

ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Basic Introduction

Meaning and Definition of Communication

The word 'communication' has been derived from Latin word '**communis**' or '**communicare**' which means to '**to make something common**' or 'to share'. In brief, communication can be called an act of transferring ideas, facts, messages, requests, orders, etc. between two or more persons. It has been defined as under:

According to Pauley and Riordan,

"Communication is the act of transmitting an idea from one person to another. Communication always requires at least two people, the sender of the message and the receiver."

According to **Keith Davis**, "Communication is the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another. It is a way of reaching other with facts, ideas, thoughts and values."

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

Newman and Summer

"Communication is the sum of all things which a person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding." - **Locus A. Allen**

To conclude, it can be said that communication is the process of sharing information or ideas so that organizational objectives may be achieved.

Characteristics of Communication

1. Unavoidable
2. Two-way process
3. Social process
4. Continuous process
5. Universal process
6. Managerial function

Language as a tool / Medium of Communication

Language is the most common medium of communication. Most of our communication takes place through words although we can communicate without the help of language. Language is central to our nature as human being. A little baby cries when he is hungry or he slaps his mother when he is angry. In both the above examples communication takes place without the use of language. But man needs language since he has found ideas to express. It is language which distinguishes man from animal world. It is an important tool for socialization for brotherhood round the globe. People of different castes and creed and of different nationality can share their views with one- another if they know one another's language.

PURPOSE/FUNCTIONS/OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

Function of business communication may broadly be divided into two parts:

1. Internal function
2. External function

I. Internal Objectives or Functions of Communication

- To provide information to Management: Business communication is to provide all important facts and information to management regarding business. It helps them in taking appropriate business decisions.
- To provide information to Employees: Business communication conveys the feelings, attitude, orders and decisions of management to employees. It helps in creating harmonious business environment.
- Co-ordinates: Communication helps in establishing effective co-ordination among different department's activities and employees. It helps in creating mutual faith and trust.
- To Improve Morale: Communication helps employees in realizing their rights, duties, place and role. It keeps them informed about business policies and decisions. It helps in efficiency as well.

II. External Functions of Business Communication

- To Maintain Relation with Suppliers: Communication helps in communicating orders, requirement, problems and complaints to suppliers. It helps in getting goods and services regularly.
- To Maintain Relations with Customers: Communication helps in maintaining and developing relation with customers. It helps in increasing sales and profit.
- Base of Advertisement: Communication is the base of advertisement. It helps in developing and increasing the image of product and enterprise.
- Reports to Owners and Other Parties: Communication provides all relevant information to owner, banks, government authorities and economic world.

In brief, main objectives/ functions of communication in business are: exchange of information, persuasion, counseling, co-ordination, transmission.

MODES /Forms/ Media of Communication

There are two forms of communication:

- a) Verbal or Oral
- b) Non-verbal

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Meaning of 'Verbal' or Oral Communication

The term 'verbal' means **use of words**. In the process of verbal communication, the sender and receiver exchange their messages either through face to face communication or some mechanical device. It may take place in different ways such as personal talks, telephone talks, interviews, seminars, public speeches, letter, messages, whatsapp, emails etc.

Levels of verbal Communication

- 1. Face to Face Communication:** It is the first and most common level of verbal communication. In this form, both the receivers and sender of message are face to face with each other. Exchange of messages is done with the help of oral words.
- 2. Use of Device:** In this form of verbal communication, the sender of message uses some mechanical or electrical device such as telephone, mobile, internet, etc. Both the sender and receiver of message complete their communication on the spot.

Channels of Verbal Communication

- 1. Face to Face Discussion:** It is the simplest and most effective form/medium of verbal communication. In this form, both the sender and receiver of message exchange their views and ideas through face to face with each other.
- 2. Meeting and Conferences:** In this form, a meeting is called of all persons concerned with the issue. The issues are discussed and on the spot decision are taken.
- 3. Speeches:** When the person to be addressed on an issue, are in large number, communication may take place in the form of speech. In business, chairman may speak to shareholders, supervisor may speak to workers, leader may speak to followers, etc.
- 4. Training and Refresher Courses:** In this form of verbal communication, newly appointed employees are trained for their work. Old employees are trained through refresher courses so that they may come to know the modern and latest techniques.

5. Interviews: This form of communication is very common at the time of selection of new employees. Candidates seeking for the job are called for personal interview. Their ability and skill is tested through interviews.

6. Telephone and Internet: If the receiver and sender of message are living at different places, the best way of oral communication is to talk on telephone and internet. Both the parties complete their communication and get their doubts clear.

7. Radio and Television: Different information is conveyed to listeners through radio and television also. In business, it is growing as the most popular media of advertisement.

8. Grapevine: Grapevine means informal communication from one person to another, another to many others and so on. It takes place generally with regards to unofficial information.

Advantages of Verbal or Oral Communication

1. Saves Time: Verbal communication is the most popular form of communication because it takes no time. It helps in quick decision making.

2. Saves Money: Verbal communication is very economic. In face to face communication no expenses are involved. Communication through telephone or internet is also very economic.

3. Personal Touch: Verbal communication is very effective because of personal touch. Both the sides can understand each other fully and clearly being face to face.

4. Effective Communication: Verbal communication is very effective. It carries more weight in some cases because words are more effective than letters.

5. Flexibility: Oral communication is quite flexible because it can be changed according to situation. Flow of language, style of presentation and mode of instructions can be changed according to need and circumstances.

6. Participative Management: Oral communication promotes participative management. All person concerned with an issue are invited to discuss it and take appropriate decision.

7. Democratic Leadership: Oral communication promotes democratic leadership. Supervisor and manager can encourage and inspire their subordinates.

8. Delegation of Authority: Oral communication is helpful in the delegation of authority. Executives may delegate their authority to their subordinates and may inspire them to accept the challenge.

