

PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in Subject introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post-Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in invisible teaching. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that it may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great part of these efforts is still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these to admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

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Netaji Subhas Open University
Post Graduate Degree Programme
Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Course Code : CP-203
Course : Managerial Skill Development

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**Netaji Subhas
Open University**

**Master of Business
Administration
(MBA)**

**Course : Managerial Skill Development
Course Code : CP-203**

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Unit 1 □ Importance and nature of business communication

Structure

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1.0 Objectives

Whenever individuals speak to one another, there is a chemistry that work either to draw them closer or to push them further apart.

If the organisation is to survive, it is a must that the people come closer. In any area of management—planning, organising, staffing, controlling, co-ordinating, budgeting, representing and in creativity also, communication is the primary and predominant factor.

The managers must try to pull their employees together and create a climate of co-operation through the process of effective business communication.

After reading this unit, one should be able to :

- | Understand the meaning of business communication.
- | Understand the nature of business communication.
- | Distinguish between different types of communication.
- | Appreciate the importance of business communication.
- | Properly design the communication to develop business.

1.1 Introduction

Communication is not the monopoly of mankind. Every living being under the sun and on the earth communicate with one another. The chirping of the cricket, twittering of the swallows; croaking of the frogs in the monsoon are varieties of communication in the living world. Even the leaves of the trees awakening in the morning dew, the sound of the woodland flowers opening and closing, the clamour of the earth baring itself to the warming rays of the noonday sun communicate a lot to the sensible ears and to the observing eyes.

In the human world, communication starts from the birth of the little baby, moves on through one's life cycle and ceases only with one's breathing last. So communication is a continuous process. As in the case of an individual, similarly in the case of business corporate or unorganised communication is continuous. It commences

before the formation of the organisation and continues upto the stage of winding up of the organisation.

So from a process perspective communication is a necessary part of being alive. Communication owes its root-to the latin word "Communicare" which means "to make common".

Thus it is a psychological process of sharing information to achieve a common understanding between ourselves and others.

It involves our total behaviour from the uttering of words to making subtle physical gestures that enhance what we have to say.

Our intended message is packed with our own perception of the world around us.

We evaluate our receiver's view point with this perspective and make assumption that the message will be well-received.

The background of different people social, academic, political, religious, financial, attitude, perception etc are different. Possibility of misuse of words and gestures and misunderstanding of words and gestures is quite possible.

Communication may be defined in the language of David H. Holt as under.

“The complete cycle of communication consists of encoding a message by a sender, transmitting it through a medium, decoding the message by a receiver, then authenticating a receipt and understanding of the message by a receiver through feedback”.

Communication is the ability to impress. The communicator is keen to impress upon the receiver so that his message is well received.

‘**IMPRESS**’ is used as acronym for explicating the basic requirement of effective communication.

- I — Idea (Initiation)
- M — Message. It is acceptable and comprehensible to the receiver.
- P — Pause, punctuated;
- R — Receiver.
- E — Empathy (Putting oneself in to other's shoes).
- S — Sender
- S — Security/Checks.

1.2 Importance of Business Communication

From a process perspective communication is a necessary part of being alive.

From an organisation view point, communication encompasses the definition at the goals/objectives of the organisation, to announce the policy guidelines, to articulate plans, organise efforts, co-ordinate activities and confirm progress from time to time.

Every organisation comes up with a definite set of objectives. With the passage of time and with evolution in the growth and development of the organisation, there may be alteration, addition or modification in the application level but the basic objectives, the fundamental. goals remain the same.

Business communication is the process by which these goals/objectives are conveyed to the employees of the organisation.

Every year, the organisations come out with some policy guidelines on the basis of which plans are made to achieve the goals. Plans are both short term and long term. Business communication articulates these policy guidelines and business plans. Organising efforts at different levels, Communications both internal and external contribute to implementation of plans. Effective Communication further co-ordinates activities of the different departments and divisions in the organisation. At the different stages of the progress of implementation of the plans and programmes communication is the connecting link among the branches/offices and the corporate office. It confirms the progress to the top-management and also to the supervisory authorities.

Thus business communication is :

- a) the basis of co-operation. among the employees, groups divisions and departments. It is also the basis of co-operation between the employees and the employer. It also develops co-operation between the organisation and external agencies.
- b) communication is the basis of co-ordination among the different divisions / departments of the organisation. For example, if the purchase division, production division and sales division do not have co-ordination there will be disturbance at different levels. Continuous communication helps to work in unison.
- c) smooth working of an enterprise depends on effective business communication. It is an edge over other enterprises where intra communication and inter communication is a futile exercise.
- d) business communication is the basis on which decisions are. made. If communication is timely, accurate, transparent and objective, sound decisions can be taken promptly on further course of action. Management information system, to a great extent depends on effective communication system. If on the other hand communication is delayed, defective and prejudiced, decision gets delayed and defective.
- e) effective business communication begets managerial efficiency and secures more and more business.
- f) cultivated communication promotes industrial peace and dissolves unrest and conflicts. 60% of problems in the organisations and enterprises crop up because of wrong communication and half baked feed back.
- g) proper communication is an essential quality to establish effective leadership. A leader should know how to communicate his ideas and to convince his followers to be guided by his directions.
- h) communication if properly conveyed assists in motivating the people to fulfil the objectives set before them.
- i) communication if done properly gives job satisfaction to the employees. People do

the work, not only for the compensation they get, they also look forward to some appreciation from their leader. Healthy and encouraging communication can bestow that appreciation to the workers, employees.

- j) communication creates loyalty of the employees to the organisation—If the top management is adept in their communication to the employees, they can get a group of people who will give their best to the organisation.
- k) communication helps in establishing good public relation. It contributes to image building exercise for the organisation. More than what is being communicated, it is more important how it is being communicated. The public is more interested in the how of the communication and that intensifies congenial public relation.
- l) finally communication is the process by which the goals and objectives of the organisation are made known to the employees in the organisation. By communication the goals and objectives are properly interpreted. Again by proper communication the goals and objectives are properly accomplished.

So the importance of business communication in running an organisation or enterprise can never be ignored or minimised.

1.3 Significance of Business Communication

Communication affects organisational performance.

Managers are concerned with pulling work groups together to pursue organisation goals. To that extent, they strive to create a climate of cohesiveness and communication that avoids distortion, misaligned attitudes and uncomplimentary needs.

While doing so, their leadership will be strengthened and the organisation will be more effective.

So the significance of business communication in the organisation is :

- 1) To build up a strong and cohesive organisational structure where the interest of the organisation always gets the outmost attention as against personal or group interest. Proper communication enhances the efficiency of the entire management, where as faulty communication makes the communication complicated and leads to lots of problems.
- 2) Communication harmonizes the various objectives of an organisation. Any organisation will have different objectives. For example, on academic organisation may have different objectives like spreading education, both formal and vocational, making it a centre of cultural integrity, preaching some values and morals. Proper communication among the different management staff and the authority would bridge up the gap of perception and ultimately result is fulfilment of all the objectives.

- 3) Communication is a time-saving mechanism :
It saves journey time and helps in taking quick decision.
- 4) Communication helps to maintain good relationship among the workers. It also helps to maintain good relation among the workers and the supervisors, the supervisors and the top management.
- 5) By proper communication from the supervisory staff and the line managers, the management comes to know the quality and potentiality of the individual staff members and make the best utilisation of the available human resources. Human resources are the costliest factor for any organisation. By proper training and further development of the staff members identified by the management, their capacities and capabilities would be fully utilised.
- 6) Today no organisation can work in isolation. It has got some social obligation. Besides, it may be a member of an association or federation. Moreover, it is to report to the law-enforcing regulatory authorities. Against this background, it is a must that the internal and external environment of an organisation are properly harmonized and balanced. Business communication is the key activity to this harmonizing and balancing process.

1.4 Nature of Business Communication

- 1) Communication is a co-operative process. Number of persons are involved in this process. Some of them are communicators, some are listeners. Unless they are cooperative no communication can be effective. The communicators are expected to be clear about what they are going to communicate and the listeners are expected to receive those communications with the willing ears and attentive understanding.
- 2) Communication is a continuous process. Business communication commences before the business enterprise comes into existence. continues through-out the existence, of the organisation and even outlives the organisation. It also flows on from one division to another division, from one department to another department. It transits from internal environment to external environment and coines back to internal environment.
- 3) Communication is a two ways process :
It originates from the sender, and reaches the receiver. But the journey of the communication is not over at that stage. As feed back from the receiver, it. goes back to the sender. Feed back implies the confirmation of the idea communicated, whether the message has been understood by the receiver in the same sense, the sender transmitted the message. With the proper feed back, the message is completed.

- 4) Relationship process—The entire process of business communication moves on mutual understanding and good relation. Without these two preconditions, no communication can stand. Communication is between two individuals or two groups or between one individual and one group etc. Unless these two units have the same wave length, and preparedness to listen to each other and convey the feed back, communication would have lots of hurdles and ultimately it would be a failed communication.

1.5 Classification of Business Communication

There are different types of Business Communication according to purpose and process.

- a) Managerial Communication : It refers to communication strategy adopted by the managers for achieving short terms objectives.
- b) Organisational Communication : This refers to established communication networks and the flow of communication within the organisation.
- c) Interpersonal communication : To develop human relations and to build the team. This type of communication caters to the need of developing customer. Relations programmes and strategic alliances.
- d) Sales Communication : Serves the purpose of improving sales of the organisation. It also takes care of publicity and public relations, customer solicitation, road shows, participation in exhibitions advertising etc.
- e) Report writing : This constitutes information, memos, regular reports, reports on data analysis, growth performance, investigation.
- e) Electronic communication : Where. electronic instruments and processes are resorted to, to send the communication. Electronic Mails, video conferencing, fax, cell phones telephonic messages, pagers etc. constitute the gamut of electronic messages.

1.6 Network of Business Communication

Communication network is a technique used for planning and scheduling of the system of communication. It shows the inter relationship among various activities constituting a project or programme. The network of Business Communication may be for Internal Communication or for External Communication.

Network develops a disciplined and systematic approach in planning and scheduling the activities. This network is applied for :

- i) Research and development,
- ii) Market research,

- iii) Long range planning and development,
- iv) Staffing plan,
- v) Organising big conferences.

Network of business communication helps the management to think systematically. It ensures that sequence requirements are adequate and interdependent.

Network of Business Communication,

- a) minimises delay
- b) controls costs
- c) removes interruption and conflicts.

1.6.1 Internal Communication Network

a) Formal Internal Communication

Formal communications are generally vertical. It follows the authority chain and it is limited to task—oriented communication. It follows the official chain of command.

This network is determined by the structure of management and reporting system prevalent in the company.

Every firm/organisation prescribes who reports to whom and what forms these communications would take care of.

Some of the reporting authorities and the forms are as under.

- 1) Workly progress reports from subordinates to superiors—Branch to Regional Office, Regional Office to Zonal Office; Zonal office to Head Office.
- 2) Job schedules and task assignments are passed down from superiors to juniors.
- 3) Traditional Planning Systems.

Process of articulating objectives and budget downward from strategic executives to operational supervisors.

Formal communication network is highly structured and formal style of communication. There are four forms of formal network communication.

- a) The wheel pattern of formal communication :

There is one central level (authoritarian and dominating and five sub-ordinate levels. One central authority dominates all the subordinate levels. There is no communication among these five levels.

- b) Chain pattern of formal communication.

In this pattern, messages flow only along (up & down) the scalar chain or command. There is no horizontal or interfunctional communication at middle and lower levels.

This is a six level hierarchical structure. The central level occupies the key position, receiving and monitoring communication from the higher level and transmitting it to the levels below in the chain. It also registers, filters and transmits the feed back from below along the chain upward to the upper level.

c) 'Y' pattern of formal communication.

The central level is located fairly high in the management hierarchy and holds the key in monitoring and operating the communication chain.

d) Democratic participative style of communication.

In this the communication network can be arranged in the circular pattern. Employees at all levels get involved in the management process.

All group members actively communicate with one another. It is a four level hierarchy.

b) Informal Communication Network Pattern

In every organisation there is an informal structure, a shadow system of authority that modifies the formal system of power and influence.

This informal structure is sustained by informal communication process. It is free, to move in any direction at any stage, and it skips authority levels.

It is likely to satisfy group members' social needs. The informal communication system is also called grape vine exercise. This is an important source of information in most of the organisations.

There are four types of informal communication network pattern.

a) Hierarchical trend patter of informal communication. I this patter the levels in the management hierarchy dominate and work as a nerve centre for informal communication spread.

b) Gossip pattern of informal communication. It is free for all. It flows on crisscross, circular and up and down. Certain visible informal groups provide the rallying point for gossip.

c) Group centre network of informal communication.

In this pattern, there are same distinct centres or group nodal points which work as sources of communications. This may be due to the nature of the position or the function of the group or due to certain individual mangers. located in a group who are known for keeping track of the communication and dissemination of messages. The centre of transmission may change with the change of the manager or the shifting of the concentration of interest.

d) Random net or probability pattern of informal communication.

This pattern of informal communication is a combination of gossip pattern and the group centre model of communication. In this pattern there is random concentration of gossip around certain levels. These levels may shift from time to time with the nature and source of communication.

1.6.2 External Communication Network

This refers to the communication between the people inside the organisation with the people outside the organisation. An organisation of today must have social orientation and market orientation. To fulfil these obligations organisation constantly interacts with the customers, suppliers, distributors, retailers, govt. agencies, competitors, business associates, confederation of commerce and industries. External communication net work links the organisation with the outside world. The external communication network is constituted of oral written or audiovisual forms.

a) Formal External Communication Network

This helps to create a favourable impression about the organisation in the outside world. Establishing good and impressive public relations, interaction with clients, discussions with the wholesalers and retailers; participation in the deliberations at the association levels, being friendly with the people at the administrative and political levels are all important avenues of effective external communication. It contributes to image building exercise of the organisation and protects the organisation from external upheaval, sabotage, strike, litigation marketing myopia etc.

Some of the modes of the Formal External Communication are :

- 1) Advertising & Publicity
- 2) Website and internet
- 3) Presentation
- 4) Seasonal Greetings
- 5) Road shows
- 6) Letters.

b) Informal External Communication Network

Generally the organisations communicate with the outsiders in a formal manner, However informal contacts with the external agencies and individuals. form potential part in organisational diplomacy.

While discussing about the company with the outsiders the insiders by their tone, gestures and eye contact communicate with the outside world. Informally many employees of the organisation collect some facts and impressions about the organisation and that

constitute the collective understanding of the company by the outside world. It also helps to know the customers' needs and their preferences. Informal contacts also help to know about the position and strategy of the competitors.

1.7 Different Types of Formal Communication

Formal communications in an organisation are generally of three types.

- 1) Vertical
- 2) Horizontal
- 3) Diagonal

1.7.1 Under the vertical group, there are two subgroups

- a) Downward Communication
- b) Upward Communication

a) Downward Communication

Messages and information are communicated by managers to their subordinates. The Chief Executive Officer of any organisation devotes half of his time to communicate with subordinates through :

- 1) Meetings
- 2) Policy Directives
- 3) Memos
- 4) Letters relating to
 - a) Objectives
 - b) Strategic plans
 - c) Performance expectations,
 - d) Activities.

Executives communicate objectives, provide about strategic performance expectation and encourage behaviour by subordinates that coincide with the company philosophy.

b) Upward Communication

Here the communication is from the subordinates to the superiors—either originating or responding. Messages and information are initiated by subordinates for their superiors, usually in the form of reports on

- 1) Activities
- 2) Work progress

3) Problems they have with their jobs.

They also communicate through devised channels;

- 1) Air grievances
- 2) Offer suggestion for improving productivity
- 3) Provide feed back to management queries.

Most of the upward communication is predetermined routine.

1.7.2 Horizontal Communication

It is the process of exchanging information between peers at any organisational level, usually to coordinate activities.

It exists between peer managers, departmental heads and co-workers. It also helps in avoiding misunderstanding.

If Accounts department staff make any change in the accounting procedure and instruct the regional officers, branches to follow the revised procedure, without any reference to the Organisation and Methods division, which functions under Planning department obviously there will be some misunderstanding leading to disorder and disturbance in the functioning of the organisation. To avoid this type of unwelcome misunderstanding, horizontal communication is the best solution.

1.7.3 Diagonal Communication

This is also horizontal flow of communication with people of different levels who have no direct reporting relationship. The purposes are varied;

- i) to speed information flow
- ii) to improve understanding
- iii) to co-ordinate efforts for the achievement of organisational objectives.

1.8 Business Communication and Business Productivity

1.8.1 Business Productivity

The concept of business productivity aims at maximum the output to be produced with minimum resource utilisation.

The concept was introduced by famous economist Quoesne in the year 1776. The concept got popularity after second world war: During the period of war· the necessity of increasing the production was felt seriously. So new methods of increasing the production through the introduction of the tools of Scientific Management were given unforeseen importance. The tools used widely are—

- 1) Time study
- 2) Motion study
- 3) Fatigue study
- 4) Process study
- 5) Work study.

1.8.2 Importance of business productivity

The impact of business productivity in the growth and development of organisations is being increasingly felt day by day. Importance of business productivity is specifically noticeable in the following areas :

- a) Business productivity reduces cost of production.
- b) With the reduction in the cost of production, the price for the different products goes down, which ultimately leads to better standard of living.
- c) Improved business productivity becomes an effective edge against the competitors.
- d) When all the business enterprises and organisations consistently improve business productivity keeping other factors undisturbed, the gain is of the society. There will be social and economic progress and prosperity.
- e) It improves the efficiency of both the employees and the employers (Managements).
- f) With increase in business productivity, wastage becomes less and finally gets eliminated.
- g) With increase in business productivity the management feels encouraged to improve working conditions, with the expectation that there would be further increase in productivity.
- h) The management can also afford to meet the demand of higher wages of the employees.
- i) Finally with continuous improvement in business productivity, the company looks forward to maximization.

