



DISTANCE LEARNING INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

DLI
COURSE MODULE

BUS264

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION



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Published by
Distance Learning Institute
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Nigeria.
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COURSE GUIDE FOR BUS 264: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Welcome Message

You are welcome to the course guide to the module of **BUS 264: Business Communication**. This Course Guide provide you with the tools to navigate the course. This course has been specifically dedicated to business communication processes and methods and to help you acquire significant skills you need to succeed in your dream to acquire a degree of the University of Lagos. It is hoped that you will maximize the opportunities provided through the material in this direction and complete this course with a good grade leading to the achievement of your dreamed degree in management sciences or other field of studies. Please, read through the course outline carefully, and learn what is expected of you.

If you need more clearance concerning any area of the module; do not hesitate to contact the course facilitator. As team of instructors for this course, we are looking forward to working together with you and helping you to get the best out of this course. You are welcome, once again, and wishing you the very best.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Course Guide is designed to provide you with details of the module. It has been divided into five basic segments to conveniently provide you with the modalities for going through the module proper. A brief background to the content of the module has also been included for your basic understanding. The specific aim of the course guide is also highlighted for you while in other parts you are furnished with module outlines, general learning outcomes and study session topics to be covered during studying the course. You shall as well be introduced to the learning support to be used, module delivery arrangement and expectations geared towards your preparations to studying the module content. Moreover, details of the assessment techniques used in this module explaining the assessment components and their rationale and the University of Lagos grading policy shall be explained to better equip you to go through this module.

a. Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the fundamentals of business communication. It is a two-unit course with ten study sessions. You will become familiar with basic concept of communication, what lead to the relevance of communication in business, communication approaches used in business, context, and types of business communication etc. It is the bedrock for you to understand what business communication is, as a course. The content of the course and reading References/Suggestions for further Readings provided assigned readings will cover some areas of the course; online facilitation, and few face-face interactions, combined with forum discussions and teamwork with your peers will also be available. The course will be helpful to you in providing a window through which you learn the background to other courses on the programme and other useful principles required to make a successful banker and financial expert.

b. Background to the Course

This module is specifically designed to equip you with relevant academic skills that are supportive of your excellent class performance. The course is a two-unit course divided into ten study sessions. The titles of all study sessions are listed below (Module outline). You will therefore require dedication to your work and acquisition of relevant academic skills to excel. These are the necessary supports provided by the Institution's E-Tutors and Facilitators through the assignments/Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) given after each study session.

c. Module Aims

The main aim of this module is to develop the relevant key study skills in you. Note that your tutors

are just a click of the button away from you to give you the support you require.

This course seeks to develop learners specifically in:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Accessing and analyzing information skills.
- Effective communication skills

2.0 MODULE OUTLINE

a. Learning Objectives

On completion of this module, you should be able to:

- i. Define the concept of communication.
- ii. Define the concept of business communication.
- iii. Discuss importance of business communication.
- iv. Identify the contexts and types of business communication.

b. Study Sessions

This study guide should be read in conjunction with the Module in print by the same author, which will be provided to all students. In addition to this module, students are encouraged to consult additional recommended reading materials such as textbook and websites on the subject matter.

The following topics are covered in the module:

Study Session 1:	Concept of Communication
Study Session 2:	Concept of Business Communication
Study Session 3:	Importance of Business Communication
Study Session 4:	Contexts and Types of Business Communication
Study Session 5:	Business Conversations
Study Session 6:	Developing Business Message: The Writing Process
Study Session 7:	Crafting Brief Messages
Study Session 8:	Writing Comprehensive Business Documents
Study Session 9:	Designing and Delivering In-Person and Online Presentations
Study Session 10:	Employment Communication

c. Learning Supports

This course guide and the Self Learning Material (SLM) are the key materials for studying the relevant study sessions. Each topic provides you with a 'road map' to guide you through the SLM. The textbook readings will be supplemented by Open Educational Recourses and

References/Suggestions for further Readings/suggestions for further Readings. You are also expected to attempt the online activities on the Learning Management System (LMS) as they will deepen your understanding of the individual topics. Online discussions and collaborations are additional vital parts of the learning support tools. They give you the opportunity to express your understanding and application of the topics under discussion in practice. Furthermore, you benefit from the experiences and insights of your peers challenging their own perspectives and actions. There is availability of other useful sources such as numerous websites which are appropriate for this course.

d. Module Evaluation

At the end of the session, you will be asked to provide feedback on this course guide through an online evaluation that will be sent to your email account. The gathering of such feedback is an important part of our quality assurance and accreditation processes, and I would encourage you to complete these evaluations.

<http://www.skills4study.com>

<http://www.ucd.ie/adulted/currentstudents/studyskillsguide/>

<http://www.mindmapping.com/>

3.0 MODULE DELIVERY SCHEDULE

a. Study Session Arrangements

The module contains ten study sessions, and you are encouraged to spend at least three (3) hours on individual study session. The module is programmed for you to engage in prior preparation, to seek confirmation and clarification at appropriate periods, to practice each In-Text Questions (ITQs) and Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) at the end of each study session and to be actively engaged during the session. The ITQs are short questions that give you immediate opportunity to assess yourself before going to study the next session. You are expected to study and be prepared for all sessions. The study sessions are divided into weekly format as will be seen on the LMS.

b. Preparation Required in Advance of Sessions

In addition to the course material or Self-Learning Material (SLM) assignments, you are expected to have read the study sessions in advance of online facilitations. BUS 264 is a 2-unit course, and the workload reflects that fact. It is essential to set out your study schedule so that you can plan your learning activities for the academic year ahead with the aim of balancing study, work, and family demands. You are expected to be fully familiar with the contents of the module.

c. *Learners Engagement*

During the sessions, you are expected to be able to discuss issues arising from the study. Session participation is a vital element in the design of this Self Learning Material. Therefore, you are expected to engage in class discussion and online collaborations to facilitate the formation of your critical judgments. To support your learning, Power-Point slides will be available which (on certain occasions) may need to be upgraded / modified during or following the sessions depending on the issues raised.

d. *Preparatory Questions*

There two types of Assessments in this module; the In-Text Questions (ITQs) and Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs). The In-Text Answers (ITAs) follow directly after the ITQs. Going through these gives you the opportunities to quickly assess yourself before moving to the next session. The ITQs come immediately after a sub-topic but you will find the SAQs at the end of each study session. Answering SAQs enable you to check your own progress in achieving the Learning Outcomes for Study Session.

4.0 ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Assessment is undertaken to establish the extent of your learning on completing the Self Learning Material (SLM). The module has three assessment components with specific weightings and marks awarded totalling 100. Further details of each assessment component are presented along with expectations in relation to prior preparation and completion.

You are required to submit THREE assignments for this module. You are advised to read the relevant section of the study session before attempting each assignment.

The weighting for each assignment is outlined below:

Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	10%
Assignment 3	10%

You will be exposed to other forms of assessments in form of Computer Marked Assessments (CMA) and Tutor Marked Assessments (TMA).

Please submit the assignments via the relevant assignment upload link on the LMS which can be















located under the 'Assignments' section of the course page. You are expected to complete all assignments ensuring that they are submitted by the specified date. All submissions must be typed and must be well laid out. Please ensure that all submissions are entirely your own work as plagiarism attracts penalties. The penalty may include a deduction of marks, failure in the course, and/or referral to the appropriate University Disciplinary Committee.

5.0 GRADING

Your programme is designed with courses which are weighted and classified into various levels. Courses are assigned units depending on the volume of work required to complete the course. This section is designed to acquaint you with the alphabets representing your final grade in this course. It is necessary to first recognize and be thoroughly familiar with certain ranges that are commonly used in arriving at your grade. These are defined as follows:

Grade	Percentage range	Grade point
A	(70-100%)	5 points
B	(60-69%)	4 points
C	(50-59%)	3 points
D	(45-49%)	2 points
E	(40-44%)	1 point
F	(0-39%)	0 point

6.0. LIST OF ICONS AND THEIR MEANINGS

S/No	Icon	Meaning
1.		Activity
2.		Calculations
3.		Charts and Tables
4.		Experiments
5.		Group Activity
6.		IAG Information
7.		In-Text Questions
8.		In-Text Answers
9.		Introduction
10.		Learning Outcomes for Study Session
11.		Summary
12.		E-Tutor
13.		Figure
14.		Key Terms

STUDY SESSION 1:

FOUNDATIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION



Introduction

In this study session, we are going to be discussing the meaning of communication, business communication, and importance of business communication and contexts/types of business communication.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:

- 1.1. Define the concept of communication (SAQ 1.1., SAQ 1.2)
- 1.2. Define the concept of business communication. (SAQ 1.2 - 1.9)
- 1.3. Discuss importance of business communication (SAQ 1.3 – SAQ 1.10)
- 1.4. Identify the contexts and types of business communication (SAQ 1.11 - SAQ 1.32)



Key Terms: Communication, Business communication, Interpersonal communication, Intrapersonal communication, Formal communication, Informal communication, Lateral communication, Interactive communication, Mass communication, Visual communication.

1.1 The Concept of Communication

Communication involves transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages. It consists of a sender, a receiver and channel of communication. In the process of transmitting messages, the clarity of the message may be interfered with or distorted by what is often referred to as barriers. The notion ‘communication’ originates from the Latin word communis or communication meaning ‘to share’ ‘to impact’ ‘to participate’ or ‘to make common’. Today communication has become problematic to define because it has come to mean a lot of things people do to express opinions or ideas. The two general models of communication are transactional and constructivist models. The transactional model of communication views communication with actions occurring at the same

time. Thus, the distinction between source and receiver is blurry. In the constructivist viewpoint, the focus is on the negotiated meaning, or common ground when trying to label communication (Pearce, Cronen, & Linda, 1980). There are three common levels of communication, namely: (1). Intrapersonal level- which consists of information ideas or messages one sends to oneself, including self-talk, or communication with oneself, (2). Interpersonal level- is the communication engagement that takes place between two people either in face-to-face encounters, or using electrical/mechanical devices such as telephone, and (3). Group level- which ensues when three or more people meet either through face-to-face encounters or through other medium of communication, such as a conference call or webinar.

Smith, Berry and Pulford (2002) define communication as the act of sending information from the point of view of one person to the mind of another person. Mcshane and Glinow (2003) viewed communication as the process through which information is conveyed and understood between two or more people. Communication, according to Seiler and Beall (2002) is the process by which people create and share ideas. In principle, communication is the process of communicating, expressing opinions, feelings, or sharing information, to others through speech, writing or body expression. Communication can be conceptualized as interchange of thought or ideas between two or more parties to facilitate mutual understanding and desired action. Communication is said to exist when: (1) there is a person (sender/transmitter) who wants to pass some information; (2) there is another person (receiver) to whom the information is to be passed on; (3) the receiver partly or wholly understands the message or information passed on to him; (4) the receiver responds to the message or gives feedback. According to Shannon and Weaver (1949), communication takes place when the sender encoding of the message corresponds with the receiver decoding of the message sent.

Communication is viewed as a process, because it encompasses a series of activities that has no beginning or end and is highly dynamics (Berlo, 1960). The first major elements in this definition consist of process. A process is a dynamic activity that is hard to label because it changes. The second word is understanding: to understand is to recognize, to interpret, and to relate perception/ interpretation to understandings. Next comes the term sharing. Sharing implies doing something together with one or more people. The last element is meaning which refers to object of communication or what is been share through communication. At the center of the study and application of communication is the relationship that encompasses interaction between two or more people to foster understanding. Therefore, there must be a mutual understanding between the sender and the receiver for the transmission of ideas or information to be effective and successful. Effective communication can be viewed as the use of language that is suitable to others' levels of

understanding, ensuring the receivers get the information or ideas based on intended purpose, developing relationships with others, creating and fostering relationship with others in a way that promotes openness, morality and collaboration and offering requisite feedback. Therefore, for any communication to be effective, it should be free from complications or barriers.

Communication is the method of exchanging views, ideas, opinions from one person or one group to another. Effective communication is essential for the success of any organization. Communication involves the most important element that is the understanding of the meaning. In the communication process, the sender is responsible for encoding an intended meaning into the message and sending it through the channel to the receiver, who then decodes the message into a perceived meaning. No business organization can survive and grow in the absence of communication. This brings us to the concept of business communication and the importance of communication in business.

1.2 The Concept of Business Communication

Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within and outside a company. Effective business communication is how employees and management interact to reach organizational goals. Its purpose is to improve organizational practices and reduce errors. Business communication is a division of general communication; however, there is no basic dissimilarity between the two. In other words, the process is the same and so are the principles that regulate them. The major difference between business communication and general communication lies in their application to situations. For instance, whereas general communication performs numerous roles in the world at large, business communication is explicitly concerned with business activities, which are mostly well-defined. Besides, business communication is marked by formality as against personal and social communication that characterizes general communication. Business communication is used for all messages or ideas connected to official purpose like running a business, managing an organization, conducting the formal affairs of business organization. Business communication can also be viewed as the use of effective language for conveying information related to the activities or operations of business organization. Business communication can be contemplated as a problem solving activity in which individuals or parties involved attempt address the following questions: What is the circumstances necessitating the need for communication? What are the likely communication approaches? What is the best course of action that is most suitable? What is the optimal design for disseminating the message? and What is the best approach to deliver the message? The main features that lend business communication a distinct identity are as follows:

- ✓ It deals with numerous commercial and industrial issues.
- ✓ It is branded by certain formal features such as commercial and technical vocabulary, the use of graphic and audio-visual aids and conventional formats.
- ✓ It is impartial and objective as great care is taken to deliver information accurately and concisely.
- ✓ It has reasonably high concentration of certain complex writing techniques and procedures.

Business communication experts have advocated 7 C's and 4 S's of communication.

The 7 C's are as follows:

- i. **Credibility:** If the sender of a message can institute his credibility, the receiver will experience little or no complications in understanding the subject matter.
- ii. **Courtesy:** courtesy implies taking into consideration both perspectives as well as feelings of the receiver of the message by showing respect for the receiver of message.
- iii. **Completeness:** refers to the fact that for any communication to be useful and effective it must be comprehensive and express all details essential by the audience.
- iv. **Clarity:** Total clarity of ideas or message disseminated adds significant meaning to the message or ideas being transmitted. to make understanding easier.
- v. **Consistency:** Consistency refers to the idea that the approach to communication should, as far as possible, be stable and unbiased.
- vi. **Concreteness:** Precise languages are to be favored in favor of unclear and nonconcrete languages.
- vii. **Conciseness:** conciseness refers to the principle that the message to be communicated should be as brief as possible.

4 S's are as follows:

- i. **Shortness:** It is a well-known fact that "Brevity is the soul of wit.". The same can said about communication. If the message can be transmitted in a brief form, then transmission and understanding of messages is likely to be faster and more effective.
- ii. **Simplicity:** Ease both in the usage of words and ideas expresses clarity in the thinking process is very vital to communication effectiveness, therefore, the use of clear/simple language and equally make communication simple.

- iii. **Strength:** The forte of a message emanates from the credibility of the sender. If the sender believes in a message that he or she is about to transmit, there is likely to be strength and belief in whatever he/she tries to state.
- iv. **Sincerity:** A sincere method to an issue is evidently useful in promoting effective communication and it will be reflected in the way he or she communicates.



Business communication experts have advocated 7 C's of communication, mention any five C's of communication known to you



(i) Conciseness (ii) Concreteness (iii) Consistency (iv) Clarity (v) Credibility

1.3 Importance of Business Communication

Communication is very fundamental to individual, group and organizational success. Communication adds valuable meaning to individual and organizational life. It does not only help in building relationships, fosters love and understanding among employees; it enriches their knowledge and understanding of their work by extension their productivity. We use communication tools and techniques in everyday life and in nearly every environment, most especially in the workplace. Whether it is giving a slight head nod in agreement or present information to a large cluster, communication is absolutely crucial to relationships building, exchange of ideas, tasks delegation, and managing a team and much more. Communication is the life blood of any organization and its main purpose is to effect positive change and influence action. For instance, communication has enabled people to organize activities and to overcome obstacles that could have impede performance improvement. The importance of communication in the workplace is further highlighted with the fact that without communication there is no way people could express opinions, feelings, and ideas.

Communication is the medium that allows managers to fulfil management expectations and demand. For example, to plan successfully, business managers must be able to communicate effectively. Similarly, to organize work activities successfully, managers must promote and encourage free-flow of communication both up and down the hierarchy, as well as between units and workforces. To lead effectively, managers must visibly communicate company's goals to employees and through that communication, motivate employees to have trust in their leadership and perform efficiently. To control productively, managers must efficiently communicate with workers to observe progress to reemphasize firm goals, and to monitor on-going processes. Communication permits managers to share objectives with shareholders both inside and outside

the company. It enables managers to encourage desired behavioral changes in employees and other key stakeholders. In more specific context, communication performs the under listed functions:

- i. **Information Function:** Information is vital for the functioning of any living system—people or organization. Therefore, information is used as the basis for orientation to those environments and for conveying messages.
- ii. **Command and Instructive Function:** This function deals with the purpose of informing their subordinates but often for the purpose of telling them what to do, directing them, or commanding their behavior in some way.
- iii. **Influence and Persuasive Function:** The essence of communication is to modify character or behavior of people at the workplace, therefore, most people believe that persuasive and influence role is very fundamental.
- iv. **Integrative Function:** Communication performs the integrative function by relating various components of the organization and ensuring collaboration within the organization.
- v. **Evaluation Function:** Examination of activities to form an idea or judgment of the worth of task is achieved through communication.
- vi. **Image building Function:** A business enterprise cannot isolate itself from the rest of the society because there is interrelationship and interdependence between the society and an enterprise operating in the society.
- vii. **The Basis of Co-ordination:** Communication enables business manager to explain to the workforces the organizational goals, modes of their accomplishment and also the relational associations amongst them. This offers coordination between numerous employees and also units within the organization.
- viii. **Fluent Working:** Communication provides opportunity through which manager coordinates the human and physical components of an organization to run resourcefully and effectively.
- ix. **The Basis of Decision Making:** Proper communication offers information that are useful and vital to the manager to aid decision making. No effective decisions could be taken in the absence of information. Therefore, communication is the foundation for taking quality decisions.
- x. **Increases Managerial Efficiency:** The managers express the tasks/targets and disseminate instructions to the subordinates. All of these facets encompass communication. Hence, communication is important for the quick and efficient performance of the managers and the entire business.
- xi. **Increases Cooperation and Organizational Harmony:** The two-way communication method encourages co-operation and common understanding amongst the workforces and

also between them and the management.

- xii. **Boosts Employees Morale:** Effective communication in the workplace assists the workforces to adjust to the physical and social element of work. It also develops good human relations in the company. Thus, an efficient system of communication permits the management to inspire, impact and satisfy the employees which in turn boosts their morale and preserves their motivation.

1.4 Contexts and Types of Business Communication

There are diverse forms of communication each with its peculiar nature, configuration, benefits and drawbacks. Some of forms of communication are:

i. **Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication is defined as a form of communication between two or more people and involves the transfer of information, message, idea or thought from one person to the other(s). The person transmitting the information is referred to as the sender or transmitter. The people whom the message is addressed to are known as receivers. In interpersonal communication, the starring role of the sender and receiver become exchangeable.

ii. **Intrapersonal communication**

This form of communication includes one person; it is often label “self-talk.” (Wood, 1997). The term 'intra' denotes 'within'. A communication that occurs within an individual is intrapersonal communication. This may occur through thinking, analyzing, dreaming or introspecting. For instance, the voice within an individual employee that propels the spirit of “Keep on Struggling” “I can do it” are forms of intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication can be positive or negative forms, and directly impacts how individual perceive and react to circumstances and communication with others.

iii. **Internal /Organizational Communication and External communications**

This is a form of communication that takes place within (or across) an organization. It may be executed through face to face, telephone, fax or mail, and some contemporary companies may use technology enabled structure such as intranet to communicate internally. External communication on the other hand, is a form of communication between the organization and those outside the organization.

iv. **Formal and Informal Communications**

Formal communication is viewed as communication which takes place through the official organizational channels or is undertaken by an employee in the course of performing his/her tasks. Formal communications are official, that are a components of the recognized

communication system within the organization. Formal communications may be mandatory, indicative or explanatory. Mandatory communication implies a structure order or command to be followed and goes by numerous euphemistic names such as instructions, briefing, etc., this kind of communication is mostly vertical and usually one way from top to downward. The indicative or explanatory communication may exist at any levels and may be vertical as well as horizontal. Formal communication can be further categorized as vertical communication and horizontal communication. The diagonal or vertical communication is a form of company that occurs between employees in a different section or unit of the organization and where one of the workers involved is on a higher level in the organization. For instance, in a bank setting, diagonal communication will take place when a manager in head office speaks with a cashier in a branch of the bank based in one of the bank branch.

The informal communication is a form of communication which occurs outside the recognized communication networks and is popularly known as ‘grapevine’. Any form of communication that occurs outside the formal channels of communication is said to be informal communication. The informal communication is often named as the ‘grapevine’ as it spreads throughout the company and in all directions without any concern to the levels of authority. The informal form of communication spreads quickly, often gets biased and it is very problematic to detect the source of such communication. It also results to rumors which are not true. Nevertheless, sometimes the information communication may be helpful as they convey information fast and, therefore, may be valuable in some situations. Grapevine is a form of communication that take place during the lunch, or hallways or in company bus between employees.

v. Oral communication (Verbal) and Written Communication (Non-verbal)

The oral communication is also known as verbal communication, while written communication is label non-verbal communication. Examples of verbal communication include spoken words which may be face-to-face, recording messages on tapes, telephoning, radio, and television. Nonverbal communication describes the procedure of conveying meaning or idea in the form of non-word messages. The various subparts of nonverbal communication: kinesics (body movements- face/eyes, gestures, body shape, appearance, and posture), proxemics (communication through space around us), chronemics, haptics, time language, paralanguage, and physical context (color). Nonverbal communication is also called “silent language”, as it encompasses the use of cues, gestures, vocal characteristics, facial expressions, and spatial connection between the sender and the

receiver to convey a message. Other elements of non-verbal Communication are: proxemics, oculesics, chronemics, haptics, paralinguistics, and physical appearance. Verbal communication consists of public discussion, telephonic conversation and through other media. Nonverbal communication involves the use of body language, gestures and facial expressions. Oral communication is a way of passing information, idea, and thought verbally or through oral communication or mechanical/electrical devices such as telephone. Oral communications tend to be deeper or off channels because information can be transmitted through speech as well as nonverbally through body language. Oral forms of communication can be transverse from a casual conversation with a coworker to a formal arrangement with many workforces.

A written communication is always expressed in writing and commonly used when the audience is at a distance or when a permanency or record is necessary or where its conservation is vital in case it is desirable as an evidence in cases of dispute. It is commonly in the form of education, orders, rules and guidelines, policies, processes, posters, memos, reports, information bulletins. While written communication does not have the benefits of immediacy and interaction, it can be the most efficient forms of conveying large amounts of information. Written communication is an effective medium when context, supporting data, and comprehensive clarifications are essential to inform or communicate with others. One drawback to written communications is that they can be misinterpreted or misconstrued by a receiver that does not have succeeding opportunities to ask instructive questions or otherwise reply. The dissimilarity between the oral and written communication is that oral communication includes transmitting ideas, thoughts or information through spoken language. In written communication, however, information is transmitted through the use of words or symbols usually in sentences format or via symbol. Written communication can take place via: letters, faxes, email, reports, and memos. Also writing communication can be stored and transmitted from individual to individual and group to group without relying on memory.

vi. Upward and Downward Communications

Downward communication is a form of communication created by managers or superiors and passed down the hierarchy to lower level employees within the organization. Downward communication is one of the vital processes of organizational communication, because it establishes connections between people by simplifying flow of information between them. Common examples include Handbooks, manuals, magazines, newspapers, bulletin boards, notices, posters, reports and memos are diverse kinds of written media used

by organizations. In most traditional organizational setting, this is the most preferred approach of communication because it is the managers that decide the systems, rules and procedures of the organization. Downward communication can increase efficiency by synchronizing organizational processes and can ensure that everybody is working towards the same the overall goals of the company. Examples of downward communication include, job descriptions, performance evaluations, company policy, and organizational systems. The communication coming from subordinates to manager is label as upward communication. Examples of upward communications comprise idea suggestion, feedback, grievance processes and employee-manager discussions.

vii. Lateral Communication

Communication between people within the same organization is label as lateral communication. In other words, it is a form of communication that occurs between employees on the same level within the organization. This form of communication involves decision making procedure to create efficiency as employees do not have to wait for managerial approval. Lateral communication comprises communication across chains of command. It simplifies coordination among departments. It may also take place because people prefer the informality of lateral communication to the formal downward and upward communication. Those actively engaged in lateral communication are label “boundary spanners.” Since “boundary spanning,” permits for buildup of vast information.

viii. Interactive Communication

Interactive communication is valuable when communication is essential between peers involved in tasks that require coordinated effort. Nonetheless, if they are not involved in tasks that need coordinated effort, interactive communication would lead to declined productivity. Interactive communication among peers may also influence vertical communication in a negative manner. The two main forms of interactive communication are: 1. Networks: A network is a group of individuals who create and maintain contact with each other to exchange information of mutual interest. Networks can be both internal and external to a company. 2. Grapevine communication: is a form of communication that supplements the formal mediums of communication and offers information, which is not communicated through the formal structure.

ix. Group Communication

As the word suggests, when people communicate in a group or under group circumstances, this is known as group communication. The group is an extension of interpersonal communication where more than two people are involved in the process of communication.

The groups involved may be formal or informal depending on the nature and goal of the communication but usually they have common goals. Group communication is generally viewed as encompassing three to eight people.

x. Mass Communication

Mass communication encompasses sending a single message to a group and permits communication of intended message to a large number of people. This form of communication is dissimilar from other forms of communication highlighted so far. In mass communication, the speaker or transmitter is separated from the audience in terms of time and place and more often than not the communication occurs with the help of an electronic device, in which a formal establishment or institution is involved. These electronic appliances are known as mass media such as print, radio, television, the Internet, etc., while the audience represents the masses. However, feedback mechanism or process in mass communication is considered to be weak and delayed.

xi. Public Communication

In public communication, one person speaks to a cluster or group of people; the same is correct of public written communication, where one person writes a message to a small or large group. The speaker or writer may raise questions, and interact with the audience in a discussion; however, the dynamics of the conversation are different from group communication, where diverse rules apply. In a public speaking circumstances, the group generally defers from the speaker. For instance, the manager speaks to sales team and the sales people quietly listen without disruption.

xii. Visual Communication

Visual communication is the process of using objects such as photographs, art, drawings, sketches, charts, and graphs to convey or disseminate information. Visuals communication is often used as an aid during presentations to offer context alongside written and/or verbal communication. Because people have diverse learning styles, thus, visual communication might be more useful for some to comprehend ideas and information. Below are some steps to develop visual communication skills: enquire from others before incorporating visuals, and consider the audience need and expectations. To improve communication visual communication abilities, set personal objectives to work through the intended goals things.



List any five (5) amongst the contexts and types of business communication

(i) Interpersonal (ii) Intrapersonal (iii) Formal and Informal (iv) Upward and Downward

(v) Lateral



Summary of Study Session 1

In this study session, you have learnt that:

1. Communication involves transmission of verbal and non-verbal messages by a sender, a receiver and through various channels of communication.
2. Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within and outside a company. Effective business communication is how employees and management interact to reach organizational goals. Its purpose is to improve organizational practices and reduce errors.
3. Amongst the importance of business communication are that it increases managerial efficiency, increases cooperation and organizational harmony, and that it boosts employee morale.
4. The contexts and types of business communication are, but not limited to interpersonal, intrapersonal, internal /organizational, external communications, formal and informal, lateral, interactive communication, and group communication.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have studied this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes for Study Session by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study diary and discuss them with your facilitator at the next study centre meeting. You can check your answers at the end of this course material.

Section A

SAQ 1.1: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

Which of the following is not a media of communication?

- a) Internal memoranda
- b) Reports
- c) Email
- d) Recreation

SAQ 1.2: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

The notion 'communication' originates from the Latin word -----

- a) Communis or communicatio
- b) Commando or communicatio
- c) Canvasseee or communicatio
- d) Compadee or communication

SAQ 1.3: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

Which of the under listed is not the literal interpretation of communis or communicatio

- a) To share
- b) To impact' '
- c) To participate'
- d) To resolve

SAQ 1.4: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

The two general models of communication are -----

- a) Transverse and constructivist models.
- b) Transactional and constructivist models.
- c) Transitory and constructivist models.
- d) Transnational and constructivist models.

SAQ 1.5: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

----- model of communication views communication with actions occurring at the same time.

- a) The transactional model
- b) The constructivist models
- c) The transitory models
- d) The Transnational models

SAQ 1.6: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

In the ----- model, the focus is on the negotiated meaning, or common ground, when trying to label communication

- a) The constructivist models
- b) The transitory models
- c) The Transnational models
- d) The transactional model

SAQ 1.7: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

There are ----- common levels of communication,

- a) Two
- b) One
- c) Three
- d) Four

SAQ 1.8: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

Which of the under listed is not a level of communication

- a) Intrapersonal Level
- b) Interpersonal Level
- c) Group Level
- d) Interdenominational Level

SAQ 1.9: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

----- level of communication is multifaceted because of the number of people involved.