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Disadvantages or Limitations of Verbal Communication

- 1. Presence of both Parties:** Oral communication is possible only when both the parties are present. If receiver is not available, possibility of verbal communication is lost.
- 2. Not suitable for Lengthy Messages:** Oral communication is only suitable when the message is short because it is very difficult to remember and recall long messages.
- 3. Lack of Proof:** An important limitation of verbal communication is that there is no proof of communication. Either party may change it. Therefore, it cannot be used for future reference.
- 4. Possibility of Misinterpretation:** In oral communication there is possibility of misinterpretation. Either party may present the fact in twisted form.

b) NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Meaning of Non-Verbal communication

The term 'non-verbal' means '**without words**'. Thus, non-verbal communication is the communication in which no word is used. The person, who wants to communicate some messages to another, uses his expression (body language). The other person (receiver) visualizes as to what the first person is trying to communicate. There are two effective ways of non-verbal communication:

- (i) Use of some signals such as traffic lights, pictographs, sirens, telephone rings etc.*
- (ii) Use of some signals such as nodding or shaking the head, gritting the teeth, raising eyebrows, pointing thumb or figure, raising hand, smiling, glaring, clapping, etc. Non-verbal communication is known as gestural communication also.*

Advantages of Non - verbal communication

- 1. Reliability:** An important advantage of non-verbal communication is its reliability. It is easy to understand the emotions and feelings of speakers by his facial expressions. Body language speaks more than words.
- 2. Economic:** Non-verbal communication is most economical. It involves no expenditure.
- 3. Personal Influence:** It is quite effective because it carries personal influence of speaker also.
- 4. Quickness:** It is the quickest form of communication. Since, both the sender and receiver are in front of each other, it takes no time.
- 5. Accurate Understanding:** It is easy to understand and interpret the message in this form of communication. Body language speaks the attitude and intentions more accurately. It helps in developing better understanding.

Disadvantages of Non - verbal communication

- 1. Lack of Secrecy:** It is difficult to maintain secrecy in this form of communication because expressions or gestures are seen by other person also.
- 2. Possibility of Misunderstanding:** If the receiver fails to understand the message, it may create misunderstanding between the parties.
- 3. Necessity of Physical Presence:** Non-verbal communication can be possible only if both the parties are present facing each other. It cannot be used if they are at different places.
- 4. Lack of Proof:** An important disadvantage of Non- verbal communication is that there is no written proof of the message. It may create a lot of problems in case of future disputes.
- 5. Not Suitable for Past Events:** It is suitable only for the present and not for the past events and ideas.
- 6. Suitable Only for Brief Message:** It is suitable only if the message is brief.

There are various effective ways of non-verbal communication:

Sign Language: Sign language, as the name suggests, is the language in which different signs are used to convey different meanings. It uses some signals such as traffic lights, pictographs, sirens, telephone rings, etc.

Kinesics/Body Language: Kinesics is the study of the body's physical movements. Body language is a form of non-verbal communication in which messages are transmitted through the movements of different parts of the body. It includes gestures, postures, facial expressions and eye contact.

Gestures: Gestures means the physical movements of different parts of the body like hands, arms, legs, torso and head etc. Gestures express our emotions, feelings, anger, happiness, etc.

Postures: It means the different ways of standing, sitting and lying. The position of hands and legs and other parts of the body convey our confidence, dependence, interest, attention, status, etc.

Facial Expression: 'Face is said to be the mirror of heart'. Facial expressions are the most important features of body language. We look at the face of a person to determine his feelings and emotions. We try to read facial expressions to determine whether person is happy, sad, serious, nervous and confident.

Oculesics/Eye-gaze: Oculesics is the study of eye movements. 'Eyes are said to be the windows of soul'. It provides information about the feelings, honesty, attentiveness and competence of a person. It includes different eye movements such as blinking the eyes, making the eyes, raising eye-brows, staring and gazing.

Para Linguistics: Para linguistics refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. It is the study that focuses on how you say not only what you say. It includes pitch, tone, rate of speech, loudness, softness, etc.

Proxemics: Proxemics is the study of how people use the physical space around them and what this use says about them. People often put an invisible boundary between themselves and others. By observing the physical distance between two individuals, one can judge the relationship between them.

Haptics: Haptics is the study of touching as non-verbal communication. It includes handshakes, holding hands, back slapping, a pat on the shoulder, fidgeting, etc. These behaviours are referred to as 'adaptors' and may send messages that reveal the intentions or feelings of a communicator.

Appearance: It is also the major factors in the development of our personality. Our choice of colour, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors affecting appearance are also considered a means of non-verbal communication. Appearance can also alter physiological reactions, judgment, and interpretation.

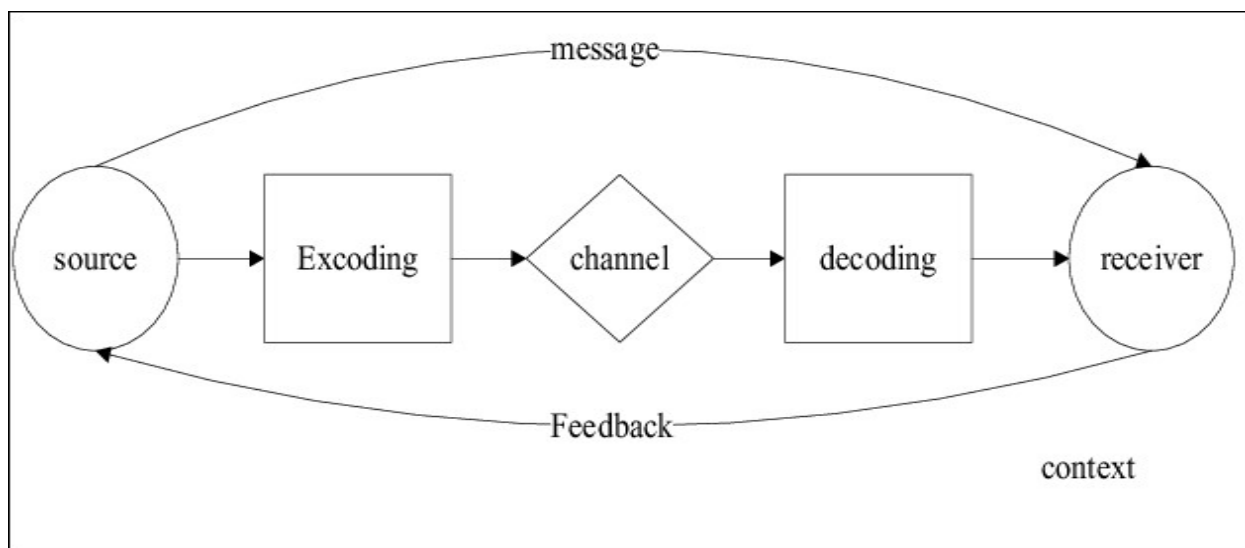
PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a process of **transmitting information** from one person to another. Communication process is the way through which a message is transmitted and responded. It is through the communication process that the sharing of a common meaning between a sender and a receiver takes place. It starts from the origin of information and ends with the response of message.

