beliefs’.
5. “The ..... of the sender’s ideas to the receiver and the receiver’s feedback or reaction to the sender constitute the communication process”.

## 1.5 SUMMARY

The process of communication involves exchanging facts, ideas, opinions or emotions between two or more persons. Feedback is an essential aspect of communication. The main purpose of communications is to inform, or to bring round to a certain point of view, or to elicit action.

Communication can be used for any or more of the following objectives: information, advice, order, suggestion, persuasion, education, warning, raising morale and motivation. The executives need information to plan and organize; employees need it to execute their job satisfactorily.

Information must be from a reliable source. Giving advice is very important objective of communication. Advice is given to the subordinate to influence his opinion or behaviour. Effective advice is both man oriented and work-oriented.



Counselling is another objective of communication. The counselor is a man of greater skill or knowledge, on some specific subject and he offers his counsel without any personal interest or involvement.

Order is a directive to a subordinate to do something in a particular way. Orders may be written or oral, general or specific, procedural or operational, mandatory or discretionary. Suggestions can be voluntary and anonymous; submitted through suggestion boxes. Employees should be encouraged to give suggestions.

If employees do not abide by the norms of the organization, or violate the rules and regulations, it may become necessary to warn them. Warning is a forceful means of communication, for it demands immediate action. But in order to retain its effectiveness, it should be used sparingly and discreetly.

Communication is the life blood of business. No business can develop in the absence of effective internal and external communication. Besides, communication skills of employees are given high weightage at the time of their appointment as well as promotion.

## 1.6 KEYWORDS

**Sender/Transmitter** is the person desirous of passing the information.

**Receiver** is the person to whom the information is to be passed on.

**Feedback** is the response from the receiver.

**Communication** is a process by which information is transmitted between individuals/organisations.

**Braindrain** is the possibility of misunderstanding at any step. It is also called breakdown.

## 1.7 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Give a suitable definition of the term 'communication' and elaborate your definition.
2. "Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding". Discuss.
3. Write a note on the need and importance of business communication.



4. What are the various steps in the communication cycle? What is brain drain? Why does brain drain occur?
5. What do you think can be the major objectives of communication? Briefly explain any two of them.
6. Write short notes on the following:
  - (a) information for planning;
  - (b) internal information; and
  - (c) environmental information.
7. What is the importance of advice as an objective of communication? What precautions should be taken by a communicator to make his advice effective?
8. What are the relative merits and demerits of written and oral orders? How can an order be made effective?
9. Discuss the importance of suggestion as an objective of communication.
10. What precautions should be taken by a manager while warning an erring employee?
11. What factors are responsible for the low morale of the workers in an organization? How can their morale be kept high?
12. Discuss the importance of motivating the workers in a factory. How can they be motivated effectively?
13. What is meant by morale? How can the morale of the workers be kept high?
14. Do you agree that the basic objective of all human communication is to obtain an understanding response? How can this be applied to the objectives of business communication?
15. What is 'communication cycle'? What are the essential elements of this cycle?
16. What is meant by 'business communication'? Write a note on the significance of business communication.
17. What is the role of language in human communication? How are the language symbols useful in communication?



18. Write the explanatory notes on 'encoding' and 'decoding'.
19. What is the significance of feedback in communication? What role does it play in the cycle of communication?
20. 'Communication is a two-way process'. Explain.

## 1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Ideas
2. Motivated
3. Communication
4. Persuasion
5. Transmission

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<b>Subject: Business Communication</b>	
<b>Course code: BCOM 203</b>	<b>Author: Dr Mani Shreshtha</b>
<b>Lesson no.: 02</b>	<b>Vetter: Dr. Mihir Ranjan Patra</b>
<b>FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 2.1 Learning Objectives

### 2.2 Introduction to Electronic Communication

#### 2.2.1 Definitions

#### 2.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages

#### 2.2.3 Forms of Electronic Communication

### 2.3 Theories of Communication

### 2.4 Check your Progress

### 2.5 Summary

### 2.6 Keywords

### 2.7 Self-Assessment Test

### 2.8 Answers to check your Progress

### 2.9 References/Suggested Readings



## 2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Technology is influencing the way communication is happening inside and outside organizations. The objective of this chapter is to get students acquainted with the basic technological methods and platforms used by the business organization for communication.

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Describe the role of technology in business communication
- Explain different types electronic communication options
- Understand various communication theories used in organizations

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION TO ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The world around us is changing very fast and the same is also applicable to all business organizations. Everyday organizations face newer challenges. Information has an important role to play in handling these challenges. Organizations face challenge to properly collect, process, and disseminate the information to the right person at the right time. Whether the information disseminated is as per the requirement depends upon the feedback mechanism. The whole task of spreading the information and collecting the response is based upon the effectiveness of a communication system in the organization. Employees in the organization have to keep a check on the flow of communication and its effectiveness.

For that, technology plays an important role of keeping the communication meaningful and fast. Technology also equips one to communicate effectively. Nowadays, various forms of electronic communication tools, techniques and platforms are available. These electronic communication options make the desired communication extremely specific and fast. These electronic communication tolls are useful for the organization at different stages of business communication. In a broader understanding, electronic communication tools enable an organization to create and send the desired message to the target audience. Also, it facilitates to gather the responses of the target audience after they receive the information.

The newer collaborative technologies have opened the doors for newer and better forms of electronic communication. For example, the combination of mobile phone with internet has brought revolution in the corporate communication. Now, same electronic communication modes enable us to switch from one-



to-one communication to one-to-many or many-to-many communication. It is important to understand the pros and cons of each electronic communication form before choosing the right combination of tools to communicate effectively. A poor combination of electronic communication forms can cause confusion and delays. Remember, there is no perfect tool that serves all communication related requirements. So, judicious mix of these electronic communication tools is required to enhance effectiveness in communication.

### 2.2.1 DEFINITIONS

Before understanding various forms of electronic communication, it is important to know the basic concepts of electronic communication. Electronic communication can be understood from different perspectives depending upon the area of applicability. Electronic communication differs in its understanding from the technical to legal perspective. Simplest definition of electronic communication is any communication which is transferred electronically. Following are the prominent definitions of electronic communication:

- Electronic communication can be defined as the communication which uses electronic media to transmit the information or message using computers, e-mail, telephone, video calling, FAX machine, etc. This type of communication can be developed by sharing data like images, graphics, sound, pictures, maps, software, and many things. ( [www.elprocus.com](http://www.elprocus.com))
- Electronic communication means the communication of any written, verbal, pictorial information or video content by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, a mobile or cellular telephone or other wireless telecommunication device, or a computer. ([www.lawinsider.com](http://www.lawinsider.com))
- Electronic communication is the meaningful exchange of information at a distance by technological means, particularly through electrical signals or electromagnetic waves. ([www.Wikiversity.org](http://www.Wikiversity.org))
- A vital concept to the virtual organization is the ability to communicate through purely electronic means, eliminating the need for physical contact and allowing the geographical dispersion of organization members. Online collaboration via e-mail, discussion boards, chat boards, and other





methods, as well as telephone and facsimile communications, are primary contributors to the removal of time and space in this new organizational concept. ([www.igi-global.com/dictionary/](http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/))

By reviewing above definitions, it can be stated that in electronic communication information (in the form of oral, verbal, image, and video) is transferred using technology. This involves one or many electronic devices.

### 2.2.2 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Electronic communication is considered as an efficient way of communicating in present scenario. It offers many key advantages over traditional communication methods. Along with its advantages, electronic communication carries certain disadvantages that need to be considered at the time of choosing electronic tools or devices for communication. Following are the various advantages and disadvantages of electronic communication:

#### Advantages:

- **Quick Communication:** By using electronic platforms messages can be delivered in micro seconds. This capability of electronic communication makes it highly desirable as it saves lot of time and resources of sender and receiver.
- **Wide Reach:** Electronic communication makes it possible for the sender to reach wider geographical area within minimal time. Through electronic communication a message could be sent to audience all over the world.
- **Efficient mode:** Electronic communication is much cheaper than traditional modes of communication. For example, the cost of sending one email is far less than the cost of sending one letter through traditional mail.
- **Convenience:** In electronic communication, the sender and receiver both have power to communicate at their convenience. They also enjoy the power to restrict or adjust the delivery timing of the communication. Another kind of convenience is of mobility. Electronic communication is possible through mobiles and laptops which are highly portable and flexible devices. The sender or receiver can communicate even when they are moving.



- **Multi-format communication:** In electronic communication, the communicator can use written, audio, and/or video formats simultaneously. Such an option improves the effectiveness of the message.
- **Storage:** All electronic communication can be stored in the digital form and can be organized, accessed, and produced at any point of time. Due to digital storage facility, no physical space is required for the storage of information.

**Disadvantages:**

- **Security:** Due to digital form of information, threat of security breach always exists. Attack of various viruses and malwares can compromise the confidential communications of the organization. There are many instances of communication leaks due to attack of viruses.
- **Source of Distraction:** Electronic communication sometimes considered as a source of distraction for the employees. Frequent messages or chats can distract employees from focusing on their task. This can cause poor productivity and loss of man hours.
- **Technology change:** Technology keeps on changing continuously. It can make current electronic resources of the organization obsolete. Every time keeping up with the technology is very complex and expensive proposition.
- **Poor legal status:** Due to possibility of easy tampering, any digital information is not enjoying the full legal status as compared to the traditional physical information.
- **Health:** Over usage of electronic communication can cause addiction and health related issues.

**2.2.3 FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

As per the definition of electronic communication it can be classified into different forms or types such as messaging, video call, e-mail, social media, etc. Usage of a particular form of electronic communication depends upon the users' purpose and convenience. Following are the few popular forms of electronic communication used by business organizations:

- **E Mail:**



Email enables us to send information instantly to individuals as well as groups located anywhere in the world. This uniqueness of email as a form electronic communication is the key to its popularity amongst the business fraternity throughout the globe. Email is considered as an effective way to get connected with the various stakeholders of the organization. Through email, a message can be transmitted instantly to many receivers present at different geographical locations. Through emails, vast information can be sent at one go. It also provides a facility for confirming the delivery of the message to the receiver. It is also used to get a faster feedback on the shared information. Overall, email is an electronic form of communication that saves time and money for the organization. The major drawback in using an email is privacy, as it is not suitable for sending confidential information. Also, spam mails challenge the reliability of this form of electronic communication.

- **Text Messages:**

Text messaging or Short Message Service (SMS) is another form of electronic communication. It enables exchange of short text messages using mobile phones between senders and receivers. This tool is used to send text messages up to 160 characters. One can also send text messages to more than one receiver at the same time. Although, newer messaging platforms have taken out the popularity from SMS still it is one of the preferred electronic mode for short and specific communication.

In the current scenario, various SMS packs are available that reduces the cost of communication remarkably. Text messaging is a useful tool for marketers. Text messages are generally sent for the purpose of sharing information, communicating offers, and alerting users on one to one basis. This form of electronic communication also suffers from certain drawbacks such as it is not suitable for long messages and it lacks expressiveness. Immediate feedbacks are not guaranteed.

- **Blog:**

Blogging is another preferred electronic communication tool adopted by the businesses. This tool ensures better connect between the customer and the organization. Blog is a platform through which an organization can provide relevant information to its customer and also show-case its expertise. Blogs come under one-to-many communication category wherein an organization can



communicate to many stakeholders at any given time. It requires continuous updating to become relevant for the followers.

In this digital age, a blog improves the presence of an organization on the Internet space and also acts as a search engine optimizer. Expert blogs can generate most relevant followers which in turn can become loyal customers in time to come. Blogs have more credibility in the eyes of customers as compared to other forms of electronic communication. Through blogs, image building for organizations is possible at low cost and with less efforts.

Usually, in order to read a blog, readers have to subscribe for it. Subscribing to blogs guarantees updated information. For extracting maximum out of a blog, it is important to select the topic of blog on the merit of its relevance for the readers. Also, it is important to update it regularly and share authentic information.

- **Teleconferencing:**

In a business setting, there are many instances when there is need for a group of people to interact with each other for the purpose of decision making and all these people cannot be available at common place. To handle such kind of situations, teleconferencing an effective option. Teleconferencing provides a facility to connect many people together for the purpose of communication. It falls under one-to-many and many-to-many communication. As the name suggests, in teleconferencing the telephone is used for conferencing. Here the reach of the telephone is extended manifold by combining with the internet. Teleconferencing is gaining more popularity as a preferred mode of communication as it saves lot of time and travelling expenditure for the organization. Teleconferencing can be of two types namely audio conferencing and video conferencing.

An audio conferencing is just like a normal telephonic conversation but more than two persons present at different geographical locations are connected for conversing. With the current technology, it is also possible to connect around 100 persons on a single conference call. On the other hand, video conferencing facilitates the exchange of both audio and video communication. For an effective video conferencing each individual requires certain equipment such as camera, microphone, monitors and signal conversion equipment. Through video conferencing participants



can see and hear each other's conversation simultaneously. This communication tool is very handy when it is important to demonstrate something during the discussion.

The major advantage of video conference is that we can get the expert advice without actually calling an expert at one place.

Poor quality of equipment and network connection are the major impediments for effective use of this form of electronic communication.

- **Podcast:**

A podcast is related to distribution of information in the audio and video format. There are certain instances when the target audience for the communication is not physically present and has no internet access. In such cases podcasts come to rescue. A podcast provides easy access to the required information in a particular format to be received at one's convenience with regard to time and place.

Just like many other forms of electronic communication it also offers one-to-many communication. Podcasts are also used for training purposes. For effective use of this electronic communication form it is important to keep a check on the content and its delivery. A podcast is having an ability to establish connect with the audience and influence them. Just like teleconferencing, the various equipment required for podcasts are microphone, recording software, mixers etc. Success of a podcast depends upon creation of valuable content followed by heavy promotion.

- **Social Media:**

Social media platforms have revolutionized the field of communication. With the social media platforms, content generation, viewing and sharing are possible with absolute ease. Text material, visuals, audio content, audio-visual content and animated content can be created and shared with minimal expertise using user-friendly applications.

Social media platforms provide an opportunity for collaborative communication. Such platforms are profusely used by Organizations to inform and influence their target audience. Through a social media platform organization can communicate specific messages to specific target



audiences at a specific time and place. Such capability makes social media as one of the most power communication tools of current times. One can reach billions of users just with a single connect. In present times, many effective social networking sites are available with each having a wide variety of uses and applications. Some of the social networking platforms are:

*Facebook:* One of the most popular social networking sites till date with huge user base. Users can increase their network of contacts by establishing connections and sharing information, images, and videos with them. Registration for Facebook requires a valid email address and mention of personal details. For organizations, it is an excellent tool as it can provide important user data such as demographical and psychographical profiles. Also, preference of users can be identified. Facebook is also used by the Organizations and individuals for branding, image building and relationship marketing among other activities. Generally, it is treated as more of informal platform for communication.

*LinkedIn:* It is a social network platform created for working professionals. Registration process on LinkedIn requires sharing of valid email id and personal details of the user. This platform is used by individuals and Organizations to share specific skill and expertise related information, search for the right kind of talent, connecting with area specific experts, etc. Broadly, through LinkedIn one can connect oneself with experts of any area of interest and get benefited from each other's' expertise.

*Twitter:* It is a micro-blogging service. For this, one has to create a twitter account also known as twitter-handle. Through a twitter-handle, an organization updates its followers through very short and crisp texts or tweets. It is equivalent to short messaging service but targeted to followers only.

*YouTube:* It is a video sharing platform. Users can upload or download the videos, give their reviews and opinions. Organizations are using this platform to show advertisements and image building promotional videos.

*WhatsApp:* It is a multiplatform application which is used to communicate via text, audio, and video messages. It is a one-to-many form of electronic communication tool. It is getting very popular recent times that it has reduced the usage of SMS and is often used as a substitute to mobile calls.



## 2.3 THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

For a business organization communication has many aspects. It can be internal communication meant for the employees of the organization or it could be external focusing on stakeholders outside the organization. It can be vertical or horizontal. It can also be linear or cyclic or circular.

The culture of an organization depends upon the choice of the communication approach it has with its various stakeholders. A controlled system of communication is always more efficient than a random one. Before choosing a communication approach for an organization it is important to understand various theories of communication along with their suitability for an organization.

- **Critical Theory**

The basic assumption under Critical Theory is that every component of the organization is in conflict. This conflict can be between different hierarchy levels, different departments, or between individuals. Under this theory situation of conflict is natural. People at especially at lower management levels continuously require motivation. Role of communication under this theory is to resolve such conflicts, avoid any kind of rift related to people and resources, establishing a sense of oneness, and motivating employees to put in unidirectional efforts for the achievement of organizational goals.

- **Information Theory**

Information Theory is related to the flow of information and points of error during the flow. The main focus of this theory is to ensure that communication happens with no confusion and alteration. With this approach, specific communication mechanism is created so that the communication of messages happens smoothly. This theory works on the premises of continuously fixing and reducing communication related mistakes.

- **Post-Positive Theory**

Post-Positive Communication Theory proposes that in the organization everything must be in order. It is based on a no-nonsense approach. It reiterates that if any kind of conflict, misunderstanding or insubordination exists it is considered as unacceptable. The role of



communication under this theory is to design such messages that ensure obeying of rules and smooth functioning.

- **Gate Keeping Theory**

A person having an authority to restrict or filter the flow of communication is known as gatekeeper. Gatekeepers are the decision makers and they have control over the generation and transmission of information in any organization. They restrict all such communication which is unfavorable for the growth of organization and let go all the favorable ones.

## 2.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. A gatekeeper has \_\_\_\_\_ over the flow of information.
- b. YouTube is a \_\_\_\_\_ sharing platform.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are the two types of teleconferencing.
- d. SMS means \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

The biggest challenge before an organization is to assimilate and provide relevant information to the correct audience at the right time and right place. Various developments in the field of technology have handed over newer formats of electronic communication. These formats are short messaging service, teleconferencing, email, blog, podcast, social media etc. Technological advancements have made these tools of communication faster, less costly, efficient and highly specific. Every form of electronic communication has certain advantages and disadvantages. It is always advisable to use a particular tool on the basis of applicability to particular situation. There exist different approaches to communication in the organization. Each theory of communication has its importance and should be selected judiciously. Few of the important theories of communication are Critical Theory, Information Theory, Post-Positive Theory, and Gatekeeper Theory.





## 2.6 KEYWORDS

**Electronic Communication:** Electronic communication can be defined as, the communication which uses electronic media to transmit the information or message using computers, e-mail, telephone, video calling, FAX machine, etc.

**Blog:** Blog is a platform through which an organization or an individual can provide relevant information to its customer or followers and side by side show its expertise in the specific area.

**Email:** Electronic mail.

**Podcast:** A podcast is an episodic series of spoken word digital audio files that a user can download to a personal device for easy listening. Streaming applications and podcasting services provide a convenient, integrated way to manage a personal consumption queue across many podcast sources and playback devices.

## 2.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

- 1 What is electronic communication?
- 2 What are various forms of electronic communication?
- 3 Describe the advantages and disadvantages of using electronic communication by an organization.
- 4 “An organization cannot survive with traditional ways of communication.” Justify the statement.
- 5 What are the various theories of communication?
- 6 Discuss various social media platforms.

## 2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. Control
- b. Video
- c. Audio and Video



- d. Short Message Service

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<b>Subject: Business Communication</b>	
<b>Course code: BCOM 203</b>	<b>Author: Dr Mani Shreshtha</b>
<b>Lesson no. : 03</b>	<b>Vetter: Dr. Mihir Ranjan Patra</b>
<b>CORPORATE COMMUNICATION: AUDIENCE ANALYSIS AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 3.0 Learning Objectives

#### 3.1 Introduction to Corporate Communication

##### 3.1.1 Definitions

##### 3.1.2 Objectives and Relevance of Corporate Communication

##### 3.1.3 Functions of Corporate Communication

#### 3.2 Audience Analysis

#### 3.3 Communication Networks

##### 3.3.1 Formal Networks

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#### 3.4 Check your Progress

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#### 3.7 Self-Assessment Test

#### 3.8 Answers to check your Progress

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### 3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The way we communicate in our daily life is totally different from the communication that happens in the corporate world. Technology has a great influence on how communication happens inside and outside giant corporate organizations. This type of communication is called corporate communication. The objective of this chapter is to provide the students a basic orientation about corporate communication.

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the role of corporate communication for a business organization.
- Explain the relevance of conducting audience analysis for effective communication.
- Identify various communication networks used in organizations

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION TO CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

The world around us is changing very fast and the same is also applicable to a business organization. Communicating effectively to its stakeholders is very critical for every business and organization. Effective communication makes it possible for an organization to tell its customers the products that are offered and how these products are different from the competing products. It also helps in communicating the way one's brand is unique in comparison to the rival brands. Effective communication also facilitates the coordination among all the communication related activities of an organization. Such communication also attempts to create reciprocal relationships between the organization and its employees. In addition to communicating with the internal stakeholders, efforts are made to create and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with external stakeholders. Through proper communication, an organization can convey to its external stakeholders about various organizational developments.

Keeping above benefits in mind, communication has gained a strategic value in the effective management of organizations. Now companies are taking all communication very seriously. Accordingly, many organizations have started investing in building a corporate communications team. The major responsibility of corporate communications is to take care of all the communications within and outside the organization.

#### 3.1.1 DEFINITIONS



In the current scenario, when the world is digitally connected, the role of corporate **communication is of utmost importance. It not only affects the employee productivity but having a strong influence on brand awareness and organizational performance. With manifold objectives and multitude of approaches, corporate communication is a complex in both concept and practice. To provide a precise meaning to the field of corporate communication is very challenging task.**

At the broadest level, corporate communication encompasses **all communication** activities of giant organizations. Following are the few acceptable definitions of corporate communication:

- Corporate communication is the sum of an organization's internal as well as external communication. ([www.blog.smarp.com](http://www.blog.smarp.com))
- Corporate communication is a set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favourable point of view among stakeholders on which the company depends. (Charles J Fromburn)
- Corporate communication refers to the way in which businesses and organizations communicate with internal and various external audiences. ([www.northeastern.edu](http://www.northeastern.edu))
- Corporate communication refers to the communication between corporations, as well as the communication *within* corporations. ([www.openpr.com](http://www.openpr.com))

While doing business, we have to interact with different groups for different purposes. These groups are also known as audiences for the purpose of communication. **There are internal audiences and external audiences. Thus, there are two aspects of corporate communication, i.e., external and internal communication. External communication** includes the company's communication meant for varied audience outside the organization and at the broadest level society at large. External communication also happens when one is dealing with stakeholders outside the organization. These stakeholders include clients, customers, investors, or trade partners, etc.

On the other hand, internal communication includes all the communication exchanged within the company. The communication happening within, between, and across hierarchical levels constitutes internal communication. This includes any kind of communication among employees through emails, meetings, phone calls, presentations, etc.



Here it is important to know that there must be a proper coordination between internal and external communication as these two communications are integral part of creating a strong brand identity.

In the present times, any communication by an organization through any social media platform is also a part of corporate communication as it is visible to the audience both inside and outside the organization.

### 3.1.2 OBJECTIVES & RELEVANCE OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Corporate communication is multidimensional and complex in nature. It is usually handled separately by team of experts under the corporate communication department. To perform with efficiency, this department plans and executes campaigns towards achieving predefined objectives against which success and failure of the department is measured.

Although corporate communications objectives may vary from company to company, generally these are following under following categories:

- *To improve awareness:* Majority of the task of corporate communication department revolves around appraising various stake-holders/audiences about company's products offered. It is done through a multitude of tools and techniques.
- *To take Goal-Oriented Action:* Corporate communication involves more than just disseminating information. The corporate communication team has to set clear and measurable targets with proper deadlines to meet them. It is very important to understand that the objectives must be realistic and achievable. For example, they goal could be set as to increase the brand awareness among 50% of the target audience of their brand. Such specific objectives require extensive search for the best media options to get maximum coverage at minimal cost.
- *To take Profit-Oriented Action:* Not all the activities performed by corporate communication department are directly measurable. So, in such instances, it is important to consider that how much return on investment is generated through overall efforts of corporate communication department.

It is very important for a company to create a right message for the right audience at the right time to make that communication effective. Also, the messages communicated through various media platforms must be synchronous with the objectives and the target audience. This is the reason that corporate



communication team has a huge responsibility towards achieving the multifarious objectives. Following are the some of the pointers that shows that corporate communication is pertinent for any organization:

- *Provides recognition:* All the communication by a company projects it's thought, culture, and philosophy of doing business. It helps in creating a unique brand identity for the company. A strong corporate communications strategy helps to create consistency in the messages and hence a strong brand identity. With a consistent brand identity, people find it easier to know what the company is all about. It also helps in generating customer loyalty towards the company and its products. Overall, corporate communication provides a clear recognition to the company.
- *Controls external influencers:* When a company has a strong corporate communications strategy, they are in a position to influence the stakeholders. With proper communication, the audiences get connected with the company. The satisfied audience members then spread positive word of mouth publicity.
- *Improves employee loyalty:* Employees of a company are always eager to know about the current developments and future plans of the company. Corporate communication at internal level keeps all the employees apprised about how the company is doing. Also informed employees feel empowered and work better for the organization. Employees also act as carriers of the positive information to the outside world. Overall, internal corporate communication helps in developing a sense of belongingness among employees resulting in long term loyalty.

### 3.1.3 FUNCTIONS OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

In an organization, corporate communication department performs various functions. Tim Stobierski (2019) in his blog on corporate communication describes various functions of corporate communication. Some of these functions are discussed below:

- **Media Relations:** This refers to the way in which a company or organization communicates with the media, by:
  - Organizing news conferences, product launches, and interviews, and creating materials (banners, flyers, etc.) for such events
  - Writing and distributing press releases to the media to garner coverage



- Monitoring the news for mentions of the organization, its product, and key employees such as stakeholders and members of management
- Devising a plan to address unfavorable press coverage or misinformation
- **Customer Communications and Marketing:** Corporate communication strategy often impacts marketing strategy, and vice versa. The corporate communication department often helps in preparing various marketing related materials including customer communications material, including:
  - Marketing presentations
  - Brochures
  - Flyers
  - Newsletters
  - Website content
  - Social media content
- **Crisis Communication:** Crisis communication refers to the specific communication stance that an organization (or individual) takes in the face of a crisis or unanticipated event which has the potential to damage their reputation or existence. In the event of such a crisis, it is the responsibility of the communications department to create a strategy to address it (often done with the aid of outside experts) which may include:
  - Organizing interviews and news briefings for company representatives to discuss the issue at hand
  - Advising company representatives on what to say and how to say it when speaking with members of the media
  - Communicating with attorneys, government regulators, emergency responders, and politicians as necessary
  - Generally protecting the organization's reputation and its ability to do business





- **Internal Communications:** In addition to being responsible for communicating the organization's message with external audiences, corporate communication department teams also handle internal communication, including:
  - Drafting emails and memos announcing company news and initiatives
  - Compiling employee resources (such as information about employee benefits)
  - Creating printed materials, such as employee handbooks or flyers
  - Facilitating group brainstorming sessions and training sessions amongst employees
  - Managing internal blogs, newsletters, or other publications

### 3.2 AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

In a business communication situation, the target audience is the most important element. The audience/customer is always the king. And all business communication/ corporate communication efforts are directed at satisfying the audiences' wants and needs. Communication to be effective, the message must be understood in the similar manner by the audience members as intended by the sender. So, audience acceptance is extremely important to increase the effectiveness of corporate communication. Understanding how and why audiences accept and reject communication content enables the communication planners to create message in accordance with the audience.

The whole communication process revolves around the audience. So, it becomes important to conduct an audience analysis. The concept of audience analysis involves identification of the audience, the wants and needs of the audience, their tastes, their reception capabilities and designing communication as per their suitability. Suitability means changing the way the message is delivered so that the audience understands it.

Audience analysis is considered as a pre-condition for designing any message. For maintaining the effectiveness of the communication, a sender has to establish a sense of commonality with the audience. Accordingly, the encoding of the message, choice of words and symbols, and choice of media to send the message depends on the results of the audience analysis.