1.8.3 Role of business communication in improving business productivity

- 1) Effective business communication helps the employees and the managers to apply the principles of specialization.
- 2) Proper communication develops the system of coordination mutual understanding and harmonisation among the employees and the group, which contributes a lot to improving business productivity.
- 3) Business Communication helps to maintain continuity in the process of production, distribution, marketing etc. This continuity is a must for improving business productivity.

- 4) Proper reporting system helps decision taking which, in turn, improves business productivity.
- 5) Proper presentation of the decision for systematic implementation is one of the areas of business communication. By this process, it helps business productivity.
- 6) Through business communication, objectives of the management are circulated among the employees. Impressive interpretation of those objectives assists business productivity.
- 7) Effective communication creates proper understanding among different levels of superiors and subordinates. This mutual understanding is an asset for business productivity.

1.9 Communication Challenges ID today's Scenario

Good Communication skills have always been important in business organisations. They are more vital today, with the change in work place—team based organisation, change in society, expanding markets and moreover technological upgradation have brought in number of challenges.

1.9.1 Advances in Technology

The Internet, e-mail, voice mail, faxes, pagers, audio video devices have revolutionized the process of communication. These technological advances have brought in new and advanced tools in communication. Simultaneously these have brought speed, frequency and much wider reach of Communication. Today the communicators have to think not only about what he is going to communicate, how to communicate and also which technological tools he should apply.

1.9.2 Globalization of Business and work force diversity

More and more business today are crossing national boundaries to compete on a global scale. Besides work force in the organisations are coming from different nationalities with diverse cultural background. This implies that employees must understand the laws, customs and business practices of many countries and be able to communicate with the people who speak different languages.

1.9.3 Team Based Organisations

The command and control style of traditional management structures is ineffective in today's fast-paced, technologically advanced environment. The concept of hierarchical management where decisions are taken by a few individuals is no longer viable. Instead, team decisions are being acted upon to succeed in a competitive and wider market. To

function in a team-based organisation, the managers must be good communicator. They must interact, reach decisions, work in unison, and resolve conflict. They should listen to others have empathy, give proper feed back and appreciate the team members.

1.9.4 Large Scale Operations

With the expansion of the organisations, delegation, decentralisation and diversification are becoming regular features. For co-ordination among the different divisions, communication and mangement information system are gaining more and more importance.

1.9.5 Emergence of skilled labour and professional awareness

With the spread of education and enlightenment the work force is becoming more and more conscious of their contributions and their demands. Their, aspirations are also growing. Concept of democratic style of management is also gaining ground. To cope up with these radical changes, effective and conscious communication is absolutely essential.

1.9.6 Increasing social orientation

Business organisations can no longer afford to be aloof from the society. They grow with the society. They develop with the social and economic development. So they will have to meet their social obligations. They will have to deal with the different social segments. They will have to enteract with the shareholders, customers, media, NGOs, government, their own chambers and business associates. In all these activities communication is the most effective skill.

1.10 Sample Questions

Short answer type Questions

- 1) Define Communication.
- 2) What are the purposes of business Communications?
- 3) What is communication network?
- 4) What are the forms of formal communication?
- 5) What do you mean diagonal Communication?
- 6) What is business productivity?
- 7) What is grape vine exercise?
- 8) Amplify “Impress”.

Long answer type Questions

- 1) What are objectives of Communication?

- 2) What do you understand by Business, Communication Network?
- 3) Discuss the importance of Business Communication.
- 4) What are the reasons of the growing importance of Communication?
- 5) Discuss informal Communication network pattern.
- 6) Discuss the role of business communication in improving business productivity.

Objective type Questions

- 1) Communication is the basis of :
a) management b) conflict c) coordination d) argument.
- 2) Business productivity concept was introduced in the year :
a) 1957 b) 1776 c) 1857 d) 1802
- 3) Team-based organisation is :
a) conventional b) dictatorial c) modern d) archaic organisation.
- 4) 'E' in 'Impress' denotes :
a) employment b) angagement c) empathy d) enmity
- 5) In the wheel· pattern of formal communication central level is :
a) five b) multiple c) ten d) one
- 6) Formal communications in an organisation are generally of :
a) five b) ten c) multiple d) three types.
- 7) Horizontal communication is between :
a) the employeer and the employees b) Manager and the staff
c) the peers d) the substaff.

Unit 2 □ Effective Communication Skill

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Principles of Effective Communication

2.1.1 Positive Principles

2.1.2 Negative Steps to be Avoided to make Communication Effective

2.2 Feed back is the Essence of Communication

2.2.1 Three tier Process of Feed back

2.3 Listening : A key to Understanding

2.3.1 Types of Listening

2.3.2 The Listening Process

2.3.3 Barriers to Effective Listening

2.3.4 How to improve Listening skill

2.4 Sample Questions

2.0 Objectives

Effective communication skill forms the environment which is conducive to successful human relation. It also encourages congruent relationship at the corporate level. Though for a few leaders· effective communication skill is a natural trait of character, for the most of the people for whom business is either an occupation or a profession, this skill is to be cultivated. This is to be learnt properly and consistently· like any other performing art. The chapter will discuss the positive principles which will improve the process of communication and shall be also deliberating on the negative steps which are to be avoided to ensure smooth communication. It shall be also referring to feed back in communication and importance of listening in the communication skill.

2.1 Principles of Effective Communication

Communication is the process of sending and receiving message. However, communication is effective only when the message is understood and when it stimulates action or encourages the receiver to think in new ways.

Besides, business communication differs from communication-in. other settings. So it is obligatory that some principles should be followed to make the communication effective. These principles are classified in to two groups-positive and negative.

2.1.1 Positive Principles

a) Initiate the Message Clearly

The first step is how to commence the process. A good communicator communicates before he communicates. The presence, the eye contact, appearance, subtle gestures all combine to initiate the message. The message should have rational appeal, emotional appeal and moral appeal.

A sense of judgement should be reflected in the message. The emotional appeal in the message is the immediate stimulating factor where as the moral appeal convincingly imposes some obligation on the part of the receiver to do something in a different way, the way in which the sender of the message wants it to be done.

The message is also to be properly structured. While the message is being initiated, it should be decided whether it is to draw a conclusion or whether it is to be left to the audience for their deliberations and decision. The sender is also to decide whether the communication is to be one-sided argument or multisided argument.

Besides, the message should have a formal headline, matter, illustration, colour etc. and conclusion.

b) The Objective of the Message

What is the purpose of the message? That should be clearly understood by the sender. It may be conveying some information, sending some report, giving a suggestion, airing some grievances, discussing some problems, communicating some goals or plans. The objective of the message decides the channel to be selected and the ambience to be associated with the communication.

c) Identifying the Target Audience

The same message may be communicated to the different AUDIENCE. It may be an individual, a group, different groups. The policy guidelines of an organisation for a particular year, are communicated to the top management, senior management, middle management, junior management and also to the award staff of the organisation. For-effective communication the content, the conduct, the channel, the language would have to be changed considering the academic background, the experience, the position and placement, and the receptivity of the respective audience.

So the communicator must study the academic background, social composition, peculiar interests and attitude, exposure and experience of the people with whom he

is to communicate. This will help to develop identical wave length, which will be conducive to effective communication.

d) Choosing Appropriate Channel

This is an important selection in the age of E-Commerce. With multiple channels at the disposal of the communicator it is a hard task to determine the proper channel.

In the case of personal communication, if it is conversational, eye-contact is very effective. In tele-talk it is the accent and the modulation which keeps the tele-talk lively. If it is by letter, the selection of words, the approach and the tone of the letter count a lot.

In the case of non-personal communication, according to the purpose and the receiver, it may be newspaper, radio, TV, leaflet etc.

Sometimes, multiple channels including formal and informal channels are used to attain effectiveness in communication. For example, to make pulse polio vaccination project a success, different channels like Radio, T.V., Newspaper, posters, pamphlets, messages of the leaders and the announcements by the local clubs, are being used simultaneously. It may be observed that the communication is gaining ground.

e) Collection of Feed back

Collection of the feed back is the final stage of the process of communication. Communication should not be left half way, neglecting the receipt of feed back. From the feed back, we can make out whether there has been any change in approach or in behaviour, whether any new work has started or any initiative has been taken.

f) Empathy as a General View Point

Empathy is an important feature in communication. If the sender (the communicator) can put himself in the shoes of the receiver, he can feel the pinch and takes effective steps to get over that pinch. It entails that the sender of the message should be able to understand the emotions, sentiments, needs and perceptions of the receiver. He should also be able to appreciate the attitudinal changes on the part of the receiver, during the course of communication.

g) Listen Carefully

Active listening helps in consciously focussing on what is being said. The receiver has an important role in any type of communication. He is to receive information by perceiving language and gestures. By proper listening the receiver gives his immediate feed back and on the basis of the feed back the sender can complete the communication loop. The communicator must also be a good listener. By this he should give opportunity

to others to speak and in the process gathers useful information to communicate further.

h) Develop Communicational Behaviour that is Congruent with Attitude of the Receiver

Communication is a two way process. It becomes effective when there is interaction between the sender and the receiver. As communication goes on the receivers either accepts the message by attentive listening, assertive nods or appreciative smile. The receiver may also disagree to what the communicator is trying to communicate. He may give negative nod. He may exhibit his restlessness because of his failure to appreciate the message. He may whisper something to the next person. The communicator should develop the faculty to take note of these attitude and reaction of the receiver and take appropriate steps to keep the communication lively and participative.

2.1.2 Negative steps to be Avoided to make Communication Effective

- 1) **Do not blow smoke** and confuse the listener. The communicator can not get respect from his colleagues and subordinates by blowing smoke of arguments and counter arguments without any definite message. If the communicator does not know something, the should not have pretension. It is better if he admits his ignorance.
- 2) **A void noise where possible** hile communicating the speaker should not tap his finger or jingle a change or ride a squcaly chair. These are simple physical disturbances that confuses the clarity or quality of the message being transmitted. More than these physical disturbances there may be physiological or psychological disturbances that create more acute communication problems. These interferences should be avoided by finding out the sources.
- 3) **Do not polarize a conversation**
Confrontation seldom leads to improved communication or closer association So it is desirable that while communicating we should not enter into conflicting arguments, nor make the sender and the receiver taking positions poles apart.
- 4) **Do not use semantics**
While communicating no misunderstanding should be created by indiscriminate use of words since the meaning of wards are changing from time to time particularly when the people in a group are from different languages. Communication is not the occasion for displaying knowledge.
- 5) **Do not obfuscate**
Darkening any information or any part of communication unintentionally or accidentally creates misunderstanding. This leads to mental road block. This should be avoided to ensure smooth communication.

6) A void Screening

Guarding against some unpleasant information or hard-to-take criticism may be a sub conscious process or an automatic defence mechanism. But this screening of information hampers proper communication.

7) Do not yield to jaundiced view point

While communicating the communicator should not be biased in one or other way. It should be complete and without any deviation or modification otherwise it prevents effective communication by 'creating barriers to free expression and open-minded listening.

8) A void Frozen evaluation

This is an attitude of "no change" assumption in which a person shuts out information. Status quo is retained to avoid threat of having to alter values or beliefs in a changing world. In the case of frozen evaluation, no fresh evaluation is made of the situation or the persons involved. In the process of communication this is a hurdle which is deliberately entertained.

9) A void stereo typing

This is over simplifying situations and individuals : This is a process in which the communicator is too much concerned, with his personal attitude and. hardly bothers about the need of others and the need of the organisation. The objective of communication is to fulfil the goals of the organisation and also to make best utilisation of available human resources. Stereo typing affects both these objectives of communication.

2.2 Feed back is the Essence of Communication

Feed back is an important method of ensuring effective communication. It implies the confirmation of the idea communicated, whether the message has been understood by the receiver in the same sense the sender transmitted the message.

The sender has

- i) his own idea
- ii) behavioural pattern
- iii) intention

Accordingly he

- i) selects a message,
- ii) encodes it,
- iii) transmits it,

iv) through a channel.

The receiver receives the message, decodes it, and acknowledges. This is the first stage.

In the second stage the receiver,

i) formulates the message

ii) encodes it

iii) transmits it to the original sender (who is now the receiver).

The message transmitted is the feed back. With the proper feed back, the message is completed.

The sender (now the receiver) on receipt of the feed back can make out whether the original receiver has properly understood the message. From feed back the sender can determine the effectiveness of the message.

2.2.1 Three tier process of feed back

A good feed back system involves three tier process.

i) To listen/study the communication accurately.

ii) Repeat the important parts/words of the message.

iii) Receiver gives a response and confirms his reaction.

“Most people want feed back, as long, of course, as it mirrors their self perception. When it does they tend to like it. When it doesn't they don't Larry Cipella.

This is again jaundiced view point about feed back. This affects the free flow of communication and works as a road block to the receiver's own perception.

Feed back is of two types.

A) Confirmatory feed back : When all the moves and the actions of the sender are accepted by the receiver and the receiver agrees to the sender's statement, the feed back system is known as confirmatory feed back.

B) Corrective feed back : When the receiver. disagrees to the sender's statement and corrects the statement, the feed back system is known as corrective feed back.

2.3 Listening : A key to understanding

According to Jennifer J. Salopek “Listening can reduce stress, frustration and conflict in the work place” Listening is more than hearing. For hearing, only the ears are used. Listening is possible when our entire existence is attentive and perceptive to what is being communicated. Out of entire communication time managers spend on various communication channels, listening is 45%. So listening is a vital skill. in business communication.

2.3.1 Types of listening

Different situations call for different listening skills. When the managers attend the business plan conference of a financial organisation, they take more interest in the content of the business plan and what is the target for their branches/offices. The same managers, when they attend a discussion on the newly introduced products and schemes; they listen attentively to the products and schemes which will be most suitable for their area of operations. In the personal discussion with a friend on the need of financial products, one of these managers “listen to him attentively to suggest which financial product will suit him best.

These different types of listening differ not only in purpose but also in the amount of feed back and interaction. These three types of listening are a) content-listening b) critical listening c) empathic listening. In the first one the goal is to understand and to retain the message.

In critical listening the goal is to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker’s message, the logic of the argument, the validity of the conclusion, the omission of any important or relevant part. Critical listening involves interaction and evaluation.

The goal of empathic listening is to understand the speaker’s feelings, needs and wants so that the receiver can appreciate speaker’s point of view, regardless of accepting or not sharing that perspective.

2.3.2 The Listening Process

Listening is the process of accurate perception of what is being communicated. It involves five related activities.

Receiving : Physically hearing the message and taking note of it. Physical reception may be blocked by noise, impaired- hearing, inattention.

Interpreting : Assigning meaning to sounds according to receiver’s own values, beliefs, ideas, expectations, roles, needs and personal background. The speaker’s frame of reference may be quite different, so there is a need to determine what the speaker really means.

Remembering : Storing a message for future reference. As the receiver listens, he retains what he hears by taking notes or making a mental out line of the speaker’s keypoints.

Evaluating : Applying critical thinking skills to weigh the speaker’s remarks.

Separating fact from opinion and evaluating the quality of evidence constitute this critical thinking.

Responding : Reacting after evaluating the speaker’s message: It may be by a verbal feed back if communicating one-to-one or in a small group. If in an audience on the reaction may be applause, laughter or silence.

2.3.3 Barriers to effective listening

Prejudgement is one of the most common barriers to listening. Listeners who jump to conclusions, close their minds to additional information.

Self centred listeners shift their attention from the speaker to themselves. No matter what subject is being discussed, they know more than the speaker does and they are determined to prove it.

Another common barrier is selective listening. When the receiver listens selectively and let his mind wander around, he tunes the speaker out. After some break, once again the receiver becomes attentive. This is half-hearted broken listening.

Recognising these counterproductive tendencies as barriers and working on overcoming them help the receivers to become good listeners.

2.3.4 How to improve listening skill

Ability to listen effectively is directly related to achieving success in team relationship. Effective listening requires a conscious effort and a willing mind.

Some of the steps to improve listening skill are stated below.

1. Look beyond the speaker :

- a) Don't judge the message by the speaker but by the argument.
- b) Depersonalize listening.
- c) Decrease the emotional impact of the message.

2. Fight distractions

- a) Close doors
- b) Move closer to the speaker
- c) Stay ahead of the speaker by anticipating what will be said next and summarizing that has already been said.
- d) Don't interrupt, avoid side tracking solutions and throwing the speaker off the course.
- e) Hold your rebuttal until you have heard the entire message.

3. Provide feedback

- a) Let speaker know you are paying attention.
- b) Maintain eye contact.
- c) Offer appropriate facial expressions.
- d) Keep all criticism and feedback positive.

4. Listen Actively

- a) Listen for concepts, key ideas, and facts.

- b) Analyse the key points-whether they make sense.
- c) Look for unspoken messages in the speaker's tone of voice or expressions.
- d) Keep on open mind.
- e) Ask questions that clarify.
- f) Reserve judgement until the speaker has finished.
- g) Take meaningful notes that are brief and to the point.

Effective listening strengthens organisation relationships, enhances product delivery, alerts the organisation about any eventuality. It enables the organisation to manage growing diversity both in the workforce and in the customers it serves. Organisations that listen effectively stay informed, upto date and out of trouble.

2.4 Sample Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1) What do you mean by feed back?
- 2) "Active listening is more than hearing" discuss.
- 3) "Feed back is the essence of communication" discuss.
- 4) What do you understand by "jaundiced view point?" Discuss.
- 5) What are the guidelines for effective listening?
- 6) What do you understand by "obfuscating"?
- 7) What is frozen evaluation in the process of communication?
- 8) Discuss the three-tier, process of feed back.

