INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Objective: The main objective of this lesson is to make the students learn on the subject matter of the business communication vis-à-vis its nature and importance.

Structure

1.1   Introductio n

1.2   The Concept of Communication

1.3   Significance of Communication

1.4   Nature of Business Communications: A Case Study

1.5   Summary

1.6   Key Words

1.7   Self Assessment Exercise

1.8   Suggested Readings

1.1   Introduction

"You cannot not communicate". This statement is quite often misunderstood by many of us. We may be fussy about the grammar of this sentence and that is at the cost of the its spirit. It, in fact, this statement let us know that we cannot remain without commutation even if we feel as we have not communicated anything but still we have commutated everything. If you are like the majority of us, you spend more time in communicating than doing anything else. Probably you spend a hefty part of each day in one-to-one speaking, writing and

listening. When you are not talking or listening, you are presumably communicating in supplementary ways like - understanding, lettering, gesturing, and drawing. Or perhaps, you are just taking in information by seeing, feeling, or smelling. All of these activities are forms of communication and certainly you do them right through most of your time.

Obviously, such activity, which we are engrossed in so much, has to be significant. Perhaps, it is the most important of all our activities. It is easy to make out that communication is what has enabled us to develop the civilized society. It is one activity that we human beings clearly do better than the other creatures, and it basically explains our dominant role in this universe. Communication has enabled us to organize - to work in groups; and through organization, we have been able to overcome barriers to our existence that we could not have subjugated individually. But we need not discuss further how communication has contributed to our development as human beings. Its role is understandable to all of us. We have to articulate that communication is vital to our success and well-being in enlightened civilization.

1.2   The Concept of Communication

The word communication has been derived from the Latin word 'communis' that means 'common'. However, communication incorporates, besides commonality, the concepts of transfer, meaning and information. **The communication can be defined as the process through which two or more persons come to exchange ideas and understanding among them.**

The definition involves two aspects in communication:

First, there is something, which is transmitted, such as, facts, feelings, ideas, etc. It implies that there must be a receiver if communication is to occur. The sender of message must consider the receiver while structuring his message from a technical standpoint as well as in delivering it. When the receiver is not considered, there is either no response or there is wrong response.

Second, the definition emphasizes the understanding element in the communication. Sharing of understanding would be possible only when the person, to whom the message is meant, understands it in the same sense in which the sender of the message wants him to understand. Thus, communication involves something more than mere transmission of the message or transmission and physical receipt thereof. The correct interpretation of the message is important from the point of view of organizational efficiency. As such, the greater the degree of understanding present in the communication, the more the likelihood that human action will proceed in the direction of accomplishment of goals.

How do we define communication?

"Communication is something so simple and difficult that we can never put it in simple words," says *T.S. Mathews*.

But we do need a definition to understand the term. In his book Communication in Business, *Peter Little* defines communication as follows:

"Communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and / or organizations so that an understanding response results."

Another very simple definition of 'communication' has been provided by *W.H. Newman and C.F. Summer Jr*:

"Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions, or emotions by two or more persons."

'Information' is the key word in the first definition communication consists in transmitting 'information'. But this definition does not indicate the objects about which information is to be transmitted. This is precisely what is being done 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 deliberately 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. Often we may have come across words of high praise spoken in a scoffing tone. In such a case, the words signify nothing and the tone is the real thing. Similarly, high-sounding expressions of bravery may be only a mask to conceal a person's timidity and cowardice that may be betrayed by his facial expressions.

The following definition offered by William Scott appear comprehensive and particularly satisfying to the students of 'business communication' since it touches all aspects of the communication process:

"Managerial 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 highlights four imperative 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 a fairly 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.

1.3   Significance of Communication

Just as communication is vital to our existence in civilized society, it is essential to the functioning of the organizations our society has produced. In fact, we could go so far as to say that organizations exist through communication; without communication, there would be no organizations. As Herbert Simon expresses it. "Without communication

there can be no organization, for there is no possibility then of the group influencing the behaviour of the individual."

If you need proof of the importance of communication to organized activity, you need only apply your good logic to any real life example. Take a very simple organization made up of just you and one other person. Assume that this organization has an objective - one that is unfamiliar to each of you. Now assume that each of you no longer can communicate. You cannot read; you cannot speak; you cannot write; you cannot gesture; you cannot draw. If the two of you make any progress at all, it is likely to be through individual effort. Strain your imagination as you will, there simply is no likelihood of coordinated effort without communication.

Needless to say, communication is the ingredient that makes organization possible. It is the vehicle through which the basic management functions are carried out. Managers direct through communication; they coordinate through communication; and they staff, plan, and control through communication. Virtually all actions taken in an organization are preceded by communication.

Just how much communicating a business organization needs depends on a number of factors. The nature of the business certainly is one. Some businesses (such as insurance companies) have a much greater need to communicate than do others (such as janitorial services). The company's organization plan also affects the volume of communication, for it generates much of the information flow. Finally, the people who make up the organization affect the extent of communication. As we would point out later, every human being is different. Each one has unique

communication needs and abilities. Thus, varying combinations of people produce varying needs for communication.

Although communication needs may be dissimilar in different organizations and different groups of people in such organizations communication more than of us suspect. According to one generally accepted estimate, between 40 and 60 percent of the work time spent in a typical manufacturing plant involves some form of communication (speaking, writing, listening, reading). Of course, these percentages are only averages. Some employees spend much more of their time communicating. In fact, the higher up the organization structure the employee is, the more communicating he or she is likely to do. Typically, top executives spend from 75 to 95 percent of their time communicating. Unskilled labourers, on the other hand, need to communicate lesser in order to do their work.

Without question, communication is important to business organizations. Therefore, it stands to reason that a business wants its communication to be done well. But all too rarely is a business satisfied with what it gets. Unfortunately, to use the often quoted words of an authority in the field, "Of all the things business executives do, they are worst at communicating".

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

Internal Communication *viz* Within Organization

Effective internal communication is considered important for the following reasons:

1. Business has grown in size. Large business houses have a number of branches within the country and even abroad. Some of the multinational corporations are no smaller than huge empires. The central organization of a large business house is its nerve center. For its healthy and even growth, it is extremely important that the central organization maintains a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the various activities at the branch offices, and in turn keep the branch offices will acquainted with the activities at the center, and some kind of link is maintained among the various branches. This calls for an effective and efficient network of communication.

2. Business activity has become extremely complex. This being an age of specialization, planning, production, sales, stores, advertising, financing, accounts, welfare, etc., are handled by different departments. If these departments do not communicate with one another as well as with the management, there will be no coordination among them. This may give rise to some awkward and embarrassing situations for the management. When production is fully geared up, the stores department may report shortage or non-availability of raw materials. The planners, having spent one full month to work out the details of a new project, may suddenly discover that there are no finances available to execute the project.

3. Effective communication promotes a spirit of understanding and cooperation. If there exists effective communication between the management and the employees, it helps to bring about an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. The employees know exactly what is expected of them, the management is aware of the potentialities and limitations of the employees and knows how to exploit the first and

make up for the latter. This mutual understanding is extremely beneficial to both the parties. The management gets better returns; the employees get job satisfaction. They also develop a sense of belonging and loyalty to the enterprise.

4. The significance of communication in the context of today's complex organizations is even greater. These organizations being designed on the basis of specialization and division of labour constitute a large number of persons. The larger the size of the organization, the greater generally is the degree of specialization and division of labour and hence, the more urgent is the need for coordination. This coordination requires mutual understanding about the organizational goals, the mode of their achievement and the interrelationship between the work being performed by various individuals; and all this can be achieved through communication only. Effective communication, as such, is essential in any type of human grouping. As Haney has put it, "Communication is imminently essential in business, in government, military organizations. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine any kind of interpersonal activity which does not depend upon communication." Dealing with the problems of communication, then, becomes an important area of activity in management whose objective is the direction of individual efforts in such a way as to secure overall coordination of organizational activities.

External Communication

External communication includes communication with the government agencies and departments on the one hand and distributors, retailers, individual customers and general public on the other.

1. Government agencies and departments. Business organizations are required to deal with licensing authorities, foreign trade

offices, customs authorities, banks and other financial institutions, income tax and sales tax offices, post offices, transporters, etc. Quite frequently, they find themselves tricky situations that can be handled only through tactful negotiation are nothing but communication.

2. Distributors, retailers, individual customers, etc. Modern business is a highly competitive phenomenon. Each product of common consumption is available in hundreds of brands, not all of which sell equally well. Marketing research has revealed that the organizations that can communicate better also sell better. Sales are promoted through persuasion and persuasion is a very important aspect of communication.

Communication Skill is Job Requirement

Some areas like personal, public relations, marketing, sales, labour relations call for exceptional communication skills. Professionals like editors, writers, teachers, advocates, researchers etc., need a highly developed ability to communicate. Executives are also expected to make speeches, prepare pamphlets, brochures, souvenirs, and give interviews to the media in order to project a favourable image of their organization. Thus the ability to communicate effectively has become a very important job requirement.

Important factor for promotion

In an article titled **What Do You Mean I Can't Write?** [Harvard Business Review, May-June 1965], John Fielden lists the ability to communicate as the most essential prerequisite for promotion of the executives. He ranks this ability higher than other essential attributes such as the capacity for hard work, the ability for making sound

decisions, academic qualifications and ambition-drive. And this view is endorsed by numerous surveys conducted by a number of American universities and other scholars in the field.

1.4   Nature of Business Communication: A Case Study

The role of communication in organized activities is perhaps explained by a real-life illustration. By design, our illustration is both detailed and scant. It is detailed because it consists of examples of the minute and specific communication events that occur in business. It is scant because at best it covers only a sample of an almost infinite number of events.

For this review we could select any organization, as communication is vital to every conceivable type. Our choice is the Typical Company, manufacturer of a line of quality whatsits. The Typical Company is moderately large, with scores of departments and hundreds of workers doing a thousand and one tasks. It employs crews of salespeople who sell the manufactured whatsits to wholesalers all over the country. Like most companies in its field, Typical works to move its products from wholesaler to retailer and from retailer to the final consumer. And it works to keep the consumer happy with the purchase. The Typical Company is indeed typical.

Our review begins with the workday of Dan D. Worker, a clerk in Typical's order department. (We could, of course, have selected any of Typical's employees). Dan's daily communication activities begin the moment he awakens. But for our purposes, we shall pick up Dan's

activities as he rides to work in a car pool with three co-workers. Of course, Dan and his car-pool companions communicate as they travel. Obviously, communication has a social use, and riding to work is a form of social occasion for Dan and his friends.

Most of their talk is about trivial matters. They talk primarily to entertain themselves and to while away the time. There is a joke or two, some comments about politics, a few words about an upcoming football game, and some talk about plans for a getaway weekend fishing trip. Such talk, of course, is of little direct concern to Typical, except perhaps as it affects the general happiness and welfare of the company's workers.

In time, the conversation drifts to subjects more pertinent to Typical and its operations. Someone mentions a rumor about a proposed change in promotion policy. Then Dan and the others bring up their own collection of rumors, facts, and opinions on the subject. And in the process, they giving, receiving, or handling information. Nothing that he did directly involved making whatsits, which, of course, is the Typical Company's main reason for being. Yet the importance of his activities to Typical's operations is unquestionable. Obviously, Dan's work assignment more directly involves communication than do many others at Typical. But there are many other communication-oriented assignments in the company, and every Typical employee's workday is peppered with communication in one form or another. If we were to trace the workday of each Typical employee and combine our findings, we would come up with an infinitely complex picture of the communication that goes on at Typical. We would see that communication indeed plays a major role in Typical's operations.

The importance of communication in business becomes even more apparent when we consider an organization's communication activities from an overall perspective. As we can see from reviewing Dan's half hour at Typical, these activities fall in three broad categories of communication: internal-operational, external-operational, and personal.

Internal-Operational Communication

Internal-operational communication consists of structured communication within the organization that directly relates to achieving the organization's work goals. By 'structured' we mean that such communication is built into the organization's plan of operations. By 'organization's work goals' we mean the organization's primary reason for being - to sell insurance, to manufacture nuts and bolts, to construct buildings, and the like.

The Typical Company, to use a familiar example, has as its major work goals the making and selling of whatsits. To achieve these work goals, it has an established plan of operations, in which communication plays a major role. More specifically, each Typical employee has an assignment within the plan. In order for the plan to work, some communicating must be done. Some of the assignments require certain working information. In order for all assignments to be performed as a harmonious and unified effort, certain coordinating information must be communicated. All of this information flow is internal-operational communication.

Specifically, internal-operational communication is carried out through any number of structured activities. In the Typical Company, for example, must of the internal-operational information is entered into the

company computer from executive workstations to become part of Typical's database. From the database, programmed reports are developed to give each operations department the information it needs. Then the reports are communicated back to specific workstations; for example, sales reports and inventory records combine to communicate production needs to the production planning department. Finally, the production planning department communicates these needs to the various production departments through a strategically planned work schedule.

Within each production unit and among production units, of course, additional communicating must go on. Superiors make decisions and transmit them to subordinates. Departments exchange information, and workers communicate working information with one another. Memorandums are written, reports are prepared, and conversations are held-all in the process of coordinating efforts and supplying the information needed for achieving the organization's goals. In every company division and in every activity, similar internal-operational communication occurs.

External-Operational Communication

External-operational communication is that part of an organization's structured communication concerned with achieving the organization's work goals that is conducted with people and groups outside the organization. It is the organization's communication with its publics-suppliers, service companies, customers, and the general public.

In this category fall all of the organization's efforts at direct selling-sales representatives sales spiels, descriptive brochures, telephone call-backs,

follow-up service calls, and the like. Also included are all of the organization's advertising efforts-for what is advertising but a deliberate, structured communication with an organization's publics? Radio and television messages, newspaper and magazine space advertising, and point-of-purchase display material obviously play a role in the organization's plan for achieving its work objective. Also in this category is everything the organization does to enhance its public relations. These activities include the organization's planned publicity, and the condition of its physical plant. All these and many more communication efforts combine to make up the organization's external-operational communication.

The extreme importance of an organization's external communications hardly requires supporting comment. Certainly it is obvious that any business organization depends on outside people and groups for its success. It is an elementary principle of business that because a business organization's success depends on its ability to satisfy customers' needs, the organization must communicate effectively with these customers. It is equally elementary that in today's complex business society, organizations depend on one another in manufacturing and distributing and services. This interdependence necessarily creates needs for communication. Like internal communications, these outside communications are vital to an organization's operation.

Personal Communication

Not all the communication that goes on in an organization is operational however: in fact, much of it is without purpose as far as the organization is concerned. Such communication may be classified as personal.

Personal communication is all the incidental exchange of information and feelings in which human beings engage whenever they come together. Human beings are social animals. They have a need to communicate, and they would communicate even when they have little or nothing to say. In fact, they communicate even when they do not communicate anything.

Much of the time friends spend with one another is devoted to communication, for it is simply the thing to do when people get together. Even total strangers are likely to communicate when they are placed together, such as on a plane trip, in a waiting room, or at a ball game. Such personal communication also takes place in the work situation, and it is part of the communication activity of any business organization. Although not a component of an organization's plan of operations, personal communication can have a significant effect on its success. This effect stems from the influence personal communication can have on the viewpoints (opinions, attitudes, and beliefs) of the organization's members.

Workers' viewpoints towards the organization, their fellow employees, and their assignments directly affect their willingness to do assigned tasks. And the nature of conversation in a work situation affects viewpoints. In a work situation in which heated words and flaring tempers are frequent, the participants are unlikely to make their usual productive effort. A rollicking, jovial work situation is likely to have an equally adverse effect on productivity. No doubt, somewhere between these extremes lie the ideal productive viewpoints.

Organization members' work viewpoint is also affecting the extent of personal communication permitted to them. Outright denial of the communication privilege can lead to emotional upset, for people hold dear their right to communicate. On the other hand, excessive personal communication can interfere directly with their work effort. Probably somewhere in the middle ground lies the optimal policy toward personal communication.

Personal communication can also help form viewpoints (opinions, attitudes, beliefs). As illustrated in the account of Dan's workday at Typical, Dan and his car-pool friends spent some of their conversation time discussing a proposed new promotion policy; and in so doing, each helped crystallize the others' viewpoints. It is a process that determines much of what organization members think about their organization, co-workers and work situation in general. What they think can affect their relationship with the organization and have a direct influence on their productivity.

1.5   Summary

The foregoing discussion merely browses the surface of our mind. It may hopefully help in appreciating the importance of communication to an individual and an organization. It shows how extensive communication is and how it permeates through every segment of the organization in a most complex way. It shows that good communication is vital to the organization's successful operation and equally imperative for a man's personality development. These conclusions, combined with the convincing evidence that most organizational communication is inadequate, leads to yet another conclusion: that communication is an

area that deserves further study by those concerned with improving the organizational operations.

1.6   Key Words

♦ Communication: It is an attempt to share understanding by two or more persons.

♦ Sender: He is a person who initiates the communication process.

♦ Receiver: The listener who receives and encoded message and attempt to decode the same in its true spirit.

♦ Message: it is an encoded idea transmitted by the sender.

♦ Internal and External Communication: A communication within organization is internal communication and communication with outside the organization is external communication.

1.7   Self Assessment Questions

1.   Attempt a suitable definition of the term communication and elaborate your definition.

2.   "The single most significant characteristic of the human race is the ability to communicate." 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." Discuss.

4.   Write a not on the need and importance of business communication.

5.   What is meant by the communication situation?   Do the following constitute communication situations?

(a)   An Englishman speaking in English to an illiterate Indian;

(b)   Two young boys talking to each other in a code language, which they have evolved themselves;

(c)   A man muttering to himself;

(d)   A young lover talking to the moon?

6.   What are the various steps in the communication cycle? What is brain drain? Why does brain drain occur?

1.8   Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Fred Luthans, Organizational Behaviour, Boston, McGraw-Hill, 8th edition, 1998.
3. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
4. Lesikar, Raymond V. and Pettit John D, Business Communication: Theory and application, 6th edition, Richard D Irwin publication.
5. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
6. Varinder Kumar, Raj Bodh, Business Communication, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, 2001.

Effective Communication Skills

Objective: The major objective of this lesson is to create an understanding in the minds of students regarding various communication skills and also let them know the relevance of such skills.

Structure

2.1   **Introduction**

2.2   **Objective of Business Communication.**

2.3   **Effective Communications Skills**

2.4   **Summary**

2.5   **Key Words**

2.6   **Self Assessment Questions**

2.7   **Suggested Readings.**

2.1   Introduction

Communication is the lifeblood of an organization and without it organization cannot stay alive.   As such, the top management of an organization should ensure that adequate and smooth communication flows in all directions and it is effective as well.   A periodic review of the existing pattern of communication effectiveness should be made.   This review would, on the one hand, reveal the direction in which the existing situation falls short of organizational requirements and, on the other would reveal the underlying forces responsible for the prevailing state of affairs as also the actions required to remove those.

Communication is, however, one of the most difficult of all the managerial activities to measure.   Quantitative and objective proof of the success of

effectiveness is extremely hard to come by. However, in evaluating communication, much can be accomplished by a systematic approach utilizing a planned method of evaluation that likes for results in terms of stated objectives and takes into account both success and failure.

Any assessment of communication, as such, requires the determination of the criteria for this evaluation and fixation of norms in respect of these criteria. Both of these are, further, to be oriented to the basic objective of the process itself. In general terms, the objective of communication may be defined as the passing of ideas and understanding from the sender to the target with the view to getting the desired behavioural response from the latter. The finding out of the actual behavioural responses and comparing these with the expected ones, however, in case of this continuously on-going process, presents insurmountable difficulties. The ultimate objectives of the communication are related to the communication programmes through their relationships with immediate objectives.

Effective communication, as such, might be the accurate transmission and receipt thereof and its correct understanding. There are several elements in communication that can be evaluated to assess directly the effectiveness of communication.

2.2 Objectives of Business Communication

The main purpose of all communication 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, man-power 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 elaborated and complex commercial structure, communication can be used for any or more of the following objectives:

1. Information   2. Advice
3. Order   4. Suggestion
5. Persuasion   6. Education
7. Warning   8. Raising morale
9. Motivation

INFORMATION

One of the most important objectives of communication is passing or receiving information about a particular fact or circumstance. It can be done either through spoken or written language or by using 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.

External information

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

1. Information about its products: (i) consumer response to its products in comparison with competing products with reference to quality as well as price, (ii) whether they are being produced in conformity with the latest trends.

2. Information about the availability of credit: the nature of the various financial institutions and the terms and conditions on which credit is offered by them.

3. Information about the availability of raw materials: how better quality raw materials can be procured on easier terms, or if there are any cheaper substitutes available.

4. Information about the Government rules and regulations: what kind of affect the rules and regulations of the Government and the changing political scene can have on the product policy of the organization.

5. Information about the advertising media: their efficiency, suitability, relative merits and the expenses involved.

6. Information about the latest development in the fields of science and technology: how latest innovations can be used to modernize the production techniques wither to improve the quality of the products or to effect economy in labour, time, money, etc.

Internal information

Internally, information should e freely given to the employees on the following points:

1. Information on job assignments and procedures governing them: 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.

2. Information on status and decision-making powers: The exact designation of the officers and their decision-making powers enjoyed by them should be clearly defined.

3. General information on the policies and activities of the organization: If the employees are kept well informed about the policies of the organization and other related aspects, it inculcates among a sense of belonging and gives them greater job satisfaction. It also helps them to acquire confidence in themselves.

ADVICE

Giving advice is another important objective of communication. Information is always factual and objective. But advice, since is 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. I may prove helpful, but it may also lead to disaster.

Importance of advice

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 businessperson may be, he cannot have specialized knowledge of all branches like fiancé, 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 are usually persons of long standing and have a great deal of experience at their command. Being in close contact with their superiors (usually the board of directors) they are well familiar with the policies and functioning of the organization. They are, therefore, in an excellent position to guide, counsel or advise their subordinate staff.

Advice flows horizontally or downwards

Advice by its very nature flows horizontally or downwards. Expert advice from outside flows horizontally. The boards 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.

How to make advice effective

While offering advice, the advisor 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 a way that it suits the individual needs of the recipient. It means that while explaining the complexities and subtleties 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 persons 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 persons feel absolutely at ease.

4. If given in a right tone, advice can often promote better understanding between the adviser and his subordinates. It can prove that the adviser is taking personal interest in his subordinate staff and is, therefore, interested in their welfare.

5. If the subordinate staff is 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 organization's functioning.

Counseling

Counseling is very similar giving advice. Only, counsel is objective and impersonal. 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. 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 counseling 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 infect other employees and lower their morale. Such employees are encouraged to consult the counseling 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.

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.

Types of order

Keeping different aspects of orders in mind, we can classify orders in various ways:

(a) Written and oral orders.

Written orders are usually given in the following cases:

1. The order is of a highly responsible nature. It is essential to keep a record of it and to make it absolutely specific.
2. The task is repetitive in nature. 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 in the following cases:

1. The job is required to be done immediately.

2. It is 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. Again, in case it is not possible to foresee all the attendant situations connected with an activity, it may become necessary to issue general orders.

(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 receive; 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.

Characteristics of an effective order

1. I must be clear and complete so that the person who receives the order knows exactly what to do, how to do and when to do it.

