

Table 1.1 (Contd)

	General Communication	Professional Communication
Audience	Not always for a specific audience	Always for a specific audience, e.g., customers, banks, etc.
Language	Does not normally involve the use of technical vocabulary, graphics, etc.	Frequently involves jargon, graphics, etc. for achieving the professional purposes

1.5 FEATURES OF SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Since communication matters a lot in the professional world, it is quite important for us to get acquainted with the most important features of successful professional communication.

1. Communication is a two-way process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations so that an understanding may develop among them.
2. Communication is a continuous process of meaningful interactions among persons in an organization that results in meanings being perceived and understood in a desired way.
3. The role of the receiver and the sender keeps changing in the entire communication activity.
4. Communication broadly includes both verbal and non-verbal forms. Therefore, it also includes lip reading, finger-spelling, sign language, and body language used in face-to-face communication.
5. It is a process which transmits and disseminates important ideas, thoughts, feelings, plans, etc.
6. Communication skills are generally understood to be an art or technique of persuasion through the use of oral, written, and non-verbal features.

1.6 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

The following factors make communication indispensable in the world of business.

1.6.1 Growth

Due to the emergence of multinational companies, large business houses usually operate both within and outside the country. The head office of a large corporate maintains a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the various activities at each of its branch offices. It keeps them well-acquainted with the activities of all the centres, which in turn establishes a link among its various branches and leads to the growth and smooth running of the entire business.

1.6.2 Complexity

This is an age of specialization and therefore, even in a single organization different activities, such as planning, production, sales, stores, advertising, financing, accounts, welfare, etc., are handled by different departments. If these departments do not communicate with one another as well as with the management, there will be no coordination among them. For instance, when production is fully geared up, stores may report shortage of raw materials. Similarly, the finance department has to apprise the other departments regarding its constraints, which might have been the result of recent fluctuations in the market. In fact, all the departments and units of an organization have to go hand in hand to achieve its goals and for that, they need to keep communicating with one another.

1.6.3 Competitiveness

Items of common consumption, such as tea, cigarettes, soaps, blades, clothes, etc., are available in a dozen brands today. Marketing research suggests that firms which communicate better sell better. The better the communication skills of a salesperson, the larger the number of customers he/she can attract. Salesmanship is primarily an art of communication. Besides, companies keep competing with one another through advertisements and other propagandist strategies for securing a higher position in the market. All this involves communication at every step.

1.6.4 Harmony

Trade unions believe in bargaining with the management and insist on the protection of the rights and dignity of the workers. The management and such unions share a delicate relation and without proper communication between the two, no harmony can be expected to exist in an organization.

1.6.5 Understanding and Cooperation

If there exists good communication between the management and employees, it will bring about an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. Only when the employees know exactly what is expected of them, can the management utilize their potentialities and make up for their limitations. Through effective communication, employees get job satisfaction and develop a sense of belongingness with the enterprise which ultimately helps the organization grow well.

1.7 PURPOSE OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Professional communication aims at achieving the following objectives:

Advising However competent a professional may be, he/she cannot have specialized knowledge of all the branches such as licensing, taxation, publicity, engineering, etc. To succeed in his/her job, he/she will have to seek frequent advice. Also, the junior employees need to be advised by the supervisory staff on how to go about doing their jobs. A proper and timely interaction with experts in the related areas helps the management take wise steps and grow.

Counselling Even an efficient employee may become slow and indifferent if he/she is facing personal problems at home. Such employees are encouraged to consult the counselling department. Through effective communication, employees and workers share their concerns, ventilate their problems and thus are restored to their mental and physical health.

Giving orders Order is an authoritative communication. It is a directive to somebody, always a subordinate, to do something, to modify or alter the course of something he/she is already doing, or not to do something. Whatever be the nature and size of an organization, orders are absolutely essential. Ordering without bullying, however, is an art that requires effective communication skills.

Providing instructions Instruction is a particular type of order in which the subordinate is not only ordered for a particular job, but also given guidance on how to go about doing it. All instructions are orders, but all orders need not be instructions. Regardless of the fact that the management intends to give instructions or issue orders, effectiveness in communication is mandatory if the right impact is desired to be created.

Marketing Just as marketing is crucial to all business, effective communication holds the key to marketing itself. Since the entire function of marketing rests on communication, it is hard to imagine any of its operations getting through without effective communication. Sometimes companies also hire consultants for obtaining right suggestions related to its various operational aspects. If not properly communicated, suggestions can be turned down.

Persuading Persuasion may be defined as an effort to influence the attitudes, feelings, or beliefs of others or to induce action based on that. Buyers have to be persuaded to buy products. In factories or offices, the lazy, the incompetent, and the disgruntled workers have to be persuaded to do their work. It is effective communication alone that can inspire indolent and uninterested people and keep them persuaded towards achieving the common objectives of an organization.

Giving warnings If employees do not abide by the norms of the organization or violate rules, it may become necessary to warn them. Warning is a forceful means of communication for it carries with it a sense of urgency. Sensitive in nature, warnings need to be communicated well so that impact is properly created and not exaggerated.

Raising morale Morale stands for the mental health of all individuals and hence is important for the growth of an organization. Morale—to be maintained only through effective communication among professionals and hence within the organization—actually is a powerful and intangible factor representing the sum of several qualities, such as courage, determination, clarity, and confidence. It acts as a kind of lubricant among people, binds them with a sense of togetherness, and impels them to work in cooperation with one another in the best interest of their organization.

Staffing Communication is needed in the recruitment process to rope in potential employees of merit to work for the enterprise. The recruits are told about the company's organizational structure, its policies, and practices. This way, proper communication helps the new entrants associate themselves with the organization and utilize their potential effectively. This also promotes proper delegation of work among employees. Thus, in such situations too, communication helps in building a good image of an organization.

Projecting image Communication is of vital importance in projecting the image of an enterprise in the social environment that is affected by the information which elite groups and wider public have acquired about its goals, activities, and accomplishments. One can hardly wonder at the meticulousness with which all the brochures, advertisements, notices, announcements, and circulars—that are made public—are written and designed by the organizations. Understandably, all important documents are ruthlessly revised and edited linguistically until they help the organization achieve the objective of carving and retaining a positive image.

Preparing advertisements No matter how good a product is, it cannot succeed without effective advertising. Advertising is done through newspapers, magazines, television, billboards, Internet, pamphlets, cards, etc. Without effective communication, persuasive and catchy advertisements and publicity material can neither be conceived nor created to achieve the desired objective.

Making decisions Communication also has an important function in solving both simple and complex problems, and making accurate decisions to positively influence organizational performance. If not properly communicated, even a good decision may sound like a bad slip.

Getting feedback The receiver's reaction to the message is also a form of communication back to the sender. Through this mechanism, companies know how much they sell, what public opinion has been formed about their product, and what the customers feel about their products. Good companies also seek feedback with regard to the satisfaction of the employees serving them. It helps them remove the unnecessary cobwebs arising out of the ills of hierarchy and achieve the purpose within an organization.

Thus, communication is like a two-way street that entails the relation between the sender and the receiver both in day-to-day and business communication. In this process, a cycle of communicating messages is formed between the sender and the receiver.

Having discussed the purpose and importance of communication in the business world, let us discuss its different forms.

1.8 ROLE OF CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION