

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS 2020/2021**

**CSK 1101/BIS 1101: COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR IT
TAKE HOME EXAMINATION
Date: 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021
Duration: 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM**

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Answer all questions.
- Each question carries 25 marks.
- The following information must be indicated on your answer script for submission: (a) **Registration Number**; (b) **Student Number**; (c) **Name of Degree** (d) **Course Name & Code**; (e) **Date of examination**; (f) **whether it is a retake or not**; and (f) **the numbers you have attempted**. Do NOT write your name anywhere on the script.

1. *Read the text below and answer questions that follow*

Ethics and Communication in Organisational Settings

Organizational ethics are the principles and standards by which businesses operate. They are best demonstrated through acts of fairness, compassion, integrity, honor and responsibility. The key for business owners and executives is ensuring that all employees understand these ethics. One of the best ways to communicate organizational ethics is by training employees on company standards.

Ethics is the systematic study of what should be the grounds and principles for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. There are many rules for acceptable behavior, which changes from culture to culture. Because of this, if one does not know about the rules of the culture it could be very easy to offend someone. For example, if one were to give someone thumbs up in Afghanistan, it would be offensive since this is equivalent to someone raising their middle finger in America. This is why it is important to be ethnically responsible when communicating with others.

Examples of organizational ethics

One example of organizational ethics is the uniform treatment of all employees. Small business owners should treat all employees with the same respect, regardless of their race, religion, cultures or lifestyles. Everyone should also have equal chances for promotions. One way to promote uniform treatment in organizations is through sensitivity training. Some companies hold one-day seminars on various discrimination issues. They then invite outside experts in to discuss these topics. Similarly, small company managers must also avoid favoring one employee over others. This practice may also lead to lawsuits from disgruntled employees. It is also counterproductive.

Small and big companies also have an obligation to protect the community. For example, the owner of a small chemical company needs to communicate certain dangers to the community when explosions or other disasters occur. The owner must also maintain certain safety standards for protecting nearby residents from leaks that affect the water or air quality. There

are state and federal laws that protect people from unethical environmental practices. Business owners who violate these laws may face stiff penalties. They may also be shut down.

Business owners must run clean operations with respect to finances, investing and expanding their companies. For example, organizations must not bribe state legislators for tax credits or special privileges. Insider trading is also prohibited. Insider trading is when managers or executives illegally apprise investors or outside parties of privileged information affecting publicly traded stocks, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission. The information helps some investors achieve greater returns on their investments at the expense of others. Executives in small companies must strive to help all shareholders earn better returns on their money. They must also avoid collusive arrangements with other companies to deliberately harm other competitors.

A company's organizational ethics can also include taking care of employees with mental illnesses or substance abuse problems, such as drug and alcohol dependency. Ethical business owners help their employees overcome these types of problems when possible. They often put them through employee advisor programs, which involves getting them the treatment they need. Employees may have issues that lead to these types of problems. Therefore, they deserve a chance to explain their situations and get the help they need.

Ethical issues in communication can be discussed along the following broad areas:

While communicating to the audience, conveying the desired message to them in a significant manner is of primary importance. For instance, the employees in a company can be asked to increase their efficiency in a demanding manner whereas managers and executives will feel offended if the same tone is used on them. There are different ways to explain the exact things to them in a much smoother manner.

When speaking to people of other ethnicities it is best to understand something about the person's moral standards so that one will not offend the other. For example, if someone tried to communicate while eating with their mouth open and arms on the table it would probably offend someone. This is why a small part of ethical communication requires being respectable and mannerly to others. Another example of being mannerly through communication is not interrupting someone while they are speaking. This is important to people in many cultures. It is also important while talking to others to not use words that may be offensive to their race, gender, age, etc.

Maintaining the same wavelength with the audience is very important for a communicator to ensure the audiences feel at home. Experienced communicators immediately build a relationship based on trust with the audience as soon as they start speaking. Great orators such as Winston Churchill and Mahatma Gandhi always were able to maintain a relationship with their audience because they were masters at striking the same wavelength of the audience.

In the modern era, information is vital for all decisions. Hence, it is vital for any organization to be cautious when communicating with the public. The communicated information should be absolute and all vital information must be conveyed appropriately. Purposely withholding crucial information might result in the public conceiving a bad image.