2.   It execution should be possible, that is, the person who has to execute it has the materials, tools, equipment, time and ability to execute it. If any hurdles are likely to be experienced, the order should specify how they are to overcome.

3.   It should be given in a friendly way so that it is not resented and is not carried out reluctantly.

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.

SUGGESTION

It would be wrong to presume that the best ideas on a subject come only from the supervisory staff or the directors. The lower staff, in fact being actually in touch with the operative aspect, is capable of giving some positive suggestions on procedural and operational aspects.

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 communicator, 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.

These days, progressive 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.

PERSUASION

Persuasion 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. Persuasion is an important objective of communication. 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 of the factory, the lazy, the incompetent and the disgruntled workers have to be persuaded to do their work.

Human nature is not amenable to coercion or repression. Whenever force is applied to command a particular action, it breeds resentment and indignation. 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.

The art of persuasion

1.   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.

2. Do not impose yourself on the receiver of your communication. Do not overwhelm him with arguments. Give indirect hints and subtle suggestions. Gently channelise his thinking in such a way that he adopts the point of view or the course of action suggested by you as if he had arrived at it as a result of his own thinking.

3. If the other person is docile and has a flexible mind, he will be easily persuaded. But if he is headstrong, a self-opinionated person, try to meet him half-way. Concede a few points to hi in the beginning. Then gradually bring him round on the other points.

4. 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. Of the numerous arguments available with you, select those that may have special appeal to him.

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. The points on which the communicator agrees with him may be mentioned first, so that a kind of meeting ground for the communicator and the receiver is prepared. It is also necessary that

the communicator discusses the whole issue from the receiver's point of view.

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. Prompting action is but a logical consummation of the first three steps. 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).

EDUCATION

Education is a very conscious 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.

1. Education for the management: Knowledge is multiplying fast. Each new day brings with it innovations, which if suitably applied can revolutionize 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.

2. 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 reorientation. Employees can be educated through talks, demonstrations, bulletins and house organs.

3. Education for the outside public. The outside 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.

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, defiance, 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:

1. 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.

2. 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. It should be as fair and dispassionate as possible. And it should never be accompanied with a display of rage.

3.   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. He should be given an opportunity to explain himself. If his arguments fail to convince the supervisor, he should, without losing temper, clearly tell the worker what is expected of him.

4.   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 talking him out of his problems, the warning given to him will become constructive.

5.   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 warning and reprimands.

RAISING MORALE

Moral stands for mental health. It 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

1.   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.

2. The atmosphere in the premises is congenial. The superiors are efficient and their attitude is constructive. They enjoy the worker's respect.

3. Promotional avenues are available to the workers.

4. Genuine grievances of the workers are promptly removed.

MOTIVATION

Motivation energizes and activities a person and changeless 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.

Offering monetary incentives is perhaps the most effective form of motivation. People working on contract basis are always motivated to work, for their earning 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.

Human minds are not identical and are not stimulated to the same extent by the forces. It is for the supervisor to clearly understand all the motivating forces, analyze the psychological needs of the individual workers and to use proper motivation to make all his workers work in cooperation.

The following points deserve consideration in discussing motivation as a form of communication:

1. Workers should be invited to give suggestions and to participate in the decision-making process, if a suggestion coming from a junior employee is accepted, he will feel motivated to work hard and prove that his suggestion was really good.

2. If clear achievement goals are set before the workers so that they know what they are working for, they will work hard to achieve these goals.

3. Apart from the satisfaction of their basic human needs like food, clothing and shelter, all human beings yearn for security, healthy social relationships and a dignified and respectable existence. They would definitely feel motivated to work in an organization capable of offering them these things. The management should take effective steps to offer the workers security of work and a congenial atmosphere in which they can work in harmony with their colleagues.

4. Example, they say, is better than precept. If the supervisory staff is so sincere and competent that it can command the respect and confidence of the workers, the latter will feel motivated to work harder.

2.3 Effective Communication Skills

In any business environment, adherence to the 7 C's and the 4 S's helps the sender in transmitting his message with ease and accuracy. Let us first take a look at the 7 C's:

Credibility

Builds trust: If the sender can establish his credibility, the receiver has no problems in accepting his statement. Establishing credibility is not the outcome of a one-shot statement. It is a long-drawn out process in which the receiver through constant interaction with the sender understands his credible nature and is willing to accept his statements as being truthful and honest.

Courtesy

Improves relationships: Once the credibility of the sender has been established, attempts should be made at being courteous in expression. In the business world, almost everything starts with and ends in courtesy. Much can be accomplished if tact, diplomacy and appreciation of people are woven in the message.

Example

(a)   Jane: "You can never do things right. Try working on this project. If you are lucky you may not have to redo it."

(b)   Jane: "This is an interesting project. Do you think you would be able to do it? I know last time something went wrong with the project, but everyone makes mistakes. Suppose we sat down and discussed it threadbare I'm sure you would be able to do wonders".

The two statements convey totally different impressions. While the first statement is more accusative, the second is more tactfully and appreciative of the efforts put in by the receiver at an earlier stage. The crux of the message in both the statements is the same: You want an individual within an

organization to undertake a project. The manner in which it is stated brings about a difference in approach. Further, expressions that might hurt or cause mental pain to the receiver should, as far as possible, be ignored. For this it becomes essential that the "I" attitude be discarded in favour of the "you" attitude. Development of interest in the "you" will perforce make the other individual also see the point of view of the other. At the time of emphasizing the "you-attitude", only the positive and pleasant "you-issues" should be considered. If it is being used as a corrective measure, then the results are not going to be very positive or encouraging.

Clarity

Makes comprehension easier: Absolute clarity of ideas adds much to the meaning of the message. The first stage is clarity in the mind of the sender. The next stage is the transmission of the message in a manner, which makes it simple language, and easy sentence constructions, which are not difficult for the receiver to grasp, should be used.

Correctness

Builds confidence: At the time of encoding, the sender should ensure that his knowledge of the receiver is comprehensive. The level of knowledge, educational background and status of the decoder help the encoder in formulating his message. In case there is any discrepancy between the usage and comprehension of terms, miscommunication can arise. If the sender decides to back up his communication with facts and figures, there should be accuracy in stating the same. A situation in which the listener is forced to check the presented facts and figures should not arise. Finally, the usage of terms should be nondiscriminatory, e.g., the general concept is that women should be addressed for their physical appearance whereas men for their mental abilities. This, however, is a stereotype and at the time of addressing or praising members of both the sexes, the attributes assigned should be the same. Similarly for occupational references. In the business world almost all

professions are treated with respect. Addressing one individual for competence in his profession but neglecting the other on this score because of a so-called 'inferior' profession alienates the listener from the sender.

Consistency

Introduces stability. The approach to communication should, as far as possible, be consistent. There should not be too many ups and downs that might lead to confusion in the mind of the receiver. If a certain stand has been taken, it should be observed without there being situations in which the sender is left groping for the actual content or meaning. If the sender desires to bring about a change in his understanding of the situation, he should ensure that the shift is gradual and not hard for the receiver to comprehend.

Concreteness

Reinforces confidence. Concrete and specific expressions are to be preferred in favour of vague and abstract expressions. In continuation of the point on correctness, the facts and figures presented should be specific. Abstractions or abstract statements can cloud the mind of the sender. Instead of stating: "There has been a tremendous escalation in the sales figure", suppose the sender made the following statement: "There has been an escalation in the sales figures by almost 50% as compared to last year". The receiver is more apt to listen and comprehend the factual details.

Conciseness

Saves time. The message to be communicated should be as brief and concise as possible. Weighty language definitely sounds impressive but people would be suitably impressed into doing precisely nothing. As far as possible, only simple and brief statements should be made. Excessive information can also sway the receiver into either a wrong direction or into inaction. Quantum of information should be just right, neither too much nor too little,

e.g. In most cases it has been seen that the date of the policy … Usually the policy date…

In the first example, the statement is rather long and convoluted. However, the second example gives it the appearance of being crisp, concise and to the point.

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7 C's of Business Communication

C's	Relevance
Credibility	*Builds trust*
Courtesy	*Improves relationships*
Clarity	*Makes comprehension easier*
Correctness	*Builds confidence*
Consistency	*Introduces stability*
Concreteness	*Reinforces confidence*
Conciseness	*Saves time*

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4 S's of Business Communication

An understanding of the 4 S's is equally important.

Shortness

Economizes. "Brevity is the soul of wit", it is said. The same can be said about communication. If the message can be made brief, and verbosity done away with, then transmission and comprehension of messages is going to be faster and more effective. Flooding messages with high sounding words does not create an impact. Many people harbour a misconception that they can actually impress the receiver, if they carry on their expeditious travails. Little do they realize how much they have lost as the receiver has spent a major chunk of his time in trying to decipher the actual meaning of the message.

Simplicity

Impresses. Simplicity both in the usage of words and ideas reveals a clarity in the thinking process. It is normally a tendency that when an individual is himself confused that he tries to use equally confusing strategies to lead the receiver in a maze. Reveal clarity in the thinking process by using simple terminology and equally simple concepts.

Strength

Convinces. The strength of a message emanates from the credibility of the sender. If the sender himself believes in a message that he is about to transmit, there is bound to be strength and conviction in whatever he tries to state. Half-hearted statements or utterances that the sender himself does not believe in add a touch of falsehood to the entire communication process.

Sincerity

Appeals. A sincere approach to an issue is clearly evident to the receiver. If the sender is genuine, it will be reflected in the manner in which he communicates. Suppose there is a small element of deceit involved in the interaction or on the part of the sender. If the receiver is keen and observed, he would be able to sense the make-believe situation and, business transactions, even if going full swing, would not materialize.

2.4   Summary

"She's so cold and uncommunicative. She never shows any emotion. Why does he talk like that? I wish he would get straight to the point instead of beating around the bush that way. He's so direct and brash. Doesn't he know that it's rude to keep people waiting like this? He's an hour late! She talks so much. I get tired just listening to her talk…"

We often hear remarks like the above made by people around us. In fact, we may even have made some of these remarks ourselves. Sometimes these

remarks are justifiable; at other times they may not be so. But what actually triggers such remarks? Usually we make such remarks about other people when they display behaviors that we consider inappropriate or unacceptable in our culture. But what is deemed acceptable in our culture may be considered strange or totally inappropriate in other cultures. So when the target of the above remarks are people who come from cultures different from ours, there may actually be no justification at all for making such remarks because the behaviors displayed may be perfectly acceptable in their cultures.

With more and more companies going global in today's changing business environment, it is not at all uncommon to walk into an office and to find ourselves looking at a multinational multi-cultural workforce. In fact, this is becoming the norm of these days. Gone are the days when developing intercultural communication skills were relevant only to business executives who had to cross national borders for overseas assignments. Today, you don't even have to leave your own country to find yourself in face-to-face contact with people whose cultures are markedly different from yours. So, in order to succeed at the workplace today, it is important for you to develop effective inter-cultural communication skills.

Indispensable to Human Behaviour or the art of dealing or interacting with people is communication. When one relates with people, he has to communicate with them, either through verbal or non-verbal language, or both. Verbally, one communicates by using words, figures and symbols. Non-verbally, he communicates through gestures, facial expressions and other forms of body language. Clarity is one of the essential ingredients to effective communication. Thus, care in the proper choice of words is crucial towards enhancing mutual understanding, rapport and support.

Positive Thinking is equally important in communicating and relating with people. A person who strives to communicate positive thoughts and actions is

readily able to maintain Smooth Interpersonal Relationships (SIR) and easily gains the respect and esteem of those around him.

2.5   Key Words

♦ Effective Communication: Effective communication, as such, might be the accurate transmission and receipt thereof and its correct understanding.

♦ Communication Barriers: Various inadequacies that can be identified through communication evaluation are required to be analyzed in terms of various factors - obstructions and barriers - that impede flow communication.

2.6   Self Assessment Questions

1. What do you think can be the major objectives of communication? Briefly explain any two of them.

2. 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?

3. If you are appointed the manager of a business organization with declining business, what objectives of communication will you use to check the decline in business?

4. Discuss and illustrate with suitable examples the effective skills required in communication

2.7 Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.

2. Fred Luthans, Organizational Behaviour, Boston, McGraw-Hill, 8th edition, 1998.

3. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.

4. Lesikar, Raymond V. and Pettit John D, Business Communication: Theory and application, 6th edition, Richard D Irwin publication.

5. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.

6. Varinder Kumar, Raj Bodh, Business Communication, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, 2001.

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Objective: The foremost objective of this lesson is to generate the thoughtful ideas in the psyche of students as regards the process of communication and the sequencing of different steps that the process of communication contains.

Structure

3.1 **Introduction**

3.2 **How to Understand Communication Process**

3.3 **A Common Misconception**

3.4 **The Communication Environment.**

3.5 **A Well Designed Communication Process**

3.6 **Summary**

3.7 **Key Words**

3.7 **Self Assessment Questions**

3.8 **Suggested Readings.**

3.1   Introduction

It may be clear from the definition of communication discussed earlier that two-ways communication takes place when the receiver provides feedback to the sender. For instance, giving an instruction to a subordinate and receiving its acceptance is an example of two-way communication. On other hand, in case of one-way communication, feedback is absent. Here the sender communicates without expecting or getting feedback from the receiver. A policy statement from the chief executive is an example of one way

communication. One-way communication takes less time than two-way communication. In certain situations, one-way communication is more effective to get work from the subordinates.

Two-way communication is superior to one way communication in the following respects:

(i)   Two-way communication is more effective than one-way communication. The feedback allows the sender to refine his communication so that it becomes more precise and accurate.

(ii)   Receivers' self-confidence is higher in case of two-way communication as they are permitted to ask questions and seek clarification from the senders.

However, in case of two-way communication, the sender may feel embarrassed when the receiver draws his attention to sender's mistakes and ambiguities. It is therefore, essential to discuss the communication process in comprehensive manner. This lesson discusses the same.

3.2   Professional Model to Understand Communication Process

A conventional analysis of communication begins with a definition of the term. Many such definitions exist, so we would have no difficulty finding one suitable for our use. But our approach is not conventional. We do not use words to define words, for, as we will see, such definitions are dangerous. Instead, we use an operational definition. By operational definition we mean one that demonstrates how something works. The following pages present an operational definition in the form of a model.

In this presentation of the model, we strive to look with scientific diligence into the phenomenon of human communication. We take the event involving one human being communicating with another. We choose a face-to-face oral communication event because this is the communication situation with which we are best acquainted. Later in the chapter, we adapt the model to written communication. Our plan is to take the communication event and place it under the microscope of our minds. Our goal is to show how the process works and how it does not work.

In developing our model, we must incline heavily on the theoretical aspects, as we are not dealing with a subject that has received total factual support. The theoretical material presented, however, represents authoritative thinking on the subject: and research is constantly producing facts that lend support to this thinking. Regardless of its factual bases, this presentation will give us a meaningful understanding of communication and will provide us with principles that we can successfully apply to real-life communication problems.

3. 3   A Common Misconception

Before beginning our analysis of the model, let us dispense with a common misconception. If you are like most people, you have never thought much about what communication really is. If you have thought about it, probably you have viewed communication as a very normal human activity. This assumption is far from correct.

Human communication at least the verbal part of it is far from being a natural function; that is, it is not the sort of thing we would do if left to nature's devices, as we would many of our other activities. Our hands, for example, would perform their natural functions of picking up and handling things whether we grew up with jungle animals or with civilized people. Likewise, our mouths would take in food and our teeth and jaws would chew it in either event. And most of our other body parts would function naturally without instruction from other human beings. However, we cannot say the same about the major organs used in communication. Our vocal apparatus would not make words if we were not taught to make them. Neither would our brains know them nor do our hands write them without instruction. Clearly, communication is a function that we must learn. It was originated by human beings, and it must be acquired from human beings.

3.4 The Communication Environment

Study of the communication process logically is preceded by an analysis of the environment in which communication occurs. This is the sensory environment, in which we find ourselves every moment. It is made up of all the signs existing in the world of reality that surrounds each of us. Your sensory environment is the real world surrounding you as you read these words. It consists of all the signs your senses can detect. More specifically, it is all you can see, taste, smell, hear, or feel in that part of the world that surrounds you.

By 'world of reality' or 'real world' we mean that what actually exists. It contrasts with the world that exists only in people's minds i.e. world of imagination. Of course, one may argue that what exists in the mind also is real that, right or wrong, the content of a mind exists in that mind. For our purpose, however, we must allow this variation in our definition. It is important to distinguish between what actually is in the world around a communicator and what the communicator says or thinks it is. Often the two are not the same.

By signs we mean everything from the real world that can act as a stimulus to us. In other words, it is everything that our sensory receptors can detect. It is what our eyes can see, our ears can hear, our nostrils can smell, our tongues can taste, and our flesh can touch. It may be a spoken word, the sound of objects crashing together, a printed word, the aroma of a flower, or the movement of a bird. Thus, an individual sign is a portion of the real world that can create a response within us.

From the preceding comment we can deduce the meaning of sensory receptors: those body organs that we use to detect the signs in the real world. Specifically, the term refers to our eyes, noses, ears, mouths, and flesh with its ability to detect surface and temperature differences.

I. Sign Detection

Our sensory receptors continuously pick up some of the infinite number of signs existing in our communication environment. Stated another way, the signs around us continuously produce responses within us through our receptors. Perhaps this phenomenon can best be explained by an example.

At this very moment, you are looking at this printed page. On it is the words (signs) that your eyes are picking up. We hope that these are the primary signs you are receiving, but there are others. Probably you are picking up some of them from time to time. Perhaps there are various noises around you -- voices from another room, the ticking of a clock, a radio playing in the distance, a roommate's movements and sounds. From time to time you may become aware of being hot or cold, or your back may itch, or your sitting position may become uncomfortable. Thus, as you read these pages your sensory receptors are continuously picking up signs from all these parts of the reality that surrounds you.

II. Sensory Limitations

The number and types of signs we can detect from the real world, however, are limited by our sensory abilities. In short, the human sensory receptors are restricted. They are not capable of detecting all the signs that we know exist in the real world. For example, our eyes

can detect only a small part of the total spectrum of wavelengths; and the ability to detect within these wavelengths varies from person to person. We can see only a fraction of the distance a hawk can see. Our ears can pick up only a narrow band of the vast range of air vibrations, and people's ability to pick up sounds within these ranges varies. As we all know, dogs and birds can hear much that we cannot. Likewise, we can smell only the stronger odors around us, while dogs and most other animals do a much better job of smelling and so. Clearly, our senses are limited and can detect only a small portion of the reality surrounding us.

III. **Selective Perception**

Although incapable of detecting all that exists in the real world, our sensory receptors can select some signs and ignore others. Place yourself, for example, in a roomful of talking people, and notice how it is possible to tune in on one conversation and ignore others. Or notice how you are able to focus your vision on one minute object and then expand your view to a much broader picture. All of us have this ability to varying extents, and we can make use of it with all of our senses.

IV. **Varying Alertness and Perception**

Our detection or non-detection of signs also depends on our receptiveness to signs. There are times when we are keenly alert to

our communication environment and times when we are less alert. Certainly you have experienced occasions when you were sleepy, in a daze, or just daydreaming. During such times, you missed many of the signs in your communication environment. When you are asleep, you detect almost none.

3.5 The Communication Process

To this point we have seen how each of us lives in an environment of signs and how these signs are with us throughout each day. We have also seen how our ability to detect these signs varies, how we can tune them in or tune them out, and how our alertness to them varies across time. With this knowledge of the communication environment as a foundation, we are now ready to describe the communication process.

Communication is a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of ideas towards a mutually accepted direction or goal. For this process to materialize, it is essential that the basic elements of communication be identified. These elements are:

Sender/Encoder/Speaker
↓
Message
↓
Medium
↓
Receiver/Decoder/Listener
↓
Feedback
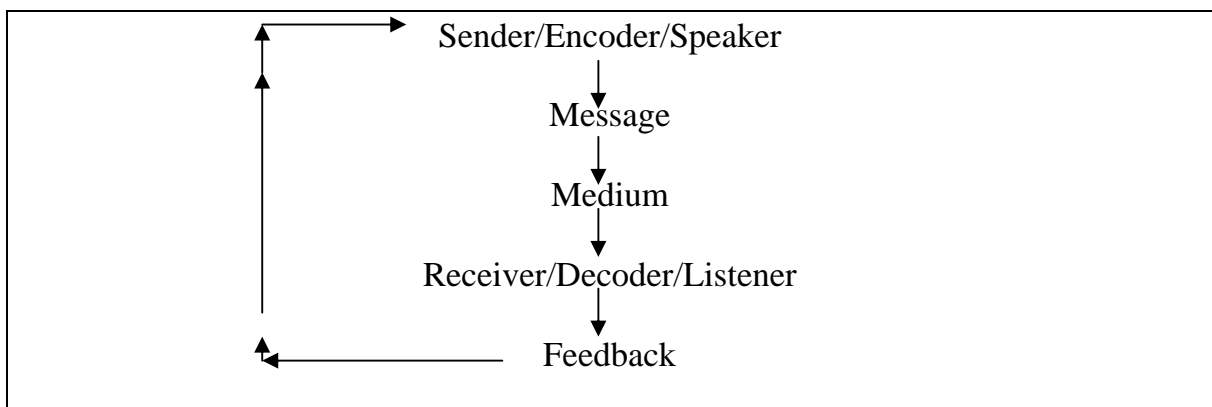
Sender/Encoder/Speaker

The person who initiates the communication process is normally referred to as the **sender**. From his personal data bank he selects ideas, **Encoding of** encodes them and finally transmits them to the receiver in the form of a **message.** The entire burden of communication then rests upon the sender or encoder. His choice of images and words, and the combination of the two is what goads the receiver to listen carefully. In this process a number of factors come into play, primary among them being an understanding of the recipient and his needs. If the message can be formulated in accordance with the expectations of the receiver, the level of acceptance is going to be higher. For example, a consultant wishes to communicate with the HRD manager of a company. The objective is to secure consultancy projects on training of personnel. If the consultant wishes the HRD manager to communicate with him, he has to ensure that their goals converge. He has a tough task ahead of him. The manager has been interacting with many consultants. Why should he pay heed to the proposal of this consultant? In a situation such as this, a good strategy to be adopted is to expand the purview of the proposal and make it company specific. The result could be highlighted and spelt out in terms of increase in sales. If sufficient preparation has been done, the message too would be formulated in a manner conducive to the interests of the HRD manager.

Receiver/Decoder/listener

The listener receives an encoded message, which he attempts to decode. This process is carried on in relation to the work environment and the value perceived in terms of the work situation. If the goal of the sender is clear in the mind of receiver the job of **decoding** becomes quite easy and the listener finds the **message** more receptive. The decoding of the message is done in almost entirely the same terms as were intended by the sender. In the example cited above, as soon as the HRD manager realizes that the proposal of the consultant is going to result in tangible benefits, he becomes more receptive and his interest in communication is reinforced.

Message

Message is the encoded idea transmitted by the sender. The formulation of the message is very important, for an incorrect patterning can turn the receiver hostile or make him lose interest. At this stage the sender has to be extremely cautious. What is the order in which he would like to present his ideas? Suppose he has four points to make. Would he (a) move in the stereotyped manner of presenting them in a sequence or (b) would he like to be innovative and proceed in a creative way? Probability is high that in the first case and he might become monotonous and in the latter case (b) he might touch a wrong spot. How then should the message be formulated and transmitted? The ordering, as stated earlier, should be based on the requirements of the listener so that its significance is immediately grasped. The minute the receiver finds his goals codified in the message, he sits up, listens and responds. The message thus has made an impact.