Following are the factors that must be kept in mind at the time of conducting audience analysis:



- **Audience expectations:** Specific audiences have specific expectations about the products being marketed or the organization being presented before the audience. To meet this set of expectations, the communication planners decide what will be communicated and how it will be communicated. Audience expectations influence the time of communication, the mode of communication, and the way it is communicated.
- **Audiences' prior knowledge level: Before delivering any communication,** it is pertinent to enquire about the pre-existing knowledge level of audience about the issue concerned. A good estimate about audiences' prior knowledge of the topic enables the sender to elaborate the topic in a better way. Any overestimation or underestimation of audiences' prior knowledge is an hurdle for effective communication.
- **Attitude toward topic: As a human being, we all carry certain beliefs and attitudes toward everything and every issue. These affect our understanding and our actions. So, knowing how your audience members feel about the topic or issue helps in determining** the best way to create an impact in their minds and in achieving the communication goals.
- **Audience Demographics:** The demographic background of the audience is an important aspect to consider before communicating. Demographic factors include age, gender, religion, ethnic background, class, gender, occupation, education, group membership, and countless other categories. A speaker must address to these demographic factors and design the communication accordingly.

One word of caution at the time of considering demographic factors is to avoid any kind of stereotyping. This means a speaker must not categorize all the audience from a particular demographic as similar. It is important to understand that every person is a different human being with different tastes and preferences.

### 3.3 COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

In the words of Adler, "Communication networks are regular patterns of person-to-person relationships through which information flows in an organization." This understanding of communication networks explains that there is a possibility to manage, regulate, and influence the flow of information. With the help of communication networks, information is exchanged among employees. The routes or paths



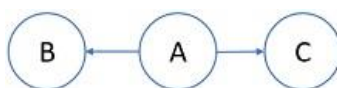
through which communication takes place are called ‘channels’ and the sum total of the channels is known as ‘communication network’. Analysis of communication networks is done to understand how communication happens in organizations. Such an understanding enables managers to control the flow of information in terms of content and timing.

Every day, numerous communication acts take place with various stakeholders. Further these communication flows could be one to one, one to many, many to many, and many to one. Communication networks are classified into two parts namely formal and informal communication networks.

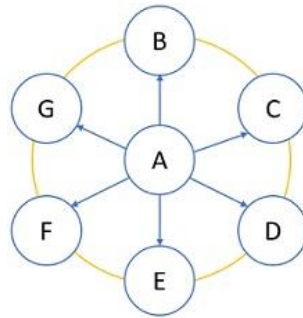
### 3.3.1 FORMAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

A formal communication network is one which is specifically designed by the management of an organization. A formal communication network is depicted through the organizational chart. An organizational chart tells about different hierarchical levels of the organization and which level is having more authority over others. In a formal setting, directions and instructions flow from top to bottom level in the organization while suggestions, requests and complaints flow from bottom to top. The cross departmental information generally flows at the same level of hierarchy. The organizational chart implies that information can flow in any of three directions – vertically, i.e., upward or downward, and horizontally. The formal communication network fixes accountability and provides authority to control the communication flow. Formal communication networks can further be classified as:

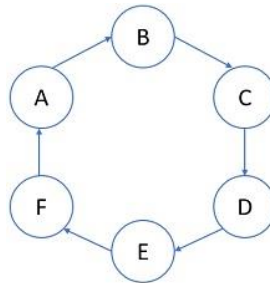
- **Chain:** When an employee passes on official information to the other employee who further communicates it to a third employee creates a chain pattern.



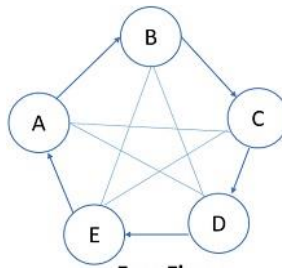
- **Wheel:** When a single employee communicates about any organizational information to a group of co-workers, a wheel pattern is formed.



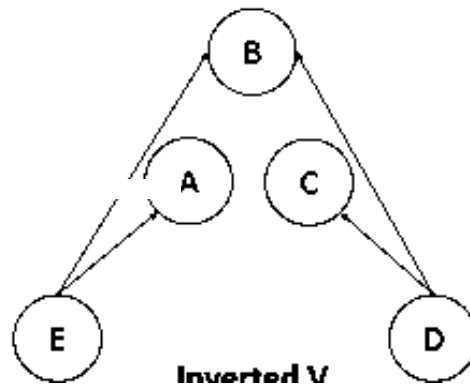
- **Circular:** An employee communicates information to his colleague, who passes it on to another co-worker and so on. The message passes from one employee to another and finally reaches to the person who initiates the process.



- **Free Flow:** In this type of network, no particular pattern is followed. Information is spread in a non-systematic manner. For example, in an emergency condition in an organization, information is randomly spread among employees.



- **Inverted V:** Under this network, the subordinates can communicate directly with their immediate senior as well as their senior or top management too.



### 3.3.2 INFORMAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

As opposed to formal communication networks, informal communication networks follow no fixed pattern. These are not specifically designed by organizations. These informal networks usually emerge over a period of time to fill certain communication vacuum. Informal networks coexist with formal networks. In informal networks, information flow does not follow a fixed path but often move in any direction. It happens because no official channel is used for the flow of communication and hence no control over the flow exists. Generally, information flowing through informal channels does not use any printed format like letters, emails, memos etc. Thus, informal networks are based more on friendship, shared personal or career interests. For example, co-workers meeting in cafeteria, parking lot or in the market are engaged in informal communication with no authentic and legal record of the communication. Any communication happening outside organization in a social setting is the part of informal communication. Informal network is unorganized and complex in nature. An informal communication is also called ‘grapevine’ as it may swiftly spread in any direction like grapevine.

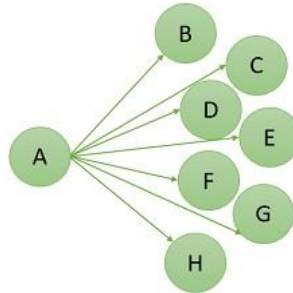
Informal communication networks can further be classified as:

- **Single Strand:** It is similar to the chain pattern. In a single strand scenario, the information flows from one person to another; then to the next; and so on.

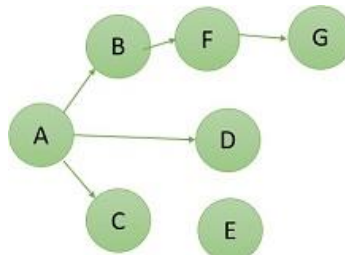




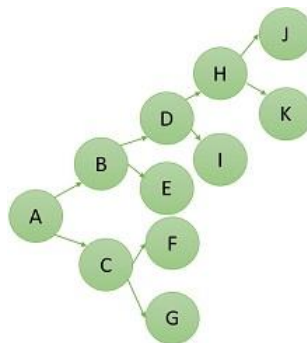
- **Gossip / Grapevine:** Here usually, a single person spreads information within an informal group. The message, usually a half truth or a half lie, moves randomly but spreads much faster than most formal networks. This pattern is called as grapevine.



- **Probability:** It has similarity to the gossip pattern but there is no necessity that everyone is involved in the communication.



- **Cluster:** When information is passed only among trustworthy group of people with a belief that they will not pass it further.



### 3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Corporate communication includes both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ communication.
- Age and gender are the \_\_\_\_\_ factors of the audience.



- c) When a single employee communicates about any organizational information to a group of co-workers, a \_\_\_\_\_ pattern is formed.
- d) Grapevine is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ communication network.
- e) In an emergency condition in the organization the information follows \_\_\_\_\_ network pattern.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

In the current scenario, when the world is highly digitally connected, the role of corporate communication can be explained as a maker or breaker. It not only affects the employee productivity but having a strong influence on brands awareness level and innovation. To provide a precise meaning to the field of corporate communication is a challenging task and virtually impossible. The reason for this situation can be attributed to the fact that the measures are too different and partly cover many other areas of a company. At the broadest level, corporate communication encompasses all communication that a company conducts. Corporate communication is the sum of an organization's internal as well as external communication.

The whole communication process revolves around the audience. So for creating effectiveness in our communication we have to make it audience centric. Keeping in view the importance of audience for the achievement of communication goals it becomes important to do an audience analysis. The concept of audience analysis involves identification of the audience and designing communication as per their suitability. Suitability doesn't mean changing the meaning of the message that suits audience but changing the way it is delivered so that the audience understands it.

Communication networks explain that there is a possibility to manage, regulate, and structure the flow of information. With the help of communication networks information is exchanged among employees. The routes or paths through which communication takes place are called 'channels' and the sum total of the channels is known as 'communication network'. It refers to the pattern of channels of communication between the participants. So, study of communication networks is done to understand how communication happens in organization. Such an understanding enables managers to control the flow of information in terms of content and timing. Communication networks are classified into two parts namely formal and informal communication networks.



### 3.6 KEYWORDS

<b>Corporate Communication:</b>	Corporate communication is a set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favourable point of view among stakeholders on which the company depends.
<b>Audience:</b>	For whom communication is meant for.
<b>Audience Analysis:</b>	Identification of the audience and designing communication as per their suitability.
<b>Chain Pattern:</b>	<b>When an employee passes on official information to the other employee who further communicates it to a third employee creates a chain pattern.</b>
<b>Gossip / Grapevine:</b>	A single person spreads information within an informal group where the message may or may not be valid.

### 3.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. What is corporate communication?
2. Outline the major objectives and functions of corporate communication?
3. What is audience analysis? Why it is necessary to conduct audience analysis for an organization?
4. Mention and explain the factors affecting behaviour of audience.
5. What is a communication network? What are various types of communication networks?
6. How formal communication networks are different from informal communication networks?

### 3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) Internal and External
- b) Demographic
- c) Wheel
- d) Informal
- e) Free flow





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- <https://theinvestorsbook.com/types-of-business-communication.html>



<b>Subject: Business Communication</b>	
<b>Course Code: BCOM 203</b>	<b>Author: Dr. B.S. Bodla</b>
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## BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

### STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Learning Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Types of Barriers
  - 4.2.1 Language and semantic barriers
  - 4.2.2 Organisational barriers
  - 4.2.3 Physical barriers
  - 4.2.4 Socio-psychological barriers
- 4.3 Check your progress
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Keywords
- 4.6 Self assessment test
- 4.7 Answers to check your progress
- 4.8 References/suggested readings

### 4.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to-

- Understand barriers to communication.



- Differentiate between language and semantic barriers.
- Differentiate between organisational and physical barriers.
- Understand socio-psychological barriers.
- Know the ways to overcome these barriers.

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a complex process involving shared assumptions and unspoken agreements between individuals. Understandably, there are frequent errors and misunderstandings in communication. Several types of barriers prevent us from transmitting our ideas meaningfully. It is hard to identify these barriers. The reason is obvious it is difficult to realize fully whether the message we get is complete and correct, or distorted. The feedback gives only a partial clue for determining whether the communication has succeeded or failed. Another problem is the identification of the criteria on the basis of which one should assess the effectiveness of communication.

However, despite these problems, one must identify the barriers that hinder the process of effective communication in order to be able to keep in check their negative effect. Studies have revealed certain common barriers and suggested ways to remove them. In the present lesson we shall try to understand some of the major barriers and ways to overcome them.

## 4.2 TYPES OF BARRIERS

There are 4 different types of barriers and these are discussed as follows:

### 4.2.1 LANGUAGE AND SEMANTIC BARRIERS

These barriers are caused by the following:

#### 4.2.1.1 Lack of common language

Language uses oral or written arbitrary symbols to transmit meanings from one person to another. Every human language has its own vocal symbol system and its own grammatical structures. If the communicator and the receiver belong to different language groups, their ignorance of each other's language or the lack of a common language will be a barrier to communication between them. It is not possible for them to communicate with each other unless they know some common language which is



properly understood by both of them. An English speaking boss and a Tamil speaking worker will not be able to communicate without a good knowledge of each other's language. If both of them know a common language, say Hindi, their knowledge of Hindi word, inflections, phrases, clauses and sentence-structure should be upto mark to express their thoughts and feelings.

#### **4.2.1.2 Semantic Barriers**

Most of the communication is carried on through words, whether spoken or written. Words are said to have no meaning but they represent arbitrary meaning associated with it. A word may have a variety of meanings and the meaning attributed to a word by the communicator may not be the same as that of the receiver's attributed meaning of that word. A word can have different meaning to different people at different occasions. It is found by the experts that people attribute thousand different meanings to a few hundred commonly used English words. Therefore, the sender and receiver are many a time likely to attribute different meaning to the same word. Sometimes, they may use different words to communicate the same meaning. There are many words in English such as light, cheap, etc. which can be used with favourable as well as unfavourable connotations. A word can stand for its positive or negative connotations. Sometimes, the intended meaning of the sender's word is wrongly entered by the receiver by attributing negative meaning to it.

#### **4.2.1.3 Poor vocabulary**

Poor vocabulary makes our message more complicated. Our pen falters and tongue fumbles when we probe into our brain for a suitable word or phrase. The words have different connotative and denotative meanings. The communicator needs to know them clearly in order to use them with clarity and precision. Words stand not only for their meanings but they are also charged with action and emotions when the communicator and the receiver understand these word-associations, they are capable of using them as living entities. Poor vocabulary does not allow the communicator to write or speak effectively. It does not allow the receiver to understand the message clearly and completely if the receiver does not understand the words, the sentences cannot be properly comprehended by him.

#### **4.2.1.4 Poor knowledge of grammar and punctuation**

Poor knowledge of grammar and punctuation is a barrier to verbal communication. A good vocabulary is of no use unless the communicator acquires the knowledge of how to use it in a sentence. More than ever



before, the job applicants, business report writers, business correspondents and all those who are involved in written and oral communications today must have superior grammar skills because an understanding of grammatical structures provide excellent basis for effective writing, speaking, listening and reading skills. If the communicator is not able to choose the correct verb form that agrees with a given noun or pronoun; if, he is not able to use nouns and pronouns precisely to indicate who does what; if he is not able to select exact adjective or adverb; if he is not able to use conjunctions and prepositions to join words correctly, he will not be able to communicate his ideas, thoughts and feelings fully and correctly. In addition to a good grammar, a knowledge of punctuation is essential, for effective communication. Many of us do not pay adequate attention to it. But it must be remembered that the faulty and improper punctuation can change the intended meaning of the sentences.

#### **4.2.1.5 Roundabout verbiage**

Roundabout verbiage consists of the usage of overworked, troublesome and exhausted words and phrases which usually cause a considerable amount of misunderstanding and confusion. It is a long winded way of saying the meaningless padding. By avoiding such roundabout verbiage, we can add a good deal of liveliness and simplicity of expression to our written as well as oral communication. For example, instead of saying 'in the majority of cases' or 'in a number of instances', we can say 'some' or 'usually'; instead of saying 'commence', we can use 'start' or 'begin'; instead of saying 'prior to', we can say 'before'. Roundabout verbiage should be avoided to achieve clarity and simplicity of the message.

### **4.2.2 ORGANISATIONAL BARRIERS**

The organisational barriers are caused by the following factors:

#### **4.2.2.1 Hierarchical barriers**

In an organization, communication transmission must flow through certain formal channels which are established by the organizational hierarchy. The employees are expected to contact the superiors and the subordinates through their immediate superiors or subordinates. This often results in hardships and difficulties in maintaining free flow of communication. Some managements disapprove with the barriers of hierarchy and propose the everyone in the organization should be free enough to communicate directly with anybody else who can help him to solve his problems.



Usually, the subordinates do not find it easy to communicate their problems to their superiors. They experience an awe of authority in communicating with their superiors. Sometimes, the upward communication is deliberately distorted and suitably edited in order to make it pleasant, and acceptable to the reputed officer. Frustration is caused among the employees when their communication is restricted to the formal channels only. They try to find the resources of the informal groups which communicate through informal channels of communication like grapevine.

#### **4.2.2.2 Increasing specialization of the workforce**

Increasing specialization of the workforce is posing a serious barrier to effective internal communication in large-size business organizations. The tasks are specified and the procedures are structured in such a way that the workforce can hardly come out of their compartments to communicate with the people in other functional groups. They look only at those things that need to be done by a functionalized group. Everyone of them is assigned with a special kind of job. This makes it increasingly difficult to see and converse with the people outside one's specialization. So far as possible, the works of each employee is confined to a single function. But this is not always possible. Therefore, generally the people who are involved in related functions are grouped together in the form of a functional department which is headed by a common superior. This separates the group of people belonging to one department from the other departments in the same organisation.

#### **4.2.2.3 Wrong choice of medium**

In lesson two, we have discussed the various media of communication available to us. It may be oral communication through, interviews, conversations, speeches, telephone talks, conferences, radio speeches, etc. It may be face-to-face communication, written communication or non-verbal communication. All these ways or media of communication are suitable for communicating at different times and for different purposes. Therefore, it is essential to think about their relative merits and limitations, before selecting one of the media for communication. The sales manager must think over if it would be better for him to hold a face-to-face talk with the prospective buyer than talking to him on the telephone. The oral communication may be a wrong medium for the smuggler at certain occasion and he may communicate safely and quickly by flashing a torchlight as a signal. Again, the oral media will be wrong one for a policeman who should blow his whistle or use hand gestures to stop the vehicles. Audio-visual media vehicle better to instruct the uneducated workers, especially in rural area rather than using



the written media for that purpose, which is merely an audio-aid to communication. Sometimes, it is better to communicate on telephone than to write a letter but there are certain messages which are more effective if they are communicated through written media.

#### **4.2.2.4 Amount and complexity of messages**

Amount of messages received by the receiver is one of the major barriers to communication. The increasing complexity of the modern business world has resulted in ever growing needs of boundless information. Through the astonishing variety of communication media, we are continuously bombarded with messages from morning till night. In a busy organization, a person who is connected with all the formal and informal channels of communication, is bound to be very busy in receiving and imparting the messages rather than a person who is supposed to receive the messages through a single channel. He has to process a large amount of information. He can handle an abundance of information, provided it consists of routine and simple messages, but it is very difficult to handle the information, which is relatively more complex and unpredictable. Even communication under-load can be a barrier to communication. An employee who is under-communicated gets bored because of his non-involvement and finally starts communicating with the help of gossip, rumour, etc., which may prove harmful to the organization.

### **4.2.3 PHYSICAL BARRIERS**

There are some physical barriers which are caused by the following factors:

#### **4.2.3.1 Noise**

Noise is quite often a barrier to communication. It interferes with the transmission of the signals. It also refers to the 'unwanted' signals of messages which interfere and disturb the reception of the wanted signals. This disturbance is usually in the form of sounds, but it need not be always the sounds. It can be in visual, audiovisual, written, physical or psychological form also. There are many people who communicate with a little signal and much noise. In fact, they communicate extraneous matters which may diminish the interest in the receivers or may even annoy them.

In manufacturing organization, oral communication is rendered difficult by the electronic noise like blaring noise of the stereo and such other noises often interfere in communication. Visual noise can be experienced when a committee member arrives late at the meeting hall and all the committee members



are distracted by his arrival. Poor telephone connections which interrupt conversations, muddled type-scripts and bad handwriting are some examples of the technical noise.

#### **4.2.3.2 Time**

Time also act as barriers to the smooth flow of communication. If the employee does not communicate with his superiors for a long time, or if husband and wife stay away from each other for a long time, it may create a communication gap between them which may affect their relationship. Time can act as a barrier to communication in some over ways also. A guest who arrives at midnight will not be able to communicate well with the host who might feel embarrassed or disturbed in his sleep. Time will now allow two communicators to talk with each other if they work in different shifts. A phone call at midnight can irritate or embarrass the receiver. A husband who keeps his wife waiting for a long time will not find it easy to communicate with her.

#### **4.2.3.3 Distance**

Sometimes the distance between the transmitter and the receiver becomes a mighty barrier. It can happen if the technical devices of communication such as telephone, telex, etc., are not available to link them. Faulty sitting arrangement in the office can create a kind of communication gap which can be eliminated by adjusting the distance. Distance between the workbenches in the offices or in the modern production departments and half partitions between them are the distance barriers which severely limit the communication among the employees.

#### **4.2.3.4 Age and educational background**

The age, maturity, educational background and the eras in which a person grows up make a generation which inevitably comes in the way of human communication. The generation gap becomes obvious in their use of vocabulary and style of speeches and the values of life which they adhere. Considering his age and maturity, we tend to apply different standards of judgement to judge the statements of the speaker. In an organization, older workers gradually form their social groups, which often remains apart from the younger workers. Their likings and interests are different and they take less interest in sports, cocktail parties and movies.





#### 4.2.3.5 Sex

When men and women work together in a group, men tend to be more assertive, acquisitive, self-confident and aggressive than the women. The sex stands as a barrier to a direct, honest and appropriate expression of a female's thoughts, opinions and beliefs. On the other hand, man is more assertive of his thoughts and opinions. It is also found that women are more likely than men to express their emotions and feelings about a situation. But, it must be noticed that these are general tendencies of sex-typed communication behaviour and not the rules. The girls tend to be less aggressive because they receive negative results such as rejection, criticism for such behaviour. They are brought up with the feeling that assertiveness is unfeminine. A girl who is brought up with such feminine conceptions about herself may try to avoid a frank eye-contact with the interviewer and may even speak in a voice that is almost inaudible.

#### 4.2.4 SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

These barriers are caused by social and psychological status as follows:

##### 4.2.4.1 Status barriers

Status consciousness exists in every organization and is one of the major barriers to effective communication. Status is a position or social rank of a person in a group. It depends on the person's abilities, amount of pay, job-skills, seniority, type of work assigned, age, etc. The high-status employees within a group enjoy more power and influence the low-status employees. Thus, status reflects the degree of power, authority, importance and responsibility placed on an individual by the other people in the organization. The subordinates are usually afraid of communicating unpleasant and unfavourable information to the high-status people. They get scared of entering into the air-conditioned cabins with runs on the floor and a number of telephones on the table. They become conscious of their own status in relationship with the status of their superiors. This status consciousness is harmful in the process of upward communication. The employees fear that the unpleasant facts communicated to their superior might bring adverse effects on them, if the information displeases the superior. They are reluctant to communicate their problems, shortcomings, mistakes and other unfavourable information to the higher-ups. They do not show courage of offering suggestions and plans of improving the organizations and its procedures for the fear of being called arrogant by their superiors. In order to safeguard the dignity of their status, the high-ups avoid accepting suggestions from the subordinates and presume that their higher



status stands for better knowledge and competence than any of their subordinates. These assumptions may prove to be serious barriers to communication between them. Therefore, it is essential that every superior should encourage his subordinates to talk freely.

#### **4.2.4.2 Attitudes and values**

Personal attitudes and opinions often act as barriers to effective communication. The attitudes serve the personal needs of the people. They provide need satisfaction to the individuals. The messages are interpreted by the people in terms of their attitudes and values. Their attitudes and values are different not merely because they are physically different but also because they have different backgrounds. They deal with the individuals and events according to their attitudes and assumptions. Their personal attitudes, values and opinions are the barriers to an effective communication. The most agreeable information for anybody of us is the one which is favourable and palatable to our opinions, values, norms and attitudes. The message which runs contrary to our views and beliefs is not easily acceptable to us even when it is factual and true. We promptly accept the government policy if it is favourable to our business, but we express our strong resentment if it adversely affects our business.

#### **4.2.4.3 Different comprehension of reality**

The reality of an object, or a person is different to different people. Reality is not a fixed concept; it is complex, infinite and continually changing. The individual experiences and their interpretations are never identical because their perceptions are different. On account of different abstractions, inferences, and evaluations, they perceive reality in a different way. If two friends see a movie together, their interpretation, of the events and the characters in it will certainly be different. The communication barrier arises as a result of different selective perceptions of the same object or idea by two or more people. Our physical senses like hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell are our contracts with the physical world. Some people have limited range and power of their senses, whereas some people have very acute and strong senses. These physical differences are also responsible for different perceptions of the existing things. Human needs are strong motivating factors which can very easily alter his perceptions. We create our own reality through selective perception which hides certain things that are there and see certain more things than are there.



#### 4.2.4.4 Inference

What we directly see, hear, smell, taste, feel or can verify and conform immediately constitutes a fact. However, the statement that go beyond facts and the conclusions based on facts are called inferences. When we get up in bed at 7.30 a.m., we infer that mummy might have already started her housework. When we sit down at a table to write, we infer that the chair will support our weight and ink will flow from the pen. Thus, the statements which are based on the facts and go beyond the facts are inferences. We may have good reason to expect that our inferences will be correct, but they may prove incorrect due to some unpredicted probability. As inferences go beyond the facts in making certain statements, they can give wrong signals also. We are to interpret symbols on the basis of assumptions which usually prove correct, but we must be aware of the probability that they may sometimes prove incorrect. When we travel in the state transport bus, we infer that we may reach safely at our destination, but this inference may not prove correct if the bus is caught in some accident. The inferential statements involve certain amount of risk, but in every imaginable context, we cannot avoid them. The inferences drawn by the specialists are many a time reliable because they are based on verified facts, but the inferences of the non-experts should be accepted after receiving more feedback from the concerned people.

#### 4.2.4.5 Abstracting

Abstracting may be defined as the process of focusing attention on some details and omitting others. It is both necessary and desirable in many cases as it may save our valuable time. We use language to communicate our experiences and feelings, but we cannot communicate every detail of it. We cannot communicate every detail of our experience to others. We focus out attention on some details and do not bother about the rest. We prepare a business report on our observation of the various events in the market. While preparing it, we abstract the reality and report only the valuable characteristics of the market. We observe partially and communicate practically because our experience of the event is also partial. When we try to convert our observations and experiences into words, we further abstract it by using selected words, which involve leaving out the details. If we try to completely describe a simple object like 'pen', we would require several volumes for it which would still be insufficient to describe the object.



#### **4.2.4.6 Ailness and closed-mindedness**

A person with a closed mind is very difficult to communicate with. He is a man with deeply ingrained prejudices. It is very difficult to communicate with such a person. He is not prepared to receive any message on a subject about which he assumes to know everything. His mind is closed to new ideas facts and revelations. If an employee approaches his closed-minded boss with some suggestions to improve the work of a business unit, the boss would not entertain the suggestion, but, on the other hand, he would retort the employee by saying that he knows better than the latter regarding what should be done for the betterment of the organization. Perhaps, he may further warn the employee that the latter should never try to teach him again. Thus, he completely rejects the information and recommendations of the communicator even before he knows the real facts. The reason behind his Closed-mindedness is his deeply rooted prejudices. He may preclude all possibility of communication unless he humbles himself down and admits that he has a great deal to know about himself, his occupation and also about the other people and their occupations.

#### **4.2.4.7 Distortion, filtering and editing**

A message is not communicated from one person to another in its entirety. The legally worded resolutions made in the management committee meeting cannot be transmitted in the same words to the operator on the machine. It requires translation of it into simple language. It does not exactly replicate the idea of the message on the receiver's mind, but, on the other hand, it interprets and simplifies the message for him. The accuracy of the message is lost and the transmission becomes imperfect as the message goes through the filters of translations and simplifications.

Further the employees are reluctant to communicate the information, which might expose the faults and inefficiencies of their loss. The horizontal channel is also subjected to such distortions and filtering. The negative effects of the informal channel like grapevine are due to distortions and filtering. No one knows where it begins, but everybody seems to be anxious to repeat and impart it to others. The message in grapevine receives fresh additions with every repetition until it gets worst. Thus; often the original information communicated through formal or informal channels gets lost or distorted to a large extent and very little of it is retained.



#### **4.2.4.8 Background of experiences**

Our experience in the past influences our attitudes and values. Every human being has his own set of experiences. His style and way of living and, personal background separates him from the rest of the society. If the individuals do not have similar experiences and expectations concerning a given communication situation, they will not attribute similar meaning to the symbols of the message. The experience and expectations attached to the language symbols by a layman are bound to be different from those of the doctor, banker and a scientist.

#### **4.2.4.9 Bad listening**

Some people often become inattentive while receiving a message, in particular, if the message contains a new idea. The adults, many a time, resist change. So the moment a new idea is presented to them, they unconsciously become inattentive. One of the major reasons for bad listening is an individual's continual thinking about his own problems and worries. The poor listeners always feel that the thought in his mind is more interesting than what the speaker is saying. A college student involves himself in thinking about his girl-friend rather than listening to the lecture of his professor. Bad listening can also be due to some strong reason for worrying. An employee may get engrossed in worrying about the sickness of his daughter rather than listening to the instructions given by his departmental manager. Some listeners mentally argue with the speaker before comprehending the complete message. This usually leads to misunderstanding and conflict. Their impatience to talk out their thoughts and their lack of interest in the message contents are strong barriers to communication.