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1) Discuss the positive principles of effective communication.
- 2) What is a channel? Discuss the importance of channel in communication.
- 3) What are the negative steps to be avoided to make communication effective?
- 4) Discuss "listening a key to understanding".
- 5) What are the barriers to effective listening and how to improve listening?

Objective Type Questions

- 1) A good communicator communicates before he
 - a) appears b) explains c) communicates d) clarifies.
- 2) A message should have
 - a) rational appeal b) moral appeal c) emotional appeal d) all the three.

- 3) Communication is
- a) multiway process
 - b) no process
 - c) triple way process
 - d) two way process.
- 4) Semantics is
- a) the science of development of the meaning of words
 - b) the science of communication
 - c) the dictionary of state words
 - d) a barrier to communication.
- 5) Obfuscating implies
- a) raising objection
 - b) wrong communication
 - c) confusing audience
 - d) darkening information.
- 6) A good feed back system involves
- a) Multi tyre process
 - b) Three tyre process
 - c) Two tyre process
 - d) Four tyre process
- 7) In critical listening the goal is to
- a) retain the content of the message
 - b) evaluate the meaning of the message
 - c) understand the speaker's feelings
 - d) interpret the message.

Unit 3 □ Process of Communication

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 How Communication originates

3.2 Different phases of the process of communication

3.3 Noise

3.4 Other draw backs

3.5 Sample Questions

3.0 Objectives

All communications are goal-oriented. The two-way process of communication is the route through which mutually accepted goal is to be reached through an exchange and progress of ideas. This chapter will discuss in detail :

How Communication originates;

What are the different phases of communication;

Noise. that disturbs communication;

Other draw backs.

3.1 How Communication originates

Communication does not occur suddenly or haphazardly either at the personal level or in the organisation. The communicator has an idea or an information or a suggestion or a problem or any other thought. He wants to share it with somebody else or a group of people. He communicates it. This is how communication originates. So the bare essentials of a communication are 1) Sender 2) a Message 3) a Receiver. This is the simplest model of communication.

3.2 Different phases of the process of communication

The communication process is not as simple as stated above. This is a dynamic and transactional two way process between the sender and the receiver. This has got six phases linking the two parties.

Phase-1 : The sender has an idea. He has conceived it and he wants to transmit it. The sender may be a superior a subordinate, a co-worker, a customer or any other person from inside or outside.

Phase-2 : The sender encodes the idea. When the idea is put into a message that the receiver will understand, then message is encoded. After encoding the message the form is to be decided, —is it word, facial expression or gesture. The length, tone and style of the message are also decided depending on the idea which is being transmitted.

The personal style and mood of the sender and also of the receiver are considered before transmitting the message.

Phase-3 : The sender transmits the message. To physically transmit the message the sender is to select a communication channel (verbal or non-verbal, spoken or written) and a medium (telephone, letter, memo, e-mail, report, face-to-face exchange.) This choice depends on the message, location of the receiver, need for speed and the formality. required.

Phase-4 : The Receiver receives the message. Receiver is the person for whom-the message is meant. He must get the message and authenticate it. Here the initiative is transferred to the receiver. If the message is oral, he is to listen to it. If it is a letter he is to read it before understanding it.

Phase-5 : The Receiver decodes the message He must absorb and understand the message. The decoded message is stored in the receiver's mind. If the receiver interprets the message correctly, he will assign the same meaning to the message as intended by the sender and respond in the desired way.

Phase-6 : The Receiver sends feed back. After deciding the message, the receiver responds in the same way and signals that response to the sender. This feed back enables the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of his message. In case of receiver's failure to understand the message, the sender is to tell by response and refine the message.

As communication is a continuous process; the process. as clarified above is repeated until both the parties are contented about expressing themselves.

3.3 Noise

Noise is a physical sound or a mental disturbance. that obscures, reduces or confuses the clarity or quality of any communication.

It can be classified into two categories :

- a) Physical Noise : It is the sound that emanates from the surroundings and hampers the listening process. The medium also sometimes disturbs the process.
- b) Psychological Noise : Sometimes, mental disturbance hampers the communication process. Various problems arise at a time when psychological noise troubles either the sender or the receiver. Some of the common types of psychological noise are mental turbulence, anxiety, tiredness, ego, preconceived ideas, pre-occupation, frustration etc. These are rriostly involuntary. However by entering into Question/Answer sessions or by moltivational measures these may be avoided/reduced.

3.4 Other drawbacks

There are some potential problems in two-way communication. It can cause polarization, defensive reasoning, cognitive dissonance and face-saving.

Many envirnmental or situatioval and organisational factors affect the communication process. Environmental factors may be educational, sociological, political, legal, economic and geographical. Time is a situational factor that affects communication. Organisation structure, layer system managerial approach and technology are the organisational factors that affect communication.

To avoid these potential problems the following steps may be taken to have an effective communication.

- 1) To have a dear idea about facts, opinions, information etc. on the part of the communicator.
- 2) To secure the participation of other persons involved in the decision to communicate a message.
- 3) To decide what to communicate, with whom to communicate, when and how to communicate.
- 4) To prepare the subject matter of communication in a suitable language (encoding).
- 5) To select a suitable medium for the transmission of message.
- 6) To transmit the message to the identified communicatee.
- 7) To ensure the correct interpretation of the message by the communicatee.
- 8) To motivate the receiver to behave as desired by the sender.
- 9) To evaluate the effectiveness of communication through response and feed back.
- 10) To evaluate the nature of impact of the communication.

3.5 Sample Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1) What is the simplest model of communication process?
- 2) What do you mean by 'Noise' in communication process?
- 3) What are the potential problems of two way communication process?
- 4) Give a diagram of the communication process model.
- 5) What are the remedies of noise?

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1) Discuss both way communication.
- 2) State the process of communication.
- 3) Explain the steps in developing effective communication.
- 4) What are the six phases of communication?
- 5) Discuss the essentials of good communication system.

Objective Type Questions

- 1) There are
a) ten b) four c) five d) six phases of communication.
- 2) The idea in a communication is encoded by the
a) receiver b) superior c) communicator d) web-master
- 3) The simplest model of communication has got
a) three b) six c) four d) two elements
- 4) In a communication, message is decoded by
a) technical expert b) a media-man c) receiver d) manager
- 5) Process of communication is
a) Multiway b) six way c) two way d) one way

Unit 4 □ Barriers and Gateway in Communication

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Communication Barriers

4.2.1 Perceptual difference

4.2.2 Language difference

4.2.3 Restrictive Environments

4.2.4 Distractions

4.2.5 Deceptive tactics

4.2.6 Information overload

4.2.7 The tendency to evaluate

4.2.8 Reluctance to listen

4.2.9 Insecurity and lack of courage

4.2.10 Fear of being discarded

4.3 Classification of the barriers to Communication

4.3.1 External Barriers

4.3.2 Organisational Barriers

4.3.3 Personal barriers

4.4 Gateways in Communication

4.4.1 4.4.2 4.4.3 4.4.4 4.4.5 4.4.6 4.4.7 4.4.8

4.4.1 Listening with understanding

4.4.2 Communication through-a moderator

4.4.3 Checking the tendency to judge

4.4.4 A minimum baseline of confidence

4.4.5 Adopt an audience Centered approach

4.4.6 Foster ail open communication climate

4.4.7 Modify the number of organisational levels

4.4.8 Facilitate feed back

4.4.9 Commit to ethical communication

4.4.10 Create lean efficient messages

4.4.11 Fine-tuning business communication skills

4.5 Sample Questions

4.0 Objectives

This unit is devoted to analyse what are the barriers in communication, how they crop up, the classification of these barriers, the steps to be taken to remove these barriers and to open up the gateway to communicate.

4.1 Introduction

Communication is effective when the receiver understands the message as intended by the sender and initiates action or changes, approach and attitude as envisaged by the communicator. However communication is not that simple and smooth process as it appears to be. On many occasions some steps in the process get blocked by some sort of external and internal interference. In the process, the message gets distorted or lost. This interference can be caused by a variety of Communication Barriers. Common barriers to effective communication include perceptual and language differences, restrictive environment, distractions, deceptive tactics message overload.

4.2 Communication Barriers

4.2.1 Perceptual difference

No two persons are absolutely alike. Their perception of reality are also different. When two persons communicate about the same event, their reportings are not identical, because their mental images of the event vary. As a sender, one person choose the details that seem important to him. As a receiver the other person gives importance to other details. When the details do not reconcile the communication gets distorted.

4.2.2 Language difference

Language is an arbitrary code that depends on shared definitions. But the two persons may not exclusively share the same meaning of a given word. The most accepted meaning of the word 'homely' is domestic. But it is also used in bad sense as "unpolished". There is every likelihood of clash in communication because of different meanings and applications of the same word. The same pronunciation of two different words also causes noise in communication.

4.2.3 Restrictive Environments

Communication is a continuous process. When the communication originates it has a

particular message but as it travels all the way up or down the Chain of authority, it may bear little resemblance to the original idea. The communication climate suffers when information is distorted, fragmented or blocked by an authoritarian style of management. Consequently, lower level employees get the fragmented or 'limited message which is thought to be adequate to perform their own isolated tasks. Communication gets suffocated in the restrictive environment.

4.2.4 Distractions

The Receiver is more likely to receive the message accurately if there is no physical interruption or emotional distraction. But these things do happen and create barriers to communication. If the telephone line is disturbed, acoustics are poor, photocopy is illegible; lighting is poor or if there is any health problem, communication suffers.

Emotional distractions can also disturb the flow of communication. If the sender is emotionally upset, hostile or aggressive or fearful or ashamed he finds it difficult to encode the message properly. If the receiver is emotional, he may also ignore or distort the message.

4.2.5 Deceptive tactics

Deceptive communicators may exaggerate benefits, quote misleading statistics or hide negative information behind an optimistic attitude . . They may state opinions as facts, leave out crucial information or portray graphic data unfairly. They may seek personal gain by making others look better or worse than they are. These deceptive tactics to manipulate receivers blocks communication and ultimately lead to failure.

4.2.6 Information overload

Today's business people are plagued by message overload. Crucial news information, instructions, guidelines, directives, reports-all these lead to distracting number of the messages. The senders expect immediate answers to these messages. Message mania itself is creating a baffling barrier to communication.

4.2.7 The tendency to evaluate

We all have a natural urge to judge evaluate, approve or disapprove another person's statement. Although making evaluation is common in almost all conversation, this reaction is heightened in situations where feelings and emotions are highly involved. Impulse to evaluate any emotional meaningful statement from our own view point blocks interpersonal communication.

4.2.8 Reluctance to listen

Most of the people are afraid to listen because what they hear might make them change their approach and attitude. Pressure of time is another factor that aggravates receiver's

reluctance. Listening carefully takes time and managers have little of that to spare: In today's business culture with the emphasis on speed, hard-pressed manager hardly finds time for the slower art of one-to-one communication.

The biggest block between two persons or two groups is the inability to listen to each other intelligently and skillfully. In the modern world this deficiency is widespread and appalling.

4.2.9 Insecurity and lack of courage

One more barrier in this era of mergers, acquisitions and delayerings is insecurity and fear it breeds. When down sizing and lay offs loom, the employees and the managers have good reasons for not opening up, especially when people believe that their true feelings or beliefs may get them fired.

4.2.10 Fear of being discarded

Communication fails, when one party does not feel free to express his feeling, when he knows that the other party will not accept his views even when his views are quite valued. This happens particularly in the communication between the boss and the subordinates, a dominating father and obedient son. Communication is facilitated when both the parties are willing to express freely and accept differences.

4.3 Classification of the barriers to Communication

Theo Raimann has classified the main barriers into four groups. These are a) barriers due to organisational structure; b) barriers caused by status and positions c) barriers caused by language and d) barriers arising out of general inclination to resist change.

Mcfarland has suggested to classify the main barriers into a) unsound objectives; b) organisation of blocs; c) semantic blocks and d) human relations problem.

On an analysis of all these blocks and, groups barriers have been classified into three categories : a) external b) organisational and c) personal.

4.3.1 External Barriers

I) Semantic barriers. We have discussed this under item No. 4.2.2 (Language differences). This crops up in the process of encoding or decoding words. The words sometimes fail to convey the desired meaning.

i) Badly expressed message

Lack of clarity and brevity in a message makes the message badly expressed. Poorly chosen words and phrases, unintended omissions, awkward sentence structure, improper use of punctuation, inadequate vocabulary are the common faults in badly expressed message.

ii) Faulty transactions

Managers receive various types of communication from various sources. But these communications cannot be further communicated verbatim. Messages are to be properly translated into proper language according to the receivers of these communications. Language tone will vary for the subordinates, peers and the superiors. Besides, message is to be properly framed according to the channel of communication. This needs a high level of linguistic capacity. Misunderstanding or average level of understanding of words and consequent faulty transactions lead to block the communication.

iii) Unclarified assumptions

There are certain underlying assumptions behind almost all the messages. The messages may be specific but the underlying assumption may not be clear. This puts the receiver in an awkward situation.

iv) Specialist's language

The technical personnel and the 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.

2. Emotional or Psychological Barrier

The meaning ascribed to a message depends upon the emotional and psychological status of the sender and the receiver. If both of them do not have the same wave length, the external message will be received but the inner message will not be appreciated and hence communication will suffer. Some of the emotional barriers are as under

i) Premature evaluation

Premature evaluation is the tendency of prematurely evaluating communication, rather than to keep an uncompromised position during the interchange. Such evaluation stops the transfer of further information and gets a sense of futility in the sender.

ii) Inattention

The preoccupied mind of a receiver prevents him from proper listening and results in ineffective communication.

iii) Loss by transmission and poor retention

During the process of passage through various levels in the organisation, the original message is hardly retained. In case of oral communication 30% of the information gets lost in every transmission. In the case of written communication also, meaning and interpretation gets a different turn.

iv) Undue reliance on the written word

Most of the communications in the organisation are written and formal. But written word is no substitute for sound face-to-face communication. Besides, for a good number of employees written communication can be above the level of readership. Moreover it is difficult to ascertain the feed back from written communication.

v) Distrust of Communication

If the receiver of the communication loses his confidence in the Communicator, because of earlier incidents of changing decision, failure to keep the commitment etc., communication would be absolutely futile and no initiation of any act or change of attitude would be noticed.

4.3.2 Organisational Barriers

The organisation structure has an important impact on the ability of the members to communicate effectively. Because of increasing complexity in the structure, the process of communication is getting stumbled. Similarly if the organisation policy is not supportive to free flow of information in different directions communication would be hampered.

i) Organisation rules and regulations

If the rules and regulations of the organisation are conservative and the organisation itself is a closed one, flow of certain informations may be restricted. The organisation may also prefer some particular channel or layer which delays the transmission of messages. This acts as an imposed barrier in communication.

ii) Status relationship

The placing of people in superior subordinate-capacity in the-organisation structure blocks the flow of communication particularly in the upward direction. Greater the gap between different hierarchical positions, stronger are the barriers of communication.

iii) Complexity in organisation structure

In an organisation with different layers and levels, communication gets delayed. The chances of distortion of the message also increase with increase in the number of filtering points.

4.3.3 Personal barriers

As communication is basically an interpersonal transaction, some personal barriers do block the flow of communication. These barriers affect not only down ward and upward communications but also horizontal and diagonal communications.

(a) Barriers in superiors

The role of superiors in communication is very vital. Because of their hierarchical relationship with subordinates, their communications, intentionally or unknowingly, create some barriers.

i) Attitude of superiors

The superiority complex of the superior is the basic barrier of their communication to the subordinates. Added to that if their attitude is unfavourable and approach is cold, their communication is bound to suffer.

ii) Fear of challenge to authority

The superiors generally maintain a safe and enigmatic distance from the subordinates. They tend to withhold the information coming down the line or going up, as frequent passing of information may weaken their position.

iii) Insistence on proper channel

The superiors have a general tendency to be in the official communication links. They believe in chain authority and in unity of command. Informal communication and skipping of levels may sometimes be more informative to the superiors, but they treat it in a different manner and the process of communication suffers.

iv) Lack of confidence in subordinates

Superiors generally suffer from a perception particularly when the superior holds the position incidentally or accidentally - that their subordinates are less competent and capable, that they do not have any access to information coming downward.

v) Ignoring communication

When the subordinates observe that the superiors consciously and deliberately ignore the communication flowing from them, the subordinates prefer to withhold any communication in future.

vi) Lack of Awareness

Superiors may lack the awareness about the significance and usefulness of communication in a particular subject or in general. So they may not evince any interest in such communication, either as sender or as receiver.

(b) Barriers in subordinates

Vertical communication in either direction can take place only when the subordinates also actively and effectively participate in communication. Apart from the role of attitude, lack of time, awareness about significance, lack of confidence, fear of challenge to authority and ignoring communication, which are applicable to superiors also, there are two other traits in the behaviour of the subordinates, which block their communication.

i) Unwillingness to communicate

Sometimes subordinates do not communicate certain information, upward, because of their unwillingness. They feel that they may be adversely affected by a particular piece of information to their superiors. Even if there is a compulsion on the part of the subordinates to convey some information, they would modify it in such a way that their own interest is protected.

ii) Lack of proper incentive

Lack of proper motivation to communicate also refrains the subordinates from communicating upwards. The reward and punishment system of the organisations, particularly in the Govt. Departments. and Govt. undertakings hardly takes any cognizance of this aspect. The superiors do not evince much interest in a novel suggestion from a subordinate nor they appreciate important information from a subordinate about some sabotage likely to be attempted by some of the insiders. This lack of incentive and appreciation creates mental block in the flow of communication.

In the area of horizontal communication the egoistic and dominating approach of one or two peers prevent other members from participating in communication. Lack of awareness about the other areas of operation also hampers effective participation in the deliberations. After collective decisions have been taken implementation and confirmation get unnecessarily delayed because the co-ordinating and monitoring authority is one of the peers and not a superior authority.