Medium

Another important element of communication is the medium or channel. It could be oral, verbal or non-verbal. Prior to the composition of the message, the medium. channel should be decided. Each medium follows its own set of rules and regulations. For example, in oral communication one can afford to be a little informal, but when using the written mode, all rules of communication need to be observed. It must be remembered that anything in writing is a document that would be field for records or circulated to all concerned.

Feedback

This is the most important component of communication. Effective communication takes place only when there is feedback. The errors and flaws that abound in business situations are a result of lack of feedback. Let us take a look at the typical responses of people involved in miscommunication: "This is not what I meant" or "This is not what I said" or "This was not my intention". If feedback is solicited on all occasions, this error can be minimized or even completely done away with. Fallacious statements or erroneous conclusions are made because of lack of confirmation through feedback and discrepancy between the message transmitted and message understood.
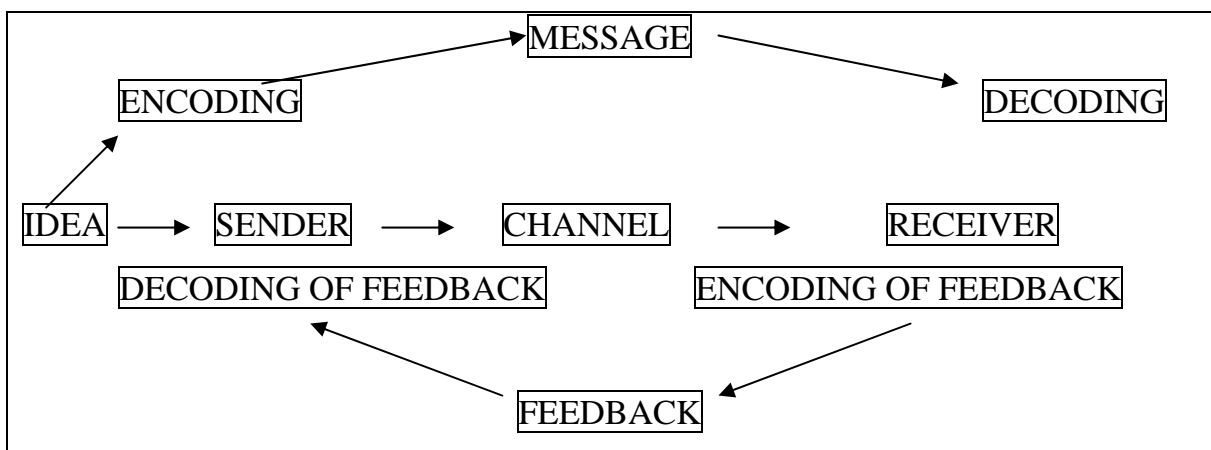
Process of Communication

The sender, according to his ideas, behaviour pattern and intention, selects a message, encodes it, and transmits it to the receiver through a medium-be it oral, verbal or non-verbal. As soon as the message reaches the receiver, he decodes it and gives an internal response to the perceived message. It is noteworthy that the response is not in relation to the actual content but rather to the "perceived content" of the original message. This completes the first phase of the communication process. Interestingly at this point words in themselves have no meaning. It is the perception of a particular word and the intention behind it that assign it meaning. The manner in which the sender and receiver perceive the same word could give rise to difference in encoding and decoding.

In the second phase, the receiver formulates his message, encodes it and transmits it to the original sender-now-turned-receiver. This stage is referred to as providing feedback and is most crucial. Unless and until there is feedback - be it in the verbal or the non-verbal form-, we cannot say that effective communication has taken place. If the feedback is in tune with the original intent of the sender, communication proceeds without a hitch. However, there could be moments when the receiver does not agree with the message of the sender. This does not mean that there is breakdown of communication. We can, in such instances, state that effective communication is stalled for the time being. It could resume after subsequent discussions.

For the process of communication to be effective, there should be a well defined goal in the mind of the sender. Harmony between the goals of the two communicators makes for good and easy progression of ideas and concepts. Whatever be the initial situation, the sender necessarily needs to adhere to the following stages:

1. Create an awareness in the mind of the receiver on the topic.
2. Propose his own point of view with clarity and preciseness so as to eliminate possibilities of confusion in the mind of the receiver.
3. Enable smooth flow of discussion through observance of communication strategies.

(Figure: 3.1 Communication Process)

4. Reinforce or correct ideas in the mind of the receiver concerning the goal of communication.
5. Achieve the goal of communication.

At the time of transmission and reception of message, all our five senses play an important role in grasping its intent. The sense that is predominantly active at a particular stage, helps in a higher degree of absorption, for

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example, in the course of the communication, if the visual sense at a particular moment, is highly active, we respond only to the visual cues.

3.6   Summary

Two-way communication is more effective than one-way communication. The feedback allows the sender the refine his communication so that it becomes more precise and accurate. Receivers' self-confidence is higher in case of two-way communication as they are permitted to ask questions and seek clarification from the senders.

Thus, these were the various spices which must be added to make each and every element of the communication process is of its utmost importance and with the absence of any of these elements the communication can't be effective or we can say that the absence of any of the above elements makes the communication process same as a handicap person living his life in the absence of any important part of the body. So, as a business communicator our efforts should be to make communication process as effective as possible.

3.7   Key Words

♦ Human Communication: It is the verbal part of communication that is far from being a natural function; that is, it is not the sort of thing we would do if left to nature's devices, as we would many of our other activities.

♦ Communication Environment: It is the process that is logically preceded by an analysis of the atmosphere in which communication occurs.

♦ Communication Process: It is a two-way course in which there is an exchange and progression of ideas towards a mutually accepted direction or goal. For this process to materialize, it is essential that the basic elements of communication be identified.

♦ and let each element of the process to play its part, sufficiently well.

3.8 Self Assessment Questions

1. "Communication is sharing of understanding", Discuss this and bring out the process of communication.

2. "Management is a two-way traffic; it is based upon the effective machinery of communication." Discuss this statement.

3.9 Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Fred Luthans, Organizational Behaviour, Boston, McGraw-Hill, 8th edition, 1998.
3. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
4. Lesikar, Raymond V. and Pettit John D, Business Communication: Theory and application, 6th edition, Richard D Irwin publication.
5. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
6. Varinder Kumar, Raj Bodh, Business Communication, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, 2001.

Subject: Business Communication
(The Lesson is Up-dated and Converted into SIM Format By: Dr. Karam Pal)

Course: MBA **Course Code: CP 105**

Lesson: 4

BARRIERS AND GATEWAYS IN COMMUNICATION

Objective: The primary objective of this lesson is to breed the attentive thoughts in the consciousness of students relating to barriers and gateways in business communication and to enable them to avoid the occurrence of such events in communication that create communication gap.

Structure

4.1 **Introduction**

4.2 **Barriers in Communication.**

4.3 **Gateways to Communication Barriers**

4.4 **Making Communication Effective**

4.5 **Summary**

4.6 **Key Words**

4.7 **Self Assessment Questions**

4.8 **Suggested Readings.**

4.1 Introduction

Communication is an indispensable activity in all organizations. No organization can think of its existence without effective communication. Communication is a managerial skill, which is essential for effective leading and motivation of people at work. A manager, who is in a position to communicate well, will be able to get the cooperation of subordinates towards the objectives of the organization.

The success of a manager depends on how clear he is in his mind about his basic functions and how effectively he can transfer this clarity of thought to

others. This involves a skill of helping others to understand the manager and to be understood by him. Thus, the need for better mutual understanding between labour and management in industry cannot be over-emphasized. It is, in fact, a prerequisite of congenial climate necessary for the overall advancement and productivity. The importance of communication in management for getting the work done may also be seen from the estimate of time which is spent by a manager in communication - verbal or written, in conferences or meetings, giving directions or receiving information. Most of the managers spend more than 60% of their time in communication with others.

4.2   Barriers in Communication

The various inadequacies that can be identified through communication evaluation are required to be analyzed in terms of various factors - obstructions and barriers - that impede flow communication. Any managerial action in this regard can be effective only when it strikes at the very root of the factors that lie at the very root of the problem. From this viewpoint, identification of different factors is necessary.

There might be a number of such barriers impeding the flow of communication in the organization. These may be classified as: (i) external (ii) organizational, and (iii) personal factors. However, such a classification does not suggest that these are mutually exclusive. Rather, such a classification is helpful in understanding the nature of communication barriers.

External Barriers

Barriers to communication may be either external to the parties involved or they might be internal to them. External barriers may affect communication in any context, whether organizational or otherwise. Such external barriers may be in the following forms:

1. **Semantic Barriers:** Semantic barriers are obstructions causes in the process of receiving or understanding of the message during the process on encoding and decoding ideas and words. These barriers arise from the linguistic capacity of the parties involved. Words are the principal communication instrument but a common difficulty with the words is that each word has several meanings. For example, in English language, the word 'round' has seventy five meanings. The Oxford Dictionary records an average of twenty-eight separate meanings for each of the 500 most used words in the English language. Similar is the position in other languages. Thus, words sometimes fail to convey real meanings. Moreover, they work as barriers in communication in the following manner.

   (i) Badly Expressed Message: Lack of clarity and precision in a message makes it badly expressed. Poorly chosen and empty words and phrases, careless omission, lack of coherence, bad organization of ideas, awkward sentence structure, inadequate vocabulary, platitudes, numbering repetition jargon, failure to clarify implications are some common faults found in this case.

   (ii) Faulty Translations: Every manager receives various types of communications from superiors, peers, subordinates and he must translate information destined for subordinates, peers and superiors into language suitable to each. Hence the message has to be put into words appropriate to the framework in which the receiver operates, or it must be accompanied by an interpretation, which will be understood by the receiver. This needs a high level of linguistic capacity. Approximate understanding of words and the consequent faulty translations lead to impaired efficiency and heavy costs.

   (iii) Unclarified Assumptions: There are certain un-communicated assumptions, which underlie practically all messages. Though a message appears to be specific, it underlying assumptions may not be clear to the receiver.

(iv) Specialist's Language: It is often found that technical personal and special groups tend to develop a special, peculiar and technical language of their own. This increases their isolation from others and builds a communication barrier. Whatever be the intention of this special language, it hinders their communication with persons not in their specialty, because of the receiver's ignorance of that type of language.

2. **Emotional or Psychological Barriers:** Emotional or psychological factors are the prime barriers in inter-personnel communication. The meaning ascribed to a message depends upon the emotional or psychological status of both the parties involved. In a communication, apart from the message, there is a meta-message, that is, what one gets out of a message when decoding. Meta-message, the emotions of the receiver play a vital role and he may not be at a wavelength as that of the communicator. Keith Davis opines that these "exist in the people's minds or because of their actions, such as being hard to contact or difficult to understand. These barriers to communication are just at effective as an actual physical wall. Often these human barriers are more like filter paper then a brick wall. They let through some communications, but hold back others, thereby making communication inadequate….This 'half-way' communication gets 'half-way' results". Following are some emotional barriers:

(i) Premature Evaluation: Rogers and Roethlisberger in 1952, first pointed out this barrier. Premature evaluation is the tendency of prematurely evaluating communications, rather than to keep an un-compromised position during the interchange. Such evaluation stops the transfer of information and begets in the sender a sense of futility. This barrier can be remedied by 'empathy', non-evaluative listening, where the communication is listened to in a non-committal and unprejudiced way, so that sagacious decision and action can follow.

(ii) Inattention: The preoccupied mind of a receiver and the resultant non-listening is one of the major chronic psychological barriers. It is a common phenomenon that people simply fail to react to bulletins, notices, minutes and reports.

(iii) Loss by Transmission and Poor Retention: When communication passes through various levels in the organization, successive transmissions of the same message are decreasingly accurate. It is said that in case of oral communications about 30 percent of the information is lost in each transmission. Even in case of written communication, loss of meaning might occur as far as the appended interpretation, if any, is concerned. Poor retention of the information is again a malady. It is shown that employees retain about 50 percent of information only, whereas supervisors retain about 60 percent of it.

(iv) Undue Reliance on the Written Word: Written word is no substitute for sound face-to-face relationships and that employees cannot be persuaded to accept companies' viewpoint and policies through 'slick', easy to read, will-illustrated publications, unless there is a fair degree of mutual trust and confidence between the organization and its employees. Further, a written communication might fail to explain the purpose of order, procedure or directive. Chester Barnard has laid down that a communication must appeal to the receiver as consonant with the organization's purpose and with his own personal interest. Written communication often tells what is to be done, but not why it should be done, and it lacks the persuasive quality. Moreover, a written communication can be above the level of readership, and failure to ascertain the response to communication is also there. Hence written media must be considered as supplementary to productive face-to-face relationships.

(v) Distrust of Communicator: It arises out of ill-considered judgements or illogical decisions or frequent countermanding of the original communication by the communicator. Repeated experience of this

kind gradually conditions the receiver to delay action or act unenthusiastically, hence making the communication unsuccessful, though apparently it is complete.

(vi) Failure to Communicate: It is quite accepted fact that managers often fail to transmit the needed messages. This might be because of laziness on the part of the communicator, or assuming that 'everybody knows', or procrastination or 'hogging' information or deliberately to embarrass.

Organizational Barriers

An organization being a deliberate creation for the attainment of certain specified objectives, day-to-day happenings within it required being regulated in such a manner that they contribute to attain these objectives in the most efficient manner. This is usually attempted through a variety of official measures such as designing the organizational arrangements for performance of various activities, prescribing of various policies, rules, regulations and procedures, laying down of norms of behaviour, instituting a reward-and-punishment system, etc. All the inner processes, including communication in different directions, are markedly affected by these prescriptions. As such major organizational barriers may be as follows:

(i) Organizational Policy: The general organizational policy regarding communication acts as an overall guideline to every one in the organization regarding how he is normally expected to behave in this matter. The policy might be in the form of explicit declaration in writing, or as is very commonly the case, it has to be interpreted from the behaviour of organization members, particularly people at the top. If this policy is not supportive to the flow of communication in different directions, communication flow would not be smooth and adequate.

(ii) Organizational Rules and Regulations: Organizational rules and regulations affect the flow of communication by prescribing the

subject-matter to the communicated and also the channel through which these are to be communicated. The rules may restrict the flow of certain messages and may leave many important ones. On the other hand, communication through proper channel in a specified way prescribed by these rules delays it and works against the willingness of persons to convey the message. This barrier is strongly operative in Indian public sector enterprises where observance of rules and regulations is more rigid.

(iii) Status Relationships: The placing of people in superior subordinate capacity in the formal organization structure also blocks the flow of communication and more particularly in upward direction. Greater the difference between hierarchical positions in terms of their status, greater would be the possibility of communication breakdown.

(iv) Complexity in Organization Structure: In an organization where there are a number of managerial levels, communication gets delayed, chances of communication getting distorted are more and the number of filtering points are more. This is more true in case of upward communication, because people generally do not like to pass up the adverse criticism either or themselves or of their superiors.

(v) Organizational Facilities: Organizational facilities provided for smooth, adequate, clear and timely flow of communication may take a number of forms. Some of these have been mentioned earlier in the communication media such as meetings, conferences, complaint box, suggestion box, open door system, social and cultural gatherings, etc. If these are not properly emphasized generally people fail to make effective communication.

Personal Barriers

While the organizational factors discussed above are, no doubt, important influences operating on communication, a host of factors internal to the two parties-sender and receiver-to this process also exert important influences on

its operation, as communication is basically an inter-personal process. Here, for the sake of convenience in the analysis, these barriers have been analyzed separately and these are relevant in the case of downward and upward communication.

Barriers in Superiors

The role of superiors in communication is very vital. Because of their hierarchical relationships with subordinates, they act as barriers in a number of ways discussed below:

(i) Attitude of Superiors: The attitudes of superiors towards communication in general or in any particular direction affect the flow of messages in different directions. For example, if this attitude in unfavourable, there is a greater possibility that messages would not flow adequately from and / or to superiors.

(ii) Pear of Challenge to Authority: A person in the organization always tries to get a higher position and prestige to satisfy his needs. As such, managers in general try to withhold the information coming down the line or going up as frequent passing of information may disclose their weakness.

(iii) Insistence on Proper Channel: One of the basic features of superiors exercising of the authority is that they wish to remain in communication links and they do not like any type of bypassing in communication. Communication through bypassing may, sometimes, be necessary but superiors treat this as the warting of their authority and blocks the flow of communication.

(iv) Lack of Confidence in Subordinates: Superiors generally perceive, correct or otherwise, that their subordinates are less competent and capable, they are not able to advise superiors or they may not have some information coming downwards.

(v) Ignoring Communication: Sometimes superiors consciously and deliberately ignore the communication from their subordinates to

maintain their importance.   This works against the willingness of subordinates to communicate.

(vi) Lack of Time: Superiors feel, whether correct or otherwise, that they are overburdened with the work and they have time to talk to their subordinates.

(vii) Lack of Awareness: Sometimes, superiors may lack the awareness about the significance and usefulness of communication in different directions in general or of particular subject-matter. In such a case, communication flow is blocked.

Barriers in Subordinates

Vertical communication in either direction can take place only when subordinates also actively participate in this process. There are various factors in the subordinates that adversely affect such active participation on their part. Some factors, which have been traced in the case of superiors, are also applicable have such as attitude, time availability, awareness about the significance, etc. Tow factors are more important in the case of subordinates and these are responsible for blocking communication in upward direction.

(i) Unwillingness to Communicate: Sometimes, subordinates do not communicate upwards certain information because they are not willing to do so. Thus, if a subordinate feels that he is likely to be adversely affected by a particular piece of information to his superior, he would not be willing to supply it. Information going up is utilized for control purposes and subordinates would not be willing to give any information to their superiors about any unfavourable happening and if its supplication is necessary they would modify the information in such a way so as to protect their own interest.

(ii) Lack of Proper Incentive: Lack of motivation to communicate also refrains subordinates to communicate upwards. The reward and punishment system of the organization is more responsible for this.

Thus, if a novel suggestion by a subordinate does not evoke any attention from the organization, he would not convey it.

4.3 Gateway in Communication

Considering the importance of effective communication in the successful functioning of business organizations, it is essential on the part of the management to overcome these barriers. Though it may not be possible to eliminate these barriers altogether, yet suitable managerial actions in this direction can minimize the effect of these barriers to such an extent that adequate and objective information flow in different directions. Following measures can be adopted in this regard:

1. It is imperative that organizational policy must be clear and explicit and encouraging the communication flow so that people at all levels realize the full significance of communication. The organizational policy should express in clear and unambiguous terms that organization favours the promotion of communication in the organization.

2. This policy should also specify the subject matter to be communicated. This does not mean that contents of communication are to be prescribed in a completely exclusive manner but that the list should be illustrative and it should emphasize that the subject matter of communication should be determined by the needs of the organization.

3. Though communication through proper channel is essential for orderly flow of information, it should not always be insisted upon. The system of communication through proper channel serves the purpose adequately as far as routine types of information are concerned. However, when and whatever the situation so warrants, this has to be overlooked and persons concerned need being told explicitly that insistence on proper channel is not necessary in all cases.

4. Every person in the organization shares the responsibility of good communication; however, persons at the top have special responsibility in this regard. A successful communication system will only be achieved if top management is determined that it is to be so. It must set good examples itself, clearly expects others to follow them, and check from time to time that there are no bottlenecks.

5. Organization should have adequate facilities for promoting communication. Adequate provision of these facilities is not sufficient, but proper attention must be given towards their proper and effective use. These need being carefully looked into and the responsibility of superior managers in encouraging the use of these facilities through the adoption of supportive attitude and behaviour needs being emphasized.

6. Communication being an inter-personal process, the development of inter-personal relationships based on mutual respect, trust and confidence is essential for its promotion. In large organization, status differentials and class distinctions are overemphasized making inter-personal relationships amongst the executives highly impersonal and official. The organizational climate, therefore, should be radically modified to make it more intimate and personal. A modification in the attitude and behaviour of persons is essential for promotion of communication. Towards this end, an educative programme in communication should be organized for managers at all levels. In this programme, managers should be instructed in the need and significance of communication, need for developing close personal contacts amongst individuals.

7. These should be continuous programme of evaluating the flow of communication in different directions. This would highlight problems in this area identify their causes and thereby enable the adoption of suitable corrective actions.

4.4 Making Communication Effective

The various measures enumerated above will no doubt create conditions for effective communication, but the communicator may take some specific steps to make it effective in a given condition. There are various guidelines for making effective communication. American Management Association has suggested Ten Commandments of good communication. These are: clarifying idea before communication, purpose of communication, understanding physical and human environment of communication, consulting others in planning communication, contents and overtones of communication, value of communication to the receiver, follow-up action; importance of communication, action congruent with communication, and good listening.

Participant	Barrier	Causative factors	Remedies
Receiver / Decoder / Listener	1. Dichotomy in reception and comprehension	Poor retention	Jot down point
	2. Partial grasp of topic	Inattentive listening	Keep the mind open
	3. Distancing form the speaker.	Tendency to evaluate	Delay evaluation
	4. Lack of interest	Differences in interests and attitudes	Find an area of interest
		Conflicting information	
	5. Mental turbulence		Check reliability and validity
		Differing status/ position/self-experience	

	6. Superior attitude	Resistance to change	Listen to ideas
	7. Mental block	Refutations and arguments	Be open to changes
	8. Lack of provision of correct feedback		Enter into healthy discussions

4.5   Summary

The study of individual for communication behaviour draws heavily on the discipline of psychology and explains why individuals behave and react as they do in response to different situations. Theories of learning, motivation and leadership have been developed to explain the communication behaviour of individuals. Also socio-psychological theories have tried to explain how attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values are inculcated and influence individual behaviour. Thus, individuals will behave differently depending upon their motivation, learning, values, and perception they have and it would certainly barriers to take place.

Differences in individuals' communication styles may be reflected in different types of behaviour on their part. Such differences range from desirable to undesirable in terms of factors. Thus, all the three individual and organizational and environmental variables are considered equally responsible for communication barriers.

4.6   Key Words

♦ Communication Barriers: Various inadequacies that can be identified through communication evaluation are required to be analyzed in terms of various factors - obstructions and barriers - that impede flow communication.

♦ Effective Communication: Effective communication, as such, might be the accurate transmission and receipt thereof and its correct understanding.

4.7   Self Assessment Questions

1.   What are the main barriers to organizational communication?

2.   Discuss the psychological barriers to effective communication.

3.   How do the personal opinions and prejudices of various individuals act as barriers to effective communication? Illustrate your answer with   suitable examples.

4.   What is meant by status-consciousness? How does it impede the smooth flow of communication?

5.   Explain how the wrong choice of the channel of communication acts as a barrier to communication.

6.   How does language act as a barrier to effective communication?

4.8   Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.

2. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.

3. Lesikar, R. V. and Pettite J. D., Business Communication.

4. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.

5. Shinha, P., Business Communication.

COMMERCIAL LETTERS

Objective: This lesson educates the students as to how to communicate clearly and effectively through commercial letters. It explains the basic skills necessary to write various types of commercial or business letters.

Structure

5.1   Introduction

5.2   Do's and Don't of Commercial Letter

5.3   Summary

5.4   Key Words

5.5   Self Assessment Questions

5.6   Suggested Readings

5.1   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:).

5.2   Do's and Don't of Commercial Letter

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.

5.2.1 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. It 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 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 Expressions: 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 modifies 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.

5.2.2 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 a 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.

5.2.3 WRITE WITH VIGOR

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 vigor has to do with language itself. Vigorous writing tends to lend vigor 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.

But 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 color (red or yellow?), new equipment (postage meter or cash register?), and change in price (increase or decrease?).

Avoid Cliches, Slang, and Buzz Words: 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 nonnative 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 the 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

Avoid slang in most business writing, for several reasons. First, it is informal, and much of business writing, although not formal, is still businesslike 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 agendize, prioritize, unionize, and operationalize quickly become tiresome.

5.2.4   Write Concisely

Businesspeople are busy people. The information revolution has created more paperwork, giving businesspeople access to more data. Having more data to analyze (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.

A requirement is by definition necessary, so only one of the words is needed. And to combine means to bring together, so using both words is redundant. 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 jewelry 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 Wordy 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 "land", which fattened the sentence without providing any "nutrition". Lanham suggests, "Think of a lard factor (LF) of 1/3 to ½ as normal and don't stop revising until you've removed it. "

Here are examples of other wordy phrases and their preferred one-word substitutes in parentheses:

are of the opinion that (believe)   in the event that (if)

due to the fact that (because)   pertaining to (about)

for the purpose of (for or to)   with regard to (about)

in order to (to)

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 (analyzed)

Avoid Hidden Subjects: Like verbs, subjects play a prominent role in a sentence and should stand out, rather then being obscured by an expletive beginning. An expletive is 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 date 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.

5.2.5   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, vigor, and conciseness; and using positive language will help you construct effective sentences and paragraphs. If you are one of the many students learning business communication for whom English is a second language, see Spotlight 13, "So You're and ESTL Speaker," on page 138.

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.

5.2.6   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.

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.

Complex Sentence: It contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. (If the two ideas are not closely related, they should be presented tin 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.

Complex Sentence: It contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. For example, in the first sentence below, "Two scanner 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, why 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.

Compound-Complex Sentence A **compound-complex sentence:** This contains tow 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 sentence 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.

5.2.7   Use Active and Passive Voice Appropriately

Voice is the aspect of a very 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 very. 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: Shoemacher & Doerr audited the books in 2002.

Passive: The books were audited in 2002 by Shoemacher & 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 Shoemacher & 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 tense0

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.

5.2.8   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. Here are some commonly used transitional expressions grouped by the relationships they express:

Relationship	Transitional Expressions
addition	also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too
cause and effect	as a result, because, consequently, hence, so, Therefore, thus
comparison	in the same way, likewise, similarly
contrast	although, but, however, in contrast, nevertheless, On the other hand, still, yet.
illustration	for example, for instance, in other words, to illustrate
sequence	first, second, third, then, next, finally
summery/conclusion	at last, finally, in conclusion, to summarize, therefore
time	meanwhile, next, since, soon, then

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.

5.2.9   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.

1. Vacation and sick leaves
2. How to resolve grievances
3. Managing your workstation

Do: The training program will cover

1. Vacation and sick leaves
2. Grievance resolution
3. 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.

5.2.10 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 signaling 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.

5.3   Summary

Communication is a complex two-way 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 an 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.

5.4 Key Words

♦ Parallelism : 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.

♦ Coherence: A coherent paragraph weaves sentences together so that the discussion is integrated.

♦ Unity: A unified paragraph gives information that is directly related to the topic, presents this information in a logical order, and –omits irrelevant details.

♦ Complex Sentence: It contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

♦ Complex Sentence: It contains one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

5.5 Self-Assessment Questions

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.

5.6   Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
3. Lesikar, R. V. and Pettite J. D., Business Communication.
4. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
5. Shinha, P., Business Communication.

| Subject: Business Communication |
| (The Lesson is Up-dated and Converted into SIM Format By: Dr. Karam Pal) |

Course: MBA   **Course Code: CP 105**

Lesson: *6*

BUSINESS REPORTS WRITING

Objective: The primary objective of this lesson is to make the students learn about the basics of business reports and make them understand as how the effective reports are written.

Structure

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Types of Business Reports

6.3 Characteristics of A Good Report

6.4 Structures of Business Reports

6.5 Summary

6.6 Key Words

6.7 Self Assessment Questions

6.8 Suggested Readings.

6.1 Introduction

Business managers, often, are required to write business reports of one sort or another. In fact, such writing can be lucrative and the organizations that do not have the need or budget to hire a full time manager look for hiring such business executives who can discharge the work on part time basis. Therefore, if you have read many business reports, you know they tend to be dull and turgid. They do not have communication balance that they need to have. While writing a business report won't let you use all your

creativity, you can apply the principles of good writing to create a document that communicates the meaning with its underlying spirit and at the same time it needs to be readers' friendly.

As always, knowing to whom the report is more critical, implicit in that knowledge is the question, "What do they want to know?" As a rule, readers of business reports are looking for two things: the bottom line and how will it affect them. It is also safe to say that your readers are busy, often extremely so, use these facts to well structure the report.

All too often business reports start with some sort of introduction that includes a bit of history and, perhaps, the approach taken to getting the results or items being reported. Usually, however, the readers already have this information, so start with the bottom line. This might involve money or it may be the action the report recommends, or both.

Make sure assertions and recommendations are backed up with solid information. History and methods can often be used as back-up information, but it will usually need to be rewritten so it fits. Business readers scan for the information they need. Well-written headlines and subheads will help or guide them to the parts of the report they actually need.

If possible, write in the first person, as a ghostwriter. Avoid the passive voice like the plague. Even if the samples you are given use a lot of passive language, use the active voice; chances are the company will be delighted.

Groups of numbers should probably go into some sort of table or chart. They not only break up large blocks of text, they also can clarify the information. Once you have a handle on the information, create an abstract

or executive summary. Include the recommended action and put this section right up front.

Now you have been introduced with a business report that communicates the needed information easily. A complete business report must concentrate on: understanding the readers' expectations; objectives and specifications for the research report; facts, conclusions, inferences, and judgments; moving data to messages objectively; organizing; using guideposts for clarity; writing clearly; writing user-friendly audit reports; editing and writing concisely

6.2   Types of Business Reports

A report is a 'basic management tool used in decision-making'. Hence, it is extremely important for business executives. In a one-man business, the functions of reporting and decision-making are combined in one man-the proprietor. He knows his business inside out and is capable of making on-the-spot decisions. Therefore, he does not need any reports. But large-scale organizations are engaged in multifarious activities, which are being handled by different departments. Their top executives cannot keep a personal watch over all these activities. So they have to base their decisions on the reports they get from the heads of various departments. For large organizations, reports are just indispensable.

A report carries information from someone who has it someone who needs it. A report; is a basic management tool used in decision-making.

Types of Business Reports: We can classify business reports in various ways. On the bass 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. Reports submitted at the Statutory Meeting of Shareholders, Directors' Report to the Annual General Meeting, Annual Return, Auditors' Report are statutory reports.

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

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

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

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

On the basis of function, a report can be (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**, **interpretative**, or **investigative.**

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

In a problem-determining report, we try to determining the causes underlying a problem or to ascertain whether the problem actually exists. In a technical report, we present data on a specialized subject, with or without comments.

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

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

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

Research Proposals and Report: Because research is a cost to the organization in terms of personnel time and monetary expenses, superiors want to know, what they will gain in return for expending these resources. Thus, a research proposal is a structured presentation of what you plan to do in research, why you plan to conduct the research, and how you plan to accomplish it. The proposal gives those concerned with your research effect on opportunity to evaluate your research approach. Every step of your proposal should be developed with extreme care. Once it has been accepted, any substantive changes you may wish to make must receive prior approval.

Research proposal formats vary depending upon the desires and needs of those who will appraise your work. It includes the following sections:

1. Heading: Provide a neutral, descriptive title for your project, being careful not to promise more than you can deliver. Include as a subtitle "A Research Proposal," your name, and the submission date. The subtitle (but not the title) may be omitted from this page if you include a separate title page that includes this information.

2.   Introduction: Establish a definite need for your study. Include here the background information about the problem, explaining enough to establish a situation and to orient the reader. For credibility, include any information from published sources that help to establish a need for your project. (More complex research proposal may contain a separate "Review of Literature" section, which would then immediately precede the "Procedures" section.)

3.   Problem: On the basis of what you said in the previous section, a problem needs answering. Introduce the problem statement and then, using neutral language, state in question form the specific problem to be investigated (avoid yes-or-no questions because your problem is probably more complex than that). Then introduce the sub-problems, listing them in logical order. Taken together, the answers to your sub-problems must provide a complete and accurate answer to your problem statement.

4.   Scope: The scope of the problem describes the boundaries you have established for your research problem. It may rely on geographical boundaries, a segment of a universe, a time period, or any combination of these. The scope (also called "delimitations") indicates those parts of the topic that normally might be considered a part of such a study but that you do not wish to include in your study. Your report title and problem statement must reflect any major delimitations imposed on your study. If you are using any terms in your study that may be subject to different interpretations or that may be unfamiliar to the reader, define them here.

5.   Procedures: Explain how you will conduct your investigation. Describe your sources of data and methods of collection. To ensure that adequate data is available to answer your problem, you should have identified most of your secondary sources prior to writing your

proposal. Likewise, you should be certain that people whose help is needed for your study are available and willing to cooperate. Regardless of how you organize this section, plan your procedures carefully and present them in such a way that the reader has confidence that they will enable you to provide an accurate and complete answer to your problem statement.

6.   Conclusion: Don't leave the reader hanging by ending your report abruptly. Include an appropriate ending paragraph that provides a sense of closure for your research proposal.

7.   Reference: Include here the published sources (including Internet citations) to which you actually referred in your proposal in your proposal. The author/year style of citation shown in Model 18 is typical for business reports, but you should use the citation style preferred by your reader or organization. (If your list of sources is extensive, begin the list on a separate page – as would be done in the final research report.)

6.3   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 invariable lead to decision-making, *inaccurate facts may lend 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 conclusions to investigation and analysis.* They must not reveal any self-interest on the part of the writer.

6. **Simple and unambiguous:** A good report is written in a simple, unambiguous language. It is a kind of scientific document of practical utility; hence it should be free from various forms of poetic embellishment like figures of speech.

7. **Clarity:** A good report is absolutely clear. Clarity depends on proper arrangement of facts. The report writer must proceed systematically. He should make his purpose clear, define his sources, state his findings and finally make necessary recommendations. He should divide his report into short paragraphs giving them headings, and insert other suitable signposts to achieve greater clarity.

8. **Brevity:** A report should be brief. It is difficult to define brevity in absolute terms. Nor can brevity be laid down as a rule. All that can

be said is that a good report is as brief as possible. Brevity should not be achieved at the cost of clarity. Nor should it be at the cost of completeness. Sometimes the problem being investigated is of such importance that it calls for a detailed discussion of facts. Then this discussion should not be evaded. Brevity in report is the kind of brevity one recommends for a précis. *Include everything significant and yet be brief.*

9. **Grammatical accuracy:** The grammatical accuracy of language though listed at number 9 in the characteristics of a good report is of fundamental importance. It is one of the basic requisites of good report as of any other piece of composition. Who is going to read a report if its language is faulty? Besides, faulty construction of sentences makes the meaning obscure and ambiguous.

Selecting a suitable type of report: Before a writer undertakes to prepare a report, he must consider the following points:

- What kind of report is requested or expected?
- How much time has been allowed to prepare the report?
- What is the purpose of the report?
- What exactly is to be examined?
- What facts are to be furnished?
- For whom is the report meant?

1. The reporter may have been instructed to prepare a specific kind of report or three may be precedents to follow. But in majority of instances he will have to decide for himself whether he is to prepare an informal or a formal

report, or if it is a formal report, whether it is a statutory or non-statutory report. It is important that a reporter, right in the beginning, is clear about the lines along which he is to plan the content, form and style of the report.

2. The length of time the writer has been allowed to prepare the report can give him valuable guidance of the type of report expected. An informal report highlighting some important aspect of a problem may be acceptable if the time is short.

3. The purpose of a report is perhaps the most important factor to bear in mind before deciding the type of report needed. If the writer has been asked to prepare a report on whether his company should set up a new branch that involves considerable initial expenditure or on advisability of merging into or collaborating with another company, these are matters of vital importance and they need very carefully written formal reports.

4. Just as it is important to keep in mind the purpose of the report, it is also important to be constantly aware of what exactly is to be examined, to be studied. Such an awareness will eliminate much redundant labour, at the same time it will help in the inclusion of all that is pertinent to a problem and will help in making the report a document complete in all respects. Let us suppose the Development Manger of a bank has been asked to report on the feasibility of setting up a branch of the bank in a new colony. Exactly what is to be examined? (a) What type of colony is this- residential, commercial or industrial? (b) If it is primarily industrial or business houses? (c) If it is residential area, what is its population, what is the general standard of the resident, and what could be their saving capacity? Will the study of these facts suffice? Or, has something of crucial importance been overlooked?

5. While studying the old file of the company or conducting a market survey, the proprietor is likely to come across a number of interesting facts that

appear to be relevant but in reality are not. The temptation to include them in the report will have to be resisted.

6. The last point to be kept in mind is: who is going to read the report? If the report is going to the Research Director, it ought to contain a detailed, step-by step account of the investigations carried out, along with detailed, minutely described findings. On the other hand, if the report is going to the Managing Director, who you know has implicit faith in you and is more interested in your recommendations, it is these recommendations, which will have to be emphasized both in the beginning and at the end. B. Maude beautifully makes this point.

Preparing a report: Once you are clear about the purpose of writing a report, the persons for whom it is meant, the facts to be examined and the facts to be included, and the time at your disposal, and know what the of report you are going to write, it is time to start the work. In Write Better, speak better the following five steps are suggested to write a report.

1. **Investigating the sources of information:** Investigating the sources of information is a kind of spadework. It is to be done right in the beginning. The extent of investigation will, of course, depend on the length and importance of the report. Major sources of information are: company files, personal observation, interviews, letters, questionnaires, and library research.

   • Most of the relevant information is already contained in the old files of the Company. Sometimes there are precedents, and old findings and recommendations may be of considerable help. So it is very important to go through the old files of the Company. Declining sales or rising cost of production are recurring phenomena. And their causes are also

usually similar. In these cases, old files may be containing some valuable information.

- In reports on a fire accident or on the progress of a project, personal observation will be great help. It needs on the spot enquiry to ascertain the cause of a fire or to find out why the work of installing a new plant is going on rather slowly.

- Complaints from customers about unsatisfactory service being provided by a branch might necessitate interviews. Interviews with the members of the staff may also be of some help. These interviews should be carefully recorded, clearly indicating the persons interviewed and the time and place of the interview. Sometimes, instead of holding personal interviews, litters may be written to different people.

- When a large number of people are to be contacted, the only practical method is to make use of questionnaires. Such questionnaires are often prepared by large business houses to ascertain the popularity of their products or to find out the possibility of introducing some new products into the market. Questionnaires should never be lengthy. Questions should be prepared in such a way that they do not call for writing lengthy answers. Questions that just require ticking off one of the many alternatives suggested are the best. If the results of the questionnaire are incorporated in the report, a copy of the questionnaire should also be included.

- In reports on subjects of general nature, library research may be found useful. This includes reference to standard reference books and past as well as current issues of newspapers, trade publications and magazines.

2. **Taking notes:** In the course of investigations, the writer keeps on taking notes of anything that appears to be related to the subject. Then there is no time to analyze them and determine how they will be of help in the final report. But as the writer deeps turning them in his mind over and over again, a kind of patter starts emerging and he begins to be clear about what is relevant and what is not. It is a very general kind of pattern but it gives the writer at least a starting point.

3. **Analyzing the data:** Now is the time to analyze the collected data in the light of the pattern that has evolved. A lot of data will have to be rejected while a need might be felt to collect more data. The final pattern will emerge at this stage. The writer should never hurry through this stage, since this is the most important stage in writing a report.

4. **Making an outline:** Once the final pattern of the report has taken shape in the writer's mind he should prepare an outline to write the report. In this outline the problem is stated, the facts are recorded, they are briefly analyzed, and the logical conclusion is arrived at. An outline is not essential, but it should be found extremely helpful in writing a systematic report.

5. **Writing the report:** The last stage is that of writing the report. It will need a constant shuttling between the outline and the notes. First a rough draft of the report is prepared. Then it is revised, pruned and polished. If the writer has some more time at his disposal, he will find it advantageous to come back to his rough draft after, say, a couple of days. This short interval will make his revision work really meaningful. The writer should also be careful that he langrage of the report is simple, unambiguous and free from grammatical errors. It is now time to type it out in a proper form and submit it.

6.4   Structures of Business Reports

Business reports are used extensively in organizations, and it is valuable for any executive to develop an effective report writing style. Business reports come in many forms, from lengthy formal reports to the shorter variations used within departments. Therefore, the writing style should reflect the nature of the report content.

A report can be organized in three ways: Letter form; Memorandum form; and Letter text combination form.

1. **Letter form:** In the case of brief, informal reports, the arrangement followed in business letter is adopted. Its main parts are: heading or the title, date, address, salutation, the body, complimentary close, and signature. It is usually written in the first person- I or we. The body of the letter can be further divided into the following parts:

   - **Introduction:** The introductory paragraphs present the terms of reference and the subject of study. Here the writer states the problem confronting him in the light of the terms of reference and the relevant circumstances.
   - **Findings:** The next few paragraphs present the finding of the investigation.
   - **Recommendations:** Recommendations that logically follow the findings are given in the last paragraph of the body.

   2. **Memorandum form:** Adopting the memorandum form is a simpler way of presenting the report, since here the formalities of the letterform are done away with. The data is mentioned at the top. It is followed by the name of the person to whom the report. Next

follows the actual text and the conclusion. As in the letterform, the text of the report is divided into paragraphs with headings and sub-headings. Large business houses have different types of printed forms to send reports. This simplifies the procedure and ensures uniformity of style.

3. **Letter-text combination form.** Long reports are usually written in the letter –text combination form.

Structure of Formal Reports: In general, long formal reports follow a recognized structure, made up of a tile page, table of contents, executive summary, introduction section, the main body of the report, conclusions section, recommendations and appendices.

Title Page: The title page, as its name suggests, identifies the report, so that it can be distributed to those individuals who are authorized to receive it. The title page should also contain sufficient information to enable the report to be retrieved easily once it is in storage. This page should be attractively laid out, as it is the first page that the reader see's, and first impressions are important!

Table of Contents: The table of contents lists the main sections or chapters that appear in the report and the page number for each.

Executive Summary: The executive summary plays an important role in the business report. Its function is to provide busy individuals with an overview of the report contents. Therefore, the summary should be interesting enough to encourage the executive to return to the report when he/she is less busy! The normal length of the summary is between 350 – 550 words, and the summary should contain the objective(s) of the report, main findings, conclusions or recommendations. However, some extensive

reports concentrate on presenting an overview of the conclusions or recommendations.

Introduction Section: The introduction should set out the aims and objectives of the report and provide background information about the matter being investigated or discussed. In addition, the author(s) of the report should explain how the data presented in the report has been gathered, and how the report itself is structured.

Main Body of Report: This section presents the main findings concerning the report's subject matter. These findings should be laid out in a clear and logical fashion, so that it is easy for the reader to follow the author(s) train of thought. It is usual to put the most important findings at the beginning of the section. It is important to use a system of headings, sub-headings and numbers to break large chunks of text down into smaller paragraphs.

Conclusions Section: In the section, the main findings are assessed. Any conclusions presented should be fair and unbiased, and should not be used as a means of highlighting the author's subjective opinions.

Recommendations: Recommendations for further action should only be made when the specific aims of the report, or terms of reference, dictate that recommendations be provided in the final report. Any recommendations made should be presented in order of importance and be written in a very precise manner, so that the readers are clear about the author's intentions.

Bibliography: If the report is based on extensive research, the works consulted by the writer are given in the bibliography. The bibliography may also include works recommended for further study.

Appendices: There are times when large amounts of data or statistics cannot be easily inserted into the main findings. Therefore, this information can be placed in an appendix at the end of the report. Clear references should be made to the appendix in the main body of the report. This approach is very valuable where several long tables of data must be contained in the report.

Glossary: It is the list of technical words used in the reports and their explanations. Whether these words are to be given in the beginning or the end or in footnotes is entirely a matter of the writer's choice. Besides, whether the glossary is needed al all depends upon who is going to read the report. If it is going to be read by knowledgeable people who are already familiar with the terms, there is no need to include the glossary in the report.

Signature: A report must be dated and signed by the person(s) who has (have) submitted it. In the case of a report prepared by a committee or a sub-committee, if it is very important, all the members may sign it, other wise the signature of the Chairman will suffice. If the report is not unanimous, it may be signed only be the assenting members. The dissenting members may submit a separate minority report or they may sign the majority report with a note of dissent

Finally, it is wise to proof-read the report before it is printed to ensure that there are no spelling errors, and that the page numbers indicated in the table of contents match exactly the pages on which headings appear in the report!

6.5   Summary

Thousand of reports, long or short, formal or informal, crucial or ordinary, special or routine are written everyday. A supervisor, at the end of the day,

reports to the manager the progress of the work carried on in his supervision. The manager of bank sends a periodic report to the Head Office on the sate of deposits, advances, overdraft limits, etc.

C.A. Brown offers a very simple definition: A report is a communication from someone who has some information to someone who wants to use that information.

A report is a 'basic management tool used in decision-making'. Hence, it is extremely important. In a one-man business, the functions of reporting and decision-making are combined in one man-the proprietor. He knows his business inside out and is capable of making on-the-spot decisions. So he does not need any reports. Nevertheless, large-scale organizations are engaged in multifarious activities, which are being handled by different departments. Their top executives cannot keep a personal watch over all these activities. So they have to base their decisions on the reports they get from the heads of various departments. For large organizations, reports are just indispensable.

Throughout this lesson, we have made a strong case for the increasingly important role that business reports play in the successful management of the contemporary organization. However, too much of a good thing is a bad thing. Without proper management, report – especially computer printouts – can backfire, becoming a nuisance and contributing to information overload.

With the increasing availability of data and the ease with which that data can be manipulated, copied, and distributed, managers sometimes tend to generate every type of report possible and then submit them all to higher-level management. Some managers seem to devote more energy to generating reports than to analyzing and making use of their contents.

Thus, someone in the organization – preferably someone in higher management – should be assigned the task of controlling reports. Periodically, (typically, annually) this individual should make an inventory of all recurring reports and determine the continuing usefulness of each one. Some reports may be eliminated altogether, some modified, others merged, and, where justified, new reports authorized.

This review process will guarantee that business reports continue to serve management rather than the reverse. With or without such controls, all managers should ensure that the reports they write serve some actual purpose, stick to that purpose, and avoid including extraneous computer data just because it's easily available.

6.6   Key Words

♦ Report: A report is a communication from someone who has some information to someone who wants to use that information.