- a) Interpersonal Level
- b) Group Level
- c) Interdenominational Level
- d) Intrapersonal Level

SAQ 1.10: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

----- refers to the act or process of giving or exchanging of information

- a) Information
- b) Communication
- c) Participation
- d) Idealization

SAQ 1.11: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

Which of the following is not an element of communication?

- a) Sender
- b) Receive
- c) Medium
- d) Radoius

SAQ 1.12: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

Communication takes place when the ----- encoding of the message corresponds with the receiver ----- of the message sent.

- a) Sender and decoding
- b) Receiver and decoding
- c) Message and decoding
- d) Transmitter and decoding

SAQ 1.13: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

..... is a specific division of general communication?

- a) Business communication
- b) Business method
- c) Business ideology
- d) Business dissemination

SAQ 1.14: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

The major difference between business communication and general communication lies in their

- a) Dissemination to situations
- b) Application to situations
- c) Knowledge to situations
- d) Message to situations

SAQ 1.15: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

----- is marked by formality as against personal and social communication that characterizes general communication.

- a) Business method
- b) Business ideology
- c) Business communication
- d) Business dissemination

SAQ 1.16: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

----- can be viewed as the use of effective language for conveying information related to the activities or operations of business organization.

- a) Business method
- b) Business ideology
- c) Business dissemination
- d) Business communication

SAQ 1.17: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

At the center of the study and application of communication is ----- that encompasses interaction between two or more people to foster understanding.

- a) The knowledge
- b) The relationships
- c) The tenacities
- d) The logical sense

SAQ 1.18: (Test Learning Outcome 1.1)

For any communication to be effective, it should be free from

- a) Complications or barriers
- b) Knowledge or barriers
- c) Dissemination or barriers
- d) Activities or barriers

SAQ 1.19: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

To improve business communication, experts have proposed

- a) 4s and 7s of communication
- b) 5s and 7s of communication
- c) 3s and 7s of communication
- d) 2s and 7s of communication

SAQ 1.20: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

Which of the following is not part of the 7 C's of communication?

- a) Credibility.
- b) Courtesy
- c) Completeness
- d) Clarification

SAQ 1.21: (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)

All of the following, except ----- is not part of the 4s of communication?

- a) Shortness
- b) Simplicity
- c) Strength
- d) Stationarity

SAQ 1.22: (Test Learning Outcome 1.3)

Which of the following is not a function of communication?

- a) Information Function
- b) Integrative Function
- c) Evaluation Function
- d) Transliteration function

SAQ 1.23: (Test Learning Outcome 1.3)

----- as a function of communication is connected to hierarchy

- a) Integrative Function
- b) Evaluation Function
- c) Transliteration function
- d) Command and Instructive Function

SAQ 1.24: (Test Learning Outcome 1.3)

Which of the following is not a form of classifying communication?

- a) Interpersonal communication
- b) Internal communication
- c) Formal communications
- d) Arial communications

SAQ 1.25: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

Information that occurs outside the organizational formal structure is known as -----

- a) Grapevine
- b) Graphical
- c) Gravitational
- d) Granulated

SAQ 1.26: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

All of the under listed except ----- is not an element of non-verbal communication?

- a) Proxemics,
- b) Oculistics,
- c) Chronemics,
- d) Parenthesis

SAQ 1.27: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

Formal communications may exhibit all of the following attributes except,

- a) Mandatory,
- b) Indicative
- c) Explanatory
- d) Psychological

SAQ 1.28: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

----- grapheme network is the most prevalent in business organizations.

- a) Cluster network

- b) probability network
- c) Gossip network
- d) single strand network

SAQ 1.29: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

----- comprises speeches, presentations, discussions, and some other aspects of interpersonal communication.

- a) Oral communication
- b) Virtual communication
- c) Lateral communication
- d) Grapevine communication

SAQ 1.30: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

The -----process is non-directive in nature

- a) Virtual communication
- b) Lateral communication
- c) Oral communication
- d) The upward communication

SAQ 1.31: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

Those actively engaged in lateral communication are label -----

- a) Personal communication
- b) Lateral communication
- c) Oral communication
- d) Boundary spanners

SAQ 1.32: (Test Learning Outcome 1.4)

Feedback mechanism or process in ----- is considered to be weak and delayed.

- a) Mass communication
- b) Personal communication
- c) Virtual communication
- d) Intrapersonal communication

Section B: Essay Questions

1. Describe what you think effective communication looks like. Share view with your classmates
(Test Learning Outcome 1.1)
2. List five classifications of business communication (Test Learning Outcome 1.2)
3. Highlight importance of business communication in the workplace (Test Learning Outcome 1.3)

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Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



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STUDY SESSION 2:

ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION



Introduction

In this study session, you will learn the broader meaning of business communication and as well, explain the importance of business communication from a broader perspective. Moreover, you will learn about the various elements involved in the business communication process. Furthermore, you will be exposed to the idea of noise and describe how it affects business communication processes and the different types of noise.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- 2.1. Discuss your knowledge and understanding of business communication (SAQ 2.1, 2.2.,)
- 2.2. Explain the importance of business communication (SAQ 2.3)
- 2.3. Describe the various elements involved in the business communication process (SAQ 2.3)
- 2.4. Define the concept of noise, and explain how it affects business communication process and the different types of noise (SAQ 2.4)



Key Terms: Noise, Channel, Feedback, Sender, Message, Receiver, External noise, Semantic noise, Physiological noise, Psychological noise

2.1 Understanding Business Communication

In the previous study, you have been introduced to business communication (definition and meaning) and its importance. I have no doubt that you enjoyed the first part and are eagerly waiting to progress to the next level.

Before we proceed to the Elements of Communication with regards to business, we need to have a clearer understanding of what communication is. Our background knowledge and understanding of communication will put us in good stead to understanding the elements of communication.

You may be wondering why we are bothering about understanding communication. After all, you have been communicating since you were a baby. That is true. In fact, you have been communicating before you were born. Surprised? You don't need to be. You have been communicating since conception in the womb. As we use to say in local parlance, if a woman is pregnant, we ask, is the baby kicking? That simple act of kicking is a form of communication with the mother. Doctors too communicate with the babies in the womb during pre-natal examination; Mothers in the class will know what I mean. Fathers who accompany their wives to hospitals will understand too.

Communication is life. Without communication, there is no life. We engage in communication from the womb to the last day we breathe. Permit me to share a personal experience. Many years ago, we had a fire in my home. In an attempt to escape from the fire, my heavily pregnant wife fell down. After the fire had been put off, our family medical personnel had to come quickly to examine my wife. She found that the baby (Now in secondary school) was okay. In other words, she had communicated with the baby.

2.2. Importance of Communication

Communication is important in all facets of life. About business, there can be no business without communication. No business can survive without communicating with its target audience. You need to communicate with them not only to create awareness of your products and service but also to seek understanding and goodwill. On a personal level, can you do without communicating in a day? Imagine the number of words you have spoken today. What of the texts you have sent or received? How many calls have you made today? You have engaged in so many acts of communication today. The list is endless.

Communication is an act we engage in more often than any other activity. We even take it for granted. Yet, it may interest us to know that we have little background in communication. Worse still, we have little understanding of communication and the processes involved. Let us demonstrate this by asking you to define communication. Pause and write your definition. You will find that it may not be as easy as you think. You will find that there may be different definitions as we have many students in the class.

Now let us define communication. According to Rothwell, the term Communication is derived from the Latin word 'communicare' which means to share. In other words, communication is the sharing of experience. It simply means the exchange of information, messages, ideas or symbols between a source and a receiver. Put in simpler terms, it is the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver. Hybels and Weaver II explained further that it involves not just the spoken

and written word but also “body language, personal mannerisms and style- anything that adds meaning to a message”. Hassan defines it as “a process of sharing or exchange of ideas, information, knowledge, attitude or feeling among two or more persons through certain signs and symbols”

The above definition shows that the source and receiver must attach same meaning to the messages, signs and symbols shared. This will bring understanding between the two. The simple definition stated above that communication is the passing or transfer of message from a source to a receiver had its origin in the writings of Harold Lasswell in 1948. This has been described further by asking some questions thus: who says what? In which medium? To whom? With what effect? This can be graphically demonstrated thus



Figure 1: The Communication Process

The simple graphic above shows that when a message originates from a source it will go through a medium or channel to be received by a receiver and the message must produce effect. For instance, if you are eating and you ask someone at the dining table to pass salt and he didn't, the message has not produced effect, but if he passes salt, it means that the message has produced effect.

2.3. Elements of Communication

I believe that you have clearly understood the meaning of communication. Our understanding of the meaning will now put us in good stead to appreciate the elements involved in communication. Let us establish some basic facts about communication. First, communication is a process. It has no definite end. According to Berlo, communication viewed as a process shows “events and relationship as dynamic, ongoing, ever-changing, continuous” it is not static. It produces reactions and counter-reactions. Secondly, communication is transactional. It involves people sharing meaning with others. Hybels and Weaver II identified three key principles involved in this transaction. First, people who are engaged in communication send messages continuously and simultaneously. Secondly, there is a part, present and future for all communication events. Take

for instance, Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria. It didn't start today (past), it is still happening (present) and we have not seen the end (Future). The same thing is true of COVID-19. Thirdly, all communicators play roles. The role you play is dependent on the situation and relationship involved. For instance, when a teacher talks to his pupils, he is a bit authoritative, and the students show respect. But there may be a role reversal when the teacher talks to his pastor. He is submissive and respectful and careful in the choice of words. Now let's consider the elements

a. Sender: This is the originator of the message. He conceives the idea, information, or message that he wants to pass along to the receiver. In other words, he is the encoder of the message- that is putting the message/ideas into spoken language and symbols that can be sent and understood by the receiver.

b. Message: This is the idea, feeling or information that a sender transmits to the receiver. It is the stimulus that can produce meaning.

c. Channel: This is the medium through which the message is sent. It is that route the message travels. The channel can be through mass media - Radio, television, Newspaper, internet, books and so on. In inter-personal, it is face-to-face (oral).

d. Noise: This is anything that interferes with the transmission of the message from the sender to the receiver. In other words, it is anything that interrupts the effective reception of the message. This could be in different forms (we shall deal with that later). Noise would affect interest and understanding of the message. A newspaper that bleeds will affect readership, poor radio signal will affect listenership. This would be treated better in the next session

e. Receiver: This is the person that decodes the message. She/he is the one that receives the message sent by the sender.

f. Feedback: This is the response of the receiver to the message sent by the sender. Feedback can be verbal or non-verbal. Communication is only complete when the receiver responds in the way desired by the sender. It means both actors attach the same meaning to the signs/message. Interpersonal communication provides the best opportunity for the feedback. It ensures better understanding of the message. There is instant feedback. Messages can be modified in response to the feedback.

2.4. Concept of Noise in Business Communication

We have decided to single out the noise element in the communication process for proper understanding. We will also have a better knowledge of its role in the communication process. Let us consider our normal lives. We don't enjoy noisy situations. Imagine when children make noise at home. How do you feel? When there is noise in the midst of discussion, we don't enjoy it.

Noise is therefore an unpleasant element of communication.

As earlier stated, noise is any interference that occurs in the process of sending a message from the sender to the receiver. It affects the reception and understanding of the message.

Noise can manifest in some ways. Let us consider the different forms of noise:

a. **External Noise:** This comes from the environment and prevents the message from being understood by the receiver. It distracts the attention of those involved in communication. It will also prevent the message from being heard. Imagine what happens when you are discussing with a colleague, and you are distracted by the blaring of a horn or an ambulance blowing siren.

Internal Noise: At times, you are in class as a student, but your mind is not on what you are being taught. You are, for instance, thinking of the traffic you will face when going home. This will affect your concentration. Internal Noise therefore is caused by what is going on in your mind that is your thought and feelings. Your focus is not on the communication at hand. You are thereby distracted.

b. **Semantic Noise:** This is a function of our emotional reaction to words. It manifests in the choice of words used which can be distracting thereby creating interference. It is therefore caused by our emotional reaction to words. Let us consider a few examples. Some of us are disturbed by the way many of today's Nigerian Youths 'murder' their local names on the social media. For example, they combine English letters to form a 'funky' name e.g. Horluwakemi, Horluwatomisin, Horluwamayowa. This can be confusing and distracting if not annoying to the elderly. The correct spellings are Oluwakemi, Oluwatomisin, and Oluwamayowa. In the same vein, profane words in music can attract emotional reactions by those who are pious. Also, if you are not used to some text language abbreviations, you may be confused and irritated.

c. **Physiological Noise:** According to Rothwell, "physiological noise or biological influences such as sweaty palms, pounding heart and butterflies in the stomach induced by speech anxiety or feeling sick or exhausted at work, can produce dramatic interference on both sender and receivers". If you find yourself in any of those situations, communication will not be interesting but distracting.

d. **Psychological Noise:** This manifests when we allow our biases, prejudices, assumptions and preconditions interfere "with effective message transmission and reception" (Rothwell). Have you considered when you are not ready to listen to a message from an individual, group, organization, a media house and the like based on your bias or prejudice.



The following are the various forms of noise in business communication except

(i) external (ii) **septic** (iii) psychological (iv) physiological (v) Semantic



Summary of Study Session 2

In this study session, you have learnt that:

- i. Communication simply means the exchange of information, messages, ideas or symbols between a source and receiver.
- ii. Communication is life. We communicate from the womb till we die.
- iii. Communication distinguishes us from lower animals.
- iv. Communication is important in all facets of our lives.
- v. We engage in communication more than any other activity in life.
- vi. A simple model of communication developed by Harlod Lasswell simply states - Who - says what- channel - whom - with what effect.
- vii. Communication is a process.
- viii. There are elements involved in communication.
- ix. The elements of communication are sender, message, channel, noise, decoder, receiver and feedback.
- x. Noise is anything that disrupts the smooth flow of the message from the sender to the receiver.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for study session 2

Now that you have studied this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes for Study Session by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study diary and discuss them with your facilitator at the next study centre meeting. You can check your answers at the end of this course material.

SAQ 2.1 (Test Learning Outcome 2.1)

What do you understand by communication and why is it taken for granted?

SAQ 2.2

Why do think that communication is important? **(Test Learning Outcome 2.2)**

SAQ 2.3

What are principles involved in communication as transaction? (**Test Learning Outcome 2.1**)

SAQ2.3

What are the elements of communication? (**Test Learning Outcome 2.3**)

SAQ 2.3

What is the importance of feedback? (**Test Learning Outcome 2.3**)

SAQ 2.4

How does noise affect communication? In what ways does it manifest? (**Test Learning Outcome 2.4**)

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen Learning/Book%3A Introduction to Business \(Lumen\)/22%3A Module 9 Readings - Teamwork and Communication/22.04%3A Reading-Effective Communication in Business](https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen Learning/Book%3A Introduction to Business (Lumen)/22%3A Module 9 Readings - Teamwork and Communication/22.04%3A Reading-Effective Communication in Business)

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen Learning/Book%3A Business Communication Skills for Managers \(Lumen\)](https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen Learning/Book%3A Business Communication Skills for Managers (Lumen))

References/Suggestions for Further Readings

Haassan, Seema (2014): *Mass communication: Principles and concepts*, New Delhi: CBS Publishers & Distributors PVT Ltd.

Hybels, Sandra, and Weaver II L. Richard (2001): *Communicating effectively*, Boston, McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Rothwell, D.J. Dan (2010): *In the company of others: An Introduction to communication*, New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press.



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STUDY SESSION 3:

ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



Introduction

In your last study, you have been able to understand deeply what communication is and its role/importance in every facet of our lives. As humans, you are better off than lower animals because you can communicate. This is one thing that distinguishes you. In addition to understanding what communication is, you also gained knowledge of the elements of communication. Having established that communication is a process and transactional, we have also learnt the role of each element in the process. Moreover, we have learnt what is meant by noise and its different forms. We have also known this ‘irritant’ element could affect communication. Hence, it is not to be taken for granted. Before we consider the main theme of this module, it will be pertinent to first consider what is meant by effective communication. An understanding of effective communication will put us in good stead to understanding the principles of effective communication.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- 3.1. Explain the meaning of effective communication (SAQ 3.1)
- 3.2. List and explain the principles of effective communication (SAQ 3.2)
- 3.3. Discuss the barriers to effective communication (SAQ 3.2)



Key Terms: Effective Communication, Noise, Medium, Language, Credibility, Courteous, Correctness, Coherence, Clarity

3.1. What Is Effective Communication

What does it mean when we say that someone has communicated effectively? Let us try and answer this question by considering a classroom situation. A typical classroom consists of the lecturer and his students. In our clime, we usually have many students on required or compulsory courses. In such situations, it is common for serious students to struggle for seats, particularly in the front

rows. Why do you think that they struggle to sit in the front rows? The reasons are not far-fetched. First, they want to hear the lecturer clearly. Secondly, they want to have a better understanding of the lecture by avoiding distractions which back benchers (as we say in the local parlance) might cause. Thirdly, they will be able to take better notes and get every word pronounced by the lecturer clearly.

Now consider those who sit in the middle or back of the hall. They deny themselves the obvious advantages that those in the front seats have. If you have observed clearly, those who use to say “pardon” (as we say in the local Parlace) are mostly those categories of students. Why do they say that? It is either they don’t hear clearly or understand what the lecturer is saying. That means that there is no effective communication.

From the above class situation, we can begin to have a glimpse of what effective communication. Imagine a situation when you are discussing with your course mate and the feedback you are getting is not what you expect. It shows that either the message is not understood or there is a problem with the message.

Effective communication in simple terms therefore means that the message sent by the sender is understood by the receiver the same way by both parties. This ensures better understanding of the message. It further shows the message is working.

Let us give a practical example and digress a little. There is a particular politician from Edo state who is noted for speaking “big grammar” (as we use to say in local parlance). He enjoys and uses vocabulary with passion in his communication, but many people do not understand him. His vocabulary is not effective for communication.

However, the point must be made that it is not only in oral communication that effective combination is desired. It is even more needed in written communication, which is a permanent message. Hence, in business communication, effective communication is a desideratum. The messages (letters, proposals, advertising, and all corporate communication) emanating from a company to its target audience/publics must be effective. In other words, the receivers of corporate communication must attach the same meaning to the message as desired by the company. For instance, it will be a waste of time and effort if a brand manager sends a message out and it is not understood by the receiver (corporate or individual). All efforts must be made to ensure that business/corporate communication is effective. Else, the image of the company would be negatively affected.

3.2. Principles of Effective Communication: The 7cs

Having understood the meaning of effective communication and its importance in both official (business) and private communication, we shall now consider the principles that we shall apply towards achieving the same. In other words, what we shall do to achieve effective communication.

The steps we shall take to achieving effective communication are referred to as the principles of effective communication. These principles are better known as the ‘7’ (seven) Cs of communication. It was first introduced by Scott. M. Cutlip and Alan H. Center in 1952. Hassan (2014), among other scholars, have further developed on the pioneering work of Cutlip and Center. The essence of the 7Cs is to ensure that messages are well understood by the receiver. That is, the message is understood the same way the sender intended. We shall consider each of the 7C’s one after the other.

- **Clarity:** A message must be clear to be effective. Clarity will ensure that the message is understood. The sender must make up his mind what idea he wants to express and be able to express it clearly. He must also know how to express it to bring understanding. He must be ‘single-minded’ and avoid jumping from one idea to another. According to Hasan “clarity is the first and foremost emphasis one should seek in writing”. To achieve this, he further stated that this can be achieved “in writing by taking pains to write to serve the purpose rather than to impress the reader”. Clarity therefore means the ability to express ideas without ambiguity. For one to write or even speak clearly, one must understand the subject matter well. Understanding the subject matter will put one in good stead to write effortlessly and clearly about it.
- **Conciseness:** To those who are young at heart and lovebirds, the word ‘kiss excites’ them. Let us apply the word in the context of conciseness. Kiss here could mean “keep it short and simple”. What does this mean? It means that your communication must be brief. You need to say those things that are necessary and avoid wasting words. When you express your message in few words, it becomes more effective and interesting. Any word that will not add anything to the message should be left out. When the message is unnecessarily long, it may become boring and uninteresting to the receiver. The idea must be expressed in a few telling words.
- **Completeness:** How do you feel when you receive an incomplete text message? You will feel angry and agitated. You will want to have the complete message immediately to enable you to act. You will want to call the sender to find out the full message. This underscores the importance of completeness in communication. For communication to be effective, it must be complete. In other words, full details must be provided in the message. All

important details and ideas must be included in the message. The sender must cross-check and ensure that nothing important is missing before sending the message. The message must not be vaguely worded. Completeness, however, does not mean verbosity but ensuring every necessary detail is included in the communication.

- **Coherence:** This means that all parts of the message must fit together. It must flow smoothly from the beginning to the end. Facts and figures must be presented logically. Ideas must be presented clearly. There must be proper transition from idea to another. The message must avoid ‘roaming-thoughts’. However, all the various ideas/points must tie up to a ‘whole’.
- **Correctness:** For the communication to be effective, it must be correct. Correctness means that it is error-free and devoid of falsehood. A receiver will be uninterested in a communication that is full of mistakes in terms of grammar, spelling, wrong information, figures and so on. The message will not achieve its purpose if these errors are prevalent in it. Consequently, it will be ineffective. Accuracy is very important in communication. The sender must ensure that all facts, names, figures, dates, spellings, and the like are properly checked before sending the message. This is also a function of proper editing. A maxim in journalism that “when in doubt, leave out” will apply here. Mistakes and errors will distract the receiver of the message. Hence the message will not be effective.
- **Courteous:** To be courteous means to show good manners, be polite and kind. In the same manner, communication must be courteous. In real life, we admire people who show us courtesy and respect. When we communicate formally, we must be courteous to our audience. Courteous communication is friendly and ‘respectful’. It does not contain harsh tone or insult. The writer keeps the “reader’s viewpoint in mind and you are empathetic to their needs” (edexec.co.uk). If you receive a message that is discourteous, you will feel offended. Business communication must be courteous because you need the continuous patronage of your customers to remain in business. If you insult or use harsh/aggressive tone in communicating with your audience, you might incur their wrath and consequently lose patronage.
- **Credibility:** For communication to be effective, it must have credibility. By credibility means that the message can be believed. Communication that lacks credibility is worthless. If the audience cannot believe the message, then the source credibility is questionable. In other words, the source of the message must be credible. The writing must be direct and clear with the intention of producing a reaction. The message must not provide any chance

of doubting its credibility. Communication that lacks credibility cannot produce the desired result. In other words, it will be ineffective.



None but one is a principle of communication.



(i) message (ii) noise (iii) **completeness** (iv) mindset (v) correctness

3.3. Barriers to Effective Communication

We have learnt the basic principles that will enable us to achieve effective communication. The application of these principles will put us in good stead to achieve effective communication. Let us move ahead by identifying and explaining the barriers to effective communication. Let us start by asking a simple question: What is a barrier? In our context, barrier refers to situation or problem that will prevent one from achieving effective communication. They are obstacles that must be overcome if effective communication is to be achieved.

What this simply tells us is that despite the application of the 7cs which we have discussed previously, effective communication may still not be achieved. That means that certain things (barriers) must still give way to enable us to achieve our goal of effective communication. This is particularly true of formal communication like business communication under review.

If we cannot achieve effective communication in business, we are putting our patronage in jeopardy. Therefore, it is very important to overcome situations that can serve as obstacles against achieving effective communication. Our ability to achieve effective communication in business will not only endear us to our client but will also help in sustaining our business through continuous patronage.

Now let us consider the barriers that can prevent us from achieving effective communication. Better still, let us consider the obstacles we must overcome if our goal of effective communication is to be achieved. Let us start with the 'obvious barrier'. Without much ado, I believe that you know this. This is because the 'expo' (using our local parlance) has been given in our previous discussion. What is it? It is simply known as noise. We need to explain the barriers one after the other.

- ❖ **Noise:** Do we still define noise? The answer is obviously capital NO. This is because we have done that in our previous study. What is important is that we should know that noise is a barrier that can prevent us from achieving effective communication either in formal or informal communication. In business communication, we must overcome noise which is

any interruption that can render our communication ineffective. As we learnt earlier on, noise can manifest in many forms. But irrespective of the way it manifests, we must overcome it. We must reduce it to the barest minimum if we are to achieve effective communication. For instance, in business communication, a business letter that is blurred cannot produce the desired result- effective communication. Also, if the letter is poorly written with spelling errors or poor grammar, it will constitute noise to the reader and obviously distraction. It will render communication ineffective. In the same vein, poor reproduction of an advertisement in newspaper or magazine will constitute noise and obviously distractive if the visuals are not clear and the message is blurred, the advertisement will be ineffective. Better quality production will help overcome this barrier.

Furthermore, noise can prevent a radio or television advertisement from being effective. This can manifest through channel noise, poor reception, poor audio/video, and the like. The source of the message may not have control over some of these things. But the source can ensure quality production of advertisement.

In formal speech situations, malfunctioning loudspeakers can constitute noise. The same thing is true of microphones or air conditioners. All these must be overcome if we are to achieve effective communication. Also, a poor accent or stage fright on the part of the speaker can constitute noise. At the individual level, noise can emanate from the poor signal from the mobile network service, poor reception or malfunctioning mobile phone device. All these will render communication ineffective. Noise can also manifest in other forms at the inter-personal communication level.

- ❖ **Language:** This is the means of expression or communication used in speech or writing. The language of communication must be common between both parties involved to aid understanding. If the language is not understood by the parties, the communication will be a wasted effort. According to Neil Postman, the language environment is “made up of four elements: people, their purpose, the rules of communication by which they achieve their purpose and the actual talk used in the situation”.

What is necessary is that we must use appropriate words in our communication. The choice of wrong words can affect our communication and people may attach different meanings to our words. Some words may be considered insulting to some people. Different cultures attach different meanings to words. In some cultures, some words are used to express respect while it does not make meaning in another. In Yoruba culture, for instance, some

words are used to show respect to elders and non-usage of such words may be considered insulting.

Besides, the source must consider the audience in his/her communication. Some demographic characteristics of the audience may be useful here. For instance, when you are communicating with a predominantly semi-illiterate or illiterate audience, the language of communication must not only be simple but common to all. In such a situation, it will be out of place to communicate in British Queen's English. In this case, it will be better to communicate with such an audience in the local language or the popular Nigerian 'pidgin' English.

In the same vein, when you want to communicate the benefits of a brand to your audience through advertisement, you should also make it simple and use a language that is appealing to all if the product has a general appeal. Better still, you can produce different advertisements to meet the needs of the different segments of the audience of the product. In addition, all business terms or professional jargon must be explained in simple language to an audience that is not very literate. For instance, if you want to advertise insurance to such an audience, instead of saying premium, you can say in pidgin, 'the money way dem dey pay insurance company every month, quarter or year wey dem dey call premium...' it is easier to understand this.

- ❖ **Medium:** The medium through which a message is delivered or sent can be a barrier to effective communication. If the right medium is not used for the communication, its effectiveness will be affected. Hence, the popular phrase many years ago by Marshall McLuhan that "the medium is the message" is still relevant today.
- ❖ **Timing:** Just like the medium, timing can affect the effectiveness of communication. Hence, the time a message is sent can be a barrier to its effectiveness. If the timing is not right, the reception may be poor and disposition towards it may be negative. For instance, in advertising a product or service, timing is very critical. That is why we have different time belts on radio and television.
- ❖ **Other Factors:** Hassan has identified a list of other factors which can serve as barriers to effective communication. These factors which are self-explanatory as identified by Hassan are poor vocabulary, semantic barriers, distance, status, attitudes and value, emotions, and different perception of reality among others.



The following are barriers to effective communication except



(i) noise (ii) language (iii) medium (iv) mindset (v) timing



Summary of Study Session 3

In this study session, you have learnt that:

1. Effective communication simply means that the messages sent by the sender is understood by the receiver the same way the sender intended. This implies that both the sender and receiver attach the same meaning to the message. Effective communication will guarantee better understanding of the message and attract the right feedback. Effective communication is desired in all communication situations.
2. The principles of effective communication are clarity, conciseness, completeness, coherence, correctness, courtesy, and credibility.
3. Noise, language, medium, timing, poor vocabulary, semantic barriers, distance, status, attitudes and value, emotions, and different perception of reality among others are source of barriers to effective communication.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have studied this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study diary and discuss them with your facilitator at the next study center meeting. You can check your answers at the end of this course material.

SAQ 3.1 (Test Learning Outcome 3.1)

What do you understand by effective communication?