In the diagonal communication also, people feel restrained to respond when the sender is a highly superior authority, much above the level of the regular reporting authority. When the communicator is a subordinate and is required to give some information directly to a much higher authority, skipping the levels, he also filters and communication gets distorted.'

4.4 Gateways in Communication

We have so far discussed the barriers in communication both in the general category and also in the classified categories. Some of them are quite complicated, some are not that complex but cannot be ignored. It may not be possible to absolutely eliminate these barriers, but that should not deter us from finding some suitable managerial actions to address these barriers.

4.4.1 Listening with Understanding

To avoid evaluative tendency we will have to listen with understanding and with empathy. It is not as easy as it sounds. But it is the most effective way to altering a person's basic

personality structure and improves the person's relationship and communication with others. Empathetic understanding is really effective.

4.4.2 Communication through a Moderator

When the emotions are heightened, discussion with another person becomes difficult. However communications through a moderator who listens non-evaluatively and with understanding has proven effective, even when feelings run high.

The moderator can deal with the insincerity, the defensive exaggerations, the lies and the false points that characterises every failure in communication.

4.4.3 Checking the Tendency to Judge

Checking the natural tendency to judge yields a better understanding of the person with whom we are communicating. Greater diversity in the present complex environment makes disciplined listening more important -because the potential for misunderstanding is greater. By suspension of assumptions and judgements, a manager can get to the heart of an employee's feelings. The manager must recognize that to make judgement, you must suspend judgement.

4.4.4 A Minimum Baseline of Confidence

A minimum baseline of confidence is needed to evoke the kind of trust that honest communication requires. It is the responsibility of both the communicator and the receiver to install that confidence in the other party by rational display of dependability, sense of responsibility, receptivity and sincerity.

4.4.5 Adopt an-Audience Centered Approach

Adopting an audience centered approach means focussing on and caring about the audience. Every effort is to be made to get the message across in a way that is meaningful to the audience. To achieve this, the communicator must know the receiver—his biases, education, age, status and receptive capacity. By writing and speaking from the view point of the audience, we can help them understand and accept our message.

4.4.6 Foster an open Communication Climate

Organization's communication climate is a reflection of its corporate culture. Successful companies encourage employee contributions by making sure that communication flows freely down, up, and across the organization chart. They encourage candour and honesty and their employees feel free to confess their mistakes, disagree with the boss, and express their opinions.

4.4.7 Modify the Number of Organisational Levels

One gateway to faster an open communication climate is to reduce the number of levels in the organisation's structure. The fewer the links in the communication chain, loss of the message by transmission will be less and retention of the content will be more. Flatter organisations enable manager to share information with colleagues and employees and to include employees in decision making, goal setting and problem solving.

4.4.8 Facilitate Feed Back

Giving the audience a chance to provide feed back is crucial to maintaining open communication climate. Feed back should be specific and not general. Feed back should be retained as impersonal and job related – Nobody should be criticized personally. Feed back should be goal oriented and well — timed. The receiver of the feed back must properly understand the feed back and make proper use of the feed back.

4.4.9 Commit to Ethical Communication

Ethical Communication includes all relevant information is true in every sense and is not deceptive in any way. An ethical message is accurate and sincere. It avoids language that manipulates, discriminates or exaggerates. When communicating ethically, the communicator does not hide negative information behind an optimistic attitude nor state opinions as facts. The communicator must be honest with employer, co-workers and clients. Against this background, ethical communication will do away with the barriers in communication.

4.4.10 Create Lean Efficient Messages

Lean and efficient messages enhance the the audience's ability to concentrate on the most important data. Successful communicators overcome information over load and other communication barriers by reducing the number of messages, minimizing distractions and fine tuning their business skills. Holding down the number of messages reduces the chance of information overload. Elimination of physical and emotional distractions will contribute to removing the barriers in communication.

4.4.11 Fine-tuning Business Communication Skills

Different types of Communication skill training like handling oral communication situations, training in electronic means of communications develop the skill in business communication. Continuous practice helps improving communication skill. Constructive criticism and focus on building skill in (the weak areas improve the communicator's skill. With improved skill in business communication, it becomes easier to remove the barrier in communication and open up the gateway to efficient communication.

4.5 Sample Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1) What do you mean by barriers to communication?
- 2) What are the common barriers to effective communication?
- 3) How language difference cause barrier to communication?
- 4) What are the common distractions in communication?
- 5) What are the external barriers in communication.
- 6) What do you understand by gateway in communication?

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1) Discuss the barriers in communication.
- 2) What are the classification of barriers to communication?
- 3) What are the organisational barriers? And how these barriers can be removed?
- 4) Discuss the personal barriers to communication.
- 5) Discuss the common barriers in communication. .
- 6) Discuss the steps to be taken to open up gateway in communication.

Objective Type Questions

- 1) To make judgement, you must suspend
 - a) verdict
 - b) justice
 - c) opinion
 - d) judgement.
- 2) Poor acoustics is a type of
 - (a) organizational
 - (b) Personal
 - (c) External distraction.
- 3) Message mania is a gate way / barrier / effective-instrument in a communication.
- 4) The biggest block between two persons
 - a) is to tolerate each other non
 - b) to understand each other
 - c) mutual enmity
 - d) to listen to each other.
- 5) The managers do not open up because of
 - a) poor vocabulary
 - b) insecurity
 - c) lack of awareness.
- 6) Barriers to communication are caused by
 - a) noise
 - b) misunderstanding
 - c) lack of awareness
 - d) external or internal interference.

Unit 5 □ Do's and Don'ts of Business Writing

Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Plan the business writing properly

5.3 Multi stepped process of business writing

5.4 Appreciate the importance of purpose in business writing

5.5 Develop an Audience profile

5.6 To satisfy audience's information needs

5.6.1 Find out exactly what the audience wants to know

5.6.2 Provide all required information

5.6.3 Be sure the information is accurate

5.6.4 Be sure the information is ethical

5.6.5 Be sure the information is pertinent

5.7 The importance of Channel and Medium

5.8 Don'ts of business writing

5.8.1 To avoid using 'you' and 'yours' in business writing

5.8.2 Do not focus on the cloud

5.8.3 Avoid using words with negative connotations

5.8.4 Avoid delay in correspondence

5.8.5 Avoid biased language

5.8.6 Delete unnecessary words and phrases

5.8.7 Avoid using any type styles

5.9 How to make the business writing more effective

5.9.1 What is good organization?

5.9.2 How good organisation is achieved?

5.9.3 Composing and shaping the message

5.9.4 Controlling style and tone

5.9.5 Selecting the best words

5.9.6 Creating effective sentences

5.9.7 Developing coherent paragraphs

5.9.8 Moving beyond the first draft

5.10 Sample Questions

5.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, one will be able to :

- 1) Plan the business writing properly
 - 2) Describe the multi stepped writing process
 - 3) Appreciate the importance of purpose in business writing
 - 4) Justify the importance of the audience
 - 5) Understand how to satisfy audience's information needs
 - 6) Recognise the importance of channel and medium
 - 7) Make-out the lapses to be avoided in business writing
 - 8) Summarise the process for making business writing effective.
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5.1 Introduction

Business audience of today is being exceedingly exposed to increasing number of varied business writings. To draw his attention in the midst of countless messages, our messages should be livelier, easier to read, more concise and more interesting. To induct. these features into the communication, one will have to cultivate some of the do's and don'ts according to the situation, audience and purpose of the writings. While doing so, one need not resort to dramatic technique, nor exhibit his knowledge and vocabulary. To compete for attention, business messages must be purposeful, audience-centered and concise.

5.2 Plan the Business Writing Properly

Purposeful : Business message (writing) either provides information, or solve a problem, or request for the resources necessary to accomplish a goal. Every business writing must have a specific purpose.

Audience Centered : Business messages help audience to understand an issue, ask them to collaborate or accomplishing a goal, or persuade them to take some action. So every message one prepares must consider the audience's background, point of view, and needs.

Concise : Business writings respect everyone's time by presenting information clearly, concisely and efficiently. So every message should be as short as it can be, without jeopardising the message.

5.3 Multi Stepped Process of Business Writing

To make the business writing effective, one may opt for three stepped writing process.

Planning : One should think about the fundamentals of the message. The purpose of the writing should be communicated in the message. He should undertake an analytical study of the audience so that the message can be tailored to their needs and expectations. In the next step, message is to be adapted to the selected channels and medium, that suit one's needs and also the needs of the audience. This will help to establish a good relationship with the audience.

Writing : Once the message has been planned, ideas are to be organised systematically and the first draft is to be prepared. At this stage thoughts are to be committed to words, sentences and paragraphs are to be created.

Completing : After writing the first draft, further review is to be done about the content, the style, the structure and readability. The details such as grammar, punctuation and format should be properly edited. Next the message is to be put into the form that the audience will receive. Finally, the final draft is to be proof read, and the message is to be completed.

5.4 Appreciate the Importance of Purpose in Business Writing

Define the purpose : Besides the general purpose of informing, persuading and collaborating, every business writing has a specific purpose. This specific purpose should be precisely stated, even identifying which audience members should respond. Too many business messages may not serve any practical purpose. Writing useless messages destroy the credibility of the originator of the message.

Even after the message is completed, nothing prevents us from deferring message or not sending it at all, if,

- | The purpose is not realistic
- | The timing is not right
- | The Communicator is not the right person to deliver the message
- | The purpose is not acceptable to the organisation.

5.5 Develop an Audience Profile

Knowing the customer is an effective tool in our hands today to develop the audience profile. Who are the receivers of the business writings? What are their attitudes? What do they need to know? Why should they care about our messages? The answers to such questions indicate what we will have to cover in our writings. When we are writing to somebody, whom we know well, audience analysis is relatively easy. But when we are to communicate to someone or a group who are strangers, we will have to learn about the members of our audience, so that we can adjust our message to serve them properly. To this end, we shall have to;

Identify the primary audience : If we can reach the decision- makers and the opinion moulders in the audience, other members of the audience will fall into place. So identifying the primary audience would generally take care of the other members of the audience.

Determine the audience size : Business writing for wider distribution requires a more formal style, organization and format as against one directed to a few persons in the department. Besides, particular concerns of key individuals should be properly addressed.

Determine audience composition : To develop audience profile, we have to look for common denominators that tie audience members together across differences in culture, education, status or attitude. Some references are to be included in the message that touch on everyone's area of interest.

Gauge audience's level of understanding : If audience members share our general background they will understand our message without difficulty. If the audience members do not have the same level of understanding, it is desirable to gear our coverage to the primary audience (the key decision makers).

Project audience's expectations and preferences : Whether the members of the audience expect complete details or a summary of the main points would suffice? Do they expect a e-mail or want a formal memo? Correct projections would contribute to getting the message across the different members of the audience.

Estimate audience's probable reaction : Audience reaction, affects message organization, when we are expecting a favourable response, we can state conclusions and recommendations upfront, and other minimal supporting evidence. When expecting a skepticism, we can introduce conclusions gradually, with more proof.

5.6 To satisfy audience's information needs

Before writing the message, we must gather same information to communicate to the audience. All these information should be relevant to the purpose of the message and to the audience selected for the message.

The informal methods for gathering information are as under :

Considering other's view points : To put ourselves in others' position to consider what they might be thinking, feeling or planning.

Reading reports and other company documents : Company's files may be a rich source of information we need for a particular memo or message. Company's annual reports, financial statements, news releases, bulletins, customer survey reports are other available documents for helpful information.

Informal discussion with supervisors, colleagues or customers : Fellow workers and customers may have information, we need. They may also know what our audience will be interested in.

Asking audience for input : There is nothing wrong in directly asking our audience what are their information needs. Through casual information, and unofficial interviews these inputs may be obtained.

One of the most essential do's in business writing is determining reader's information needs and then responding to them effectively.

5.6.1 Find out exactly what the audience wants to know

In many cases audience's information needs are very specific. But sometimes the information needs are vague. In such cases we may request for the specific need of the audience. Otherwise by our experience and some presumption we may furnish a little more information to the audience.

5.6.2 Provide all required information

Once all required information needs of the audience are defined we should provide these needs in our business writing completely. To test the thoroughness of the message it should put to questions like who, what, when, where, why and how. If all these questions are adequately answered in the message, we can say the message is complete.

5.6.3 Be sure the information is accurate

Answering the questions of the audience would be a futile exercise, if the answers are wrong. The organisation/company is legally bound by the promises we make, and responsible for our statements. So before passing we should make it certain that the information we are providing is accurate and that the commitments we make can be kept. Double checking everything whatever we have written will minimise our mistakes.

5.6.4 Be sure the information is ethical

Honest mistakes are certainly possible. But there is no excuse for deliberate omissions or commissions. Even after taking all precautions to answer some information needs

correctly, if later on it is observed that the information was incorrect the most ethical thing for us to do is to contact the specific primary audience and correct the error. But for deliberate and intended lapses the company or the organization would be unknowingly exposed to unwelcome situations. There may be legal or other sound business reasons for not including every detail about every matter. But there should be an ethical background as well, to hold back such information.

5.6.5 Be sure the information is pertinent

While responding to audience's information needs, we should identify what points will especially interest the audience and then give those points maximum attention. The knowledge of our audience members helps us to figure out what will most interest them.

5.7 The importance of Channel and Medium

Before starting the business writing we must find out how to make it serve both our audience and our purpose. To accomplish this we have to select a channel and a medium. Appropriate selection of the channel and the medium can make the difference between effective and ineffective business communication. Since we are discussing about business writing, we confine ourselves to written channel. The written channel includes media such as letters, reports, e-mail, faxes, telex and so on. What ever channel and medium we choose, it should match the message and the intention. Channel and medium also govern the style and tone of the message. The level of formality differs from an e-mail message to a letter. The more complicated the message, the richer is the medium required. Every medium influences the audience's perception of our intentions. When we want to emphasize the formality of a message, we use a more formal medium, such as memo or a letter. Time and cost also, affect medium selection. If the message is urgent we should fax it, instead of sending by regular mail.

When choosing the appropriate medium, we should also remember the **receiver's expectations**.

5.8 Don'ts of Business Writing

So far we have discussed the do's of business writing. But there are some don'ts also which should be avoided to make the business writing effective.

5.8.1 To avoid using 'you' and 'yours' in business writing

By using this we may sound dictatorial. It may make someone feeling guilty. It may go against the style of the organization.

5.8.2 Do not focus on the cloud

Instead of stressing on what we can do and what we will do, we should not focus on what we have not done, we can not do or we would not do. Even bad news may be more acceptable by focussing on some redeeming feature.

5.8.3 Avoid using words with negative connotations

Using words that might hurt or offend the audience does not serve our purpose of proper communication. It is preferable to use euphemisms (mild terms) for those that are unpleasant. We can be honest without being harsh. Gentle language would not change the facts, but it will make them more acceptable.

5.8.4 Avoid delay in correspondence

One simple and effective courtesy is to be prompt in correspondence. Where possible, it should be attended to within two to three days. If it needs more time, a brief note may be sent mentioning that we are working on an answer. Most people are willing to wait if they know how long the wait will be.

5.8.5 Avoid biased language

It helps avoiding unethical, embarrassing blunders in language related to gender, race, age and disability. We should avoid sexist language by using the same label for every one. We should eliminate references that reinforce racial or ethnic characteristics. There is no necessity of referring to an individual's age or physical limitations unless these are relevant.

5.8.6 Delete unnecessary words and phrases

Some combination of words have more efficient, one-word equivalent. Clutter of too many or poorly placed relative pronouns, and excessive use of articles hamper the progress in communication.

5.8.7 Avoid using any type styles

That inhibits audience's ability to read the message. Underlining or using all upper case letters can interfere with reader's ability to recognize the shapes of words. Bold face or italicized type can slow down the reader. Some of the other types, hinder legibility. The size of the type should be proportionate to the importance of the message and the space allotted.

5.9 How to make the business writing more effective

All business communicators face the challenge of writing messages that the communicatee can easily understand. People do not appreciate isolated ideas, unrelated facts or figures. So good organization is the base on which effective business writing can be structured.

5.9.1 What is good organization?

Good organization means creating a linear message that proceeds point by point.

In a well organized business writing, all the pieces fit together in a coherent pattern. Good organization helps the audience to understand the message and to accept the message. Well organised messages are efficient, precise and relevant. They satisfy audience's need for information.

5.9.2 How good organisation is achieved?

Good organization is achieved by;

- a) defining the main idea
- b) limiting the scope
- c) grouping the points
- d) choosing the direct or indirect approach.

The broad subject of a message is the topic and the main idea makes a statement about the topic. The scope of the message must match the main idea. A good way to visualize how all the points will fit together is to construct an outline.

We are to start with the main idea. The main idea is (1) what we want our audience to do or think and (2) why they should do so.

In the next step we are to identify some major points that support and clarify the message in more concrete terms.

Subsequent to this, major points are to be illustrated by specific evidences : The more evidences, we provide, the more conclusive will be our communication.

After focussing on the main point, identifying the major points and providing enough specific evidence, the stage is set to present the points in a particular sequence. The sequence may be direct. approach or indirect approach.

In the direct approach the main idea (recommendation, conclusion or request) comes first. It is followed by the evidences.

In the indirect approach, the evidences come first, followed by the main idea.

5.9.3 Composing and shaping the message

Once the planning process and organizing the message are over, composition of the message starts. It is the process of drafting the message. When all the thoughts and ideas have been jotted down, message is 'to be properly shaped.

5.9.4 Controlling style and tone

Style is the way we use words to achieve a certain tone or overall impression. The style may vary on the nature of the message and relationship with the reader. The tone may vary from informal to conversational to formal. Most business messages aim for a conversational tone, using plain language that sounds business like without being stuffy, stiff, wordy or full of jargon. To introduce this conversational tone we should avoid.