♦ Glossary: It is the list of technical words used in the reports and their explanations. Whether these words are to be given in the beginning or the end or in footnotes is entirely a matter of the writer's choice.

♦ Appendices: There are times when large amounts of data or statistics cannot be easily inserted into the main findings.

♦ Bibliography: If the report is based on extensive research, the works consulted by the writer are given in the bibliography.

♦ Executive Summary: The executive summary plays an important role in the business report. Its function is to provide busy individuals with an overview of the report contents.

6.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. "The single most significant characteristic of the business report is the ability to define the structure of a report." Discuss.

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 the statement in the light of business report writing.

3. Write a note on the need and importance of business report. What are the ideal features of such report..

4. What is the desirable structure of a business report? How many ways a report can be written?

5. Your manager has asked you to determine whether or not the office staff would welcome the introduction of canteen facilities. Most of the staff have indicated that they would, but only if the facilities were of a high standard. Some of the staff would prefer luncheon vouchers. Make your recommendation in a report to your manager.

6.8 Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
3. Lesikar, R. V. and Pettite J. D., Business Communication.
4. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
5. Shinha, P., Business Communication.

| **Course: MBA** | **Course Code: CP 105** |
| | *Lesson: 7* |

ORAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Objective: The main objective of this lesson is to make the students learn about the basics of Oral and Non-verbal Communication.

Lesson Structure

7.1   Introduction

7.2   Oral and Non-verbal Communication

7.3   Summary

7.4   Key Words

7.5   Self-Assessment Questions

7.6   Suggested Readings.

7.1   Introduction

The subconscious mind works on past experiences, hopes and fears. In being apprehensive ahead of non-verbal communication, it is easy for your sub-conscious to focus on downbeat outcomes and thereby magnify your concerns. In such situation, you need to be aware of your body language, space language, time language, physical layout and para language from the moment you stand up until your presentation is completed. The importance of positive eye contact and the correct use of posture and hand movement to accompany your presentation cannot be overstated.

7.2   Oral and Non-verbal Communication

An individual's facial expression, tone of voice, body posture and movement often convey a world of detail about what they are thinking and feeling and how they are reacting to what you are saying. The effective use and interpretation of body language communication will help you to identify delicate aspects of the audiences' attitudes and reactions. This understanding and interpretation of body language is a key component of intelligent listening.

Members of your audience will analyze your body language, even if they are unaware of this at the conscious level. A brilliantly prepared presentation delivered in an interesting voice will fall well short of the mark if accompanied by negative, intrusive or hostile body language.

You will probably be aware of the concept of personal space - that area around an individual into which other people should not venture uninvited. Audiences too are very conscious of this space and when presenting you should not stand within 10 feet of the audience. This distance is known as the public zone and if you violate it you are likely to antagonize those affected. This distance also creates an effective stage area in which you, the presenter, can perform.

Once you are positioned in the correct zone - this will be further away the larger the audience. There are four main aspects of body language that you should consider**:** what to do with your eyes; what your facial expressions

indicate; the positioning and movement of your body and limbs; and your hand gestures.

Eye Contact: Eye contact with the audience is an essential part of any presentation. Without it the audience will feel remote from the presenter and are unlikely to relate to them or their message in a meaningful way. Not many presenters realize how important eye contact is, or how sensitive people are to it. Eye contact should be a positive form of body language communication, but if it is not used correctly it can easily become negative.

The face shown has a shaded area that indicates the correct target zone for positive eye contact. That is looking anywhere within this shaded zone represents positive eye contact.

Looking at someone's face anywhere outside of the triangular target zone is likely to cause some degree of embarrassment. However, the no-go zones, which look red, are both associated with strong adverse reactions.

Zone A represents the intimate zone and by moving just a fraction below the base of the target triangle, you will enter it. When this happens people typically react by feeling that the other person is staring at them, or that the observer looks shifty.

Zone B represents a dominant zone and by looking at the forehead of another person you are likely to invoke a reaction that you appear to be arrogant, that you are staring straight through them or more commonly that you are talking down at them.

As well as understanding how to make positive eye contact with an individual it is also important to ensure that your gaze encompasses your whole audience - including those at the back and the sides. Try to avoid holding eye contact only with audience members who appear enthusiastic and interested. Whilst you may find it more difficult to engage members of the audience who appear neutral, it is important to try to involve them.

Body and Limb Movement: The way that you use your body and limbs will also have a major influence on how your audience perceives you. When presenting you will normally be standing, and an ideal stance is with your feet close together and your weight evenly distributed between them.

It is important not to grow roots - don't stand in one position, but try to inject movement as you speak. This helps to add a natural animation to your presentation, as the audience will have to adjust their gaze to follow you rather than stay looking at a fixed position.

By developing a practiced way of moving you can add a confident and professional air to your presentation style. Precisely how you choose to move is a personal thing - but try to develop and rehearse your style so that you end up moving without conscious effort.

Whilst it is a good thing to be animated don't walk around too much or the audience will find it distracting and annoying. One of the best tactics is to use the main features of your presentation as cues for movement, until you have developed this skill it may be worth annotating your cue cards with movement cues or symbols.

When conversing socially you probably don't think consciously about what you are doing with your arms, they are just there, moving in support of what you are saying. Somehow in a formal presentation you are constantly aware of them, hanging awkwardly from your shoulders, always seeming to be in the way.

The key point about arms is to ignore them - move them back into your subconscious so that they can support what you are saying in a natural way. That said, there is one movement that you should develop when presenting which will display confidence and openness. This involves moving your arms away from your body and showing open palms to your audience.

Hand Movement and Gestures: One of the most obvious forms of conscious body language communication is the hand gesture:

A wagging or pointing finger often indicates a threat or accusation.
A clenched fist is indicative of anger or a threat.
A hand held to the ear indicates difficulty in hearing.
A finger held in front of pursed lips is an instruction to be quiet.

The best advices when using hand signals is to be aware of the standard interpretations associated with them and avoid any with a strong negative meaning - such as a threatening gesture. When you rehearse your presentation, you may want to include some pre-planned hand movements but let others occur in a natural and spontaneous way.

Your Posture and Stance: There are further aspects of posture that you should be aware of - as they can easily communicate subconscious messages, some of which you will want to avoid:

The forward sloping stance indicates a wish to dominate other people, often it is accompanied by an over-stressed point. The presenter may be attempting to impose a concept or point of view on their audience. This is made worse by aggressive or intrusive behavior - such as entering the public zone or the use of hostile gestures.

A backward sloping stance indicates a presenter who is not happy with their situation. This defensive or submissive stance tends to indicate that they lack confidence in what they are saying and would rather not be there.

A bent posture is indicative of a person who is saying something without conviction. Saying one thing whilst meaning another - such as a salesperson giving an exaggerated sales pitch or a customer who wants to say no but has been placed in an awkward position.

The upright posture demonstrates adult, assertive behavior with no hidden meaning or manipulations in the communication. This stance indicates that the person has conviction and confidence in what they are saying. This is the posture you should practice and use when presenting.

Staying in Control: The professional presenter will know how to deal effectively with disruptive members of an audience and manage a question and answer session in a constructive manner.

When you are making a presentation the best way of staying in control and keeping your audience with you, is to keep them interested in what you are saying. The best strategy is to prepare and then deliver a presentation that

your audience find spellbinding. Unfortunately, many business presentations will be based on subject matter that is not that interesting.

Another complication is that audiences are made up of individuals, who will not share the same interests, attention span or boredom threshold. People vary in the way they express disagreement, boredom and frustration and you should be able to read signs of this from the body language demonstrated by your audience. Members of an audience don't usually think of themselves as being observed, and consequently their guards tend to be down - making their body language relatively easy to read.

Reading Signals from Your Audience: There are a variety of body language signals that you might observe among members of an audience:

Members of an audience can show signs of disapproval or hostility in a variety of ways. You may observe people pointedly discussing things with a neighbor, looking at the ceiling, out of a window or frowning whilst looking at you.

A negative posture, with an impassive or slightly hostile expression, arms folded as if to form a barrier and legs crossed with the person leaning back - suggesting resistance to the presenter. However, you should be careful to avoid making judgments based on observing one piece of body language in isolation. For example crossed legs or crossed, arms on their own should not be automatically read as a negative reaction.

A neutral and open attitude is often accompanied by a neutral or slightly friendly facial expression and an upright or slightly forward leaning seating position. As these people have not yet decided whether or not they agree

with your main message you may observe a mixture of gentle nods and shakes of their head as you make your key points. Neutrals should be viewed as a positive resource - it is after all the job of your presentation to win them over.

Someone interested in what you are saying may be smiling and nodding in agreement or frowning in thought, possibly leaning forward attentively. Hands clasped together may also indicate that a person is carefully considering what you are saying, as may lean on their chin.

If boredom is affecting any members of your audience this may manifest itself in reversion to common habits - such as fidgeting with personal belongings like glasses, watches, pens and earrings. Whilst looking at a watch or clicking a pen may demonstrate boredom, don't confuse these signs with such things as the chewing of the end of a pen, which may indicate thoughtfulness. Members of the audience who become bored may also whisper among themselves, rustle papers, scribble aimlessly on notepads, throw back their head between their cupped hands and even make audible sighs.

Adjusting to Signals from Your Audience: Recognizing both positive and negative signals from your audience should not change your planned presentation fundamentally. Your message and the material with which you are communicating should have been carefully prepared and radical changes will almost certainly not be realistic.

The real point of reading signals from your audience is that it can help you to judge who you have on-side, who is opposing your point of view and who has yet to decide. This should help you to focus your message where it

can have maximum impact, talking round those that can be swayed, whilst keeping your supporters with you and trying not to alienate the opposition.

One or more members of your audience may attempt to disrupt your presentation, usually because they strongly disagree with your message. Learn to recognize how this disruption may manifest itself and you will be better equipped to cope with it. The keywords when dealing with disruption are to be polite but firm, never lose your temper or your cool - if you enter into a shouting match with a heckler then they win and you lose.

Coping with Hostility: It is vital you don't let disruptive members of the audience derail your presentation - you are working to a tight schedule so don't get involved in protracted discussions. Try to approach the point of contention from any common ground that you share, but if this fails to work then politely request that the point is discussed later at the pre-planned question and answer session.

If someone denounces something that you have said, avoid getting into an argument with him or her. If your point was based on fact then make this clear and present the evidence. However, if it was based on your personal opinions then don't attempt to pass this off as factual - it is your presentation and therefore your opinion should be worth expressing.

Always remember that what is underlying the point of contention may be a genuine concern and that if you try to brush it aside it is likely to be taken up by other members of the audience, who may then swing against you.

Another point that you should always bear in mind is that any hostility shown by an audience is aimed at your message not at you personally.

Attention seekers may make silly or sarcastic comments simply to get themselves noticed, whilst other members of your audience may respond unwittingly to a rhetorical question that you pose - simply because they weren't paying full attention. Try to analyze these sort of events as they occur and respond, perhaps with humor or support but don't try to put people down - as this nearly always reflects badly on the presenter.

Summing-up the Presentation: It was recommended earlier that you planned your presentation to have a question and answer session at the end. This will enable you to deliver your message and then end strongly with a clear and concise summing up before entering the relatively unpredictable area of tackling questions from the floor.

Unless you are using visual aids, make sure that they are switched off to avoid them causing a distraction during your conclusion. Step forward so that you are confidently asserting yourself as the center of attention and deliver your summing up with confidence and authority. It may be a good idea to announce that the end is near - as this can refocus the attention of any members of the audience who are beginning to suffer from listening fatigue. For example, you could say now to sum up briefly before I answer your questions.

Your conclusion, or summing up, should be strong and clear but not protracted. Ideally, it will represent about 10 per-cent of the overall presentation. The last impression you make with the audience will be the

lasting one and the last words that you say may be the best remembered - so always plan to finish strongly.

Aim to reiterate the main points from your presentation. Use a combination of pauses, intonation and other verbal techniques - such as alliteration, in order to create a memorable statement.

A good presentation can be ruined by a poor question and answer session. Conversely, a mediocre one can be saved by a confident final session. The key to being confident in dealing with questions is preparation. When you have finished drafting your presentation read through it carefully and note any questions that it is likely to raise, and prepare answers to these in advance. This is the time to focus on any areas in which your message is short of facts or vulnerable to being challenged - in this way it is usually possible to anticipate most questions that are likely to arise. This analysis will also help you to prepare one or more lengthy answers in advance for questions that you are sure will be raised.

Sometimes, you may be facing an unresponsive group, one that just sits inert and will not show any interest in taking part - even during the planned question and answer session. You may think that the obvious conclusion to draw is that they have no interest in what you are saying.

However, it is equally likely that you are just facing an unresponsive group; this may be due to the character types within it or the intra-group politics. If your presentation has a chair then the chairperson should intervene and ask some initial questions in an attempt to involve your audience. If not, then you might pose some general questions at the audience in order to get them to loosen up.

When answering questions do so by speaking clearly and confidently, otherwise you will appear unsure of what you are saying. Do not let nerves draw you into responding hastily, always think about your answer before you speak and if necessary refer back to your notes in order to answer a question.

If the question requires clarification then ask the questioner to do this, rather than risk answering a question that wasn't asked. When answering, address the entire audience and not just to the questioner, and avoid getting into a protracted debate on any point that is raised - you may offer to see a questioner after the presentation to continue a point that is of specific personal interest to them.

You may face questions that are unanswerable. These may be posed by people who are hostile to your message or by those just wishing to make a point. If you feel unable to answer a question you may find it useful to have a standard reply ready in order to reduce its impact on your presentation. Here are a couple of examples that you might find useful:

I would rather not answer that here and now, but if you see me after the session, I will take your details and get back to you as soon as I have checked some facts.

Let me think about that for a minute, can we come back to it later? Next, question please.

I don't think that the information necessarily supports either view definitively, however my personal opinion is that . . .

Regaining Your Composure: Consider an example where the presenter has started well, and delivered a clear and concise introduction. However early into the main body of the presentation she became confused about where she was in relation to her cue cards, nerves set in and subsequently she lost the attention of the audience. At this stage the presentation could have degenerated into chaos, which is what would happen if control was not regained.

However, by pausing, taking a drink of water and regaining eye contact with supportive members of the audience the presenter has managed to compose herself once more. She followed this by telling a joke at her own expense, and then firmly re-established her position in the presentation by summing up the main points made so far. Following this her confidence returned and the presentation proceeded well, with the help of smooth running audio-visual aids and some well researched but spontaneously delivered examples.

The presentation ended with a clear and memorable conclusion and the question and answer session was also well managed. The overriding impression was of a professional and successful presentation. This example illustrates a key point - that if the presenter can remain calm and composed and deal with situations as they arise then they should be able to stay in control, hold the interest of the audience and make a successful presentation.

7.3   Summary

The oral and non-verbal communication is equally important. Make sure that you start by speaking confidently and at a natural pace. Try not to refer

to your notes more than once or twice in your opening segment. A confident opening style should establish you as a credible and authoritative speaker who is open and friendly. One very useful tip for generating a relaxed and friendly presentation style is to speak to your audience, regardless of its size, as though you were chatting to a friend in a far less formal environment.

Try to look at all of the members of your audience - so that they feel included, and hold brief eye contact with a handful of them. It can be worth seeking eye contact in a methodical way - by switching from the rear right corner of your audience to the center to front left, then back to rear left and so on. Adopting this approach should ensure you cover all areas of your audience. One final point regarding your opening is that you should make it crisp and telling - giving your audience something to think about right at the start. This will have the effect of gaining their attention; it is then your job to make sure that you keep it.

7.4 Key Words

♦ *Oral and Non-verbal Communication:* An individual's facial expression, tone of voice, body posture and movement often convey a world of detail about what they are thinking and feeling and how they are reacting to what you are saying.

♦ *Presentation Styles:* The presentation style that you adopt should be influenced by the size of your audience together with the level of formality that is appropriate.

7.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. "The single most significant element of non-verbal communication is the body language." Discuss the statement.
2. "Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another through gestures." Discuss and elaborate the statement.
3. Write a note on the need and importance of body language in business communication.
4. What are the factors a presenter should keep in mind while going for non-verbal communication with three different groups of audiences.

7.6 Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
3. Lesikar, R. V. and Pettite J. D., Business Communication.
4. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
5. Shinha, P., Business Communication.

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PRESENTATION

Objective: The primary objective of this lesson is to make the students learn about the basics of public speaking aspects in business communication and to enable them to avoid the occurrence of such events in public speaking that do not add to the value of the speaker.

Structure

8.1   Introduction

Public speaking is a common source of stress for everyone. Many of us would like to avoid this problem entirely, but this is hard to do. Whether we work alone or with large numbers of people, eventually we will need to

speak in public to get certain tasks accomplished. And if we want to be leaders or achieve anything meaningful in our lives, we will often need to speak to groups, large and small, to be successful.

Many of us have observed public speakers and thought to ourselves "Wow, I could never be that smart, calm, witty, entertaining, polished . . . or whatever." Well, you do not have to be brilliant, witty, or perfect to succeed. That is not what public speaking is all about. I know it may look that way, but it is not. You can be average. You can be below average. You can make mistakes, get tongue-tied, or forget whole segments of your talk. You can even tell no jokes at all and still be successful.

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. Here, we draw attention to six steps that constitute a typical two-way communication, and when the opportunities for mis-communication are considered you may view it as surprising how often communication works without a problem.

When, a speaker speaks to a recipient, we have the following possible processes:

- What the speaker thinks to say
- What he actually says
- What the recipient hears

None of these are necessarily the same and three chances already exist for a breakdown in communication. As a result of what a recipient hears, he may make a reply, giving:

- What he thinks to say
- What he actually says
- What the speaker thinks to hear.

Now, multiply that by the number of recipients that may be listening to the speaker and you begin to understand the opportunities for misinterpretations that may arise.

As you can see, communication is a complex two-way process this is why it so often breaks down and is ineffective. With the complexity apparent even in a simple communication, like the one illustrated, it should be apparent that there is a need for clarity and simplicity – as this will minimize the chance of misunderstandings.

Communication is a skill and like any skill, it requires practice. The skill enhancement is a gradual process through practice that differentiates a skill from one form to other forms of knowledge. Understanding the theory of communication and effective public speaking will not in itself make you a brilliant communicator or speaker but should make you aware of how to maximize the impact of your presentations.

The most important thing to remember is that the message that you intend to communicate is likely to be misunderstood. Therefore, in addition to carefully preparing and presenting your message, stay alert for any signs that your audience are mis-interpreting it. It is up to you, the speaker or presenter, to continually check that your message has been received, understood, correctly interpreted and filed in the receivers mind.

We will now examine each of the six steps of the communication model in slightly more detail - with a view to introducing some guidelines that should help to promote more effective two-way communication.

Step1 - Ensure that your audience are tuned in and paying full attention to what you are about to say. Once you have the attention of the audience the communication of the message can begin.

Step2 -   Each recipient listens to the message.

Step3 -   Each recipient will have some feeling about the message and will interpret its meaning. This is often done in the light of individual attitudes and prejudices or alternatively with reference to previous experience or associations. Your problem is that the audience may not feel and interpret in the way that you intended. The result may range from a simple failure for the message to hit home, through to a serious misunderstanding.

Step4 -   Each recipient may respond to the original message.

Step5 -   You have now become the receiver, and should listen carefully to the message.

Step6 -   You will feel and interpret something about this message. This may range from satisfaction that the communication is proceeding as you intended, to bewilderment at how your original message was mis-interpreted.

8.2   Encoding and Translating

The majority of people communicate in a way that is fundamentally flawed - in that they adopt the egocentric communication model. This involves the presenter deciding what they want to say and how they want to say it, with little or no regard for the characteristics or needs of their audience. This model is termed egocentric because of the significance that the presenter attaches to his or her own role in the communication process. The presenter is essentially adopting the following attitude: "I have decided what to say and the way I'm going to say it. I will then say it and assume that the audience agrees, more or less, with my interpretation". This process, of

packaging a message, is called encoding and it determines which human senses (hearing, vision, touch etc.) will be used to transmit the message.

The next step in a communication is to send the encoded message to the receiver. The receiver then has the difficult job of decoding the message in terms that they can relate to. It is at this point that they may misinterpret, change, filter or edit the message to fit into their own preconceived framework. In this way, egocentric communication often fails to convey the intended message.

To minimize the chance of your message being misinterpreted another step should be added to the communication model. This new step is called translating and involves you encoding the message as before, but then translating the message, to take into account a variety of issues from the audience's point of view. By translating the encoded message for its intended audience, the chance of misinterpretation is greatly reduced.

When done properly the result of this translation step is to frame the message in terms that are better suited to the audience - in other words a far more relevant and focused message for the audience to decode. This process will produce a message that has more impact.

Think about how many times you and your colleagues have attended the same meeting or presentation and yet have come away with different interpretations about what was meant. When preparing your messages, try to think of the different ways that it could be interpreted by your audience and try to translate it in a way that will minimize inaccurate interpretations.

8.3   Understanding Your Audience

You should be clear on the aim of your presentation, identify the personality types in your audience and adjust your presentation accordingly. You must be clear on the aim of your presentation at the outset in order that you can stay focused when preparing it. Think of your aim as the final destination, and your presentation as the journey.

Your objective is to ensure that the presentation delivers you, and your audience, to the correct and clearly defined destination. It is only if you are clear about your aim that you will carry conviction in your forthcoming presentation. The purpose of nearly all business presentations is either to inform or to persuade. You should decide which applies and then prefix your presentation with an aim statement that is worded accordingly.

Once you have decided on your aim and written this down you can begin to consider the content of your presentation. However before you can plan the content in detail you will need to know how to analyze the audience that you will be presenting to - in order to help you to translate the message in an appropriate way.

Audience Classification: There are three questions that you need to ask concerning the characteristics and composition of the audience; Firstly, what personality types are likely to be in your audience? Secondly, how can we recognize them in advance? Finally, what happens if you are presenting to a mixed audience? Analysis of audience characteristics can be undertaken based on a simple but effective model that classifies people as being one of four types. Each candidate should be classified as one of the four personality types shown:

1. Emotive people are people-oriented and they tend to be; sociable, animated, spontaneous, unstructured and welcome change. They prefer the broad picture but cant be bothered with the details. Emotive people often have a short attention span, so keep the presentation short and

focused and keep it at the overview level, avoiding discussion of any details.

2. Directive people are high in dominance but low in sociability. They tend to be; aggressive, intense, pushy, determined and opinionated. Their goal driven nature can be misinterpreted as unfriendly, especially if they encounter resistance to their aims at work. When presenting to these people stick to the facts, cover each point clinically and proceed to the next.

3. Reflective people are low in both dominance and sociability. They tend to be; precise, questioning, aloof, serious, scientific and stuffy. They often occupy product related jobs - such as scientists and engineers, and they pay attention to detail. When presenting to these people supply lots of detail and have plenty of support information at hand in order to address the detailed questions that are likely to be raised.

4. Supportive people are high in sociability and low in dominance. Their traits make them easy to recognize, being; loyal, steady, solid and reliable good workers. The majority of people are from this group, but you should bear in mind that they tend to fear change and will worry if given cause. You should therefore avoid risking being seen as uncaring or aggressive and should take time to pre-empt any contentious issues.

8.4   Targeting Your Audience

It is important to target your message to the correct audience, if you prepare for reflective candidates and your audience is predominantly directive then

they are likely to become bored - and being directives, they will probably make their feelings known.