SAQ 3.2 (Test Learning Outcome 3.1)

Why is effective communication important? (Test Learning Outcome 3.1)

SAQ 3.3

What are the principles of effective communication? (Test Learning Outcome 3.2)

SAQ3.4

List and discuss three barriers to effective communication? (Test Learning Outcome 3.3)

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Sandboxes/jhalpern/BMT_2720%3A_Managing_Workplace_Diversity_\(Perry\)/05%3A_Successful teamwork and leadership within a diverse workplace/5.02%3A Striving for Engaged and Effective Intercultural Communication](https://biz.libretexts.org/Sandboxes/jhalpern/BMT_2720%3A_Managing_Workplace_Diversity_(Perry)/05%3A_Successful_teamwork_and_leadership_within_a_diverse_workplace/5.02%3A_Striving_for_Engaged_and_Effective_Intercultural_Communication)

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Introductory_Business/Book%3A_Introduction to Business \(Lumen\)/11%3A_Teamwork and Communication/11.07%3A_Putting It Together - Teamwork and Communication](https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Introductory_Business/Book%3A_Introduction_to_Business_(Lumen)/11%3A_Teamwork_and_Communication/11.07%3A_Putting_It_Together_-_Teamwork_and_Communication)

References/Suggestions for Further Readings

Hasan, Seema (2014): *Mass communication: Principles and concept*. New Delhi, CBS Publishers and Distributors PVT Limited.

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STUDY SESSION 4:

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND STRATEGIES



Introduction

I welcome you to another topic in the study of Business Communication. I believe you are having better understanding of the course so far. I would like to start the discourse on verbal communication by telling you a true-life story to underscore the importance of the topic under review. Several years ago, when I was in the final year in secondary school, my close friend woke up one morning in the hostel and couldn't speak again. My bed was beside his and he tapped me repeatedly without uttering a word. I called his name and asked what the problem was. There was no response; lo and behold, he couldn't speak again. As expected, we were all confused. What should we do? I took him home to his parents. Typical of Nigerian (Nay African) situation, he was said to be attacked (spiritually) in his sleep. It was a combination of spiritual, western and traditional medicine saw that him regain his speech. Our joy knew no bounds when he was able to speak again. I have narrated this experience to show you the importance of verbal communication in the life of man. In fact, we communicate verbally from the moment we are born till we die. If a child is born in the hospital and the baby does not 'cry' (communicate). I have heard of situations where midwives will crudely beat the child's bum to force him/her to cry. Just as verbal communication is important in our lives, it is equally important in business. A business organization that doesn't communicate with its audience will die a natural death. For a business to continue to operate successfully, it must engage in various forms of verbal communication with its target audience. Even if a company does not have a competitor, it will still communicate verbally with its prospects and targets. No wonder, electricity distribution companies (despite their monopolies) still communicate with their consumers. They cannot afford not to communicate even though the consumers have little or no choice than to patronize them. The options of the consumers are at a higher cost.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

At the end of this study session, you will be able to:

- 4.1. Define verbal and non-verbal communication. (SAQ 4.1, SAQ 4.2)
- 4.2. Explain the importance of both verbal and non-verbal communication (SAQ 4.2)

- 4.3. Describe what listening is in communication, its importance, process involved in listening, listening skills and barriers to listening (SAQ 4.3)
- 4.4. Understand the concept of reading (SAQ 4.4)
- 4.5. Explain speaking, its purpose, and skills (SAQ 4.5)
- 4.6. List and explain writing, its importance, and the essentials of good writing (SAQ 4.6)



Key Terms: Verbal Communication, Non-verbal communication, Skimming, Scanning, Intensive, Extensive, Memos, Bulletins

4.1. Verbal Communication and Non-Verbal Communication

Both verbal and the non-verbal communication skills have been seen from diverse perspectives. The subsections below provide various definitions of verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

4.1.1. Verbal Communication

Let us define verbal communication. In a simple form we can start with the word ‘verbal’- what does it mean? It simply means something communicated in words. It is the use of words in communication; sounds are also used. Hence, the combination of both may be involved. How then can we define verbal combination? Let us consider the definition of some communication scholars. According to Hybels and Weaver II (2001:136), verbal communication consists of words used to communicate. Receivers attach meanings to the word and decode the word. This brings understanding. The point must be made, however, that words can mean different things in different cultures. The Business Dictionary defines verbal communication as the sharing of information between individuals by using speech. In other words, messages are sent forth verbally or by writing. Let us consider some key areas of communication.

Verbal communication includes sounds, words, language, and speech. Speaking is an effective way of communicating and helps in expressing our emotions in words. This form of communication is further classified into four types, which are:

- **Intrapersonal Communication:** This form of communication is extremely private and restricted to us. It includes the silent conversations we have with ourselves, wherein we juggle roles between the sender and receiver who are processing our thoughts and actions. This process of communication when analyzed can either be conveyed verbally to someone or stay confined as thoughts.
- **Interpersonal Communication:** This form of communication takes place

between two individuals and is thus a one-on-one conversation. Here, the two individuals involved will swap their roles of sender and receiver to communicate in a clearer manner.

- **Small Group Communication:** This type of communication can take place only when there are more than two people involved. Here the number of people will be small enough to allow each participant to interact and converse with the rest. Press conferences, board meetings, and team meetings are examples of group communication. Unless a specific issue is being discussed, small group discussions can become chaotic and difficult to interpret by everybody. This lag in understanding information completely can result in miscommunication.
- **Public Communication:** This type of communication takes place when one individual address a large gathering of people. Election campaigns and public speeches are examples of this type of communication. In such cases, there is usually a single sender of information and several receivers who are being addressed.



What are the four forms of verbal communication?



(i) public (ii) small group (iii) interpersonal (iv) intrapersonal

4.1.2. Non-Verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication refers to the ways in which beings convey information about their emotions, needs, intentions, attitudes, and thoughts without the use of verbal language. Nonverbal communication types include facial expressions, gestures, paralinguistics such as loudness or tone of voice, body language, proxemics or personal space, eye gaze, haptics (touch), appearance, and artifacts.

- **Facial Expressions:** Facial expressions are responsible for a huge proportion of nonverbal communication. Consider how much information can be conveyed with a smile or a frown. The look on a person's face is often the first thing we see, even before we hear what they have to say. While nonverbal communication and behavior can vary dramatically between cultures, the facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, and fear are similar throughout the world.
- **Gestures:** Deliberate movements and signals are an important way to

communicate meaning without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, and using fingers to indicate numeric amounts. Other gestures are arbitrary and related to culture.

- **Paralinguistics:** Paralinguistics refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. This includes factors such as tone of voice, loudness, inflection, and pitch. Consider the powerful effect that tone of voice can have on the meaning of a sentence. When said in a strong tone of voice, listeners might interpret approval and enthusiasm. The same words said in a hesitant tone of voice might convey disapproval and a lack of interest.
- **Body Language and Posture:** Posture and movement can also convey a great deal of information. Research on body language has grown significantly since the 1970s, but popular media have focused on the over-interpretation of defensive postures, arm-crossing, and leg-crossing, especially after publishing Julius Fast's book *Body Language*. While these nonverbal behaviors can indicate feelings and attitudes, research suggests that body language is far subtler and less definitive than previously believed.
- **Proxemics:** People often refer to their need for "personal space," which is also an important type of nonverbal communication. The amount of distance we need and the amount of space we perceive as belonging to us is influenced by several factors including social norms, cultural expectations, situational factors, personality characteristics, and level of familiarity.
- **Eye Gaze:** The eyes play an important role in nonverbal communication and such things as looking, staring, and blinking are important nonverbal behaviors. When people encounter people or things that they like, the rate of blinking increases and pupils dilate. Looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions including hostility, interest, and attraction.
- **Appearance:** Our choice of color, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors affecting appearance are also considered a means of nonverbal communication. Research on color psychology has demonstrated that different colors can evoke different moods. Appearance can also alter physiological reactions, judgments, and interpretations.
- **Artifacts:** Objects and images are also tools that can be used to communicate nonverbally. On an online forum, for example, you might select an avatar to

represent your identity online and to communicate information about who you are and the things you like. People often spend a great deal of time developing a particular image and surrounding themselves with objects designed to convey information about the things that are important to them.



Five types of non-verbal communication?



(i) facial expression (ii) gestures (iii) eye gaze (iv) appearance (v) artifacts

4.2. Importance of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Both verbal and non-verbal communication are useful tools and are important for various reasons shown below:

4.2.1. Why is Verbal Communication Important?

We use verbal communication to inform, whether it is to inform others of our needs or to impart knowledge. Clarification is a key component of verbal communication.

Often, we do not articulate ourselves clearly, or our words or actions are misconstrued. Verbal communication helps to clarify misunderstandings and provides missing information.

Verbal communication can be used to correct a wrong, where powerful words are more effective than an action. It can also be used as a tool of persuasion and creates opportunity for debate, stimulates thought and creativity and deepens and creates new relationships.

In the International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences article "The Psychology of Verbal Communication," Robert M. Krauss explains, "A species' survival depends critically upon its ability to communicate effectively, and the quality of its social life is determined in large measure by how and what it can communicate.

4.2.2. Why is Non-Verbal Communication Important?

Think of how many relationships start with a man and woman making eye contact across a crowded room. A playful wink tends to be more effective than a well-thought out pick-up-line.

In his book, "Bodily Communication," Michael Argyle identifies five main functions of non-verbal communication: to express emotions, communicate interpersonal relationships, support verbal interaction, reflect personality and perform rituals, such as greetings and

goodbyes.

The Importance of Effective Communication" paper by Edward G. Wertheim, PhD., details how non-verbal communication interacts with verbal communication: We can reinforce, contradict, substitute, complement or emphasize our verbal communication with non-verbal cues such as gestures, expressions, and vocal inflection.

Avoiding eye contact when we tell someone we love them communicates something far different than do spoken words, just as a bright smile when we say congratulations reinforces the sincerity of our words.

4.3 Listening in Communication

According to Wood, “listening is an active complex process that includes being mindful, physically receiving messages, selecting and organizing information, interpreting communication, responding and remembering”. It is the act of paying attention to what somebody says or taking notice that you can hear. As it is often said, listening is the beginning of understanding. Full understanding may be a function of being attentive to what the speaker says. According to Woods, “effective communication also involves listening; few of us devote as much energy to listening as we do to talking”.

For business organizations, acquisition of listening skill by the staff is a critical ingredient for productivity and success; it has been found that “there is a direct connection between good listening and productivity on the job”. Employees who are trained in listening skills have been found more productive than those who did not receive such training. Deal and Kennedy stated that “when people don’t listen carefully on the job, they often miss important information that affects their work and advancement”. Also, listening has been found to be one of the most important qualities of effective managers. Researchers have shown that in America that employees of companies spend about 60% of their time listening while executives spend an average of 57%. As it is in the business world, so is education. As a student, when you don’t listen attentively to your lecturer in class, your understanding is impacted. When you listen attentively in class, you are most likely to understand the subject and (all things being equal) perform better in tests, assignments and consequently examination. Let us also consider personal relationships either as friends, roommates or in family setting. We will live more harmoniously if we listen better to ourselves. This will ensure more understanding. Misunderstandings will be reduced to the barest minimum.

4.3.1. The Listening Process

Wood identified six processes involved in listening. Let us discuss each of them in turn.

They are:

- i. **Being mindful:** This means that the listener consciously makes up his mind to listen with rapt attention or “being fully engaged at the moment”. He avoids any kind of distraction in the conversation. This will ensure understanding and commitment on the part of those involved.
- ii. **Physical reception of messages:** Oral messages are received through hearing. The deaf receive messages through sign language or by reading the lips of the speaker. But when we have received messages for a long time sitting down, we may be tired or discouraged. Imagine how you feel when you sit in class for two hours.
- iii. **Selecting and organizing materials:** We cannot receive all messages hence we select some and disregard others. Our interests and expectations among others will determine what will select. We also curb our interferences to our messages. After we have selected our messages, we organize the material.
- iv. **Interpreting Communication:** After we have selected and organized our material, we interpret the message we have received to make sense out of them, you may not always accept the views of the others, but you must listen first to them to know their perspective so that you can argue logically.
- v. **Response:** Listening becomes effective when you respond. You don’t need to wait till the end of the discussion before you respond but you do though out the interaction. Our response not only shows that we are listening but interested in the discussion. You can give non-verbal gestures to show response.
- vi. **Remembering:** This is the final stage of the listening process. We must be able to remember what we hear. The rate of retention is high immediately after the conversation but decreases with time.



The following are process of listening except.



(i) response (ii) remembering (iii) being mindful (iv) **intrapersonal**

4.3.2. Listening Skills

In whatever we do, we need skills to excel. You may be wondering what is listening skill? Do I need any skill to listen? After all, I have been ‘listening’ since I was a baby. You are perfectly right. Listening is usually taken for granted. But if we want to have better understanding of the message, ‘connect’ with the speaker and create a conducive

atmosphere between both, the listener must listen attentively.

The question then arises: What are the skills we need? Do I need to learn them? These and many more questions will agitate our minds. The skills are very simple things that we only need to pay special attention to in our conversations.

Hasan identified some listening skills for the listener which when adopted will make listening to a pleasurable experience. They include but are not limited to:

- a) Keep quiet while listening
- b) Focus on what the speaker says and not on his/her looks
- c) Avoid distractions
- d) Show interest in the speaker
- e) listen first and take notes afterwards
- f) look for the main theme and ideas
- g) Avoid interruptions
- h) Be interested and act interested in the speech
- i) Be open minded
- j) Keep your mind open to every subject and speaker.
- k) Chose a quiet place to listen if possible
- l) Arrive early at a speech event- lecture, seminar and so on.
- m) Empathize with the speaker and try to understand his opinions, views and values.
- n) Observe non-verbal signals, facial expressions, body movements and gestures
- o) Try to look into the speakers' eyes
- p) Be objective in your evaluation of the speakers' message.
- q) Accept criticism without losing your temper.
- r) Give feedback. Ask a question to encourage him to show that you are interested and understand.

4.3.3. Barriers to Effective Listening

Much as we plan to listen effectually during conversations, there are certain barriers which may prevent us achieving this. The underlisted points which are self-explanatory serve as barriers to effective listening. We must overcome them if we want to achieve effective listening. They are as follows:

- a) Distractions
- b) Lack of interest
- c) Noise
- d) Prejudgment

- e) Length of time
- f) Too much information (information overload)
- g) Difficult or complex message
- h) Too much familiarity
- i) Unwillingness to accommodate opposing views
- j) Pre-occupation

4.3.4. Forms of Listening

Let us conclude our discussion on listening by examining the forms of listening. Why do we listen? Can we afford not to listen to others? It is impossible. We spend most of our time listening to others every day. Let me ask you a simple question. Why do you think God gave you two ears? It is obvious to listen more than talking.

The forms of listening that have been identified are as follows:

- **Listening for information/knowledge:** We listen to gather information and ultimately improve our knowledge. As a student, you listen to your lecturers or instructors to gather information and gain knowledge. You listen to the news on the radio to gather information which will be useful for you. In business, we listen to gather information on many things relating to our business. For instance, we listen to business reports to gather information on price gains, on the stock market, interest rate, exchange rate and so on.
- **Listening for pleasure/enjoyment:** Pleasurable listening can be pleasant. It is simply listening for enjoyment, when you listen to any of your favorite musicians on any device you want, you are listening for pleasure and enjoying yourself. When you attend comedy shows, you listen to jokes for pleasure and to enjoy yourself.
- **Listening to discriminate:** According to Wood, there are situations “we listen to make fine discriminations in sounds order to draw valid conclusions and act appropriately in response”. For instance, doctors use the stethoscope to diagnose the heart/chest function of a patient. In this way, they are listening to discriminate.
- **Active listening:** This can be considered an advanced form of listening for information/knowledge (though similar). In the words of Hybels and Weaver II, in interpersonal communication “it involves looking for the literal and the emotional meaning in what someone is saying as well as showing interest with non-verbal cues”. Active listeners are not only interested but very much

involved in the conversation. There is opportunity for feedback; questions can be asked, and comments made.



Only one (1) is a form of listening in communication?



(i) public (ii) small group (iii) interpersonal (iv) intrapersonal (v) listening to discrimination

4.4. Reading in Communication

It has been said (though derogatively) that if you want to hide anything from an African, put it in print. I do not agree with this submission. But when it shows is that we Africans don't read. May I ask you; how many books have you read this year? It will surprise you that some students do not know where the main library of our school - University of Lagos – is located. Gone were the days when students were vociferous readers. It is worrisome that students do not read these days. They would rather spend their time on less productive ventures particularly social media. Yet, reading is central to life and business. The amount of information and knowledge you can gain through reading can determine how far you can go in life and business endeavor. In the same vein, a student that reads will no doubt perform better than those who don't read. Imagine how frightened you will be in examinations if you don't prepare well by reading. No wonder it has been said that readers are leaders. Now, let's ask simple questions. What is reading? To read simply means looking at and understanding the meaning of written or printed words or symbols. Reading is the activity of someone who reads.

The essence of reading is to understand basic and useful ideals and commit some to memory for future usage. When you read, you are concerned with the salient points. It is not every word that matters to you. When you read a business proposal, it is not the very word of the proposal that matters. You look for business ideas and investment opportunities.

There is a purpose because we read; the aim of reading is comprehension. You don't just read for the fun of it, you have a purpose in mind. As students of Business Administration and allied courses, you will be selective in the kind of journals you read. It is expected that you will read more business/economy columns of newspapers and magazines. This will be true of serious-minded students. But male students may enjoy sports column more. Reading skills and strategies: reading skills will enable one to interact and derive meaning from the written word. According to Whalon, Otabia and Delano, it is "recognizing and manipulating spoken words in language"

The four types of reading techniques are skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive (www.howtolearn.com).

- **Skimming:** It means reading to know the usefulness of the information. It is done quickly but not carefully. It is done quickly without searching for specific facts.
- **Scanning:** This means looking for information in a text or document quickly but not carefully. You know what you want and go for it specifically without looking at every word in the page or document.
- **Intensive:** This means reading in detail with a high level of concentration. You read slowly to analyze what is being read.
- **Extensive:** In this type of reading, you read the material in-depth with a view to understanding it.
- However, the strategies that have been identified for reading are using prior knowledge/previewing, predicting, identifying the main idea, summarization, questioning, making inferences and visualizing, (www.readnaturally.com).



Only one (1) is a form of reading in communication?



(i) questioning (ii) reading group (iii) personal (iv) intrapersonal (v) reading to discriminate

4.5. Speaking in Communication

Speaking is a major form of verbal communication. It is an activity we engage in from birth till death. Freedom of speech is one of the fundamental and inalienable rights of every citizen of a country. Any attempt to curb this is usually resisted by its citizens. We engage in speaking ability in our everyday conversation. We do this by speaking everyday with family members, friends, course mates, roommates, co-workers and so on. This is generally inter-personal or group communication. Ability to speak effectively is central to having a voice in the workplace, community, and society at large. It is a means of having influence and fellowship.

In some careers/professions, the ability to speak effectively is a criterion for success. In fact, the ability to express your ideas clearly is one of the critical qualities that will be assessed. In public relations for instance, it is expected that the practitioner should be able to speak clearly and effectively. In the same vein, it is expected that a business executive should be able to make effective business presentations, marketers, sales personnel, and the like should speak effectively and persuasively to gain confidence of prospects and clients. However, what is needed is to have

the requisite communication skills to be able to speak effectively. These skills can be learned and acquired through practice and experience. Moreover, public speaking is a more enlarged conversation with a large audience. It requires more preparation, planning, topic selection, research for supporting materials, ethics, delivery, and purpose. In public speaking, the speaker must select a topic that is not only appropriate for the audience but also appropriate for him/her to handle. It must not be broad but specific and suitable for the occasion. Topic selection is the first step in public speaking. You don't embark on public speaking for the fun of it. You must have a purpose. The purpose will range from general to specific. The general purposes of public speaking are:

4.6. Writing in Communication

Simply put, written communication refers to the conveying of a message through written symbols. It differs from verbal communication in that it is words noted down rather than spoken. The nature of written communication means that you can consciously choose and edit words to best get your point across. Whenever two people exchange printed words – whether a handcrafted letter, a short text message or a brief email – they are engaging in written communication.

4.6.1. Advantages of Written Communication

There are many advantages of written communication that make it the most common and effective mode of business interaction.

- It is used across every organization, regardless of environment, and can take many forms from emails to employee manuals.
- It allows the sender to carefully craft a message to reach many people. While speaking from the heart without a script can seem personal and sincere, it can also run the risk of well-intended words being misconstrued.
- Removing the verbal aspect helps to mitigate this and at the same time creates a physical or virtual paper trail that can be referred to in the future. This permanent record of information allows businesses to access data quickly, often years later.
- It is also the best choice of communication when transmitting lengthy or complex information, as it allows for thorough elaboration in a way that verbal interaction cannot.
- Written communications also define a brand by portraying them with their desired elements.
- As written communication is used across such a wide spectrum, learning and developing effective writing skills is invaluable. Crafting quality written

communication is much more than putting words on a page; it is a way to express how you feel, raise a call to action and gain the trust of others.

- The strength of written communication lies in the effectiveness of your message. It is crucial that you choose the correct words, sentence structure and paragraph cohesion.

4.6.2. What Are the Main Types of Written Communication?

The main types of written communication include:

- **Emails:** Electronic mail has become a very popular method of communication within businesses due to its rapid delivery, ease of use and ability to reach large audiences effortlessly. Emails should be succinct to grab attention, so make use of bullet points and numbered lists.
- **Letters:** One of the most important written communication formats, letters are a medium that has stood the test of time. They should use simple language with impeccable spelling and grammar.
- **Contracts:** They detail the legally binding undertakings of parties. It is important that contracts are drafted with a focus on detail and clarity.
- **Briefs:** As the name suggests, this form of communication should be brief. These forms of text are usually prepared to give information to another person ahead of a meeting.
- **Memos:** These short letters are usually used to communicate with the employees of the same organization. They should only contain information that is necessary to ensure people take away the key facts.
- **Meeting agendas:** Meeting agendas are circulated prior to a gathering to inform attendees of the planned discussion topics. They should be detailed enough to make the reader aware of what will happen but avoid an overload of unnecessary information.
- **Bulletins:** A bulletin is a notice posted in a communal area to inform employees of emergencies and important matters. Its main purpose is to relay urgent information, so this communication must be short and succinct.
- **Announcements:** People will look for the highlights in an announcement communication, so use font features such as bold text and underlining to draw attention to the most important parts.



Both letters and contracts are not necessarily main types of written communication?



(i) Yes (ii) Cannot Say (iii) **No**



Summary of Study Session 4

In this study session, you have learnt

- i. The definition and types and forms of verbal and non-verbal communication.
- ii. The importance of both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- iii. What is listening in communication is, its importance, process involved in listening, listening skills and barriers to listening.
- iv. The concept of reading in communication, the various types of reading techniques
- v. Speaking in communication, its purpose and skills.
- vi. Its importance and the essentials of good writing, and types.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have studied this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study diary and discuss them with your facilitator at the next study centre meeting. You can check your answers at the end of this course material.

SAQ 4.1: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.1)

Which of the following is not a type of verbal communication?

- a) Interpersonal communication
- b) Intrapersonal communication
- c) Large group communication
- d) Public communication

SAQ 4.2: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.1)

Intrapersonal communication? Takes place between two individuals and is thus a one-on-one conversation.

- a) Yes
- b) Cannot Say
- c) No

SAQ 4.3: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.1)

One of the following statements is not true about non-verbal communication?

- a) Nonverbal communication refers to the ways in which beings convey information about their emotions and needs
- b) Facial expressions are not responsible for a huge proportion of nonverbal communication
- c) Common gestures include waving, pointing, and using fingers to indicate numeric amounts
- d) Our choice of color, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors affecting appearance are also considered a means of nonverbal communication

SAQ 4.4: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.1)

Which of the following is not a type of non-verbal communication?

- a) Facial expression
- b) Gestures
- c) Paralympics
- d) Proxemics

SAQ 4.5: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.2)

Choose the three statements that are true?

- a) We use verbal communication to inform others of our needs or to impart knowledge.
- b) Verbal communication can be used to cause wrong actions, where weak words are less efficient than inaction.
- c) Verbal communication helps to clarify misunderstandings and provides missing information.
- d) We can reinforce, contradict, substitute, complement or emphasize our verbal communication with non-verbal cues such as gestures, expressions and vocal inflection.

SAQ 4.6: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.3)

Choose three statements amongst others that are true?

- a) For business organizations, acquisition of listening skills by the staff is a critical ingredient for productivity and success
- b) Listening is an inactive simple process that includes not-being mindful, spiritually receiving messages, ignoring and organizing reformation and forgetting
- c) Effective communication also involves listening; few of us devote as much energy to listening as we do to talking
- d) Full understanding may be a function of being attentive to what the speaker says

SAQ 4.7: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.3)

The listening process does not include.

- a) Being mindful

- b) Physical reception of messages
- c) Remembering
- d) Listening and changing selection

SAQ 4.8: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.3)

Barriers to effective listening does not include

- a) Too much familiarity
- b) Difficult or complex message
- c) Lack of interest
- d) Attention

SAQ 4.9: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.3)

Only one statement is true about forms of listening?

- a) we listen to make satisfactory discriminations in sounds order to draw valid conclusions and act appropriately in response
- b) We study hard to pass exams and ultimately improve our knowledge.
- c) Active listeners are not interested and involved in the conversation
- d) Pleasurable listening can be very unpleasant because you are listening for pleasure and enjoying yourself.

SAQ 4.10: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.4)

Three types of reading techniques include.

- a) Scanning
- b) Skipping
- c) Intensive
- d) Extensive

SAQ 4.11: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.5)

Three statements are not true about speaking in communication.

- a) The ability to speak effectively causes violence in the workplace, community, and the society at large.
- b) Freedom of speech is not one of the fundamental and inalienable rights of every citizen of a country.
- c) In some careers/professions, the ability to speak effectively is a criterion for success. In fact, the ability to express your ideas clearly is one of the critical qualities that will be assessed.
- d) In public relations for instance, it is not expected that the practitioner should be able to speak clearly and effectively.

SAQ 4.12: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.6)

Three statements are true about advantages of written communication

- a) It is also the best choice of communication when transmitting lengthy or complex information, as it allows for thorough elaboration in a way that verbal interaction cannot.
- b) Written communications also define a brand by portraying them with their desired elements.
- c) It is not used across every organization, regardless of environment, and cannot take many forms from emails to employee manuals.
- d) It allows the sender to carefully craft a message to reach many people.

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_Business_Communication_Skills_for_Managers_\(Lumen\)/16%3A_Text_Contents/16.03%3A_Learning_Outcomes](https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_Business_Communication_Skills_for_Managers_(Lumen)/16%3A_Text_Contents/16.03%3A_Learning_Outcomes)

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References/Suggestions for Further Readings

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Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



Are you in need of General Help as regards your studies? Do not hesitate to contact the DLI IAG Center by e-mail or phone on:

 iag@dli.unilag.edu.ng

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STUDY SESSION 5:

BUSINESS CONVERSATIONS



Introduction

In our everyday lives, we are often involved in various kinds of conversations. Similarly, in the business terrain, we will often find ourselves involved in various kinds of business conversations. These are conversations by which we communicate between and among business stakeholders, such as management, staff, customers, suppliers, etc. Two of the most common ones are telephone communication and meetings. These conversations allow us to give and receive information, discuss issues, and take decisions that are relevant to achieving organizational goals. Developing oneself in these areas, therefore, is crucial to the success of business relationships and career. In this study session you will learn professional ways to handle conversations relating to the telephone and business meetings in both face-to-face and online modes.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

After you have carefully studied this Session, you should be able to:

- 5.1 Define and use correctly all the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQs 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3)
- 5.2 Explain the main idea of business conversations. (SAQs 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3)
- 5.3 Describe general etiquette and specific techniques for telephone communication. (SAQs 5.1 and 5.2)
- 5.4 Describe the processes and techniques in planning, facilitating, and participating in productive meetings, in face-to-face and online modes. (SAQs 5.1 and 5.3)



Key Terms: Telephone communication, Meetings

5.1 General Etiquette and Specific Techniques for Telephone Conversations

Telephone communication refers to communication between or among persons through the medium of a telephone. In some instances, the telephone is the recommended means of communication, such as when you need to communicate urgently. In other instances, such as when working with people in remote locations, the telephone may be the primary channel for communication. As it is such a common mode of business communication, offices often have guidelines for telephone communication. You need to be familiar with them and always adhere to the protocols. Nevertheless, the following general telephone etiquette and specific techniques for

various telephone functions share similarities with most office guidelines.

5.1.1 General Telephone Etiquette

Irrespective of the specific type of telephone conversation, you should be guided by the following etiquette:

1. Be prepared. Be informed and have relevant information ready.
2. Always be courteous, enthusiastic, and polite. Use the 3 key expressions: “Please,” “Thank you” and “I’m sorry”
3. Visualize your conversation partner as a friendly, positive person, and maintain a smile before and throughout the conversation. It makes the tone of your voice more welcoming and friendly.
4. Speak directly into the mouthpiece of the phone or a headset clearly, slowly, concisely and with confidence.
5. Do not eat or chew gum while talking on the telephone and avoid distractions as much as possible.



What three popular expressions allow you to be courteous and polite when engaged in telephone communication?