- a) obsolete and pompous language
- b) intimacy
- c) humour
- d) preaching and bragging

5.9.5 Selecting the best words

To compose effective business writing, we must choose our words carefully. Correctness is the first consideration when choosing words. Effectiveness is the second consideration, Correct grammar enhances the image of the communicator. In business writing, words with negative communications should be avoided.

5.9.6 Creating effective sentences

Words do not make much sense until they are combined in a sentence to express a complete thought. Once the sentence is constructed, it can be further improved by exploring the possibilities. The sentence style may be used to emphasize key thoughts by giving some parts of the sentence more space, putting them at the beginning or at the end of the sentence, making them the subject of the sentence.

5.9.7 Developing coherent paragraphs

A paragraph is a cluster of sentences all related to the same general topic. It is a unit of thought, separated from other units. Each paragraph is an important part of the whole, a key link in the train of thought. Along with the composition of the message the placement of the paragraphs and their relationship to one another should also be thought of Paragraphs may be further developed by

- (i) illustration
- (ii) comparison or contrast
- (iii) cause and effect
- (iv) classification and
- (v) problem and solution.

5.9.8 Moving beyond the first draft

The first draft of the message is rarely good enough so the first message should be further reviewed and refined before sending. Even after written message is fine tuned, the content, organization, style and tone should be further evaluated. The readability of the message should be reviewed. The message may have to be further edited and rewritten for clarity and conciseness. Completing of the message consists of three tasks : revising, producing and proof reading. To complete the business message, we must also check its design and mechanics.

5.10 Sample Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1) What are the features of a message to draw the immediate attention of the business audience?
- 2) Describe the three stepped process of business writing.
- 3) What do you understand by audience-centred business writing?
- 4) When would you like to not send the message even when it is completed ?
- 5) What are the sources . to gather information to satisfy customer's information needs?

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1) What are the steps to be taken to satisfy audience's information needs?
- 2) Discuss the don'ts of business writing.
- 3) What are the methods to make the business writing more effective?
- 4) What is good organisation? How good organization is achieved?
- 5) How do you plan business writing? Discuss in detail.

Objective Type Questions

- 1) Every business message should be
 - (a) business-oriented
 - (b) sales-centered
 - (c) audience-centered
 - (d) profit-oriented.
- 2) A message should not be sent if
 - (a) it is too long
 - (b) it is hand written

- (c) it is not on official letter head
 - (d) the purpose is not acceptable to the organisation.
- 3) If any information is observed to be incorrect at a later date the best course is
- (a) to ignore it
 - (b) to modify it in a subsequent message
 - (c) to cover it by some means
 - (d) to contact the specific audience and correct the error.
- 4) Whatever channel we use in our communication it should match the
- (a) message
 - (b) the communicator
 - (c) the receiver
 - (d) the medium.
- 5) The primary audience in a group constitute the people
- (a) who first receive the message
 - (b) the supervisory staff
 - (c) the desk clerks
 - (d) the decision makers.

Unit 6 □ Commercial Letters

Structure

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Functions and importance of commercial letters

6.3 Style of commercial letters

6.4 Essentials of commercial letter

6.5 Form and arrangement of commercial letter

6.6 Three step writing process for commercial letter

6.6.1 Planning the commercial letter

6.6.2 Writing the commercial letter

6.6.3 Completing the commercial letter,

6.7 Kinds of commercial letters

6.7.1 Placing orders

6.7.2 Requesting information and action

6.7.3 Making claims and requesting adjustments

6.7.4 Requesting recommendation or references

6.7.5 Banking and insurance

6.7.6 Letter to government

6.7.7 Company matter

6.8 Sample Questions

6.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, the different aspects of commercial letters would be more comprehensible.

- | Functions and importance of commercial letters.
- | Style of commercial letters.
- | Essentials of commercial letter.
- | Form and arrangement of commercial letter.

- | Three step writing process for commercial letters.
- | Kinds of commercial letters.

6.1 Introduction

Letter is the most effective essential to communication, next only to face-to-face contact. The term “letter” refers to written or printed message from one individual to another institution or an individual on matters of common interest. Commercial letters mean message/communication of informations on matters relating to trade and commerce. The primary objective of a commercial letter is to open up good relation with the customers, maintain good relations and enhance that relation for further growth and development of business. An effective commercial letter is vital for survival in the midst of stiff competition in the business world.’

6.2 Functions and Importance of Commercial Letters

The function of commercial letter is to open up and maintain the commercial relation, to initiate, conduct and conclude commercial transaction of different types. The functions of commercial letters are—

- 1) Introduction or opening up of commercial relation.
- 2) Maintenance and conclusion of commercial transactions.
- 3) Promotion and acceleration of commercial opportunities.
- 4) Achievement of success in commercial activities.

Good commercial correspondences are considered as an important parameter of the functioning of a commercial organisation. The senior Corporate Writer in the corporate relations department of an organization is held in high esteem because of his / her silent contribution to the maintenance of a congenial relation of a commercial organization with its customers, suppliers, debtors, creditors, government authorities, media and the public at large.

The importance of commercial letters may be gauged from the following points.

i) Medium of communication at low cost

Commercial establishments use both oral and written channels. through different media for communication. Out of these different media, letters are the means of communication at low cost.

ii) Document of evidence

Letters are considered to be the standard document of evidence to the commercial establishments. They are also accepted in the courts of law.

iii) Less possibility of errors

Commercial letters are drafted with utmost care. So the possibility of error which may be noticed in case of conversation is nominal.

iv) Adequate security

Letter is meant for the specific addressee, particularly when he mentions 'personal' and 'confidential'. It can be more secured by sending through fax. Speed can also be attributed in the process.

v) Suitable for conveying any type of news

The letters are suitable for any type of communication-routine, good news, good will messages, bad news-messages, persuasive messages. What can not be expressed orally can be expressed through letters. Unpleasant works like complaint against invoice, refusal of goods, collection of dues etc. can be smoothly performed through letters.

vi) Accurate handling of business problem

Letter is the most valuable medium of handling any intricate business problem accurately and without any ambiguity. Even telephone talks are confirmed by written statement for future reference and also to avoid dispute and ambiguity,

vii) Creation of goodwill of a Commercial Concern

The status and good will of a commercial concern can be ascertained by means of form and content, style and tone of commercial letters. The managerial efficiency of a commercial concern can also be measured by the letters originating or in response from their office.

6.3 Style of Commercial Letters

While drafting the commercial letters, it should be remembered that the commercial letters differ from other letters in respect of subject matter and form. The style and tone of these letters are to be decided-in tune with the subject matter. The commercial letters should be in plain and simple language. Unnecessary words and jargons should be avoided. Positive approach should be followed throughout. The rules of grammar and syntax should be properly complied with. Adequate attention should be given on choice of words. Words should be chosen in such a way so that the exact meaning of the letter is conveyed to the receiver and there is no scope for any ambiguity. It is essential that the sense of modesty and courtesy should be expressed through out the letter. The language of the letter should be lucid and simple so that the addressee is not inconvenienced.

The lay-out of the letter must be proper and attractive. The points of the letter must be arranged in logical sequence so that the letter becomes impressive to the reader. Finally the approach of the letter shall be positive and straight-forward.

6.4 Essentials of Commercial Letter

- a) **Clarity** : The first essential quality of a business letter is clarity of purpose and clarity of information need by the audience. The letter should be absolutely transparent without any ambiguity, The letter must be written in simple, clear and unambiguous language.
- b) **Brevity** : The author of the commercial letter must appreciate the value. of time of the receiver of the letter. So the letter should be brief, concise and to the point. In a long letter the purpose and the meaning may be lost in the midst of unwanted references and excesses. It may even antagonise the reader of the letter and finally lead to wastage of time. However clarity should not be sacrificed for the purpose of brevity.
- c) **Courtesy** : “Courtesy, costs nothing but pays a lot”. The proverb is singularly applicable to a business letter. The letter must be courteous both in language and in spirit. A courteous communication goes a long way in establishing and maintaining good relationship with the customer and other-business associates. However while showing courtesy and modesty the writer should avoid exaggeration or flattery.
- d) **Completeness** : A commercial letter should be complete in all aspects. It must be specified dealing with the different needs of- the audience and giving complete answer to all the information needs of the customer. No fact or ‘information should be left out.
- e) **Correctness** : The queries asked or replies given through the letter should be .proper. Information intended to be conveyed should be correct and exact. This process would give ethical values to the commercial letter. To serve this purpose all queries should be made and information should be gathered.
- f) **Reader-friendly** : The letter should be reader” friendly, with proper space and font. Properly punctuated letter with correct use of grammar and syntax not only gives better image to the author, it also makes pleasant reading for the receiver of the letter.

6.5 Form and Arrangement of Commercial Letter

6.5 Form and Arrangement of Commercial Letter

The commercial letters should have a structural form and arrangement by means of which letters are made attractive. The main purpose is to compose a neat, orderly, reader-friendly and impressive letter. A commercial letter has generally six parts :

- a) **Heading** : Every commercial letter has a heading. Letters are generally written in the letter head of the company. The letter head will show (1) the name of the firm

and the nature of business (2) address (3) telephone number, fax number, E-mail and website (4) telegraphic address (5) (a) reference no. (b) deptt. (c) letter no and date. A sample of complete heading is as given below :

CALCUTTA ANTIQUES

Specialist Collector of Indian Antiques

12 Camac St. Kolkata-700 016

Telephone : 033-2284-3219, Fax : 033-2284-3115

website. www.calcuttaantiques.com E-mail antiques@zee.net.com

Telegram - CALANT

Reference No. 241/Sales/31/04

November 21st, 2004

- b) Inside Address :** This consists of the name, designation: of the person and the name and address of the company to whom the letter is addressed. It is addressed to an individual, the name and address of the individual are to be furnished. This is written on the left hand top margin of the letter just above the greeting. As a matter of courtesy, a complimentary title is usually prefixed to the name of the addressee. This complimentary title is generally based on customs and usage.
- c) Opening salutation and greetings to the addressee :** Greeting is the complimentary term usually used to begin with the letter. This varies according to the status of the addressee. In case of addressing firms and companies, greeting changes.
- d) Body of the letter :** This is the most important part of the letter. This has got three parts (i) opening (ii) body, (Iii) Close. In the opening part, the main idea, the request, or the news are to be stated clearly. The body includes all necessary details. In the final part there should be cordial closing. The specific action as desired by the communicator should also be stated. A separate paragraph should be devoted to different parts. If different topics are taken up for presentation, it should be made up of paragraphs logically arranged. However it is desirable that each letter should deal with only one subject.
- e) Complimentary close :** It is a simple and polite approach of ending the letter and formal leave taking. It contains the phrases expressing respect, obedience or regard of the writer to the addressee. It is usually written just below the body of the letter on the right hand side.
- f) Signature :** It contains the name of the writer within the bracket and his signature between complimentary close and the name. Just below the. name comes the designation of the writer.

- g) **Enclosures** : If there are some documents such as cheque, invoice, bill, copy of contract, terms and conditions enclosed, these should be attached and put below the letter. These should be properly numbered and be mentioned at the bottom of the letter on the left hand side.
- h) **Postscript** : Postscript is additional information which is written at the bottom of the letter. Generally, it is written as a result of after thought. The 3 abbreviation P. S. is used to indicate it. Signature should be put after using P.S.

To give the letter a pleasing finish and much needed relief to the eyes of the reader, margins should be provided on all the sides of the letter.

6.6 Three Step Writing Process for Commercial Letter

Effective communication creates a positive impression and a positive impression gets more positive response to the purpose of the commercial letter. The three-step writing process contributes to instil this response in the mind of the reader.

6.6.1 Planning the Commercial Letter

Whatever the type of the letter, irrespective of any situation or purpose, we need to analyse, investigate and adapt our messages. First thing to analyze is whether the purpose is specific and it is worth pursuing at the particular juncture. We are also to analyze the probable 'reaction of the receiver of the letter. Next to analysis, comes investigation. The author of the letter is to investigate what are the needs of the audience (the customer etc.) whether all the relevant information are at our disposal? Or whether we need some more time to gather' some more information? Once this is over, the letter is to be adapted to the reader. The appropriate format is to be selected. Finally, whatever the purpose and whoever the reader, the language should be positive and polite.

6.6.2 Writing the Commercial Letter

Next to planning, we are to organise and compose the letter. The main idea should be fairly well defined. To limit the scope of the letter, we should stick to the main idea. Only relevant points are to be covered, grouping them in the most logical fashion. To conclude, the letter is to be closed cordially.

While writing the letter, the important deadlines are to be emphasized with bold or italic type. Attention to important points is to be drawn with bullet points.

A feeling of partnership with the readers of the letter may be established by a friendly and conversational tone. But any type of irony or sarcasm should be strictly avoided.

6.6.3 Completing the Commercial Letter

Any type of commercial letter should be made professional by allowing plenty of time to revise, produce and proof read it. The letter may be revised to maximise overall effect. The content and the organization of the letter are to be evaluated to make sure that our purpose has been properly conveyed in the order in which we would like to convey. For the purpose of conciseness and clarity the letter is to be consciously edited. The types, errors in spelling and mechanics, alignment problems print quality *S etc.* are all to be looked into to minimize if not to negate any negative impression.

6. 7 Kinds of Commercial Letters

The various types of commercial letters are numerable. However many of the letters we write, fall into some major categories as under :

- a) Placing orders
- b) Requesting information and action
- c) Making claims and requesting adjustments
- d) Requesting recommendation & references
- e) Banking and Insurance
- f) Letters to government
- g) Company matters.

6.7.1 Placing Orders

Placing orders are considered as some of the simple types of commercial letters. When placing an order, we are to just state our needs clearly and directly. Most of the orders refer to a product that the reader knows about. If we are not interested in filling up the computer generated form, we may start the letter with general request. In the middle we are to include the specific information about the items we want. The information should include the number/quantity, description, price per item and the total price per item and the total price delivery address should be specifically mentioned. How it is to be delivered should be mentioned along with the date/period by which it should be delivered. How the bill amount would be paid should also be mentioned in the letter.

6.7.2 Requesting Information and Action

When making a request for information about something or some one, we should mention i) what we want to know, ii) why we want to know it, iii) why it is in the reader's

interest to help us. In this type of letter we are to start with a clear statement of our reason for writing. In the middle, we are to provide relevant points-justifying our request. We may have to furnish the information how the reader would be benefited by providing the information. We are to close the letter with the specific account of what we expect and include a dead line for the purpose.

6. 7.3 Making Claims and Requesting Adjustments

When we are dissatisfied with a company's product or service, we make a claim or request an adjustment. In such cases a courteous, clear, concise explanation will impress the reader much more favourably than an abusive, angry letter.

Here we should start with a straight forward statement of the problem. In the middle we are to provide back up information for verification of the complaint about faulty merchandise or unsatisfactory service. In the closing, we should politely request specific action or convey a sincere desire to find a solution. It should be also clearly stated that the business relationship will continue if the problem is solved satisfactorily.

6.7.4 Requesting Recommendation or References

The need to enquire about people often arises in business. Before, awarding credit,n contracts, jobs, scholarships, some companies ask applicant to supply references. If we are applying for a job and. the employer asks for reference, we may ask a close personal or professional associate to write a letter of recommendation.

In such cases we may begin our letter by clearly stating about applying for a position and requesting. the reader to- write a letter of recommendation. If we do not have recent contact with the person for some time, we may open up recalling the nature of the relationship we had, the dates of association and any special events that may bring a clear, favourable picture of us to the mind of the reader.

For further emphasizing about our favourable qualities we may provide the receiver of the letter with as much information about our qualification and eligibility for a job or a scholarship.

The letter is to be closed with an expression of appreciation and the full name and address of the person to whom the letter should be sent. If immediate recommendation is needed, the deadline should be mentioned. We can make a response more likely if we enclose a stamped, preaddressed envelope.

6.7.5 Banking and Insurance

While taking up with a bank, enquiring about the reason of dishonour of a cheque, even though sufficient funds were arranged for honouring the cheque, we should go for a direct approach.

We should open the letter stating the fact that the cheque has been dishonoured, mentioning the reason as shortage of funds.

In the middle, we should provide the relevant facts about how the funds were provided and there was no information from the Bank about no receipt of funds.

While closing, we should request the bank furnish the reasons of dishonouring the cheque. We may also mention about how our goodwill in the market has been affected because of dishonouring the cheque.

However, since we do not know what actually has happened, throughout the letter, we should be polite in our correspondence.

6.7.6 Letter to Government

While writing to government department, we should be very particular about the specific authority and the department to whom the letter should be sent. If it is a case of loss or damage, we should furnish all the relevant information along with the copies of the evidences, retaining the originals with us.

How the department is responsible for the loss and damage should be clearly stated. Since in the first letter, we are expecting that our claim for compensation would be favourably considered, we should show courtesy and politeness throughout the letter and close the letter with a request for initiation of action.

6.7.7 Company Matter

Letter on company matter should be generally addressed by the Company Secretary. The request of the addressee should be properly looked into and proper investigation should be made before sending any letter. For any statement which may later on found to be incorrect, the company would be held responsible. So before passing on any message, proper caution should be taken.

If it is about allotment of the shares, the details about the face value, the premium or discount if any, no of shares, the deadline of deposit of the allotment money should be correctly mentioned.

Formal courtesy should be maintained in the letter with usual dosing.

6.8 Sample Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1) What is meant by postscript
- 2) What is layout of the letter?
- 3) What is a trade enquiry?
- 4) What is a quotation?
- 5) What are the different parts of a commercial letter?
- 6) What does the Heading of a commercial letter usually include?

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1) Discuss three step writing process of commercial letters.
- 2) What are the qualities of a good business letter? Explain the objects and functions of a business letter.
- 3) Draft a letter placing an order with a supplier for supply of uniforms to the drivers and conductors of a state transport corporation, mentioning that if order is not executed within 60 days, the order will be cancelled.
- 4) What are the essentials of a commercial letter?
- 5) What are the different types of commercial letters and what are the features of these types?
- 6) Design the layout of a commercial letter and discuss the style of commercial letter.