#### **4.2.4.10 Emotions**

Emotions of a person play an important role in the act of communication. Emotions are our feelings about the world around us. Usually, the positive emotions such as joy, love or affection do not interfere with communication, but the negative emotions act as strong barriers to effective communication. Emotionally excited communicator is unable to organize his message properly. His excited or nervous state of mind does not allow him to think clearly. He expresses his blurred thoughts with gesticulations and keeps on repeating the same words. He cannot even grasp the message sent by the communicator in its true sense. Almost anybody who comes across such an irritated person becomes a victim of his unfocused negative emotions.



#### **4.2.4.11 The source of communication (halo effect)**

Trust is an essential dimension of all human encounters. What two people would say to each other and how they would interpret it depends on the level of trust between them. If the psychological climate between two people is uneasy, there would be more distortions and misinterpretations of the messages communicated between them. Distrust distorts mutual understanding and takes away pleasurable and acceptable aspects of communication. It may even interfere with the efforts of introducing attitude changes and motivating actions. If we trust the speaker, we may change our attitudes easily and readily according to whatever the speaker proposes. Our readiness to, change, our views and values is a result of our acceptance of the speaker's statements as reliable 'truths' or 'whites'. If we distrust the speaker, everything that he says can motivate no action from us, nor can it bring any change in our attitudes, views and values. The picture of our life is multi-coloured and it should not be painted just in black and white. We must be sensitive to its mixed tones and tunes. We must try to see and understand the 'grey' tones (the halo effect).

#### **4.2.4.12 Resistance to change**

The new idea is rejected consciously or sometimes unconsciously if it conflicts with beliefs, morals; values, attitudes and opinions of the receiver. The average adult human mind ignores the new idea, especially when he feels insecurity and uncertainty about its aftermath. He feels that the things go along just fine with him and he would be insecure if the changes are introduced. He is also suspicious about its success in future. Because of its uncertainty, he hastily concludes in his mind that the proposal would not be successful. He even further feels that the proposal would make things worst for him. Thus, the average human mind which resists changes does not accept the new ideas from the communicator.

### **4.3 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. ....is a complex process involving shared assumptions and unspoken agreements between individuals.
2. Language uses oral or written arbitrary symbols to ..... meanings from one person to another.
3. ....caused by noise, time, distance, age and educational background and sex.



4. Status reflects the degree of power, authority, importance and .....placed on an individual by the other people in the organization.

5. If the psychological climate between two people is uneasy, there would be more distortions and .....of the messages communicated between them.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

Communication, as explained earlier, is the process of transmitting information. If the information, as it is present in the mind of the transmitter, is transferred unchanged into the mind of the receiver, we say that a perfect act of communication has taken place. If we recall how many times we have had an experience of miscommunication (sometimes causing embarrassing misunderstanding), we shall realize that there does not exist any such thing as may be described as perfect communication.

Communication barriers can originate at three levels at the level of the transmitter, of the medium, or of the receiver. In technical parlance, any-thing that obstructs free flow of communication is called 'noise'. Or we may refer to it simply as a 'barrier' to communication. In the present chapter we have described some of the major barriers to communication and ways to overcome them.

#### 4.5 KEYWORDS

**Semantic Barriers** arise from the different meanings of the same word.

**Round about verbiage** is the usage of overworked, troublesome and exhausted words and phrases causing misunderstanding and confusion.

**Abstracting** is the process of focussing attention on some details and omitting others.

**Distortion** is the reproduction of the message with some different meaning and the original message goes somewhere else.

**Filtering** is the lost of some contents of the original message.

**Grapewine** is an informal communication which receives fresh additions with every repetition until it gets worst.

**Halo effect** is the communication which is affected by the trust between the persons. It is the sensitivity towards mixed tunes and tones.



#### 4.6 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

1. “In reality there is no such things as perfect communication”. Discuss.
2. Describe the factors responsible for miscommunication in business organisations.
3. What are barriers to effective internal communication in business organisation?
4. How does languages act as a serious barrier to effective communication?
5. How does the ‘failure to use multiple communication channels’ result in poor communication?
6. What are the psychological barriers to effective communication?

#### 4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Communication
2. Transmit
3. Physical Barriers
4. Responsibility
5. Misinterpretations

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<b>BUSINESS COMMUNICATION PRACTICES</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 5.0 Learning Objectives

#### 5.1 Introduction Business Communication Practices

5.1.1 Group Discussion

5.1.2 Mock Interviews

5.1.3 Seminars

#### 5.2 Check your Progress

#### 5.3 Summary

#### 5.4 Keywords

#### 5.5 Self-Assessment Test

#### 5.6 Answers to check your Progress

#### 5.7 References/Suggested Readings

## 5.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Business communication is integral to all business organizations. The very survival of business organizations depends on the success of the type of business communication organizations practice. In this chapter, it is attempted to create a basic understanding of various practices related to business communication.



After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Know the procedure for conducting and participating in group discussion
- Understand the benefits of mock interviews
- Know the utility of organizing a seminar

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

As a student of business communication, it is very important to know that how communication happens in organizations and what are the various formats through which communication takes place. In every organization, communication takes place in both verbal and non-verbal form. Verbal communication includes oral and written communication. There are various methods through which we can communicate through speaking or through writing. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. With a basic understanding of the purpose, the advantages and disadvantages of these different methods of verbal communication, one can pick the right method at right time to achieve the desired communication goals. For example, memos and notices are preferred in a written format and having legal sanctity. On the other hand, interviews are generally conducted in oral format that saves lot of time and resources for the organization. In certain cases, like annual reports, it is mandatory to present in written format and made available to public for viewing. If you are working in an organization or you are a student of business management, it is pertinent for you to go through various business communication practices followed in the corporate sector. Such understanding will help you in increasing your communication effectiveness at various junctures of professional life.

Following sub-sections will describe various business communication formats that are used in business organizations to achieve varied communication goals.

### 5.1.1 GROUP DISCUSSION

Decision making is an integral part of a manager's responsibilities. A decision can be taken alone or with the discussion with others. Every discussion requires a detailed analysis of situation at hand. Careful analysis of the existing situation helps in reaching a logical decision. As the old saying goes, 'More the



merrier', companies rely more on decision making by groups in order to get better outcomes. Every discussion has an agenda that needs to be discussed in a systematic way through active participation of its members. Any discussion without purpose is a waste of time.

In a group discussion, all its participants present their opinions and ideas. At the end of the discussion the participants are expected to fulfil the objectives of the discussion. Group discussions can be to provide a way out in a crisis situation, share information, assess the pros and cons of an idea or a strategy, or generate a consensus on decision.

Groups could be formal or informal. As such there is no fixed number for conducting a group discussion but for increasing the effectiveness of a discussion the ideal range is eight to fifteen participants. A number less than eight might results into lack of diverse inputs on the issue while a larger group minimizes the participation of individual members of the group.

- **Advantages of Groups:**

The biggest advantage of discussing a problem in a group is that it enables the analysis of the issue from different perspectives. Every individual offers his or her own point of view. This leads to more information, more suggestions and multiple options. So, group discussions allow a comprehensive coverage of an issue from diverse angles. Once a group is at a consensus, chances are there that at the time of implementation of decision it will get higher acceptability in the organization.

While deciding a group for discussing volatile issues, wider representation is suggested. Such a step safeguards the interests of all involved parties.

Although discussing in groups has several advantages still it suffers from certain short comings. Generating a consensus among group members is the biggest challenge. In certain cases, few dominating members try to overpower others and impose their ideas on the group. It results into skewed decision making. Also, different viewpoints of the members often result into no decision or fragmented decisions. When it is conducted poorly, group discussion loses its focus and members start settling their personal scores.

- **Group Discussion as a component of Selection Process**



One of the best use of group discussion in the corporate sector is in selection and hiring of talents. It is used as a tool in deciding the suitability of prospective candidates a wide variety of managerial jobs. Various required traits of candidates can be assessed simultaneously within a stipulated time using group discussions. As an exercise for selection, group discussions are conducted along with written tests and personal interviews. Following are the few traits and skills that can be assessed through a group discussion:

- *Leadership skills:* Ability of a person to steer the discussion and influence the thought processes of others can be assessed during a group discussion. How an individual is taking an initiative, keeping the discussion on track and involving others to be the part of the discussion shows his/her leadership capabilities.
- *Communication skills:* During group discussions, communication skills of a candidate can also be assessed. The cues to check the communication skills are usage of proper vocabulary, logical sequencing of thoughts, appropriate usage of body language and clarity in speech.
- *Interpersonal skills:* Behaviour of members in group could also be observed during group discussion. Showing respect to the viewpoints of others and giving them chance to speak indicates good interpersonal skills. Assessment of interpersonal skills of an individual indicates his compatibility towards working in a group.
- *Knowledge:* During group discussions, knowledge of participants about specific fields as well as general awareness could be assessed.
- *Analytical and problem-solving skills:* Through group discussions, the capability of individuals to analyze given situations from different angles could also be evaluated. From the views presented by an individual, it can be concluded whether he or she is able to understand the issue properly or not. Also, whether the solutions offered for the problem at hand are justified or not. The strength of the logical solution is a clear indicator of analytical and problem-solving skills.

The ability to assess above mentioned skills and characteristics of an individual in a short duration makes group discussion an effective tool in the hand of management. It is one of the finest techniques to choose suitable candidates during the selection process.



- **Group Discussions Types:**

There are various factors that decide the suitability of a particular type of group discussion. These factors include hiring policy of the organization, level in the organization, availability of time and space, etc. considering these factors, a group discussion could be classified into following broad categories:

- Topic based:* In this kind of group discussion, participants are expected to discuss on a given topic. Many a times, especially in case of job selection process, participants are given multiple topics and the group can choose any one of them to discuss further. The choice of final topic is based upon the consensus among the group members. The topic for discussion varies from factual to abstract.
- Timing of topic:* The topic for group discussion could be announced either before the date of discussion or on the spot. Pre-announced topics give an opportunity to participants to prepare for discussion while on-the-spot topics check the presence of mind of the participants. For the on the spot topic, participants are given five to ten minutes to arrange their thoughts.
- Case based:* Sometimes the participants are given a case to discuss upon. The case could be from a real-life situation or hypothetical one. At the end of the case, few questions are posed to the participants. All the participants are expected to analyze the case and provide the logical and innovative solutions.

- **Process of Group Discussion:**

Broadly there exist two scenarios regarding group discussion. Either you have to conduct it or participate in it. Both these roles have different responsibilities. The person responsible for conducting a group discussion is the moderator. Whether conducted in a formal or informal environment, it is always advisable to follow the pre-decided stages to make group discussion an effective exercise. Following are the few guidelines to conduct a group discussion:

- Know the purpose:* Before conducting a group discussion its purpose must be clear to everyone. It is the responsibility of the moderator to inform all members about the



objective of the group discussion. This objective could also provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the discussion.

- b. *Decide group members:* In case many participants are there, they need to be divided into smaller groups. The next decision is about the number of participants in a group and number of groups. As suggested earlier, eight to fifteen members per group are ideal for group discussion.
- c. *Seating Arrangements:* In order to provide suitable environment for discussion, proper seating arrangements need to be made. A good seating arrangement helps the participants to communicate effectively. As a rule, every member of the group must be in a position to look and communicate with all the other members of the group. Popular seating arrangement styles are circular and semicircular styles.
- d. *Give necessary instructions:* The role of a moderator is to announce necessary instructions prior to the commencement of the discussion. These instructions are given to ensure the smooth conduct of the discussion. Instructions could be related to the time limit for the discussion, general rules of conduct etc.
- e. *Announcement of topic:* Now it is the time to announce the topic or provide the case for discussion. Generally, at this stage few minutes are provided to the participants to organize their thought. Permission to use pen and paper varies from moderator to moderator.
- f. *Discussion time:* At this stage, the moderator gives permission to start the discussion. All the participants try to present their viewpoints with supportive arguments on the given topic. One of the members generally initiates the discussion and others start pouring in their views and so on. Unless and until mutually decided, no particular sequence is followed to present the views. At the conclusion stage, one of the members takes initiative to summarize the discussion in the light of the purpose.
- g. *Assessment:* Once the discussion is over, the judges evaluate the performance of each member on a pre decided criteria. Such evaluation criteria might include group behavior, communication skills, leadership qualities, analytical skills, subject knowledge etc.

- **Roles in Group Discussion:**



At the time of commencement of a group discussion, all the members are at par with each other. Still, all the members assume different roles at different stages during the discussion. Choice of role assumed by an individual depends upon his/her personal characteristics. In addition to it, sometimes a member plays more than one role during the discussion. Following is the list of some roles played by members during the discussion:

- a. *Starter*: The member who initiates the discussion and sets the tone for further discussion.
- b. *Connector*: This member tries to connect the ideas of all the members of the group.
- c. *Extender*: This member extends the viewpoints presented by previous speaker by adding more information.
- d. *Encourager*: This member ensures that all other members are actively participating in the discussion.
- e. *Critic*: A critic always provides significant analysis of the presented idea.
- f. *Peace maker*: If a situation arises that the members of the group are locking horns with each other, this member tries to pacify them to ensure a harmonious discussion.
- g. *Tracker*: A tracker keeps the discussion on track and prevents it from going haywire.

• **Do's and Don'ts of Group Discussion:**

For an individual, success during the group discussion depends upon a unique combination of various skills, personality characteristics and practice. In order to make a mark during the discussion, one must strike a balance among these factors. Many of the traits are inherent while few can be acquired through practice. An individual before participating in a group discussion must go through the following guidelines. These guidelines work as a proactive measure to perform better during a group discussion.

- Keep your calm.
- Read more and more for having basic understanding about varied fields.
- Always organize your thoughts before speaking.
- Try to understand the context of the given topic.
- Start the discussion only if you are confident.





- Compliment your body language with the words you are saying.
- Listen carefully to the viewpoints of other members.
- Motivate non participative members to speak.
- Grab the opportunity to conclude the discussion.
- Be respectful to others.
- Support your arguments with factual information.
- Present your strongest argument first.
- Always maintain an eye contact with group members.
- Handle criticism gracefully.
- Finish the discussion within the allotted time.
- Work towards getting a consensus of group members.
- Never address a judge or moderator during group discussion.
- Strike a balance between verbal and non-verbal communication.

- **Evaluation of a Group Discussion:**

The last stage of any group discussion is its evaluation. The evaluation is guided by the purpose of the group discussion. If the purpose is decision making then it has to be checked whether the group has arrived at a logical decision or not. As mentioned earlier, group discussions are used as a prominent tool in the hiring process of an organization. In such a case, the fit between the prospective employee and the job is checked through group discussion. Certain skills and personality traits of an individual are assessed during the discussion. These skills include communication, leadership, interpersonal, intellect and analytical skills. For assessment, an evaluation sheet is prepared. This sheet carries multiple rows and columns wherein various skills and traits are mentioned. The evaluator is expected to rate the participant on a scale of one to five against the skill or trait. A rating of one indicates not acceptable and five indicates excellent.



To avoid any kind of biasness, rating score of all judges could be clubbed and an average is taken. A sample format for evaluation is presented below:

<b>Group Number _____</b>  <b>Name _____ of _____</b> <b>Participant _____</b>		<b>Ratings</b>				
S. No.	Evaluation Criteria	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Not Acceptable
1	Leadership Qualities					
2	Communication Skills					
3	Analytical Skills					
4	Interpersonal Skills					
Signature of Evaluator						

### 5.1.2 MOCK INTERVIEW

At one point or other in their life, everyone has to face an interview. It could be an admission interview, first job interview, job shifting interview, promotion interview or job exit interview. As per the experts from the field it is always good to practice or rehearse before facing the actual interview. Such practice enables a person to identify one's strong and weak points in advance and create a chance to work upon them. An interview practice enhances your confidence level and helps you in sharpening your skills. A



deliberate activity to practice for a real interview is considered as a mock interview. It allows a person to get a feel of an actual interview situation.

By definition, a mock interview is a practice interview that allows the interviewee to create effective responses, work on nonverbal communication skills and become familiar with the interview settings. Just like a real interview situation, mock interviews also require an interviewee and interviewer. In other words, one who will appear for the interview and the other who will conduct the interview. For practice purpose, anyone could act as an interviewer but for best results a person from the related field is advisable. Nowadays, various professional service providers offer such help. People from related field are in a better position to create a list of relevant questions. A mock interview can recreate any interview environment, such as in-person, phone or group interviews.

- **Benefits of mock interviews**

A mock interview offers various benefits to an aspiring candidate. It enables you to prepare different answers for the same question and identify the best answer. It provides an opportunity to get comfortable with the interview setting. Mock interview practice also helps in overcoming nervousness during the interview process. If you have practiced through mock interviews at the time of the actual interview you will sound prepared and confident. There will be no need to memorize the answers as answers will come in a natural way.

- **Preparing for a mock interview**

It all starts with making an appointment with the interviewer and providing an overall idea about the context of the interview. A list of questions from the related field is created by the mock interviewer. The interview is conducted at a predetermined time. At the end of interview, feedback is provided to the candidate about the performance during the interview. Such feedback is used by the candidate to sharpen skills for the actual interview.

For getting to attend a mock interview following key points should be kept in mind:

- a. *Dress as per the occasion:* Never take mock interviews casually. Be formally dressed as you would have had for the actual interview. Be in a professional attire to attend a mock interview.



- b. *Imagine the interview room:* It is always good to imagine about the setting of the interview room. This will help you in adjusting to the environment and getting more focused on the questions and answers.
- c. *Interviewer matters:* Success of the mock interview totally depends upon the skillfulness and suitability of the interviewer. Generally, interviewers from the related field are preferred to get more meaningful feedback.
- d. *Organize your documents:* Always prepare a well-maintained document file with the copies of an updated resume and other relevant documents for the interview.
- e. *Do your homework:* Always research about the company and the job profile for which you are applying. A basic knowledge about the desirable company always comes handy at the time of answering the questions. It also displays your sincerity towards your candidature.
- f. *Review the interview criteria:* Before appearing for the mock interview it is important to go through the interview pattern and criteria. This will help you to mentally prepare yourself about the procedure to be followed at the time of the interview.
- g. *Record it:* Recording your mock interview is the best aspect you can use it to sharpen your skills. Through a recording you can check about your non-verbal cues along with your answers. It is the best feedback you can have apart from the views of interviewer.

### 5.1.3 SEMINAR

A seminar may be defined as a gathering of people for the purpose of discussing a stated topic. Such meetings of participants of seminar are for the purpose of interactive discussions on a predefined issue. The discussions are generally done through few designated presenters having a responsibility to steer the seminar to a fruitful ending.

Various kinds of purposes are served by a seminar. A seminar can be organized to disseminate topical knowledge in the form of a lecture-based presentation wherein the participants listen, learn, and provide their inputs to further increase the knowledgebase. Apart from that, skill-based seminars could be organized with an aim of enhancing a particular skill of the attendees. A seminar conducted over the internet or web is also known as webinar. Another type of seminar is inspirational wherein speakers



motivate the participants to do or not to do something. Through such seminars likeminded people, people from similar trades gather together and share their views on a specific topic with an aim of upgradation of their skill or knowledge. Another kind of seminar could be guidance seminar such as seminar on educational opportunities in foreign universities.

For organizing an effective seminar, it is very important to identify its specific purpose. Once the purpose is available it gives direction towards identifying target audiences. After that it is good to explore the benefits for audiences attending the seminar. It is just like the identifying value the seminar adds to the participants. The next step is to identify agenda that will provide the direction to the seminar. This is followed by selection of such a venue which is accessible to maximum number of participants to attend. And above all budget of the seminar has to be determined so that whole event could be managed properly.

The basic chain of events for organizing a seminar includes identification of speakers relevant to subject matter of seminar, selection of attendees, selection of venue, deciding the time-based schedule of presentations and talks during the seminar, arrangement for boarding, lodging, food etc. and in the end analysis of outcome seminar through the feedback by the attendees and speakers.

## 5.2 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) \_\_\_\_\_ is the member of the group who initiates the discussion and set the tone for further discussion
- b) Simulation is another term used for \_\_\_\_\_ interviews.
- c) For effective group discussion, number of participants in a group should be in the range of \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) For any seminar, the topic is \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) Mock interview provides a \_\_\_\_\_ of performance to the candidate.

## 5.3 SUMMARY

A group discussion is a systematic oral communication activity wherein all the participants interact with each other for exchange of ideas and thoughts to serve a purpose. For an effective group discussion, decision has to be taken regarding the type of discussion, number of participants and seating



arrangements. Every individual must follow the guidelines for conducting and participating in the group discussion. On the basis of its purpose, every group discussion must be evaluated.

A seminar may be defined as a gathering of people for the purpose of discussing a stated topic. Such meetings of participants of seminar are for the purpose of interactive discussions on a predetermined issue. The discussions are generally done through few designated presenters having a responsibility to steer the seminar to a fruitful ending.

A mock interview is a practice interview that allows the interviewee to create effective responses, work on nonverbal communication skills and become familiar with interview settings. Just like a real interview situation, mock interview also requires an interviewee and interviewer. In other words, one who will appear for the interview and two who will conduct the interview? For practice purpose, anyone could act as interviewer but for best results a person from the related field is advisable. Nowadays, various professional service providers offer such help. People from related field are in a better position to create a list of relevant questions. A mock interview can recreate any interview environment, such as in-person, phone or group interviews.

## 5.4 KEYWORDS

<b>Group discussion:</b>	A systematic oral communication activity wherein all the participants interact with each other for exchange of ideas and thoughts to serve a purpose.
<b>Group roles:</b>	Different roles played by an individual at different times during a group discussion.
<b>Mock interview:</b>	A practice interview that allows the interviewee to create effective responses, work on nonverbal communication skills and become familiar with interview settings.
<b>Seminar:</b>	A gathering of people for the purpose of discussing a stated topic.
<b>Evaluation of GD:</b>	The group members are evaluated on skills including communication, leadership, interpersonal, intellect and analytical skills.

## 5.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST



1. What is a group discussion? Mention its various types.
2. Explain the process for conducting a group discussion.
3. Describe the dos and don'ts for a group discussion.
4. What is purpose of a mock interview?
5. Explain the preparation required for attending a mock interview
6. Describe the points that are kept in mind for organizing a seminar.

## 5.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) Starter
- b) Mock
- c) 8-15
- d) Pre-decided
- e) Feedback

## 5.7 REFERENCES / SUGGESTED READINGS

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## REPORT WRITING

### STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Learning Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Meaning and importance of reports
  - 6.2.1 Oral and written reports
  - 6.2.2 Types of business reports
  - 6.2.3 Characteristics of a good report
- 6.3 Organisation of reports
- 6.4 Check Your Progress
- 6.5 Summary
- 6.6 Keywords
- 6.7 Self-Assessment Test
- 6.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 6.9 References/Suggested Readings

### 6.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to-

- Understand the meaning and importance of reports.



- Know various types of business reports.
- Explain the features of a good business report.
- Describe the structure and organisation of report.
- Know the essentials of a press report.

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Decision-making in organisations is dependent on the information supplied to these. Information should be supplied/furnished in presentable form. Report is one such document having details of business activities or projects. Now how to prepare a report and present it in suitable presentable form, depends upon the objectives and requirement of the organisations. Reports may be oral or written. Business reports are of two types— informal reports and formal reports. Informal reports are reports from person-to-person while the formal reports are prepared in prescribed format which can be statutory or non-statutory. Reports may be periodic or routine; special, analytical or investigative. There are some pre-requisites of a good business report such as- precision, accuracy, relevance, reader-orientation, objectivity of recommendation, simple, brevity, clarity, grammatical accurate. The reports should be prepared in standardised format.

## 6.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF REPORTS

In general, a business report presents an account of something, finds solution-to some problem and submits information in organised form to the authorised person. It describes the sources of information and also the procedure and significance of data collection. After analysing collected data, it reaches certain conclusions and if required, it includes suggestions and recommendations.

C.A. Brown defines report as a communication from someone who has to inform to someone who wants to use that information. It describes the events or individuals to someone who requires it. The business reports are written by the individuals or by the committees as a part of their regular duties. Many of them are objective factual and impartial in nature and they do not require interpretations or comments. But, some reports can be prepared only after careful investigation, experiments, research, surveys and logical thinking. Such reports often end with expert advice, suggestions and recommendations.



Thousand of reports, long or short, formal or informal, crucial or ordinary, special or routine are written everyday. A foreman, at the end of the day, reports to the manager the progress of the work carried on in his supervision. The manager of a bank sends a periodic report to the Head Office on the state of deposits, advances, overdraft limits, etc., during the period. Another manager posted in a remote rural area would like to report to the Head Office the difficulties faced in sanctioning loans to farmers and later in the recovery of loans earlier sanctioned.

A textiles firm may have been using various modes of publicity – messages broadcast from the Vividh Bharati, slides flashed on television or the cinema screen, hoardings on the roadside, fashion parades in big cities, participation in exhibitions and trade fairs, regular advertisements in newspapers and journals, distribution of leaflets, etc. The Board of Directors of this firm would definitely like to get a report on the effectiveness of these modes in the light of the expenditure incurred in order to make an optimum use of funds earmarked for publicity.

The report helps the management for evaluation, assessment and appraisal of the employees and their organisational activities it forms a basis for their future planning and development. It helps the executives to secure efficient control over the situations and to improve the organisational structure. The large industries which employ thousands of workers in their various departments have to rely on reports furnished by different departmental heads and committees to bring coordination among them. A critical evaluation of their performance is essential for the progress, growth and expansion of the organisation. It depends on the detail and accurate reports which provide analysis and interpretations of the facts regarding the processes of purchase, production and sales. The progress reports of these processes are compared with those of other similar organisations.

### **6.2.1 ORAL AND WRITTEN REPORTS**

A report may be either oral or written. An oral report is simple and easy to present. It may consist in the communication of an impression or an observation.

Sometimes it may be quite useful. But a written report is always preferred. It enjoys several advantages over the oral one:

1. An oral report can be denied at any time. But a written report is a permanent record. The reporter cannot deny what he has reported once.



2. An oral report tends to be vague. It may be encumbered by the presence of irrelevant facts while some significant ones may have been overlooked. In a written report, the writer tries to be accurate and precise.
3. A written report can change hands without any danger of distortion during transmission.
4. A written report can be referred to again and again.

### 6.2.2 TYPES OF BUSINESS REPORTS

We can classify business reports in various ways.

- *On the basis of legal formalities to be complied with, we can have (1) informal reports, and (2) formal reports.*

**1. Informal reports:** An informal report is usually in the form of a person-to-person communication. It may range from a short, almost fragmentary statement of facts on a single page, to a more developed presentation taking several pages. An informal report is usually submitted in the form of a letter or a memorandum.

**2. Formal reports:** A formal report is one which is prepared in a prescribed form and is presented according to an established procedure to a prescribed authority.

Formal reports can be statutory or non-statutory.

A report prepared and presented according to the form and procedure laid down by law is called a statutory report. Report submitted at the statutor, meeting of shareholders, Directors' report to the Annual General Meeting, Annual Return, Auditors' Report are statutory reports.

Formal reports which are not required under any law but which are prepared to help the management in framing policies or taking other important decisions are called non-statutory reports.

- *On the basis of the frequency of issue, a report can be periodic or special.*

**1. Periodic or Routine reports** are prepared and presented at regular prescribed intervals in the usual routine of business. They may be submitted annually, semi-annually, quarterly, monthly, fortnightly, weekly or even daily. Generally such reports contain a mere statement of facts, in detail or in summarized



form, without an opinion or recommendation. Branch Managers of banks submit periodic reports to the Head Office on the quantum of business transacted during a particular period.

**2. Special reports** are related to a single occasion or situation. A report on the desirability of opening a new branch or on the Unrest-among staff in a particular branch are special reports. Special reports deal with non-recurrent problems.

- *On the basis of function, a report can be (1) informative, or (2) interpretative.*

If a report merely presents facts pertinent to an issue or a situation, it is informative. On the other hand, if it analyses the facts, draws conclusions and makes recommendations, it may be described as **analytical**, or **interpretative**, or **investigative**.