“Please,” “Thank you” and “I’m sorry”

5.1.2 Techniques for Making Telephone Calls/Placing Outbound Calls

When you must make a telephone call or place an outbound call...

1. Plan the call by noting or making a list of what you want to discuss so you will not forget anything important.
2. Also plan the objectives you want to accomplish, such as the information you need to obtain from the conversation, by jotting them down ahead of time. Have any necessary information nearby.
3. Assume what questions or objections you may encounter prior to placing the call and devise answers to them to avoid making additional calls
4. Be sure you have the right telephone number before placing the call. You may keep a “frequently called numbers” list within reach. If you do reach a wrong number, say, “I’m sorry, I dialled the wrong number” before hanging up.
5. Make business calls well before the close of the office hours
6. After someone answers the phone, identify yourself before asking for the person desired.

7. Take notes during the call and specify any follow-up action to the caller, such as, when you plan to get back to him/her
8. If the person you are calling sounds busy, ask if you may call back at a more convenient time.
9. When the number you are calling is not answered quickly, do be patient. It may take several rings to be transferred or forwarded to voicemail.
10. When you reach an answering device, such as a voice mail or an answering machine, be sure to leave the following information: Your name, your department and telephone number, the date and time you called, your message, and when you are available to take calls.

5.1.3 Techniques for Answering the Telephone

When answering the telephone...

1. Answer the phone as quickly as possible (before the third ring). Briefly excuse yourself if you're in a face-to-face conversation (once you have answered the telephone, you have the option of placing the caller on hold). Ask a co-worker to answer your phone when you are away from your desk.
2. Use a friendly greeting, "Good morning" or "Good afternoon"
3. Identify your department/unit and your name, and help, "How may I help you?"
Have basic materials and information readily available for reference.
4. Identify who the caller is and use the caller's name.
5. If the person that was being called is not available, apologize for the person's unavailability and offer to help.
6. Listen to the caller, acknowledge requests or concerns. Stay positive, be considerate, show interest, and care.
7. Take responsibility for the calls that you answer. Don't forward a problem to someone, that you can resolve yourself. Where necessary ask the caller if you can place him/her on "hold" while you find the answer to their question or ask them for a number where you can call them back. Do not keep people on HOLD too long. Ask the caller if she/he would prefer to hold or leave a message on voicemail.
8. If necessary, you may offer to call back (within 5-10 minutes)

5.1.4 Techniques for Putting Calls on Hold

If you need to place a caller on hold to get what they need, or someone or something requires your urgent attention while you are on the phone...

1. Ask the caller for permission to be put on hold, wait for an affirmative answer, thank the caller for the permission granted with promise to return shortly, then

press the HOLD button.

2. Press the HOLD button *before* placing the handset in the cradle, or laying the receiver on the desk, otherwise, the caller will be able to hear everything being discussed in your office.
3. Remember who you put on hold and on which line.
4. Check back on the caller periodically (between 30-45 seconds) and thank them for holding.
5. Ask the caller if they wish to continue to hold, or leave a message, transfer to another person, or get a call back at a specific time.
6. When placing multiple calls on hold, remember to return to the first caller you placed on hold first.

5.1.5 Techniques for Transferring Telephone Calls

If you must transfer a call...

1. Offer to transfer the call and explain to the caller why you are transferring their call
2. Confirm that it is alright with the caller for you to transfer them
3. Place the caller on “hold” then call the department or person where you are transferring a call to.
4. Introduce yourself and inform the receiver about your intention to transfer a call to them.
5. If they can take the call, give the name of the caller and information about the call, so the caller does not have to repeat himself/herself. This should be brief so that you do not make the caller wait more than a few seconds
6. Return to your caller and give them the name of the person they are being transferred to, the department and the telephone number (if possible).
7. If the recipient for transfer is on the phone, ask if the caller would like to hold, leave a message, or be transferred to voice mail.

5.1.6 Techniques for Taking Telephone Messages

If the caller would like to leave a message...

1. Use telephone message forms, if available, to record messages. They ensure the information obtained is accurate, organized, and complete.
2. Write down complete information (name of person for whom the message was left, name of caller, caller’s company or dept. and phone number, date & time of call, brief message, action to be taken, when caller can be reached for a return call, your name)

3. Double-check the number and message with caller to be sure they are accurate and assure the caller you will deliver the message before ending the call.
4. Mark the message with the date and time of the call and sign or initial the message.
5. Deliver the message promptly and maintain confidentiality with all messages. When delivering a written message, either turn the message over or fold it in half, as to not risk them being easily read by other staff members or visitors.
6. Return phone messages within one working day.



If you have answered a call and for whatever reasons, you need to put the call on hold or transfer it, do you need permission from the caller?



“It is important to get permission from the caller before placing a call on hold or transferring it.

5.2 Planning, Executing and Participating in Productive Meetings

If you’ve caught yourself daydreaming during meetings, you are not alone, and it is really *not* uncommon. **Meetings** are opportunities to bring the right people together to discuss for a predetermined outcome. They can occur in both face-to-face and online modes. A common misconception, however, is that good results will happen simply by getting all the experts together in the same room. While getting the right people together is certainly important, that is just a first step. Many meetings are boring, inefficient, and unproductive. Whether you’re the facilitator, or you’re a participant, the right techniques will help you achieve better results with meetings.

5.2.1 Planning a Productive Meeting

Effective meetings don’t just happen. They require a considerable amount of preparation and thought. The stages involved may not necessarily follow a fixed order, while some may be done simultaneously, but there is one exception: defining the meeting purpose and desired objectives always comes first.

1. *Define the meeting purpose and objectives.* Why are you having the meeting? What do you want to accomplish in the meeting? The reasons for the meeting may include sharing information, planning, solving problems, or building relationships.
2. *Create the participant list.* Select the right people to attend the meeting and the right number of people to attend the meeting. The decision about who is to attend depends on the meeting purpose and objectives.

3. *Determine the modalities.* Determine if the meeting will be held in-person, virtually, or through a combination of both. Also determine the duration for the meeting.
4. *Establish roles.* The roles played in a meeting may include that of facilitator, leader, timekeeper, recorder, and participant.
5. *Develop the agenda.* The agenda provides a framework for the meeting with an outline of tasks in a logical order and timeframe. The agenda can be developed alone or in collaboration with intending participants. It should also be distributed to participants with sufficient time before the meeting to enable them to come prepared.
6. *Select process tools.* These help participants engage in meaningful analysis, discussion, and decision making. Tools include brainstorming for generating and soliciting ideas, and several other techniques for maximizing participant engagement and managing disruptive behaviours.
7. *Identify background materials.* These cover everything that will be required run the meeting smoothly, including information needed by participants to meaningfully participate in the meeting
8. *Plan the meeting location and space.* These should be comfortable, accessible, and conducive to meaningful exchanges among participants



Planning a productive meeting is a process that involves many stages. What is the first stage in that process?



Define the meeting purpose and objectives.

5.2.2 Executing a Productive Meeting

To effectively execute a productive meeting, you will need to be familiar with meeting stages and facilitation techniques.

Stages in Executing a Productive Meeting

The following stages are typical with productive meetings:

1. *Opening the Meeting.* Opening a meeting involves a series of actions. Begin by distributing the agenda to everyone. Then welcome and check-in with participants to build relationships among participants and recognize their individualities. When you have successfully built a warm atmosphere, you can move on to review the agenda – the purpose, goals, topics for discussion, and timeline of the meeting.
2. *Determine Responsibilities.* Assign roles for the meeting. This allows the meeting run more smoothly and encourages more participation. Also, establish ground

rules to ensure that each person behaves in ways that contribute positively to the effective running of the meeting. It helps if these rules are collaboratively agreed upon by, but primary ground rules can also be listed on the agenda.

3. *Get into the discussion.* Usually, there are three stages of a discussion – the opening, where ideas are generated and information is gathered; the organization or narrowing, where the information gathered is organized, categorized and evaluated; and the closing, where decisions are made, priorities are selected, or agreement is reached.
4. *Document the meeting.* Meeting are typically documented by taking meeting minutes. This helps participants remember what took place during the meeting and to clarify the accuracy of what is represented in the minutes. The minutes also allows accountability for action items assigned to various participants.
5. *Summarize meeting and confirm action items.* At the end of the meeting, provide a summary of what occurred during the meeting, including decisions and proposed actions. To be sure that the summary is accurate, ask for corrections and input from participants, then facilitate assignment of proposed actions and definition of next steps.
6. *Evaluate the meeting.* Evaluations should be done both during and at the end of the meeting. Get feedback intermittently during the meeting when you can improve the meeting process right away, and at the end to get a summative assessment. Evaluation may be formal or informal, depending on the kind of meeting, but keep it simple.
7. *Closing Meetings.* End the meeting on time and on a positive note. Review actions and assignments. Set the time for the next meeting and try to get their commitment by asking each person if they can make it or not. Clarify that meeting minutes and/or actions will be reported back to members in a short time (preferably, at most a week), as this will help to keep the meeting fresh in their minds and remind them of the action points.

Facilitation Techniques for Executing a Productive Meeting

As a facilitator, you must be conscious of the fact that people have different communication styles. They perceive and process information differently. So, to engage all participants and produce the desired outcomes, you will have to employ a range of facilitation techniques. Useful techniques to achieve success include the following:

1. *Call on quiet members* directly to make contributions, but keep it simple and courteous, so as not to make the person uncomfortable.

2. *Appreciate and redirect participants* that try to dominate the meeting by using their passion and energy to encourage participation of others.
3. *Honour all contributions* by responding respectfully and acknowledging all contributions. Open criticism or dismissal of any idea can discourage others from participating.
4. *Breakout Groups* can be used if the group is too large to enable in-depth discussion. The breakout groups would report back to the full house to share the outcomes of their discussion or decisions made.
5. *Active Listening*. Body language can be used to make let participants know that they are being heard Face whoever is speaking, look them in the eye, and don't show open support for or disapproval of any contribution so as not to discourage open communication.
6. *Asking Questions*, especially open-ended questions which encourage wider participation, thorough discussion of ideas, and uncovering hidden points.
7. *Paraphrasing* contributions can be used to let participants know they are being heard, to repeat the point made to other participants, and to clarify ideas as you're able to ascertain if you have correctly interpreted what was said.
8. *Summarizing* all that has been said in the course of the discussion helps to either open up areas for further discussion, or give the discussion a proper ending.
9. *Synthesize* ideas to build consensus and commitment by encouraging participants to comment on and build on each other's ideas.
10. *Negative Polling* during the "closing" part of a discussion can be used to confirm if anyone disagrees with suggestions offered and decisions made, before moving on to a next task.
11. *Remaining Neutral*. Focus on the "process" role and avoid the temptation to offer an opinion on the topic of discussion. If you wish to become involved in the content discussion, you must let the group know that you are stepping out of the facilitator role.
12. *Boomeranging* is used to send questions back to the participants when they try to get you to answer questions about content or suggest solutions. Always remember that the facilitator must focus on the process, rather than try to be the content expert.
13. *Restating the Purpose* of the meeting is used when the discussion becomes diverted and participants are talking about issues that are not on the agenda.

14. *Labelling Side Tracks*. Where the “diversion” seems important, you should identify exactly what it is and draw the attention of participants to it. They can then decide if the side-track should be properly discussed or get back to the agenda.
15. *Parking Lot*. Side-track items can also be placed in a parking lot (usually a flip chart page or regular sheet) and reviewed later to determine if any should be followed up for inclusion in a future meeting agenda.
16. *Mirroring*. Periodically, you can tell participants how they appear so they can adjust. This can be used to get their attention back to the task at hand, evaluate the pace of the meeting or if a break is required, or address disruptive behaviours.
17. *Wall Note Taking*. Wall notes on flipchart, chalkboard, or butcher paper can be used as visual tools to record decisions and key points of discussion, keep meeting members on track and focus their attention on the issues at hand. For best viewing, set up the meeting room in a “U” shape and place the wall note at the open end of the U.
18. *Writing*. Apart from talking, participants can also write their ideas. Writing clarifies thought.
19. *Evaluation*. Feedback is always important. You can ask participants to give a quick verbal rating of the meeting and then briefly explain how it can be made more effective. If you think maintaining anonymity will be better, they can jot down their answers to the questions on a sheet of paper and hand it in as they leave the meeting, or you can send them a brief online survey to complete after the meeting.

5.2.3 Managing Conflict and Disruptive Behaviours during Meetings

Conflict is your friend. When confronted by it, it may seem unpleasant, but it remains an important part of effective meetings because it promotes effective decision-making. Without conflict, meeting decisions may be outcomes of pretence, which may be counterproductive or outright damaging. Also, it is not uncommon to encounter disruptive behaviour from one or more participants that threaten the effectiveness of the meeting. So, how do we manage conflicts to maximize its benefits and deal with disruptive behaviour?

1. *Set guidelines to encourage productive conflict*. Clarify to participants the differences between productive and destructive conflict and collaboratively decide on rules to guide conflict during the meeting.
2. *Interrupt a conflict when it becomes personal or destructive*. When participants become verbally aggressive or disrespectful with each other that is a signal for destructive conflict which should be checked immediately.

3. *Redirect discussions about blame from people to process.* Avoid the temptation of “scapegoating,” or casting blames on anyone at the meeting. Rather, de-personalize conflict by redirecting the focus on the process.
4. *Use a parking lot to manage unproductive conflict.* Rather than allow the conflict fester, use a parking lot to set it aside. It is possible that emotions would have calmed down by the time the issue is revisited.
5. *Describe, state, and redirect disruptive behaviour.* Describe the behaviour of the participant disrupting the smooth flow of the meeting. Make an impact statement to let the person involved know how those actions are affecting the facilitator, the process, or other participants. Then redirect the person’s behaviour by asking other participants for their suggestions about what to do.



You should evaluate a meeting only at the end of the meeting. True or false?



False. Evaluation should be done both during and at the end of the meeting.

. 5.2.4 Planning and Executing Teleconferences, Videoconferences, and Webinars

Facilitating meetings generally involve the same processes and techniques. However, meetings where one or all group members are participating via phone, video, or the Web have some peculiar considerations. Below are some of the techniques used for such virtual meetings.

Planning for the Meeting

Two key aspects in planning for virtual meetings are: planning for participants, and planning for outcomes and actions.

1. *Plan for Participants.* Provide participants background information and all meeting materials. Also provide participants with directions on how to gain access to the meeting, including links, call code, etc.
2. *Plan for Outcomes and Actions.* Decide what type of meeting follow-up will be done and who is responsible. This will help guide the recorders at the meeting to know what information should be captured, to what level of detail, and in what format.

Executing the Meeting

Some of the key elements in executing virtual meetings are: managing participants, evaluating the meeting, and following-up.

1. *Managing Participants.* Do a roll call to let everyone know who is participating. Also keep a list of participant names to identify speakers or other people who need to be brought into the conversation. Ask participants to identify themselves before they speak. Also request that they mute their phones when they are not speaking to minimize interference. Periodically check in with virtual participants, so that you don't miss out on important nonverbal cues that may not be easily observed in virtual meetings.
2. *Evaluating the Meeting.* Get feedback from meeting participants on how well they thought the meeting went and what could be changed or improved to make future meetings more productive. Such information can be collected using an evaluation form. You can also spend a few minutes at the end of the meeting asking participant and recording the responses on two different sheets of flip chart paper, or on one sheet with two columns for the two kinds of information sought.
3. *Following Up.* Prepare a meeting summary, preferably, within two weeks of the meeting. The summary should contain the action items and next steps, including due dates and responsible parties. A more detailed report may include background information, main points of discussion, and answers to questions asked by participants. Participants should be informed about the type of meeting summary that will be prepared and if they will be asked to review the document before it is made final.



When facilitating an online meeting, what should you ask participants to do with their microphones?



Participants should mute their microphones to minimize interference.

5.2.5 Participating at Meetings

So far, we have looked at processes and techniques for facilitating meetings. In some instances, you may not be the facilitator, but a participant. In such instances, what is expected of you? How can you ensure that you participate effectively? The following can guide you:

1. Don't sit opposite people you don't get on with or you disagree with. Sit next to them, or along the same line.

2. If you are new to a meeting, go through past agenda, minutes and background papers, to get familiar with content, process, key contributors, jargon and abbreviations, etc.
3. When making contributions, keep it short and simple. You can use signalling clues to indicate you have more to share if people want to know more. Also, do not only make contributions; also ask for feedback and comments to your contributions.
4. When speaking, direct your eye contact around the room to other participants, not just to the meeting Chair.
5. If there is the tendency for you to get nervous, speak early on during the meeting when the discussion is low key and low risk.
6. If you're not very knowledgeable about the topic, you can still participate effectively by asking questions and using summarising and clarifying techniques. This allows you to get involved in the process, rather than the content.
7. Demonstrate emotional intelligence through enthusiasm, genuine interest and humour (not jokes). Also, avoid negative language. Maintain the use of positive language.
8. Don't be too eager to volunteer to take the minutes. It may restrict your contribution and affect others' perceptions of you.
9. If your meeting involves presentation ensure you know how to give multi-sensory, engaging, insightful and motivational content, rather than PowerPoint with boring bullet points, text heavy slides or graphs and charts that are unreadable on the screen.
10. When confronted with aggression, emotionally laden or difficult contributions from participants, you can adopt the PACR technique: Pause, Acknowledge, Clarify, and Respond. Do not react.



When If you're a participant at a meeting, and you want to make a contribution, should you make eye contact with the meeting Chair only or other participants as well?



Eye contact should be made with everyone at the meeting, not just the meeting chair.



Summary of Study Session 5

In this study session, you have learned that:

- i. Business conversations, such as telephone communication and business meetings, allow us to communicate between and among business stakeholders.
- ii. There are general etiquette and specific techniques to effectively handle telephone communication.
- iii. There are processes and techniques that will enable you effectively plan, facilitate and participate in productive meetings, whether in face-to-face and online modes

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have studied this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study diary and discuss them with your facilitator at the next study Centre meeting. You can check your answers at the end of this course material.

SAQ 5.1 (Test Learning Outcomes 5.1 and 5.2)

You have been assigned a task at your organization to lead the execution of an important project. To deliver on the task, you need to maintain constant communication with people in other branches of your organization. Many times, you need share information quickly, discuss and clarify issues to decide on the best line of action, and get urgent feedback on tasks. What communication choices will you make to ensure you achieve results most effectively?

SAQ 5.2 (Test Learning Outcomes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3)

You have been recently engaged in an organization to work in a unit of two persons. While alone in the office a few minutes to close of work, the telephone on your colleague's desk rings. You suspect it is an angry customer that has engaged your colleague almost the entire day. Describe what you would do to handle the situation.

SAQ 5.3 (Test Learning Outcomes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4)

Your Unit Head has just informed you that she must be away for an engagement and will need you to facilitate a project meeting involving other staff and external members of the project team. How will you go about this task to ensure you have a productive meeting that your boss will be proud of?

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Folsom_Lake_College/BUS_310%3A_Business_Communications_\(Buch\)/04%3A_Research_Business_Reports_and_Business_Presentations/4.05%3A_Business_Presentations_in_Action/4.5.02%3A_Telephone_VoIP_Communication](https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Folsom_Lake_College/BUS_310%3A_Business_Communications_(Buch)/04%3A_Research_Business_Reports_and_Business_Presentations/4.05%3A_Business_Presentations_in_Action/4.5.02%3A_Telephone_VoIP_Communication)

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References/Suggestions for further Readings

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Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



Are you in need of General Help as regards your studies? Do not hesitate to contact the DLI IAG Center by e-mail or phone on:

 iag@dli.unilag.edu.ng

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STUDY SESSION 6:

DEVELOPING BUSINESS MESSAGE: THE WRITING PROCESS



Introduction

In this study session, you will learn how to discuss the writing process consisting of six elements: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proof-reading.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:

- 1.1. Describe the writing process of developing business message (SAQ 6.1)
- 1.2. Explain the key concepts in the writing process (SAQ 6.2)
- 1.3. List and explain the phases or stages of the writing process (SAQ 6.3)
- 1.4. Explain the basic tasks in each of the writing process stages (SAQ 6.3)



Key Terms: Writing Process, Editing, Publishing, Drafting, Revising, Prewriting

6.1 Developing Business Message: The Writing Process

Writing is a critical element in developing a business message. Writing is a process or course of action that involves several distinct stages or steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Writing is essentially a process driven; thus, good writing doesn't occur overnight; it necessitates planning, drafting, reviewing, and editing. Thus, there is not a shortcut or gimmick to good writing but regular practice. In most writing engagements, it is not always the case for writers to proceed directly from one stage to another in a sequential manner. The writing processes are sometimes iterative, implying that the writer might return to previous phases in the process from time to time. Thus, the more complicated the task, the more the number of iterations that may be required. During academic enquiry on writing, people might have come across a diverse "writing process". Communication skills, comprising writing, are some of the critical soft skills, whether an individual is messaging a colleague, writing to a superior, developing the company newsletter, or writing a press release to the media, writing competences can boost or impede an individual career profession.

Essentially, writing skills make a difference in how people are perceived in the workplace. In general, there is no single universal writing process that works for everyone in every circumstance. Therefore, the critical task is to recognize the numerous phases in a typical writing process and contemplate how to use or adapt them most efficiently based on the situation. Effective writing process involves stages that is iterative and ends when the writer is satisfied that the exercise accomplishes its tenacity. It is vital for a writer to deliberate through each of the steps to ensure that he or she produces a polished and complete piece of business message that will be impactful and yield desired outcomes. Some of the attributes of a good writing message are brief, strategic, significant, persuasive, simple, outstanding, factual, and tailored. It is also important to address all the attributes to enable the writer to communicate effectively with diverse target audiences by adapting precise language and depth of information. Good technicality of writing practice also involves good planning simplicity, conciseness, proper use of words, energetic voice, and commitment to writing as a process. For example, while revising, a writer might have to return to the prewriting stage to develop and expand the subject matter. Therefore, no matter what form of writing an individual is doing, academic writing, professional writing, or personal writing, the quality of communication or information dissemination can be made easier by using the appropriate writing process.

6.2 Key Concepts in Writing

- **Audience:** refers to the receivers and decoders of a message.
 - **Audience analysis and adaptation** describes the process of evaluating the needs and knowledge of readers and listeners and modifying the messages accordingly.
 - **Brainstorming:** is a technique of creating content by listing ideas as they come to mind. Cause-and-effect development is a process of configuration that connects writing events with the motives for them.
 - **Chronological development:** refers to a technique of organization that defines events in the order in which they take place.
 - **Collaborative writing:** is a process for writers to produce finished reports, proposals, and other vital documents.
 - **Contextual factors:** relates to components of a writing task, such as the circumstances, organization's processes, and the readers, that impacts the writer's choices at every stage.
- Credibility:** denotes the rate an individual is viewed as believable, based his or her competence, moral, and concern for others.

- **Discourse community:** are group of communicators who share an objective or a concern in adopting a manner of participating in a public discussion.
- **Drafting:** is the preliminary writing of a document.
- **Editing:** refers to the process of assessing a writing draft to ensure it fit in to standards of good English, style, and recognized business-writing preparation.
- **Freewriting:** is a technique of generating content based on unstructured writing and the documentation of ideas as they occur.
- **General-to-specific development** is a procedure of organization that begins with over-all information on a subject matter followed by precise details.
- **Genres:** refers to the agreed-upon formats of writing that develop in reaction to recurrent circumstances and that permit users to act decisively in a particular encounter.
- **Journalistic questions:** refers to the critical essential questions (*who, what, why, when, where, and how*) that journalists investigate as they focus on and prepare their storylines.
- **Mapping or clustering** refers to the process of generating content by envisaging the central topic and its sub-elements.

6.3 Writing Stages of Phases

Typical writing stages consist of:

- I. Prewriting
- II. Drafting
- III. Revising
- IV. Editing and Proofreading
- V. Publishing

Prewriting

Prewriting is also known as planning stage. And it is the first stage in a typical writing process, and it generally recognized that up to 40% of writer time is expended on planning the document. Prewriting entails deciding what to write about (the topic) and gathering of all relevant information to support or elucidate what the subject matter and planning how to arrange ideas/thoughts in a way that efficiently develops the topic. The writer uses his prewriting transcripts to determine a focus for the write-up. This may encompass contracting the focus of the topic and possibly identifying tenacity for the subject matter. Thus, prewriting defines all the thinking and planning that heralds the actual writing of a paper. This stage includes activities such as task evaluation, thinking, discussion, free-writing, exploring, brainstorming, concept planning, idea focus and outlining among others.

Much careful attention and thought needs to be given to the prewriting stage before focusing on the topic. Firstly, understand the writing tasks and its limits, in term of length and secondly, establish the writing purposes. It is vital to contemplate the motives of writing or its intended purposes which may fall into any of the under listed three categories: (1) expressive writing is the one that conveys individual feelings or thoughts to the audience, (2) Informative writing attempt to enlightens the audience about something or matter of importance benefits, (3) Persuasive writing seeks to convince the audience to think or act in a particular way. Issues of importance or even everyday observations can lead to interesting topics. More important, reading plays a fundamental role in all the phases of the writing process, but it first figures out in the development of ideas and topics. Thus, while reading almost any relevant document, it is important to evaluate the author's point of view and deliberate how he or she support the current necessity for writing. It is also important to focus on energy on the freewriting which can yield a huge amount of relevant material.

Drafting

The second stage in the writing process encompasses drafting. In stage two, which is drafting, writer is advice to spend 20% of his or her time writing a rough draft. During drafting, the writer highlights his or her ideas into comprehensive thoughts, such as sentences and paragraphs. Also, during drafting, the writer will compose an overview to the write up and develop a conclusion for the material. The tenacity of a conclusion is to sum up the piece of writing by linking all the interrelated thoughts and ideas. The best conclusions are imaginative, appealing, and leave very few questions unanswered in the mind of the reader. At the end of this stage of the writing procedure, the writer will have developed a "rough draft." During drafting, the writer should choose the most important subject matter preferably one for his or piece of writing. A sound, interesting introduction sets the stage for the rest of the draft. Therefore, the writer should begin drafting by organizing his notes in an order that will make sense to the reader. The focus should be on reasonable connections between topics.

Revising

Once a rough draft is created, the writer should take some time to move away from the essay to get a newer and better viewpoint by revising. Some writers are very systematic and thorough when they write a first draft. Other writers let loose a lot of words in order to express themselves fully, thus, necessitating revision. Usually, an average of 40% of time should be dedicated to revision. Revising entails reconsidering the ideas and content of the write-up as well as cleansing the style and arrangement of the paper. Revising implies reexamining and rethinking the first draft, addition,

and removal of ideas comprehensively; rearranging any of the ideas, sentences, or paragraphs that are less or not relevant in the first draft; paraphrasing sentences and paragraphs for more quality content, better readability, and more precise choice of words. Often, it is possible for writers to have three or four drafts before the final version. For easier revision, the following tips are valuable:

- i. To ensure objectivity, take reasonable time between the first draft and the final revisions.
- ii. Do revision on hard copy rather than reading on the computer screen.
- iii. Do not delete revising the drafts copies
- iv. Ensure labelling of label each successive draft after each revision and seek comment.
- v. Review to improve the draft.
- vi. Read the draft extensively or solicit third opinion.
- vii. Solicit feedback to improve the quality of the write-up
- viii. Do not tolerate ego obstructing the quality of the work done.
- ix. Revision should be done in phases e in stages
- x. Lastly, revise for choice of words aiming at improving suitable level of diction that do not elaborate or underrepresent specific or general expressions.

Editing and Proof-reading

Editing and proof-reading are the two forms of tasks writers undertake to significantly enhance the quality of write-up. Editing and proof-reading is the final step that enables the writer to go back and clean up the rough edges. Authors should focus of attention is on facts, spelling, numbers, grammar, and style. To edit, writers should search for grammatical mistakes, check punctuation marks, cross check spelling, and examine sentence style and choice of words. To proofread, the writers should look for contents' errors, including typos, wrong and formatting problems. In general, writers should look cautiously for any error, big or small, that may lessen the quality and credibility of the write-up. Both editing and proof-reading are vital components of the writing process and mostly combined. Most writers may assume that a completed initial draft implies that little improvement is desired. Nonetheless, even experienced writers need to develop their drafts and rely on peers or associates to edit and do proof-reading.

Editing is an on-going process, not a one-time activity and the purpose is to check the write-up for errors. Editing enables a writer to take a second look at how ideas and thoughts are expressed. During editing, some new ideas are integrated while some are deleted. Editing also enables writers to fix any complications in grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction. There are two forms of editing: the ongoing edit and the draft edit. Most writers edit as they write and write as they edit, and it's difficult to slice cleanly between the two, this approach is named ongoing

edit. In the case of draft editing, the writer will stop writing, accumulate several pages together, comprehend them, make notes on what is suitable, and then rewrite areas considered awkward. It is during the draft edit that the writer gain a sense of the whole and view the entire write-up as a unified whole. Thus, it is the draft editing that makes most writers uneasy, and that doubtfully matters most if handle poorly.