Objective Type Questions

- 1) "Inside address" is the address of
 - (a) the another of the letter
 - (b) the Head Quarter of the Company
 - (c) the reader of the letter
 - (d) the authority whose instruction the letter is being sent
- 2) "Layout" of the letter refers to
 - (a) subject of the letter
 - (b) request made in the letter
 - (c) instruction given in the letter
 - (d) proper arrangement of different parts of the letter.

- 3) Commercial letter is suitable for conveying-
 - (a) any type of news
 - (b) good news
 - (c) bad news
 - (d) routine news.
- 4) Courtesy should be exhibited in
 - (a) letter asking for a favour
 - (b) goodwill letter
 - (c) letter of appreciation
 - (d) any type of letter.
- 5) The most important part of a letter is the-
 - (a) complementary close of the letter
 - (b) the action desired in the letter
 - (c) body of the letter
 - (d) subject of the letter,
- 6) The organization of a letter means-
 - (a) organization of the sender of the letter
 - (b) organization of the receiver of the letter
 - (c) organizing the principal idea, the relevant points and evidences in the letter
 - (d) organizing drafting typing and despatch of the letter.

Unit 7 □ Writing Business Reports

Structure

7.0 Objectives

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7.2 What is business report

7.3 Purposes of reports

7.3.1 Informational Reports

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7.3.1b Reports for implementing policies and procedures

7.3.1c Reports for complying with Govt. Regulations

7.3.1d Reports for documentary progress

7.3.2 Analytical Reports

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7.3.2b Proposals

7.4 Classification of Business Reports

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7.7.1 Drafting Business Report

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7.8.1 Components of a Formal Report

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7.8.1b Text of the report

7.8.1c Supplementary parts

7.9 Sample Questions

7.0 Objectives

This unit focusses on

- 1) What is business report
- 2) Purposes of reports
- 3) Classification of business reports
- 4) Three steps writing process to business reports
- 5) Organizing business reports
- 6) Composing business reports
- 7) Completing business reports

7.1 Introduction

Dell Computer Corporation of United States of America depends on more than 4000 types of analytical and informational reports to keep operations running smoothly. Data is the engine that keeps them on track and staying on track with accurate reports is one way by which Dell remains a leader in its industry. The management team in the corporation rely on well-planned reports that not only summarise and present carefully researched data but define problems, discuss pertinent issues and analyze information. As in Dell Computer Corporation, in other organizations also most managers rely on reports to provide information and analyses so that they can make decisions and solve problems. Any report whatsoever communicates about some aspects of the business.

7.2 What is business report

A business report is a form of a precise and systematic statement of information relating to an event, progress or action or some business activity prepared by a person or group of persons after an inquiry, systematic study, or investigation and presented to the interested parties, without or with opinions or recommendations. This is a refined description of systematically developed business reports. But the term covers everything from a fleeting

image on a computer screen to preprinted forms to informal letters and memos to formal voluminous reports. So a business report is any factual objective document that serves a business purpose.

7.3 Purposes of reports

Business reports can serve hundreds of purposes. But most of the reports are used for one of the six general purposes as detailed below.

Informational Reports

1. Monitor and control operations
2. Implement policies and procedures
3. Comply with legal or regulatory requirements
4. Document work performed for clients.

Analytical Reports

5. Guide decisions on particular issues.
6. Get products, plans or projects accepted by others.

7.3.1 Informational Reports

Informational reports present data and facts without analyses or recommendations. These reports include those for monitoring and controlling operations, statement of policies and procedures, compliance reports and progress reports.

7.3.1a Reports for monitoring and controlling operations

Monitor/control reports help manager find out what is happening in the operations under their control. These reports focus on data, so they require special attention to accuracy, thoroughness and honesty of content. Monitor/control reports expose any problems that exist.

Three types of reports used for monitoring and controlling operations are plans, operating reports and personal activity reports.

Plan

Plans help managers to i) Coordinate the various activities of a business organisation ii) guide the distribution of resources and-iii) motivate employees. There are different kinds of plans-strategic plans, Business plans, Marketing plans.

Operating reports

Operating reports provide manager with detailed information from a management information system, which captures data about everything happening in the organisation- Sales, production, inventory, shipments, backlogs, costs, personnel, and so on. Periodic operating reports describe what has happened in a department or division during a particular period. Corporate annual reports are periodic reports that are formal and comprehensive. These recurring operating reports keep the managers up to date and provide the signals where corrective actions are necessary.

Personal Activity Reports

These reports describe what has occurred during a conference, convention, seminar or other activity. These are intended to report important informations or decisions that emerged during the activity. Expense reports, performance reviews, recruiting are other such documents which keep the management posted about the operational activities.

7.3.1b Reports for implementing policies and procedures

Policy/procedure reports help managers communicate the company's standards. Some policies and procedures provide lasting guidelines for how things should be done. Other policies and procedures explain management's position on passing events.

7.3.1c Reports for complying with Govt. Regulations

Compliance reports explain what a company is doing to conform to government regulations. These reports should be honest, thorough and accurate.

Many compliance reports are prepared on annual basis e.g. Income Tax Returns, professional tax returns, Annual Share holders reports.

There are some interim compliance report also, particularly in the Govt. undertakings like Report on implementation of official Language Policy, progress report on frauds; progress report on bad loans etc.

7.3.1d Reports for documentary progress

Progress reports vary in importance and complexity, When a progress report is being prepared, the needs of the reader should be given proper attention. The report should provide the required information clearly and tactfully.

Progress reports are generally submitted on a regular basis-monthly or weekly or on a phased basis. Interim progress reports are followed by a final report at the conclusion of the contract or the project. The final report focuses on results rather than on progress.

7.3.2 Analytical Reports

In addition to informational reports, managers rely on the supporting information, analyses and recommendations presented in analytical reports to make conscious decisions.

Analytical reports require a strong foundation of facts combined with good analytical insight and excellent communication skills on the part of the writer. An analytical report ends by presenting a decision or a solution to a problem or by recommending number of actions. The body of the report presents all the facts (both good and bad) and persuades readers to accept a decision, accept an action or recommendations detailed throughout the report.

7.3.2a Problem solving reports

When solving problems, managers need both basic information and detailed analysis to evaluate the possible solutions. Problem-solving reports provide such information and analyses.

Trouble shooting reports are one type of problem solving reports. These reports usually start with some background information on the problem, then analyse alternative solutions, and finally recommend the best approach.

Feasibility report is a problem-solving report that studies proposed options to assess whether any or all of them are sound. The report answers such question as will this action work? Is it profitable? Is one action better than the other? The report may also conclude that a proposed action is not feasible because it is too costly to implement or because the advantages do not outweigh the disadvantages. The author or the report may ask for some alternatives, evaluate each report and present a recommendation for the most feasible one.

Justification reports are similar to feasibility reports except for a timing difference. These reports are written after a course of action has been taken or after a decision has been made to justify the action or decision.

7.3.2b Proposals

A proposal is a special type of analytical report designed to get products, plans, projects accepted by others. Proposals are an important type of job related report because their acceptance can lead to significant operational improvements, new business, additional jobs, safe working conditions. Proposals are usually submitted to the persons who are in authority and who take decisions.

Proposal may be both **internal or external** **Internal proposals** are submitted to decision makers in one's own organisation. These proposal have two primary purposes : (1) to seek approval for a project or course of action or (2) to request additional resources.

External proposals are submitted - to decision makers outside the organisation, such

as current or potential clients and govt. agencies. These proposals also solicit approval for projects or funds. Unlike internal proposals, external proposals form the basis of a contract if approval is granted, so they are to be prepared with extreme care. External proposals also compete for a client's business. So the proposal must be convincing to the readers that the author's organisation is the best source of a product or service. The external proposal should elaborately talk about the experience, qualifications, facilities and equipm_ent. The proposal should also demonstrate that the reader's problem and need has been clearly understood.

Solicited proposals

Solicited proposals are generally prepared at the request of external parties. The external party prepares a Request for proposal (RTP) specifying the exact type of work to be done along with the guidelines on how and by when the company wants the work to be completed and invites to bid on the job: The solicited proposal is to demonstrate that the company participating in the bid is best qualified than competitors to handle the particular contract.

Unsolicited proposals

These are initiated by organizations attempting to obtain business or funding without a specific invitation from a potential client. The employees or managers of the company may also initiate such proposal by convincing the company to adopt a program, policy or idea. An unsolicited proposal must first establish that a problem exists in the potential client's company and then convince the reader that the proposal enunciated by the organisation is capable of solving the problem.

7.4 Classification of Business Reports

Apart from Informational and Analytical reports which we have discussed at length, reports may be classified in some other ways :

- 1) Voluntary or authorized
- 2) Routine or special
- 3) Internal or external
- 4) Formal or informal
- 5) Statutory and non-statutory
- 6) Ordinary and privileged.

7.4.1 Voluntary or Authorized

Reports are classified according to the source who initiates it. Accordingly voluntary or authorized are two types of reports. Voluntary reports are prepared on own initiative of

the author. So they usually require more detail and support than authorized reports. Authorized Reports are authorized by some interested parties. They also give the guidelines how the reports should be prepared. Should it be with or without opinion or recommendations.

7.4.2 Routine or Special

On the basis of frequency these two types reports are made. **Routine Reports** are the reports which are generally prepared in a standard way. They are submitted on a recurring basis (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually). Because they are routine, they require-less introductory material. Reports of sale, auditor's report are of this type. **Special Report** is prepared by an individual or a body who is entrusted with some special enquiry, one time studies, or investigations. It usually contains the opinions or recommendations supported by facts and argument e.g. Report on a fraud, study about a new financial product.

7.4.3 Internal or external

Internal and external reports are categorized according to target audience. We have discussed these two categories under analytical reports. Internal reports are designed for use within the organisation. External Reports are sent to people outside the organisation.

7.4.4 Formal and Informal

These two types are classified according to form and content. A formal report is drafted in a prescribed form and presented in the conventional procedure and through proper channel. Reports submitted by officials- or by committees of various constituted bodies are usually formal reports.

7.4.5 Statutory and Non-statutory

The formal reports are of two types. Statutory and non-statutory. Statutory Reports are generally prepared and submitted in the prescribed form and procedures as laid down in statute. Some of these reports are submitted in the statutory meeting of the company for example. Auditor's Report which is submitted at the Annual General Meeting of the Company.

Non-Statutory Reports are the reports which are not required under the provisions of any law but have to be prepared, for example, to help the directors to take decisions for exercising effective control and proper conduct of the business.

7.4.6 Ordinary and privileged

Ordinary reports are those reports which are prepared and presented at specific intervals in the usual routine of business. The Report of Directors to the Annual General

Meeting or Auditor's Report to the Annual General Meeting are the examples of ordinary reports.

Privileged Reports are the reports which are immuned from the liability of slander or defamation. In the case of oral speeches, certain reports have been granted privilege. by law. Reports of proceedings in a Court of Law or press reports of public meeting enjoy "qualified privilege".

7.5 Applying the Three Step Writing Process to Business Reports

As in the case of commercial letters' in the case of business reports also the three step writing process (1) planning (2) writing and (3) completing is quite beneficial.

7.5.1 Planning

The planning tasks for reports fall into three categories: **analysis, investigation and adaptation.**

7.5.1a Analysis

While writing reports, special attention is to be paid to analysis tasks such as defining the problem and developing the statement of purpose. The problem which is to be resolved through the report may be defined by the superiors or identified by the author of the report.

Next to identification of problem comes the statement of purpose. The statement defines why the report is to be prepared. This purpose statement which identifies the objective of the report helps shape the scope of the report.

Once the purpose statement is confirmed, it forms the basis of preliminary outline. The preliminary outline gives an idea of the entire report, the important points, the order in which the points will be discussed and the details to be included: However the final outline of the report need not conform to the preliminary outline. With a purpose and preliminary outline, we are to prepare the work plan for the report.

The formal work plan for a report should include the following elements.

- a) Statement of the problem.
- b) Statement of the purpose and scope of investigation.
- c) Discussion of tasks, to be completed.
- d) Description of any product that will result from investigation.
- e) Review of project assignment, schedules and resource requirements.
- f) Plans for following up after delivering the report.

7.5.1b Investigation

While writing a report, informational or analytical, we need to gather data on specific companies, industries, trends, products, events etc. For the purpose of investigation, we shall have to undertake the following six tasks.

1. Identify the right questions to understand the topic and assignment.
2. Find and access secondary and primary information.
3. Evaluate and finalize the sources.
4. Process the information.
5. Analyze the data.
6. Interpret the findings.

7.5.1c Adapting the Report to the Audience

Any report voluntary or authorized should be audiencecentered. For this purpose, a good relationship should be established with the specified or prospective audience. Proper channel and medium should also be selected that would suit the readers:

To ensure that the report is acceptable to the audience, the report should

- a) Focus on how the report answers their questions and solve their problems.
- b) Emphasize the positive opinion or recommendation.
- c) Establish the credibility of the author.
- d) Be polite.
- e) Be written in bias-free language.
- f) Project the image of the company.

For reports, channel and medium choice depend' not only on audience and purpose but also on classification.

Reports are generally **written** to accommodate complex information in a logical and structured format. The written report can be used for any future reference.

Reports can also be oral, when immediate feed-back is needed. Written reports can be accompanied With an oral presentation.

With the growing use of electronic communication, electronic reports are becoming increasingly popular.

7.6 Organizing Business Reports

Before drafting the report, the format, length, order and structure for the report should be carefully selected. The report may be in a preprinted format, letter, memo or manuscript.

The next important aspect for a report is to decide the correct approach-direct or indirect. The direct approach saves time and makes the report easier to understand by giving the main idea first. The indirect approach helps overcome resistance by withholding the main idea until the final stage of the report. Sometimes both the approaches are combined together. The conclusions and recommendations are revealed gradually along with the supporting details and evidences.

For the sake of proper organization, materials should be arranged in order of importance, sequence, chronology, spatial relationship, location or categories.

7.7 Composing Business Reports

Once the proper organizational structure of the report is decided, the next step is to compose the first draft. A final outline is prepared after reevaluating the information and the order in which it is to be presented.

While composing the business report, we should control our style and tone, select the best words, and create the effective sentences and paragraphs.

7.7.1 Drafting Business Report

The text of the report has three main sections-

- i) Introduction
- ii) Body
- iii) Closing.

Effective Introduction accomplishes four things :

- * Puts the report in a broader context by tying it to a problem or an assignment.
- * Introduces the subject or purpose of the report and indicates why the subject is important.
- * Previews the main ideas and order in which they will be covered.
- * Establishes the tone of the document and the writer's relationship with the audience.

The following topics are generally covered in the introduction of the report.

- i) Heading or Title.** It is essential that every report must contain the heading or title .
- ii) Address.** The report is to be addressed to the persons or superiors to whom the report is to be submitted.
- iii) Authorization.** When, how, and by whom the report was authorized, who wrote and when it was submitted.
- iv) Problem/ Purpose.** The reason for the existence of the report and what is to be accomplished as a result of the report.

- v) **Scope.** What is and what is not going to be covered in the report. The scope indicates the report's size and complexity.
- vi) **Background.** The historical conditions or factors that led up to the report. The background also enables the readers to understand how the problem developed and what has been done so far about it.
- vii) **Sources and method.** The primary and secondary sources of information that have been used for the report. This section explains how samples were selected, questionnaires were constructed. This section also develops the confidence of the readers in the work, the sources and methods used.
- viii) **Limitations.** Factors that are beyond the control of the author such as too small a budget or too short a period for conducting a research, unreliable and unavailable data, which may affect the quality of the report should be covered in this section.
- ix) **Report Organization.** The organization of the report (which topics are covered and in what order), along with a rationale: for following this plan, should be covered in this section.

Body of the Report. The body is the middle section in the report. It consists of the major divisions or chapters, that analyze, and interpret the information gathered during investigation. They also support the recommendations or conclusions discussed in the document.

Among the topics commonly covered in the body of the report are :

- * Explanations of a problem or opportunity.
- * Facts, statistical evidence and trends.
- * Results of studies or investigations.
- * Discussion and analyses of potential courses of action.
- * Advantages, disadvantage costs and benefits of a particular course of action.
- * Methods and approaches.
- * Conclusions and recommendations.
- * Supporting reasons for conclusions or recommendations.

Closing. The closing is the final section of a report. It has important functions.

- * Emphasizes the main points of the message.
- * Summarizes the benefits to the reader if the document suggests a change or some, other course of action.
- * Refers back to all the Pieces and reminds the readers how these pieces fit together.
- * Brings all the action points together in one place and gives the details about who should do what, when, where and how.

7.7.2 Report Content

The content and quality of the report depends on the depth of the thought process of the writer, his analysing capacity, how he draws conclusions and how he develops and supports his recommendations. To create a successful report the content should be.

- * **Accurate.** Information presented in a report must be factually true and free from error. Facts and references should be double checked.
- * To help the colleagues and the supervisors to take a decision, all the necessary information should be provided in the report.
- * **Balanced.** All sides of the issue should be fairly and equitably presented. All the relevant information should be adequately available in the report, so that the report does not get biased.
- * **Structured clearly and logically.** Clear sentence structure and good transitions are essential to make the report effective. There should not be any ambiguity either in the structure of the sentences or in the meaning of the words used in the report.
- * **Documented properly.** If primary and secondary sources have been used for the report, the same should be properly documented and acknowledged.

7.8 Completing Business Reports

It is very often quoted in business, that “some one has to be willing to go the extra mile to produce a good report” Mark Landiak. Going the extra mile means paying close attention to detail and proof reading carefully to ensure that the final product is as clear as it can be.