If a report presents production figures in a particular period, it is informative. But if it goes into the causes of lower production in that period, it becomes analytical, interpretative or investigative.

- *On the basis of the nature of the subject dealt with, we can have a (1) problem-determining report, or (2) fact-finding report, or (3) performance report, or (4) technical report, etc.*

In a problem-determining report, we try to determine the causes underlying a problem or to ascertain whether or not the problem actually exists. In a technical report, we present data on a specialized subject, with or without comments.

- *On the basis of the number of persons entrusted with the drafting of reports, we can have (1) reports by individuals, and (2) reports by committees or sub-committees.*

Reports submitted by the Branch Manager, Personnel Manager, Marketing Manager, the Company Secretary, the Auditor, the Solicitor, etc., are reports by individuals. These reports are naturally related to the work in their own departments.

Sometimes reports are needed on subjects that concern more than one department, or they are so important that it is thought advisable to associate more than one person with them. In such cases, committees or sub-committees are formed to prepare reports. These reports are formal in style and impersonal in tone and are prepared after a careful and cautious deliberation of the members.



### 6.2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD REPORT

1. **Precision.** In a good report, the writer is very clear about the exact purpose of writing it. His *investigation, analysis and recommendations are directed by this central purpose*. Precision gives a kind of unity and coherence to the report and makes it a valuable document.
2. **Accuracy of facts.** The scientific accuracy of facts is very essential to a good report. Since reports invariably lead to decision-making, *inaccurate facts may lead to disastrous decisions*.
3. **Relevance.** The facts presented in a report should be not only accurate but relevant also. While it is essential that every fact included in a report has a bearing on the central purpose, it is equally essential to see that nothing relevant has escaped inclusion. *Irrelevant facts make a report confusing; exclusion of relevant facts renders it incomplete and likely to mislead*.
4. **Reader-orientation.** A good report is always reader-oriented. While drafting a report, *it is necessary to keep in mind the person(s) who is (are) going to read it*. A report meant for the layman will be different from another meant for technical experts.
5. **Objectivity of recommendations.** If recommendations are made at the end of a report, they must be impartial and objective. *They should come as a logical conclusion to investigation and analysis*. They must not reveal any self interest on the part of the writer.
6. **Simple and unambiguous language.** A good report is written in a simple, unambiguous language. It is a kind of scientific document of practical utility; hence it should be free from various forms of poetic embellishment like figures of speech.
7. **Clarity.** A good report is absolutely clear. Clarity depends on proper arrangement of facts. The report writer must proceed systematically. He should make his purpose clear, define his sources, state his findings and finally make necessary recommendations. He should divide his report into short paragraphs giving them headings, and insert other suitable signposts to achieve greater clarity.



8. **Brevity.** A report should be brief. It is difficult to define brevity in absolute terms. Nor can brevity be laid down as a rule. All that can be said is that a good report is as brief as possible. Brevity should not be achieved at the cost of clarity. Nor should it be at the cost of completeness. Sometimes the problem being investigated is of such importance that it calls for a detailed discussion of facts. Then this discussion should not be evaded. Brevity in a report is the kind of brevity one recommends for a precis. *Include everything significant and yet be brief.*
9. **Grammatical accuracy.** The grammatical accuracy of language though listed at number 9 in the characteristics of a good report is of fundamental importance. It is one of the basic requisites of a good report as of any other piece of composition. Who is going to read a report if its language is faulty? *Besides faulty construction of sentences makes the meaning obscure and ambiguous.*

A good report is

- precise and brief;
- accurate (factually and grammatically);
- relevant;
- reader-oriented;
- objective;
- clear and unambiguous.

## 6.3 ORGANISATION OF REPORTS

### *Organisation of Reports*

Though there is no hard and fast rules regarding the format of a report, it is essential to present all the facts in logical sequence. The constituent parts of the reports are organised in different manners to suit their purpose and contents. Sometimes the authority for whom the report is to be Written prescribes a particular form for the report, but when there is no statutory obligation that report should be in a particular form, the report writer should organise his report in a systematic manner to meet its purpose.



A report can be organised in three ways:

1. Letter form
2. Letter-text combination form
3. Memorandum form

**Letter Form:** The brief and informal reports are usually written in letter form. It is written in first person “I” or “We”. It consists of the following parts:

- (i) Heading or Title
- (ii) Date line
- (iii) Inside Address
- (iv) Salutation
- (v) Body of the report
  - (a) Introduction
  - (b) Findings
  - (c) Conclusions
  - (d) Recommendations
- (vi) Complimentary close
- (vii) Signature and designation.

**Letter-text and designation:** The letter-text combination form is suitable for the lengthy and complex reports. Though it is normally divided in three parts, each of the three parts are further sub-divided into smaller units.

## **I. Introductory Material**

- (a) Forwarding
- (b) Title page,
- (c) Preface,





- (d) Acknowledgements,
- (e) Contents,
- (f) List of illustrations,
- (g) Summary or Synopsis

## **II. Body of the Report**

- (a) Introduction
  - (i) Definition of problem
  - (ii) Methodology
- (b) Findings
- (c) Conclusions
- (d) Recommendations

## **III. Supplementary Material**

- (a) Appendix
- (b) List of References
- (c) Bibliography
- (d) Glossary
- (e) Index
- (f) Signature and designation

**Memorandum form:** The memorandum form is the simplest way of report organisation. In it the report writer does not follow the formalities of the letter-form. The printed memorandum report forms of various types are used in the business houses which ensures uniformity, clarity and simplicity in the presentation of the reported information. The memorandum form can be divided in the following parts:

- (a) Title
- (b) Name of the report-writer



- (c) Date line
- (d) Actual text of report under various headings and sub-headings
- (e) Conclusions

### ***Constituent Parts of the Reports***

***Title/Title Page:*** It gives the title or the heading of the report. It also contains the name of the author, name of the authority to whom the report is submitted, the number of the report and the date of submission.

***Letter of Forwarding:*** ‘Forwarding’ or ‘covering’ letter is a routine letter for the transmittal of the report from the writer to the recipient. It simply serves as a permanent written record of the transmission of report to its primary recipient. It also contains the date of submission, the name and designation of the writer and the name of the authority. Sometimes it invites the readers comments on the report.

***Preface:*** Preface is the author’s explanatory remarks about the report. It introduces the report and offers it to the readers. It may contain almost all the information of the covering letter.

***Acknowledgements:*** In acknowledgements the author’s mentions the names of the individuals and the organisations that have helped him in report writing. If the report includes published material, he gives the list of sources.

***Contents Page:*** Contents page is essential for the lengthy reports. It gives the titles, sub-titles and page numbers of each chapter. It not only helps the reader to locate a particular chapter but also gives him an overall view of the report at a glance.

***List of Illustrations:*** In the report consists of a page number of pictures, diagrams, tables and other figures, a list of illustrations is given after the contents page. It gives the titles and page numbers all the illustrations.

***Summary / Synopsis:*** The summary of the report is also called as the ‘synopsis’ and, the ‘abstract’ of the report. It gives substance of the report in brief. It describes the methodology, findings, conclusions and the recommendations in nutshell. The summary or synopsis is unnecessary for a short report of three-four pages but it is extremely useful to the reader if the report is lengthy.

***Introduction to the study:*** The introduction includes a brief historical background of the subject, scope of study, methods of data collection, definition of problem and definitions of special terms and concepts.



**Conclusions:** The report writer analyses the data and draws conclusions on the basis of his 'findings'. The conclusions are supported by the findings and their explanations and analysis. The report writer may derive a number of conclusions based on the analysis of different facts. They should be grouped suitably and should be presented in the descending order so that important conclusions are mentioned in the beginning.

**Recommendations:** Recommendations logically follow the conclusions of the findings: But all the reports do not include the recommendations or suggestions. In some reports the conclusions and the recommendations are combined. This combination may suit the short reports up to five-six pages; but for lengthy reports the recommendations, should be written separately to suggest the future course of action. . The recommendations in committee report are put in the form of resolutions.

**Appendix:** The appendix contains diagrams, charts, maps, pictures, statistical data and other material which supports the main body of the report. The details which are separated from the body of the report are included in the appendix. The reader can understand the contents of the reports without it but if he desires to go through the details of the related evidences, supporting material and documents, he can find them in the appendix.

**List of References:** The list of references helps the reader to locate a piece of information in the original source. Some reports are based on exclusive research. It is a customary that the writer of such a report should give the list of published or unpublished works referred by him in his report. If this list is lengthy, it should be arranged in alphabetical order and should be given at the end of the report. If the number of references is small, they can be mentioned in the footnotes.

**Bibliography:** Bibliography is a list of published and unpublished works to which the report writer is indebted for certain ideas. It may also contain names of works for further study. The list of works in bibliography is arranged in alphabetical order. Bibliography of the works to be consulted is often prepared before writing the report.

**Glossary:** The technical or jargon words are usually explained in the footnotes. If the number of such words is large, a list of those words is prepared in an alphabetical order. This list is called as glossary. If the reader's field of expertise is different from the subject dealt in the reported if the technical words used in the report are likely to be unknown to him, the glossary becomes on essential part of the report.



***Index:*** In case of lengthy reports, an index is helpful to the reader to locate easily and quickly any topic or sub-topic of the contents. Index is included in the report if the table of contents cannot help the reader to point out all the aspects of the contents. It is always needed in bulky reports. The entries in the index are made in alphabetical order and page numbers are mentioned before each entry.

***Signature:*** A report is signed by a person who submits it to the authority. If it is prepared by a committee, the chairman of the committee signs it. Sometimes all the members of the committee are required to sign it. The members who disagree with certain matters in the report usually sign it with a note of dissent. Signature of the other members indicate their assent to the subject matter of the report.

### ***Reports by Committees or Sub-Committees***

Some business reports are concerned with more than one department or individual and some subjects are too important and expansive to be entrusted to one person for its research findings and recommendations. Such a subject matter requires careful and complete investigation by the committees and sub-committees in which a number of people are involved in the process of report writing. There is a cautious deliberation over all the issues of the subject-matter. The views and opinions of all the committee members are given serious consideration before they arrive to certain conclusions. It is usually written with impersonal and formal style.

These reports should invariably mention the objectives of the investigation, methods of data collection, explanation or interpretation of collected data, details of evidences gathered, the conclusions of the deliberations and recommendations or suggestions given by the committee or the sub-committee. They should also mention the names of a person or body to whom the report is addressed. Such a report is usually signed by all the members or by the chairman of the committee.

### ***Press Reports***

The press reports are the reports of the events and activities published in the newspapers and periodicals so that the news reach to the large number of people simultaneously. A reader may not be interested in all the events and activities described in the newspapers and periodicals but he may come across certain topics of his interest. Some of the news definitely create curiosity and interest in every reader. As the social animals we are always curious to know about what goes on around ourselves. The press reports not



only satisfy our curiosity but they also educate us in our daily walks of life by, supplying us the news along with expert opinions, editorials and special articles.

***Essential Aspects of a Good Press Report:***

1. **News Value:** The news value of a press report depend on the number of people being affected by the event or activity described in it. The Prime Minister's visit to a foreign country has more news value than a factory workers visit to his native place. A fathers money order to his son is not a news but the government's relief fund to the drought affected people makes a news. A marriage invitation letter from one's friend does not have a news valve but the American's President's invitation to the Indian Prime Minister to visit his country has the news value.
2. **Clarity and Completeness:** Accuracy, Clarity and completeness: The press report should be accurate, clear and complete: If the headline of reports arouses curiosity, it should be clear and complete and accurate to satisfy that curiosity. The reported news should give accurate facts, figures and statements. It should be simple and clear enough so that the readers may readily understand it. It should never be biased, slanted or distorted. It should not mislead the readers. It should be complete in the sense that it should be able to satisfy all the queries of the readers.
3. **Attractive and Lucid Style:** The language of the press reports should be attractive, simple, lucid and catchy. Not only the language but the script also, should make a 'news sense'. If the readers find the news difficult to understand due to its style, it wont tempt the readers to read further.
4. **Feedback:** The news should be capable of receiving feedback from the readers. It should initiate the public to think over the events and activities described in it. It should mobilise the public views and opinions on the current topics of the public interest.
5. **Conciseness:** The press reporter should always remember that the readers time is precious and they should not feel that they are wasting their valuable time in reading the unnecessarily lengthy news. He should avoid the needless words and irrelevant details of information. But his brevity and conciseness should not be at the cost of the completeness and clarity.
6. **Reported Speech:** The press reports should be drafted in indirect speech and in past tense.



### *Organisation of Press Report*

1. **Headline:** The headline of the press report is also called as the caption. It is a short title or heading of the news article. It is usually printed with a photograph or illustration.

It should be bold, catchy and attractive so that it may immediately attract the attention of the reader and tempt him to go through the news. It should suggest the central idea or the theme of the report. The reporter usually tries to make caption sensational and catchy but in this effort it is likely to mislead the readers. For faithful representation the press report headline should be accurate but mildly sensational.

2. **Place and Date of Reporting:** The place and date of reporting are usually mentioned either at the right or at the right hand corner of the report below the headline

3. **Lead:** The lead of a press report means the first one or two paragraphs of the report. It is like synopsis or the summary of a long report. It gives the general sense or the main points of the news. The readers to do not have enough time to go through the whole report, can get the gist of the news in the lead. It should be presented in such a way that the reader will be induced to go through the whole body of the report.

4. **Body:** The lead is followed by the body of the report which consist of all the main and supporting points of the news. It gives all the details of certain occasions, activities, events, discussions, public speeches, etc. It should be written in simple and lucid style. The language based in the body should be invariably the every day spoken language of the readers. The paragraphs in the body must not be heavy and bulky. Each paragraph should be kept short and should cover one significant aspect of the news. The important point should be given at the beginning in the form of introduction. The important points must be followed by the supporting details and ideas. The least important details should be given at the end of the paragraph. The reporter should provide the sub-headings to the paragraphs, if necessary.

5. **Conclusion:** The concluding paragraphs of the press report should give the gist of the report in such a way that it leaves final impression on the readers mind and mobilises his views and opinions of the topic.

#### **Example 6.1: Report on boat-engines used by the fisherman in Sindhudurg district**



Mr. D.N. Palkiwala,  
Sales Manager  
Kirloskar and Company  
Kirloskarwadi,  
Pune-38.

5th Aug., 20.....

The Managing Director,  
Kirloskar and Company,  
Kirloskarwadi,  
Pune-38.

Dear Sir,

**Subject: Report on boat-engines used by the fishermen in Sindhudurg district.**

**Ref.: Your letter No. KC-SJ-187 dated 4th July, 20.....**

I accordance with your instructions contained in your letter mentioned above, a survey was conducted among the fishermen in Sindhudurg district. The coastal towns and villages selected for this purpose were Chinder, Walawal, Porle, Rajiwada, Bhatye, Malwan and Vengulla. The questionnaires used for the survey were supplied to the fishermen in the above villages.

**The objectives of this report are as follows:**

1. To study the reasons behind popularity of the boat-engines manufactured by the rival companies like Yamaha, Ruston, Ashok Leyland etc.
2. To study the problems and difficulties of the fishermen regarding purchasing, handling and performance of our boat-engines.
3. To study the market demand of our boat-engines and their spare parts.
4. To find out the causes responsible for the steady fall in the sales of our boat engines.
5. To give useful suggestions to remedy the situation.



### ***Findings***

A careful examination of the various aspects of problem and the information obtained through interviews and questionnaires reveal the following details.

#### **1 Popularity of the boat-engines introduced by other companies such as *Yamaha, Ruston, Ashok Leyland*:**

(a) The first reason behind the popularity of boat engines introduced by the companies mentioned above is that the fishermen in selected coastal towns and villages get attracted towards those engines because of their better performance, and lower fuel consumption. The second important factor is that the light weight of the engines. The weight of boat engines is an important factor for the fishermen because it affects the load capacity of the small boats. The running capacity of a small fishing boat depends on its own weight as well as on the weight of the engine. Yamaha engines are more light in weight as compared to those of ours. A fisherman can carry it easily on his shoulder from his hut to the his boat on the shore. Fishermen find Kirloskar engines very heavy in their weight. Secondly, Yamaha engines require less fuel as compared to the fuel requirement of oil engines.

(b) The middle and higher class fishermen having medium and large size fishing boats prefer *Ruston* and *Leyland* engines for heavy duty performance. Their interest in buying *Ruston* is mainly due to the reason that these machines have water cooling system, whereas our engines have air cooling them. Water cooling system effectively controls the excessive heat generated by the engine. The air cooling system of our engines which is not so effective in heat-controlling affects the fishing operations at long distances, especially in hot seasons.

(c) Due to availability of the spare parts whenever necessary and due to their lower prices; the *Ashok Leyland* engines are more popular among the fishermen in Sindhudurg district. *Ruston* and *Leyland* offer guarantee of their products for a longer period.

#### **2. Demotivating factors in buying and handling our engines and spare parts as follows:**

- (a) Our engines consume more fuel.
- (b) Spare parts of our engines are not readily available.
- (c) Our engines become much hot after a particular period.





- (d) Starting trouble: Our engines do not start readily and easily. They require more efforts in starting.
- (e) Bank Loan: While buying our engines on loan basis, the fisherman face problems in obtaining loan from the banks.

### ***Conclusions***

Fishermen in Sindhudurg district are attracted towards, the engines introduced by *Yamaha*, *Ruston* and *Leyland* because of their clear advantages over our engines. Their easily obtainable loan-schemes, effective after-sale service net work and, lastly, the long term guarantee period of their engines and spare parts are some of the factors which have played an important role in enhancing popularity of their products in Sindhudurg district.

### ***Recommendations***

We can create interest among the fishermen in Sindhudurg to buy our engines and spare parts if:

1. We offer them better and prompt after sale service.
2. We make them available the spare-parts whenever necessary at reasonable rates.
3. We improve the models of our engines by employing latest modern technology which will remove all the disadvantages and enhance the heavy duty performance of our engines.
4. We reduce fuel consumption rate of our engines.
5. We provide sufficient quota of our engines and spare parts to the corresponding dealers of our company.
6. We increase the number of our corresponding dealers.
7. We provide the fishermen of Sindhudurg some loan-scheme, to enable them to buy our engines promptly on loan basis.

Yours faithfully,

Harsha Babu

Sales Manager

Kirloskar and Company

**Example 6.2****BANK OF INDIA**

Rajarampuri Branch

Rajarampuri, Kolhapur

10<sup>th</sup> Jan., 20.....

General Manager,

Bank of India,

Head Office,

Bombay-14.

**Subject: Report on the installation of computer in the Bank.****Ref.: Your Order No. BOI-74-175 dated 5th Dec., 20.....**

Dear Sir,

With reference to your order mentioned above I am submitting herewith a brief reports on installation of computer in our branch at Rajarmpuri, Kolhapur.

The objectives of this study report are as follows:

1. To study the advantages of computer in the bank.
2. To study the financial requirements for the installation of computer.
3. To find the possibility of diverting some staff members of Rajarampuri. Branch to the extension-counter at Shivaji University.

***Findings***

A thorough inspection of the present position of Rajarampuri Branch and its customers was made during last three weeks for the purpose of presenting this report. This branch was established in 1975. During last two years I have found that the area covered by this branch is getting well-developed, and due to speedily increase in the number of shops, hospitals, dispensaries, apartments, industries, hotels, lodgings and educational institutions, our customers increased rapidly. In 1981, there were 5,000 depositors and now there are 24,000 depositors in this branch. Nowadays, we are finding it difficult to give the quick



and satisfactory service to our customers due to such an increase in their number. For withdrawal of cash, the customer has to wait, at least, for twenty minutes. They are taking away their deposits from our bank as they prefer to open their accounts in other rival banks. Some of our rival banks in this area like Ratnakar Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, Canara Bank have already installed computer and they are giving quick services to the customers.

It is obvious that time is very important in this competitive world; and, to save time in bank procedures, there is no alternative other than computers. It gives rapid calculations and results in almost a fraction of seconds. The prices of computers are falling down and we can buy two computers in the investment of one lakh and forty thousand. There is no need to recruit the trained computer operators. We can give training to our employees and they will easily operate the computers after the completion of their training programme. After installing computers in Rajarampuri Branch, we can transfer half of its staff to our new extension-counter at Shivaji University. So, there is no need to employ new staff at the extension counter.

## 6.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Reports may be oral or .....
2. A .....presents an account of something, finds solution-to some problem and submits information in organised form to the authorised person.
3. On the basis of ..... to be complied with, we can have (1) informal reports, and (2) formal reports.
4. A good report is precise and brief, accurate (factually and grammatically), relevant, reader-oriented, objective, clear and unambiguous.
5. Organisation of Press Report consists of....., body, lead, place and date of reporting and conclusion.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

A business report presents an account of something, finds solution to some problem and submits information in organised form to the authorized person. The business reports are written by the individuals or by the committees as a part of their regular duties. The reports may be long or short, special or ordinary,



formal or informal or informal, technical or non-technical and oral or written. The reports help the management in numerous ways. A written report is always preferred over the oral one.

## 6.6 KEYWORDS

**Report** is a communication from someone who has the information and wants to share some other.

**Business Reports** are prepared and written by individuals/committee as a part of regular duty in business organisation.

**Informal Reports** are usually written in form of a person-to-person communication.

**Formal Reports** are prepared and written in prescribed format according to established procedure.

**Periodic Reports** are prepared and presented as regular intervals. These are also known as routine reports.

**Special Reports** are prepared and written specification on occasions or on situation demanded by the organisation on issue of specific attention.

**Interpretative reports** are based on interpretation or analysis of facts/findings.

## 6.7 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

1. What is a 'report'? What are the essential elements of a business report?
2. What is significance of 'report writing' in business communication?
3. What are the ways in which business reports are classified?
4. What are the characteristics of a good business report?
5. What is the difference between special and routine business reports? What are essential elements of a special business report?
6. Show the difference between a report written by an individual and a report written by a committee.
7. What are the ways in which a report can be organised? How can a report writer follow the arrangement of a business letter to write a business report? How can he present report in a memorandum form?
8. Which form should be adopted for a long business report?
9. What is press report? What are the features of a good press report? How should a press report be organised?



## 6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Written
2. Business report
3. Legal formalities
4. Unambiguous
5. Headline

## 6.9 REFERENCES/SUGGESTED READINGS

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<b>Subject: Business Communication</b>	
<b>Course code: BCOM 203</b>	<b>Author: Dr Mani Shreshtha</b>
<b>Lesson no. : 07</b>	<b>Vetter: Dr. Mihir Ranjan Patra</b>
<b>SELF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 7.0 Learning Objectives

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7.1.1 Development of Positive Attitude

7.1.2 SWOT Analysis

#### 7.2 Non Verbal Communication

7.2.1 Body Language or Kinesics

7.2.2 Proxemics

7.2.3 Paralanguage

#### 7.3 Check your Progress

#### 7.4 Summary

#### 7.5 Keywords

#### 7.6 Self-Assessment Test

#### 7.7 Answers to check your Progress

#### 7.8 References/Suggested Readings

## 7.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Personal or self-development is a decision that every human being has to take to live a meaningful life. Self-development is a continuous process that runs throughout our lives. In self-development you evaluate



your skill set and match them with your life goals in order to achieve them. The objective of this chapter is to get the students acquainted with the basic concept of self-development and to make them aware about the importance of nonverbal communication in the communication process.

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the relevance of self-development
- Assess their strengths and weaknesses
- Describe various components of nonverbal communication

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Self-development is popularly known as personal development. Personal development is considered as an ongoing process of life carried at individual level by all human beings. An individual has to follow many steps to manage self-development. It all starts with setting a personal vision about what you wish to become. Once such vision is established, planning for achieving above set goals is required. Planning itself is not sufficient and requires proper execution. So, an individual has to start taking steps as per the plan to achieve the desired goals of self-development. After taking all the necessary steps as per the planning, it is important to measure your efforts. In this way you can check whether you have improved yourself on the desired skill and if yes then to what extent. It also helps in taking corrective measures if required. Although communication and self-development are two different fields but both are essential for each other. For example, in order to achieve any of the self-development goals you have to transform into an actionable communication. The people who are expert in the field of communication are in a better position to transform their lives through self-development. The major self-development skills include communication, interpersonal organization, problem-solving, self-confidence, adaptability, integrity, work ethic, and leadership. There are various strategies you can adopt to improve self-development skills:

- **Make an effort to conquer your fears.**
- **Make reading a habit. More you read better you will become.**
- **Be inquisitive. Always be eager to learn new things.**
- **Whenever you try something new, try to get a feedback of your actions.**



- **Develop your observation skills.** Actions of others could be highly inspirational for your life.
- **Develop a network of people from different walks of life**
- **Maintaining a record of your efforts, success, and failures is good to move ahead in life.**
- **Meditation is great for self-development.**
- **Try to find a guiding hand or a mentor in your life.**

### 7.1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Who we are or become is totally dependent on our attitude or mind-set. Whether we realize or not we tend to develop negative outlook towards our surroundings. This happens because as a human nature we pay more attention to negative things in comparison to the positives. Such negative attitude restricts us from enjoying good and positive things of our life. Also, it is proven that we as an individual carry some energy and making it positive or negative depends solely upon us. So, developing a positive attitude is a bliss for an individual. Following are some useful ways to develop positive attitude:

- **Keep a record of positive happenings:** Many a times few negative events overshadow the impact of many positive incidents of our life. It is important to focus on the positive experiences of our life. By deliberately keeping a record of all the positive happenings of our life and thanking the supreme power for that he has granted you with, you can dwell on a positive mindset and work efficiently.
- **Give flexibility to your challenges:** we have to understand that there is no perfect solution to the challenges we face in our daily lives. It is our duty to face the challenges head on and give our best shot to handle it. Sometimes we get successful and sometimes we fail. There is no reason to regret for your failures. Failures are learning for our lives. Simultaneously, never get too rigid in achieving your goals. It is good to accept that situations change and so do the goals.
- **Accept rejections:** Rejection is a part of life. It's a skill that everyone has to master. Make no mistake, every successful person you see around has surely gone through many rejections. So





never get disheartened by rejections in your life and learn to sail through them. Never get deviated from your goals just because you faced a few rejections. Remember, rejections are the stepping stone to succeed in life. Always see the positives in a negative situation.

- **Portray your life with positivity:** Whenever someone asks you to describe your life, always use positive vocabulary. The words which we use to describe our lives are having a strong impact on our attitude. We can easily understand it by looking at the words such as my life is boring and messy or my life is cheerful and adventurous. The vocabulary used for describing our lives presents our outlook for the future.
- **Start executing the plans:** It is good to plan but sticking only to the planning phase is wrong. Many a times we get trapped into the phase of planning to do things rather than acting on them. Continuous actions help you get to your goals as planned, thus execution of the plans is crucial. This will give you a sense of achievement. This sense of achievement drives you to work more passionately for better results.
- **Never be a part of other's negative environment:** Don't be a party to a discussion where negative things are discussed. More you keep yourself away from negative environments better are the chances to develop positive attitudes. Never encourage negative feelings or environments.
- **Work for solutions:** Never be a part of a group that only highlights problems. Always discuss the problems with a solution in mind. Do not dwell on what went wrong rather work on how you can make things better.
- **Contribute to other's life:** Helping others and giving positive contributions to the life of others make you feel better and a happy person.

### 7.1.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

The personal SWOT analysis is a powerful technique used for identifying the current state of condition of a person in context of challenges posed under a given environment. A person can evaluate one's condition on four parameters namely Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. SWOT is the acronym used to depict such information in chart or tabular form. Measuring these four conditions will help you in understanding your current standing under a given situation and where you are heading to.