Elements of Communication Process or Main Concepts of Communication Process

Communication is a two-way process which can be divided into several elements. Some basic elements are mentioned below:

- 1. Idea (source):** Every message begins with an idea. The sender (source) conceives an idea and wants to share it with others. The sender is known as a source of information.
- 2. Encoding:** The sender encodes the idea. Encoding means giving a clear shape to an idea and converting it into a language or symbol.
- 3. Transmission/Channel:** Channel means the way or medium by which a message is transmitted. It may be verbal, non-verbal or written.
- 4. Receiver:** The receiver is the person or group for whom the communication effort is intended. The receiver gets the message from sender.
- 5. Decoding:** The receiver now decodes the message. Decoding is the process by which the receiver interprets the message and translates it into meaningful information.
- 6. Feedback:** The transmission of receiver's response is called feedback. Communication process comes to an end with feedback because it enables the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of message.



As the figure illustrates, the communication process is completed in six phases and is repeated until both parties have finished expressing themselves.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Meaning and Definition

Success of an individual or an enterprise depends upon effective communication and not only upon communication. Communication can be effective only if it helps in achieving organizational objectives. It can be effective only if it is clear, precise and complete. It should be free from obstacles and complete with feedback from the receiver. It has been defined as under.

“Effective communication is a process by which information is transmitted between individuals and organizations with the purpose to inform, to request or persuade and to build goodwill. It is clear, complete, and correct and saves the reader's time and helps in achieving its goals. - K.O. Locker

To conclude, effective communication is the communication which is clear, complete and reliable. Message of communication is precisely followed by the receiver and then action is resorted accordingly.

Importance of Communication

Importance of effective communication may summarize as follows:

Importance to Individuals:

Communication helps an individual in -

- 1) Expressing oneself
- 2) Satisfying one's needs
- 3) Building human relations
- 4) Career advancement

Importance to Organizations:

Communication plays a pivotal role in an organization whether it is a human enterprise, an industry or an academic institution.

- 1) Lifeblood of Management:** Effective communication is as important to management and administration as blood is to body. It is the base of all managerial functions. Planning, organizing, motivating, directing, coordinating, decision-making and controlling can be effective only with the support of effective communication.
- 2) Efficient Functioning:** Effective communication helps in efficient functioning of an organization. Through communication, a manager can explain himself to his subordinates and understand their problems, suggestion, feelings, etc. In the absence of communication, employees feel alienated and unwanted.
- 3) Stimulates Initiative and Creativity:** Group action or teamwork is not possible without communication. A two-way communication system stimulates initiative and creativity among the subordinates. Through communication subordinates are encouraged to find new solutions and implement them in efficient way.
- 4) Developing Human Relations:** Effective communication helps in developing and maintaining effective human relations in the organization. It develops a feeling of dignity and self-respect among all employees. It integrates people and encourages them to put their best efforts. This all helps in achieving organizational objectives.
- 5) Avoid Illusion:** Illusion is the great enemy of communication. An efficient system of communication aims at removing illusion and misunderstanding by communicating facts and figures.
- 6) Maximum Production at Minimum Cost:** Effective communication develops congenial atmosphere in the enterprise. It minimizes the possibility of strike, lockout and industrial unrest. It helps in maintaining harmonious relations between labour and management. This all leads to higher efficiency and better utilization of resources. It makes maximum production possible at minimum cost.
- 7) Promotion of Industrial Peace:** Effective communication is the base of industrial peace. It conveys order and directives of management to workers and problem and suggestions of worker to management. It minimizes the possibility of misinterpretation between the two. It provides a platform of dialogue between the two. This all leads to industrial peace.
- 8. Contacts with External Parties:** It helps in developing contact with external parties such as customer, association, other manufacturers, advertisers etc. It helps in getting acquainted with economic development at regional, national and international level.

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PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

7 C's/ principles of communication are: completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness.

1) Completeness: Business communication should be completed. It should include all the required facts and opinions. It should include all those things that are asked and that are important in clarifying once message. Following three elements should be included in business message:

- I) All necessary information
- II) Answer to all questions
- III) Other necessary information

2. Conciseness: Conciseness means saying something in brief. It should explain everything in minimum possible words. Following three conditions should be satisfied:

- I) Wordy expression should be avoided. Instead, brief notices should be used.
- II) Only the relevant material should be given. Irrelevant material should be avoided.
- III) Repetition of sentences, words and phrases should be avoided.

3) Consideration: It means transmitting a message keeping the receiver in the mind. The message should focus on 'you' instead of 'I' and 'we'. The Message should show interest in the receiver. Reader's benefit should be personalized and emphasized. Similarly positive and pleasant facts should be emphasized. The message should reflect the integrity and honesty of sender.

4) Concreteness: It means using specific, definite, clear, and vivid information. Thus, the message should not be vague and general. Following points should be observed:

- i) Specific facts and figures should be used.
- ii) Reliable statistics should be used to support the message.
- iii) Comparative information, if available, should be used.
- iv) Message should be direct, explicit and specific.
- v) Active verbs should be used in place of passive verbs.

5) Clarity: It means simplicity. The message should be so clear that it may be understood with the little effort. It can be achieved in following two ways:

- i) **Use of Concrete, Precise and Familiar Language:** Simple and easy language should be used in business messages. Every word of message should convey its sense. Language of message should be familiar to audience and appropriate to situation. Technical terms should not be used as far as possible. Short sentence makes the message clear. Words should be arranged correctly so that it may express intended meaning clearly.

ii) Use of Effective Sentence and Paragraph: Message should be divided into paragraphs so that different issues may be given in different paragraphs. Main idea of sentences and paragraph must be very clear.

6) Courtesy: It means politeness. It grows out of respect and good behavior. Following points should be observed for a courteous communication:

- I) The message should be respectful, thoughtful and appreciative.
- II) The message should give equal treatment to all, irrespective of gender, race, status, income, etc.
- III) The messages should show respect and concern for others.

7) Correctness: The message should be correct in all respect following points should be observed:

- i) Proper grammar, punctuation and effective language should be used
- ii) Accurate facts and figures should be given.
- iii) The message should be checked and rechecked to ensure its correctness.

Conclusion: Knowing the 7C's and using them, will help you to become a better communicator; the principles for these 7 criteria for good communication are core principles of effective communication.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Communication Barriers

Communication barriers are the obstacles arising in communication process. These barriers may arise at any stage of communication process i.e., while the message is developed, transmitted, received or interpreted. These barriers may damage the message in many ways. Sometimes the damage is so serious that the message loses its original form and sense.

Types of Communication Barriers

Communication barriers may be classified into following parts:

1) Physical or Mechanical Barriers

These are the barriers which are caused by faulty physical and mechanical conditions these may be as under:

- i) Noise:** Communication process may get disturbed due to the presence of noise. It may be human noise, traffic noise, noise of machines, noise due to faulty telephones and electric lines, noise due to people coming and going etc.
- ii) Mental Disturbances:** Sometimes psychological disturbance may also cause physical barriers in communication. These may be mental tension, ego clash, tiredness, worry, headache etc.

iii) Time Barriers: Sometimes time may also become a barrier in communication process. It arises when sender and receiver of a message are living at different places.

iv) Distance Barriers: Distance between the sender and receiver is also a barrier in communication. Telephone and internet facilities are not available at every place; postal services are not very effective.

v) Other Barriers: Poor lightning, mechanical fault in the channel of communication, excessive messages etc. also cause problems in the way of communication.

2) Semantic or Language Barriers

The term '**semantic**' means a study of signs. Semantic barriers are the barriers related to language. Difficulties in the use, expression and understanding of language create such barriers as under:

i) Use of Technical Words: People working in technical, administrative, medical and judiciary groups use technical language. If the sender and receiver of a message belong to different fields, use of such language creates communication barriers. (jargon)

ii) Uses of idioms and Phrases: People of literary taste, use idioms and phrases in their communication to make it decorative and interesting. If the receiver is unable to understand their meaning, it causes a communication barrier.

iii) Use of Denotative and Connotative Words: The words that indicate neither positivity nor negativity are called denotative. Ex: pen, book, telephone, office etc. The words that indicate either positivity or negativity are called connotative words. Ex: intelligent, dull, honest, dishonest, expensive, cheap etc. Some are the words that have both, positive and negative meanings. Use of such words causes communication barriers.

iv) Wrong Assumption: Sometimes sender assumes that receiver knows basic facts of this information and therefore, it is enough to tell him only the latest developments. If this assumption is wrong, communication fails to serve the purpose.

v) Other Barriers: Use of words having multiple meaning and wrong interpretation of message also create communication barriers.

3) Organizational or Status Barriers

Organizational structure affects the capability and efficiency of employees in a significant manner. If it is faulty it creates number of barriers in communication as under:

i) Faulty Policies and Rules: Ambiguous policies and rules may create a number of communication barriers. Similarly, strict discipline may also cause communication barriers. It is what makes informal communication more popular.

ii) Status Relationship: If there is formal division of work and status, effectiveness of communication may suffer particularly if a message is to move from bottom to top. It is so because there is lurking fear in the mind of workers and employees that communication maybe faulty.

iii) Long Scalar Chain: More the number of managerial levels in an organization, more difficult communication it will be. Number of managerial levels are barriers in communication.

iv) Lack of Organizational Facilities: If proper and sufficient organizational facilities like stationery, telephones, office equipment's, office furniture etc. are not available effective communication may not be possible.

4) Psychological/Perceptual Barriers

If the **mental condition** of sender or receiver or both is not favorable communication cannot be effective. Important emotional barriers are as under:

i) Behavior and Attitude: Every person has different behavior and attitude. If the behavior and attitude of sender are different from that of receiver, communication cannot be effective.

ii) Emotions: Effectiveness of communication is affected by the nature and emotions of both the sender and receiver of message. If the sender or receiver is angry, tensed, excited or afraid, communication cannot be effective.

iii) Status Consciousness: Organizational position and status also affect communication. Senior managers do not like to discuss the things with their subordinates.

iv) Poor Retention: Scientific studies have established that there is a limit of retention of information. About 30% is lost in every transfer of information. Some people can remember about 80% of the facts whereas; other can remember only about 30% facts. It causes a major barrier in effective communication.

v) Other Barriers: If the receiver is having an evaluation in his mind about the message, it causes a hindrance in the exchange of information.

5) Personal Barriers

These are the barriers which are directly related with the sender and receiver. These may relate to superiors or subordinates as under:

i) Attitude of Supervisors: If superior have positive attitude, communication may be effective but if they have negative attitude, communication will be ineffective. Sometimes, superiors do not want to convey the fact to subordinates.

ii) Lack of Confidence: If superiors feel that their subordinates are not capable and efficient, they would ignore the information or suggestions sent by their subordinates.

iii) Unwillingness to Communicate: If the superior and subordinates are not willing to communicate with each other, effective communication cannot be possible. It may be so because of the fear that a particular message will be against their interest.

iv) Lack of Attention: If superiors and subordinates are not paying proper attention to the messages, communication cannot be effective.

Suggestions to Remove Communication Barriers

Following measures should be adopted to make Communication effective:

- 1) Purposeful Communication:** Communication should always be purposeful. Why do you want to communicate and what response do you expect from your audience, should be decided well in advance?
- 2) Use of Seven C's:** Seven C's should be used to make the communication effective. These are: completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness.
- 3) Continuous Process:** Communication is a continuous process so there should be no break in this process.
- 4) Adequate Facilities:** There should be adequate facilities in this organization to make communication effective. Channel of communication should be modern and free from problems. Facilities of stationary, telephone, internet, translator etc. should be made available.
- 5) Mutual Understanding:** An important requisite of effective communication is that both the sender and receiver should have complete faith in one another. They should realize that their individual objectives can be served only when they work together for organizational objectives.
- 6) Appropriate Language:** Language of communication should be appropriate keeping in view the standard and status of receiver, need of the message and organizational setup.
- 7) Proper Medium and Transmission Technique:** Communication can be effective only if it reaches the receiver in its original form and at proper time. Therefore, the technique of transmission should be adopted carefully.
- 8) Emphasizing Key Points:** Key points of message should be emphasized and made clear to the receiver. Charts diagrams, maps and graphs may also be used, if the need be. In case of oral communication, body and voice may be used to emphasize these points.
- 9) Eliminate Environmental Barriers:** Communication can be effective when it is free from environmental barriers. It should be free from noises. Adequate lightning and instrumental facilities should be made available.
- 10) Facilitates Feedback:** Communication can be effective if it is properly responded. It should encourage people to be open minded and to speak. Let the receiver come to know the purpose of message and give their reactions.

FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Listening is a whole range of other aspects of communication. macro functions of communications per changing exam pattern, in question statements, there is increasing use of technical words. Thus, we need to discuss some functions. The macro functions of communication are listed below.

1. **Emotive function:** To communicate the inner state of mind and emotions. For example, Oh My God! Oh no!

2. **Directive function:** This function seeks to affect the behaviour of others. For example, Fetch me a glass of water, please.

3. **Phatic function:** This is to open the channel of communication or checking that it is working. For example, Hello, is it Ram? or can you hear me, Mrs Girdhar? This function establishes, acknowledges or reinforces social relations

4. **Poetic function:** This refers to the aesthetic function of language and focuses on 'the messages own sake'. Thus, it is basically the essence of the message. For example, euphony (pleasantness of sounds in speech and pronunciation) is an application of this function. This poetic function of language can be used when one says 'Asoka the Great', instead of 'the great Asoka', which essentially has the same meaning.

5. **Referential function:** Referential function refers to any message that is constructed to convey information.

6. **Metalinguistic function:** This function focuses attention on the code of language itself. When language is used to speak about language, for example in grammar or a dictionary, the metalingual function has been employed. Metalinguistic activity may be unconscious. For example, 'The use of both will or shall is correct in modern usage.'

7. **Contextuai function:** It facilitates the creation of a particular kind of context. It sets the tone. For example, Right! Let's start the meeting now.

8. **Heuristic function:** Here, we use language to gain knowledge, learn and explore the environment. A child uses language to learn. This may be in the form of questions and answers or the kind of running commentary that frequently accompanies children's play.

In addition, there can be some more functions.

1. Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a word, the 'dictionary definition'. For example, if you look up the word snake in a dictionary, you will discover that one of its denotative meanings is 'any of numerous scaly, legless, sometimes venomous reptiles, having a long, tapering, cylindrical body and found in most tropical and temperate regions.'

2. Connotation, on the other hand, refers to the associations that are connected to a certain word or the emotional suggestions related to that word. The connotative meanings of a word exist together with the denotative meanings. The connotations for the word snake could include evil or danger.

Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills: What Are They?

Which skill is more important in your career: hard skills or soft skills?

To be successful in any role, you need a combination of relevant hard skills and soft skills. Every job requires **a certain set of both hard skills and soft skills**, and every person has their own unique set of skills. When it comes to finding the right career, you need to match the skills you have with a position's required skills.

In this UNIT of skills we'll discuss everything you need to know, including:

- ✓ The definitions of hard skills and soft skills
- ✓ Why hard skills and soft skills are both important
- ✓ How to develop hard skills and soft skills
- ✓ Where to find hard skills and soft skills in a job description
- ✓ How to feature hard skills and soft skills on a resume and in an interview

What Is The Difference Between Hard Skills And Soft Skills?

To put it simply, the main differences between hard skills and soft skills are how you obtain them and how you apply them in the workplace.

Hard skills are usually obtained through **hands-on experience or education**. On the other hand, **soft skills** are more akin to **personality traits** that you have naturally developed throughout your life. For example, a hard skill would be coding. No one is born with the instinct to code. Rather, it has to be learned over time, usually through some type of schooling, education, courses, [upskilling](#), or other skill development program. Certain hard skills will often be a **prerequisite for a job**. Again, look at the example of coding. This skill is very important if you're a developer or web designer. However, coding is less important if you're an administrative assistant or project manager.

Soft skills, however, are more interpersonal than technical. They're sometimes [known as durable skills](#). For example, an example of some soft skills would be [time management](#) and relationship-building. Soft skills are typically something that you find yourself naturally good at, without having to learn it through education or hands-on training. However, you can still improve your soft skills, just as you can improve your hard skills. Soft skills are necessary for most jobs. Look at the examples of time management and relationship-building. Developers, administrative assistants, project managers, and web designers all need some level of relationship building. But some of these roles require it more than others on a day-to-day basis.

One of the **main differences** between hard skills and soft skills is **hard skills are easier to quantify** than soft skills. But both are important to developing yourself professionally. When you understand the difference between hard skills and soft skills, then you can determine which skills to [highlight on your resume](#) or in an interview.

What Are Hard Skills?

Hard skills, or technical skills, are learned through education or **hands-on experience**. These are concrete, measurable abilities that are often specific to a job. You can **demonstrate your proficiency** in hard skills **through relevant certifications, portfolios, skill assessment tests**, and completed work. Different professions will require different criteria for expertise.

For some professions, like lawyers and doctors, you need advanced degrees and rigorous testing to prove your hard skills. For other professions, like web developers or copywriters, you can learn the skills on your own or on the job, and you can prove your hard skills with a portfolio of work.

While certain **hard skills will absolutely be mandatory for many jobs**—medical training is rigorous for a reason—other hard skills might be negotiable. Don't be afraid to apply for a position that matches your overall passion and expertise, even if you're missing a few hard skills. Point out your related hard skills, your ability to learn quickly, and your willingness to do any training to learn the required hard skill. (The willingness to learn hard skills—and doing it quickly—is actually a great soft skill!) For example, if you have used other programs for video-editing and graphic design, but not Adobe Creative Suite, you can explain how your existing hard skills will help you learn the new programs quickly.

Examples Of Hard Skills

Here is a short list of examples of hard skills:

- Speaking foreign languages
- Experience with Adobe Creative Suite
- Healthcare-related certifications or licenses
- Ability to work with different programming languages (JavaScript, etc.)
- Website development
- Content development
- Working with certain machinery
- Coding
- Copywriting
- Copyediting
- Budgeting
- Statistical and data analysis
- User interface (UI) design
- Experience with certain platforms or software

This list only contains a few examples of hard skills, as there are a wide variety of skills that pertain to all different industries and job functions.

What Are Soft Skills?

Now that you understand hard skills, what about soft skills?

Soft skills, or people skills, are traits and abilities that you develop throughout your entire life. Soft skills speak to *how* and *why* you are motivated to do certain things. They speak directly to your personality. These interpersonal skills are difficult to define or to measure, but they're still valuable in the workplace.

Examples Of Soft Skills

- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Adaptability
- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Organization
- Willingness to learn
- Leadership
- Dependability
- Work ethic
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Decision-making

While this list of examples doesn't cover every soft skill that you may have, it's a solid starting place when considering what you may put on your resume or discuss in an interview.

What Skills Are Employers Looking For?

Employers are looking for a combination of hard skills and soft skills as they assess candidates. As already shown through various examples, the exact skills you need depend on the job and the industry. For some jobs, strong soft skills can make up for a lack in a recommended hard skill. But if you identify there's a gap between your hard and soft skills and the job description of the job you want, how do you develop these skills?

How To Develop Hard Skills

Taking the time to learn a new technical skill can help you stand out from other job seekers. A few ways to develop hard skills include:

- Sign up for continuing education classes
- Follow tutorials on YouTube
- Attend a workshop
- Apply the new skill to a personal project, learning through trial and error
- Get coached by a mentor or teammate

Even if you're employed but are actively looking for a new job, you can take advantage of classes, webinars, and workshops offered by your current employer.

How To Develop Soft Skills

Improving your soft skills is not as straightforward, but you can still do it.

First, you need to know which soft skills you want to develop. **Perform an honest self-assessment.** You can also ask for feedback from your boss, colleagues, family, and friends. For example, if you're frequently late to work, or you tend to miss deadlines, then you might need to develop time management. If you're interested in a promotion, then you might need to develop leadership skills.

Once you know which soft skills you want to develop, **then it's time to start working on them.** Some soft skills you can develop through learning.

To develop time management, you might first watch a webinar on productivity, and then apply each tip. To develop leadership skills, you might spearhead a new project at work or request more responsibility in your volunteer role. These skills can take a long time to develop as you unlearn old habits and learn new ones.

How Do You Use Hard Skills And Soft Skills On Your Resume?

Hard Skills On A Resume

As for your hard skills, you can create a section on your resume titled "Skills" and list out all relevant skills to the job you're applying to.

For example, it could look something like:

SKILLS

Copywriting | Copyediting | Proofreading | Adobe Creative Cloud | Video-Editing | DSLR Film

Don't feel like you have to list every single skill you have. Leave room to discuss your skillset in the interview, in your cover letter, or within the experience part of your resume.

Soft Skills On A Resume

As for soft skills, you will want to detail these in a sentence form within the bullet points you have under each job experience.

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For everything that you did in your past experiences, you can usually detail a soft skill that enabled you to be successful.

For example:

- *Used effective communication skills and leadership abilities to work with multiple stakeholders in the company to produce web and video content that aligned with each of their visions and deadlines.*

When choosing which soft skills to include on your cover letter and resume, look back to the job description. While some soft skills will be listed in the Skills/Qualifications section, you might find others throughout the entire job description. Look for any requirements that relate to what motivates you or how you work with other people.

In addition, your cover letter is the place to demonstrate your soft skills. Explain the *why* and the *how* behind your top career accomplishments.

Overall, refer back to the job description to assess which skills to emphasize. And keep these skills in mind while [prepping for your interview](#).

How Showcase Soft And Hard Skills In An Interview?

Once you get to the interview phase, you can showcase your soft and hard skills to hiring managers. Showing up on time (and even early) for an interview showcases time management. Asking questions about the company and goals of the role shows your willingness to learn. Responding to real-life scenarios with unique but specific answers can show your problem-solving and critical thinking.

Hard skills can be a little more difficult to showcase when talking to another person, but managers may ask you [complete skills assessments](#) before and after the conversation.

Hard Skills Vs. Soft Skills: They Both Matter

What are soft skills and hard skills?

Soft skills are those skills that come **naturally and uniquely** to everyone. These include leadership, effective communication, teamwork, time management, motivation and adaptability.

On the other hand, **hard skills** are those that are **gained through hands-on experience**, training, or education. Hard skills include things like accounting, Microsoft Excel, typing, copywriting, or computer programming.

When applying for jobs, it's important to read through all the details in the job description so you can decide what's important to include in your list of hard skills vs. soft skills.

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Crafting Excellence

How To Read An Online Job Advertisement

An accurate reading and understanding of an online job advertisement is essential for preparing your job application.

An online jobs site may have a short advertisement to attract your attention, with a link to a longer advertisement. The longer advertisement may still not provide all the information you need, particularly for public sector jobs.

Here are ten critical details to note when reading an online job advertisement.

1. Name of the organization

This will alert you to the type of organization you are dealing with (eg public or private sector, community organization). Advertisements may give you brief information about what the organization does. For more detailed information you must read the full job or role description and visit the organization's website. This information will help you to tailor your application to the context of the job.

2. Sub-unit and location

Large organizations can be made up of divisions, branches, units and sub-sections. Many websites provide an organizational chart. It's useful to know where the job fits within the organization as well as its geographic location.

3. Job type and status

This information identifies whether the role is permanent or fixed-term, and whether it is full-time, part-time or temporary.

4. Salary

Salary, particularly in the public sector, can be related to a classification level. The classification identifies where a job fits in the organization's hierarchy. Each level has a salary range. External applicants may be expected to start at the bottom of the range.

5. Duties and accountabilities

The advertisement may summarize the main duties of the role or give a short paragraph describing the scope of the role. To fully understand what a job involves you must read the full job or role description. This document may give further details including role purpose, key accountabilities, challenges, relationships, decision-making and reporting lines.

6. Selection criteria

Online advertisements may not list the relevant selection criteria. This information will be found in the full job or role description. For public sector roles it is essential to locate the selection criteria as they form the basis of your application. Failing to respond to the criteria may mean failing to progress to an interview.

7. How to apply

A trap for applicants is to assume what form an application takes. This may not be clear in the online advertisement. You need to find the instructions about how to apply so you know if there are word limits,

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and if you need to write a cover letter, responses to selection criteria, or a two-page statement of suitability.

8. Eligibility

Eligibility requirements apply to government jobs. Commonwealth agencies usually state Australian citizenship as a requirement. Other jurisdictions allow applications from permanent residents or may have no citizenship requirements.

Advertisements may specify other requirements or checks (eg criminal history check, working with children check, a security clearance) that will be completed before appointment.

9. Position/inquiries contact

When a contact person is identified in the advertisement it is useful to talk to them to find out more about the job. This additional information will help inform your application.

10. Submitting an application and closing date

Most applications are submitted via an online mechanism. Look for information about accepted document formats. Note the closing date. Organizations may state that late applications will not be accepted. If you find yourself short of time for good reason, contact the relevant person to see if an extension can be negotiated.

Tips for completing job application forms

Some employers will ask you to complete job application forms. Most application forms are completed online. However, some employers, such as supermarkets, may ask you to fill out a printed form and hand it in to them. Whether you complete an online or paper form, these nine tips will help you present your skills and experience in the best way.