Of course, this profiling depends, to some extent, on a familiarity with the audience. This will be easier with work colleagues than, for example, when creating a sales presentation for an external audience.

You will often have to piece together the audience profile from a variety of snippets of information - such as their job titles and ages. Other information that may prove useful includes any previous correspondence or conversations and anecdotal stories passed on by colleagues.

Audience profiling is an important precursor to preparing the content of your presentation and you may need to use all of your investigative instincts to get the most advantage from this process.

Targeting a Mixed Audience: Unfortunately presentations are normally targeted at an audience that is a mixture of personality types. So the question is who should you aim your presentation at? The answer will depend on the size and composition of the audience. Whilst there are an infinite number, of audience scenarios we will consider one example – to illustrate the kind of issues you should consider when deciding where to pitch your presentation.

In this scenario, you are presenting to a small mixed audience, but there isn't an identifiable key decision maker. Presenting to this kind of group will be your biggest challenge, and if you are unable to gain any further information about the group then your best strategy is likely to be to prepare a DIRECTIVE presentation.

This will keep any directives in the audience happy - and they are often influential. The emotive will be satisfied because your delivery will be fact based and punchy. To keep the reflective happy prepare a handout that will supply further details. The supportive will be influenced by the others during the presentation but may also warrant a pep-talk before or afterwards to address the specific concerns they may have.

Further Audience Analysis: As well as understanding the personality types that you will be presenting to there are some other key questions that you should ask about your audience.

- How many people will attend
- Why are they attending
- What do they want from the presentation
- How are they likely to react to the presentation
- What level of knowledge do they have already

Each of these questions should provide you with information that should help you to fine-tune the content of your presentation as well as making you better prepared when you come to deliver it. For example, audience members who have chosen to attend are likely to be more receptive than those who are there by obligation. In addition, an understanding of their existing knowledge will enable you to adjust the level at which you pitch your presentation.

The most important thing to remember is more you know about your audience the more you will be able to translate your presentation for them and therefore the clearer your message will be to them.

8.5   Designing a Presentation

Think of a presentation in terms of a journey; designed to take an audience to a pre-planned destination. Use this analogy to identify the key points of your message, prioritize them and allocate each one an appropriate time slot. Nearly all presentations should fit into a simple structure. This comprises three clearly identifiable parts - an introduction, followed by a main body and finally a conclusion. This is often expressed as:

- Tell them what you're going to tell them,

- Tell them,

- Tell them what you have told them.

A good guide for the breakdown of a presentation is the 10/80/10 rule - whereby the introduction and conclusion are each allotted 10% of the presentation time, with the main body comprising 80%. For example, a 30-minute presentation would have a 3-minute introduction and conclusion and main body lasting 24 minutes. This formula can be applied to any length of presentation - as it reflects a good breakdown from the audience's perspective.

In researching and collating the material that you need and devising your key points you will have been concentrating on the main content of your presentation. This is fine, as the most effective and efficient way to prepare your presentation is to construct it in the order of: Introduction, Main Body, and then the Conclusion.

It is usually best to plan your presentation to have a question and answer session at the end. This will enable you to deliver your message and then end strongly with a clear and concise conclusion, before entering the relatively unpredictable area of tackling questions from the floor.

Identifying Key Points: In structuring your presentation, you may find it useful to divide your journey into a series of stages. You are then faced with the challenge of deciding how many stages there should be and what should constitute a stage.

It was also recommended that you should look at your aim statement and try to develop between three and five key points that you would like to drive home. This represents as much information as most people are able to take away from a presentation.

These key point messages can be considered as the intended destination for each stage of your journey. In other words key points are synonymous with stages in the same way that the aim statement is synonymous with the destination. If you are working in a familiar subject domain the key points may well be apparent; but what if the subject isn't familiar and the key points are not self-evident?

When you are preparing a presentation in an unfamiliar domain the most effective way to identify the key points is to ask other people. The people you should ask should be from a similar group as your intended audience. If they are predominantly directives, as is likely in the scenario of a sales manager making a case for equipping her field sales force with laptop computers then she should ask relatively senior people within the organization.

If she asked a colleague in the training department their comments would probably be heavily biased towards the training implications, whereas technical staff would be preoccupied with the specification and interfacing

of IT systems. Neither group is likely to ask the sort of questions that are likely to be of most interest to senior management.

By asking a representative group, you should ensure that the key points are properly targeted and that the audience remains focused. You should ask them a question framed around your aim statement. 'What would you need to know which would' . . . followed by your aim statement. In the current example what would you need to know which would . . . demonstrate the competitive advantage of equipping the field sales force with laptop computers? Ask as many people, from a representative group as you can, and record their comments as potential key points.

The biggest advantage of this approach is its speed. It is quite common for people to spend hours sifting through information, collating it and then editing down into digestible chunks - whilst still struggling to devise a suitable presentation structure for it. Asking other people is a fast and effective way of devising potential key points and has the added advantage that the key points will be non-egocentric that is they will reflect what your audience wants to hear and not just what you want to tell them.

Key Points Example: This screen illustrates the sort of responses that you might expect when asking the question: 'What would you need to know which would . . . demonstrate the competitive advantage of equipping the field sales force with laptop computers?'

Here are some examples of what colleagues might ask when asked what the potential key point might be:

1.   How will giving them laptops improve their sales volumes?

2.   How much will all this cost and how long is the return on investment, in other words a detailed cost benefit analysis?

3.   Would we be able to cut the sales force because of their increased productivity?

4.   How long will it take to procure this equipment and software, and then how long will it take to carry out the training required?

5.   What are the main business benefits, apart from cost-related issues - you know will the organization appear to be more professional, that kind of thing?

Prioritizing Key Points: Starting with the main body of your presentation, your first task is to decide on what your key points will be and order them in a way that will address the needs of your audience. Once again, you should be prioritizing what it is that the audiences want from the presentation. The key points should be presented in the order that reflects their importance to the audience - with the most important first. If you do not do this you will find it difficult to hold their attention.

It may prove useful to write each key point on a piece of card and shuffle them in a variety of different presentation sequences and consider the effect of each on your audience. Ask yourself, or others, which will have the most impact?

Your next task is to divide the presentation up so that the correct amount of time is allocated to each of your key points. This will ensure that the overall time allotted to the main body of your presentation does not overrun. For example if the main body is planned to last 10 minutes and their are three

key points, as in this presentation, then you might divide it into two minute and one six minute segments. Alternatively, you might create three equal segments. Once again let the requirements of the audience determine this division.

Focus on the Message: The overall message of the presentation should be embodied in the aim statement. It is important to keep the focus of your presentation on the message and not on the information and facts that underpin that message. This can be very difficult; especially when the message is supported by a multitude of facts that you think the audience should know.

If your presentation does consist of a series of facts and supporting evidence, then the audiences are likely to assimilate these and draw their own conclusions. If this happens you will lose the opportunity to influence and shape the audiences interpretation. It is far more effective to communicate your messages and then support them with an adequate level of facts and information - so that the audience can line them up behind the message you wish to convey.

As you develop the content of the presentation you should devise a message, or messages, to communicate each key point. However, you should only include sufficient facts to support and validate these messages.

Depending on the size and scope of each stage, it may be necessary to devise one or more sub-messages to communicate the key point. Each message and sub-message should be supported by its own support facts and information.

From your research, you should have a surplus of facts and information available and the main challenge facing you should be the selection of an appropriate sub-set to support each of your messages. One of the best rules of thumb to adopt when screening your research information is to:

Stop adding facts when your point is clear and present them in order of importance. Remember, whilst quoting authoritative sources may be useful when presenting support facts and information, your audience are unlikely to want a detailed explanation of all the processes and investigations that you have carried out.

Your Presentation Style: Before creating a detailed presentation it is worth considering the pros and cons of the three presentation styles normally available to you. Firstly, you could memorize the presentation, secondly you could write a full script and read from it and thirdly you could use free, conversational speech aided by some form of notes or cue cards.

Committing a presentation to memory represents an enormous overhead in terms of time and effort and is unnecessary except in some situations where you may be need to present the same subject time and time again. Another drawback with a memorized presentation is that you have to concentrate so hard on remembering what to say that the style can become stilted.

Reading from a fully scripted presentation invariably leads to a dull and boring monologue. It is also likely to reduce eye contact and general spontaneity, with a resultant loss of impact. These problems can generally only be overcome by employing a professional speechwriter to write a presentation that will be delivered by a professional actor.

The use of natural conversational language assisted by pre-prepared cues is usually the best style for a business presentation. Adopting this approach will help you to sound normal, natural and spontaneous and it will also create a less formal and more relaxed relationship between you and your audience.

The use of this cue-assisted natural presentation style underpins the remainder of this section. However in situations where you need to adopt an alternative approach - be it a memorized or scripted presentation, then the content planning can follow a similar approach - but with a greater level of detail being added.

By placing each fact or piece of information on a separate card, you will have the ability to move him or her around independently when devising the optimum support information for each message and sub-message. Placing all of the information relating to a given message on the same card would impose an artificial restriction on your ability to do this.

Your Presentation Structure: Placing the facts and information that you have collated into the correct position within your presentation structure is a critical process. One of the best ways to put the facts into their optimum sequence to support the messages is to write each fact and piece of information on a separate planning card - these are typically the size of a small postcard. Then by shuffling the order around you will be able to experiment until you find a sequence that you feel delivers the best effect.

During this process, you may decide to alter your original structure, changing the sequence and relationships between certain messages. Remember, that it is the impact and clarity of the messages that is important, and not sticking rigidly to a structure that can be improved. You

may also find that certain facts and pieces of information are more effective in supporting an alternative message to the one that you had originally envisaged - if that is the case, move the facts.

Remember that the best rule of thumb to adopt when screening your research information is to: stop adding facts when your point is clear and present them in order of importance.

When you are happy that you have taken this level of planning as far as you can you should apply a simple but unambiguous numbering convention to all of your planning cards.

It is also useful to annotate each card with the approximate time that you think each fact or piece of information will take to present effectively. As each stage of the presentation has a pre-defined time, you will then become aware as you approach its time limit. This is one of the most effective ways of avoiding the common problem - of preparing a presentation that is too long. This may only become apparent when you rehearse the presentation - and then realize, at the eleventh hour, that a serious redesign is required.

Designing Cue Cards: At this time, you should have a clear picture of your presentation; you will know the overall message - that is encapsulated in the aim statement. You will have devised a series of key points and the messages and sub-messages that you need to present in a way that is clear and convincing. Furthermore, you will have organized, in order of importance, the facts and information that you are going to use - and these will be clearly numbered.

The amount of detail you require will depend upon the nature and complexity of the material you are presenting, your level of familiarity with it, and your experience and confidence as a presenter.

The planning cards that you have may represent a sufficient level of detail from which to deliver a spontaneous presentation. However, it is more likely that you will want to convert your planning cards to cue cards. These are a common presentation aid and their role is precisely as their name suggests - cuing the presenter.

Cue cards should hold the level of information necessary to enable you to present in a natural and seemingly spontaneous way. They are so widely used that it is usually acceptable for the presenter to hold them in one hand and refer to them openly, as required. The cards recommended for the planning phase are also ideally suited for use as cue cards.

The first principle is to ensure that a clear and unambiguous numbering convention is applied to all of the cards - so that if you drop during your presentation you can quickly re-arrange them into the correct sequence.

Only write on one side of each cue card - this avoids the distracting behavior of flipping and manipulating cards and confusion as to whether or not you have addressed both sides of each spent card. Only communicate one theme or idea on each card - this way when you have covered the point you will be confident that you can move onto the next card. Once again this avoids distracting behavior - of re-scanning cards that you have already dealt with.

8.6   Preparing the Venue and Seating Arrangement

It is important to arrive early in order to familiarize yourself with the venue and any audio-visual equipment that you will be using. If you are presenting in a familiar setting, for example within your own organization the room and its layout will be familiar. However, you may be presenting at a location that you have never seen before - the boardroom of a host organization, a hotel suite or an exhibition. Where this is the case it is important to plan your arrival at the venue well ahead of time.

There are logistics involved when traveling to a remote location; organizing any travel tickets and accommodation, any specialist equipment and props, and packing the clothing and other belongings that you require, will need careful thought and planning. The best advice is to build in a significant safety factor - to allow for any unforeseen travel or accommodation problems.

When you are presenting at an external location you should try to pre-arrange access to the room that you will be presenting in. Even if it is being used immediately before your slot you could try and gain access to this event - as it is important to familiarize yourself with the surroundings. If you are unable to get there sufficiently early, then you should contact the venue in advance and request a copy of the floor plan and any seating arrangement options they offer.

The venue will set the mood for your presentation; an informal gathering in a small cheerful office will create a very different mood to a large conference room in a hotel. Where possible try to assess as many aspects of the room as you can - it's size, coloring, layout, lighting, position of power points, doorways, work surfaces and any refreshment facilities. Pay

particular attention to the position that you, the presenter, will occupy and the location of any support equipment.

Stand in the position that you will occupy when presenting and check the line of sight to your audience. Are there any barriers to them seeing you clearly, such as columns or projection equipment? If so, can you alter the position of these obstacles or the seating arrangement? Practice speaking from the podium or stage to familiarize yourself with the surroundings and see how your voice carries. If you can, ask someone to stand at the back and confirm how you sound from there; but remember that your voice will carry less well when the room is full.

If you are able to adjust the temperature set it to just below what is comfortable as when the room fills up the temperature will rise. You don't want to be hot and flustered and neither do you want your audience dozing in excessive heat. If there is any chance of getting fresh air into the room this can help to keep your audience alert.

Make sure that any equipment you requested is present and working properly. It is very disconcerting to have to learn how to use unfamiliar equipment halfway through a presentation. Remember, even equipment that looks familiar may actually be a model you haven't used before. A single unfamiliar function or strangely placed button has the potential to stop you when you are in full flow.

Where your presentation will be dependent on a consumable item - such as an overhead projector bulb, check that you know how to replace it and ensure that a spare is handy. When you are presenting at an external location, make a note of the technical support extension number so that any equipment failure can be remedied as soon as possible.

Make sure that your audio-visual aids are installed in the correct position and sequence. If these include a slide show, it is worth checking through them - to confirm they are all present, sequenced and the right way up. This will also enable you to check that your images are in focus, and familiarize yourself with adjusting this setting.

If you will be using a PA system then perform a sound check. Pay particular attention to avoiding acoustic feedback, which is affected by both the volume and the position of the microphone in relation to the speakers. Also, check that your microphone will not be rubbing against your clothing as you gesture and move around.

Place any pointers, pens, remote control units and other hand held devices where they are easily accessible. Having water or another drink handy is important, if you do dry-up, it is much easier to take a quick sip than to hack your way through the remainder of your presentation.

Seating Arrangement: In small and medium size venues you will probably have considerable discretion over the seating layout. It is important to get the right balance when seating your audience; comfort is an issue but try not to make them so comfortable that they fall asleep.

Spacing chairs out so that everybody has sufficient room to store their bags and briefcases will also create a less claustrophobic feeling. If your audience are likely to make notes during your presentation you might want to provide chairs with armrests or supply complimentary clipboards - which may carry your organizations logo.

Whilst the seating layout is often fixed in large venues, you can experiment with the seating plan at smaller venues. A series of straight and narrow rows stretching back from you may permit easy eye contact but may restrict the ability of people at the back to see and hear clearly.

If this plan is switched to wide rows in front of you, then the majority of the audience will be able to see and hear clearly but it will be difficult for you to make eye contact with those people sitting at the periphery.

A semi-circular, or n arrangement provides an effective format as both the acoustics and visibility work well for the audience. You will also find it easy to engage all members of the audience with eye contact. This arrangement takes up slightly more space than the other options but is well worth the effort where there is sufficient room.

If your presentation involves a lot of note taking, or includes workgroup-based interaction, you might want to include tables in the seating plan. The plan shown is the classic schoolroom type layout and this can be significantly improved simply by turning the end of the tables towards the presenter.

By doing this the members of the audience will have a better view of your visual aids and each table will be able to accommodate twice the number of people - which is ideal for any group based working. If you want to use group interaction during your presentation then arrange the audience so that they are sitting in groups of between five and eight.

Research shows that people are most likely to contribute to group sessions when there are enough people to create some energy within the group but

not so many that they feel excluded. Groups of between five and eight people have been shown to optimize this.

8.7   Final Point and Getting Start

A final point regarding floor plans where your audience is an unknown quantity is that you may find it helpful to remove the back row of seats. This avoids the common problem where the audience filters in and head for the seats furthest from the presenter. By placing potentially surplus seats at the sides of the room, latecomers can help themselves to a seat and join at the back.

When planning any pre-presentation food and drink think carefully; you don't want to spend a lot of money on lavish food and drinks just to put your audience to sleep. As with your own personal preparation, light snacks and sandwiches are best and it is advisable to avoid alcohol where possible. If possible, hold over part of the catering - such as desserts and any alcoholic drinks until a post presentation gathering.

Depending on the size and level of formality of your presentation, it may be a good idea to welcome members of your audience as they arrive. If you are present but wait impassively, or are preoccupied, as the audience filters in this can create a cold and unwelcoming atmosphere that can be difficult to overcome - regardless of how good your presentation is.

Getting Started: There are two key points about any presentation. Firstly, it is important to start well and inform your audience of the presentations overall structure and the style of interaction you would prefer. Secondly, you should then Focus on delivering your message and avoiding self-analysis during your presentation.

When your presentation actually begins, if you find that you are suffering from last minute nerves, you can calm yourself by not speaking immediately. Consciously deepen your breathing as you take in your audience, holding eye contact with two or three of them for 3-4 seconds. Then when you feel ready, start speaking as you maintain eye contact with one individual before moving on to another.

This is the time to switch your focus firmly onto the message. This does not mean that body language, eye contact and interaction with your audience are not important - they are. These vital presentation skills are dealt with in the next section.

Any presenter who asks he or she 'how am I doing?' is liable to deal his or her own presentation a critical blow. You cannot perform real-time self-assessments in mid-presentation. The human mind can only cope with one major task at a time and delivering your message should become that all encompassing task once your presentation has started.

8.8 Summary

For a good presentation the introduction will help to establish your credibility and will give the audience a clear expectation of what you are about to tell them. If you are being introduced, it may be worth clarifying your personal details, such as any relevant qualifications or experience that you possess, with the person who will introduce you.

Ideally, your introduction will inform your audience how long you will be speaking for, so that they can adjust their anticipated concentration span

accordingly. It is also a good time to outline the overall structure of your presentation, and to mention the style of audience interaction you would prefer. For example you might welcome any question from the floor, as and when they arise, or you might prefer to proceed uninterrupted until a formal question and answer session at end of your presentation.

Make sure that you start by speaking confidently and at a natural pace. Try not to refer to your notes more than once or twice in your opening segment. A confident opening style should establish you as a credible and authoritative speaker who is open and friendly. One very useful tip for generating a relaxed and friendly presentation style is to speak to your audience, regardless of its size, as though you were chatting to a friend in a far less formal environment.

Try to look at all of the members of your audience - so that they feel included, and hold brief eye contact with a handful of them. It can be worth seeking eye contact in a methodical way - by switching from the rear right corner of your audience to the center to front left, then back to rear left and so on. Adopting this approach should ensure you cover all areas of your audience. One final point regarding your opening is that you should make it crisp and telling - giving your audience something to think about right at the start. This will have the effect of gaining their attention; it is then your job to make sure that you keep it.

Presentation Styles: The presentation style that you adopt should be influenced by the size of your audience together with the level of formality that is appropriate. The following classification divides presentations into one of four broad categories:

Type 1

Examples of this type of presentation would be: a committee meeting, a sales pitch or an interdepartmental presentation. Here you should establish eye contact with each member of the audience early on and remain facing them at all times, in order to hold their attention.

Type 2

Examples of this type of presentation would be: the introduction of new products to established suppliers or the briefing of work colleagues. Here it is often best to interact with the audience by soliciting questions and letting individuals make meaningful, but brief, contributions.

Type 3

When presenting at large formal events such as a conference or a corporate AGM, check early on that all sections of the audience can hear you clearly. Punctuate your presentation with links, clear summing-ups and by repeating your main points.

Type 4

An informal presentation to a large audience is relatively rare, but might for example occur if you were asked, at very short notice, to contribute from the floor when attending a conference or similar event. In this case, make sure that you keep your message simple and speak slowly with clear enunciation. Only expand on your general point if requested to do so.

8.9 Key Words

♦ Communication Skill: It is a skill like any other skills that requires practice. The skill enhancement is a gradual process through practice that differentiates a skill from one form to other forms of knowledge.

♦ Presentation Skill: You should be clear on the aim of your presentation, identify the personality types in your audience and adjust your presentation accordingly.

♦ Presentation Journey: Think of a presentation in terms of a journey; designed to take an audience to a pre-planned destination.

8.10 Self Assessment Questions

1. "The speaking and public presentation skills are primary requirements for a successful manager." Discuss the statement.

2. "Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another through public presentation." Discuss and elaborate the statement.

3. Write a note on the need and importance of public speaking in business communication.

4. What are the precautions a presenter should keep in mind while going for non-verbal communication with three different groups of audiences?

8.11 Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
3. Lesikar, R. V. and Pettite J. D., Business Communication.
4. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
5. Shinha, P., Business Communication.

COMMUNICATION: NEGOTIATIONS AND LEGAL ASPECTS

Objective: The most important objective of this lesson is to make the students learn about the basics of business negotiation skills in communication along with its legal aspects.

Structure

9.1   Introduction

9.2   Phases of a Negotiation

9.3   Characteristics of a Negotiation

9.4   Opening Negotiations

9.5   Legal Aspects of Communication

9.6   Summary

9.7   Key Words

9.8   Self-Assessment Questions

9.9   Suggested Readings.

9.1   Introduction

The World is full of countries that prove the precept that those that live closer to the principles of free trade do better than those who have abandoned them. The famous economist Adam Smith spent 12 years, up until 1776 writing his seminal piece 'An Inquiry into The Nature and

Causes of the Wealth of Nations'. In it he remarked on the propensity to truck, barter and exchange - which he found to be common to all people on the planet and yet was not present in any other species. - Smith wrote.

"Nobody ever saw a dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another with another dog. Nobody ever saw one animal by its gestures and natural cries signify to another, this is mine; that is yours: I am willing to give this for that".

If you want to trade you have to negotiate, the alternative is to accept what you are offered. There are many opportunities to negotiate better deals and terms, however these chances are often missed because neither side makes it clear that negotiating is an option. Many people wrongly assume that nothing is negotiable unless the other party indicates that this is the case - a more realistic view is that everything is negotiable.

The complexity of the negotiating process will vary according to the size and complexity of the proposed deal as well as the attitudes adopted by the parties involved. This course explains a comprehensive and detailed approach, which should be tailored to suit the needs of each particular negotiation. It is worth remembering that the time and effort that you invest in any round of talks should reflect the potential benefit that can be gained from them.

9.2   Phases of a Negotiation

Nearly all negotiations are characterized by four phases - preparation, opening, bargaining and closing. In large scale negotiations each of these phases are normally tackled sequentially. However, in smaller scale negotiations it is quite common for these phases to merge - possibly into a

single unstructured process. Where this is the case, a good understanding of the logic that underpins the four-phase approach can guide you, even when you are negotiating smaller deals.