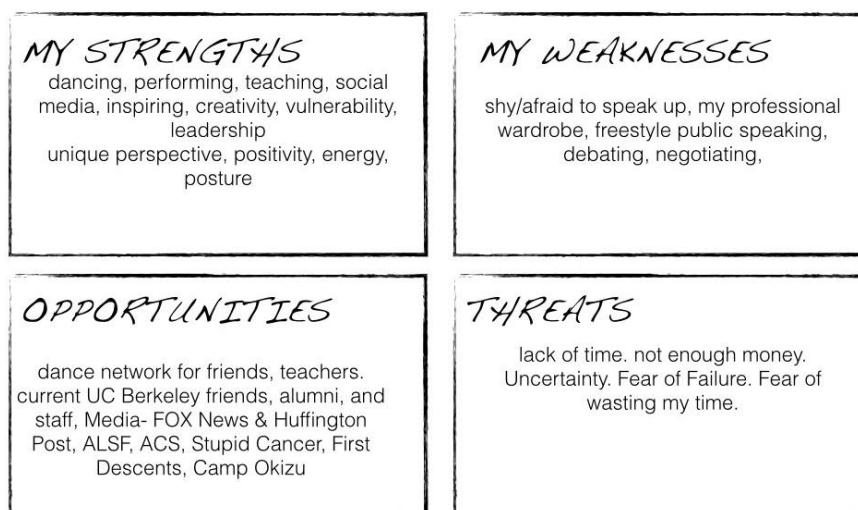
An elaboration of SWOT analysis is as follows:

- **Strength:** Strength is something which is positive and makes you stronger than others. Strengths are always relative to competitors. Something that you share with others is not your strength rather the abilities that set you apart from the rest is your strength. You can answer the following questions to identify your strengths:
  - What are you good at?
  - What additional skills do you possess?
  - What unique capabilities do you have?
  - What are your talents?
- **Weakness:** Weakness is something which is negative and makes you weaker or more vulnerable than others. Weaknesses are also relative to competitors. If you don't possess a certain ability in you that the others have for completion of an assignment then it is a weakness. You can answer following questions to identify your weaknesses:
  - What are your negative traits?
  - Which skill you are lacking in?
  - What capabilities do you lack that others have?
- **Opportunity:** Opportunity is a situation that is present in the outside world and you can exploit it in your favor. Opportunities are those favorable situations which are equally available to you and your competitors. One who possesses the right kind of strengths to avail those opportunities will take the bigger pie. Some of the opportunity situations are:
  - Employment opportunities in the market
  - Booming economy
  - Availability of highly efficient technologies
  - Availability of skill upgradation programs



- **Threat:** Threat is a negative situation that is present in the outside world and you do not have proper strengths to avoid or prevent it. Threats are those unfavorable situations which are equally available to you and your competitors. One who has the right kind of strengths to avoid those threats will survive. Some of the opportunity situations are:
  - Increasing unemployment
  - Weak economy
  - Non availability of highly efficient technologies
  - Non availability of skill upgradation programs

An elaboration of SWOT analysis chart is as follows:



Source:<https://whymillennialsmatter.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/personal-SWOT-analysis.0031024x768.jpg>

## 7.2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Any communication wherein no words are used to convey a message is known as nonverbal communication. Many a times, a nonverbal communication accompanies a verbal communication. In a normal face to face conversation between two people, the nonverbal cues constitute a major portion of the total conversation. When compared with verbal communication, nonverbal communication differs on certain aspects such as unstructured and less intentional. Interestingly, if there is a conflict between the



verbal and nonverbal communication, later is considered as more predictive of actual intentions of the speaker. Nonverbal cues are believed to be generated as unplanned and accidental actions. In case of nonverbal communication, a person involved in a face to face communication is considered as the message. The actions or even the presence of a person can be decoded and interpreted to conclude a meaning out of it. The actions can be in the form of eye movement, appearance, tone, time, space or distance. Interpretation of a nonverbal cue is totally dependent on the decoder of the cue. The same actions can have different meanings for different people. With a nonverbal cue we can support, negate, replace, or highlight the verbal communication. In the simplest words a nonverbal communication is a communication without the use of a language. Following are the dimensions of nonverbal communications:

- Kinesics or body language
- Paralinguistics or language of voice
- Proxemics or language of space
- Chronemics or language of time
- Other dimensions like touch, colour and smell

Understanding of nonverbal communication helps in two ways. First, it helps in using the correct nonverbal cue to support the verbal communication and second, it equips a person to interpret the correct intentions of a speaker.

### 7.2.1 BODY LANGUAGE OR KINESICS

Kinesics means a study of body movements. While communicating, various parts of our body move. Every movement and way of movement of a body part provides certain cues to others. All our bodily movements are guided by the way we are thinking. Winking an eye, waving a hand, shrugging shoulders etc. all are a part of our body language. Movement of body part and their interpretation can be understood under following elements:

- *Face*: Face of a person is referred as a mirror of one's heart. Whatever we feel inside, willingly or unwillingly gets reflected on our face. Every person is capable of generating several facial expressions depending upon the state of mind. These expressions include happiness, anger,



sadness, sorrow, bewilderment, disbelief, disgusted and many more. These expressions are created by using lips, eye-brows, eye lids, cheeks and eyes. Yawning symbolizes boredom, twinkling eyes with smile indicate excitement and happiness, contracted eye- brows with red eyes indicate anger, and closed lips along with lowered eyelids expresses sadness. Facial expressions provide feedback to the communicators. It is suggested to work on your facial expressions while communicating. Your facial expressions must match with the words you're speaking. If you are communicating in a group and delivering a motivational speech, your facial expressions must convey that you are energetic, enthusiastic, and happy to communicate with the group. A facial expression serves different purposes. It indicates whether the communicating parties are interested in the communication, level of involvement of each party, responses are original or fabricated.

- *Eye Contact:* Eyes are the integral part of face and contributes to various facial expressions. For the purpose of understanding body language, eye movement is studied separately. It is generally suggested that during a face to face communication eye contact has to be maintained. The reason for this suggestion is eye contact conveys to the receiver that speaker is confident and knowledgeable. Just like facial expressions, eyes also convey the interest level of the listener. Through shafting an eye contact a speaker can focus on a different receiver. Eyes are also used to gain feedback. A variation in eye movement conveys different meanings. Continuously looking or staring at someone is considered as rude. Too little eye contact is taken as less interest, insincere or dishonest. Lowered eyes indicate respect or regret. Not looking into the listener's eyes while talking indicates lack of confidence. Eyes looking to the sky sometimes indicate prayer. During a conversation or presentation if listeners are not looking into your eyes that means they are less interested in your talks and it is advisable that you should change your strategy. Size of the eyeball also gives indications. A contracted eyeball conveys doubt or anger and an expanded eyeball shows shock, amusement or disbelief. Winking of an eye actually negates what is said during verbal communication.
- *Gestures:* Whenever any body part is moved while communicating, it is considered as a gesture. The body parts could be hands, head, legs, feet, fingers, shoulders etc. The gestures are used to support the verbal communication. These are sometimes used to emphasize or highlight a point while communicating. Such gestures are known as illustrations. Appropriate usage of gesture



sometimes eliminates the requirement for a verbal communication. For example, if someone asks you the way to the market and in reply you shrug your shoulders, the communication got completed. It means, instead of saying I do not know the way to the market, you simply indicated 'no' by shrugging your shoulders alone. It is the power of nonverbal communication. Every part of the body when moved might indicate some meaning to the receiver of the cue. Few of the body movements and their possible interpretation is given below:

- Tapping your temple with finger: Thinking, planning
- Tapping your chin with finger: Making decision
- Moving your head up- down: Agreeing, listening, understanding
- Arms crossed on chest: Not interested, closed communication
- Sitting with crossed legs: Bored
- Rubbing the eye: Bewildered, amazed
- Fidgeting fingers: Nervous, doubtful
- Biting nails: Anxious, insecure, nervous
- Shrugging shoulders: I don't know, not interested
- Rubbing palms: Indicating that I'm at an advantageous position, I know something more
- Touching the nose: Hiding something
- Scratching the neck: Uncertain, doubtful
- Fingers in mouth: Insecure
- Both hands in pocket and thumbs out: Confident, superior
- Scratching head with index finger: Not understanding
- Sitting and shaking foot or leg: Anxious, nervous

Gestures can be used for different purposes such as to specify, explain, point out, symbolize, and insist. It is important to understand that the meaning of a gesture changes with the culture. Same gesture can have different meanings in two different cultures. For example, a 'V' sign can symbolize victory in one culture while it indicates taking the opponent head on in some other culture. Also, it is important to develop a coordination of a gesture with verbal communication.



- *Posture*: It is also known as body posture. Posture is how you carry yourself during a conversation. In other words, posture is a way in which you stand, sit, or walk being a part of a communication situation. The way we stand conveys a particular meaning. For example, standing with slouching body posture signifies tiredness or surrender. On the contrary, a person standing straight with head held high indicates energy and confidence. Similarly, sitting at the edge of a chair conveys that a person is uncomfortable or nervous or ready to go. Leaning forward while sitting indicates that you are eager to listen. Leaning backward depicts you are relaxed and comfortable. As a speaker it is very important to maintain a correct posture in all the three positions i.e. standing, sitting, and walking. It is suggested that while standing one should stand tall, feet together and keeping the chin parallel to the floor. While sitting, one should sit attentive and straight with a total weight on your hips. In case of walking, always walk with confidence at a moderate speed and in a straight line. Distribute your body weight appropriately while walking.
- *Appearance*: Appearance is related to the overall look of a person. It includes clothing, grooming, accessories etc. Although it might seem unrelated to the body language but it creates a first impression sometimes prior to other components of body language. For example, by looking at one's uniform we can guess the profession of a person. Also, the kind of hair style explains the personality of a person. Keeping aside special occasions, generally it is suggested that one should follow a conservative style of dressing. Always keep in mind that your appearance must match to the occasion. Your dress should be neat and clean, properly ironed, hair well groomed, nails properly trimmed, footwear matching with the dress, sober accessories. Your overall appearance depicts many things about your personality. It also indicates your attitude towards yourself, others, and your life.

### 7.2.2 PROXEMICS

It is also known as the language of space. The study of Proxemics tells us how we communicate through space around us during face to face interactions. For example, during a conversation between two people it can be judged that whether they are at the same level of hierarchy or the other way. Space is always relative to a speaker. Its understanding moves from intimate to public space. Adequate space provides



freedom to move body parts and convey a message through body language. Major credit for conducting remarkable space related studies goes to E. T. Hall. In the year 1963, Hall has given classification of space to improve its understanding in communication. As per the classification of Hall, space can be divided into following four zones:

- *Intimate zone*: It includes a radius of 0-1.5 feet around us. A zero means physical touch. This space is used when we embrace, touch, or whisper. Only people very close to us are allowed to enter into this zone. Generally, these people include our relatives.
- *Personal zone*: It includes a radius of 1.5- 4 feet around us. This space is used when we shake hands at about an arm's length. Generally, our friends and close associates fall into this category.
- *Social zone*: It extends from 4 feet to 10 feet. This space is being used for formal purposes and generally for the relationships that are more professional. Our colleagues from the organization, customers, suppliers and others that create our professional surrounding are a part of the social zone. In our social zone, people are known to us and we share some commonness with them.
- *Public zone*: Any distance beyond 10 feet creates a public zone for us. Generally, it is used when we are addressing the public. In a public zone, people unknown to us can be a part of it. Relatively, in public zone a speaker is detached with the audience in terms of accessibility.

### 7.2.3 PARALANGUAGE

Paralinguistics or paralanguage means like language. It is closest to the actual oral communication and always accompanies it. Basically, the study of paralanguage focuses on how the content is delivered at the time of oral communication. All the voice related aspects at the time of oral communication is the part of paralanguage. An effective usage of paralanguage provides different cues about the content and the relevance of the content delivered by a speaker. Voice is an important aspect of verbal communication. Just by listening to someone, we are able to figure out about the speaker's age, gender, education, and attitude. Generally, every individual carries a reasonable voice that works ok for most of their life span. The purpose of a voice is to carry a message or meaning. Its purpose gets defeated unless all the components of voice are working properly. Main components of a voice are quality of voice, speaking speed, pitch, volume, pause or silence, diction, pronunciation and non-fluencies. All the components of voice are discussed in the following sub-sections:





- *Quality of voice:* Quality of voice refers to that feature which makes it unique when compared with others. We can easily observe around us that there are a few voices which are termed as good or pleasant while others are considered as unpleasant or harsh. Generally, we cannot do much about our quality of voice. We are gifted with a certain quality of voice. With some practice and training some improvements can be made in one's quality of voice. Voices can be classified as husky, harsh, shrill, nasal, soft, pleasant etc. There are some professions which require a particular quality of voice. For example, commentators, radio jockey, announcers, news readers, front office executives. A good voice is always considered as an asset and it adds up to the personality of a speaker.
- *Pitch:* A pitch refers to the tone of sounds. A pitch brings variation in sound while speaking. Purpose of a pitch is to catch the attention of a listener. It can be monotonic, high or low. If the speaker brings no variation in the sound while speaking it becomes a monotone. Any audience is less interested in listening to a monotone. A variation can be created by putting stress on important words while speaking. A variation of sound during speech keeps the audience alert and interested in your conversation.
- *Speed:* It denotes the speed at which you are speaking the words. A speaker has to control the speed of the words spoken. Generally, 120 to 150 words spoken per minute are acceptable to the audience. If you are too slow, you would be termed as a dull speaker. On the other hand, if you are too fast, audience would fail to understand the content. We can also speak different parts of the message at different speeds to highlight a specific piece of information.
- *Volume:* Volume refers to the power of sound. It decides whether the speaker is audible or not. A speaker needs to adjust their volume considering the size of audience, room size, noise level, availability of amplifiers, and venue. While speaking, we should be loud enough that everybody hears what we are communicating. More the audience louder should be the volume. Contrast is another strategy that sometimes the speakers should adopt. A sudden lowering of volume also attracts attention of the audience. Volume also signifies the intended audience of the message. If spoken in lower volume, the message is meant for people who are close to the speaker. It also conveys the confidentiality of the matter. On the contrary, a loud volume dictates that the message is for everyone.



- *Pronunciation:* It refers to the way we speak a letter or word or a sentence. A wrongly pronounced word can indicate a different meaning resulting into misunderstanding. Culture has a strong influence on the pronunciation of an individual. English is generally accepted as a global language but influence of other languages can be easily observed when people from different countries or regions speak the same word. We can even get the idea about the native place of speaker; just by the manner a word is being pronounced. Training is required to neutralize the accent related issues.
- *Pause or Silence:* General perception is that if we are not speaking, thus no communication is taking place. It is wrong, as silence is a strong communicator and has a meaning. If a person remains silent after listening to a speaker it might mean that listener is not understanding anything, waiting for more information to come, or maybe they're spellbound. A gap between two spoken words or sentences is considered as a pause. Just like silence pause also communicates. Duration of pause or number of pauses indicate different meanings during an oral communication. For example, a long pause indicates that the speaker forgets the matter. Too many pauses can break the flow of communication and makes a message difficult to understand. In a public speaking scenario, effective use of pauses can attract attention of audience, controls audience discussions, and pull applause.
- *Non-fluencies:* Non-fluencies are the sounds and expressions that fill the gaps between two words or sentences. Some of the common non-fluencies are 'umm', 'aaa', 'you know', 'ok', 'got it' etc. Many a times speakers are unaware about making such sounds or utterances. These are used by the speaker to breath, think or plan the next word or idea. An effective use of these non-fluencies can attract the attention of the listener and break the monotony of the conversation. But if overly used, it definitely distracts and irritates the listeners.

### 7.3 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) A communication without using words is referred as \_\_\_\_\_ communication.
- b) In context of communication, a study of body movements is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
- c) A radius between \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ feet is a part of intimate space of a person.
- d) SWOT stands for \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) While addressing a problem, always work for its \_\_\_\_\_.



## 7.4 SUMMARY

Self-development is popularly known as personal development. Personal development is considered as an ongoing process of life carried out at individual levels by all human beings. An individual has to follow many steps to manage self-development. It all starts with setting a personal vision about what you wish to become. Once such a vision is established, planning for achieving above the set goals is required. Planning itself is not sufficient and requires proper execution. So, an individual has to start taking steps as per the plan to achieve the desired goals of self-development. After taking all the necessary steps as per the planning, it is important to measure your efforts.

The personal SWOT analysis is a powerful technique used for identifying the current state of condition of a person in context of challenges posed under a given environment. A person can evaluate one's condition on four parameters namely Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. SWOT is the acronym used to depict such information in chart or tabular form.

Any communication wherein no words are used to convey a message is known as nonverbal communication. Body language is the most observable aspect of communication. When compared with verbal communication, nonverbal communication is unstructured and less intentional. In case of a conflict between the two, nonverbal aspect is considered as more predictive of actual intentions. Nonverbal cues are believed to be generated as unplanned and accidental actions. The actions or even the presence of a person can be decoded and interpreted to conclude a meaning out of it. The actions can be in the form of an eye movement, appearance, tone, time, space or distance. Interpretation of a nonverbal cue is totally dependent on the decoder of the cue. Same action can have different meaning for different people. With a nonverbal cue we can support, negate, replace, or highlight the verbal communication. In the simplest words a nonverbal communication is communication without the use of a language. It has many dimensions such as Kinesics or body language, Paralinguistics or language of voice, Proxemics or language of space. Understanding of nonverbal communication helps in two ways. First, it helps in using the correct nonverbal cue to support the verbal communication and second, it equips a person to interpret the correct intentions of a speaker. Interpretation of nonverbal communication varies with culture.

## 7.5 KEYWORDS



<b>Self-Development:</b>	Taking steps to better yourself, such as by learning new skills or overcoming bad habits.
<b>Strength:</b>	Strength is something which is positive and makes you stronger than others
<b>Kinesics:</b>	A study of body movements
<b>Proxemics:</b>	Language of space
<b>Paralanguage:</b>	Language of voice

## 7.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Why is self-development important for an individual?
2. Describe the relevance of positive attitude in life. How one can develop a positive attitude?
3. Explain the concept of SWOT analysis in context of an individual.
4. What is non verbal communication? Mention its types.
5. What are the important components of kinesics?
6. Explain the purpose of understanding Proxemics.
7. What are the various elements of paralanguage?

## 7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) Non verbal
- b) Kinesics
- c) 0 to 1.5 feet
- d) Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat
- e) Solution

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<b>PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING</b>	

## STRUCTURE

### 8.0 Learning Objectives

#### 8.1 Introduction to Listening

- 8.1.1 Purpose of Listening
- 8.1.2 Types of Listening
- 8.1.3 Reasons for Poor Listening
- 8.1.4 Principles of Listening

#### 8.2 Check your Progress

#### 8.3 Summary

#### 8.4 Keywords

#### 8.5 Self-Assessment Test

#### 8.6 Answers to check your Progress

#### 8.7 References/Suggested Readings

## 8.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Communication is an integral part of everyone's daily life. To make communication effective it is important that no barriers to communication exist during the whole process. Listening is one such



component of communication that is the responsibility of the receiver. Any kind of error during listening reduces the effectiveness of communication and eventually may cause miscommunication. So, it is pertinent for everyone to understand the concept of listening and ways to enhance the listening skills. Learn this skill is beneficial for attaining growth in one's professional and personal life.

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the role and types of listening
- Understand the impact of poor listening
- Know various principles of listening.

## 8.1 INTRODUCTION TO LISTENING

In any organization role of communication is imperative. The people involved in the communication process have to communicate effectively in order to achieve their goals. An effective communication is possible only when the sender and receiver of the conversation play their role properly i.e. remove all the hurdles that can cause disturbance in the communication process. Presence of any bottleneck during communication can cause breakdown in the communication process. This rule applies for verbal as well as nonverbal communication. In a verbal communication scenario, an individual has to develop four competencies to be effective. These competencies are related to knowledge of language, strong vocabulary, good general awareness, and strong knowledge about your core area. Once such competencies are developed, an individual can do well in the area of verbal communication. An important skill that is the support for above mentioned four skills is listening skill. Before moving further let's have a look at various definitions of listening

- To listen is to give attention to sound or action. (Oxford Living Dictionary)
- Listening is the ability of a person to correctly accept and infer messages in the communication process.
- *Listening* is the active process of receiving and responding to spoken (and sometimes unspoken) messages.



The terms hearing and listening are generally confused. Hearing is an automatic physical process in which the sound enters our ear. Hearing is considered as a passive process that requires minimal effort of a person. For listening to happen, four stages need to be crossed. It starts with the person paying attention to external stimuli (visual or verbal) then involving in the physiological act of allowing ears to hear. A meaning is provided to whatever is heard followed by retaining the meaningful information. Listening requires active involvement during the process. Thus, it's clear that listening and hearing are not interchangeable concepts as hearing is a part of the whole listening activity.

### 8.1.1 PURPOSE OF LISTENING

Listening performs various functions and its utility varies with situation and nature of communication. Following are the few purposes served by listening:

- *To pay attention to the message and avoiding all kinds of distractions and biases.*
- *To obtain complete understanding of speakers' context of communication.*
- *To assess the message with utmost sincerity.*
- *To look for verbal and nonverbal cues for enhanced understanding.*
- *To display willingness and receptivity towards the message.*
- *To establish trust and motivate the speaker to share the information without any inhibitions.*
- *To display an empathetic approach by putting the speaker first.*

In professional life listening is considered as an important skill and many companies provide training to their employees to enhance their listening skills. From the company's point of view an employee as a good listener ensures better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes, and valuable information-based inputs.

### 8.1.2 TYPES OF LISTENING

We can understand listening skill in a way that good listeners hear better, those who hear better can understand better, and finally those who understand better can learn better. So, it is not exaggerating to say that listening is vital for learning. Listening generally involves:

- Receiving information from the speaker without being critical and insensitive





- Showing interest in the speaker for further communication
- Providing timely but small inputs to contribute to the speaker's idea

Above explanation shows the importance of listener in the total communication process. To be an effective communicator you have to be a good listener first. Otherwise there will be too many speakers and too few listeners. A good listener is highly appreciated and rewarded. It has been observed that people retain only quarter of what they hear after two days creating a vital barrier. To elaborate more on listening, we have to go through the various types of listening.

- Selective listening: When the listener pays attention to only that communication that suits his or her existing views and majorly missing the views of the speaker.
- Sensitive listening: When the listener gives absolute weightage to the speaker's views and completely ignores his or her personal views that creates imbalance for effective listening.
- Comprehension listening: When the listener listens to understand or figure out the speaker's message.
- Assessment listening: When the listener tries to evaluate the value of the message and generate positive or negative viewpoint about it.
- Decisive listening: When listener not only listens to understand but also tends to generate an opinion on it.
- Mock listening: When the listener pretends to be listening to the speaker while not being attentive during the conversation. The aim is just to please the speaker.

Understanding of above types of listening could help both speaker and listener in improving effectiveness of communication. Lucy Smith ([www.aconsciousrethink.com](http://www.aconsciousrethink.com)) presented an altogether new way to explain the types of listening. Listening requires paying attention and the way we do that conveys our degree of inclination towards the speaker. A good listener is expected to be very careful about the way they respond while the speaker is communicating. Following are the listening types from different perspective:



- **Biased listening:** In this type of listening we hear things that are in confirmation with our preexisting thoughts, beliefs and apprehensions. Basically, we hear what we think we should be hearing. All this happens subconsciously and without the realization of the listener.
- **Sympathetic listening:** It displays the listener's caring attitude towards the speaker. Here the listener specifically expresses that how he or she understands the speaker and the way they relate to their speech. Generally, this kind of listening is displayed with very close friends and family members.
- **Empathetic listening:** It is quite similar to sympathetic listening in many ways but the only difference is that in this the listener puts himself or herself in the shoes of the speaker and then feel the impact of the communication. The listener takes the journey along with the speaker.
- **Critical listening:** It involves critically analyzing what is being said by the speaker and then taking a decision on how to respond to it. It looks for finding out the most relevant information from the total communication. Be aware that critical listening doesn't mean negative listening.
- **Informational listening:** This type of listening is done to educate ourselves. Just like while attending a class or a training program we listen, we try to understand the communication, and learn from it. This type of listening often involves practical or technical content.
- **Appreciative listening:** This type of listening can be done on your own or with others who have a mutual appreciation for whatever it is that you enjoy. The appreciative listening has a strong impact on your mood. This listening is generally done outside the professional life and in more informal and relaxed environment.
- **Rapport listening:** This kind of listening is done by building a rapport with the speaker. Here the listener shows keen interest in the communication of the speaker and provides the inputs wherever he or she deems fit.

Although listening seems a simple and straightforward process but its impact on the effectiveness of the communication is phenomenal.



### 8.1.3 REASONS FOR POOR LISTENING

During every oral communication, certain obstacles might arise that can cause hurdles in effective listening. Following are some of the obstacles affecting effective listening:

- When the listener is showing resistance to the new idea. Such situation stops the listener to accept anything that challenges his or her current understanding.
- When the listener is emotionally charged. In such situations, emotions overpower the thought process and stop the entry of any kind of information.
- When the listener grows impatient. An impatient person tries to jump to conclusion of the input information without paying full attention to the whole message. That could result in processing of insufficient or incomplete information.
- Presence of external noise. A noisy physical environment stops the message to properly reach the ears of the listener. So poor hearing ends up in poor listening.
- When there exists a lack of empathy towards the speaker. In this situation, the listener fails to understand the point of view of the speaker and interpret the communication on the basis of his or her pre-conceived notions.
- When the listener is disinterested in the topic discussed. Due to non-relevancy of the topic of communication the listener loses interest in it and hence attention gets deviated.
- Lack of trust between the speaker and the listener. This lack of mutual trust can cause listener to ignore or unfollow all the communication with the speaker
- When the listener gets tired. Due to fatigue the listener may lose attention on the communication causing poor listening.

Apart from the above reasons, one of the most popular reasons is that mostly people are way too involved in their own thoughts that they are attentive of the communication with the speaker. For learning effective listening skills an individual has to remove above mentioned obstacles.



### 8.1.4 PRINCIPLES OF LISTENING

Contributions of Keith Davis and John W Newstrom are highly recognized on the subject of listening. They have formulated 'Ten commandments of listening'. An individual following these commandments would become an effective listener as well as learner. The ten commandments of listening are:

- *Stop talking:* Generally, we are more interested in what we want to say than in what we are being told. So, we must stop talking before we listen.
- *Put the talker at ease:* If the speaker is not at ease, he might not be able to do his job satisfactorily. It is very important for the listener/listeners to make the speaker comfortable.
- *Show the speaker that you want to listen:* It is important not to distract the speaker by looking at your watch, reading some book or newspaper or looking away from him. Moreover, you should give the speaker the impression that you are listening to him to understand rather than to oppose.
- *Remove distractions:* Certain activities like tapping with a pen or pencil, shuffling papers or passing something along distracts the speaker.
- *Empathize with the talker:* True exchange of information can take place only if we place ourselves in the position of the talker. This way we will be able to appreciate his point of view and build up a climate conducive for an efficient and effective communication.
- *Be patient:* patience pays. We should give enough time to the speaker. There are all kinds of speakers. Some get to the point very quickly, while some take a lot more time. We must give the speaker enough time to come to his point in his own way. We must not be tempted to interrupt.
- *Hold your temper:* Anger is the worst enemy of communication as it builds walls among the participants in the communication event. It hardens their positions and blocks their minds to others words.
- *Go easy on argument and criticism:* Argument and criticism do not lead anywhere. On the other hand, argument and criticism distorts the communication as the speaker becomes defensive and agitated.



- *Ask questions*: Putting questions shows an open mind. It shows that you are listening. It shows that you are getting the message and giving a genuine feedback.
- *Stop talking*: This is the last as well as the first commandment. All other commandments or rules of listening depend on it.

## 8.2 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) Attention is important for effective listening. True or false
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ listening happens when the listener tries to evaluate the value of the message.
- c) \_\_\_\_\_ listening happens when the listener pretends to listen but in fact he or she is not.
- d) Trust between speaker and listener is not important for effective listening. True or False
- e) Sympathetic and empathetic listening are same. True or False.

## 8.3 SUMMARY

To make communication effective it is important that no barriers to the communication exist during the whole process. Listening is a component of communication that is the responsibility of the receiver. Any kind of error during listening reduces the effectiveness of communication and can cause miscommunication. So, it is pertinent for everyone to understand the concept of listening and the ways to enhance their listening skills. Listening is the ability of a person to correctly accept and infer messages in the communication process. In professional life listening is considered as an important skill and many companies provide training to their employees to enhance their listening skills. From the company's point of view an employee as a good listener ensures better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes, and valuable information-based inputs.

## 8.4 KEYWORDS

**Listening:** *Listening* is the active process of receiving and responding to spoken (and sometimes unspoken) messages.

**Hearing:** Hearing is an automatic physical process in which the sound enters our ear. Hearing is considered as a passive process that requires minimal effort of a person. It's a part of the whole listening process.