1. Prepare

Have your **resume** and any other information you'll need with you.
Find somewhere quiet to fill in the form.
Read all instructions and questions carefully before you start to write.

2. Take the time to do it right

Complete a draft form first. When ready to complete the actual form, write neatly in black or blue pen, spell things right and avoid crossing out. If you are filling in the form online, use a spell check if available. Otherwise write your answers in a word processing program. Check your spelling and grammar, and paste the answers into the form. It's a great idea to get someone else to check and correct your draft.

3. Follow all instructions

- ✓ Answer all the questions. Don't leave any blank spaces. If you don't understand a question, ask how
- ✓ they want it answered. Use 'N/A' (not applicable) if the question doesn't relate to you – this shows that you didn't overlook anything.
- ✓ Use block letters where the form asks you to.
- ✓ Don't write in sections that say 'Do not write below this line' or 'Office use only'.
- ✓ If there isn't enough space on the form for all your information, attach a separate sheet to the form.
- ✓ Don't try to cram everything into the space provided. But remember that the employer has allowed space for the amount they want to read. Can you cut some words from your answer without losing important information?
- ✓ Don't write 'Please refer to resume'. Employers want to compare applicants using the form. Include a resume only if the employer asks for it.
- ✓ Enter a keyword or use the filters

4. What should you include?

Include details and experience that you think relate to the role you are applying for. Make sure that the information you give is:

- accurate
- brief and clear
- interesting to read
- truthful (false information can become a basis for dismissal)
- put in a positive way.

Think about each question. Why is it in the form? What does the employer want to find out by asking it?

Use action words (verbs) to describe what you've done in previous jobs.

5. Signing a declaration

A declaration on an application or registration form is a formal statement that you are expected to sign. By signing it you declare that the information you've provided on the form is true and you agree to any terms of employment the employer sets.

It is very important that you understand the declaration before you sign it. Ask about the pay award and any special conditions you will be working under. If details of these are attached to the form, read them before signing.

Make sure that all the information you've given and statements you've made are true and correct before you sign the declaration.

6. Know your rights

Some declarations ask you to allow the employer or agency to contact other organizations for more information about you. You have the right to find out who they will contact what information they will be looking for.

If the declaration says that you agree to follow certain company policies, ask for details about what the policies are before you sign.

If you have questions about the declaration, don't sign it. Ask politely for an explanation or more information, and only sign when you're happy that you understand and agree to everything.

7. Make a final check and send it in

- Make sure it's clear which job you're applying for.
- Check you've answered all the questions.
- If the form is double-sided, make sure you haven't missed a page.
- Check that all the dates you've entered are correct.
- Check for spelling mistakes.
- Make sure you have signed the form, if required.
- Photocopy or print a copy to keep.
- Send the form so that it will arrive before the deadline.

8. Special requirements

Employers may require specific licences or certificates. Examples include:

- Current driver licence
- First Aid certificate
- Working with Children Check (these vary from state to state)
- .

9. Beware of fake and misleading job advertisements

If it sounds too good to be true, then it usually is. Employers do not advertise high-paying jobs with big benefits for people with little or no experience on notes posted to lampposts, in the classifieds in local newspapers or online.

Writing an Effective Resume

Resume Writing

A resume is a document that you—the jobseeker—uses to promote your skills, abilities, and knowledge to a potential employer. It uses your past experiences and accomplishments to position you for future opportunities.

From an employer's perspective, resumes are used to identify qualified candidates to invite to an interview. Resumes do not generate job offers, but well written resumes do facilitate interviews. They are a marketing tool. The resume is important, but just one of several steps that make up a successful job search.

Things to know before you get started:

- Your resume will be among a stack of resumes that will be viewed for no more than 30 seconds.
- Applicant tracking systems scan resumes for keywords that match the company's job descriptions. Use words in your resume that match the job description. If the keywords/skills are missing, your resume may be rejected.
- Don't be vague, you need to do more than simply list functions you had at a previous job. What did you accomplish? What problem did you solve? (see accomplishment worksheet)
- Don't lie or embellish the truth (employers will check your references)
- Rules of the English language are forgotten
 - Avoid first person pronouns "I" "Me" or "We"
 - Keep sentences short. Sentence fragments are acceptable.
- Assemble all personal and factual information before you construct your resume.
- Work on your resume one section at a time.
- Use a dictionary or thesaurus to avoid repetitive wording.

ABOUT FORMAT

Choose a standard font (Times New Roman, Ariel, Helvetica)

Keep the font size between 10-12 pt.

(10 pt. is only recommended to keep to one page)

Resume should be 1 page- every line is valuable real estate

Print resume on 24 LB Bond paper (white or cream)

Components of a good resume:

Personal Information

Your name, address, city, state, cell phone number and email address should be highly visible, centered at the top of the page. *Note: E-mail address and cell phone voicemail must be professional.

Objective (optional)

Not all employers require an objective. An objective identifies which position you are seeking. Place an objective on your resume when you are applying for a specific position.

Highlights of Qualifications

The qualifications section delivers an impact at the top of your resume – it's your first impression. The qualification statements should match your skills to the target job description. You want the employers to read the summary and say "we have to meet this person." Information in this section must be customized to fit each position you apply for. Place most important words first since the scanner may be limited in the number of words it reads. List hard skills not soft skills (see skills sheet).

Experience

Use separate headings for Internship and Work experience List in reverse chronological order, specifying employer name, city and state, job title, and dates of employment. Use action verbs (see sheet) to describe your tasks, hi-lighting your accomplishments and skills (review accomplishment sheet) and relating these to individual job requirements. If you have not completed an internship, you may consider adding a section titled "Career Related Experience".

Education

List all collegiate experiences (degree received) in reverse chronological order. Include school name, city and state, degree, anticipated graduation date, majors, minors, GPA (optional). You may also list relevant course work, Dean's List, and scholarships. Study abroad would also be listed under this section using the same format.

Activities

Employers have indicated that involvement in extracurricular activities demonstrates leadership, time management and organizational skills. The following is a list of activities that can be included in this section: organizations/associations, volunteerism, community involvement, and athletic teams, (if you have held a leadership position, be sure to include this with the activity). You may choose to have a leadership section if you have several experiences.

References

"Reference available upon request," can be omitted. It is understood that you will supply references. Create a separate reference page and bring it with you to the interview. Include the reference name, title, organization/company name, business address, phone number, and email of each reference. Include only those persons who have agreed to serve as a reference for you. List all your personal information at the top of this page.