Preparation involves information gathering - knowing the state of the market, being aware of the supply and demand status, being aware of any current or imminent discounts and special offers and so on.

The **opening** phase of a negotiation involves both sides presenting their starting positions to one another. It usually represents the single most important opportunity to influence the other side.

In the **bargaining** phase, your aim is to narrow the gap between the two initial positions and to persuade the other side that your case is so strong that they must accept less than they had planned. In order to do this you should use clearly thought out, planned and logical debate.

The **closing** of a negotiation represents the opportunity to capitalize on all of the work done in the earlier phases. The research that you've done in the preparation phase, combined with all of the information that you've gained since should guide you in the closing phase.

9.3   Characteristics of a Negotiation

In business, we negotiate with both suppliers and customers. We also negotiate within our organizations, for example with colleagues and team members. Think for a minute about the hundreds of deals you make every year - with your boss, your customers, your suppliers and colleagues. Whilst there are an infinite variety of negotiation scenarios, most

negotiations are defined by three characteristics: There is a **conflict of interest** between two or more parties. What one wants is not necessarily, what the others want. Either there is no established set of rules for resolving the conflict, or the parties prefer to work outside of an established set of rules to **develop their own solution**. The parties prefer to **search for an agreement** rather than to fight openly, to have one side capitulate, to break off contact permanently or to take their dispute to a higher authority.

The principles of negotiation are not dependent on the identity of the parties involved, their cultures or the amounts at stake. The skill of negotiation can be applied universally - whether you are seeking a promotion, commissioning a nuclear power plant or simply buying a used car.

The Critical Factors: The actual negotiation process depends on the following factors:

- The goals and interests of the parties
- The perceived interdependence between the parties
- The history that exists between the parties
- The personalities of the people involved
- The persuasive ability of each party

Negotiation is a complex communication process, all the more so when one round of negotiations is just an episode in a longer-term commercial or political relationship. In these situations, considerations about the longer-term relationship will influence any specific round of talks - and reduce the tendency to maximize short-term gain at any expense.

Two Types of Approach: There are two types of negotiation process that differ fundamentally in their approach and in the relative prospects for the stability of the agreement that is reached.

The first is called the integrative or win/win approach. In these negotiations the prospects for both sides, gains are encouraging. Both sides attempt to reconcile their positions so that the result is an agreement under which both will benefit - therefore the resultant agreement tends to be stable. Win/win negotiations are characterized by open and empathetic communications and are commonly referred to as partnership agreements.

The second is called the distributive or win/lose approach. In these negotiations, each of the parties seeks maximum gains and therefore usually seeks to impose maximum losses on the other side. This approach often produces agreements' that are inherently unstable.

In real life negotiations both of these processes tend to be at work together. Therefore, rather than two negotiators adopting one or other of the approaches, negotiations tend to involve a tension between the two.

It should be apparent that where a long-term business relationship is involved that it is important to adopt a more integrative (win/win) approach to negotiations. The failure to work together with the other side in order to reach a mutually acceptable outcome is a common reason for the breakdown in many otherwise successful business relationships.

The Spirit of the Deal: The spirit of the deal can be as important as the terms of the contract and when seeking to expedite negotiations that will deliver a deal that suits the needs of both sides, you should:

Focus initially on each side's primary objective - ancillary-negotiating points can become a distraction in the early stages.

Be prepared to settle for what is fair - if an agreement is not seen to be equitable it is unlikely to be stable. Maintain flexibility in your own demands and interests, this makes it easier for the other side to be flexible as well.

Listen to what the other side wants and make efforts to meet their requests. Compromise on the main issues so that both sides can begin to attain their goals.

Seek to trade-off concessions - so that each side gets something in return for everything they give up.

Capable negotiators understand that the stability of the outcome is important and focus on more than simply maximizing the concessions that can be extracted from the other side.

The Use of an Agenda: You should try to follow your own clearly thought out agenda and use it to keep you focused on your goals and to keep the discussions on track. It may be advisable to agree the agenda up front, in the preparation phase of a negotiation. Beware of wasting time on issues that are of little importance to either side - this sometimes happens when both sides work too hard at avoiding contentious issues.

Use an agenda to:
- Formally, define what the discussions are about.

- Keep you focused on your goals.

- Allocate fixed periods to specific issues.

- Help to bypass any deadlock situations - by moving onto the next item.

The presence of a firm deadline on your agenda can be used to put the other side at a disadvantage. Their options may become more limited as they feel the pressure of time. You may decide to set a deadline arbitrarily, for example by letting the other side know that you will be unavailable after a certain date because you have other commitments or are starting another project. You may highlight or exploit an existing fixed date as a deadline in order to expedite the negotiation process, for example a forthcoming trade show or the launch of a new venture.

Paying Attention to Detail: Negotiations depend upon clear communication and it is vital that both sides understand one another. Misunderstandings are potential time bombs - set to go off just when both sides feel as though an agreement is within their grasp.

Always be explicit about:
- What point you are discussing

- Each offer you make to the other side

- What objections your side has to a given offer

- What changes remove or negate a current point of contention.

- What terms you think you are agreeing to

Try to draft notes about points of disagreement and about each point that is agreed on. Committing thoughts to paper can make both sides think more clearly about what has been agreed and reduces the chance of a misunderstanding arising.

The bargaining phase can be long and protracted. During this phase many options may be discussed and it is important that you note down all of the concessions that are offered by the other side - no matter how tenuous or how conditional they appear to be.

When it comes to detailing the terms of the final deal, the notes you have taken may put you in a position to request concessions that can substantially benefit your side's position. The other side may have volunteered concessions, at the time noted by you, that you can later request - for example making them conditional on you delivering the main deal in line with their expectations.

9.4   Opening Negotiations

It is important to make a tough but credible opening. In the early stages of bargaining it is important to follow this up by maintaining a firm stance, to demonstrate to the other side that you are unlikely to make substantial movements from your opening position (whether or not this is actually the case).

Your job as a negotiator is to put forward persuasive arguments that will compel the other side to agree with you and thereby make concessions. However, never verbally attack the other side, always be polite and if possible provide them with an escape route. Disagree firmly but don't try to make the other side look small. If you indulge in personal attacks the other side may dig in and a deadlock may result.

Listen, Anticipate and Compromise: Irrespective of your fundamental negotiating style, there are certain guidelines that you should follow:

Be willing to make small concessions. Identify what is important to you and focus on achieving gains from the other side on these issues. By making small concessions on a number of minor points a spirit of co-operation can be fostered, whilst enabling you to keep referring back to your main issues and seeking accommodation on them.

Anticipate the other side's objections - and use this information to address them. By foreseeing obvious reservations that they may have you can address them and explain your point of view before the other side can raise them as a contentious issue. The one caution here is that you must be careful not to gift any arguments to the other side - by raising points that they may not have thought of.

Assertions of fact will have far more impact if they are backed up with published information. The use of domain experts may add a lot of weight to your position. If they are good communicators why not let them make the argument rather than just confirm your viewpoint.

Before you attempt to counter the other side's argument it is important that you understand their position, by listening carefully to what they are saying. The way in which an argument is countered will be heavily influenced by the personality and style of the individual negotiator.

Avoid Confrontation: In the same way there are certain guidelines that you should follow.

Don't talk too much yourself, as you may end up giving too much away and it is likely to reduce your ability to read signals coming from the other side.

Wherever you can, ask the other side to justify their position on an item-by-item basis and make sure that you understand their reasoning clearly.

Don't just say no - if the other side wants something that you cannot give. Where possible, try to offer an alternative package. For example if you cannot meet the customers required delivery date, could you deliver part of the order on that date, followed by the remainder shortly afterwards.

Don't overstate your case. The use of emotive words and metaphors can add interest and aid understanding. However, if taken too far it can reduce the credibility of your main argument. It is often better to understate a strong case than to overstate a weak one.

Don't highlight your own shortcomings. Never use your own problems or shortcomings as bargaining chips, this almost inevitably backfires. For example if you try and justify a price rise as being the inevitable consequence of staffing problems, then it is likely that the customer will start to view your competitors in a better light.

Don't deny obvious weaknesses in your position. As you may jeopardize your credibility if you assert that, they are not really weaknesses. A better tactic is to downplay them in comparison to other areas - where your position is strong.

The Use of Concessions: To a large extent negotiating is the art of knowing how to exchange concessions. One of the major drawbacks with concession trading is that it can involve losses at two levels - both materially and from an image perspective.

Concessions can become a way of life, eating away at an organizations profit margin - particularly, for example, when sales targets are volume based with little or no recourse to the bottom line. This is why it is important to plan carefully the concessions that you are willing to make.

Each concession made, may be read either as:
A goodwill gesture, or
A sign of weakness

Even in the best case scenario - where a concession is taken as a sign of goodwill - there is absolutely no compelling reason for the other side to respond in kind. Making goodwill concessions is not contagious. An experienced negotiator is more likely to accept the concession and feel confident that he can seek further movement from a party that is ready to make unilateral concessions.

If however, the concession is read as weakness on your part then the other side may very well adopt a tougher stance. The law of the jungle prevails at the bargaining table and one thing that you must try to avoid doing is to draw attention to any weaknesses in your case.

Concession Trading: The problem with making concessions is that making one from a position of weakness can lead to requests for you to make a series of follow-on concessions. Alternatively, if you are not in an obviously weak position, and are seen to be too ready to make concessions, then the other side may start to feel that the underlying deal must be biased to your advantage.

Another important aim during the bargaining phase is to get the other side used to making concessions. A good tactic here is to get them to make a few minor concessions at the start of negotiations - as this will lay the groundwork for obtaining more important ones later on.

If the other side refuses to make any significant concessions then this may indicate that they are not negotiating in good faith. Furthermore, if the other side have got used to giving little, or nothing, away then they may assume that they are in the stronger position as the negotiations draw to a close.

The concessions made by both sides are key to the outcome of the negotiations. It is important to avoid making the first major concession, as the other side will gain a significant psychological advantage from it.

Concessions should be planned in the preparation phase and offered in reverse priority, contingent on the other side making some movement in return. Try to avoid making concessions when you are under pressure and make the other side work hard for any movement in your position.

Recognizing a Losing Trend: You need to know how to recognize and react to a losing trend in the negotiation process. You should also understand why negotiations can become derailed and appreciate a variety of options for dealing with deadlock.

In long negotiations, the advantage often swings back and forth between the two sides. However, sometimes you can find yourself on a losing trend when you feel that despite your best efforts you are consistently coming off second best.

As a rule consider a losing trend to be indicated by: A situation where you find yourself making three unilateral concessions in a row. You can't keep the other side focused on issues which you feel are important. You find yourself persuaded by the arguments of the other side on three or more successive points.

You should learn to recognize a losing trend and respond by either:

1   **Taking a Break** - make an excuse and suspend negotiations while you reorganize your arguments and rethink your strategy. This could be a short coffee break; a lunch break or you could make an excuse for suspending negotiations overnight.

2   **Moving the Focus** - a losing trend can result from the negotiations becoming centered on your weak areas. Try to move the debate on to areas where you are stronger.

3   **Trading a Concession** - one sure way to stop a losing trend is to gain a concession from the other side. This may be worthwhile even if the trade seems generous from your perspective - as you may shift the momentum back to your side of the negotiating table.

Removing Deadlock: It is not uncommon in negotiations for an impasse to arise - where the two sides just cannot see eye to eye and progress is not being made. The key here is to remain calm and patient. Try to step back from the heat of the talks and understand what has lead to the current situation.

Suggest taking a break, often it is tension and fatigue that lie behind many deadlock situations. Sometimes a few hours may be sufficient for you to recharge you batteries and see a new angle with which to address the impasse. The natural assumption is that the other party is at fault and often the best way to analyze the situation is to put you in their position.

It may be useful for the senior negotiators to have a round of discussions together, with a view to removing the deadlock in the absence of other team members who have developed a negative mind-set. Alternatively, a group brainstorming session may reveal an effective route around the block.

If the deadlock is proving to be immovable then it may be worth raising issues that are on a higher plane than the existing talks themselves. For example, the importance of your long term relationship, the advantages of reaching an agreement and the dangers of not doing so, as well as the fact that a negotiated settlement is in both of your interests whilst conflict is not. Factors such as these raised and discussed diplomatically may help by focusing attention on the bigger picture.

Salary Negotiation - Stress the Positive: An interview is best approached as a sales meeting. Your main challenge at interview is how to communicate your benefits to the interviewer, and how to avoid, or dilute, any negative aspects of your employment history.

When attending an interview it is your job to make as strong a case as you can for them offering you the position as you can. You are there to sell - yourself!

One of the keys to this is to ensure that you always remain positive. Good news tends to be accepted at face value, whereas bad news tends to make people sit up and pay attention. If you get the interviewers attention in this way, they are likely to pursue this new line of enquiry aggressively. This would mean dwelling on bad news and facing awkward questions about something you really should not have brought up in the first place.

If you have some career skeletons in your closet, decide ahead of the interview how you can avoid giving too much information about these areas. Is it possible to avoid talking about these issues at the interview? You almost certainly won't have published negative information in your CV.

Alternatively, can you put a more positive interpretation on events, stressing the lessons you learned and how you have put these to practical effect since?

Salary Negotiation - Sell Your Sizzle: In treating the interview like a sales meeting, it is worth keeping a very common sales slogan in mind: Sell the sizzle, not the sausage. This slogan stresses that you sell the benefits and not the feature.

In an everyday sales arena a salesman might be selling an expensive gas fireplace, whilst operating in front of a live demonstration model in the showroom. Here, the customer can see all the features; like design, craftsmanship and the real-fire effect.

The good salesman wont waste his breath describing what is totally obvious to anyone looking at the fire; but will stress all the real benefits; like speed at heating a cold room, fuel efficiency self cleaning flue, etc.

Likewise, your features your skills experience and abilities are all clearly identified on your CV; so when you highlight these during the interview you should do so by linking your feature to a demonstrable benefit.

You are at the interview on the strength of your application to date, but you need to secure the job offer. To do that you need to convince the interviewer that your features have brought real benefits to previous employers. The association will be that you are a benefit bringer, and that pattern will continue for their organization.

In this mode you really are selling, you are presenting the interviewer with an irresistible package of benefits.

Salary Negotiation - Asking the Right Questions at Interview: Towards the end of an interview it is normal for the Interviewer to ask if you, the candidate, would like to ask any questions. At the point you start asking questions, you are effectively taking charge of the proceedings for the first time. Remember that you need to reinforce the impression that you would be a positive addition to the organization, so remain friendly and react positively to their replies.

When asking your questions don't interrogate the interviewer. Whilst the interview is a two-way process there is an inherent balance of power and you are in the weaker position.

Only ask questions that you think the interviewer is capable of answering. Asking inappropriate questions can lead to embarrassment and cause a rift between you. An example of this would be asking detailed technical questions of an interviewer from the HR department.

Don't ask questions that could have easily been answered by your own research ahead of the meeting. For example, asking about the organizations geographical offices or an overview of their product lines would be the type of question that a bright and inquisitive candidate should know before attending interview.

You must use your judgement to decide when to bring your questions to a close. Be aware of the time and the interviewer's body language - if they start shuffling, clock watching or looking uncomfortable the time has come to wrap up quickly.

It is quite acceptable to have a prepared list of questions. You should write these in order of priority so that you ensure you ask the most important ones first. Intelligent and unique questions can leave a positive impression on the interviewer and help to set you apart from the other candidates.

Useful questions topics include:

- What are the key tasks and responsibilities of the job
- How are performance reviews conducted
- The attitudes of your future line manager
- What scope there is for promotion within the company
- Training and development opportunities

- Other expectations of the employer, such as travel etc
- Why the position has become vacant
- What is the largest challenge facing this section at present
- The decision-making process and line of authority issues

Salary Negotiation - Negotiating the Right Package: Salary negotiations may form an essential part of the interview process. It is important that you do not psyche yourself into a weak position before the negotiations begin and that you have an appreciation of a variety of factors, other than salary, that together constitute the employment package.

It is up to you to ensure that the employer recognizes your value and the contribution you can make to the organization. Remember, once you accept an offer, your salary is unlikely to change significantly until you get promoted.

The salary negotiation process depends on the following factors:

- The goals and interests of the parties
- The personalities of the people involved
- The persuasive ability of each party

As with any negotiation, your two major objectives are:
- To change the other party's impression of the strength of your position.
- To change the other party's impression of the strength of their position.

Most candidates are overly concerned with the power of the employer and the extent of the competition for the job. It is quite common for candidates to psyche themselves into a weak position by focusing on their misconceptions of these two critical issues – make sure you don't fall into this trap!

Salary Negotiation - Know Your Market Value: Before going into the negotiation make sure that you've done your homework. This will add to your confidence - something that is vital when negotiating.

Assess your market value based on advice from recruiters, adverts for similar jobs, the demand for people with your skills set, salary surveys in trade magazines and advice from colleagues who have a similar role to yours.

The golden rule is never to be the first party to mention a figure. Sometimes this can be difficult, but you can respond vaguely by talking about 'a package in the region of…' The purpose of this tactic is to avoid selling yourself short. Usually the job description will carry a salary range, but you will obviously want to get as much as you possibly can.

Once they have mentioned a figure, you must assess whether or not it is reasonable. If so, you should aim to maximize the package that you can secure.

If it is not, you can then begin levering them with comments such as; "How much room do we have for negotiation?" "What benefits does that include?" or even call their bluff by saying, "I'm really keen on the position, but I'll have to weigh it up against another offer I have been made."

Salary Negotiation - Challenging a Poor Offer: If their opening offer is unacceptable then you could make comments such as "I'll have to go away and consider if I can justify that salary to myself" or "I'm not sure if that's a very competitive salary".

This will indicate that they should consider an immediate improvement or the negotiations might stall. Sometimes, a surprisingly effective tactic is to look the interviewer straight in the eye and ask, "Is that the best you can offer?"

Not all remuneration is made as payment. Some benefits do have a genuine value, while others may even leave you out of pocket in the long run. Be well informed about common 'sweeteners' such as company cars, share options, profit share and pensions. Many of these are based on performance or the buoyancy of the economy.

Finally, take the time to consider and accept the right offer. Don't be afraid to turn down an offer and move onto another interview with added confidence. Beware of fancy titles, expectations of unpaid overtime, open promises and so-called 'opportunities for promotion'.

Salary Negotiation - What Happens Next: Ensure that you create a positive impression at the end of the interview by clarifying what happens next.

The interviewer will make it clear when the interview is over. Remember, let them take the lead; stay seated until they stand up. However, you can start gathering your personal items together, to avoid any awkward pauses. Now is the time to create a positive impression, by using a parting shot that

you have committed to memory. For example you could say something like "It's been a pleasure meeting you and finding out more about what you do here".

Unless they have already made it clear it is important to clarify precisely what happens next - a further interview, psychological tests, a medical, etc. You also need to establish what timeframe they are working to. Without this information you will be left in limbo, not knowing what happens next, or if and when to approach them for an update.

Requesting this information not only helps you to prepare for the next phase but it also shows them that you are professional and organized; you are demonstrating precisely the sort of approach that they will value in new member of staff.

Key questions to ask include:
- When will I hear from you?
- How will I be informed – is it by a written formal offer?
- Do you need any more information from me?
- Is there anyone else I should speak to?

Salary Negotiation - Review Your Experience: You should always review your interview experience as soon as possible after the interview. This is even more valuable following an interview where you have been successful - in gaining a job offer. Treat every interview as a learning experience, so that you can continue refining and improving your performance. You can't be sure that this offer is the one you will accept and it isn't even a firm offer until you have it in writing!

In conducting your post-interview analysis, ask yourself questions such as:

- Were you asked questions that caught you by surprise?
- Why did these questions surprise you?
- Could you have answered some questions better?
- How do you think you handled the non-verbal communication aspect?
- What kind of rapport did you manage to establish with the interviewer?

This approach will also help you to cope better with interview rejections, as you will still see that you gained something positive from them. Even if you do accept this job offer, you will be better prepared to handle your next promotion!

Salary Negotiation - Write a Simple Thank You Letter: Following through with a thank you letter is a popular way of reminding the interviewer of your enthusiasm, although they may not even acknowledge the gesture. The letter just needs to express how much you enjoyed the interview, appreciated their time and confirm your continued interest. It shows that you are keen and committed and that if offered the position you would be very likely to accept it. You may even benefit, for example if their first choice candidate turned them down. If you are seen as a keen candidate who will accept the job, it can only strengthen your position in relation to the other applicants.

Get Ahead in Business Negotiations: The information on this sheet is a very small subset of **"Get Ahead in Business Negotiations"** a world leading training course that exists both as an e-Book and a multimedia CD-Rom training course. This course will teach you proven strategies for

negotiating better deals by setting yourself ambitious goals and shows you how to achieve these goals by adopting a structured approach to the four phases of any negotiation.

This course will give you a detailed understanding of the whole negotiation process, from the preparation phase - where you can learn to maximize your advantage before negotiations even begin; right through to the closure phase - where you may need to deal effectively with the other side's last minute tactics.

You will learn how to:
- Prepare effectively, to maximize your advantage before negotiations even begin.
- Make the best possible opening, one that is both tough and credible.
- Become expert in the use of bargaining tactics and concession trading.
- Master the win/win and distributive approaches to get the best deal possible.
- Deal effectively with any last minute tactics and close the deal.

9.5 Legal Aspects of Communication

The legal writing skills trains anyone working in legal profession to write effectively, especially lawyers, attorneys, judges etc. Many a times, the business managers are also put in such a situation where they are supposed to know the legal aspects of business communications particularly while writing the letters and reports. They convene the meetings and attend the same as representative of their respective organizations. In such cases they are supposed to record the minutes as per requirements of different laws like company law, consumer's protection law and income tax law, etc.

Therefore, the business managers need to improve their legal orientation as well as business communication more particularly the written communication. The legal aspects of business communication takes you through every step in the process of deciding with your company what types of minutes to take, preparing for taking minutes, recording your notes, translating the notes into clear minutes, and distributing the minutes.

As a matter of legal requirement, a business manager needs to have a clear objective of any such writing; should know the reader; should write with clear openings for new information; Use explicit guideposts for readers; Use strategies to have the impact you want; Quote and cite correctly; Use key words, definitions, explanations, and examples; Write using clear, simple words; Write clear, simple sentences; Write clear, simple paragraphs Write concisely; Use an attractive, easy-to-follow format; and ultimately should go for proofreading for legal correctness.

In order to make communication legally authentic, the manager needs to avoid letting personal biased and unfounded opinions influence your interpretation and presentation of the data. Sometimes you will be asked to draw conclusions and to make recommendations, and such judgments inherently involve a certain amount of subjectivity. You must make a special effort to look at the data objectively and to base your conclusions, solely on the data. Avoid letting your personal feelings influence the outcomes. Something the use of a single word can unintentionally convey bias.

Moreover, the business manager should give enough evidence to support your conclusions. Make sure that your sources are accurate, reliable, and objective and that is enough evidence to support your position. Sometimes

your evidence (the data you gather) may be so sparse or of such questionable quality that you are unable to draw a valid conclusion. If so, simply present the findings and don't draw a conclusion. To give the reader confidence in your statements, discuss your procedures thoroughly and cite all your sources.