**Selective Listening:** When the listener pays attention to only that communication that suits his or her existing views while majorly missing the views of speaker.

## 8.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. Define listening and its purpose for an organization.
2. Mention various types of listening.
3. How listening is different from hearing?
4. What are the basic principles for effective listening?
5. What are the bottlenecks for effective listening?

## 8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a) True
- b) Assessment
- c) Mock
- d) False
- e) False

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## **BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE: LETTER WRITING**

### **STRUCTURE**

- 9.0 Learning Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 What is Business Letter
  - 9.2.1 Types of Business Letter
  - 9.2.2 Do's and Don'ts of business letters
- 9.3 Style or Form of Writing Business Letters
- 9.4 Check Your Progress
- 9.5 Summary
- 9.6 Keywords
- 9.7 Self-Assessment Test
- 9.8 Answer to Check Your Progress
- 9.9 References/Suggested Readings

### **9.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After reading this lesson, one should be able to understand:

- Meaning of business letter
- Types and Do's and Don'ts of business letter
- Style or form of writing business letters





## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

A business letter differs from other kinds of writing activities in several ways. First, it is usually addressed to only one specific person. Therefore, it is important for the writer to think about the reader with a you-viewpoint or a you-attitude. Second, every business letter can become a legal document or contract, so it is critical to maintain an appropriate service attitude. It is also important to have a good strategy or heuristic. There are three basic types of strategies for business letters: the good news or neutral letter, the bad news or problem-solving letter, and the sales letter. The heuristics in each of these three types can be very important to the outcome or success. For each type of letter, there are some characteristic strategies, which will allow the writer to achieve the best results with specific cases. Look at the format for letters in the examples provided in the text content, particularly the use of block form and semi-block form. Let us elaborate the brief outline of the different parts of the formal letter in terms of: the letterhead block with address and date; the inside address block, presented as on the envelope; the salutation, with the various problems of gender and identity address; the body (block form, no indentation, single-space within / double-space between paragraphs) usually in three paragraphs on a single page; the signature block, with legible signature and the addendum (p.s., enc., cc:).

## 9.2 WHAT IS BUSINESS LETTER

A business letter is a type of correspondence between companies or between companies and individuals, such as customers, clients, contractors or other outside parties. The business letters are formal paper communication between, to or from businesses and generally sent through post offices or courier services. The business letters differ from personal letters in that they are more formal in tone and writing style. However, the tone and style can vary greatly depending on the type of business letter. Business letters can have many types of content like to request direct information or action from another party, to order supplies from a supplier, to point out a mistake by the letter's recipient, to reply directly to a request, to apologize for a wrong, or to convey goodwill. It is a formal document which have a defined structure. It is sometimes useful because it produces a permanent written record, and may be taken more seriously by the recipient than other forms of communication.

### 9.2.1 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTER



Most people who have an occupation have to write business letters. Some write many letters each day and other only write few letters over the course of career. Followings are the main types or categories of business letters:

1. **Business Apology Letter:** The business apology letter is write when you or company have made a mistake, behaved poorly, missed a scheduled event or in other circumstances where you or company have messed up and needs to apologize. The apologies can be given to vendors, customers, and employees.
2. **Appreciation Letter:** Appreciation letters are write to express thanks and gratitude towards people for their good deeds. The main purpose of appreciation letters is to sincerely recognize what people have done for you and their positive impact on your work life. These types of communication letters are written by senior management to the junior management for the conveyance of gratitude in order to congratulate them on a job well done or in order to motivate them.
3. **Sales Letter:** This is the most common form of a business letter that is used in almost every field. The sales letter serves as an introduction for the customer about the [product](#) and/or the company. A typical Sales letter starts off with a line or statement which captures the interest of the reader who is more often than not a [target](#) customer or a prospect. The purpose of a sales letter is to ensure that the reader takes an action and that is why strong calls to action are included in it.
4. **Order Letter:** Order letters are sent by consumers or businesses to a manufacturer, retailer or wholesaler to order goods or services. These letters must contain specific information such as model number, name of the product, the quantity desired and expected price. Payment is sometimes included with the letter.
5. **Complaint Letters:** Complaint letters are the types of Business letters written by one party to another party or entity to convey disappointment about a certain issue. Complaints are indicators that something has went wrong and that has been indicated by a formal business letter. If applicable, complaint letter is followed by an acknowledgment letter and then an apology letter.
6. **Adjustment Letters:** Adjustment letters are the ones that are sent to the customers as a response to their claim or complaint. The adjustment can be either in customers' favour in which case, the letter should begin accordingly and if it is not in the favour of the customer, the tone should be kept factual with a message that you understand the complaint.



7. **Circular Letters:** These types of business letters are sent to a closed group or selected [people](#) with the purpose of being circulated widely. The purpose of circular letters is to either convey customers about the sale or news or intimate about important information about newly launched or built facilities. Circular letters are also used to reach new and prospect customers to let them know about the new information and new developments.
8. **Acknowledgement Letters:** A letter sent for acknowledgment or recognition or receipt of material or letter from the other party is called an acknowledgment letter. The acknowledgment can be of receipt of [goods](#) and services, receipt of any other letter or of general inquiries. These letters act as simple receipts. Businesses send them to let others know that they have received a prior communication, but action may or may not have taken place.
9. **Candidate Rejection Letter:** The candidate rejection letter is written for the individual or job applicants who was not selected for the job. The main purpose of this type of letter is to inform the job applicants about their rejection for the job.
10. **Employment Verification Letter:** Employment verification letters are often requested by landlords and lenders to confirm that a person is employed at a company or not.
11. **Letter of Inquiry:** These types of business letters are sent for inquiry about certain information. The primary purpose is to know about something or if someone has any query which [needs](#) to be answered. The inquiry letter is to be kept short and to the point with directly addressing the inquiry.
12. **Reference Letter:** A reference letter is a positive endorsement of a person's skills and attributes, written by someone familiar with their work, character, and accomplishments. Reference letters are needed when applying for jobs, internships, volunteer positions, colleges, and graduate school programs.
13. **Letter of Resignation:** When an employee plans to leave his job, a letter of resignation is usually sent to his immediate manager giving him notice and letting him know when the last day of employment will be. In many cases, the employee also will detail his reason for leaving the company. It is also known as letter of recommendation.
14. **Follow-up Letter:** Follow-up letters are usually sent after some type of initial communication. This could be a sales department thanking a customer for an order, a businessman reviewing the outcome of a meeting or a job seeker inquiring about the status of his application. In many cases, these letters are a combination thank-you note and sales letter.



**15. Payment Request Letter:** These types of Business letters serve the purpose of reminding the payer to pay up the amount due to the payee. The request letter contains a request for payment of a certain amount before the final date.

## 9.2.2 DO'S AND DON'TS OF BUSINESS LETTERS

Individual words are our basic units of commercial letter writing, the bricks with which we build meaningful messages. All writers have access to the same words. The care with which we select and combine words can make the difference between a message that achieves its objective and one that does not. Discussed below are five principles of words choice to help you write more effectively.

**1) Write Clearly:** The basic guideline for writing, the one that must be present for the other principles to have meaning, is to write clearly – to write message in such a way that the reader can understand, depend on, and act on. You can achieve clarity by making your message accurate and complete, by using familiar words, and by avoiding dangling expression and unnecessary jargon.

➤ **Be Accurate:** A writer's credibility is perhaps his or her most important asset, and credibility depends greatly on the accuracy of the message. If by carelessness, lack of preparation, or a desire to manipulate, a writer misleads the reader, the damage is immediate as well as long lasting. A reader who has been fooled once may not trust the writer again. Accuracy can take many forms. The most basic is the truthful presentation of facts and figures. But accuracy involves much more. For example, consider the following sentence from a memo to a firm's financial backers;

The executive committee of Mitchell Financial Services met on Thursday, May 28, to determine how to resolve the distribution fiasco. Suppose, on checking, the reader learns that May 28 fell on a Wednesday this year – not on a Thursday. Immediately, the reader may suspect everything else in the message. The reader's thinking might be, "If the writer made this error that I did catch, how many errors that I didn't catch are lurking there?"

Now consider some other subtle shades of truth. The sentence implies that the committee met, perhaps in an emergency session, for the sole purpose of resolving the distribution fiasco. But suppose this matter was only one of five agenda items being discussed at a regularly scheduled meeting. Is the statement still accurate? Suppose the actual agenda listed the topic as "Discussion of Recent Distribution Problems." Is fiasco the same as problems?



The accuracy of a message, then, depends on what is said, how it is said, and what is left unsaid (see, for example, the following section on the importance of completeness). Competent writers assess the ethical dimensions of their writing and use integrity, fairness, and good judgment to make sure their communication is ethical.

- **Be Complete:** Closely related to accuracy is completeness. A message that lacks important information may create inaccurate impressions. A message is complete when it contains all the information the reader needs – no more and no less – to react appropriately.

As a start, answer the five Ws: Tell the reader who, what, when, where and why. Leaving out any of this information may result either in decision based on incomplete information or in extra follow-up correspondence to gather the needed information.

- **Use of Familiar Words:** Your message must be understood before someone can act on it. So you must use words that are both familiar to you (so that you will not misuse the word) and familiar to your readers.
- **Avoid Dangling Expression:** A dangling expression is any part of a sentence that does not logically fit in with the rest of the sentence. Its relationship with the other parts of the sentence is unclear; it dangles. The two most common types of dangling expressions are misplaced modifiers and unclear antecedents. To correct dangling expressions, (1) make the subject of the sentence the doer of the action expressed in the introductory clause; (2) move the expression closer to the word that it modifies;

**Don't:** After reading the proposal, a few problems occurred to me. (As written, the sentence implies that “a few problems” read the proposal).

**Do:** After reading the proposal, I noted a few problems.

**Don't:** Dr. Ellis gave a presentation on the use of drugs in our auditorium. (Are drugs being used in the auditorium)?

**Do:** Dr. Ellis gave a presentation in our auditorium on the use of drugs.

**Don't:** Robin explained the proposal to Joy, but she was not happy with it. (Who was not happy – Robin or Joy).

**Do:** Robin explained the proposal to Joy, but Joy was not happy with it.

- **Avoid Unnecessary Jargon:** Jargon is technical vocabulary used within a special group. Every field has its own specialized words, and jargon offers a precise and efficient way of



communicating with people in the same field. Nevertheless, problems arise when jargon is used to communicate with someone who does not understand it. For example, to a banker the term CD means a “certificate of deposit,” but to a stereo buff or computer user it means a “compact disc.” Even familiar words can be confusing when given a specialized meaning.

Does the field business communication have jargon? It does – just look at the Key Terms list at the end of each chapter. The work jargon itself might be considered communication jargon. In this text, such terms are first defined and then used to make communication precise and efficient. Competent writers use specialized vocabulary to communicate with specialists who understand it. And they avoid using it when their readers are not specialists.

- 2) **Prefer Short, Simple Words:** Short and simple words are more likely to be understood, less likely to be misused, and less likely to distract the reader. Literary authors often write to impress; they select words to achieve a specific reader reaction, such as amusement, excitement, or anger. Business writers, on the other hand, write to express; they want to achieve comprehension. They want their readers to focus on their information, not on how they convey their information. Using short, simple words helps achieve this goal.

**Don’t:** To recapitulate, our utilization of adulterated water precipitated the interminable delays.

**Do:** In short, our use of impure water caused the endless delays.

It is true, of course, that quite often short, simple words may not be available to convey the precise shade of meaning you want. For example, there is not one-syllable replacement for ethnocentrism (the belief that one’s own cultural group is superior). Our guideline is not to use only short and simple words but to prefer short and simple words. (As Mark Twain, who was paid by the word for his writing, noted, “I never write metropolis for seven cents because I can get the same price for city. I never write policemen because I can get the same money for cop”). Here are some examples of needlessly long words, gleaned from various business documents, with their preferred shorter substitutes shown in parentheses:

Ascertain (learn)

Endeavor (try)

Enumerate (list)

Fluctuate (vary)

Indispensable (vital)

Initiate (start)



Modification (change)

Recapitulate (review)

Substantial (large)

Termination (end)

Utilization (use)

However (but)

You need not strike these long words totally from your written or spoken vocabulary; any one of these words, used in a clear sentence, would be acceptable. The problem is that a writer may tend to fill his or her writing with very long words when simpler ones could be used. Use long words in moderation. Heed the following advice from author Richard Lederer:

- When you speak and write, no law says you have to use big words. Short words are as good as long ones, and short, old words like sun and grass and home are best of all. A lot of small words, more than you might think, can meet your needs with strength, grace, and charm that large words lack.
- Big words can make the way dark for those who hear what you say and read what you write. They add fat to your prose. Small words are the ones we seem to have known from birth. They are like the hearth fire that warms the home, and they cast a clear light on big things: night and day, love and hate, war and peace, life and death.
- Short words are bright, like sparks that glow in the night; sharp, like the blade of a knife; hot, like salt tears that scald the cheek; quick, like moths that flit from flame to flame; and terse, like the dart and sting of a bee.
- If a long word says just what you want, do not fear to use it. But know that our tongue is rich in crisp, brisk, swift, short words. Make them the spine and the heart of what you speak and write. Like fast friends, they will not let you down.
- Leader practices what he preaches. All 223 words in these four paragraphs are one-syllable words! Similarly, 71% of the words in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (190 out of 267) are only one syllable long.
- You have probably heard the advice "Write as you speak." Although not universally true, such advice is pretty close to the mark. Of course, if your conversation were peppered with redundancies, jargon, and clichés, you would not want to put such weaknesses on paper. But typical conversation uses mostly short, simple words – the kind you do want to put on paper. Don't assume that the bigger the words, the bigger the intellect. In fact, you need a large



vocabulary and a well-developed word sense to select the best word. And more often than not, that word is short and simple. Write to express – not to impress.

- 3) **Write with Vigour:** Vigorous language is specific and concrete. Limp language is filled with clichés, slang, and buzz words. Vigorous writing holds your reader's interest. But if your reader isn't even interested enough to read your message, your writing can't possibly achieve its objective. A second reason for writing with vigour has to do with language itself. Vigorous writing tends to lend vigour to the ideas presented. A good idea looks even better dressed in vigorous language, and a weak idea looks even weaker dressed in limp language.

**Use Specific Concrete Language:** As discussed in the lesson of communication barriers caused by over abstraction and ambiguity, when possible, choose specific words – words that have a definite, unambiguous meaning. Likewise, choose concrete words – words that bring a definite picture to your reader's mind.

**Don't:** The vehicle broke down several times recently.

**Do:** The delivery van broke down three times last week.

In the first version, what does the reader imagine when he or she reads the word vehicle – a golf cart? Automobile? Boat? Space shuttle? Likewise, how many times is several –two? Three? Fifteen? The revised version tells precisely what happened.

Sometimes we do not need such specific information. For example, in “The president answered several questions from the audience and then adjourned the meeting”, the specific number of questions is probably not important. But in most situations, you should watch out for words like several, recently, a number of, substantial, a few, and a lot of. You may need to be more exact. Likewise, use the most concrete word that is appropriate; give the reader a specific mental picture of what you mean. That is, learn to talk in pictures:

**Don't:** The vice president was bored by the presentation.

**Do:** The vice president kept yawning and looking at her watch.

Be sure that your terms convey as much meaning as the reader needs to react appropriately. Watch out for terms like emotional meeting (anger or gratitude?), bright colour (red or yellow?), new equipment (postage meter or cash register?), and change in price (increase or decrease?).





**Avoid Clichés, Slang and Buzz Word:** A cliché is an expression that has become monotonous through overuse. It lacks freshness and originality and may also send the unintended message that the writer couldn't be bothered to choose language geared specifically to the reader.

**Don't:** Enclosed please find an application form that you should return at your earliest convenience.

**Do:** Please return the enclosed application form before May 15.

As noted earlier, slang is an expression, often short-lived, that is identified with a specific group of people. If you understand each word in an expression but still don't understand what it means in context, chances are you're having trouble with a slang expression. For example, read the following sentence:

- It turns my stomach the way you can break your neck and beat your brains out around here, and they still stab you in the back.

To anyone unfamiliar with American slang (a non-native speaker, perhaps), this sentence might seem to be about the body because it refers to the stomach, neck, brains, and back. The real meaning, of course, is something like this:

- I am really upset that this company ignores hard work and loyalty when making personnel decisions.

**Same Rules World Over:** The strategies for writing effective business messages discussed in this chapter are universal. The passage below, from a business communication text for Chinese business executives, recommends substituting concise phrases for long, empty ones.

Wordy	Concise	Wordy	Concise
enclosed herewith	Enclosed	under separate cover	Separately
enclosed you will find	enclosed is	a long period of time	a long time
please don't hesitate	please write us	Continuous and uninterrupted	continuous
to call upon us		during the year 1971	during 1971
please feel free to write	please write	endorse on the	endorse this



prior to	Before	back of this check	check
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Avoid slang in most business writing, for several reasons. First, it is informal, and much of business writing, although not formal, is still business-like and calls for standard word usage. Second, slang is short-lived. A slang phrase used today may not be in use – and thus may not be familiar in three years, when your letter is retrieved from the files for reference. Third, slang is identified with a specific group of people, and others in the general population may not understand the intended meaning. For these reasons, avoid these terms in most business writing:

can of worms	pay through the nose
chew out	play up to
go for broke	security blanket
hate one's guts	use your noodle
knock it off	wiped out
once-over	zonked out

A **buzz word** is an important-sounding expression used mainly to impress other people. Because buzz words are so often used by government officials and high ranking business people – people whose comments are “newsworthy” – these expressions get much media attention. They become instant clichés and then go out of fashion just as quickly. At either end of their short life span, they cause communication problems. If an expression is currently being used by everyone, it sounds monotonous, lacking originality. If it is no longer being used by anyone, readers may not understand the intended meaning. Here are examples of recent “in” expressions:

bottom line	paradigm
done deal	parameter
impact (verb)	scenario
interface	user-friendly
no-brainer	vision statement



Be especially careful of turning nouns and other types of words into verbs by adding *ize*. Such words as *agenize*, *prioritize*, *unionize*, and *operationalize* quickly become tiresome.

- 4) **Write Concisely:** Businesspeople are busy people. The information revolution has created more paperwork, giving businesspeople access to more data. Having more data to analyse (but presumably not being able to read any faster or having more time in which to do so), managers want information presented in the fewest possible words. To achieve conciseness, make every word count. Avoid redundancy, wordy expressions, hidden verbs and nouns, and other “space-eaters”.

**Avoid Redundancy:** Redundancy is unnecessary repetition of an idea that has already been expressed or intimated. Eliminating the repetition contributes to conciseness.

**Don’t:** Signing both copies of the lease is a necessary requirement.

**Do:** Signing both copies of the lease is necessary.

**Don’t:** Combine the ingredients together.

**Do:** Combine the ingredients.

Don’t confuse redundancy and repetition. Repetition – using the same word more than once – is occasionally effective for emphasis (as we will discuss in the next Chapter). Redundancy, however, serves no purpose and should always be avoided.

Some redundancies are humorous, as in the classic Samuel Goldwyn comment, “Anybody who goes to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined,” or the sign in a jewellery store window, “Ears pierced while you wait”, or the statement in an automobile advertisement, “Open seven days a week plus weekends”. Most redundancies, however, are simply verbiage – and hence must be avoided.

Do not use the unnecessary word *together* after such words as *assemble*, *combine*, *cooperate*, *gather*, *join*, *merge*, or *mix*. Do not use the unnecessary word *new* before such words as *beginner*, *discovery*, *fad*, *innovation*, or *progress*. And do not use the unnecessary word *up* after such words as *connect*, *divide*, *eat*, *lift*, *mix*, and *rest*. Also avoid the following common redundancies (use the words in parentheses instead):

advance planning (planning)

over again (over)

any and all (any or all)

past history (history)

basic fundamentals (basics or fundamentals) repeat again (repeat)



but nevertheless (but or nevertheless)

sum total (sum or total)

each and every (each or every)

true facts (facts)

free gift (gift)

when and if (when or if)

**Avoid Worthy Expressions:** Although wordy expressions are not necessarily writing errors (as redundancies are), they do slow the pace of the communication and should be avoided. For example, try substituting one word for a phrase whenever possible.

**Don't:** In view of the fact that the model failed twice during the time that we tested it, we are at this point of time searching for other options.

**Do:** Because the model failed twice when we tested it, we are now searching for other options.

The original sentence contains 28 words; the revised sentence, 16 You've "saved" 12 words. In his delightful book *Revising Business Prose*, Richard Lanham speaks of the "lard factor": the percentage of words saved by "getting rid of the lard" in a sentence. In this case,

$$28 - 16 = 12; 12 \div 28 = 43\%$$

Thus, 43% of the original sentence was "lard", which fattened the sentence without providing any "nutrition". Lanham suggests, "Think of a lard factor (LF) of  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  as normal and don't stop revising until you've removed it. "

**Avoid Hidden Verbs:** A hidden verb is a verb that has been changed into a noun form, weakening the action. Verbs are action words and should convey the main action in the sentence. They provide interest and forward movement. Consider this example:

**Don't:** Carl made an announcement that he will give consideration to our request.

**Do:** Carl announced that he will consider our request.

What is the real action? It is not that Carl made something or that he will give something. The real action is hiding in the nouns: Carl announced and will consider. These two verb forms, then, should be the main verbs in the sentence. Notice that the revised sentence is much more direct – and four words shorter (LF = 33%). Here are some other actions that should be conveyed by verbs instead of being hidden in nouns:



arrived at the conclusion (concluded) has a requirement for (requires)

came to an agreement (agreed)

held a meeting (met)

gave a demonstration of (demonstrated)

made a payment (paid)

gave an explanation (explained)

Performed an analysis of (analysed)

**Avoid Hidden Subject:** Like verbs, subjects play a prominent role in a sentence and should stand out, rather than being obscured by an expletive beginning. An expletive is an expletive via an expression such as there is or it is that begins a clause or sentence and for which pronoun has no antecedent. Because the topic of a sentence that begins with an expletive is not immediately clear, you should use such sentences sparingly in business writing. Avoiding expletives also contributes to conciseness.

**Don't:** There was no indication that it is necessary to include John in the meeting.

**Do:** No one indicated that John should be included in the meeting.

**Imply or Condense:** Sometimes you do not need to explicitly state certain information; you can imply it instead. In other situations, you can use adjectives and adverbs instead of clauses to convey the needed information in a more concise format.

**Don't:** We have received your recent letter and are happy to provide the data you requested.

**Do:** We are happy to provide the data you recently requested.

**Don't:** This brochure, which is available free of charge, will answer your questions.

**Do:** This free brochure will answer your questions.

- 5) **Prefer Positive Language:** Words that create a positive image are more likely to help you achieve your objective than are negative words. For example, you are more likely to persuade someone to do as you ask if you stress the advantages of doing so rather than the disadvantages of not doing so. Positive language also builds goodwill for you and your organization and often gives more information than negative language. Note the differences in tone and amount of information given in the following pairs of sentences:

**Don't:** The briefcase is not made of cheap imitation leather.



**Do:** The briefcase is made of 100% belt leather for years of durable service.

**Don't:** We cannot ship your merchandise until we receive your check.

**Do:** As soon as we receive your check, we will ship your merchandise.

**Don't:** I do not yet have any work experience.

**Do:** My two terms as secretary of the Management Club taught me the importance of accurate record keeping and gave me experience in working as part of a team.

Expressions like cannot and will not are not the only ones that convey negative messages. Other words, like mistake, damage, failure, refuse, and deny, also carry negative connotations and should be avoided when possible.

**Don't:** Failure to follow the directions may cause the blender to malfunction.

**Do:** Following the directions will ensure many years of carefree service from your blender.

**Don't:** We apologize for this error.

**Do:** We appreciate your calling this matter to our attention.

**Don't:** We close at 7 p.m. on Fridays.

**Do:** We're open until 7 p.m. on Fridays to give you time to shop after work.

Sometimes you can avoid negative language by switching to the subjunctive mood, which uses words like wish, if, and would to refer to conditions that are impossible or improbable. Such language, softens the impact of the negative message, making it more palatable to the reader. Here are two examples:

**Don't:** I cannot speak at your November meeting.

**Do:** I wish it were possible for me to speak at your November meeting.

**Don't:** I cannot release the names of our clients.

**Do:** Releasing the names of our clients would violate their right to privacy.

In short, stress what is true and what can be done rather than what is not true and what cannot be done. This is not to say that negative language has no place in business writing. Negative language is strong and emphatic, and sometimes you will want to use it. However, unless the situation clearly



calls for negative language, you are more likely to achieve your objective and to build goodwill for yourself and your organization by stressing the positive.

Because words are the building blocks for your message, choose them with care. Using short simple words, writing with clarity, vigour, and conciseness; and using positive language will help you construct effective sentences and paragraphs.

**Writing Effective Sentences:** A sentence has a subject and predicate and express at least one complete thought. Beyond these attributes, however, sentences vary widely in style, length, and effect. They are also very flexible; writers can move sentence parts around, add and delete information, and substitute words to express different ideas and emphasize different points. To build effective sentences, use a variety of sentence types, and use active and passive voice appropriately.

- 6) **Use a variety of Sentence Types:** There are four basic sentence types – simple, compounds, complex and compound-complex – all of which are appropriate for business writing.

A **simple sentence:** It contains one independent clause (a clause that can stand alone as a complete though). Because it presents a single idea and is usually (but not always) short, a simple sentence is often used for emphasis. Although a simple sentence contains only one independent clause, it may have a compound subject or compound verb (or both). All of the following sentences are simple.

- I quit.
- Individual Retirement Accounts are a safe option.
- Both individual Retirement Accounts and Simplified Employee Pension Plans are safe and convenient options as retirement investments for the entrepreneur.

A **compound sentence:** This contains two or more independent clauses. Because each clause presents a complete idea, each idea receives equal emphasis. (If the two ideas are not closely related, they should be presented in two separate sentences). Here are three compound sentences:

- Stacey listened, but I nodded.
- Morris Technologies made a major acquisition last year, and it turned out to be a disaster.
- Westmoreland Mines moved its headquarters to Prescott in 1984; however, it stayed there only five years and then moved back to Globe.



A **complex sentence**: It contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. For example, in the first sentence below, “Two scanners will save valuable input time” is an independent clause because it makes sense by itself.

- “Although it cost \$235” is a dependent clause because it does not make sense by itself.
- Although it cost \$235, the scanner will save valuable input time.
- George Bosley, who is the new CEO at Hubbell, made the decision.
- I will be moving to Austin when I assume my new position.

The dependent clause provides additional, but subordinate, information related to the independent clause.

A **compound-complex sentence**: This contains two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

- I wanted to write the report myself, but I soon realized that I needed the advice of our legal department. (two independent clauses and one dependent clause).
- If I can, I’ll do it; if I cannot, I’ll ask Shelia to do it. (two independent clauses and two dependent clauses).

**Sentence Variety**: Using a variety of sentence patterns and sentence lengths helps keep your writing interesting. Note how simplistic and choppy too many short sentences can be and how boring and difficult too many long sentences can be.

The sentences in these paragraphs should be revised to show relationships between ideas more clearly, to keep readers interested, and to improve readability. Use simple sentences for emphasis and variety, compound sentences for coordinate (equal) relationships, and complex sentences for subordinate relationships.

The first two sentences in the revision are complex, the third sentence is simple, and the last sentence is compound. The lengths of the four sentences range from 12 to 27 words. To write effective sentences, use different sentence patterns and lengths. Most sentences in good business writing range from 16 to 22.





- 7) **Use Active and Passive Voice Appropriately:** Voice is the aspect of a verb that shows whether the subject of the sentence acts or is acted on. In the active voice, the subject performs the action expressed by the verb. In the passive voice, the subject receives the action expressed by the verb.

**Active:** Inmac offers a full refund on all orders.

**Passive:** A full refund on all orders is offered by Inmac.

**Active:** Shoemaker & Doerr audited the books in 2002.

**Passive:** The books were audited in 2002 by Shoemaker & Doerr.

Passive sentences add some form of the verb to be to the main verb, so passive sentences are always somewhat longer than active sentences.

In the first set of sentences just given, for example, compare offers in the active sentence with is offered by in the passive sentence. In active sentences, the subject is the doer of the action; in passive sentences, the subject is the receiver of the action. And because the subject gets more emphasis than other nouns in a sentence, active sentences emphasize the doer, and passive sentences emphasize the receiver, of the action.