Publishing

Writing as an exercise is communication. Therefore, if you have written an idea, the intended purpose is for someone or target group to read it. Publishing a document entail releasing it to the public domain. Therefore, publishing is the publication of the final report for audience and readers attention. In other words, it is an account given of a particular subject matter especially in the form of an official document after thorough investigation or consideration by an appointed person or body.

Just as people adopt design procedures to creatively resolve multifaceted problems, writing processes is used to create complex documents for varying purposes and the procedures are not straight forward. This is because, sometimes ideas may not flow easily, and the write-up that an individual originally start out to write is not the one that is finally presented. Oftentimes, the writing stages proceed unpredictably and overlap; the vital thing is to keep writing and refining until a final product is accomplished, because the more than one writes, the better he or she become as a writer. In other words, the writing process is not a series of precisely developed stages and may differ somewhat depending on occasions or situations. Writing often becomes less complicated and easier when you have a personal connection with the topic. Therefore, it is important to generate ideas through freewriting, and doing this may create thoughts that are very interesting. Proper flow of thoughts can lead to the discovery of more ideas about the topic as well as diverse viewpoints on the subject matter.

The major stages or phases in the writing process are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading, and publishing. As with most design tasks, the writing process must start with an understanding of the problem the writer is trying to solve. This is often named “Task Analysis.” In professional settings, the writer must contemplate who the audience are or will be, why they need to read the document, and what their desires, needs and expectations are, as well as targets and documentation requirements. A good writer must anticipate the information and ideas that readers may want or desire to know concerning the subject matter. Anticipating and bearing in mind the likely questions that the anticipated audience may raise about the topic. Effective writers also need to adopt diverse approaches to sort the ideas and information to ensure connections, recognize connections, and detect possible directions and types of writing that is most

suitable. By adopting the above tactics, the writers gain opportunity to rearrange, reassemble, classify, and cluster their notes in comprehensive form.



Summary of Study Session 6

In this Study Session, you have learnt

- i. Writing is a process or course of action that involves several distinct stages or steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.
- ii. Some of the key concepts in the writing process are audience, audience analysis and adaptation, brainstorming, chronological development, collaborative writing, contextual factor and so on.
- iii. The phases or stages of writing process typically consists of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading.
- iv. Editing and proof-reading are the two forms of tasks writers undertake to significantly enhance the quality of write-up. Editing and proof-reading is the final step that enables the writer to go back and clean up the rough edges

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 6

Now that you have studied this session, you can assess how well you have achieved its learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study diary and discuss them with your facilitator at the next study Centre meeting. You can check your answers at the end of this course material.

SAQ 6.1: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.1)

..... is a critical element in developing business message?

- a) Message
- b) Writing**
- c) Knowledge
- d) Input
- e) Configuration

SAQ 6.2: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.1)

----- is a process or course of actions that involves several distinct phases

- a) Knowledge
- b) Input
- c) Message

d) Writing

SAQ 6.3: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

Which of the under listed is not a stage in writing process?

- a) Prewriting,
- b) Drafting,
- c) Revising,

d) Loading

SAQ 6.4: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.1)

The writing processes are sometimes -----

- a) Iterative**
- b) Static
- c) Transitional
- d) Resistivity

SAQ 6.5: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

Which of the following is not a key concept in writing?

- a) Audience
- b) Drafting
- c) Genres
- d) Genesis**

SAQ 6.6: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

----- entails deciding what to write about (the topic) and gathering of all relevant information to support or elucidate what the subject matter is, and planning how to arrange ideas/thoughts in a way that is efficiently

- a) Prewriting**
- b) Drafting
- c) Publishing
- d) Editing

SAQ 6.7: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

There are ----- broad motives of writing

- a) 3**
- b) 2
- c) 5
- d) 7

SAQ 6.8: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

Which of the following is not a motive for writing?

- a) Expressive writing
- b) Informative writing
- c) Persuasive writing
- d) Brainstorming writing**

SAQ 6.9: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

During the ----- stage, the writer highlights his or her ideas into comprehensive thoughts, such as sentences and paragraphs.

- a) Prewriting
- b) drafting,
- c) Editing**
- d) Proof-reading

SAQ 6.10: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

----- entails reconsidering the ideas and content of the write-up as well as cleansing the style and arrangement of the paper.

- a) Revising
- b) Editing**
- c) Proof-reading
- d) Pilling

SAQ 6.11: (Test Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6.3)

----- writers should search for grammatical mistakes, check punctuation marks, cross check spelling, and examine sentence style and choice of words

- a) Proof-reading**
- b) Editing
- c) Restructure
- d) Prewriting

Section B

1. List and discuss the stages in the writing process
2. How critical is prewriting phase in the writing process

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Management/Book%3A_Business_Communication_Skills_for_Managers_\(Lumen\)/02%3A_Writing_in_Business/2.04%3A_The_Three-Part_Writing_Process](https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Management/Book%3A_Business_Communication_Skills_for_Managers_(Lumen)/02%3A_Writing_in_Business/2.04%3A_The_Three-Part_Writing_Process)

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Folsom_Lake_College/BUS_310%3A_Business_Communications_\(Buch\)/02%3A_Planning_Writing_and_Revising/2.04%3A_Writing_in_Business/2.4.07%3A_A_Revising_Business_Messages](https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Folsom_Lake_College/BUS_310%3A_Business_Communications_(Buch)/02%3A_Planning_Writing_and_Revising/2.04%3A_Writing_in_Business/2.4.07%3A_A_Revising_Business_Messages)

https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Business_English_and_Communication/Book%3A_A_Business_English_for_Success/09%3A_Effective_Business_Writing/9.03%3A_Good_Writing

References/Suggestions for Further Readings

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Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



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 08033366677

STUDY SESSION 7:

CRAFTING BRIEF MESSAGES



Introduction

Whether you are new to the workforce or a corporate executive, you may find yourself in the position of needing to write and present an effective message to a group of people. This could be in a somewhat intimate setting, like a group of colleagues in a small conference room, or in front of a large crowd at a corporate event. Being able to communicate effectively is a necessary skill for any successful leader. Knowing how to understand your audience, pick the right words, and then string them together effectively to convey a purposeful message is not a skill that comes naturally to everyone. It often takes a lot of trial and error. In this section you will learn how you can begin crafting your message and presenting ideas effectively.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

At the end of this study session, you should be able to:

- 7.1. Identify the electronic media available for short messages, list nine compositional modes used in electronic media, and discuss the challenges of communicating through social media.
- 7.2. Describe the use of social networks, user-generated content sites, community Q&A sites, and community participation sites in business communication.
- 7.3. Describe the evolving role of email in business communication and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to email messages.
- 7.4. Describe the business benefits of instant messaging (IM) and identify guidelines for effective IM in the workplace.
- 7.5. Describe the role of blogging and microblogging in business communication today and explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to blogging.
- 7.6. Explain how to adapt the three-step writing process to podcasting.



Key Terms: Brief Messages, Instant Messages, Electronic Media

7.1 Electronic Media for Business Communication

Today's business communicators have a broad range of media options for sending short messages.

- Social networking and community participation websites
- Email
- Instant messaging (IM)
- Text messaging
- Blogging and microblogging
- Podcasting
- Online video

While most of your business communication is likely to be via electronic means, don't overlook several situations when you should use a printed message over electronic alternative:

- When you want to make a formal impression
- When you are legally required to provide information in printed form
- When you want to stand out from the flood of electronic messages
- When you need a permanent, unchangeable, or secure record

Compositional Modes for Electronic Media

You can succeed with written communication in virtually all electronic media by using one of nine compositional modes:

- Conversations
- Comments and critiques
- Orientations
- Summaries
- Reference materials
- Narratives
- Teasers
- Status updates and announcements
- Tutorials

Creating Content for social media

Social media change the relationship between sender and receiver.

Because the relationship has changed, the nature of the messages needs to change as well:

- Remember that it's a conversation, not a lecture or a sales pitch.
- Write informally but not carelessly.
- Create concise, specific, and informative headlines.

- Get involved and stay involved.
- If you need to promote something, do so indirectly.
- Be transparent and honest.
- Think before you post!

Managing Communication in a Social Media Environment

Managing business communication in this rapidly changing environment is not a simple task, for several reasons:

- The communication effort is more complex, with more internal and external channels to staff and monitor.
- With more media information channels that require attention, the cost structure of business communication can change dramatically (e.g., taking money from media budgets to cover staffing costs).
- Media tools and consumer behavior can evolve so quickly and so unpredictably that companies must be prepared to experiment continuously, adapt ideas that work, and abandon bad or outmoded ideas—without slipping into a purely reactive mode.
- Companies need to have social media guidelines for their employees that strike a balance between too much control and too little.

7.2 Social Networking and Community Participation Websites

Social networks are online services that enable individual and organizational members to form connections and share information. Facebook and other networks, particularly business-oriented networks such as LinkedIn, are now commonly used for business communication.

These communication platforms can be divided into four types:

- Social networks
- User-generated content sites
- Community Q&A sites
- Community participation websites

Social Networks

Some companies embrace social networks wholeheartedly and encourage employees to use them to reach out to customers.

Other companies ban employees from using them at work, particularly networks such as Facebook that weren't originally designed for business use.

Whatever a company's stance, social networking is already a major force in business communication and promises to get even bigger.

Social networks are likely to become the primary communication system for a significant portion of the workforce over the next few years.

Businesses now use several types of social networks:

- Public, general-purpose networks (Facebook being the most significant of these)
- Public, business-oriented networks (LinkedIn is the largest of these)
- Specialized networks, including networks for small-business owners, for connecting entrepreneurs with investors, those created by individual companies to enhance the sense of community among their customers, and private corporate networks

Business applications of social networks include

- Gathering market intelligence
- Recruiting new employees and finding business partners
- Sharing product information (including *conversation marketing*, in which companies initiate and facilitate conversations among customers and other interested parties)
- Fostering brand communities
- Responding to events, questions, and rumors
- Providing customer support
- Offering location-based services

Guidelines to make the most of social networks for both personal branding and company communication:

- Choose the best compositional mode for each message, purpose, and network.
- Join existing conversations, in addition to starting your own.
- Anchor your online presence in your hub, a web presence that you own and control, such as a conventional website, a blog, and/or a company-sponsored online community.
- Facilitate community building; make it easy for customers and other audiences to connect with the company and with each other.
- Restrict conventional promotional efforts to the right time and right place.
- Maintain a consistent personality across sites, while staying within the evolving norms of each site (e.g., LinkedIn has a somewhat more formal tone than Facebook).

User-Generated Content Sites

YouTube, Flickr, and other user-generated content (UGC) sites, on which users rather than website owners contribute most or all of the content, have also become serious business tools.

Video (including screencasts) is a powerful medium for product demonstrations, interviews, industry news, training, facility tours, and other uses.

The social aspects of these sites, including the ability to vote for, comment on, and share material, encourage enthusiasts to spread the word.

The keys to effective user-generated content are making it valuable and making it easy, such as organizing it all on a branded channel on YouTube.

Community Q&A Sites

Community Q&A sites are websites on which visitors answer questions posted by other visitors or by representatives of companies.

Both public and member-only sites are in operation.

Responding to questions on Q&A sites can be a great way to build your personal brand, to demonstrate your company's commitment to customer service, and to counter misinformation about your company and its products.

Community Participation Websites

Community participation websites pool the inputs of multiple users in order to benefit the community as a whole. Examples include

- Social bookmarking or content recommendation sites such as Delicious (<http://delicious.com>), Digg (www.digg.com), and StumbleUpon (www.stumbleupon.com)
- Group buying sites such as Groupon (www.groupon.com)
- Crowdsourcing sites such as InnoCentive (www.innocentive.com)
- Product and service review websites such as Yelp (www.yelp.com) compile reviews from people who have purchased products or patronized businesses

7.3. Email in Business

Although it seems a bit old school to some users, email remains a significant business medium.

However, email still has compelling advantages

- It is universal; anybody with an email address can reach anybody else with an email address.
- It is still the best medium for many private, short- to medium-length messages.
- Its non-instantaneous nature can be an advantage; many messages do not need the rapid update rates of IM or Twitter, and the implied urgency of those systems can be a productivity-sapping interruption.

Planning Email Messages

First and foremost, don't contribute to the email blizzard:

- Make sure every message you send is necessary.
- Don't "cc" people who don't need to see the message.

Follow company email policies

- Many companies now have formal email policies that specify how employees can use email, including restrictions against using company email service for personal messages and sending material that might be deemed objectionable.
- Other concerns include the possibility of disclosing confidential information and exposing company networks to security problems.
- Many employers also monitor email.
- All email users have a responsibility to avoid actions that could cause trouble.
- Email hygiene refers to all the efforts that companies are making to keep email clean and safe.

Respect the chain of command; don't blast a complaint off to the CEO without discussing it with your immediate superiors first.

Writing Email Messages

Recognize that business email is more formal than social email and the consequences of bad writing or poor judgment can be much more serious.

Email messages have the same legal weight as printed documents.

Subject lines are one of the most important parts of email messages.

- Make sure your subject line is informative and compelling.
- Do more than just describe or classify your message—build interest with key words, quotations, directions, or questions.
- "Tweetify" your first few lines by crafting an opening sentence that is compelling and relevant to the reader.

Completing Email Messages

Take a few moments to revise and proofread your message before you send it.

- Also, lean in favor of simplicity when it comes to producing your email messages (a clean, easily readable font, in black on a white background is sufficient for nearly all email messages).
- Take advantage of your email system's ability to include an *email signature* that is placed at the end of your message.

- Before you send your message, pause to verify what you're doing, e.g., don't hit "Reply All" when you meant to hit only "Reply."
- Don't set messages to "Urgent" unless they really are.

7.4 Instant Messaging and Text Messaging

IM is now widely used throughout the business world and is beginning to overtake and replace email for internal communication in many companies.

Business-grade IM systems can feature

- Basic chat
- Presence awareness
- Remote display of documents
- Video capabilities
- Remote control of other computers
- Automated newsfeeds from blogs and websites
- Automated bot capability

Text messaging has several applications in business as well, including marketing, customer service, security, crisis management, and process monitoring.

Understanding the Benefits and Risks of IM

Benefits to businesses using IM include the following:

- Rapid response to urgent messages
- Lower cost than phone calls and email
- Ability to mimic conversation more closely than email
- Availability of a wide range of devices, from PCs to mobile phones to PDAs
- Less misuse as a broadcast mechanism than email

Potential drawbacks of using IM:

- Security problems
- Need for user authentication
- Challenge of logging messages for later review and archiving
- Incompatibility between competing IM systems

Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful IM

Planning instant messages: plan conversations as you would an actual conversation.

Writing instant messages: the appropriate writing style for business IM is more formal.

Completing instant messages: quickly scan your message before sending it.

To use IM effectively, pay attention to some important behavioral issues:

- Potential for constant interruptions
- Ease of accidentally mixing personal and business messages
- Risk of being out of the loop
- Vast potential for wasted time
- Being at the mercy of others' typing ability (if someone is a slow typist, then you have to wait for his or her reply)

Make IM more efficient and effective by following these tips:

- Make sure you have a purpose before you IM anyone.
- Make yourself unavailable when you need to focus on other work.
- Don't send confidential information if you're not on a secure system.
- Be extremely careful about sending personal messages.
- Don't use IM for lengthy, complex messages unless your system is set up for it—email is better for that.
- Avoid carrying on multiple IM conversations at once.
- Make sure your IM system filters for spim (IM version of email spam) is active and up to date.

7.5 Blogging and Microblogging

Blogs and microblogs have become commonplace in today's business. Integrating blogs into today's business communication can be a powerful tool in supplementing traditional methods of communication. From increasing employee connectivity to building an expanded customer base to positive media relations, blogging connects all types of business partners with real-time immediacy.

Understanding the Business Applications of Blogging

Here are some of the many ways businesses are using blogs:

- Anchoring the social media presence
- Project management and team communication
- Company news
- Customer support
- Public relations and media relations
- Recruiting
- Policy and issue discussions

- Crisis communication
- Market research
- Brainstorming
- Employee engagement
- Viral marketing
- Influencing traditional media news coverage
- Community building

Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Blogging

The three-step writing process is easy to adapt to blogging tasks:

- Pay attention to your audience, your purpose, and your scope: Make sure you have a clear audience in mind, a purpose with “legs,” and a scope that gives you enough room to write about it month after month.
- Carefully consider the information you are including (others could link to it months or years from now).
- Evaluate the content and readability of your message—write in a comfortable, personal style.
- Compelling headlines for posts are an essential tool to draw in readers.
- Successful blog content also needs to be interesting, valuable to readers, and as brief as possible.
- Completing blog posts is quite easy: Evaluate the content and readability of your message, proofread to correct any errors, and post using your blogging system’s tools for doing so.
- Use tagging features to make posts easy to find.

Microblogging

A microblog is a variation on blogging in which messages are restricted to specific character counts.

Twitter is the best known, but many others exist, including private corporate systems.

Many of the concepts of regular blogging apply to microblogging as well, although the severe length limitations call for a different approach to composition.

Microblog messages often involve short summaries or teasers that provide links to more information:

- Twitter is frequently used to announce or promote new posts on regular blogs.
- Microblogs tend to have a stronger social networking aspect that makes it easier for writers and readers to forward messages and for communities to form around individual writers.

Microblogging quickly caught on with business users and is now a mainstream business medium. Microblogs are used for virtually all of the blog applications mentioned in the chapter, as well as

- Providing company updates
- Offering coupons and notice of sales
- Presenting tips on product usage
- Sharing relevant and interesting information from experts
- Serving as the *backchannel* in meetings and presentations
- Interacting with customers individually

Commonly used Twitter features are hashtags to tag tweets by subject (strictly speaking, not a Twitter feature, but a user convention) and *retweeting* to share content.

7.6 Podcasting

Podcasting is the process of recording audio or video files and distributing them online.

Podcasting is not used as widely as blogging and some other electronic media but does offer several interesting possibilities for business communication.

Understanding the Business Applications of Podcasting

Podcasting applications include

- Replacing existing audio and video messages, such as one-way teleconferences
- Creating employee training materials
- Replacing marketing brochures with video podcasts that demonstrate new products in action
- Offering video tours of companies to attract new recruits

Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Podcasting

The three-step writing process adapts nicely to podcasting.

In the planning step, determine whether you're creating a limited number of podcasts or an ongoing podcasting channel with regular recordings on a consistent theme.

As you organize the content for a podcast, pay close attention to previews, transitions, and reviews; these steering devices are especially vital in audio recordings.

One of the attractions of podcasting is the conversational, person-to-person feel of the recordings, so unless you need to capture exact wording, speaking from an outline and notes rather than a prepared script is often the best choice.

Effective podcasts, like effective stories, have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Particularly for more formal podcasts, start by revising your script or thinking through your speaking notes before you begin to record.

Editing podcasts is more work than editing texts, so the closer you can get to recording your podcasts in one take, the more productive you'll be.

Most PCs have the hardware needed for basic podcasts, and you can find free software online.

For professional quality, you'll need to upgrade to a better microphone, editing software, and possibly audio processing equipment and acoustic treatments.



Summary of Study Session 7

In this study session, you must have learnt that:

1. Electronic media available for short messages are, but not limited to emails, text messaging, blogging, and microblogging. Also, amongst the compositional modes used in electronic media are conversations, comments, and critiques.
2. Some companies embrace social networks wholeheartedly and encourage employees to use them to reach out to customers. YouTube, Flickr, and other user-generated content (UGC) sites, on which users rather than website owners contribute most or all the content, have also become serious business tools.
3. Email remains a significant business medium. It is still the best medium for many private, short- to medium-length messages.
4. Instant messaging is now widely used throughout the business world and is beginning to overtake and replace email for internal communication in many companies. Business-grade IM systems can feature basic chat, presence awareness and remote display of documents.
5. From increasing employee connectivity to building an expanded customer base to positive media relations, blogging connects all types of business partners with real-time immediacy. Some of the many ways businesses are using blogs are anchoring the social media presence, project management and team communication, company news and customer support.
6. One of the three step processes required for successful blogging are to evaluate the content and readability of your message—write in a comfortable, personal style



Walking Around with the Entire Internet in Your Hands

1. The biggest impact of customers who show up on the doorstep of a business with the Internet in their hands is likely to be the diminished impact of on-site promotional communication and various nonverbal signals such as the physical presentation of the site. For a restaurant, for example, reviews from previous diners will carry more weight than an elegantly printed menu posted outside or a fancy doorway. Overall, the big shift will be from communication to performance for many businesses—with so many consumers sharing information, a company's actions will speak much louder than its words.
2. "Gamification" activities, such as becoming the "mayor" of a coffee shop or other establishment by electronically checking in more than anyone else during a given time period, are one-way businesses can use location-based social networking to attract new shoppers or guests and encourage repeat visits thereafter.



Help! I'm Drowning in social media!

1. A social media source is worth paying attention to if it is *useful* and *relevant*. Note that these criteria do not include *entertaining*, *amusing*, *distracting*, *relaxing*, and several other adjectives that could be used to describe much of the content available via social media. Business professionals need to exercise extreme restraint to avoid having their time consumed by interesting but not necessarily helpful content.
2. Although this is an individual choice, many professionals elect not to be alerted each time a new message is available. Instead, some reserve a specific time each day to review these types of messages so that their workflow is not interrupted during the day. Constant interruptions lower productivity and can even temporarily reduce cognitive ability.



Communication Challenges at Southwest Airlines

Individual Challenge

The challenge is to state and explain the decision to continue with the current policy while maintaining credibility with those who argued that it should be changed. One possible solution would be:

We appreciate the feedback we've received regarding our policy of reviewing and filtering comments on our "Nuts about Southwest" blog. While we recognize there are certain benefits associated with posting every comment, we are committed to meet our readers' needs by maintaining the blog's focus on how airline can best serve its

customers. For this reason, we will continue to collect and seriously consider all comments, but post only those (positive or negative) that fall within the scope of the blog.

Team Challenge

Candidate A: This style is too casual and unprofessional.

Candidate B: This blogger does not have enough confidence in himself to give readers any reason to pay attention to him.

Candidate C: This writer is entirely too focused on himself.

Candidate D: This paragraph is clearly the best; the writer begins by getting the readers' attention, clearly defines her role within the company, demonstrates an awareness of the program, is eager to engage with Southwest's customers, and reflects positively on the company.



Printed messages are usually preferable over electronic alternatives when you: (1) want to make a formal impression; (2) are legally required to provide information in printed form; (3) want to stand out from the flood of electronic messages; (4) need a permanent, unchangeable, or secure record.



Orientations don't give away the key points in a collection of information but rather tell readers where to find those points. Summaries, in contrast, can serve as miniature versions of a document or appear at the end of a document and function as a review of what readers have just read. Teasers withhold the main point of a message as a way to encourage clicking through to a blog post or webpage.



Business applications of social networks include:

- Gathering market intelligence
- Recruiting new employees and finding business partners
- Sharing product information (including *conversation marketing*, in which companies initiate and facilitate conversations among customers and other interested parties)
- Fostering brand communities
- Responding to events, questions, and rumors
- Providing customer support
- Offering location-based services

4. A hub is a web presence that you own and control, such as a conventional website, a blog, and/or a company-sponsored online community that serves as the foundation of your online presence.
5. Subject lines in email messages are important because they help the reader decide whether or not to open the message. Use the subject line in email (and in memos) to capture your audience's attention. Make the subject line informative by making it do more than just describe or classify message content. Build interest with key words, quotations, directions, or questions. Also, when exchanging multiple emails with someone on the same topic, modify the subject line to reflect the revised message content.
6. Email still has several compelling advantages:
 - It is universal; anybody with an email address can reach anybody else with an email address.
 - It is still the best medium for many private, short- to medium-length messages.
 - Its non-instantaneous nature can be an advantage; many messages do not need the rapid update rates of IM or Twitter, and the implied urgency of those systems can be a productivity-sapping interruption.
7. The benefits of IM in business include its rapid response to urgent messages, lower cost than both phone calls and email, ability to mimic conversation more closely than email, and availability on a wide range of devices from PCs to mobile phones.
8. Audiences relate to a more personal style of blogging because it is a fresher approach than the carefully scripted "corporate voice."
9. Blogs help in viral marketing efforts by making it easy for bloggers to spread a message by linking to an article, website, video, or other blog post.
10. It's important to have a long-term, sustainable purpose in mind before creating and syndicating your blog or podcast because if your posts bounce from one theme to another, you are likely to lose your audience.



APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Writing every microblog message as a teaser is a risky approach because readers might tire of the never-ending delayed gratification and want some messages that offer immediate value of some kind.
2. One of the stated purposes of business social networks such as LinkedIn is using the network for businesses purposes, so yes, this would be considered ethical.
3. A writer is able to use a personal, intimate style of writing and still adhere to the conventions of grammar, spelling, and mechanics. Readers often have only a blogger's writing to determine his or her credibility, and one way to demonstrate you're an expert

and that you care about quality is by showing that you have a firm command of the English language.

4. Eliminating blogging entirely to make sure bloggers don't accidentally share too much prerelease information about upcoming games would not be a wise idea. Currently, the blogs have thousands of readers and the prerelease information piques consumers' interests, which likely results in more sales. Essentially, these blogs foster positive relationships with customers. One solution to ensure that no sensitive information is released is for the company to appoint an individual who would view all blogging content before it is posted. This way, the company can still foster its relationship with its customers and the president could be assured that the information being posted has been vetted.
5. No, the communication power of Twitter is not at all limited to 140 characters. A good way to think about this is to consider Twitter as both a messaging service and as an enabler or connector, putting you in touch with people and information sources that you might never have found otherwise. Finding and following interesting people—and the interesting people they find and follow—can be a career- and life-enhancing experience that goes beyond the short messages themselves.



PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

Messages for Analysis 1

The customer service agent's tone is informal and unprofessional.

- Responses to the customer's comments contain an IM acronym (LOL) that is inappropriate for a business context.
- The agent's remarks suggest a lack of knowledge on his or her part.
- The agent also suggests that the problem is the customer's fault, even though there is no evidence to show that the customer has done anything wrong.
- It would be more effective to adopt a more formal (but still conversational) tone, to gather more information from the customer, and to avoid speculation about what caused the problem.
- The focus throughout should be on helping the customer resolve the issue.

Here is one possible revision:

Agent: Thanks for contacting Home Exercise Equipment.
 How can I help you?

Customer: I'm having trouble assembling my home gym.

Agent: Okay, let me get some information about your gym so I can help you with that. Do you still have the box?

Customer: Yes.

Agent: Great—the model number is located on the front near the UPC code. Please read that number to me.

Customer: It's model number HG-8975.

Agent: Thank you. What problem have you encountered?

Customer: The cross bar that connects the pillars isn't long enough to reach across the pillars.

Agent: I understand. There's a spacer in the box that can help with that. It's a cylinder about 6 inches long with internal threads on one end and a connector on the other. Do you see that part?

Customer: Yes. What should I do about it?

Agent: Just insert one end of the cross bars into the threaded end of the spacer and tighten it, and that will make the cross bar long enough to reach both pillars.



Messages for Analysis 2

The post is written in a tone that is unprofessional and excessively negative. The author loses additional credibility by admitting that he or she has based the entire post on a very limited amount of information.

- The informal language might be appropriate for a personal blog, but not for a corporate one (“WE’RE DOOMED!” “it ain’t pretty,” etc.).
- The purpose of the post is unclear. It sounds like the only purpose is to allow the author to vent, but some comments (particularly in the paragraph that begins, “I’ve been saying for years”) indicate that the author has some valid suggestions on how the company could improve.
- The author’s drastic claims are not supported with adequate evidence. A “10-second glimpse” of the prototype would have provided only a limited understanding of its quality and functionality. Also, the author’s interpretation of the “grin” is highly subjective. It may have meant that the robot’s price was low but could just have easily suggested that the price was incredibly high.
- The final paragraph establishes an adversarial relationship with the audience, casting the entire post as a tirade based on their failure to take the author’s warnings seriously.

Here is one possible revision:

Impressive prototype from Motoman

I visited the Sikorsky plant in Stratford yesterday to check the status of the assembly line retrofit we performed for them last year. While there, I saw part of a demonstration of a prototype robot from Motoman. It was, to say the least, impressive. I witnessed only a small part of the demo, but from what I saw the robot was compact, fast, and incredibly maneuverable.

Motoman may be onto something with its emphasis on size, speed, and maneuverability. Our products are strong in terms of accuracy and payload capacity, but to remain competitive we may need to pay more attention to factors that have become our rival's trademarks.



Messages for Analysis 3

Four obvious weaknesses in this podcast are as follows:

1. The introduction is abrupt and could offend a professional audience.
2. The speaker insults listeners by saying that anyone who isn't familiar with social media has been living under a rock.
3. The podcast exhibits a poorly planned sequence, forcing the speaker to backtrack and define social media halfway through the recording.
4. After listing the various types of social media, the speaker says, "notice the common threads," then introduces the first thread by saying "One," thereby implying that at least a "two" and perhaps a "three" are to follow. However, only the first item is discussed, leaving listeners to wonder what happened to the rest of the "common threads."