In order to ensure that this concept is successfully practiced and understood in an organization, a well-organized value system must be established throughout the organization by the top management. If an organization functions on the base of value systems common to both the top management and the employees, mutual respect between them will be present. A sound and healthy value system can make way for ethical communication.

Any information that is to be passed on must be true and accurate. Communicating without checking the truth of the information can be highly dangerous for the organization. Identification of the source and testing the information is necessary before communicating it.

The basic *Q&A* refers to the five questions that all managers should bear in mind during person to person communication: what, how, to whom, when, where... are we communicating?

What is being communicated is the content of the communication. For the manager who wants to be communicative and ethical, this is the key issue. He has to be very clear in advance about what he wants to communicate. But as the content of the communication always has its origins in the person who is communicating, it becomes very difficult (not to say unlikely) to separate the content from the person who is transmitting it. Here, the "who" is crucial. Who should communicate? The manager who has gained the trust of his workers thanks to his past record and his way of doing things day by day, has, from the start, greater credibility. Credibility based on trust is therefore fundamental when we are talking about communication. If there is trust, we can say that the manager has gained the moral high ground over his team. However, even more crucial is integrity. Why is this? What has this manager done to deserve his team's credibility? In all likelihood, in his daily tasks, through his behaviour and the way he is, on various occasions he will have sent messages and made small gestures, ranging from almost inconsequential acts to ones that have a larger impact, in the way that he exercises his managerial responsibility, this principle of ethical behaviour that consists of reducing the gap between what he says and what he does. Philosophically speaking, this will be the unity of being and doing: the whole person, complete. Or, in another way, if being is sincere, it prevails over doing. Because first the person is, and then he does. Doing is found in being. There is not such a large distance between them, although we put it in place for better understanding. Phrased more simply, what we do shows who we are. Actions are therefore also important as they make us the people that we are.

If the manager has gained the trust of his team through his actions, he has achieved a lot. He has shown himself to be a manager that can be trusted. Integrity, which is a manifestation of harmony between being and doing, is fundamental for ethical communication. Solomon (2000, 38) writes that integrity is not in itself a virtue, but rather a combination of the virtues that act together to form a coherent whole. This is what we call, in the moral sense, character. Evidently, its basic pillars lie in coherence and decency. A manager is said to be honest, first of all, when he has shown this day by day, when he has earned the trust of others. They have seen, through his way of doing things, that he is a decent person with coherent behaviour. There is no trust without integrity. In any event, if there is no trust, what usually happens is a

misunderstood complicity or interest, which are both very different matters.

The advantage of communicating in a straight line is that co-workers get used to it, encouraging communication that works both ways. In turn, many managers appreciate that the members of their team tell them things straight, above all if they have sufficient humility and intelligence to accept suggestions from their subordinates. The straight line is a two-way street.

The how is the second factor to bear in mind. In the content of the communication, messages have to be clear, direct, short. They have to be clear if they are to be understood by the other person. The how has a lot to do with the way we communicate. It is the responsibility of the manager to think very carefully about how to say things, the way in which the information is to be given. If the content is complicated, this way may be crucial in reducing a possible negative impact on the other person. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare a *Q&A* with basic questions and answers. In addition, the three or four ideas that are to be communicated should be well thought out and noted down. Perhaps it is exaggerating to say that "the medium is the message". But the way of communicating things reveals who is saying them. We suppose that it is possible to fake it. But how long for? Truth is absolutely vital in communication. And it is good that this works in both directions: both for the manager who communicates and for the person who is receiving the communication. In person to person communication, deception cannot be kept up for very long. People can live through deception or be deceived, but for how long? Between two people, there is no shorter path than along the straight line. A manager finds himself in situations that are truly difficult to communicate. If he is a good manager, he will analyse and check everything in detail and find the right conditions for communicating well. If he is not a good manager, he will be indifferent on how to tell somebody something. Quite simply, he will say it as it comes into his head, no more than that, without stopping to think who is sitting in front of him. The how expresses the manager's good or bad ways of doing things. In other words, the way he acts tells us a lot about his ethics.