In the second set of sentences, either version could be considered correct, depending on whether the writer wanted to emphasize Shoemaker & Doerr or the books.

Use active sentences most of the time in business writing, just as you naturally use active sentences in most of your conversations. Note that verb voice (active or passive) has nothing to do with verb tense, which shows the time of the action. As the following sentences show, the action in both active and passive sentences can occur in the past, present, or future.

**Don't:** A very logical argument was presented by Hal. (passive voice, past tense).

**Do:** Hal presented a very logical argument. (Active voice, past tense)

**Don't:** An 18% increase will be reported by the eastern region. (Passive voice, future tense)

**Do:** The eastern region will report on 18% increase. (Active voice, future tense)

Passive sentences are most appropriate when you want to emphasize the receiver of the action, when the person doing the action is either unknown or unimportant, or when you want to be tactful in



conveying negative information. All the following sentences are appropriately stated in the passive voice:

- Protective legislation was blamed for the drop in imports. (Emphasizes the receiver of the action).
- Transportation to the construction site will be provided. (The doer of the action not important).
- Several complaints have been received regarding the new policy. (Tactfully conveys negative news)

Words, sentences, and paragraphs are all building blocks of communication. You have seen how using a variety of sentence types and using active and passive voice appropriately can help make your sentences more effective. Now you are ready to combine these sentences to form logical paragraphs.

**Developing Logical Paragraphs:** A paragraph is a group of related sentences that focus on one main idea. The main idea is often identified in the first sentence of the paragraph, which is then known as a topic sentence. The body of the paragraph supports this main idea by giving more information, analysis, or examples. A paragraph is typically part of a longer message, although one paragraph can contain the entire message, especially in such informal communications as memorandums and email. Paragraphs organize the topic into manageable units of information for the reader. Readers need a cue to tell them when they have finished a topic, so that they can pause and refocus their attention on the next topic. To serve this purpose, paragraphs must be unified and coherent, be stated in parallel structure, and be of an appropriate length.

- 8) **Keep Paragraphs Unified and Coherent:** Although closely related, unity and coherence are not the same. A paragraph has unity when all its parts work together to develop a single idea consistently and logically. A paragraph has coherence when each sentence links smoothly to the sentences before and after it.

**Unity:** A unified paragraph gives information that is directly related to the topic, presents this information in a logical order, and –omits irrelevant details. The following excerpt is a middle paragraph in a memorandum arguing against the proposal that Collins, a baby-food manufacturer, should expand into producing good for adults:



**Don't:** [1] We cannot focus our attention on both ends of the age spectrum. [2] In a recent survey, two-thirds of the under -35 age group named Collins as the first company that came to mind for the category “baby food products”. [[3] For more than 50 years we have spent millions of dollars annually to identify our company as the baby-food company, and market research shows that we have been successful. [4] Last year, we introduced Peas ‘N Pears, our most successful baby-food introduction ever. [[5]’ To now seek to position ourselves as a producer of food for adults would simply be incongruous. [6] Our well-defined image in the marketplace would make producing food for adults risky.

The paragraph obviously lacks unity. You may decide that the overall topic of the paragraph is Collins’s well-defined image as a baby-food producer. So Sentence 6 would be the best topic sentence. You might also decide that Sentence 4 brings in extra information that weakens paragraph unity and would be left out. The most unified paragraph, then, would be Sentences 6, 3, 2, 5 and 1, as shown here:

**Do:** Our well-defined image in the marketplace would make producing food for adults risky. For more than 50 years we have spent millions of dollars annually to identify our company as the baby-food company, and market research shows that we have been successful. In a recent survey, two-thirds of the under 35 age group named Collins as the first company that came to mind for the category “baby-food products” . to now seek to position ourselves as a producer of food for adults would simply be incongruous. We cannot focus our attention on both ends of the age spectrum.

A topic sentence is especially helpful in a long paragraph. It usually appears at the beginning of a paragraph. This position helps the writer focus on the topic, so the paragraph will have unity. And it lets the reader know immediately what the topic is.

**Coherence:** A coherent paragraph weaves sentences together so that the discussion is integrated. The reader never needs to pause to puzzle out the relationships or reread to get the intended meaning. The major ways to achieve coherence are to use transitional words and pronouns, to repeat key words and ideas, and to use parallel structure.

Transitional words help the reader see relationships between sentences. Such words may be as simple as first and other indicators of sequence.



Ten years ago, Collins tried to overcome market resistance to its new line of baby clothes. First, it mounted a multimillion-dollar ad campaign featuring the Mason quintuplets. Next, it sponsored a Collins Baby look-alike contest. Then it sponsored two network specials featuring Dr. Benjamin Spock.

Finally, it brought in the Madison Avenue firm of Morgan & Modine to broaden its image.

The words first, next, then, and finally clearly signal step-by-step movement. Now note the following logical transitions, aided by connecting words:

I recognize, however, that Collins cannot thrive on baby food alone. To begin with, since we already control 73% of the market, further gains will be difficult. What's more, the current baby boom is slowing. Therefore, we must expand our product line.

Transitional words act as road signs, indicating where the message is headed and letting the reader know what to expect.

A second way to achieve coherence is to use pronouns. Because pronouns stand for words already named, using pronouns binds sentences and ideas together. The pronouns are underlined here:

If Collins branches out with additional food products, one possibility would be a fruit snack for youngsters. Funny Fruits were tested in Columbus last summer, and they were a big hit. Roger Johnson, national marketing manager, says he hopes to build new food categories into a \$200 million business. He is also exploring the possibility of acquiring other established name brands. These acquired brands would let Collins expand faster than if it had to develop a new product of its own.

A third way to achieve coherence is to repeat key words. In a misguided attempt to appear interesting, writers sometimes use different terms for the same idea. For example, in discussing a proposed merger a writer may at different points use merger, combination, union, association, and syndicate. Or a writer may use the words administrator, manager, supervisor, and executive all to refer to the same person. Such "elegant variation" only confuses the reader, who has no way of knowing whether the writer is referring to the same concept or to slightly different variations of the concept. Avoid needless repetition, but use purposeful repetition to link ideas and thus promote paragraph coherence. Here is a good example:



Collins has taken several steps recently to enhance profits and project a stronger leadership position. One of these steps is streamlining operations. Collins's line of children's clothes was unprofitable, so it discontinued the line. Its four produce farms were likewise unprofitable, so it hired an outside professional team to manage them. This team eventually recommended selling the farms.

Ensure paragraph unity by developing only one topic per paragraph and by presenting the information in logical order. Ensure paragraph coherence by using transitional words and pronouns and by repeating key words.

- 9) **Use Parallel Structure:** The term parallelism means using similar grammatical structure for similar ideas – that is, matching adjectives with adjectives, nouns with nouns, infinities with infinities, and so on. Much widely quoted writing uses parallelism: for example, Julius Caesar's "I came, I saw, I conquered" and Abraham Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people, and for the people". Parallel structure smoothly links ideas and adds a pleasing rhythm to sentences and paragraphs, thereby enhancing coherence.

**Don't:** The new dispatcher is competent and a fast worker.

**Do :** The dispatcher is competent and fast.

**Don't:** The new grade of paper is lightweight, nonporous, and it is inexpensive.

**Do:** The new grade of paper is lightweight, nonporous, and inexpensive.

**Don't:** The training program will cover.

Vacation and sick leaves

How to resolve grievances

Managing your workstation

**Do:** The training program will cover

Vacation and sick leaves

Grievance resolution

Workstation management



**Don't:** One management consultant recommended either selling the children's furniture division or its conversion into a children's toy division.

**Do:** One management consultant recommended either selling the children's furniture division or conversion it into a children's toy division.

**Don't:** Gladys is not only proficient in word processing but also in desktop publishing.

**Do:** Gladys is proficient not only in word processing but also in desktop publishing.

In the last two sets of sentences above, note that correlative conjunctions (such as both/and, either/or, and not only/but also) must be followed by words in parallel form. Be especially careful to use parallel structure in report headings that have equal weight and in numbered lists.

**10) Control Paragraph Length:** How long should a paragraph of business writing be? As with other considerations, the needs of the reader, rather than the convenience of the writer, should determine the answer. Paragraphs should help the reader by signalling a new idea as well as by providing a physical break. Long blocks of unbroken text look boring and needlessly complex. And they may unintentionally obscure an important idea buried in the middle. On the other hand, a series of extremely short paragraphs can weaken coherence by obscuring underlying relationships.

Essentially, there are no fixed rules for paragraph length, and occasionally one or ten-sentence paragraphs might be effective. However, most paragraphs of good business writers fall into the 60 to 80 word range – long enough for a topic sentence and three or four supporting sentences. Although a single paragraph should never discuss more than one major topic, complex topics may need to be divided into several paragraphs. Your purpose and the needs of your reader should ultimately determine paragraph length.

### 9.3 STYLE OR FORM OF WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS

Following are the main style or form of letter:

**1) Indented Style or Form:** This is the oldest style and is now outdated. In this form, the inside address is in intended style, and every paragraph being 3 to 5 space away from the left margin. The indentation causes the letter to look uneven at the left margin. Besides, it takes more time to type because of the indenting. Figure 3.0 portrays the intentent style of writing letter:

**Figure 3.0 Indented Style**



Name of the Company & Addresses		Date.....
Inside Name.....		
Inside Address.....		
.....		
Salutation.....		
Subject.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
..... Body of Letter .....		
.....		
.....		
Complimentary Close Signature & Designation		

- 2) **Full Blocked Form:** This is the most modern style. All parts of the letters, except the printed letterhead, are aligned with left margin. A letter in this form saves more time because indentation is not required for any part. But some correspondents do not like it because it appears imbalances and heavy on the left side. Figure 3.1 describes the full block form of writing letter:

**Figure 3.1 Full Block Form**

Name & Address of the Company	
Date:	.....
Inside Name & Address	.....
Salutation	.....
Subject	.....
.....	
.....	
.....	
..... Body of Letter .....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
Complimentary Close	
Signature & Designation	

- 3) **Modified Blocked Form:** This style is a modification of the full block form. It eliminates the shortcoming of the full block style by keeping the date and complimentary close on the right in their usual position. The entire paragraph being at the left margin, and there is double space between the paragraph. Figure 3.2 shows the modified blocked form or style of writing a letter:

### Figure 3.2 Modified Blocked Form

<b>Name &amp; Address of the Company</b>	
Ref. Number .....	Date:.....
Inside Name & Address .....	
Salutation .....	
.....	
.....	
..... Body of Letter .....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
.....	
Complimentary Close Signature & Designation	

- 4) **Semi Blocked Form:** This is like the block style except that the paragraphs of the letter are intended. Those who use it say that it is easier to read paragraph which begins with an indented line because



<b>Name &amp; Address of the Company</b>		<b>Date:</b> .....
Inside Name & Address .....		
Salutation .....		
Subject .....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
..... Body of Letter .....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
		Complimentary Close Signature & Designation

- ### Figure 3.4 Hanging Indentation Form

<b>Name &amp; Address of the Company</b>	Date:.....
Inside Name & Address ..... ..... Salutation ..... Subject .....  ..... ..... ..... Body of Letter ..... ..... ..... .....	
	Complimentary Close Signature & Designation

- DDE GJUS&T, Hisar



All lines begin at the left margin and the inside address in the block form. The special features of this form are:

- It has no solution and no complimentary close;
- The subject line is in capitals, 3 lines below the inside address;
- Numbered items of a list begin at the left margin but if there is no number, the items are indented 5 spaces. There is no full-stop at the end of items.
- The writer name and title are typed in capitals in one line below the space for signature.
- The typist initials are in the left bottom corner.

The figure 3.5 given below shows the NOMA form or style of writing a business letter:

**Figure 3.5 NOMA Form or Style**

Name & Address of the Company	
Date .....	
Inside Name & Address .....	
Subject .....	
..... ..... ..... Body of Letter ..... ..... ..... .....	
Signature & Designation	

## 9.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Fill in the Blanks:

- 1) The business letters differ from ----- letters in that they are more formal in tone and writing style.
- 2) The Business ----- are a formal document which have a defined structure.
- 3) The purpose of ----- letters is to either convey customers about the sale or news or intimate about important information about newly launched or built facilities.
- 4) The ----- request letter contains a request for payment of a certain amount before the final date.



- 5) A ----- letter is a positive endorsement of a person's skills and attributes, written by someone familiar with their work, character, and accomplishments.

## 9.5 SUMMARY

Writing business letters and memos differs in certain important ways from writing reports. Keeps the proper sequence of letter writing in mind when you write and especially when you revise your business letters or memos. The heading contains the writer's address and the date of the letter. The writer's name is not included and only a date is needed in headings on letterhead stationery. The inside address shows the name and address of the recipient of the letter. This information helps prevent confusion. Also, if the recipient has moved, the inside addresses helps to determine what to do with the letter. In the inside address, include the appropriate title of respect of the recipient; and copy the name of the company exactly as that company writes it. When you do have the names of individuals, remember to address them appropriately: Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and so on. If you are not sure what is correct for an individual, try to find out how that individual signs letters or consult the forms-of-address section in a dictionary.

The salutation, the "Dear Sir" of the letter, is followed by a colon (except when a friendly, familiar, sociable tone is intended, in which case a comma is used). Notice that in the format, the salutation line is eliminated altogether. If you don't know whether the recipient is a man or woman, traditionally you write "Dear Sir" or "Dear Sirs" and just not worry about it. More recently, however, salutations such as "Dear Sir or Madame," "Dear Ladies and Gentlemen," "Dear Friends," or "Dear People" have been recommended. Deleting the salutation line altogether or inserting "To Whom It May Concern" in its place, however, is not always a good solution; it's quite impersonal.

Try to get a person's name within the organization; make a quick, anonymous phone call to get a name. Or, address the salutation to a department name, committee name, or a position name: "Dear Customer Relations Department," "Dear Recruitment Committee," "Dear Chairperson," "Dear Director of Financial Aid," for example.

As shown in the subject line replaces the salutation or is included with it. The subject line announces the main business of the letter. The actual message of course is contained in the body of the letter, the paragraphs between the salutation and the complimentary close. The "Sincerely yours" element of the business letter is called the complimentary close. Other common ones are "Sincerely yours," "Cordially," "Respectfully," or "Respectfully yours." You can design your own, but be careful not to create florid or wordy ones. Notice that only the first letter is capitalized, and it is always followed by a comma.



Usually, you type your name four lines below the complimentary close, and sign your name in between. If you are a woman and want to make your marital status clear, use Miss, Ms., or Mrs. in parentheses before the typed version of your first name. Whenever possible, include your title or the name of the position you hold just below your name. For example, "Technical writing student," "sophomore data processing major," or "Tarrant County Community College Student" are perfectly acceptable.

Just below the signature block are often several abbreviations or phrases that have important functions. To make sure that the recipient knows that items accompany the letter in the same envelope, use such indications as "Enclosure," "Encl.," "Enclosures (2)." For example, if you send a resume and writing sample with your application letter, you'd do this: "Encl.: Resume and Writing Sample." If the enclosure is lost, the recipient will know.

If you send copies of a letter to others, indicate this fact among the end notations also. If, for example, you were upset by a local merchant's handling of your repair problems and were sending a copy of your letter to the Better Business Bureau, you'd write this: "cc: Better Business Bureau." If you plan to send a copy to your lawyer, write something like this: "cc: Mr. Raymond Mason, Attorney."

Business letter communication is a complex process, involving the encoding, translation and decoding of messages. Effective communication through commercial letter requires the communicator to translate their messages in a way that is specifically designed for their intended audience. Creating and drafting an effective commercial letter requires a basic understanding of the communication process. Most commercial letters require the clear and unambiguous communication of a message in a way that can be clearly understood by the recipient. It is human nature to assume that when we communicate we are doing so effectively, and that if anything goes wrong consequently the responsibility for that must rest with the recipient.

In a commercial letter, the writer of the letter should understand very clearly the following steps:

Step 1: Organize your writing.

Step 2: Know what is and is not appropriate

Step 3: Write an informative beginning

Step 4: Write a revealing exchange of information

Step 5: Avoid clumsy phrases and complex vocabulary



Step 6: Apply the skills to good news and bad news messages

Step 7: Use short, clear sentences and simple punctuation

Step 8: Write a clear, meaningful subject line

Step 9: Convey your message in as few words as possible

Step 10: Use headings, generalizations, and paragraphs

Step 11: Write a cordial, informative conclusion

Step 12: Edit and proofread your writing.

Your intention and the needs of someone who reads your letter should at the end of the day make a decision as to what a letter need to carry.

## 9.6 KEYWORDS

- **Business Letter:** It is a type of correspondence between companies or between companies and individuals, such as customers, clients, contractors or other outside parties.
- **Complaint Letter:** Complaint letters are the types of business letters written by one party to another party or entity to convey disappointment about a certain issue.
- **Payment Request Letter:** The payment request letter contains a request for payment of a certain amount before the final date.
- **Appreciation Letter:** Appreciation letters are write to express thanks and gratitude towards people for their good deeds.

## 9.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

- 1) Define the concept 'commercial letter'. Discuss the essentials of a commercial letter. Also give a specimen of such letter.
- 2) "The single most significant characteristic of the commercial letter is that it must have a human face." Discuss.
- 3) "Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding." Is it true in case of commercial letter? Argue your viewpoint with suitable examples.
- 4) Explain the different style of presentation of business letters with the help of a specimen.



5) Write short note on the following:

- Indented Form
- Modified Form
- Block Form

6) What do you mean by business letter? What are the different types of business letter?

## 9.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Fill in the Blanks:

- 1) The business letters differ from **personal** letters in that they are more formal in tone and writing style.
- 2) The Business **letters** are a formal document which have a defined structure.
- 3) The purpose of **circular** letters is to either convey customers about the sale or news or intimate about important information about newly launched or built facilities.
- 4) The **payment** request letter contains a request for payment of a certain amount before the final date.
- 5) A **reference** letter is a positive endorsement of a person's skills and attributes, written by someone familiar with their work, character, and accomplishments.

## 9.9 REFERENCES/SUGGESTED READINGS

- 1) Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
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<b>Subject: Business Communication</b>	
<b>Course Code: BCOM 203</b>	<b>Author: Mr Ankit</b>
<b>Lesson No. 10</b>	<b>Vetter: Dr. Rajiv Kumar</b>

## COMPANY MEETINGS

### STRUCTURE

- 10.0 Learning Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Meaning of Meetings
  - 10.2.1 Objective of Meetings
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- 10.3 Requisites of a valid Meeting
  - 10.3.1 Notice of Meeting
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- 10.4 Check Your Progress
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- 10.6 Keywords
- 10.7 Self-Assessment Test
- 10.8 Answer to Check Your Progress
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### 10.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After learning this lesson, you will be able to recognize:



- Meaning and Objectives of Meeting
- Various types of Meeting
- Requisites for a valid Meeting

## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

The most common form of interactive communication is meetings. It encourages direct and face-to-face contact at different levels in a company. They act as channels of oral interaction between the organization's various stakeholders. As per the Collins, the meeting is an act of coming together. In a business setting, when two or more people gather to discuss an issue of significance termed as a business meeting. Alternatively, it is an approach through which a group of individuals tries to resolve the specific problems faced by their organization. In general, a meeting occurs when two or more people meet and discuss. In a business organization, depending upon the situation meeting could be conducted at different levels and with different styles. A meeting could be organizational or functional and of formal or informal type. Various formal and informal groups such as the Board of Directors, shareholders, operational heads, departmental heads, employee unions, and trade partners can hold a meeting. Essentially, a meeting must be fruitful and achieve its objective. In order to serve the purpose of a conference, all meeting participants must contribute altogether to optimizing the performance of the discussion. Meetings are held to handle different organizational matters. They are, however, accompanied by written communications such as notices, agenda, minutes, and report to the higher authorities to transfer details.

## 10.2 MEANING OF MEETING

A meeting is assembly of individuals gathered to discuss a particular assigned task. When a group of person meet to discuss, a meeting takes place. It is a crucial prerequisite of a legitimate meeting. But it does not describe a business conference. By prior notice or by mutual agreement, a meeting may be described as the assembly of group of persons to discuss and transact some business. A 'company meeting' is a gathering of the corporation's founders, shareholders, directors and debenture holders with prior notice, a time and place earlier stated.

The definitions of a meeting are as follows.

“Any gathering, assembly, or coming together of two or more persons for the transaction of some lawful business of common concern is called Meeting”. (P.K. Ghose)





“A concurrence or coming together of at least a quorum of members by previous notice or mutual agreement for transacting business for a common interest is a Meeting”. (**K. Kishore**)

Therefore, It may inferred that a meeting is a assembly of two or more person by former notice and mutual agreement at an fixed location and period for the transaction of any of the company's legitimate business.

### 10.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF MEETING

Following are the main objective of meeting:

- To notify and clarify the information to the members.
- To comprehend the situation.
- To get response from the members.
- To exchange ideas and knowledge among the members.
- To encourage members to accept changes.
- To resolve fights and misunderstandings.
- To take decisions on matters affecting the organization.
- To make a positive attitude among the members.

### 10.2.2 TYPES OF MEETING

The main types of meetings are the following:

1. **Formal meeting:** If official formalities, laws and etiquette hold a meeting, it is known as an official meeting. It is a prearranged meeting of a group of individual who have assembled to accomplish a shared purpose by verbal communication. The predetermined subjects, a set of goals and formal notices are the main characteristics of formal meetings. This meeting is headed by a chairperson on a specified time and designated place to discuss on an agreed agenda.
2. **Informal meeting:** Any conference arranged without having any official protocols is known as an informal meeting. This type of arrangement is less organised and controlled than an official meeting. It is because of lacking many significant features of official gathering including ‘minutes’, a ‘head’ and a set ‘agenda’. The informal meetings take place on normal place like a restaurant, coffee shop,



and participant's desks called upon on short notice using informal media. This type of 'meeting' is widespread in the office.

3. **Private meeting:** A meeting conducted for discussing private and constrained matters is known as the private meeting. In a private forum, general people are not allowed to participate in the conference. Only selected individuals are allowed to take part in the discussion.
4. **Public meeting:** A 'meeting' is conducted in a public place to discuss issues of public interests is known as public meeting. Here, general people are pleasantly invited.
5. **Company meeting:** A "Meeting" held by the manager, director, and secretary to discuss business problems and affairs of a company known as company meeting. It is subdivided into the following types:
  - **Statutory Meeting:** It is the first meeting of the members held only once in the life of a public corporation. It must have held within not less than one month nor more than six months from the commencement date. The key objective of the statutory meeting is to inform the shareholders about all essential facts of the new company. For this purpose, a statutory report must forward to every participant at least 21 days before the meeting day. This report encompasses all the vital information relating to the promotion and incorporation aspect of the company.
  - **Annual General Meeting (AGM):** It is an obligatory annual gathering of a company's investors and executives for discussing business-related matters. As per company's ordinance 1984, every company shall hold a general meeting of its members every year. The directors have the authority to convene the annual public meeting and present a yearly report containing information about the company's performance and strategy. The chairman selected among present member may give an overall status of the company performance to shareholders of the company. The secretary, on behalf of the directors, prepares the minutes of the meeting and may ask to read important documents.
  - **Extraordinary General Meeting:** It is also known as an emergency public meeting. This meeting deal with urgent matters that arise in between the two annual shareholders' meetings. The directors of the company have the power to convene an extraordinary general meeting within a gap of 18 months between two consecutive sessions. This gap is mandatory and shall be



maintained. The following are the main conditions for conducting an extraordinary public meeting:

- To amend the corporation's memorandum and articles of association documents
  - To issue new debentures
  - To increase, decrease or reorganise the share capital of the company
  - Any other urgent matter
- **Meeting of Board of Director:** Directors' meetings are called board meetings. These are company's most relevant and the most regularly held sessions. All relevant matters of organization and its policies are discussed and decided upon only at these meetings. It is an elected body of people representing a company's shareholders. This board is the governing body of a corporation that usually meets at regular intervals to set corporate policy and management policies. For this purpose, the board of directors are generally making the valid quorum for the meeting. The “Companies Act, 2013” gives broad discretions to the executives to frame rules and regulations of holding and conducting aboard meetings. These rules and regulations are known as “Standing Orders”.
  - **Class Meeting:** Class meetings are held by investors of a particular class of shares, such as preferred shareholders, equity shareholders and debenture holders. These meetings usually occurred when the rights of a particular class of investors are planned to be changed, diverse or affected. For example, it is appropriate to call for a meeting of preference shareholders and pass a resolution to cancel the arrears of dividends on accumulated preference shares. The holders of the other class of shares have no right to participate and vote in the event of such a class meeting.
  - **Meeting of Debenture Holder:** The debenture holders conduct these meeting when a company issue any new debentures and wants to amend the rate of interest on any existing debentures. The rules and procedures for debenture holders meetings usually specified on debenture trust deed.
  - **Meeting of Creditors:** The creditors call for a meeting if a company issues debentures on its incorporation or later. Infect, creditor meeting is not the company meeting because the creditors



organise such an arrangement. As per Section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013 the creditor meeting called for the following purpose:

- To resolve any grievance between the creditors and the company
  - To reduce the number of credits or interest payable
  - To get the creditors approval for the reorganisation and amalgamation
  - To get the creditor's approval for the winding up of a company
- **Director Committee Meeting:** The companies which have diversified fields of activity establish teams of its executives to deal with different business problems. When the director held a meeting on specific matters is known as a director committee meeting. Only members of the committee can take part in such meeting. Such a committee is of two types:
    - **Permanent Committees:** It is the company's working committee. The main function of this committee is the day to day administration of the company. The committee meets regularly and takes decisions about the company's administration. The committee members and its chairman selected from the board of the directors.
    - **Temporary Committees:** These committees created to take decisions on the matter that are important for the time being. The board of directors considers the recommendation of these committees and make the final decision.
  - **One-Man Meeting:** The presence of two or more than two persons is one of the essential conditions for conducting a valid meeting. Generally, there cannot be a one-person meeting. However, there are several exclusions suggested in the Companies Act, where the involvement of only one person considered to have held a meeting. These exceptions are as under:
    - Meeting Called by Tribunal
    - Absence of minimum number of members in an Adjourned Meeting
    - Meeting Convened by court
    - Meeting of the one-person committee of the board of directors
    - Class meetings of shareholders or creditors

### 10.3 REQUISITES OF VALID MEETING



A company meeting is valid only if it properly held. It is essential that the meeting of the company have all requisites of a good discussion and are as per the provision of law. It is vital to notify here that not only the meeting held conflicting with provision of law will be illegal but also all decisions taken in such meeting shall be invalid. The Companies Act, 2013 defines the circumstances to be followed by every company in organizing and conducting the company's meetings. The primary requisites of a valid meeting are:

- Notice of Meeting
- Agenda of Meeting
- Resolutions of Meeting
- Minutes of Meeting
- Quorum of Meeting
- Proxy for Meeting
- Chairman of Meeting
- Methods of voting in Meeting

#### 10.3.1 Notice of Meeting:

The word 'notice' originates from a Latin word meaning information. The term 'Notice' refers to the awareness of the meeting provided to the individual concerned. A duly held gathering when the participants obtained adequate notice. The notice informs to members about the date, time, place, and agenda for discussion. The effective notification of the meeting shall provide the recipient with all the information necessary to prepare for the meeting in a written form. The meeting notice can take the form of a memo, a letter, an email or a poster. A notice of the meeting should provide sufficient details to the recipient to attend a meeting without checking any sources or records.

Figure 7.0 displays a sample format of the notice for the “Annual/Special General Meeting of the XYZ Land Trust to be held at the Police Citizen Youth Centre, Warwick”, beginning at 10.00 a.m. on Saturday, 12 April 2020.

**Figure 7.0 Sample Performa of Notice of Annual/Special General Meeting**



**Notice of Annual/Special General Meeting**

25 March 2020

[Name]  
[Address]  
[Town State Postcode]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

An Annual/Special General Meeting of the XYZ Land Trust (XYZ) is to be held on **Saturday, 12 April 2020** at the Police Citizen Youth Centre, Warwick, commencing at 10.00am.

It is important that a quorum is achieved for this meeting in order for all discussions and decisions to be validated. As per the XYZ constitution, rule 99AB 'a quorum for all general meetings of the members of the land trust is not less than 'x' members present at the meeting'.