More than one medium would work for these examples, but students should be able to support their choices. Here are some possible solutions:



- a. A conventional website would work well since it would allow users to search quickly for information on their specific issue, and it could be updated easily to reflect changes in product design. Another possibility would be a community Q&A site (perhaps as part of the main website).
- b. A handwritten note would be best for a message of condolence.
- c. Since the company is small and this resignation will affect everyone, a meeting would be the best way to prevent false rumors about when and why she is leaving.
- d. A blog would be appropriate for these messages, since it could easily incorporate

pertinent information about current events.

- e. A limited-access blog would work for this as well, since it would enable everyone involved with the project to post questions, review past posts, and have easy access to a record of who is responsible for what.
2. Student answers will vary. Encourage students to dig for the sort of breaking news that a real industry insider would get excited about. Bloggers and Twitter users who follow a company or industry closely might reveal some interesting news items.
3. Responses will vary. Here are some examples:
 - a. Updated budget figures for Jarman renovation
 - b. Request for input on new marketing brochure
 - c. June production schedule—and list of key concerns about staffing
4. The message is dictatorial and implies that employees are not pulling their weight. The memo will offend conscientious employees, and even those guilty of taking a little extra time now and then will resent the tone of the memo. The writer can treat this as a routine memo, with a straightforward change in routine procedures. The first paragraph can contain the main idea of the change in break procedures, with logical, justifiable details in the following paragraphs. The tone should not reflect talking down to employees or lecturing. A courteous close that helps completes the direct approach.

Subject: Changes in Break Procedures

Starting Monday, January 1, 2012, scheduled break times will be used for morning breaks, lunch breaks, and afternoon breaks. Your supervisor will assign your specific break times. Both the morning and afternoon breaks will be 15 minutes, as has been customary in the past. The lunch break will be a regular 30-minute break.

The use of scheduled break times will allow us to achieve our productivity goals and ensure that a certain number of employees are always available. Once your new scheduled break and lunch times are assigned, please adhere to them. Should you need to leave your work assignment at any other time, please talk with your supervisor first. Please stop by my office (room 243) or call me at extension 3454 to discuss our new changes.
5. Students should revise each statement to make it more formal but avoid substituting obsolete or pompous language for the originals.
 - a. Based on the information you have provided; I recommend our quad turbo sprayer.
 - b. I am glad I could help you.
 - c. I've found the L400 to be effective.
 - d. Customers who use this sprayer often see a 20-30 percent reduction in fumes.
6. Students might revise the blog posting in the following manner:

We've been unable to get our hands on enough high-grade chromium steel to meet our production schedule, so we aren't going to meet the June 1 commitment to ship 100 operating tables to Southeast Surgical Supply. This morning we learned that we'll be able to make only 30 tables.

The fact that we won't be able to keep our promise to a valued customer is obviously embarrassing and bad for business. However, it also aggravating for all of us involved because we were warned about the chromium steel shortage well in advance. Six months ago the purchaser told us about the shrinking supplies and suggested that we advance-buy the chromium steel we would need for the next 12 months. Unfortunately, we were not able to do so given our corporate policy that restricts advance purchasing to three months in advance. Since our division is responsible for completing this order, we're going to be blamed for the inability to fill the order and for possibly losing a customer to our competition, Crighton Mfg. We have urged the corporate office to reexamine the advanced purchasing policy so that we can be more financially flexible and better able to compete.

7. Students' responses will vary, but the updates should be concise, easy to read, and contain a link back to the product they describe. For example:
8. In addition to being excessively chatty, this podcast exhibits two significant organizational problems. First, the lack of an introduction deprives listeners of the opportunity to prepare for the information they are about to receive. Second, it has no organizational structure to speak of, with major, minor, and irrelevant bits mixed together.

Here is one possibility for a clear introduction:

Hello everyone; we have lots of important news this week. I want to cover four topics. First, Thomas will join us at the quarterly sales meeting next week and wants an update from all district managers. Second, we've changed the commission reporting structure, which will naturally interest all of you. Third, we've just entered into a co-branding agreement with Uni-Plex, which creates sales opportunities for everyone. And fourth, I want to make sure everyone takes a moment to meet Selma Gill, who just joined and took over the Northeast sales region from Jackson Stroud.

Starting with the quarterly sales meeting next week, Thomas wants an update on how petroleum prices are affecting customer behavior. Each district manager should be ready with a two or three paragraph report on conditions in your geographic area. If you have any questions on what to cover, please give me a call.

CASE SOLUTIONS

Here are possible solutions for this Unit's cases.



Media Skills: Social Networking; Media Skills: Microblogging

Note: Students should keep in mind that this service is provided in the spirit of friendly competition and creates marketing messages that are real-time, authentic, and enthusiastic. Timeliness is of vital importance in these messages to potential customers.

Use the free tools provided by Foursquare to attract new customers and keep your best ones coming back.

Offer customers extra entertainment by using Foursquare Specials, attractive freebies that will boost your business.

Special offers will be automatically presented in the Foursquare applications of near-by users for better promotion.

Claiming a Foursquare Venue will also allow you to profile your customers and monitor their activities at the Venue Stats dashboard!



Media Skills: Social Networking; Online Etiquette

Note: Controlling the urge to harshly criticize these employees is vital. Students' posts should be positive, informative about possible negative consequences for the company, and helpful in offering guidance. Students should also recognize the power of social media and its sometimes-delicate application in business communications.

The Internet has revolutionized business communication. Now social media sites allow people to discuss openly about products and services; businesses are increasingly using the Internet to interact more freely with their customers.

However, the speed and ease of online interaction has brought with it a decline in etiquette. 'Conversational and personalized' communication often crosses the boundaries of professionalism. At times, an unintentional blunder on the part of an employee could lead to confusion or even hurt the company's reputation.

We can easily avoid such lapses while representing our company online. It's simply a matter of keeping in mind basic business netiquette.

1. Avoid personal attacks.

The anonymous nature of online interactions often removes social inhibitions. Many people use foul language and strike out at others on Internet platforms; something they would not do face to face. Keeping one's cool is the only solution to avoid such emotional outbursts.

2. Follow company policies.

PR guidelines inform employees about the official stand on important issues. We should refer

to these guidelines while speaking on behalf of our company to ensure that our communications are in line with the company's stand.

3. Ensure authenticity of information.

Often people confuse their personal beliefs with facts, and then support them with evidence. This tends to happen more often on Web-logs and in online discussion groups and it dilutes the speaker's authenticity.

4. Respect people's virtual space.

While a person might appear online on the IM late at night, it's presumptuous to message them about work. When interacting online, we should imagine how we would speak if the person was in front of us and extend the same courtesy to them in the virtual world as well.

5. Do not assume privacy.

All emails, instant messages, blog posts and tweets are stored forever. They could be seen by anyone—a customer, a friend, co-worker, company security staff, or even one's boss. So writing something online is very similar to saying it aloud in a public space!

6. Maintain email etiquette.

Even in an informal email, we should ensure the writing remains grammatically correct, relevant, and comprehensive. All emails don't require the "Reply-all" option, unless it's relevant to everyone in the mailing list. Acronyms, emoticons, and slang could be interpreted as unprofessional. These simple steps will go a long way in developing a positive image for our community.



Media Skills: Social Networking; Media Skills: Presentations

Note: This exercise gives students the opportunity to step out of their college confines and expand their awareness of local business. They should offer an effective strategy to integrate that small business into the community and be able to utilize all effective means of social media to expand the existing customer base. The following is an example of how a small business could benefit from students' strategies.

Brain Snacks is a small business in our neighborhood that could use some help in increasing its customer base. The unique, personal touches to customer service and small-town atmosphere set Brain Snacks apart from larger national chains that we all see at every mall. A tailored social media strategy would enhance the customer base by strengthening its local presence with personal, accountable recommendations from its neighbors.

An independent bookstore owned by our neighbor Sue Petersen, Brain Snacks shelves mostly mystery, romance, and science fiction/fantasy titles. Presented here is a proposal for a social media

campaign designed to assist our neighbor and community-focused employer. Goals of this strategy include:

- Increase the customer base
- Foster brand communities
- Facilitate community building
- Strengthen local presence
- Share product information
- Share information about the store

An effective social media strategy can help bolster the financial strength and viability of Brain Snacks in the following ways:

1. Create a buzz about the store
2. Announce special offers through status updates
3. Initiate engaging conversations
4. Invite customer feedback, views, and reviews

A variety of social media outlets can be used to attract a wide variety of users, all with differing interests and capabilities. In addition to linking the bookstore's website to social media outlets, the following examples show opportunities for each outlet:

- **LinkedIn**
 - Get support and advice
 - Connect with investors
 - Create special interest groups
- **Facebook**
 - Share photographs
- **YouTube**
 - Encourage customer involvement by posting video clips of interviews with authors, video tours of the bookstore, or tutorials on picking the right book for gifting
- **Twitter**
 - Provide store updates and the latest news from the publishing world
 - Offer coupons and notices of sales/discounts
- **Create a Blog**
 - Share the bookseller's views on books
 - Invite authors and publishers to write
 - Publish customers' book reviews
 - These efforts will go a long way to increase an online presence and community,

establishing a broader customer base, and therefore, increasing sales.



Media Skills: Social Networking

Note: The key challenge of this message will be in leveraging good intentions against a possibly negative reaction. While the message is intended to guard against future embarrassment or negative employment consequences, the receiver may see this effort as intrusive. The goal should be focused on constructive advice. The example message below begins with complimentary comments on writing ability and then moves swiftly into problem areas, helping the receiver be more open to the feedback.

To: janet_markell@wayne.edu

Subject: My review of your online presence

Hi Janet,

I “Googled” you today and have finally sifted through your Facebook account, numerous blog posts, tweets, and photographs. While evaluating your online presence I kept asking myself how I would react if I was in the process of hiring you.

Your online writing is impressive. I liked your blog, especially the section with links to your published and award-winning work.

I suggest you reconsider the following:

- ✓ Your online résumé at LinkedIn does not have your current contact information.
- ✓ Several photographs and videos, taken during Allison’s bachelorette party and posted on her website, show you drunk and passed out. You should contact her immediately and ask to have the images removed.
- ✓ A few of your Facebook posts criticizing university policies appear emotionally charged and hostile.
- ✓ You have tweeted details from drinking binges and parties. I suggest going through your tweet history and deleting all such messages. The Library of Congress will still have them on file, but unless you run for president someday, that shouldn’t be a problem! At least you can get them out of immediate view of employers, and according to Twitter, deleting them will eventually clear them from Twitter search.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions about my feedback.

Regards,

Lisa



Media Skills: Email; Career Management: Personal Branding, Prologue

Note: This message gets to the point and provides an appropriate level of detail. The subject line clearly identifies the content of the message, making it easy for the reader to know whether this message is relevant. The bulleted list provides consistency and clarity in the items described. The upbeat close indicates the value of the internship to both the reader and the organization.

From: Sarah Maxwell <s_maxwell@suddenlink.net>

To: Maxine Minton <minton@techcorp.net>

Subject: Duties during my HR internship

Dear Maxine:

As you requested, here is a description of my internship duties:

- Shadowed HR employees to gain perspective on all activities of the department
- Assisted other HR employees in completing quarterly reports
- Prepared the EEOC report for supervisor review
- Helped department intranet representative redesign department homepage and accompanying links
- Familiarized myself with the HR information system that supports the hiring process
- Processed new employees and departing employees by entering data into the system, verifying the completion of forms, and proofreading forms for correctness
- Assisted employee-benefits team by conducting research on health-care-provider options
- Helped coordinate annual company picnic: designed project management list using project management software, reserved location, designed and distributed flyers, prepared memos, tracked attendance to plan food and beverage quantities, calculated quantities, planned and coordinated games for the picnic
- Wrote an article about the annual picnic for the quarterly newsletter
- Completed general office tasks, including answering phones, filing, obtaining supplies, and running errands

Because of the variety of experiences this internship has provided, I now have a more complete understanding of the HR activities in a successful company. Thank you for the opportunity to expand my knowledge while contributing to this organization's ongoing success.

Sarah



Media Skills: Email; Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages

Note: This message opens with the main idea. Reasons for the new procedure are clearly explained in the body. The listed evaluation factors illustrate that the writer has gone beyond the factors suggested in the case scenario. The writer makes appropriate forms easy to obtain and presents a way to provide consistency in the new evaluation process. The last paragraph closes with an offer to help answer any questions that the readers may have about the new process.

Subject: Side impact protection with Britax seats

Dear <Customer Name>,

Thank you for your interest in side-impact crashes and the safety features of Britax seats. We know that there are many car seats on the market, and we are pleased to explain the superior protection our seats can offer your family. This email message will provide information about understanding side impact crashes, minimizing injuries and fatalities in side impact crashes, and protecting your family by purchasing a Britax car seat.

Understanding Side Impact Crashes

When a car is in an accident there are two sources of injury to the occupants: the acceleration of the body as the car comes to a sudden halt, resulting in energy (G forces) being placed on the body, and contact with any intruding objects such as glass, metal shards, car doors, etc. When a car is hit from the front and a child is properly secured in a car seat in the back, there is not much risk from intruding objects. The risk is minimized because the car's hood combined with the front seat creates a buffer between intruding objects and the child. When a car is hit from the side, however, this buffer is eliminated, making intruding objects a danger and often results in more severe injuries.

Energy cannot be destroyed but can be transferred from one object or one form to another. So the key to minimizing the risk of serious injury during a side impact crash is to make sure energy from a crash is transferred to something other than the child. To do this in a side impact crash, it is critical to have a car seat with a rigid barrier around the head and torso. The car seat's shell should be lined with energy absorbing material, such as Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) foam. In addition, a car seat should restrain the child in place. Then, in the event of a crash, the seat and child will slow down with the car. In a side impact crash, this means not only employing a harness to prevent a child from moving forward, but also using a car seat with close-fitting sides that minimize side-to-side motion. If a child is properly secured, the movement of his or her body will slow down when the vehicle slows after impact, minimizing the G forces the child absorbs and lowering the risk of injury.

Armed with this knowledge, Britax developed side impact protection for its full line of products, with several of its car seats featuring True Side Impact Protection®, the highest level of side impact protection available.

Yours in safe travel,

Britax



Media Skills: E-Mail

Note: Students should refer to the incident early in the email and move quickly to explain the new policy and its context. It would also be vital to establish credibility by explaining that the writer is the director of catalog operations.

To: catalog_staff@simons.ca

Subject: Revised Company Policy for Booking Catalog Models

Last summer our company realized that we were promoting unhealthy beauty standards for young women and, as a result, decided to pull back our back-to-school catalog. You may remember that our company also issued an apology and replaced the catalog. Because we'd like to continue portraying women with healthy bodies and from various backgrounds, I'd like to inform you of our revised company policy regarding models:

Effective immediately, we will no longer book models who do not have healthy body mass indices.

I have attached the weight/height requirements for healthy body mass indices to this message.

As the Director of Catalog Operations, I am pleased that our company is continuing to represent the bodies of actual women rather than unobtainable stereotypes.

If you have any questions about our new policy, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Media Skills: Email

Note: Students should keep this message brief and upbeat, while recognizing that Grogan's complaints are not entirely unfounded. Simply having his concerns recognized may go a long way toward encouraging him to persevere.

To: chris_grogan@webmagic.com

Subject: Keep up the Good Work

Chris,

I'd like to thank you for your continued design efforts on the FitGear web development project.

As you know, this project has been tough for everyone on our team. The client's expectations have changed periodically, and that has led to delays and extra work that none of us anticipated. Things have been particularly challenging on your end: almost every design has had to be re-worked through no fault of your own.

All of us appreciate your hard work and look forward to getting together to celebrate once we bring this project to a close (and—believe it or not—we will!).

Sincerely, Mitch



Media Skills: Email; Message Strategies: Negative Messages

Note: This type of message would come only as a last resort and could easily become part of legal proceedings. It would need to be factual, unemotional, and clear in saying that you wish to have no further dealings with the customer.

To: samhardison@roadrunner.com

Cc: sheriff@nash.nc.gov; jthomas@thomaslaw.com

Subject: Purvis Hardware, Inc.

Dear Mr. Hardison,

Last Wednesday, August 10, 2011, you visited our hardware store at 4:15 p.m. to return an Echo gas-powered leaf blower because you were dissatisfied with it. As you acknowledged, the blower was fully functional. This was the tenth item with a ticket price exceeding \$200.00 that you had returned to our store in the past four months.

When our sales staff declined to accept the return based on our return policy, you asked to see the Assistant Manager, and then to speak with me—the owner of the store. I confirmed what my employees had said: after nine returns of fully functional, big-ticket items within four months, we could not refund the purchase price of the blower.

In over 25 years in the hardware business, I've never received the kind of verbal abuse you delivered that day. You shouted angrily and flung the blower against the wall behind our counter. My employees and I felt threatened, and other customers left the store because of your tirade. You ignored three requests to leave the store, and finally departed only after I called the police.

Please consider this email a formal request that you not return to Purvis Hardware. We regret having to make this request, but I am sending it on the advice of the Sheriff's Department and our store's attorneys. Thank you for your cooperation.

Ben Purvis

Owner, Purvis Hardware



Media Skills: Email; Collaboration: Team Projects

Note: Students will provide a wide variety of responses to this exercise. Their lists of products should, however, be consistent in explaining how each one would benefit and meet the needs of women in the target market. One example of a possible response is below.

Subject: Tapping into a Growing Market

Hi Jen, Eduardo, and Pam,

My research shows that one of the fastest-growing markets in the U.S. is made up of adult women who live without spouses. For the first time ever, more than half of all American women are now in this category, and the trend shows no signs of slowing.

The demands of women in this market are unique, and we should capitalize on the opportunity to meet those needs. Here are some examples of products and product upgrades we could help our clients pursue:

- Upscale, easy-to-prepare meal kits: Everyone's jumped on the Lean Cuisine and 'family meal kit' bandwagon, but what's missing is a line of meal kits *for one* that moves far beyond the microwave boxed dinner.
- Exercise equipment line designed exclusively for women: Most at-home exercise machines have a universal "one-size-fits-all" design that often falls short when it comes to enabling women to exercise safely and comfortably.
- Hand tools designed by women for women: (My thinking on this is like that in item 2.) What if a group of women designed a line of hand tools to fit their everyday needs that required lesser physical prowess than standard tools?
- Electronics product line emphasizing quality and convenience: When it comes to electronics, men tend to equate complexity with quality. Women expect the same high quality, but often do not want to spend hours setting everything up. A strong sense of style in product design wouldn't hurt, either.
- Taxi and bus services for and by women: Women would feel safer in taxis and buses driven by women.

These are just a few of my ideas on how we can meet the needs of this growing segment of the American market. Could we meet next week to talk them over?

Regards,



Media Skills: IM; Compositional Modes: Tutorials

Note: The greatest challenge here will be conveying sufficient information without overwhelming customers who may be unfamiliar with (and perhaps confused by) the details of high-definition television. Students should respond with simple definitions written in plain language.

Resolution: The sharpness or clarity of an electronic image. Resolution is measured in number combinations such as “1024 x 768,” which denote the number of pixels the display contains.

HDTV: This means “High-Definition Television,” but is used to describe different things by different people. Strictly speaking, it refers only to the highest-resolution digital TV format of the 18 currently available. This means a real HDTV must have a resolution of 1,080-line interlaced (1080i) or 720-line progressive (720p).

1080p: “1080 progressive,” a high-definition format with resolution of 1920 by 1080 pixels. “Pixels” are picture elements, the building blocks of the picture on your screen. The smaller the picture elements, the more realistic the picture will appear. The “progressive” designation is important because it means a 1080p television can display any digital format without sacrificing picture quality.

HDMI: “High-Definition Multimedia Interface.” This is an interface (a type of “jack” or “outlet”) that enables you to connect any audio or video device to a monitor and transfer uncompressed digital content via a single cable.



Media Skills: IM; Collaboration: Working in Teams

Note: In these role-playing scenarios, students will be challenged to communicate clearly in a short amount of time. They’ll probably recognize early on that it’s imperative to clearly state their concerns and, conversely, their advice. The clients will benefit from thinking through their dilemmas, clarifying their need, and being receptive. The advisors should be prepared to be succinct and thoughtful in the words they choose to offer advice.

This task requires two groups of students, where one team would be the “advisors” and the other the “clients”. Students will work in pairs and use any free IM/Chat system to coach each other in

finding solutions to decision making scenarios. In each pair, one student would communicate while the other observes the process. And then they would swap roles.

The IM conversations will vary greatly, depending on the scenarios chosen by the students and their style of communication. However, it is important to notice how the participants communicate—the language should be informal, yet professional in tone. There should be no usage of IM acronyms, popularly used during personal IM conversations. Although each scenario would be discussed for approximately five minutes, students should try and communicate in a coherent, complete way that would minimize the number of individual messages required. To ensure that their communication is accurate, effective, and professional, “Advisors” should briefly review each message before sending it to their “Clients”.

After the role playing, students need to meet as a full team and compare their experiences and learning. The discussion should cover areas such as how technology supported the communicators’ needs, and how IM can be effectively used in a business context.



Media Skills: Blogging; Compositional Modes: Tutorials

Note: In posting to their blogs, students should focus on exciting and tangible details to garner enthusiasm for the program. While it may seem obvious that most consider travel abroad exciting, students should remember to include practical details to make the experience more imaginable. The author’s voice should convey upbeat and enticing information. A possible example is below.

[Post title] Study Abroad Opportunities for Students at Miami University

“Imagine studying marine biology in the “living laboratory” of the Galapagos Islands, while staying with a local family in a small village in Ecuador! The learning curve was tremendous, and I received insights into the subject that would have been impossible while sitting in a classroom in Miami. I swam with sea lions and manta rays and ambled alongside giant tortoises, constantly wondering if I was treading ground that Charles Darwin had previously walked on!” — Martha Wright, UGalapagos Spring Program, 2011

I am sure many of you have interacted with students who have returned from study abroad programs and couldn’t stop talking about their experiences. Such programs provide students valuable exposure to new learning, cultures, and peoples, which translates into tangible personal, academic, and career benefits in today’s globalized environment.

Our university also encourages students to study abroad by providing a variety of foreign workshops, exchange programs, and scholarships. Study programs sponsored by other U.S.

universities and study abroad providers are also accepted. Credits from these programs can easily be transferred to Miami University, so we can avail ourselves of these facilities and still graduate on time.

Here's what you can do to get your study abroad plans rolling:

Typically, students start making their study abroad plans at least two semesters in advance. The first person to approach when planning your program is the academic advisor, who can help you decide upon the best time to study abroad and arrange your academic plan around a study abroad experience.

Step 1: Research the study abroad programs available by

- Check out the study abroad program listings at: www.studyabroad.muohio.edu
- Attending a Study Abroad 101 Group Advising Session.
- Attending the Study Abroad Fair held each fall.
- Browsing the materials in the Study Abroad Resource Center, 225 MacMillan.

Study abroad advisors and financial aid counselors are a great resource for students who plan to go abroad.

Step 2: Get all the paperwork in place.

- Visit the Study Abroad website to electronically sign your Disciplinary Release and complete the Office of Education Application.
- Complete the application procedures needed for your foreign university program.
- Program applications will often require a form called a Home School Nomination Form (or similar), to be signed by a Study Abroad Advisor. You can drop this form off in 216 MacMillan anytime during business hours.
- Transcripts can be requested from the Office of the Registrar in the CAB Building.

Step3: Visit your academic adviser to discuss the program courses and request approval of the Transfer Credit Approval Form (available at: www.studyabroad.muohio.edu).

Step 4: There is a Consortium Agreement for transferring financial aid to your study abroad program. Approach the Office of Student Financial Assistance for further information on financial grants.

Step 5: You can use our university orientation facilities to prepare for a successful study program abroad.

Living and learning abroad is a unique experience. I hope many of us avail it to explore the global nature of today's economy, politics, and cultures.

And of course, don't forget to share your experiences here! Media Skills: Blogging

Note: While this post is intended for the car dealer's blog, students should remember that they're providing information ultimately intended for the customer. This will require detailed

information presented in an enticing and energetic format. Effective communication in the blog will ensure success as dealers create a buzz about an exciting new product.

[Post title] Stay in the Game with the 2011 Chevrolet Volt

The 2011 Chevrolet Volt lives up to the high expectations. Available at approximately \$32,780, it is the most advanced hybrid fuel-efficient car, featuring an electric-only mode with a range of roughly 40 miles per charge, and luxurious interiors.

It is a four-seat, four-door hatchback, engineered with closed grille and aerodynamic back edges which increase its fuel efficiency. The futuristic dashboard has been specially designed to help customers make the most of their car.

The standard features of the Volt include:

- Two LCD screens on the dashboard that display speed, battery power, range to recharge or re-fill as well as an efficiency gauge that gives you real-time feedback
- A seven-inch diagonal high-resolution touchscreen on the center console and a driver mode control switch
- A six-speaker energy-efficient Bose stereo with CD/DVD player, auxiliary audio jack, iPod/USB interface and 30GB of digital music storage
- 17-inch alloy wheels, automatic headlights, power adjustable mirrors, keyless ignition, remote ignition, automatic climate control, cruise control, auto-dimming rearview mirror, six-way manual front seats, and tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel

Car owners will get a 100,000 mile/8-year warranty for the 16-kWh lithium-ion battery. The Volt's standard equipment includes a charge that allows customers to recharge the battery in about 10 hours using a conventional 110-volt outlet. Alternatively, a 220/240-volt station can be purchased that will charge the battery in about four hours.

The new Volt enables users to cut costs on gasoline and go green!

The average cost of recharging the battery is \$1.50 per day allowing customers to commute gas-free and tailpipe emissions-free at much lower costs. People can further reduce their costs by charging the battery during off-peak hours. It also has a small, on-board gas generator that creates energy to power the vehicle. Hence, customers can have a much quieter ride compared to noisy, internal combustion engines found in most cars.

Other innovative features include:

- Seamless torque right at the wheels, which allows greater and smoother acceleration
- Regenerative braking captures the energy from forward motion when the car brakes and then converts it into electricity, thus increasing its efficiency
- Eight standard airbags, wrapping its passengers in a cocoon of safety

- A standard five-year subscription to an OnStar automatic crash response plan, providing automatic alerts to an OnStar Advisor, who is immediately connected into the vehicle to gauge the severity of the crash and call for help
- Freedom for customers to pick their driving mode from maximum efficiency, normal mode; responsive acceleration of the sports mode; and the mountain mode for better energy reservation

The first electric car to win the Green Car of the Year award, the 2011 Chevrolet Volt is receiving accolades from both industry experts and users. To access the latest prices and quotes go to the Chevrolet website: <http://www.chevrolet.com/tools/currentoffers/results.do>.



Media Skills: Blogging

Note: Students should write this post in a way that accommodates the audience's need for concise information and a recommendation. Some audience members might be skeptical about the magnitude of the convention, so it will be important to include statistics to illustrate its magnitude and popularity. The journalistic approach will work well, since it will help keep the post focused on the basics (if readers want more details, they can visit Comic-Con's website, which should be listed in the post).

[Post title] What's Up with Comic-Con?

I've received a lot of email recently about whether or not I would recommend fans to attend Comic-Con, the international pop culture convention of massive proportions coming up this July in San Diego, California. In a word: yes! If you're a pop culture fan (and if you're reading this, you are), it's an understatement to say you'll enjoy this event. From comics to film to gaming, Comic-Con has it all packed into a four-day extravaganza featuring costumed participants and big-name special guests including the likes of Ray Bradbury.

We're not talking about some glorified comic book sale here. Comic-Con is in its thirty-eighth year, and organizers expect more than 100,000 participants (which, according to the Comic-Con site, is "the largest number of attendees of any convention in the country"). Everything pop culture—from classics to the latest titles—will be on display in a 460,000 sq. ft. exhibit hall. Participants can attend seminars on production and screenwriting, how to get noticed by well-known publishers like DC Comics, and a Battlestar Galactica Forum hosted by Richard Hatch

(a.k.a. Captain Apollo).

The dates for this year's Comic-Con are July 26-29 (with a "Preview Night" on July 25). Registrations and hotel rooms are limited, so if you plan on going don't wait to make your arrangements. You can find out more at www.comic-con.org or by emailing cci-info@comic-con.org.



Media Skills: Blogging

Note: With the multitude of information available online regarding safe travel, students should have no problem finding and identifying at least six tips to include in the posting. One example of a site that offers dozens of tips is

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html, which is maintained by the U.S. Department of State.