SKILLS IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Explaining
Listening
Persuading
Speaking
Teaching
Writing

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Prioritizing
Planning
Managing time
Budgeting

JUDGMENT SKILLS

Appraising
Editing
Evaluating
Reviewing
Examining

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Administering
Coordinating
Deciding
Delegating
Initiating
Managing
Supervising

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Investigating
Researching
Observing
Locating
Trouble shooting

CREATIVE SKILLS

Inventing
Designing
Entertaining
Innovating
Displaying

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Advising
Cooperating
Confronting
Group facilitating
Interviewing
Negotiating
Researching

MAINTENANCE SKILLS

Compiling
Handling details
Setting up
Updating
Carry out requests

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Conceptualizing
Analyzing
Classifying
Questioning

(Adapted from Quick Job Hunting Map-The Beginning Version, by Richard N. Bolles and Victoria B. Zenof)

ACTION WORDS

Accelerated	Closed	Developed	Explained	Inventoried	Pinpointed	Reviewed
Accomplished	Coached	Devised	Facilitated	Lectured	Placed	Revised
Achieved	Collected	Diagnosed	Fired	Led	Planned	Scheduled
Acquired	Compiled	Directed	Formulated	Lobbied	Posted	Screened
Adapted	Completed	Discovered	Found	Logged	Presented	Selected
Adjusted	Conceived	Dispatched	Founded	Made	Processed	Simplified
Administered	Conducted	Displayed	Generated	Maintained	Produced	Sold
Advertised	Consolidated	Distributed	Guided	Managed	Programmed	Solved
Advised	Constructed	Documented	Headed	Manufactured	Promoted	Steered
Analyzed	Contacted	Earned	Hired	Mastered	Proposed	Streamlined
Appraised	Controlled	Edited	Identified	Modified	Provided	Studied
Approved	Coordinated	Elicited	Implemented	Monitored	Purchased	Suggested
Arranged	Copyrighted	Eliminated	Improved	Motivated	Recognized	Supervised
Assembled	Corresponded	Engineered	Increased	Negotiated	Recommended	Supplied
Assisted	Counseled	Enhanced	Influenced	Obtained	Reduced	Taught
Audited	Created	Enlarged	Initiated	Operated	Referred	Tested
Augmented	Cultivated	Established	Inspected	Ordered	Reinforced	Trained
Authored	Debugged	Estimated	Installed	Organized	Reorganized	Transcribed
Balanced	Decreased	Evaluated	Instituted	Originated	Repaired	Translated
Budgeted	Delivered	Examined	Instructed	Packaged	Replaced	Utilized
Built	Designated	Executed	Interpreted	Patented	Reported	Vended
Calculated	Designed	Expanded	Interviewed	Performed	Represented	Wrote
Catalogued	Determined	Expedited	Invented	Persuaded	Restored	

Accomplishments Worksheet

The best measurement of the future is to show what you have accomplished in the past. Hiring professionals already know what the job duties are; your resume should highlight your accomplishments in that position.

As you evaluate your past experiences, work or otherwise, consider the following:

1. Try to list accomplishments that are specific and measurable.
2. Quantify whenever possible. (Examples: Increased sales by 50 percent over the previous year; Built a customer base of 150, the largest in the firm's customer-service team.
3. Use superlatives and "firsts." Use words such as "first," "only," "best," "most," and "highest."
4. Consider the "so-what factor." For every accomplishment you list, ask yourself, "so what?" Does the item you've listed truly characterize your abilities and your potential for contributing to your next employer's success?



A series of **brainstorming questions** are asked below to consider when evaluating experiences from your work history. Respond to as many of the questions as you can for each job.

- ◆What special things did you do to set yourself apart? How did you do the job better than anyone else did or than anyone else could have done?
- ◆What did you do to make this job your own? How did you take the initiative? How did you go above and beyond what was asked of you in your job description?
- ◆What special things did you do to impress your boss so that you might be promoted? And were you promoted? Rapid and/or frequent promotions can be especially noteworthy.
- ◆List any awards you won, such as Employee of the Month, President's Club?
- ◆What are you most proud of in this job?
- ◆What tangible evidence do you have of accomplishments -- publications you've produced, products you've developed, software applications you've written?
- ◆How did you contribute to operational efficiency in this job, such as through cost reduction percentages? How did you help this employer or a part of the organization to save money, save time, or make work easier?
- ◆How did you contribute to productivity, such as through successfully motivating your team?
- ◆How did you build relationships or image with internal and/or external constituencies? How did you attract new customers or retain existing ones?
- ◆If you had to ghostwrite a letter of recommendation about you from your boss, what would be in it?
- ◆How did you solve one or more specific problems in this job? What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? What did you do to overcome the problems? What were the results of your efforts? Hint: Use the SAR or PAR technique, in which you describe a Situation or Problem that existed in a given job, tell what Action you took to fix the Situation or Problem, and what the Result was.

Vague Claims vs Accomplishments

- “Experience working in fast-paced environment”
“Registered 120+ third-shift emergency patients per night”
- “Excellent written communication skills”
“Wrote jargon-free User Guide for 11.000 users”
- “Team player with cross-functional skills”
“Collaborated with clients, A/R and Sales to increase speed of receivables and prevent interruption of service to clients.”
- “Demonstrated success in analyzing client needs”
“Created and implemented comprehensive needs assessment mechanism to help forecast demand for services and staffing.”

VAGUE Example

Senior Commercial Loan Underwriter
September 2005 to Present Lotsa Bucks Trust, St. Louis, MO

- Took commercial and construction loan applications
- Negotiated terms
- Five direct reports in commercial loans division
- Trained new hires on loan research methods
- Organized company softball team

GOOD Example

Senior Commercial Loan Underwriter
September 2005 to Present Lotsa Bucks Trust, St. Louis, MO

- Processed \$10 billion in commercial construction loan applications for the top commercial lender in Eastern Missouri
- Managed a team of five junior underwriters who exceeded departmental goals consistently for past six months
- Facilitated professional training on loan research methods to shorten learning curve for new hires
- Applied professional team-building skills to development of successful company softball team, resulting in higher corporate visibility in local community and enhanced employee morale

There is no one single resume format. The information contained in this booklet was obtained from various resources and opinions acquired from a variety of hiring professionals. It should be used as a guideline in creating a resume that you are comfortable with.

THANK YOU

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