The process of writing a report does-not end with the first draft. Once the first draft has been finished three tasks line up for immediate attention - revising, producing and proof reading. In the revision process, we are to evaluate the organisation, style and tone of the report. The author of the report should further make sure that he has said what he wanted to say and in a logical manner. The readability of the report may also be improved by varying sentence lengths, keeping paragraphs short and adding headings and subheadings. The content of the report may be further revised to make it clear and concise.

7.8.1 Components of a Formal Report

A formal report’s manuscript format and impersonal tone convey an impression of professionalism. What sets it apart from other reports is its polish.

The three basic divisions of a formal report are

- * Prefatory parts
- * Text
- * Supplementary parts.

7.8.1a Prefatory parts.

Prefatory parts are front-end materials that provide Key preliminary information about the report. Many of these parts such as the table of contents, list of illustrations and executive summary - are easier to prepare after the text has been completed because they directly reflect the contents. Other parts can be prepared at any time. We may list prefatory parts of a formal report.

Cover. Many companies have standard covers for report made of heavy paper and imprinted with the name and logo of the company. Report titles are either printed on these covers or attached with gummed labels.

Title Fly and Title page. The report title should be informative but not too long. The title fly is a plain sheet of paper with only the title of the report on it. The title page includes the four blocks of 'information.

- 1) The title of the report.
- 2) The name, title and address of the person, group or organization that authorized the report.
- 3) The name, title and address of the person, group, organization that prepared the report.
- 4) The date on which the report was submitted.

Letter of Authorization. The Letter of authorization is a document and **Letter of Acceptance** requesting that a report be prepared. It also specifies the problem, scope, time and money restrictions, special instructions and due date. The letter of acceptance acknowledges the assignment to conduct the study and prepare the report. Letter of authorization is generally included in the report. The letter of acceptance is rarely included in reports.

Letter of Transmittal. The letter of transmittal conveys the report to the audience. If the audience is likely to be skeptical or even hostile to something in the report, the transmittal is a good opportunity to acknowledge their concern and explain how the report addresses the issues they care about. If the report does not have a synopsis, the

letter of transmittal may summarize the major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table of Contents. The table of contents indicates in outline form the coverage, sequence, and relative importance of the information in the report. The headings used in the text of the report are the basis for the table of contents. The table of contents is prepared after the other parts of the report have been typed, so that the beginning page number for each heading can be shown. The headings should be worded exactly as they are in the text of the report.

List of Illustrations. All visual aids in the reports are referred to as illustrations or exhibits. The list of illustrations gives their titles and page numbers.

Synopsis or Executive Summary. A synopsis is a brief overview of a report's most important points, designed to give readers a quick preview of the contents. The synopsis can be either informative or descriptive. In an informative synopsis the main points of the report are presented in the same order as in the text. A descriptive synopsis, on the other hand, simply tells what the report is about using only moderately greater detail than the table of contents.

7.8.1b Text of the report

Three main text parts of a report are (i) **Introduction**, (ii) **Body** and (iii) **Closing**.

Introduction. A good introduction helps the reader follow and comprehend the information that follows. It tells what the report is about, how the report is organized and why the audience should be concerned about the report.

Body. This section contains the information that supports the conclusions and recommendations as well as analysis, logic and interpretation of the information. Too much data and too much information tend to bore the audience. To avoid this, only essential information should be included in the body and the rest may be placed in an appendix.

Closing. Closing of the report would summarize the main idea of the report, highlight the conclusions and recommendations and list any courses of action that the reader should take.

7.8.1c Supplementary parts

Supplementary parts follow the text of the report and provide further information for interested readers. Supplements include the (i) appendixes, (ii) Bibliography and (iii) Index.

Appendixes. An appendix contains materials related to the report but not included in the text because they are too lengthy, or bulky or because they lack direct relevance. Sample questionnaires, cover letters, sample forms, financial statements, copies of important documents, are generally included in appendixes. Each type of material deserves a separate appendix. All appendixes should be mentioned in the text and listed in the table of contents.

Bibliography. The author of a report has an ethical and legal obligation to give other people credit for their work. A **bibliography** is a list of secondary sources consulted when preparing the report.

In addition to providing a bibliography some authors prefer to cite references in the report text. Mentioning the names of well known or important authorities on the subject helps build credibility for the message.

Index. An index is an alphabetical list of names, places, subjects mentioned in the report, along with the pages on which they occur.

Once when all the various components of the report have been assembled, the entire content has been revised, for clarity and conciseness and the document has been designed to please the readers, the report is in its final form:

At this stage, we are to review it thoroughly, looking for inconsistencies, errors and missing components. We should also proofread everything one last time. Types, spelling errors, mistakes in punctuation, visuals all should be proofread properly.

Once the formal report has been completed and sent to the audience/ concerned authority, wait for a feedback. If nothing comes within a week or two, ask for feedback and if there is any serious criticism, we should learn from the mistakes.

7.9 Sample Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

- 1) What is a Report?
- 2) How many types of report are there?
- 3) Define ordinary report.
- 4) What do you mean by special report?
- 5) What do you mean by privileged report?
- 6) What is unsolicited proposal?

- 7) Describe the formal work plan for a report.
- 8) What are the steps to be taken to ensure that the report is acceptable.
- 9) What are the features of an effective report content?
- 10) What are the basic divisions of a formal report?

Long Answer Type Questions

- 1) Discuss in detail the classification of business reports.
- 2) Prepare a business report on out sourcing of some of the activities in a business concern, with the help of three step writing process.
- 3) What are the things to be covered in the introductory part of a business report?
- 4) How to complete a business report?
- 5) Distinguish between Informational Reports and Analytical Reports. Describe different types of informational reports.
- 6) Describe analytical report. Describe two types of analytical reports and provide examples of each.
- 7) What is a proposal? Distinguish between internal proposals and external proposals.
- 8) Discuss “For reports, channel and medium selection choice depends not only on audience and purpose but also on classification.”
- 9) A proposal is both a selling tool and a contractual commitment.

Objective Type Questions

- 1) A business report is
 - (a) subjective document,
 - (b) comprehensive document,
 - (c) legal document,
 - (d) objective document, that serves a business purpose.
- 2) Routine reports are to be submitted
 - (a) monthly,
 - (b) quarterly,
 - (c) annually,
 - (d) as prescribed by the management.
- 3) RFP means
 - (a) Regular, fast, and progressive,

- (b) Request for permission,
 - (c) Request for proposal,
 - (d) Request for presentation.
- 4) Routine reports are generally submitted in
- (a) letter,
 - (b) pre-printed form,
 - (c) memo,
 - (d) manuscript.
- 5) Analytical reports may be organized around conclusions and recommendations, when the audience is-
- (a) receptive,
 - (b) internal,
 - (c) external,
 - (d) skeptical.
- 6) The executive summary of a report should be prepared-
- (a) before writing the report,
 - (b) after writing the report,
 - (c) simultaneously while writing the report.
- 7) The purpose of a report is mentioned in
- (a) the introduction,
 - (b) the body,
 - (c) closing part of a report.
- 8) Compliance reports explain what a company is doing to confirm to
- (a) standing instructions of the company,
 - (b) comments of the auditors,
 - (c) government regulations.

Unit 8 □ Oral Communication - presentation of reports, Public Speaking, negotiations

Structure

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8.0 Objectives

In this unit we shall be discussing different types of oral Communication as under:
What is oral Communication;

- Uses of oral Communication;
- Advantages and disadvantages of oral Communication;
- Three step oral presentation process;
- Mastering the art of delivery;
- Six Great helpers on public speaking;
- Seven steps to a successful public speaking exercise;
- Discussing salary and negotiations ;

8.1 Introduction

All the topics in this unit have one thing in common. Oral communication is the channel in these varied activities. This is the primitive and the most ancient mode of communication but till today it is considered as the best. type of communication. “Email and voice mail are efficient, but face-to-face contact is still essential to true communication”. Edward M. Hallowell.

Knowing the audience is the most important element in a communication and in oral communication, particularly in face-to-face communication this element is present throughout. We can understand our audience and personalize the message. We can get the first hand feel of their reaction and appeal to the most important issues in their, minds. “Economy of language is the real key to good communication” and in oral communicaiton”, that means choosing the best way of saying something to get the desired result”. Leanne Anderson.

8.2 Oral Communication

No organization can function without written communications of various kinds. But the greater percentage of information, instruction, ideas and suggestions etc. are communicated orally. It has been observed that managers spend around 60% to 80% of their work time in oral communication, with help of spoken words.

Oral communication may take place

- a) by face to face communication, and
- b) through mechanical devices :

Face to face communication

Under this channel, the speaker passes the required message to another person or group of persons through conversation. Under this system the person communicating can ask questions or explanation or sometimes when communication is not properly understood, he can clarify the message. Meeting, conferences, lectures and interviews are the important media of such communications.

Through Mechanical Devices

- a) **Telephone** is the widely used instrument for internal and external oral communication. In a big office, there are different departments with a number of telephone points and the different points are connected with some extensions. Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) and International Subscriber Dialing are further variations of telephonic communication.
- b) **Radio** : Radio is another form of oral communication where messages are transmitted through electro-magnetic waves. These waves may be short wave or medium wave in case of communication through radio.
- c) **Intercom System** : Intercome telephone system is a device of internal communication requiring no exchange. Multimode cable is used for the installation of such system. Direct extension lines from the main line are established by setting a rotary switch to the desired number. Any person of one department can speak directly to another person of his department or any other department.
- d) **Cellular phones or mobile phones** : It is the device of communicating messages from one place to another without cord. It incorporates all the features of an advanced pager and modern telephone set along with the antenna for wireless communication. It is being used profusely more so in transit covering a wide area.

Both the methods of oral communication are frequently used in organisations for downward

communications. The managers and supervisors make use of oral communication by instructing, advising, counselling and so on. The juniors and the subordinates also use oral communication for conveying their suggestions and grievances and feed back to the management.

8.2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of oral communication

Oral communication is generally possible when there is a direct contact and the message to be conveyed is not of permanent nature. The system has the following advantages

i) Close contact between the parties.

Oral communication is quite helpful to facilitate close contact between the parties, where they can exchange their feelings, ideas, facts and understanding.

ii) Quick and prompt transmission.

It has very high degree of potentiality for speedy and complete interchange of information. It provides the opportunity to both the transmitter and receiver of the message to respond directly.

iii) Appraisal of subordinate's action.

It enables the superior to make a quick appraisal of subordinate's action and reaction to any message transmitted. This helps the superior to minimise and avert conflicts, reschedule plans and programmes as and when needed.

iv) Acting as a motivating factor.

As the oral communication establishes a direct contact, it inculcates among the subordinates a sense of self-importance. This motivates the subordinates.

v) Personal touch in the communication.

The personal touch in the communication has a good effect on the subordinates and they easily comprehend the communication properly.

vi) Forming a co-operative team spirit.

This type of communication can easily form a friendly and co-operative team spirit.

Despite these advantages, oral communication suffers from some deficiencies as well. These are as follows :

i) Not a permanent record of communication.

This type of communication is not permanently recorded. In the process, it may lose its effectiveness.

ii) **Lack of understanding.**

The spoken words may not be clearly heard and understood. This may lead to misunderstanding.

iii) **Not suitable for lengthy communication.**

Oral communication is not suitable for lengthy communication. It is not taken seriously by the receiver and the basic objective of communication gets lost.

iv) **Time consuming**

Sometimes, it becomes time consuming specially for those meetings and conferences where nothing comes out concrete, after various deliberations.

v) **Not suitable for all cases**

This type of communication is considered to be not adequate where specific performance of policies and compliance of rules is needed.

vi) **Incapacity of the subordinates to follow**

The subordinates who are not experienced, can not follow the facial expression, and the tone of manager's voice.

vii) **Incapacity of the superiors to communicate effectively**

All the superiors/managers are not equipped with effective communicational skill.

Their articulation, conceptualization, arrangements of ideas and delivery may not be that much impressive, resulting in poor and incomplete communication.

8.3 Three step oral presentation process

Regardless of the variety of reports, oral presentation would be more effective, if we follow three-step process :

- 1) Planning the presentation
- 2) Writing the presentation
- 3) Completing the presentation

8.3.1 Planning oral Presentation

Planning oral presentation of the report is much like planning any other business message. It requires analyzing the purpose and the audience, investigating necessary information, and adapting the message for the occasion and audience. When the report is being presented orally, we are to remember that the presentation is a one time event; the audience can not leaf back through printed pages to review something mentioned earlier. So we must

capture the attention of the audience immediately and keep them interested. Otherwise we will lose them, and the chances of getting them back are bleak.

The four basic purposes for giving a presentation are i) to inform ii) to persuade iii) to motivate and iv) to entertain.

The purpose of the oral presentation will govern the content of the report and the style of the presentation.

To make the presentation more effective, the first essential is to know who are the members of the audience and what they need. By determining audience size and composition, predicting the audience's probable reaction and by gauging the audience's level of understanding we may effectively gear the content, organization-and style of the oral presentation.

8.3.2 Writing Oral presentation

In the case of oral presentation, we need not write the report word for word. But interesting and intelligent speaking about a report deserves more work and more time than preparing a written document.

8.3.2.1 Organizing Oral presentation

Every facet of organizing oral presentation is driven by our knowledge about the audience. This focus on audience will help us define the main idea, limit the scope, choose the approach, prepare the outline and decide. on the most effective style for the presentation.

8.3.2.1a. Define the main idea

The idea points out how the audience can be benefited from the presentation. This should be an abridged and to the point generalization that links the subject and purpose of the report to the audience's frame of reference. The audience must be convinced that the 'main idea' would be beneficial to them.

8.3.2.1b. Limiting the scope

Effective presentations not only focus on the audience's need but also tailor the materials to the time. allowed. So oral presentation should fit the time allotted. For a simple, easily accepted report, 10 minutes may be enough. On the other hand if the report is complex or audience is skeptical, we will probably need more time. The guideline is do not squeeze a complex presentation into too brief period, and do not spend time more that necessary on a simple presentation.

8.3.2.1c. Choosing the correct approach

The approach may be direct or indirect according to the purpose of the presentation. If the report involves routine information, we may opt for direct approach, if on the other

hand report involves persuasion for accepting some proposal or the report is advance information about some impending disturbance we may use indirect approach. Even in a short presentation there should be an introduction to arouse interest and to give a preview of what is to come. In the body of the presentation, the presenter is to explain the who, what, when, where, why and how of the subject. In the final paragraph the points made should be reviewed. The presentation is to be closed with a statement that will help the audience to remember the subject of the report. Lengthy formal reports require longer presentation. If the purpose is to motivate or inform, direct approach is preferable. The structure of the presentation is to be based. on the importance of the subject along with sequence, chronology, spatial orientation, geography or category.

If the purpose is to analyze, persuade or collaborate, the presentation is to be organized around conclusion and recommendation of the report. Approach is to be direct when the audience is receptive; if resistance is expected, it is better to opt for indirect order.

Regardless of the length of the presentation, the simplicity of organization is especially valuable in oral presentation. So a clear, direct organization is to be used in the presentation to accomodate listeners' limitation.

To keep the audience's attention, we should include in our presentation only the most useful, interesting and relevant supporting evidence.

8.3.2.1d. Preparation of the outline

A carefully prepared outline is more than just the starting point for composing a presentation. It helps the author to stay on task. The outline helps to make sure that the presentation accomplishes its purpose by keeping the presentation audience concerned and within the allotted time.

8.3.2.1e. Deciding on an appropriate style

Style is an important element in the preparation of a presentation. The size of the audience, the subject of the presentation (the report), the purpose of the report, the budget for the presentation and the time available for preparation and presentation, influence. the style.

If the presentation is before a small group, we can use a casual style which encourage audience participation. The tone may be conversational. Audience may be invited to give comments.

On the other hand, of large audience is to be addressed the report is a very important special one, we should prefer to establish a more formal atmosphere. A formal style is well suited to present report on merger, acquisition, new products, financial results etc.

Irrespective of the style of presentations, we should always choose our words very carefully. If we try to impress our audience with opscure and unfamiliar vocabuiary the purpose of the presentation will be lost. So we should, by all means, keep the things simple.

8.3.2.2 Developing oral presentation of a Report

Developing oral presentation is much like writing a formal report, with one important difference, adjusting the technique to an oral communication channel, which presents both opportunities and challenge. The major opportunity lies in the interaction between the speaker and the audience. Instead of simply expressing the ideas developed in the report, we can draw ideas from the audience and then reach a mutually acceptable conclusion. Another opportunity is to use nonverbal cues supplied by the audience to reinforce the message of the report. Audiences will receive much richer stimuli during a speech than they can while reading a report.

The major challenge of using an oral communication is being able to control what happens during presentation. As we develop each part of the presentation, we will have to think about how to deliver the information. Moreover, because listeners can not refer back and forth to what has been or will be said, it is the additional responsibility of the presenter to help them stay on track.

To cope up with shift in topic, because of a comment from some one in the audience, we should develop each part of the oral presentation; the introduction, body and close, very consciously and intelligently.

Introduction

In the first few minutes of our presentation, we should build up a solid introduction, which should arouse audience's interest in the topic, and capture their attention. The introduction should also inspire confidence in the speaker and preview the contents of the presentation.

Body

The bulk of the presentation is devoted to a discussion *of* three or four main points in the outline. While discussing these points our objectives should be to make sure that the organization of the presentation is clear and the presentation holds the attention of the audience. By using clear transitions between sentences and paragraphs, as well as between major sections, we can help the audience to follow the presentation.

To hold the attention of the audience we may follow the following tips.

- i) Relate the subject to the needs of the audience;
- ii) Anticipate questions from the audience;
- iii) Use clear, vivid language;
- iv) Explain the relationship between the subject and familiar ideas;

Close

The close of a presentation should leave a strong and lasting impression. Before closing we should summarize the main idea, and restate the main points.