[Post title] Safe Travel Tips

For many of us, travel is an important part of our jobs. Unfortunately, work-related matters can distract you from your surroundings and make you vulnerable to theft and other crimes. Here are some tips to help you travel safely, along with some helpful websites with more information on staying safe while you're away from home:

- **Pack light.** The less you take with you, the less weight you'll need to carry. Also, keep in mind that most airlines now have very strict limits on the weight and size of check-in and carry-on luggage. If it's not absolutely necessary for your trip, leave it at home. (See "A Safe Trip Abroad" at www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety)
- **Keep valuables close by.** Don't leave cash or other valuables (including your passport) in your hotel room or anywhere else. The safest place to store them is in a money pouch you can hide beneath your clothes. (See "Keep Your Valuables Safe" at www.msnbc.msn.com)
- **Take the elevator.** Avoid staying on the ground floor of your hotel since it's most vulnerable to intruders. However, don't stay in a room higher than the seventh floor since higher floors are more difficult to escape during fires. (see "In Pictures: Safe Travel Tips for Road Warriors" at www.forbes.com)
- **Blend in.** Do your best to avoid looking like an outsider. Avoid "flashy" jewelry and clothes, and be discreet about carrying tourist items like cameras and maps. Also, be mindful of local cultures and dress and behave accordingly. (See "Safety Tips for Business Travelers" at www.allbusiness.com)

- **Lock the door.** When you're in your hotel room, always lock the door. This includes using the "swinging metal security lock" that makes it even more difficult for would-be thieves and other intruders to get in. (See "Hotel Room Safety Tips" at www.businesstravel.suite101.com)
- **Call before opening the door.** Just because someone knocks on your hotel room door and claims to be "room service" or "maintenance" doesn't mean you should immediately open up. Call the front desk first to verify that they're really who they say they are.

With a little common sense, you can greatly reduce the chances of becoming a victim of crime while you're traveling on business.



Media Skills: Blogging

Note: Students must recognize that the intention of this post is to generate interest in the services of PreVisor. They should be specific, yet brief, in detailing the customer's need and how that was successfully met.

[Post title] How NASA Validated IT Security Readiness with Objective Skills Metrics from PreVisor

When NASA discovered that it needed to measure and validate the IT security skills of its 3,000 systems administrators, it turned to PreVisor for help. Together, they developed a pre-employment assessment and skills certification program using Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) technology to provide an accurate snapshot of critical employee skills. Today, PreVisor's assessments are delivering results by providing objective skills metrics that serve as a catalyst for continuous improvement among employees and contractors who are crucial to the agency's success. To know more about this case, visit <http://www.previsor.com/results/clients/nasa>.



Media Skills: Blogging

Note: Most readers are likely to believe that there can be few benefits to teenagers playing videogames and this blog posting immediately addresses this belief as well as makes use of clear organizational structure.

Parents today are increasingly concerned about the amount of time their child spends playing video games as they have, from time to time, heard that playing videogames can be detrimental to children. While our organization has posted evidence based on experiments, we've conducted to contradict this, we'd also like to direct your attention to the results of a recent study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project survey that supports our stand on the issue. Read on to see how

playing videogames can help your children.

Game playing is social, with most teens playing games with others at least some of the time.

- 76% of gaming teens play games with others at least some of the time.
- 82% play games alone at least occasionally, though 71% of this group also plays games with others.
- 65% of gaming teens play with others in the same room.

Game playing can incorporate many aspects of civic and political life.

- 76% of youth report helping others while gaming.
- 44% report playing games where they learn about a problem in society.

These results indicate that game playing is not quite the curse it has been made out to be.

In fact, it has benefits that could help children and youth learn civic and social skills that will make them positive members of society.



Media Skills: Microblogging

Note: This post should be a catchy appeal to customers that highlights the unique nature of the product, and how that could play into customers' personal lives. An example would be:

Logan, a fashion magazine for young women with disabilities, makes a great birthday gift for special young women!



Media Skills: Microblogging; Compositional Modes: Teasers

Note: This exercise gives students an opportunity to pass along tips regarding the more exciting elements of the job hunt. They should inject a lighthearted, helpful approach to an often-challenging task.

Watch Ken Lloyd of “Jerks at Work” share his secret psychological techniques and nail your first job interview. [URL]



Media Skills: Microblogging; Compositional Modes: Updates and Announcements

Note: Travelers need up-to-the-minute information, and they want it now. Students should appeal to the urgency required for getting a great deal.

Bid for your Vacation & Save: Enjoy steep discounts on flights and travel packages, but act now!

[URL]



Media Skills: Podcasting; Message Strategies: Marketing and Sales Messages

Note: Since students can choose any product for this sales pitch, their responses will vary. The exercise offers a good opportunity to review important differences between features and benefits and can help students practice creating a single message for two audiences (in this case, the sales staff and the customers).

The Pioneer Inno is a versatile, easy-to-use product that lets you enjoy XM Satellite Radio at home or on the go. You can even record your favorite songs, add them to the Inno's MP3 library and listen to them again and again. The Inno's bright, colorful screen makes it easy to keep track of your music and utilize the unit's many convenient functions.

Perhaps the Inno's most important feature is its internal antenna. Unlike other satellite radio receivers, the Inno doesn't require that you always connect it to an external antenna before listening. If reception is available, you can simply switch the Inno on and gain immediate access to XM programming. If you happen to be in a location that doesn't allow the portable antenna to receive programming, you can simply plug the Inno into the included home cradle (or the available car kit) and access the added power of an external antenna.

The Home cradle is another convenient feature. It enables you to easily connect the Inno to your home audio system and it even charges the internal battery. Taking the Inno on a trip and don't have room for the cradle? You can take the included Travel Adapter instead. It's even more compact, and lets you charge the Inno's battery by simply plugging it into any wall outlet.

The Pioneer Inno adds unique portability to the crystal-clear programming of XM Satellite Radio. All you need to get started is an XM subscription and some places to go.



Media Skills: Podcasting; Career Management: Personal Branding, Prologue

Note: This assignment allows students to research a particular company in which they are interested. In their podcasts, students should begin by introducing themselves and mentioning the position they are applying for, describe their background, and explain why they are the ideal candidate for the job. Students should take care to use concrete, colorful language. Here is a sample podcast:

Hello, I am Chelsey Vandenberg. I am applying for the Public Relations Specialist position within your company. I am currently attending Arizona State University and will be graduating this May with a BA in Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations.

In addition to my extensive public relations coursework, I am currently serving as president of our university's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter. In this role, I am responsible for overseeing work with an actual client. This year, our organization partnered with the Phoenix Blood bank Project. Using my leadership and interpersonal skills, our group was able to develop and implement a marketing campaign encouraging high school students to donate blood. Our campaign received Honorable Mention at the Public Relations Student Society of America's annual conference.

My experience working with the Phoenix blood bank Project overlaps with your company's focus on health care. This project introduced me to the rigorous HIPAA standards and, having already worked within this realm, I know that I will be able to apply my skills to your company. I would welcome the opportunity to continue promoting the stellar work your company is doing within our company. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to elaborate on my interest in securing a position with your company. I know that my experience both inside and outside of the college classroom would serve me well as a Public Relations specialist with your company.

Links to OERs

<https://bigthink.com/plus/9-tips-for-crafting-your-message-presenting-ideas-effectively/>

<https://cleareurope.eu/our-courses-2/craft-messages/>

<https://www.slideshare.net/sadimalik1/crafting-message-for-electronic-media>

<https://www.sesync.org/for-you/communications/toolkit/crafting-a-clear-message>

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_Introduction_to_Business_\(Lumen\)/25%3A_Module_11_Teamwork_and_Communication/25.15%3A_Electronic_Communication](https://biz.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_Introduction_to_Business_(Lumen)/25%3A_Module_11_Teamwork_and_Communication/25.15%3A_Electronic_Communication)

References/Suggestions for Further Readings

Pollard, C. (2016). *5 tips for creating powerful key messages for your business*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/catriona-pollard/5-tips-for-creating-power_b_9775472.html

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Williams, J. D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing: Research, theory, and practice* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.



Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



Are you in need of General Help as regards your studies? Do not hesitate to contact the DLI IAG Center by e-mail or phone on:



iag@dli.unilag.edu.ng



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STUDY SESSION 8:

WRITING COMPREHENSIVE BUSINESS DOCUMENTS



Introduction

There are two main purposes for writing a comprehensive business document. The first, and most important, is to serve as a guide during the life of your business. It is the blueprint of your business and will serve to keep you on the right track. To be of value, your plan must be kept current. If you spend the time to plan ahead, many pitfalls will be avoided, and needless frustrations will be eliminated. Second, the comprehensive business document is a requirement if you are planning to seek loan funds. It will provide potential lenders with detailed information on all aspects of the company's past and current operations and provide future projections. The text of a business plan must be concise and must contain as much information as possible.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- 8.1. Explain how to adapt to your audience when writing reports and proposals.
- 8.2. List five characteristics of effective report content, and list the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of formal reports.
- 8.3. Explain six strategies to strengthen a proposal argument, and list the topics commonly covered in the introduction, body, and close of proposals.
- 8.4. Identify six characteristics of effective website writing.
- 8.5. Describe the guidelines for becoming a valuable wiki contributor.



Key Terms: Comprehensive, Business, Document

8.1. Writing Reports and Proposals: Adapting to Your Audience

Like all messages, reports and proposals are most effective when adapted to the needs and interests of their intended audiences:

- Be sensitive to audience needs
- Build strong relationships with your audience

- Control your style and tone

Being Sensitive to Your Audience's Needs

All four aspects of audience sensitivity apply to reports and proposals:

- Adopting the “you” attitude
- Maintaining a strong sense of etiquette
- Emphasizing the positive
- Using bias-free language

Reports and proposals that are highly technical, complex, or lengthy can put heavy demands on readers, so the “you” attitude takes on special importance with these messages.

You can meet the needs of a diverse audience—if you plan for these elements in advance.

Readers today want results quickly and easily. If you want readers to understand and accept your message, help them seamlessly navigate your document by using:

- Headings
- Links,
- Smooth transitions
- Previews
- Reviews

Headings and Links

Headings are brief titles that cue readers about the content of sections that follow.

- They improve a document’s readability and are especially useful for identifying the framework of a report.
- They also visually indicate shifts from one idea to the next and allow readers see the relationship between subordinate and main ideas.

If creating a scheme, make the hierarchy of headings and subheadings clear.

When using three levels of headings in a report, for example, an effective scheme could be

- 20-point bold type for the first level headings
- 16 points for the second level
- 12 points for the third level

Another option is to put the first level headings in all capital letters or emphasize them using color.

Transitions

Use transitions to help readers move from one section of a report to the next and from key point to key point within sections. Transitions can be:

- Words
- Sentences

- Complete paragraphs

Effective transitions can help readers summarize and remember what they've learned so far while giving them a mental framework to process new information.

Previews and Reviews

Preview sections come after a body of material and summarize the information just covered. They introduce important topics and help readers get ready for new information; they are particularly helpful when the information is

- Complex
- Unexpected
- Unfamiliar

Previews and reviews can be written in sentence format, in bulleted lists, or using a combination of the two. Both are effective, but when appropriate, bullets can increase your document's readability by adding white space to the document design and making it easier to skim.

Building Strong Relationships with Your Audience

Building relationships with your readers starts with planning how to adapt style and language to meet their needs and expectations.

Some reports—particularly any reports that can be transmitted online—can take on lives of their own, reaching a wider audience than ever imagined. Choose content and language with care.

Establishing credibility is vital to successful communication.

- To gain the audience's trust, research all sides of the topic and document findings with credible sources.
- Setting audience expectations too high can lead to problems with your credibility if you can't deliver everything people expect.
- Take particular care with the introductory sections of important reports.

Controlling Your Style and Tone

If a report is likely to meet with audience approval, you can usually adopt a fairly informal tone.

To create a tone that is less formal, refer to readers as *you*, and refer to yourself as *I* (or *we*, if there are multiple report authors).

A formal tone is objective and businesslike and is more appropriate for

- Longer reports, especially those that deal with controversial or complex information
- Reports being sent to other parts of the organization or to outsiders
- Imposing a controlled distance between you and your readers

8.2 Composing Reports and Proposals: Drafting Report Content

Before composing a first draft, review the outline one last time. Verify that the organization you've chosen makes sense and review the wording of the headings and subheadings to make sure they establish the right tone.

For a direct tone, use informative phrasing. For an indirect tone, use descriptive phrasing.

Like other written business communications, reports and proposals have three main sections:

- An introduction (or *opening*)
- A body
- A close

The content and length of each section varies, depending on the:

- Type and purpose of the document
- Organizational structure
- Length and depth of the material
- Document's degree of formality
- Relationship between writer and audience

An effective introduction accomplishes at least four things:

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

In the body, the middle section in the report or proposal, cover these actions:

- Present the information
- Analyze the information
- Interpret the information gathered during an investigation
- Provide detailed proof supporting conclusions and recommendations

The close, the final section of your report or proposal, has three important functions:

- Emphasizes the main points of the message and briefly reiterates the logic behind any conclusions or recommendations.
- Summarizes the benefits to readers if the document suggests a change or some other course of action.
- Brings all the action items together in one place and gives details about who should do what, when, where, and how.

The final section of a report or proposal leaves a strong lasting impression. The close offers one last chance to make sure that the report says what is intended.

Your credibility is on the line with every business report you write, so make sure your content is

- **Accurate.** Information presented in a report must be factually correct. Double-check facts and references in addition to checking for typos.
- **Complete.** To help audiences make informed decisions, present information in a way that meets their needs. Include all the information necessary for readers to understand the situation, problem, or proposal and support all key assertions.
- **Balanced.** Present all sides of the issue fairly and equitably and include all essential information, even if some of it doesn't support your line of reasoning. Omitting relevant information or facts can bias your report.
- **Clear and logical.** Make sure sentences are uncluttered, contain well-chosen words, and proceed logically. Make your transitions clear and logical.
 - **Documented properly.** If you use primary and secondary sources, be sure to properly document and give credit to your sources.

Report Introduction

The specific elements to include in a report's introduction depend on the nature and length of the report, the circumstances in which you're writing the report, and your relationship with the audience.

An introduction could contain all the following topics:

- **Authorization.** When, how, and by whom the report was authorized; who wrote it; and when it was submitted.
- **Problem/opportunity/purpose.** The reason for the report's existence and what is to be accomplished because of your having written the report.
- **Scope.** What is and what isn't going to be covered in the report. The scope indicates the report's size and complexity; it also helps set the audience's expectations.
- **Background.** The historical conditions or factors that led up to the report. This section helps readers understand how the problem, situation, or opportunity developed and what has been done about it so far.
- **Sources and methods.** The primary and secondary sources of information used. This section builds reader confidence in the work and in the sources and methods used.
- **Definitions.** A list of terms that might be unfamiliar to your audience, along with brief definitions. Terms may also be defined in the body, in explanatory notes, or in a glossary.
- **Limitations.** Factors beyond your control that affect report quality.

- **Report organization.** The organization of the report, along with rationale for following this plan. This section that helps readers understand what's coming at each turn of the report and why.

Report Body

The body of a report can require difficult decisions about which elements to include and how much detail to offer.

Provide only enough detail in the body to support your conclusions and recommendations; you can put additional information in appendixes.

The following topics are commonly covered in a report body:

- Explanations of a problem or an opportunity
- Facts, statistical evidence, and trends
- Results of studies or investigations
- Discussion and analyses of potential courses of action
- Advantages, disadvantages, costs, and benefits of a particular course of action
- Procedures or steps in a process
- Methods and approaches
- Criteria for evaluating alternatives and options
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Supporting reasons for conclusions or recommendations

For analytical reports using the direct approach, state conclusions or recommendations in the introduction and use the body to provide evidence and support.

If using the indirect approach, use the body to discuss your logic and reserve conclusions or recommendations until the close.

Report Close

The content and length of a report's close depend primarily on use of the direct or indirect approach.

- If using the direct approach, end with a summary of key points, listed in the order in which they appear in the report body.
- If you're using the indirect approach, use the close to present conclusions or recommendations.

Don't introduce new facts in the close; audience members should have all the information they need by the time they reach this point.

If your report is intended to prompt others to action, use the close to spell out exactly what should happen next. If you'll be taking all the actions yourself, make sure your readers understand this fact so that they know what to expect from you.

8.3 Composing Reports and Proposals: Drafting Proposal Content

The scope and organization of a solicited proposal are usually governed by the request for proposals.

Most RFPs spell out precisely what should be covered and in what order. This uniformity lets the recipient evaluate competing proposals in a systematic way.

The general purpose of any proposal is to persuade readers to do something like persuasive sales messages.

You must sell your audience on your ideas.

Here are some additional strategies to strengthen your persuasive argument:

- Demonstrate your knowledge. Show that you have the knowledge and experience to solve the problem or address the opportunity outlined in your proposal.
- Provide concrete information and examples. Give quantifiable details on how the job will be done.
- Research the competition. Emphasize why your solution is the optimum choice.
- Prove that your proposal is workable. Your proposal must be appropriate and feasible for your audience and be consistent with your audience's capabilities.
- Adopt the "you" attitude. Relate to the reader's exact needs, either as stated in the RFP for a solicited proposal or as discovered through your own investigation for an unsolicited proposal.
- Package your proposal attractively. Make sure your proposal is letter perfect, inviting, and readable. Readers will prejudge the quality of your products or services by the proposal you submit.

Proposal Introduction

The introduction presents and summarizes the problem or opportunity you want to explore along with your proposed solution.

The introduction also orients readers to the remainder of the report.

If the proposal is solicited, its introduction should refer to the RFP to clarify which RFP you're responding to.

If your proposal is unsolicited, your introduction should mention any factors that led to submitting your proposal.

The following topics are commonly covered in a proposal introduction:

- **Background or statement of the problem or opportunity.** Review the reader's situation and establish a need for action. In unsolicited proposals, demonstrate that a problem or an opportunity exists before you try to convince them to accept your solution. Emphasize how your goals align with your audience's goals.
- **Solution.** Briefly describe the solution you propose and highlights your key selling points and their benefits, showing how your proposal will help readers meet their business objectives.
- **Scope.** State the boundaries of the proposal, defining what you will and will not do.
- **Organization.** Orient the reader to the remainder of the proposal and call attention to the major divisions of information.

Proposal Body

The proposal's body gives complete details on the proposed solution and specifies what the anticipated results will be.

Proposals are persuasive messages, and the audience expects confidence and professionalism, but maintain an objective tone so that you don't risk overselling your message.

In addition to providing facts and evidence to support your conclusions, an effective body covers this information:

- **Proposed solution.** Describes what you have to offer: your concept, product, or service. Focus on the strengths that are relevant to your readers' needs and point out advantages you have over competitors.
- **Work plan.** Describe how you'll accomplish what must be done. Explain the steps you'll take, their timing, the methods, or resources you'll use, and the person(s) responsible. Include when the work will begin, how it will be divided into stages, when you will finish, and whether any follow-up is involved.
- **Statement of qualifications.** Describes your organization's experience, personnel, and facilities—all in relation to reader needs. This section is a significant selling point and should be handled carefully.
- **Costs.** Covers pricing, reimbursable expenses, discounts, and cost factors.

Proposal Close

The proposal close should meet these objectives:

- Summarize key points
- Emphasize the benefits to readers
- Summarize the merits of your approach

- Restate why you and your firm are the best choice
- Ask for a decision from the readers.

The close is your last opportunity to persuade readers to accept your proposal.

In both formal and informal proposals, make this section relatively brief, assertive, and confident.

8.4 Drafting Online Content: Identify six characteristics of effective website writing.

Pay attention to six key aspects of web writing that will help make your web content more effective.

- Take special care to build trust with your intended audiences, because careful readers can be skeptical of online content. Make sure content is accurate, current, complete, and authoritative. Indicate the date material was originally posted and again when it is updated.
- Adapt your content for a global audience. Localize the homepage and key secondary pages while keeping more detailed content in its original language.
- Present your information in a concise, skimmable format. Effective websites use a variety of means to help readers skim pages quickly, including lists, careful use of color and boldface, informative headings and helpful summaries.
- Write headlines that answer the questions your target readers have in mind when they go looking for content.
- Whenever including links in your material, write link text that is descriptive and clear so that readers know where the link will take them. If a link takes readers to another website or launches a video or a podcast, make that clear so that website visitors aren't surprised when they click the link.
- Make your website a "living" document by adding fresh content and deleting reports and articles that are out of date or no longer relevant to your target audience.

8.5 Collaborating on Wikis: Offer guidelines for becoming a valuable wiki contributor.

Using wikis is a great way for teams and other groups to collaborate on writing projects, from brief articles to long reports and reference works.

The benefits of wikis are compelling, but they do require a unique approach to writing.

Understanding the Wiki Philosophy

To be a valuable wiki contributor, keep these points in mind:

- Writers must let go of traditional expectations of authorship, including individual recognition and control. The value of a wiki stems from the collective insight of all its contributors.
- Team members sometimes need to be encouraged to edit and improve each other's work.
- Writers should use page templates and other formatting options to make sure the content fits the same style as the rest of the wiki.
- Many wikis provide both editing and commenting capabilities, and participants should use the appropriate tool for each.
- New users should take advantage of the *sandbox*, which is a "safe," nonpublished section of the wiki where team members can practice editing and writing.
- Wikis usually have guidelines to help new contributors integrate their work into the group's ongoing effort. Read and understand these guidelines; don't be afraid to ask for help.

Adapting the Three-Step Process for Successful Wiki Writing

Whether you're creating a new wiki, adding new material to an existing wiki, or revising existing material on a wiki, you can easily adapt the three-step process.

If you're creating a new wiki, carefully think through your long-term purpose and ask these questions:

- Will the wiki be a one-time project or an ongoing effort?
- Who will be allowed to add or modify content?
- Will you or someone else serve as editor, reviewing all additions and changes?
- What rules and guidelines will you establish to guide the growth of the wiki?
- What security measures might be required?

If you're adding a page or an article to an existing wiki, figure out how this new material fits in with the existing structure. Find out whether any similar material already exists; it might be better to expand an existing article or add a subpage than to create a new item.

If you don't agree with published content and plan to revise it, you can use the wiki's discussion facility to share your concerns with other contributors. A well-run wiki encourages discussions and disagreements if everyone remains civil and respectful.

Hey, you! Hands off My Content!

1. If full and proper credit is given (including prominence and placement), veracity of the information is verified, and the writer authorizes use, copying an entire article is acceptable and ethical. The original author is receiving a wider audience and the "user" is reaching out

for additional information to supplement the information on the site. What is not permissible, however, is any effort to minimize credit given by hiding or diminishing its presence.

2. Value-added content is becoming a major communication effort for many entrepreneurs and companies. Four advantages of this strategy include:
 - a. It helps break down the barriers between companies and potential customers.
 - b. Helpful content allows individuals and organizations to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise.
 - c. Content is vital to being found online, whether it's through social media sharing or conventional search engines.
 - d. Advertising supported sites benefit from great content because it increases traffic and therefore increases ad revenues.

Communication Challenges at Tellabs

Individual Challenge

An example transition sentence: "Following several years of economic challenges, market conditions began to improve, and we were able to capitalize on the increased demand for our products"

Team Challenge

Here is an example solution (entries do not necessarily reflect current website designs)

Criteria	www.tellabs.com	www.pepsico.com	world.honda.com	www.apple.com	www.target.com
Easy to read	Links in red are in very small font	Very small fonts throughout	Easy to use "font size" control buttons	More white space than others, fonts easy to read	Very small fonts throughout
Large buttons	Small fonts make some buttons very small	Tiny buttons make it difficult to click on most links	Fonts larger than Tellabs and Pepsi, and buttons easy to click	Small buttons if you click text, but icons throughout	Small fonts require you to click in a small area to follow each link
Can click on image or text	Very few images compared to other sites	Not many images, but icons to click for downloads	Numerous images to click (CEO Mid-Year Speech, and more)	Easy-to-identify icons to click on	Few icons or images to click

No broken links	All links appear to work	All links appear to work	All links appear to work	All links appear to work	All links appear to work
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Summary

As the table shows, links on the Tellabs Investors website are like those that appear on other corporate Investor Relations sites. Except for American Honda and Apple, all the sites contained very small fonts, small buttons, and few icons you could click to follow links. The Apple site was easier to read because it contained more white space. Apple’s website was also easier to navigate because it contained simple, easy to identify icons you could click to follow links. Honda’s site featured a “Font Size” control panel that made it easy to enlarge the font with one click. These are all features that would be easy to add to the Tellabs site and doing so would make the site easier to read, understand, and navigate.



The “you” attitude is particularly important because long and complex reports can place heavy demands on your audience.



1. To make a report less formal, writers can address the reader in the second person and refer to themselves in the first person. Style decision such as words choices, the use of contractions, and sentence structure can also make a piece of writing more or less formal. To make a report more formal, writers should adopt a third-person, journalistic style and more formalized language choices.



Reviewing your outline one last time before you begin to compose your report enables you to verify that the organization you’ve chosen makes sense. It also allows you to ensure that the way you’ve worded headings and subheadings establishes the right tone.



A successful report introduction accomplishes four things: (1) putting the report in context by tying it to a problem or an assignment, (2) introducing the subject or purpose and explaining why it’s important, (3) previewing the main ideas and their order of presentation, and (4) establishing a tone and a relationship with the audience.



2. The close of a report might include a review of the main points of the message, a summary of benefits (if the report presents a course of action or change), a reference back to pieces of the message and reiteration of how they fit together, and a summation of all action items (together with details about who should do what, when, where, and how).



3. The introduction of an unsolicited proposal needs to persuade a reader that a problem or an opportunity exists, and the situation is important enough to warrant some attention.



4. The work plan is a key component of a proposal because it is contractually binding if the proposal is accepted. So it's important not to promise more than can realistically be achieved.



5. Providing dates for online content allows readers to judge the currency of your content.



6. Using the inverted pyramid style helps online readers by letting them see additional layers of detail only if they want to (links to subpages are idea for this).



- Wiki editing capabilities are used to revise the displayed content of wiki pages, whereas commenting capabilities are used to discuss content “behind the scenes,” without mixing these conversations in with the actual content.



Apply Your Knowledge

1. Preview sections introduce important topics and help readers get ready for new information. Review sections come after a body of material and summarize the information just covered. Together, these two sections ensure complete delivery of the information.
2. The introduction to a proposal presents and summarizes the problem being discussed, along with a proposed solution. The introduction orients readers to the remainder of the report. If the proposal is solicited, its introduction should refer to the RFP so that readers know which RFP is being responding to. If the proposal is unsolicited, the introduction should mention any factors that led to its submittal. If the purpose of the proposal is not included, the audience will be left uncertain of its intent and therefore be left unclear on the information provided.
3. A company that solicits a proposal and then adopts the recommendations in that proposal without hiring the submitting firm is acting unethically. One could argue that if the proposal were

unsolicited, then any ideas freely given are “fair game,” but many would probably see this behavior as unethical. Exceptions might include situations in which (a) the company has already hired another organization that submitted similar or identical ideas or (b) the company already had similar changes in the works, prior to receiving either a solicited or an unsolicited proposal.

4. Material written for the web needs to be shorter than that intended for print because online readers tend to skip over long chunks of text.
5. Wiki writers need to let go of traditional expectations of authorship and control, because the key purpose of a wiki is to present the current and collective wisdom and insight of the entire team—while making it easy for everyone to contribute toward this end.



Practice Your Skills

Message A

The current proposal contains no introduction, headings, transitions, statement of qualifications, or no clear work plan; in addition, it does not use the “you” attitude, uses a table missing a horizontal line, uses a numbered list that does not contain an order (which suggests a bulleted list should be used); uses a list that does not feature parallel structure, and contains unnecessary information (e.g., F.E.I.N. numbers are given only for financial transactions and since the writer is not asking Mr. Estes to send any money, this number is not needed).

Here’s a possible revision:

Memco Construction

187 W. Euclid Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025

www.memco.com

April 19, 2019

PROJECT: IDOT Letting Item #83 Contract No. 79371 DuPage County

Dear Mr. Estes:

Given the positive and fulfilling relationship Memco Construction enjoyed with DuPage County, we are pleased to submit the following proposal for IDOT Letting Item #83.

Work Plan

To ensure a clear understanding that is beneficial to both organizations, the responsibilities of our company and expectations of your organization are outlined below.

Memco Construction

Furnishes all labor, material, equipment, and supervision.

Shall be paid strictly based upon the amount of material actually used on the job.

DuPage County

Ensures completion of all prep work, including geotechnical fabrics, geomembrane liners, etc., to be done by others.

Provides all forms, earthwork, clearing, etc., to be provided and maintained by others.

Provides a General Contractor who will identify a location for staging, stockpiling material, equipment, and storage at the job site.

Provides water at project site.

Provides an organization to complete dewatering.

Provides traffic control setup, devices, maintenance, and flagmen.

Costs

To complete this job successfully, we have identified the following costs:

Engineered Fill—Class II-IV

Description	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total
Mobilization*	Lump Sum	1	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
Engineered Class II	Cubic Yards	1,267	\$33.50	\$41,811.00
Engineered Class IV	Cubic Yards	1,394	\$38.00	\$52,972.00
			Grand Total:	\$99,283.00**

* Mobilization includes one move-in. Additional move-ins to be billed at \$1,100.00 each.

**Bond is not included in above prices. Bond is available for an additional 1 percent of the total bid.

Having worked with our company before, you know first-hand the type of high-quality construction and customer service we offer. Since our last project for you, we have completed six other construction jobs similar to this one and invite you to visit our website to view our before and after pictures (www.memcoconstruction.com).

Given the proposal deadline, we would like to receive confirmation of your acceptance of our bid within 10 days of your receipt of this proposal.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the phone number listed below. I'm looking forward to working with you once again.