A number of issues will be discussed at this meeting, including:

- additional member nominations
- recent resignations
- administrative arrangements
- proposed amendments to the constitution
- Land trust capacity building training.

Please find enclosed an agenda outlining these issues. If you have any questions, please contact either:

Source: [www.coursehero.com](http://www.coursehero.com)

### 10.3.2 Agenda of Meeting:

The agenda is a list of the business matters discussed in a meeting. A well-arranged agenda will help the chairperson transact business of the meeting. It ensures that decisions are made effectively. A copy of the meeting agenda is circulated to the participants in advance. All items in an agenda must be organized serially.

#### Preparation of Meeting Agenda:

An agenda as a vital requisite for a valid meeting must be prepared carefully. It includes all relevant business matters for discussion in the upcoming meeting. Having a clear agenda helps the participants to prepare for it. Preparing an agenda is beneficial to practice because of:

- It enables the participants ready for the meeting in advance.



- It allows the chairperson to convene the meeting quickly because a clear agenda has a set procedure.
- It ensures that only relevant matters to be discussed in a meeting.
- It provides that every fact is correctly considered for discussion.
- It helps in preparation of the minutes.

### **Drafting of Meeting Agenda:**

It does not necessarily require the collection of skills to draft an agenda for a meeting. In only one day you can prepare a plan as long as you know what the meeting is all about and who can attend the conference. However, if you are looking for advice on the drafting of a meeting agenda, the following point should keep in mind:

- It should be clear and obvious.
- It should be in a summarized form.
- It should put routine matters first and the other issues later.
- All the problems of a similar nature should put close to each other on the agenda.

### **Elements of Business Meeting Agenda:**

Following are the essential elements that should be included in a business meeting agenda to conduct an effective meeting:

- **Types of Meeting:** The agenda of the business meeting should specify what kind of meeting it is if it is a meeting of departments, a committee meeting, a meeting of the board, a gathering of shareholders, and so on.
- **Meeting Objectives and Goals:** The business meeting agenda should have a clear statement of the objectives and goals of the meeting.
- **Date of the Meeting:** The plan for a business meeting should mention the date when the meeting will take place.



- **Start and End time of Meeting:** The business meeting agenda should say the starting time (when the meeting will start) and closing time (when the meeting will end).
- **The venue of the Meeting:** The business meeting agenda should mention the venue or location of the meeting where the conference is conducting.
- **Topics and Subtopics of Meeting:** The business meeting agenda should state the main issues and sub-issues that must discuss in a meeting.

### 10.3.3 Resolutions of Meeting:

A resolution is a decision taken on a motion by voting in a meeting. When something proposed at a conference, it is called a motion. In simple words, the subject matter discussed in the forum by the members known as motion. When the discussion about the motion is over, the chairman calls for a vote. If the requisites number of members personally or by proxy, voting in favour of the motion, it becomes a resolution. So, a resolution is result of the discussion in the meeting. It is obligatory for organization. It becomes valuable when it approved and the minutes make the evidence of such resolution.

#### Rules Regarding Resolutions:

Every association, business, or company has to function according to the guidelines of the resolutions passed in general meetings, executive meetings, committee meetings and any other if any. Therefore, the importance of resolutions is endless. Specific rules have to be strictly observed for passing resolutions. They are:

- The framing of a resolution done with great care so that sense of resolution is clear without any ambiguity. The secretary can help in framing process as an expert. The motion itself drafted in such a way that it can be adopted as a perfect resolution.
- There are many types of drafting a resolution. Any type can be followed. A formal resolution should be prepared in a specific manner.
- A resolution must enter in the Minute Book in verbatim, i.e., word for word.
- When a resolution approved, it cannot be withdrew or cancelled either at the same meeting or any upcoming meeting by-transient another resolution.

#### Types of Resolutions:





Following are the main types of resolutions:

1. **Ordinary Resolution:** This is the most common type of resolution. An ordinary resolution is passed by a simple majority of votes which is more than 50% of votes of the members. A simple majority means the excess of votes 'for' the resolution than 'against' it. Suppose, votes for resolution are equal then the chairman can cast his vote for the resolution to be accepted or rejected. Such kind of resolution is required to take decisions on regular matters of the companies. According to companies act, an ordinary resolution required to be passed in the following cases:
  - To change the name of a company identical to another company.
  - To alter the company's share capital.
  - To accept the annual accounts and balance sheet of the company.
  - To appoint, replace and fix the remuneration of the company's auditors.
  - To alter the prospectus of the company.
  - To fill the vacancies of directors retiring by rotations.
  - To approve the remuneration of directors.
  - To approve voluntary winding up if the articles provided.
  - To approve appointment and remuneration of a liquidator for voluntary winding up.
2. **Special Resolution:** A special resolution needs a specific margin of votes such as two-third majority or three-fourth majority to pass the resolution. Such resolutions are needed when any decision has to be taken, disturbing the structure of the company. A special resolution is a procedure by which a company can perform such vital acts which are necessary for the smooth operations of its business. The companies Act clearly states the following activities which a company can accomplish only by a special resolution:
  - To alter the provisions of company's memorandum, articles and registered office.
  - To reduce its share capital.
  - To keep a register of members at a place other than the registered office.



- To make variations in the rights of particular classes of shares.
- To obtain an order from the court for closing of the company.
- To issue further shares to any person other than equity shareholders.
- To appoint one or more person to inspect the businesses of the company.

#### 10.3.4 Minutes of Meeting:

A minute is a record of the proceeding of any conference. During the conference, the matters listed on the agenda discussed in sequence. All members express their ideas and discuss amongst themselves the merits and demerits of each item of the agenda. Thus, minutes are the authorized documents of the proceedings of the conference. In simple words, minutes are the brief explanation of discussions held and decisions taken at the meeting. An authorized person has to retain all such arguments, discussions and conclusions in writing specifically. The key objective of scripting minutes is to keep a record of formal discussion and preparing background for future discussion.

#### Elements of Minutes of Meeting:

The minutes of a meeting must contain:

- Date and number of meeting
- A list of name of members who attend the meeting
- A list of members who did not participate in the discussion
- The recorded information of the previous minutes and any amendments
- The contextual information of issue under discussions
- A clear and explicit explanation of the decision reached
- A separate minute must write on the policy issue of the specific case

#### 10.3.5 Quorum of Meeting:

The another elements of a valid meeting is the required quorum of members. A quorum defined as the minimum number of members must be present for a valid meeting. A meeting cannot start and transact business until there is a minimum number of voting members make a *quorum or majority*. Without



a *quorum*, the meeting is never correctly constituted. It cannot transact business validly. Only such members who have the right to vote can constitute a quorum. Any business transacted where a *quorum* is not present is null and void. What should be the appropriate quorum is solely at the discretion of committee members. The number of members qualifying for a majority may differ from meeting to meeting or company to company. Such a number is desirable to have a representative character in a forum, and no decisions made with a minimum number of people present. At the same time, the quorum must not be too high for a small attendance to cause a meeting to fall through.

**Exception of quorum for a valid meeting:**

Usually, a quorum required for a legitimate meeting. However, a smaller number of members can make up the quorum in the following circumstances:

- Any number present at the adjourned meeting make up the quorum if a meeting adjourned for lack of quorum.
- In the case of class meetings, if one person alone owns all the shares of that particular class of shares, the quorum shall be formed on his own.
- At a board meeting, when a problem occurs in which one or more directors are involved, the director or directors concerned can-not engage in the discussion. The remaining directors draw up the quorum.
- At an annual general meeting of a corporation lodged at the request of only one member of the company by order of the central government, or a public meeting convened by the Company Law Board at the request of one member of the company, the quorum shall be exercised by the member alone at the meeting.

**10.3.6 Proxy for Meeting:**

In meetings, proxy means a replacement sent by a member to attend a meeting and vote on his behalf. The idea comes from the Companies Act, 2013. Section 105 of the Act provides that member of a company entitled to send another person to attend a meeting to vote on his behalf. A proxy cannot vote if the members arrive late and decide to vote for him/herself. The proxy shall not have any right to speak, at the meeting. A proxy has special importance in a company's meeting. Generally, shareholders of a



company spread over the entire country. It is not possible for shareholders to personally attend the company's meetings. In such a case, the members for whom it is not possible to participate in the company's discussions, appoint another person to represent them in such meeting. The instrument appointing a proxy must be in writing and must be signed by the appointer or his attorney duly authorised in writing.

### **10.3.7 Chairman of Meeting:**

The other requisites of a valid meeting are the chairman. He presides over the meeting and conducts its proceedings. The chairman as a head presides over meetings and makes sure that meetings commenced in an arranged manner. The deputy or vice-chairman takes over the administration of meeting in the absence of the chairman. Unless otherwise provided, the member directly present at the meeting shall, by show of hands or by a ballot, chose one of them to be the chairman of the meeting. For leading a meeting, a chairperson needs to shuffle between different leadership styles. It enables him/her to guide a meeting to its destination in the form of conclusion. Leadership style could be authoritarian wherein discussion is totally under the control of the chairperson, and members who are in support are appreciated. The drawback of such style is it hinders the free flow of views of members. On the contrary, the participative style of leadership provides an opportunity for all the members to put forth their opinions. Adopting such a style for conducting a meeting could be time-consuming. Overall, a chairperson needs to shuffle between the leadership styles to meet the objective of the meeting. Apart from leadership style, a chairperson must understand the presence of diversity among the members ranging from hyperactive to submissive, yes man to arrogant and excellent listeners to poor listeners. It is essential to ensure that every member must contribute. At the end of the meeting, chairperson needs to mention the deliberations made, decisions reached, and future course of action.

### **Qualities of a good chairman:**

Following are the main qualities that should be presence in a good chairman:

- He/she must have very good communication skills
- He/she must be highly knowledgeable
- He/she must be an impartial individual
- He/she must be capable of making good decisions without differing



- He/she must be one who isn't prone to being discouraged

### **Functions of Chairman during the meeting:**

Following are the main functions of the chairman of the meeting:

- The chairman should ensure that meeting held properly according to rules.
- The chairman should take all major decisions after discussing with the secretary.
- The chairperson of the meeting shall be responsible for bringing matters to the vote if consensus is not achieved.
- The chairman should announce the results of the poll after a vote has been taken.
- The chairman should ensure that a proper order prevails during the meeting.
- The chairman should ensure that irrelevant discussions do not overshadow the summit.
- The chairman should ensure that former minutes read before starting the meeting.
- The chairperson should clarify any misunderstanding arising during a meeting.
- The chairman should inform members that progress made or not.
- The chairman should reveal to members about what they accomplished at the end of the meeting.
- The chairman should approve the minutes by putting his signature when the meeting is over.

### **10.3.8 Methods of Voting in Meeting:**

Voting is the explicit expression of assent or dissent for or against any proposal or resolution. When a motion or proposed solution is discussed by the members and is then put to the vote to ascertain the decision of the majority of the members. Voting defined as the process of formally indicating choice between two or more motions. For instance, the chairperson can request that participants cast their votes for or against a specific proposal/motion during a meeting. There is something the chairman might claim like this: "At this point, we are now going to vote on a motion to increase our employees' wages by 10%." Having said that a voting method is selected and then voting will start during the meeting. During a meeting, there are a variety of ways in which voting can take place. Some of them are:



1. **Voting by Show of Hands:** In a company meeting, this is the simplest and most widely used method of voting. The chairman of the panel asks the members who support the motion to raise their hands and then count the number of hands raised in such a voting procedure. After this, he asks those opposed to the motion to do so and the number of hands counts again. The motion is carried if the number of hands raised in support of the motion is greater than those opposed to it; otherwise, it is dropped.
2. **Voting by Poll:** Voting at meetings is generally carried out by a poll. It is the mechanism by which persons make their choice by specifying it or ticking it on a pre-printed voting paper regarding a specific problem. The voting papers are collected, and results are announced at the end of the voting procedure.
3. **Voting by Division:** A motion or proposal is put before the participants in the meeting to vote on this method of voting. By rising from their seats and walking into various rooms, participants vote on the motion. One room will be for respondents who support the motion, while the other room is for respondents who are not in favour of the motion. Special tellers then count the occupants of each room, and the results are relayed to the chairman, who then declares the final results.
4. **Voting through a Ballot:** In this form of voting, participants of a meeting privately make their decisions on a specific issue on individual voting papers. The paper is then placed into a ballot box after personally indicating their preference on the voting paper and then counted later after the entire voting process.
5. **Voting by Acclamation:** It is known as voice voting as well. This method of voting, as the name suggests, enables participants to state their decision on a specific motion by saying it loudly to the chairperson and other participants at a meeting. The moderator of the meeting will usually ask the members in favour of a specific motion to cast their votes by saying 'yes' during voice-voting. Then the president would ask those who oppose the motion to cast their votes by saying 'no'. Results are declared based on the number of voices that say 'yes' or 'no'.
6. **Voting by Electronic Mode:** It is also known as E-voting. E-voting is a facility given to the members of a company to cast their votes on the resolutions through electronic mode. It provides



an opportunity for the shareholders residing in distant places to take part in the decision-making process of the company.

## 10.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Fill In the Blanks:

1. A ----- is a assembly of individuals gathered to discuss a particular assigned task.
2. If official formalities, laws and etiquette hold a meeting, it is known as a ----- meeting.
3. ----- is a method of casting a vote electronically.
4. The ----- is the head of the meeting.
5. ----- is a substitute sent by a members to appear and cast vote on his behalf.
6. ----- is a record of the proceeding of any meeting.

## 10.5 SUMMARY

Meetings are an excellent way of handling issues and sharing information. Every organization must ensure that their meetings become more constructive than boring. Most importantly there must be an issue worth discussing at a meeting. Meetings are generally conducive for three purposes namely information sharing, problem solving, and rejoicing. Chairperson as well as the members of the meeting must understand their roles and responsibilities. Any meeting has few important elements like Notification of meeting, Agenda of meeting, and Minutes of meeting. The purpose of notification is to inform all the members of the committee about the meeting. Agenda of the meeting states the business to be transacted at the meeting. Minutes of the meeting provides a snapshot of the business transacted and resolution passed over various agenda items. The organisers of meeting should clearly understand the purpose of each element. For writing Notice, Agenda and Minutes standard formats or guidelines should be adopted in order to avoid any ambiguity. Seating arrangement for a meeting is another important decision area, as it impacts the flow of communication and eventually the outcome of a meeting.

## 10.6 KEYWORDS

- **Agenda:** It is a list of business issues discussed in a meeting.
- **Minutes:** Minutes is a record of the proceeding of any meeting. The main purpose of writing minutes is to keep record of formal discussion and preparing background for future discussion.



- **Proxy:** Proxy is a substitute sent by members to appear and cast vote on his behalf.
- **E-Voting:** It is a method of casting a vote electronically.
- **Resolution:** It is the final decision taken on a motion by voting in a meeting.

## 10.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. What is meeting? What are its objectives?
2. What do you mean by meeting? What are the various forms of meetings?
3. What do you mean by “Agenda”? Why is it socializing among the participants before the meeting?
4. What are the different points that should be kept in mind during the planning of the “Notice and Agenda”?
5. Write short notes on following:
  - Resolutions
  - Quorum
  - Methods of voting
6. Prepare a “Notice and Agenda” for a vehicle manufacturing business for the 6th annual meeting of the board of directors.
7. What is meeting? What are the requisites of a valid meeting?

## 10.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Fill In the Blanks:

1. Meeting
2. Formal
3. E-voting
4. Chairman
5. Proxy
6. Minutes

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10. <https://hosbeg.com/methods-of-voting-at-meetings/>
11. <https://dominicanewsonline.com/news/homepage/news/general/stay-away-from-parliament-carbon-warns/>
12. [www.coursehero.com](http://www.coursehero.com)



<b>Subject: Business Communication</b>	
<b>Course Code: BCOM 203</b>	<b>Author: Dr. Mani Shrestha</b>
<b>Lesson No. 11</b>	<b>Vetter: Prof. Harbhajan Bansal</b>

## **CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO ENQUIRIES AND ORDER PLACING**

### **STRUCTURE**

- 11.0 Learning Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Business Letter Writing: A Snapshot
- 11.3 Business Letter Types
  - 11.3.1 Sales Letter
  - 11.3.2 Enquiry Letter
  - 11.3.3 Reply Letter
  - 11.3.4 Order Letter
- 11.4 Check Your Progress
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Keywords
- 11.7 Self-assessment Test
- 11.8 Answer to Check Your Progress
- 11.9 References/Suggested Readings

### **11.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After going through this lesson, students will be able to:

- Familiarize themselves with specific kinds of external communication
- Communicate effectively outside the organization through written communication



## 11.1 INTRODUCTION

On a daily basis, every organization interacts with its external environment. Generally, organizations are created to do business wherein products are offered to potential customers for their consumption. For generating business for the organization, people concerned have to initiate certain interactions. This interaction is in the form of exchange of information. The information is exchanged with various stakeholders present outside the business entity. Poor communication affects the image of a business, hence must be effective. For interaction, both oral as well as written means could be adopted. For the purpose of record keeping, legality, standardization, and specificity, written communication is preferred over oral communication. The purpose of such communication is to resolve the doubts and to persuade the receiver to act in a desired manner. Business letters are one of the most common methods to interact with the external stakeholders. Depending upon the requirement of the situation, a business letter could be modified and delivered. In the coming sections, certain situation based business letters would be discussed.

## 11.2 BUSINESS LETTER WRITING: A SNAPSHOT

As discussed in the previous section, a business letter is the most popular form of external written communication. With passage of time and availability of technology, business letters are now sent via email. Though the mode of sending the information may have changed, the presentation of content hasn't. Business letters are still written on the basis of the purpose it serves. Two things are of utmost importance in this context- first, structure and layout of the letter and second, the context in which letter is written. Context also decides the type of a business letter such as enquiry letter, sales letter, good newsletter, and bad news letter. Before going any further, it is pertinent to quickly go through both the aspects of business letter writing.



**Structure and Layout of a business letter:** To enhance the effectiveness of business letter, the writer must follow all the principles of effective writing such as clarity, conciseness, completeness, courtesy, correctness, concreteness, and consideration. Apart from following the writing principles, it is important to include the basic components of letter such as:

- **Address:** It is the starting point of a letter. It provides information about the details about sender and receiver. It must include name, designation, name of the organization and place of the organization along with pin code and may be phone number/ email id. It is followed by mentioning the date in a proper format i.e complete name of month, date, and complete year (e.g. October 21, 2010).
- **Title and salutation:** In order to standardize and remove ambiguity during official correspondence, you can address recipients as Dear/ Respected Sir/ Madam.
- **Body of letter:** Body of a letter is its main part. It can be further divided into three sections. The first section points out the purpose of the letter and mentions the reason for writing the letter. The second section conveys the details and describe the supportive information for section one. Finally, the last section discusses the expected actions or reactions on the part of recipient towards statements made under the letter.
- **Closing:** Closing of a business letter is equally important. It is also known as complimentary close where a single sentence followed by a phrase is mentioned. For example, 'In anticipation of an early response' followed by 'Yours Sincerely'. After a complementary closing, Signature is marked and name of the sender is written. If the sender wishes, he or she can add few more information like contact number or email id.



Layout tells us about the looks of a letter. It is the arrangement of information in a letter. Full block and modified block are the few widely accepted styles of layout. The characteristics of a full block layout are that all the information on the letter is left aligned and no punctuation related formalities are followed. On the other hand, in a modified full block layout style the sender's address, date, complementary closing, signature, name of sender and designation are placed to the right of the center of the page. Rest of the information is presented in a block style. Following is the sample of full block layout:

Letter Head	
Sender's Address	
Address Lines	
Date: (Month Date, Year)	
Receiver's Name	
Designation	
Address Lines	
Salutation: (Dear Sir/ Madam)	
Subject: (Specific title line of the subject)	
(Body Paragraph –I)	
(Body Paragraph – II)	
(Body Paragraph –III)	
Complementary Close: (Sincerely yours)	
Sender's Signature	
Sender's Name	
Enclosures	

### 11.3 BUSINESS LETTER TYPES



After having an understanding about the structure and layout of a business letter, the next aspect of business letter writing is to get clarity about the purpose of writing. The situation guides about the type of information to be included in a letter. The coming sub sections include examples of different kind of letters. Kindly note, the address part of each letter example is deliberately omitted to avoid repetition of information. While writing a business letter you are suggested to include the address of sender, date, address of receiver, and subject strictly as per the formats discussed above.

### 11.3.1 Sales Letter

Before discussing an enquiry letter one must understand what causes generation of enquiry. Generally, a company manufacturing a product uses various means to market it. Their first task is to inform the potential customers about their product and for this purpose a sales letter is drafted. A sales letter is one of the most commonly used business letter. Purpose of sales letter is to persuade customers or other stakeholders to act in desired manner. Following are the characteristics of a sales letter:

- It is like an advertisement in a letter form.
- It is used as a part of direct marketing campaign.
- It discusses about the product and benefits offered to the prospective customers.
- It offers a reason for making a quick decision about the purchase.
- It possesses an attractive opening to generate the interest of the reader followed by introduction of the product.

Following is a sample sales letter by a personal care company KJ Personal Care Pvt. Ltd:

**KJ Personal Care Pvt. Ltd.**

Dear Sir

Here comes an excellent opportunity to win wonderful prizes from KJ Personal Care. The only simple thing you have to do is to provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of 3 of your friends who use cosmetics.

That's True! You heard it right. Just refer 3 of your friends by filling up enclosed forms and you are straight away entitled to enter into a contest that could win you a mega prize without paying a single paisa.

Grand Prize (1)

A free round trip for two to Atlanta, USA.

First Prize: (2)

Two Years supply of KJ Personal Care products to two lucky winners.

Second Prize: (20)

Xiomi smart phones for next 20 lucky winners.

Consolation Prize: (100)

One month supply of KJ Personal Care products to next 100 winners.

Just to remind you that products of KJ Personal Care products are the products of the times and follow international standards as far as quality is concerned. We are glad to inform you that number of satisfied customers of KJ Personal Care products has just doubled since last one year and we are happy to have you as our privileged customer.

This is not the end!!! each person you refer to us will get a special gift hamper from our company. Please remember to refer only valid contacts to become eligible for the mega prize. We have enclosed postage paid envelop with this letter so that you don't need to spend anything.

Thanks for being our privileged customer.

Yours faithfully

*Mark Stan*

(Mark Stan)

Head, Marketing

Enclosure: Postage paid envelop and blank forms



### 11.3.2 ENQUIRY LETTER

An enquiry letter is written when we are interested in gaining information from other organizations. These kind of enquiries are generally sought for trading purpose. Letter of enquiries are also sent at the time of entering into a new business, looking for new suppliers, interesting in becoming an agent, making an instant purchase etc. Such kind of letters must clearly specify about the information required, the duration within which information is required, and the format in which it is required. The broad areas of enquiries are related to asking for a catalogue, pricelist, demonstration, personal visit, terms and conditions, scope for product modification, warranties and mode of payment.

#### Diamond Sports

Dear Sir

We are into sales of sports goods since last 20 years and enjoy an excellent reputation in the market. Kindly inform us if you can supply the following sports goods in a months' time.

Sr No	Item Description	Quantity
1	SS Cricket Bat- Regular Size	80
2	Yonex -350 Shuttle Cocks	75 boxes
3	Cosco- Tennis Balls (3 balls pack)	70 boxes
4	Cosco- Basket Balls (Size 6)	25

It would be helpful if you could mention their individual prices along with mode of payment, discounts, and other terms and conditions.

We would appreciate an early response.

Yours faithfully

*J Ram*

(Jeet Ram)

Partner

Source: [https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/view\\_f.php?category=1401](https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/view_f.php?category=1401)





### 11.3.3 Reply Letter

Reply letters are written in response to a letter of enquiry. A reply letter has much of its relevance as it can result into a sale. From the business point of view an effective reply letter can convert an enquiry into order. Also, it shows the professionalism on the part of receiver of enquiry letter to provide prompt and desired information. Generally, a reply letter is followed by a clarification and eventually an order. While writing a reply letter, it is important to provide exact and accurate information about the queries mentioned in the enquiry letter. Try to provide detailed information to avoid any kind of ambiguity.

**Excel Sports Ltd.**  
**[Exclusive Distributors (North India) for all leading Sports Brands]**

Dear Sir

First of all we thank you for showing interest in dealing with our organization. We are glad to inform you that our organization is into supply of sports related goods since last 25 years. We are having an exclusive dealership for almost all prominent sports brands. As desired, following is the price of each item (inclusive of all taxes):

Sr No	Item Description	Quantity	Price (INR)	Availability
1	SS Cricket Bat- Regular Size	80	980 per piece	Yes
2	Yonex -350 Shuttle Cocks	75 boxes	480 per box	Yes
3	Cosco- Tennis Balls (3 balls pack)	70 boxes	240 per box	Yes
4	Cosco- Basket Balls (Size 6)	25	560 per piece	Yes

We also assure you the delivery of all required items within 30 days of receipt of the order. If you order within next five days, we commit to offer you a discount of 7% on the total billed amount. We accept payment strictly through cheques only. Apart from that we expect full payment within a week's time of the delivery of the order.

Wishing for a prosperous relationship.

Yours sincerely

*Rajeev Jaiswal*  
 (Rajeev Jaiswal)  
 Owner



Source: [https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/view\\_f.php?category=1401](https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/view_f.php?category=1401)

### 11.3.4 Order Letter

When both the parties i.e. buyer and seller are interested in entering into a contract, an order letter is written. From the buyer's point of view, it is called as purchase order and from the seller's side it becomes a sales order. When both purchase order and sales order are matching with each other, a contract is created. As these letters are having a legal binding once contract is created detailed description of product, price, quantity, mode of payment, time of delivery and specification must be mentioned.

Source: [https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/view\\_f.php?category=1401](https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/view_f.php?category=1401)

#### Diamond Sports

Dear Sir

Thank you very much for promptly replying to our queries. It is highly appreciable that you have provided all the information asked for. We found your rates highly competitive. We are also comfortable with your terms and conditions. Keeping all these things in mind we wish to place an order as per the following description:

Sr No	Item Description	Quantity	Price (INR)	Amount (INR)
1	SS Cricket Bat- Regular Size	80	980 per piece	78400
2	Yonex -350 Shuttle Cocks	75 boxes	480 per box	36000
3	Cosco- Tennis Balls (3 balls pack)	70 boxes	240 per box	16800
4	Cosco- Basket Balls (Size 6)	25	560 per piece	14000
	TOTAL			145200

Terms and conditions as stated in our previous communication vide letter no. xx/vbn/vbg

Kindly inform us the moment you dispatch the order.

Yours faithfully

J Ram

### 11.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



Fill In the Blanks:

1. **Business letters** are one of the most common methods to interact with the external stakeholders.
2. **Reply letters** are written in response to a letter of enquiry.
3. An **enquiry** letter is written when we are interested in gaining information from other organizations.
4. **Layout** is the arrangement of information in a letter.
5. A reply letter is followed by a clarification and eventually an order.

### 11.5 SUMMARY

Business letters are one of the most common methods to interact with the external stakeholders. Depending upon the requirement of the situation a business letter could be modified and delivered. Business letters are still written on the basis of the purpose it solves. First, structure and layout of the letter and second, the context for which letter is written. Context also decides the type of a business letter such as enquiry letter, sales letter, reply letter or order placing letter.

### 11.6 KEYWORDS

- **Sales letter:** A letter drafted to persuade customers or other stakeholders to act in desired manner.
- **Enquiry letter:** An enquiry letter is written when we are interested in gaining information from other organizations.
- **Order placing letter:** When both the parties i.e. buyer and seller are interested in entering into a contract, an order letter is written.

### 11.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

1. What are the key characteristics of a sales letter?
2. Under what circumstances letter of enquiry and letter of reply are written?
3. What are the essential of an order letter?

### 11.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Fill In the Blanks:



1. **Business letters** are one of the most common methods to interact with the external stakeholders.
2. **Reply letters** are written in response to a letter of enquiry.
3. An **enquiry** letter is written when we are interested in gaining information from other organizations.
4. **Layout** is the arrangement of information in a letter.
5. A reply letter is followed by a clarification and eventually an order.

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## NOTES

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## NOTES

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