Some presentations require the audience to reach a decision or agree to take specific action. In such cases, we should be certain that everyone agrees on the outcome and understands what should happen next.

Finally while closing, remarks should be encouraging and memorable. Alternatively, we may end with a question or a statement that will leave the audience thinking.

8.3.3 Completing Oral Presentation

To complete oral presentation, we need to evaluate the content of the message and edit the remarks for clarity and conciseness. We may also need to develop aids for presentation and co-ordinate them with delivery. Besides these tasks, four additional areas require special attention. Mastering the art of delivery, preparing to speak, overcoming anxiety, and handling questions responsively.

8.3.3.1 Mastering the Art of Delivery

Once the presentation has been planned and written, we are to begin practising delivery. There are variety of delivery methods to choose from.

a) Memorizing

Unless some body is a trained actor, it is better avoiding memorizing as it may expose the speaker to some embarrassments. However, memorizing a quotation, an opening paragraph or a few concluding remarks can bolster confidence and strengthen delivery.

b) Reading

For delivering a technical or complex presentation reading out the presentation is ok. However if the speech is to be read, it should be properly practiced to maintain eye contact with the audience.

c) Speaking from notes

Making a presentation with the help of an outline note cards or visual aids is probably the most effective and easiest delivery mode. This provides the material to refer to and still allows for eye contact and interaction with the audience.

d) Impromptur Speaking

Sometimes we are required to give an imprompt or unrehearsed speech, if we are called to speak unexpectedly or we have not prepared our remarks, in time. It is better to avoid

speaking unprepared, unless the presenter has talked on that topic countless times or he is an extremely good speaker.

Regardless of the mode of delivery, to present a report, the speaker should be well conversant with the subject. Practice makes perfect, so any presentation should be well practiced to make it effective.

8.3.3.2 Preparing to speak

Apart from knowing the material and practicing delivery, confidence is to be built up with the information that the location is ready and all the infrastructural facilities are available. These may be further checked up and rearranged according to individual's need.

8.3.3.3 Overcoming Anxiety

The initial anxiety associated with oral presentation of a report, can be overcome by concentrating on the listeners and on their needs, rather than focussing on the speaker's own self. More confidence, will be gained by using eye contact, posture, gestures, and voice to convey an aura of mastery and keep audience's attention.

8.3.3.4 Handling Questions Responsively

The question - and - answer period one of the most important parts of an oral presentation. Questions give a chance to obtain important information, emphasize main idea and supporting points. It also helps build enthusiasm for presenter's point of view.

However if the report presented is unpopular and unwelcome, we should be ready for hostile questions, treating them as legitimate requests for information.

To maintain control during the question - and answer period, effective speakers use the following strategies to maintain control

- i) Use body language to emphasize the fact that the speaker is listening to the questioner;
- ii) Keep the answers short and to the point;
- iii) Maintain control by stating some ground rules in the beginning of the question - and - answer session;
- iv) Respond unemotionally to tough questions without getting into an argument;
- v) Help audience members ask questions;

8.3.3.5 To conclude presentation of report

When the time allotted for presentation is up, we should call a halt even if the people are eager to continue. After the "one more question" has been replied, we should summarize the main idea of the presentation and thank people for their attention. We are to conclude

the way we open the presentation : by looking around and making eye contact with the audience. Finally we are to gather the notes and leave the podium, shoulders straight and head up.

8.4 Public speaking

The importance of business communication has all the more increased with the passage of time, as the society is becoming more and more complex and the businesses are getting global. Organisations are operating at trans national level. The need of dealings with peoples of different cultures and languages is going up.

With the expanding economics, businesses are being conducted on larger scale.

There is a substantial change in management from autocratic to participative. This necessitates proper communication between the workers and the management.

With the growing aspirations of work force and its awareness, keeping the workers motivated and talking to them about the different activities in the organisation has been an important task of management.

Finally modern business has been recognised as a social institution. It has to deal with different segments of society in different capacities, such as share holders, customers, suppliers, trade unions, foreign delegates, association of business associates, academic organization, press, government etc. Against this back ground, public speaking has assumed unprecedented importance. Effective public speaking is now a competitive edge for a business organization.

8.4.1 Attitude towards Public Speaking

Speaking before the public is an opportunity provided to the speaker to express his point of view. For some, one of the easiest things in the world is to stand in front of a group of people and to talk. Others may look scared and be ready to rush for cover at the sight of an audience. This difference lies primarily in the attitude towards public speaking. If the speaker can do away with the initial fear and nervousness and move on the assumption that speaking and interacting is enjoyable, the whole floor would unfold before him.

Making presentations in front of a large gathering is not that difficult if the following few factors are kept in mind.

Positive attitude

The attitude towards the situation and the audience should be positive. He should develop affinity and fancy for this performing art. He should emerge as an assertive communicator whose thought process should be positive and it should be evidenced through his body

sport and oral presentation.

Instilling enthusiasm

The speaker should try to instil interest and enthusiasm in the audience by sharing information in an open manner. This is a step by step procedure in which the speaker opens up, shares and asks for feed back further information. As greater interaction is sought with the audience, the level of enthusiasm and participation increases and the presentation is accepted with greater open-mindedness and decreased resistance.

You are the expert

Another important factor to keep in mind by the speaker is he is an expert in this area. This attitudinal change should be reflected in the presentation as it enhances skills and increases the level of confidence.

Empathise with the audience

Knowing the audience and understanding their needs help empathising with the audience. Once this happens, the speaker is accepted by the audience and speaking to them turns out to be a smooth exercise.

8.4.2 Exercising control over three domains

For successful handling of an audience a presentation requires excelling in exercising control over three domains :

- 1) The material to be presented
- 2) The self
- 3) The audience

8.4.2.1 Preparation of the material

The first stage is the preparation of the material. There is absolutely no harm in preparing more material than what is thought to be necessary. Once the materials are prepared, it should be properly organised - what should come first, what should follow next, and so on and so forth in accordance with the needs of the audience and the proposed structure of the presentation. At this stage the speaker is to differentiate between the **objective of a presentation and the assignment itself**. The objective of the presentation is to deliver the topic in such a manner that the principal idea and relevant issues are clearly comprehensible to the audience. The assignment on the other hand is to make a presentation in a convincing fashion. To meet both these objectives there should be a session of personal brain storming.

8.4.2.2 Self Control

Once the matter to be presented is ready the second stage is to exercise self-control. The speaker may feel nervous at the thought of making a presentation. The following techniques can help the speaker to be more confident.

‡ **Rehearse**

The more familiar the speaker is with his material, the less panic will feel.

‡ **Think positively**

The speaker, should see him as polished and professional, the audience will also think so.

‡ **Visualize success**

The speaker should. convince himself that he is on and he is ready to achieve success.

‡ **Take a few deep breaths**

Before beginning to speak, remember that audience is silently wishing you success.

‡ **Be ready**

Wish the audience. Have the first sentence memorized and on the tip of the tongue.

‡ **Be comfortable**

If the throat is dry, drink some water.

‡ **Don't panic**

If you feel that you are losing audience during the speech, try to pull them back by involving action, ask for their opinion or pause for questions.

‡ **Keep going**

Things usually go better as the speaker goes on. Self control may be further developed by

- a) maintaining steady eye-contact with the audience;
- b) keeping the feet firmly planted on the ground;
- c) Keeping the shoulders back and straight;

8.4.2.3 Control of the audience

The last stage is. taking control of the audience.

In this stage we are to find out the needs and requirements of the audience so as to make the message clear, simple and acceptable. The language used should be close to the

participants. Using big words or jargons alienates them. When anecdotes are narrated or examples cited, the ones closed to their heart will have more appeal.

Next comes the stage when we are to devise strategies for capturing the attention of the audience. There are five tips for making presentation and communicating successfully with the audience.

1. **Speak slowly and distinctly**, articulating every word carefully. Emphasize consonants for clarity, and pause frequently so that the audience will have time to absorb key point.
2. **Repeat keywords and phrases** when audiences are less familiar with the speaker's language, they need to hear important information more than once.
3. **Aim for clarity, Keep** the message simple. Eliminate complex sentence structure, abbreviations and acronyms. Stay away from cultural idioms.
4. **Communicate with body language.** Establish a relationship with the audience through strong eye contact. And forget to smile!
5. **Support the oral message with visual aids.** For most audiences, visual messages support and clarify spoken words. Handouts, flip charts, overheads, and electronic slides help describe key points. Avoid confusion about quantities by presenting numbers in graphs or piecharts.

Variety in the manner of presentation of material by incorporating variations in the pitch and the volume is also important.

The correct use of pause creates long lasting impact. Pauses at correct junctures give the audience time to think and absorb all that is being said.

8.4.2.4 Question Answer Techniques

Can also be used to control the audience. This would be most effective if employed at the end of each key area and before the summary. This procedure, to a great extent, helps in clarifying doubts, if any, in the minds of the audience.

8.4.3 Six great Helpers

To enhance the skill in public speaking, we may secure the help of the six great helpers

- a) Why
- b) Who
- c) Where
- d) When
- e) What
- f) How

a) Why?

The purpose of presentation must be clear to the speaker. Is it to inform, to persuade to influence, to educate, to empathise, to entertain, or to sympathise? Only when the purpose is known, all the relevant ideas and thoughts may be listed. Sorting or prioritising them in order of importance or manner of presentation can be done at a subsequent stage. As a next step the speaker should attempt to guess the reaction of the listener. What is the speaker going to achieve through an effective and efficient transmission of the message? Is it a change of attitude or belief or an increase in knowledge?

b) Who?

Who is my audience? Knowledge about the audience goes a long way in meeting communication demands. The personality, education, age, status, knowledge, level of the audience help deciding the format, the tone and the manner of presentation. What would be the reaction of the select audience to the message? The answer to this question should be prior to commencing the presentation.

c&d) Where and When?

These imply the place and the context. The format and tone of the message should change in accordance with the place where it is going to be delivered. The place determines whether the message should be formal and precise or casual and informal. The context of the delivery of the message has also a role in effectively organizing the content of the message, particularly in the introductory part of the speech.

e) What?

This obviously focuses on the subject matter of the message. What exactly the speaker is required to communicate and what is the need to do so? The answer to these questions can be determined by studying the profile of the audience. Sufficient information about the audience enables the speaker to discern between the essential and the redundant areas of the material to be presented. The expectation of the audience and the probable questions should also be studied while determining the what of the speech.

f) How?

How to achieve the right effect? To what purpose can we use the five W'S so as to secure the undivided expectation of the speaker. The effect can be achieved by the tone and medium of the delivery. Proper organisation of the theme - the main point followed by subsidiary points and relevant evidences, impressive introduction and memorable closing would leave a lasting impression in the mind of the audience. Proper use of words and proper selection and application of visual aids also help effective transmission of the message.

8.4.4 Seven steps to a successful public speaking exercise

There are seven basic steps which need to be kept in the mind at the time of making a public speech. An excellent speech is to be preceded by extra ordinary preparation. Proper attention at all the preparatory stages would definitely result in excellent presentation of a meticulously conceived message.

a) Decide upon the objective

What it is that the speaker is going to achieve at the end of the presentation? The objective should be crystal clear. The speaker should not move away from the mainpoint. Any movement round the mainpoint should be with the idea of emphasizing the mainpoint.

b) Manner of Presentation

It should be decided by the speaker how best to achieve his objective. Whether he should go for a formal or nonformal presentation. The profile of the participants and the place of presentation would help determine the manner of presentation.

c) Mode of presentation

A strategy needs to be chalked out for a satisfactory rendering of the topic. The manoeuvres are going to vary with a change in the manner of presentation. Presentation should be such that the participants at no stage feel that the speaker is an alien in their midst or that he has something to say with which they are not comfortable. In both the cases, the attempt should be to convincingly present the points and bring about a change in the attitude of the receivers towards the issues being discussed.

d) Preparation of Script

The most tedious and arduous task in the preparatory stage of a speech is the preparation of the script. The speaker may be flushing with all the ideas and points well stored up in the mind but they need to be given a proper format so that there is greater acceptance by the audience. The speaker should decide whether he should have a direct or indirect approach. If the audience is receptive, direct approach is preferable, in the case of a skeptical or hostile audience it is desirable to shift to indirect approach. The points in the scripts should be on cue cards for reference to the speaker.

e) Preparation of visual aids, handouts and feedback forms

It is always better to prepare visual aids much in advance of the presentation. This will save the speaker from rushing through the entire procedure. As visual aids are used as supports to the presentation, errors in the same are sure to leave a poor impact in the minds of the audience. The transparencies should be prepared neatly with no over writing or spelling errors. The materials should be well spaced and written in capitals on block

letters so that the listeners from different directions can properly decipher the contents. The written material on the transparency should be readout to the audience.

Handouts should be prepared meticulously and carefully. These should be given to the participants prior to commencing the session so that they can come prepared at the presentation with focussed queries. Handouts pass on and on from the participants in the presentation, to their friends and colleagues. The speaker should take this aspect into consideration and ensure that he does not miss remote recognition. The quality of the presentation plus the handouts, to a great extent, determine the acceptance of the speaker by the audience.

Feedback forms

In the case of regular, structured sessions feed back forms should be prepared well in advance so that they can be handed over. to the participants at the end of the presentation. Points which need to be elaborated in the feed back form are :

- a) Information about the audience,
- b) Level of acceptance of the speaker,
- c) Scope for improvement,
- d) Inadequacies if any, in the presentation,
- e) Expectation from the presentation,
- f) To what extent they were met,
- g) Gain from the session
- h) Scope for further inferaction
- i) Grading of the speaker on various parameters such as, delivery, ideas, use of the visual aids, handling the group, empathy, listening etc.
- j) Suggestions, if any.

f) Rehearse

Making presentation is not simple. It is extremely important to realise the sanctity of rehearsing to improve the quality of public speaking. The more we rehearse, the better will be our performance before the audience. The culmination point of the preparatory stage is the rehearsal.

g) Presentation

The final stage in an exercise of public speaking is· presentation of the topic. The speaker should be extremely careful. about the introduction and conclusion. The attention of the

audience is to be captured right at the start by making the opening impressive and inspiring. If we miss the opportunity at that stage, it will be difficult to get back the audience with you.

To gain the lost ground, some strategies may be adopted e.g. Quiz, music or game. These are commonly known as “ice-breakers”. Through these manoeuvres the initial hesitation on the part of participants may be done away with and they are likely to warm up for the session.

The **conclusion** is also equally important very often the presenter gets carried away by the audience and their responses. Little does he realise that the time is up and he has to wind up his presentation. In such situation, there could be an emergency stop, which may not be appreciated. The speaker should keep in mind the fact that the conclusion is his show. So he should keep the time factor in mind and reserve the last ten or fifteen minutes for summarising the whole presentation and taking the leave of the audience.

8.5 Negotiations

Negotiations start while discussing salary, after an offer is received during the interview. As a candidate you will naturally want to discuss salary. It is ideal to be realistic in your salary expectations and diplomatic in your negotiations. However let the interviewer raise the subject. If asked about your salary requirements, say that you would expect to receive the standard salary for the job in question. If you have added qualifications and some experience, you would expect to start in the middle of normal salary range. For getting an idea of the salary structure in the kind of job you are getting, you may find the details in the internet, before coming for the interview.

When to negotiate

If you are happy with the salary offer, negotiation does not arise. But when you do not like the offer, you might try to negotiate, provided you are in a good bargaining position and the organization has the flexibility to accommodate you. You will be in a fairly strong position if your skills are in short supply and you have several other offers. It also helps if you are the favourite candidate and the organization is booming. However many organizations are relatively rigid in their salary practices, particularly at the entry level. When you are not sure about the approach of the organization, it is perfectly acceptable to ask. ‘It there any room for negotiation’.

What to negotiate

Even if you can not bargain for more money you may be able to win some concessions on benefits and perquisites. Negotiating benefits may be one way to get more value

from an employment package. The value of negotiating can be significant because benefits often cost the employer 25 to 45 per cent of the salary. However, do not enquire about benefits, until you know you have a job offer.

8.6 Sample Questions

Sample Questions Short answer type questions

- 1) What are the different mechanical devices of oral presentation?
- 2) What is face to face communication?
- 3) What is three-step oral presentation?
- 4) What are the four basic purposes of giving presentation?
- 5) What do you understand by limiting the scope of oral presentation?
- 6) How do you prepare outline of oral presentation?
- 7) What are the factors that decide the appropriate style of oral presentation?
- 8) What are the different methods of oral delivery?
- 9) How anxiety in oral presentation may be avoided?
- 10) How to make question and answer session lively?

Long answer type questions

- 1) “Knowing the audience is the most important element in communication” discuss.
- 2) “Economy of language is the real key to good communication” Discuss.
- 3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of oral communication?
- 4) How do you organize oral presentation?
- 5) What are the factors that determine the correct approach in oral presentation?
- 6) How to develop oral presentation of a report?
- 7) Why public speaking is gaining so much importance?
- 8) What is public speaking? How best you can handle audience during a public speaking exercise.
- 9) Discuss the role of six Great Helpers in enhancing skill in public speaking.
- 10) Describe the seven steps to a successful public speaking exercise.
- 11) What is negotiation? When to negotiate? Is there any option to negotiate on salary?

Objective type questions

- 1) Oral communication is not suitable for a) formal b) informal c) lengthy d) diagonal communication.
- 2) The basic purposes of communication are a) four b) many c) ten d) five.
- 3) The main idea in oral presentation points out how a) the presenter b) the public in general c) a section of the society d) audience will be benefitted by the presentation.
- 4) If the presentation is before a small group, we should use a) formal b) Official c) Casual d) combined approach.
- 5) The major challenge of making an oral presentation is being able to control a) the language b) the audience c) what happens during presentation d) hostile questions.
- 6) Oral presentation has got a) four b) three c) ten d) five parts.

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