Management needs comprehensive, up-to-date, accurate, and understandable information to achieve the organization's goals. Much of this information is communicated in the form of legal communications. The most common types of business legal communications are periodic legal communications, proposals, policies and procedures, and situational legal communications. Each of these types is discussed and illustrated in the following sections

Informational legal communications relate objectively the facts and events surrounding a particular situation. No attempt is made to analyze and interpret the data, draw conclusions, or recommend a course of action. Most periodic legal communications, as well as policies and procedures, are examples of informational legal communications. In most cases, these types of legal communications are the easiest to complete. The writer's major interest is in presenting all of the relevant information objectively, accurately, and clearly, while refraining from including unsolicited analysis and recommendations.

Authorized legal communications are written at the specific request of some higher authority. Thus, the reader has an inherent interest in the report. Voluntary legal communications, on the other hand, are prepared on the writer's own initiative. Therefore, the reader needs more background information and frequently more persuasive evidence than do readers of

authorized legal communications. Authorized legal communications may be either periodic or situational. Periodic legal communications are submitted on a recurring, systematic basis. Very often, they are form legal communications, with space provided for specific items of information. Readers of periodic legal communications need little introductory or background information because of the report's recurring nature. Readers of situational, one-time legal communications, on the other hand, need more explanatory material because of the uniqueness of the situation.

Some important factors naturally interfere with legal creativity and concentration. In addition, they undermine the writer's self-image and make him or her even more reluctant to tackle the next writing task. The treatment for writer's block lies in the strategies, from legal point view, discussed hereunder:

1. **Choose the appropriate legal environment:** The ability to concentrate on the task is one of the most important components of effective legal writing. The appropriate legal environment may not be the same desk where you normally do your other work. Even if you can turn off the phones and shut the door to visitors, silent distractions can bother you – a notation on your calendar reminding you of an important upcoming event, notes about a current project, even a photograph of a loved one. Many people write best in a library-type environment, with a low noise level, relative anonymity, and the space to spread out notes and other resources on a large table. Others find a computer room conducive to thinking and writing, with its low level of constant background noise and the presence of other people similarly engaged.

2. **Schedule a reasonable block of time:** If the legal writing task is short, you can block out enough time to plan, draft, and revise the entire message at one sitting. If the task is long or complex, however, schedule blocks of no more than two hours or so. After all, writing is hard work. When your time is up or your work completed, give yourself a reward – take a break or get a snack.

3. **State your purpose in legal writing:** Having identified your specific purpose during the planning phase, write it at the top of your blank page or tack it on the bulletin board in front of you. Keep it visible so that it will be uppermost in your consciousness as you compose.

4. **Engage in free writing:** Review your purpose and your audience, then, as a means of releasing your pent-up ideas and getting past the block, begin **free writing**; that is, write continuously for five to then minutes, literally without stopping. Although free writing is typically considered a pre-drafting technique, it can also be quite useful for helping writers "unblock" their ideas.

   While free writing, do not look back and do not stop writing. If you cannot think of anything to say, simply keep repeating the last word or keep writing some sentence such as, "I'll think of something soon." Resist the temptation to evaluate what you have written. (If you are composing at a computer, you may want to darken your screen so that you will not be tempted to review what you have written thus far; this technique is called invisible writing.) At the end of five or ten minutes, take a breather, stretch and relax, read what you've written, and then start again, if necessary.

5. **Avoid the perfectionism legal syndrome:** Remember that the product you are producing now is a draft – not a final document. Do

not worry about style, coherence, spelling or punctuation errors, and the like. The artist in you must create something before the editor can refine it.

6. **Think aloud with legal aptitude:** Some people are more skilled at speaking their thoughts than at writing them. Picture you are self-telling a colleague about what you are writing, and explain aloud the ideas you are trying to get across. Hearing your ideas will help sharpen and focus them.

7. **Write the easiest parts first:** The opening paragraph of a letter or memo is often the most difficult one to compose. If that is the case, ship it and begin in the middle. In a report, the procedures section may be easier to write than the recommendations. Getting something down on paper will give you a sense of accomplishment, and your writing may generate ideas for other sections.

9.6   Summary

This lesson educates you skills to successfully negotiate your way through life. Even if you were to measure it in narrow monetary terms this course would reward you enormously in all the big-ticket negotiations we do in our lives. But, even more important it gives you valuable lessons about setting goals; following a strategy and building a meaningful relationship with the people you interact with. This course is not just about negotiations - it is also an enlightening and entertaining educational experience about living more effectively.

Managers at every level must balance various working styles, build efficient management teams, and develop sharp negotiation skills to remain competitive. Business Negotiations offers a selection of the best thinking

on negotiation practice and managing conflict in organizational settings – an invaluable training resource.

Negotiation is a critical skill needed for effective management. This multimedia course explores and explains the major concepts and theories of the psychology of bargaining and negotiation, as well as the dynamics of interpersonal and inter-group conflict and its resolution. It is relevant to a broad spectrum of management students as well as all staff involved in professional negotiations and bargaining.

Try each of the legal strategies for avoiding writer's block at least once; then build into your writing routine those strategies that work best for you. Just as different athletes and artists use different legal strategies for accomplishing their goals, so do different writers. There is no single best way to make legal business communication, so choose what effective way of business communication for you is.

9.7 Key Words

♦ Negotiation: If you want to trade you have to negotiate, the alternative is to accept what you are offered. There are many opportunities to negotiate better deals and terms, however these chances are often missed because neither side makes it clear that negotiating is an option.

♦ Negotiation Phases: Nearly all negotiations are characterized by four phases - preparation, opening, bargaining and closing. In large scale negotiations each of these phases are normally tackled sequentially.

♦ Legal Writing: The legal writing skills trains anyone working in legal profession to write effectively, especially lawyers, attorneys, judges etc.

♦ Legal Communication: rational legal communications relate objectively the facts and events surrounding a particular situation. No attempt is made to analyze and interpret the data, draw conclusions, or recommend a course of action. Most periodic legal communications, as well as policies and procedures, are examples of informational legal communications.

9.8　Self-Assessment Questions

1. "The business negotiation skills are key to success to a corporate manager." Discuss the statement.
2. "Communication is the sum of all things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another through business negotiation." Discuss and elaborate the statement.
3. Write a note on the relevance of business negotiation in business communication.
4. What are the precautions managers should keep in mind while going for business negotiations with new entrants in the organization? Does he take care of some legal aspects as well?

9.9　Suggested Readings

1. Pal, Rajendra and Korlahalli, J. S., Essentials of Business Communication.
2. Kaul, Asha, Effective Business Communication.
3. Lesikar, R. V. and Pettite J. D., Business Communication.
4. Sharma, R. C. , Business Communication and Report Writing.
5. Shinha, P., Business Communication.

Subject: Business Communication
(The Lesson is Up-dated and Converted into SIM Format By: Dr. Karam Pal)

Course: MBA	Course Code: CP-105
	Lesson: 10

AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE IN BUSINESS

Objective: The objective of this lesson is to give the learners an understanding of agency   correspondence, there by enabling them to draft various agency related letters.

Structure

10.1   **Introduction**

10.2   **Essentials of Agency Correspondence**

10.3   **Hints for Drafting Agency-related Letters**

10.4   **Some Sample Letters**

10.5   **Summary**

10.6   **Key Words**

10.7   **Self-Assessment Questions**

10.8   **Suggested Readings**

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Manufactures often appoint agents and/or franchisees to sell their products and services. With the growth of their business and expansion of their markets, manufacturers generally prefer agents and franchisees to new branches for economic reasons. It is easier and economically more viable to give agency or

operate through a franchisee than to establish a branch and look customers in a new area. An agent is a person who represent a company or another person in an area. The company or person who appoints an agent is called the principal of that agent. Thus a principal appoints an agent to act for him. The agency is the agent's office or job that is to sell the goods or services for a commission. The agent and principal enter in to an agreement that is called agency agreement. The agency agreement govern the rate of commission, targets to be met during a fixed period, territory within which the agent has to operate, guarantee of payment/collection against credit sales and so on.

Agency can yield the best results only when there is perfect understanding and complete co-operation between a principle and his agent. Both the parties have, therefore, to be in continuous correspondence with each other. The correspondence between the principal and his agent includes a wide variety of letters on different occasions, such as:

- Offer of agency by the principal
- Agent's reply to the offer of agency by the principal
- Advertisement for appointment of agencies by the principal
- Application for agency by a prospective agent
- Principal's reply to the application for agency
- Announcement by the agent regarding obtaining agency
- Cancellation of agency and public notice by the principal

10.2 ESSENTIALS OF AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

Many of the letters relating to agency share the features of sales letters. The objective of both is the same "to sell". A principal looking for agents sells his image and his product through the agent. In the same way a prospective agent, while applying for appointment, sells his image and standing in the market. The

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relationship between principal and agent is built up on mutual trust and shared benefits. Both use persuasive approach and 'you-attitude' in their correspondence. They say the best possible thing in their favour. Needless to say mutual appreciation and adjustment are indispensable for the agency related correspondence. Like all other kinds of sales letter, agency letters end on a positive, forward-looking note.

10.3   HINTS FOR DRAFTING AGENCY-RELATED LETTERS

1.   **Offer of Agency by the Principal**

   ♦ Mention the recommendation on which you are offering agency.

   ♦ Refer to the potential market for your goods.

   ♦ Explain the merits of your goods – brand name; quality; variety; reasonable price; popularity of the goods elsewhere, *etc.*

   ♦ Persuade the addressee to handle your products.

   ♦ Mention the remuneration and other terms of agency – stocking, payment of advance, additional commission, area of operation, *etc.*

2.   **Agent's Reply to the Offer of Agency by the Principal**

   ♦ Thank the correspondent for the offer of agency.

   ♦ Explain the market conditions – either favourable for the products in question or unfavourable, as the case may be.

     (a) If you accept the offer, communicate your decision; and if you have any suggestions regarding the terms of offer, put them down clearly.

     (b) If you cannot accept the offer, say so in a courteous manner, and in all cases, with reason.

   ♦ If the offer is accepted, assure the correspondent your full co-operation in a mutually rewarding relationship.

3.   **Application for Agency by a Prospective Agent**

At the outset-

- ♦ Point out that there is a good scope for the sale of the manufacture's goods in a particular area or region and that you are prepared to act as an agent to push his goods in that market, in case the application is made on your own initiative.

    or

- ♦ Refer to the advertisement made by the manufacturer, if your application is made in response to it.

    or

- ♦ Mention the source from which you got the information that the manufacturer is willing to appoint an agent, if you are applying on the basis of such information.

- ➢ Emphasize your ability to sell the goods by referring to your-
    - ✓ Business standing and experience,
    - ✓ Knowledge of local business environment and conditions,
    - ✓ Business contacts,
    - ✓ Capacity of offer special facilities like show-rooms display windows, central situation of a building owned by you, delivery vans *etc.*

- ➢ Mention the terms on which you are ready to accept the agency or ask the manufacturer to state his terms for granting the agency.

- ➢ Give suitable Trade and/or Bank references, if you want the manufacturer to know more about you.

- ➢ Mention the security deposit you are prepared to offer in case you are willing to keep a large quantity of stocks.

- ➢ State any other ground that might support your claims.

4.   Principal's Reply to the Application for Agency

- ➢ Acknowledge, with thanks, the correspondent's letter.

- ➢ Appreciate his interest in your products and also business standing.
- ➢ Inform whether you are prepared to grant the agency applied for.
- ➢ If the agency is granted, mention the terms of agency, either in the form of accepting the terms offered by the applicant (with change, if necessary) or by giving your own terms.

5.   A Letter Announcing the Cancellation of an Agency

- ➢ Regretting the need for cancellation, mention the name of agent whose agency has been terminated.
- ➢ Request the correspondent not to deal with the agent in any manner in regard to business with you.
- ➢ Caution him of non-responsibility on your part if the correspondent deals with the agent for business with your firm.
- ➢ Express your concern for the inconvenience caused to the customers.
- ➢ Request them to send their orders directly to you until an alternative arrangement is made.

9.4   SOME SAMPLE LETTERS

Some agency- related letters are given below.

1.   Offer of Agency by the Principal

Mysore Silks (P) Ltd.
125, M. G .Road, Bangalore.
Phone:

October 11, 2005

Messrs, K K Jain & Sons
167, Sector 17
Chandigarh-160017

Dear Sirs

Mr. S Sharma, the Sales manager of Padam Textiles (P) Ltd., was kind enough to recommend you as a firm of highly reliable, reputed and progressive agents in the states of Punjab and Haryana. In view of his recommendation we wish to offer you the Agency for our products in the state of Punjab and Haryana.

Mysore Silks have always been trend setters and fashion creators. Our innovative designs have been catching the imagination of all kinds of customers. Besides, our products are priced to suit all budgets. Priced at Rs. 225 to Rs. 2000 and above, our sarees are within the reach of most people and satisfy even the most critical buyer in respect of quality, designs, color combinations, variety and durability.

In view of the immense popularity our silk sarees, blouse pieces and other varieties of cloth enjoy in southern states, we are sure that our products will find a responsive market in Punjab and Haryana as well. You only have to organize an impressive launching of our silks.

We wish you to work for us as a Sole Agent for the whole of Punjab and Haryana. You will be supplied with adequate stock periodically and your requirements between two regular supplies will be met with promptly. We appreciate the difficulties you may have to face in the initial stages of introduction and offer you the highest rate of 17% commission on net sales. Our interior decorators will be at your disposal to complete your window dressing jobs at places of your choice. We will also be taking up show-

windows in important cities and your suggestions in selecting appropriate places will greatly facilitate our work.

We are sure our business relations will be mutually beneficial and we hope you will be happy to represent our company in your areas.

Sincerely yours,

2.	**Agent's Reply to the Offer of Agency by the Principal**

Messrs, K K Jain & Sons
167, Sector 17
Chandigarh-160017

October 14, 2005

Mysore Silks (P) Ltd.
125, M. G .Road,
Bangalore.

Dear Sirs

Re: Sole agency for Punjab and Haryana

We thank you for your offer of sole agency for the states of Punjab and Haryana. It is really nice of Mr. Sharma to have recommended our name and we are thankful to him for the confidence he and his company have reposed in us.

We are aware of the popularity enjoyed by your silk products in southern states and are rather surprised your have overlooked the potential of our states so long. Though rather late, your decision to tape this market is a sound one and we visualize a long, mutually beneficial relationship with you.

Notwithstanding the superior quality and popularity of your products, you will concede that overcoming inherent customer resistance is initially difficult. Two major factors may be mentioned here. People are universally skeptical about the genuineness of silk. Secondly, there appears to be some preference for polyester-blended fabrics. However, we are confident that it will not take us very long to please the elite customers in the cities and towns of Punjab and Haryana.

Your terms of agency are acceptable to us, and we await your instructions to complete other formalities.

Meanwhile, please send us samples of the full range of your products. We would also like to suggest that you launch a special advertising campaign immediately to run through the entire Diwali festival when people have a natural desire to buy something new to wear.

Sincerely yours,

3.	Application for an Agency

Messrs, K K Jain & Sons
167, Sector 17
Chandigarh-160017

October 17, 2005

Mysore Silks (P) Ltd.
125, M. G .Road,
Bangalore.

Dear Sirs

Re: Sole agency for Punjab and Haryana

Mr. S Sharma, Sales Manager, Padam Textiles (P) Ltd. has informed us that you are looking for sole agents for your silk products for Punjab and Haryana. We would be pleased to represent you as your sole agents in these two states.

We have been in the field of wholesale distribution for the last fifteen years and have earned a name for satisfactorily representing manufacturers and promoting the sale of their goods in our territory. Our specialization is sarees, and we can give you an impressive launching. You can consider these markets, wherein we wish to represent you, as a gateway for your entry into the northern regions. With our rich experience in the textile line and our business contacts throughout these two states, your products will have no difficulty in being successfully introduced to our customers. A special advertising campaign by you would help us to overcome whatever problems may have to be faced in the initial stages.

On our part, we will exhibit your products in all our showrooms and show windows which are situated at strategic places in the important cities of Punjab and Haryana. Our traveling salesmen have a wide knowledge of the customers and the market in the line of textiles of all types and varieties. We would, therefore assure your confidently of large sales of your products throughout the year.

We propose the following terms:

- *a.* Goods will be supplied to us F.O.R. Chandigarh.
- *b.* You will draw on us for each consignment a bill for 3 months.
- *c.* Our commission – 7.5% on invoice price, *del credere*, if you approve 3%.
- *d.* Every new design developed by you will be supplied to us immediately.

e. Expenses on any special advertising campaign for your goods shall be shared by us equally.

f. Since it is a sole Agency, we would insist that you do not entertain any direct orders.

For our standing and credit, you may refer to:

1.   Mr. S Sharma, Sales Manager, Padam Textiles (P) Ltd., Mohali,

2.   The Krishna Mills Ltd., Ludhiana and

3.   Bank of India, Main Branch, Chandigarh.

We feel we are the right people to represent you in our territory. An effective distribution system is the life breath of a manufacturing unit, and that is precisely what we are offering you.

We await your decision in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

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4.   Principal's Reply to the Application for an Agency – *Granting the Agency*

Mysore Silks (P) Ltd.
125, M. G .Road, Bangalore.
Phone:

October 21, 2005

Messrs, K K Jain & Sons
167, Sector 17
Chandigarh-160017

Dear Sirs

Many thanks for your letter of 17th October. We appreciate your interest in developing a market for our goods. We have also received reports from your references and are now pleased to grant you the sole agency for our products in the states or Punjab and Haryana. Your terms of agency are acceptable to us except that the *del cruder* commission would be 2.5% and not 3% since it is at 2.5% that we pay to our other agents. Further we shall not turn down direct orders from the customers but we shall execute them only after referring them to you and obtaining your approval.

The agency will be for a period of three years to start with and can be renewed thereafter.

Kindly complete the enclosed agreement bond and return it promptly along with a cheque/draft for Rs. 50,000 as security deposit which will earn you interest at 11% p.a.

Sincerely yours,

Encls. : Agreement bond in duplicate

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5.   Principal's Reply to the Application for an Agency – *Refusing to Grant the Agency*

Mysore Silks (P) Ltd.
125, M. G .Road, Bangalore.
Phone:

October 21, 2005

Messrs, K K Jain & Sons
167, Sector 17
Chandigarh-160017

Dear Sirs

While thanking you for your letter of October 21, 2005, offering your agency services for the Punjab and Haryana area, we regret to state that we are not in a position to accept your offer

at present, as we have already given Agency to two firms at Ludhiana and Panipat, which cover the Punjab and Haryana areas respectively.

However, as we have plan to re-allocate the areas in the near future, we shall be glad to correspond with you the moment a final decision is taken in this regard.

Sincerely yours,

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6.   A Letter Announcing the Cancellation of an Agency

Mysore Silks (P) Ltd.
125, M. G .Road, Bangalore.
Phone:

April 12, 2012

Messrs, Chabbildas & Sons
107, Palika Bazar,
Chandigarh-160017

Dear Sirs

We regret to inform you that due to unavoidable circumstances it has become necessary for us to withdraw our agency arrangements with Messrs, K K Jain & Sons, of Chandigarh for the North region. We request you, therefore, not to deal with them in any manner in connection with booking orders, or obtaining any receipts from them for your recent remittances, if any.

We shall soon be writing to you about fresh arrangements. Meanwhile send your orders direct to us. We will execute your orders and attend to your other communication so promptly that your will not feel the absence of a regular agency system.

We earnestly seek your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

10.5 SUMMARY

Most special agency correspondence 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 special agency correspondence 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.

10.6 KEY WORDS

- o Agency Model: It gives the best results only when there is perfect understanding and complete co-operation between a principle and his agent. Both the parties have, therefore, to be in continuous correspondence with each other.

- o Agency Letters: Many of the letters relating to agency share the features of sales letters. The objective of both is the same "to sell". A principal looking for agents sells his image and his product through the agent. In the same way a prospective agent, while applying for appointment, sells his image and standing in the market.

10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following question in brief:

   a.   Why do manufacturers prefer appointing agents to opening new branches?

   b.   What facts would you include in your application for an agency?

   c.   What facts should be included in a letter offering an agency?

2. Draft a letter to the Calico Mills, Ahmedabad, requesting them to appoint you their sole agents for their Cali-ber suitings for Madhya Pradesh. Include in your letter all those details which you think will induce them to give you the agency.

3. Write a tactful letter to an applicant for an agency, pointing out that you are already represented adequately in his district but stating that his application will be filed for reference.

4. The Hindustan Electric Company, Bangalore, is the sole agents for southern India for "Clear Tone" Television in the important towns of southern province. You

have a small business of your own in your district, and you desire to be appointed as subagents for your district.

Write a letter to the Hindustan Electric Company applying for the agency.

5. Write the Hindustan Electric Company's reply to the above letter stating the terms on which the agency would be given to you.

6. *(a)* The Typewriter Company, London, who are trying to find an agent in India, have been advised to approach to Mr. M N Sinha, Patna. They write accordingly to Mr. M N Sinha, setting out the terms and conditions on which they are prepared to appoint him their sole agent for India and emphasizing the chief points in favour of their typewriters. Draft the letter.

   (b) In his reply to the Typewriter Company, Mr. M N Shinha asks for a trial consignment pending the final acceptance by him of their offer of the sole agency. He also gives forwarding instructions regarding the consignment. Draft the reply.

7. *(a)* Without making invidious comparisons, inform one of your agents that his sales are very much lower than those of other agents in neighboring districts. In a frank and friendly fashion ask him if he can account for this..

   (b) Write a defensive reply to the above letter but avoid any attempt to repudiate any responsibility.

8. Draw your agent's attention tactfully to a decline in his sales and insist on forwarding reports more regularly. Point out that this is also in his own interest.

9. Draw your principal's attention to certain delays in the forwarding of goods. Point out the serious effect this may have on your sales and ask him to take up the matter with his forwarding agents.

10. You have been acting as agents for Premier Book Company, New Delhi, for over three years. Your Principal have written to you expressing dissatisfaction with the volume of business done by you for them and threatening to terminate your agency. Draft a reply giving suitable explanation and satisfactory assurance.

11. Your agent in Karnataka has not been able to push the sales of the Ritewel pens manufacture by you. Write a letter to him terminating his agency.

12. The Indian Industries Syndicate, Limited, Bombay, write to an England firm, manufacturing transistors, offering themselves as the sole agents of the firm in India. Draft the letter.

13. You have been offered the sole agency for the whole of Maharashtra for a popular brand of instant coffee. You are willing to act as agents but are not satisfied with the terms and conditions offered. Draft a suitable letter.

10.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Business Communication *by* K. K. Sinha. Galgotia Publishing Company., New Delhi.

2. Business Communication *by* C. C. Pattensheti. R. Chand and Company Publishers., New Delhi.

3. Essentials of Business Communication *by* Rajindra Pal and J. S. Korlahalli. Sultan Chand and Sons., New Delhi.

4. Effective Business Communication *by* Herta A. Murphy and Charrles E. Peck. Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company Limited., New Delhi.

5. Essentials of Business Communication *by* Pettett and Lesikar. Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company Limited., New Delhi.

6. Business Communication *by* Pettett and Lesikar. Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company Limited., New Delhi.