Who do we have to talk to? Who is the right person? The *to whom* responds to a strategy, planned in advance. In communication, the strategy is fundamental. Communication is increasingly becoming a strategic factor for companies. If communication within a company has traditionally been an important element to take into consideration, these days it is essential. This is why managers need to have communication skills, and to be good communicators. In person to person communication, it is essential that the manager has a capacity for communication, as this is certainly one of the few things that a manager cannot delegate. Obviously a manager can ask his subordinate to communicate something to somebody. That goes without saying. If it is something he wants to get out of or if he does face up to his responsibility, he is acting inappropriately. "You tell him, I don't have time..." or, "I'm off on a business trip". Above all this is a problem if the news is not good. The ethical manager has to take on the responsibility in personal communication. He has to know how to face up to things, both in the form and the content, whoever he has to communicate

something to. A good manager has to be able to communicate personally and, when things go belly up, the courage to be able to do it.

Finding the right time is not just necessary, it is essential. In addition, it responds to forethought and advanced planning. It cannot be done in any other way than finding the most favourable moment to transmit the communication, to say what has to be said. Knowing how to choose when is important, above all in times of crisis. Recently, many companies have reduced their workforce due to the economic crisis. In this sense, the communication of crisis, in situations of making job cuts, entails prior planning. Improvisation might aggravate such a delicate situation. An ethical manager who has to communicate such important situations to his team will choose the right moment down to the slightest detail.

The fifth question that a good manager has to ask; concerns the place where he can best communicate. Where are we going to pass on the information? In the office? Taking a short stroll? At lunch? Over a coffee? In a press conference at a hotel? The place has a lot to do with the recipient or recipients of our communication. To one extent or another the environment chosen will influence the way that the recipient receives the message that is transmitted. In addition, and especially during crisis situations, the manager and the organisation should plan in detail where to inform their employees of news that negatively affects their continuation with the company.

If the manager takes this basic Q&A into account, person to person communication will be much more effective.

Organisations are as complex as the people who make them up. Therefore, management communication should not resort to improvisation. People deserve communicative managers who can manage their teams whilst transmitting integrity and trust. Ethics and communication go hand in hand as both have a lot to do with the way that we do our work, or in short, in how it is.

Questions:

- 1a) In about 300 words, what ideas are expressed about ethical issues in communication? (15 marks)*
- 1b) Explain any 5 possible communication barriers in an organizational setting. (10 marks)*
- 2. The text below has grammatical and mechanical errors and mistakes. Re-write it correctly following the qualities of good writing. Highlight the corrected sections. (25 marks).*

Scientists and philosophers of science tend to speak as if “scientific language” were intrinsically precise as if those who use it must understand one another’s meaning even if they disagree but in fact scientific language is not as different from ordinary language as is

commonly believed it too is subject to imprecision and ambiguity and hence to imperfect understanding moreover new theories or arguments are rarely if ever constructed by way of clear-cut steps of induction deduction and verification or falsification neither are they defended rejected or accepted in so straightforward a manner in practice scientists combine the rules of scientific methodology with a generous admixture of intuition aesthetics and philosophical commitment the importance of what are sometimes called extra-rational or extra-logical components of thought in the discovery of a new principle or law is generally acknowledged ...but the role of these extra-logical components in persuasion and acceptance in making an argument convincing is less frequently discussed partly because they are less visible the ways in which the credibility or effectiveness of an argument depends on the realm of common experiences on extensive practice in communicating those experiences in a common language are hard to see precisely because such commonalities are taken for granted only when we step out of such a “consensual domain” when we can stand out on the periphery of a community with a common language do we begin to become aware of the unarticulated premises mutual understandings and assumed practices of the group even in those subjects that lend themselves most readily to quantification discourse depends heavily on conventions and interpretation conventions that are acquired over years of practice and participation in a community.

3. *As a student of Makerere University, Kampala, write a 2-3 page informative essay to discuss the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown on your personal student life. (25 marks)*
4. *Imagine you are a student representative of your College at the University Council. The College Students' Assembly meets to deliberate on issues concerning online teaching and examination. In a detailed discussion students from your College highlight 3 challenges they are experiencing regarding the subject, and suggest 3 recommendations to the University Council.*
 - 4a) *Write a one page speech you would deliver as a student representative of your College at the University Council Meeting. (15 marks)*
 - 4b) *Write a one page letter addressed to all students in your College, persuading them to embrace the online teaching and examinations. (10 marks)*

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