Sincerely

Kris Beiersdorf

Memco Construction

187 W. Euclid Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025

Office: (847) 352-9742, ext. 30

Fax: (847) 352-6595

Email: kbeiersdorf@memco.com

Message B

This wiki article is a good example of material that suffers from a lack of the “you” attitude. Here is one possible revision:

Experience tells us that adult language leaders are most likely to succeed when three conditions are met. First, learning must take place within a safe, mutually respectful relationship. Our clients have learned to survive in today’s complex environment without the benefit of strong reading and writing skills, so they clearly possess intelligence and creativity that we must respect. Second, when the subject matter is relevant to their everyday concerns and interests, learners are more likely to grasp and retain the language. Third, clients’ needs, and interests evolve as their language skills improve, so tutors must continuously improvise and adapt.

Message C

Students should ask these when evaluating a wiki:

- What is the purpose of this document or message?
- Who is the target audience?
- What information does the audience need?
- Does the document provide this information in a well-organized way?
- Does the writing demonstrate the “you” attitude toward the audience?
- Is the tone of the writing appropriate for the audience?
- Can the readability be improved?
- Is the writing clear? If not, how can it be improved?
- Is the writing as concise as it could be?
- Does the design support the intended message?

Students should also realize that if they don’t agree with published content and plan to revise it, you can use the wiki’s discussion facility to share their concerns with other contributors. A well-run wiki encourages discussions and even robust disagreements, as long as everyone remains civil and respectful.



Exercises

1. (Yahoo! Statement on Internet Accessibility): By its very nature, this online report is a great example of the “you” attitude because it focuses on ways that Yahoo! works to accommodate and respect its customers. Students should be able to identify several “you”-oriented examples in which

Yahoo! speaks to the concerns of its audience, provides simple and clear information, or avoids going overboard with self-promotion.

(Recommendation report): This report demonstrates the “you” attitude in several ways, including white space, lists, and headings that make the key points extremely easy to find and follow, transitions (such as “First” and “Second”) that help the reader stay oriented, and concise presentations of information that respect the reader's time.

(Johnson Landscaping report): This report starts on a solid “you” footing in the first sentence. Another good example of the “you” orientation is the “Special Issues” section, in which the writer shows respect for the reader by being honest about problems and by immediately addressing concerns the reader is likely to have in response to negative news.

(Personal activity report): The “you” attitude is evident throughout this report. It respects the reader's time by conveying information in a table that is easy to read and understand, and it clearly distinguishes what has been done in July and what will be done in August. It also illustrates the inverted pyramid style by including links readers can click if they want more detail about any of the listed sites.

2. This exercise gives students a hands-on example of how headings, transitions, previews, and reviews guide readers through a lengthy report. Discussion might center on articles that did not accomplish this effectively. Why didn't they? What could their authors have done differently? In more successful articles, did students find any techniques that were repeated effectively (such as a similar form for reviews or previews used throughout the article)?
3. When you are writing the report, the ethical move would be to mention your recent discovery about the faulty survey in the introduction (as you explain “limitations”—factors beyond your control that affect your report's quality). Since the report is due in three days, you'll probably want to go ahead and present your findings and recommendations but inform your readers of the discrepancy you found. In truth, a better-administered survey might come up with similar or identical results, so you have no reason to throw out your conclusions just yet, and you'll want to mention this fact in the introduction as well. Depending on the circumstances of your report, you might also suggest follow-up research to counter the flawed survey with a second or revised report to be submitted before the company acts.
4. Following are suggested placements, with a description of the type of information to explain the reasoning for the placement:
 - a. Body—facts and statistical evidence
 - b. Introduction—historical background
 - c. Body—facts and statistical evidence

- d. Body—facts, statistics, trends
 - e. Introduction—explanation of methods
 - f. Body—facts, statistics, trends
 - g. Closing if using the indirect plan, body if using the direct plan—recommendation
 - e. Closing actions
5. This exercise will help students see how they can use various elements to define a problem, explain reasons for it, explore options, and recommend a solution that will be viewed as credible. Evaluating the types of sources cited by the author will help them become sensitive to the issues of integrity and credibility. They'll see how facts and statistics are used to support a recommendation, and they may see how articles address facts that don't support their conclusion or recommendations. You might want to discuss how citing the criteria used to evaluate options can affect audience reception of the author's recommendation.
6. This exercise will give students practice in organizing, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from research. Students should use the information in the note cards to draw their own conclusions and make a recommendation. Recommendations will vary depending on how each student interprets the data.

Main idea: Finding a special niche is the key to success for small competitors in the cosmetics business.

Major points: See points A, B, and C of the following outline: supporting evidence includes second-level headings. Additional detail/evidence (although not required) is listed in lower case alphabet and in roman numerals. Note: Students will need these details to draw conclusions. They should include these statistics and facts in their reports to make them more compelling.

DEMAND FOR COSMETICS HAS STABILIZED

- Consumption of cosmetics relatively flat for the past five years
 - Average annual expenditure per person for cosmetics is \$58
 - Industry grew for several decades, fueled by per capita consumption
 - The cosmetics industry is near maturity, but some products vary
 - Total market currently produces annual retail sales of \$14.5 billion
 - i. Cosmetics/lotions/fragrances: \$5.635 billion
 - ii. Personal hygiene products: \$4.375 billion
 - iii. Hair-care products: \$3.435 billion
 - iv. Shaving products: \$1.055 billion
- b. The cosmetics industry was considered recession-proof, but statistics show pattern is shifting

- i. Past year, sales sluggish
- ii. Consumer spending is down
- iii. Most affected were mid- to high-priced brands
- iv. Consumers traded down to less expensive lines
- c. First quarter of current year, demand is beginning to revive; trend expected to continue
- d. Demographic trends
 - i. Gradual maturing of baby-boomer generation
 - ii. Population is increasing in the South and Southwest
- B. BIG CORPORATIONS DOMINATE THE INDUSTRY
 - 1. 700 companies in the cosmetics industry
 - 2. Industry dominated by market leaders
 - 3. Competition is intensifying and thus putting great pressure on smaller cosmetic companies.
 - 4. Prices are constant while promotion budgets are increasing.
 - 5. How small companies survive
 - a. Specialize in niches
 - b. Differentiate product line
 - c. Focus on market segment

C. SPECIAL NICHEs OFFER BEST POTENTIAL FOR NEW ENTRANTS

- 1. Avoid head-on competition with industry leaders
- 2. Promising Markets:
 - a. Men
 - i. 50 percent of the adult population
 - ii. Account for one-fifth of cosmetic sales
 - iii. Market leaders have attempted this market but failed
 - b. Senior citizens
 - i. Large growing segment of population
 - ii. Account for 6 percent of cosmetic sales
 - iii. Specialized needs for hair and skin not being met
 - iv. Interested in appearance
 - c. Ethnic groups
 - i. Some firms specialize in products for African Americans
 - ii. Few firms oriented toward Hispanic, Asian, or Native Americans

Note: Data used in this memo and outline are for illustration only and do not attempt to portray industry conditions.

7. Possible solutions could include:
 - a. Quarterly Financial Overview
 - b. Contact Us
 - c. News Release: Crenco Under SEC Investigation
 - f. New iMac Now Available



CASE SOLUTION GUIDELINES

Here are solution guidelines for this chapter's cases, along with a completed solution for Case 10.



Message Strategies: Informational Reports 1

The audience for this information report will be interested, so the direct approach is appropriate. The memo should include information on progress the student has made thus far and on his or her plan for completing the remaining requirements.

The purpose of the memo report should be clearly identified in the first paragraph. Information in the report should be presented in a straightforward manner. Developing a preliminary outline will assist in planning coverage of necessary information.

The reader will be interested in points such as the number of semesters the student has been in school, the number of courses typically taken each semester, and the number of courses remaining. As students assess the number of courses remaining, they will need to research the course offerings carefully and consider their own financial situations. They should research answers to such questions as the following: What prerequisites must be completed for each of the remaining courses? How will such prerequisites affect the number of semesters I will need to complete the work? How will my progress be affected by courses offered only once a year or only in certain terms? They must also address how working part- or full-time may affect their progress, based on the information about the course offerings.

Although the report will be relatively short, the reader will benefit from headings such as "Progress as of [date]," "Remaining Coursework," and "Related Completion Activities." To provide additional clarity for the reader, students may want to include a table detailing what courses and activities remain and in what terms they plan to complete each one.



Message Strategies: Informational Reports 2

Students will find it helpful to put themselves in the mindset of a business manager who agreed to fund an employee's college expenses and wants to know how well the investment is likely to pay off over the long term. This perspective will help students identify what points to include in the report and how to phrase the message to make it as relevant and compelling as possible.



Message Strategies: Informational Reports; Media Skills: Wiki Writing 3

When considering the use of social media in the workplace, students will find varying elements to include in this exercise. Topics that could be included are:

Advantages:

- Encourages teams and other groups to collaborate on writing project, from brief articles to long reports and reference works.
- Keeps lines of communication open among team members and between employees and their superiors.
- Promotes open communication between companies and their customers, keeping fresh content flowing into the company.
- Minimizes the need for covert conversations regarding employee satisfaction issues.

Disadvantages:

- Takes time away from other work duties
- Allows negative comments to run rampant, if not monitored correctly to ensure constructive action
- Opens the possibility of employees interacting with customers in ways not consistent with company policy



Message Strategies: Online Content; Collaboration: Team Projects 4

Students should bear in mind that while their individual experiences may be unique, they are all attending the same college so even their pooled wisdom is limited in that respect. Consequently, the advice they offer future college students will need to be generalized so that it has value to anyone attending any college.



Message Strategies: Online Content 5

Students will select varying topics to highlight based on their personal experience in selecting a college. This exercise should provide interesting insight into what different students find of value

to them personally. Therefore, this is an opportunity to reinforce the concept of determining audience needs before writing a message.



Message Strategies: Analytical Reports 6

You might encourage students to “step outside themselves” for this assignment as a way to view their mistakes and failures more objectively. In other words, have them assume the perspective of someone who was able to observe the choices leading up to the mistake or failure and the consequences afterward. This helps moderate the emotions (e.g., “I hate myself for what I did”) and ego-protection efforts (e.g., “It was my parents’ fault for not believing in me”) that often surround poor choices and unfortunate outcomes.



Message Strategies: Analytical Reports 7

Students can identify potential courses to recommend by reviewing other universities’ curriculum offerings. They might also research the latest trends in particular professions or industries to find out what types of knowledge and skills employers are seeking. Conversely, they could look back in time to find courses that colleges once offered or emphasized but that have been dropped.

The proposal needs to be planned carefully so that the dean and appropriate faculty give it serious consideration. The proposal is unsolicited, so it will need to convince the audience that a new course is needed, and it will need to show how including your course will benefit the curriculum. Students should be sure to explain why the course is needed, what content would be included, and how students will benefit.



Message Strategies: Analytical Reports 8

Students are preparing this report for a counselor or academic adviser, so they can assume they have an interested reader. An important planning step for this report is identifying and prioritizing the criteria that will be used as the “yardstick.” Criteria could include times and days of the week that courses are scheduled, prerequisites, interest in the subject matter, lab fees and other costs, relevance to career plans, and fit with degree requirements.

Students can conduct the necessary secondary research by reviewing course descriptions in the school catalog. They may also want to conduct some informal primary research to discuss some of the above issues with students who have taken the courses under consideration.

The report should present the information in a clear, straightforward manner, using unbiased

language and eliminating any negative references to individuals teaching the various courses. The report should close by drawing conclusions from the factual information provided. Finally, based on the conclusions, the report should make a recommendation about which course the student should enroll in next term.



Message Strategies: Analytical Reports 9

This letter will go to the owner, so students can assume the reader is interested. The purpose of the message is to inform the reader of areas that need improvement or change. Therefore, students will need to prepare a plan of what they will do and what they will look for during their visit. Preparing an observation checklist is a good idea; quick references to the list will remind students of the issues they want to research. Naturally, the value of the observations depends on each student's reliability as an observer.

The opening paragraph should describe the purpose of the report and the methods used to conduct the research. Students may wish to begin with a discussion of positive observations. This information tells the reader that the writer completed a comprehensive observation of the restaurant's food, facilities, and service. The following paragraphs could then include findings in areas needing improvement. These remarks should be stated as positively as possible, emphasizing what needs changing, rather than focusing on an individual employee.

After the areas needing improvement are discussed, the report should draw conclusions and offer recommendations. The conclusions should be an interpretation of the various facts reported, should be based on logical reasoning, and should link back to the original statement of purpose.

This report should end with a section of recommendations for improvement. Students should be sure to base these recommendations on logical analysis of the conclusions they have written.



Message Strategies: Proposals 10

Note: Below is a complete solution to this case. This email proposal will go to the landlord, who is surely as frustrated as the tenant, so students can assume the reader is interested. The purpose of the message is to inform the reader of areas that need improvement or change and the benefits of making these changes. Naturally, the value of the suggestions made would be best highlighted by what benefits they offer the landlord. These remarks should be stated as positively as possible, emphasizing what needs changing and how these changes will benefit everyone, rather than focusing on fellow tenants' poor behavior or the landlord's current inability to provide a more pleasant living space.

To: roger.greenberg@gmail.com

From: h.lockie@uchicago.edu

Subject: Reducing Repair Costs and Improving the Quality of Life at Cedarwood

Dear Mr. Greenberg,

Of late the living conditions at Cedarwood Apartments have undergone a noticeable decline. Residents often litter the common areas and spill food and beverages there; at times they damage common property and even their own apartments. For instance, the tenants who recently vacated apartment B-15 damaged the passage walls while moving their furniture.

This obviously adds to your maintenance costs, as well as making the property unattractive to potential tenants.

One long-term solution to these problems is to foster a sense of shared ownership and community among residents in the building. I believe this can be done by converting the little-used storage area in the basement into a small community center.

With some modest investment—re-painting the storage room, constructing a kitchen with basic utilities, and providing a large-screen television, informal seating arrangements, and indoor-games—this space can be turned into an attractive community room for residents. After the initial investment, the maintenance cost can be kept low.

A community room can be used in various ways. For instance, you could

- Build a sense of ownership by encouraging residents to give their feedback on what they would like most in the common room.
- Encourage residents to use the common room by making it available to them for free.
- Motivate artistic residents to showcase their talents in this space.
- Host common events such as Super Bowl parties, potluck dinners, and other group events where residents can socialize with each other.
- Help residents to organize birthdays, anniversaries, New Year's Day, Christmas, and other common celebrations in the community room.

Not only will the residents enjoy having a common space to relax in, but also they will get to know each other well. This, in turn, would change their impersonal attitude towards Cedarwood Apartments leading to greater shared concern about the building.

While I cannot offer research evidence of the benefits of creating a community center, I have a strong conviction that this initial investment will give you long-term returns. You would benefit by having

- Fewer instances of vandalism
- Lower maintenance costs

- Happier residents
- An added feature to entice future tenants
- Positive reviews and opinions about your housing facilities

Given the increasing availability of rented apartments in this neighborhood, having a community room will give your property an edge over other apartments. If you have any questions regarding this proposal, please call me.

Sincerely,

Heather Lockie

D-21, Cedarwood Apartments



Message Strategies: Proposals 11

The report is an external, unsolicited proposal. Prior to conducting research on the product, students need to verify the specific purpose of the proposal: to convince a retail outlet to carry a particular product. They will obviously need to consider the interests and concerns of their readers. Although readers may not have an initial interest in the product, they are interested in carrying products that sell in sufficient volume and with sufficient markup to contribute to profits.

Students should conduct research to gather information about the product's features and its benefits to the store. For instance, could the availability of this product also increase demand for other products in the store? Students may also find some information about retail cost of the product to help them determine reasonable figures for their reports. The manufacturer's website may also provide information about warranties and other details students will need to know.

The proposal should also highlight other benefits beyond the product itself, such as quantity discounts, free training for store employees, return policies, and other services.



Message Strategies: Proposals 12

This proposal is an external, unsolicited proposal, so students will need to carefully consider the interests and concerns of their readers to demonstrate that a problem does indeed exist, and a solution is available. Although the reader may not have an initial interest in the product, she is certainly interested in increased fuel efficiency and safety for her company's drivers and their cargo.

In promoting the benefits of the system, students should present those benefits in a way that would be most compelling to the fleet manager at a trucking company. For example, "route optimization" needs to be explained to the reader in a way that corresponds to the real-life business challenge of making deliveries in a way that balances operating costs with customer service.



Summary of Study Session 8

In this study session, you have learnt

- Writing Reports and Proposals: Adapting to Your Audience
- Composing Reports and Proposals: Drafting Report Content
- Composing Reports and Proposals: Drafting Proposal Content
- Drafting Online Content: Identify six characteristics of effective website writing.

Collaborating on Wikis: Offer guidelines for becoming a valuable wiki contributor

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 8

SAQ 8.1 List key things you need to do to adapt to your audience in report writing

SAQ8.2 List eight (8) elements of Report Introduction

SAQ 8.3 Explain the concept ‘proposal body’

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Business_English_and_Communication/Book%3A A Business Communication for Success/09%3A Business Writing in Action/9.03%3A Business Proposal](https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Business_English_and_Communication/Book%3A_A_Business_Communication_for_Success/09%3A_Business_Writing_in_Action/9.03%3A_Business_Proposal)

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Entrepreneurship/Book%3A Business Plan Development Guide \(Swanson\)/01%3A Chapters/1.07%3A Chapter 7 Finishing the Business Plan](https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Entrepreneurship/Book%3A_Business_Plan_Development_Guide_(Swanson)/01%3A_Chapters/1.07%3A_Chapter_7_Finishing_the_Business_Plan)

References/Suggestions for further Readings

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Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



Are you in need of General Help as regards your studies? Do not hesitate to contact the DLI IAG Center by e-mail or phone on:



iag@dli.unilag.edu.ng



08033366677

STUDY SESSION 9:

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING IN-PERSON AND ONLINE PRESENTATIONS



Introduction

At one point or another, or perhaps, more frequently in your line of work, you will have to make presentations. This could be at a meeting, interview, sales pitch, conference, seminar, or other kinds of event. This study session is all about equipping you to design and deliver effective presentations. In this session you will learn about techniques for developing in-person and online presentations, including how to enhance presentations with visual tools.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 9

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 9.1 Define and use correctly all the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQs 9.1 and 9.2)
- 9.2 List the basic elements of a presentation. (SAQ 9.1)
- 9.3 Describe the process of creating content for presentation. (SAQ 9.2)
- 9.4 Explain how to use visual tools to enhance a presentation. (SAQ 9.3)
- 9.5 Enumerate strategies for delivering effective presentations. (SAQ 9.4)



Key Terms: Presentation

9.1 Presentation Elements

A functional definition of a **presentation** is that it is a conversational performance in which the presenter communicates a message with an audience, in each setting, using an array of skills, strategies and tools. From this definition, five key elements are readily identifiable: the presenter, the message, the audience, the setting, and the skills, strategies, and tools.

1. *The presenter:* As the presenter, you are the key driver of the success of your presentation. To achieve that success, there are key qualities you should have, including knowledge and passion about your message; confidence and calmness; professional appearance, in terms of dressing, grooming and posture; and a winning attitude.

2. *The message:* The message is the core of your presentation. You should not only be familiar with the subject of your message, but also clear about the purpose of your message. The purpose of your message is what you want your presentation to achieve. This includes what your audience expects of you, and what you expect of your audience.
3. *The audience:* Your audience is the person or group of persons you will be communicating with during your presentation. You need to know as much as is necessary about your audience. Knowledge of audience will help you prepare effectively for the presentation.
4. *The setting:* This is the time and place of the presentation. Information about the setting will help you prepare adequately for the occasion. For instance, the time and place for your presentation will play a major role to determine how you should be dressed for the event, how to allocate time for different aspects of your presentation, etc. note that the place of presentation may be physical or virtual.
5. *The skills, strategies, and tools:* Several skills, strategies and tools are relevant to designing and delivering effective presentations. These include language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), preparation and delivery strategies, and technology tools (PowerPoint and videos).



What key elements make up a presentation?



Key elements of a presentation include the presenter, the message, the audience, the setting, and the skills, strategies and tools.

9.2 Creating Presentation Content

Developing content for presentations follow the same process of writing: planning, drafting, and revising, editing and proofreading.

9.2.1 Planning Presentation Content

The planning stage of developing presentation content includes the following:

1. *Identify your topic:* Your topic is the subject matter of your presentation. That is, the general idea or concept of your message. You should be thoroughly familiar with your topic, otherwise, your presentation will not have the desired flow and your audience will most likely notice your ignorance.
2. *Determine your purpose:* We noted earlier that the purpose of your presentation is important. This includes what your audience expects of you (that is, what your audience

expects to achieve or gain from your presentation, and what you expect of your audience (that is, how you expect your audience to behave in response to your presentation).

3. *Analyse your audience:* Among other things, knowledge of audience will guide you in determining the amount of content to include, what specific information is necessary, and the time to spend addressing each point. Some of the things you need to know about your audience include: the number of people that will make the audience, their demography, their predisposition to you and the subject matter, familiarity of your audience with the subject matter, and your level of familiarity with the audience.
4. *Craft a (working) title:* The title is a short phrase, statement or question that captures the essence of the topic of your presentation, and the “name” by which your presentation is identified. It must be catchy and compelling.
5. *Research, study and organize relevant information and materials:* No matter how much knowledge you already have about your subject matter, to ensure that you have content that is not only rich and current, but also competitive, you will need to research and study what other people have done on the subject matter of your presentation. Five simple steps to do this are: brainstorm to access the wealth of knowledge you currently have on the subject matter; source information from relevant people and places; read extensively and critically; evaluate all your information and materials gathered; and organize the remaining information and materials
6. *State your core message:* Your core message is the most essential concept, idea or proposition in your presentation. It represents your major standpoint in the presentation, which sets the direction for the rest of the presentation. In academic presentations, this core message is called the *thesis statement*. To ensure that your core message is well articulated, it must be written in one concise sentence; it must convey a main idea, concept, or proposition; it must be specific, clear and precise; it must take a stand; and it must be compelling.
7. *Outline your key points:* The outline shows the navigation of ideas. To prepare your outline, write down several key points that you can use to support and drive home your core message and arrange them in a logical sequence so that each point naturally leads to the next one; organize the supporting details of your key points (e.g., order of importance); and then review the information critically to determine whether the information gathered are relevant, appropriate, and adequate for the purpose, or if more research is necessary. Review can be done by using a concept map, checklist, or flowchart.

8. *Anchor your core message and key points:* Your core message and key points are those aspects of your presentation that your audience should remember, even if they were to forget every other thing about your presentation. There are techniques to help you impress your core message and key points in the minds of your audience. You can use a story, an activity, or an analogy.

9.2.2 Drafting Presentation Content

The drafting stage is where the presentation is given structure. This structure is usually in three parts: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. This will involve the following activities:

1. *Create a strong opening:* An opening establishes rapport with the audience, presents the purpose statement, communicates your core message, previews the main points to be covered, and sets the mood for the rest of the presentation. To be effective, your opening should be crisp, catchy, and compelling! You can make use of a challenging or intriguing question, an intriguing or controversial statement, a motivational or inspirational statement, a myth or conventional wisdom, a short but very relevant quote, a demonstration or dramatic visual, a related story, or shocking statistics.
2. *Develop your key points:* Provide the details that are relevant for each key point in your outline. You need to ensure that the details of each key point clearly and correctly address the idea in the key point, and they smoothly lead one to the other. You can explore a range of strategies to enrich your details: include stories, examples, quotes, activities, etc.
3. *Create a closing that throws a powerful call to action:* Just like the opening, extra attention should be given to crafting a powerful closing. The closing should: re-emphasizes your core message with a clear, motivating, and memorable statement; summarizes your key points; give direction to your audience to know what next step they should take; and place a powerful call for action regarding that next step.
4. *Format your content:* Determine the mode of presentation you will adopt, and ensure you follow the principles of such mode. For instance, if you will be making use of PowerPoint, you need to format the content in such a way that the slides compliment your presentation, and not distract or become offensive to the audience. We will examine this more closely in the next section.

9.2.3 Revising, Editing and Proofreading Content

After drafting, the content must be subjected to revision, editing and proofreading. Review your content to make improvements to it in such a way that your content does justice to your topic, is

appropriate to your audience, and it fulfils the purpose you intended. Ensure that the content fulfils the principles of effective communication (clarity, correctness, completeness, coherence, etc.). Also check for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and typing errors. Review your entire presentation as many times as is necessary.



Creating content for a presentation follows the typical stages in the writing process. True or false? How?



True. To creating content for a presentation will involve planning, drafting, and revising, editing, and proofreading.

9.3 Enhancing Presentations with Visual Tools

People learn differently. Some learn better by hearing sounds; some by doing things with their hands; yet others, by visualising. Content is more appealing when it includes visual stimulation. Hence, your ability to use visual tools effectively is important if you will meet the needs of your audience and achieve maximum results with your presentation. Note, however, that the use of visual tools is supposed to complement great content, not substitute for it.

9.3.1 Enhancing Presentations with PowerPoint

While there are various tools you can use to format the content of your presentation, one of the most popular and effective tools you can use is *PowerPoint*. To do this, you should consider the features, design, and ordering of the slides.

Slide Order

1. Your first slide should contain the title of presentation, event, date, presenter's name and position.
2. Your second slide should have your core message in the statement or question form.
3. Your third slide should set out the key points of your presentation.
4. Your fourth slide onwards should present the details of each key point, with a new key point on a new slide. The total number of slides for your key points will depend on the number of key points, the number of details on each key point, and the total amount of time you have for the presentation. You should, however, avoid too many slides as this will simply overwhelm the audience.
5. Your last but one slide should capture the closing of your presentation.

6. Your last slide should set out all appropriate contact details (official address, email address, website, blog, etc.)

Slide Feature and Design

1. Select an appropriate design
2. Each subsequent slide (after the first slide) should have a clear heading – a phrase or a question. Where a question is used, you should ensure that the question is answered in the body of the slide. Include one major idea with a descriptive title highlighting it.
3. Avoid crowded or scanty, unintelligible slides. Use bullet point that consist of intelligent phrases rather than single words that may not make any meaning standing alone, or long sentences that may be better delivered orally. Also use concise bulleted lists with parallel language to present related points.
4. Use alignment, capitalization, and punctuation effectively. Also avoid confusing abbreviations, italics, and underline.
5. Limit the amount of text per slide. Use appropriate graphics, pictures, and illustrations to complement text and aid understanding
6. Use a limited number of easy-to-read font type and size that convey the desired presentation tone.
7. Number each slide and put the logo of the organisation you are representing on each slide.

9.3.2 Using Presentation Visuals Effectively

It is not enough to have prepared a good PowerPoint presentation. It is equally important that this tool is used effectively during your delivery. To achieve this:

1. Project visuals such as video images, maps, posters, charts, and slides. Refer to the visual and let the audience know how it fits into the presentation. Ensure that you are positioned in such a way that the audience can see the visual clearly. Paraphrase rather than read the visual line for line.
2. Place a computer screen on a desk in front of you showing the presentation to allow you maintain synchrony with what is being viewed on the screen by your audience. This also ensures you are always facing the audience and maintaining eye contact with them rather than being distracted by the need to turn to look at the projector screen. Use print copies of your slides to guide you, where a computer is not available.



The use of visual tools can take the place of great content in delivering an excellent presentation. True or false? How?



False. For an excellent presentation, visual tools are supposed to complement great content, enhance its quality, and make it more appealing to the audience. It is not meant to substitute for it.

9.4 Strategies for Effective Presentation Delivery

The strategies for effective presentation delivery include things you should do to prepare for an effective delivery as well as during the actual delivery. This is irrespective of whether you're having an in-person presentation or an online presentation.

9.4.1 Preparing for the Presentation

Preparing for a presentation requires much more than creating great content. You should give attention to these other aspects that are just as important:

1. Practice, get feedback and improve. Just because you have written a great presentation does not mean that the actual delivery will be as great. Get a real audience such as family, friends or colleagues, to watch and listen to your presentation, and ask for feedback you can use to improve the presentation.
2. Prepare yourself physically – inside and out. Pick out appropriate clothing for the presentation. Eat well because you need to be physically sound and energetic. Take time out to rest at least one day to the presentation.
3. Ensure that all your materials are intact, double-checked, and certified okay. Email content to organiser in advance and insist that they load it on to a laptop, check it through to be sure everything is fine and confirm to you.

9.4.2 Delivering the Presentation

There is an array of verbal and non-verbal strategies you can use during the actual presentation that will make your delivery engaging and exciting. In using these strategies however, you must consider the appropriateness to the subject matter, audience, purpose, and of course, the setting of the presentation – whether physical or virtual.

1. Make a grand entrance by using an *opening* that gives your presentation a brilliant start and cap up your presentation with a *closing* that gives an excellent finish. Remember that these are the two most important parts of your presentation.
2. Connect and build rapport with your audience. *Face your audience* always; use *eye contact* to establish and maintain connection. Get personal by using your *audience's names*.

3. Use *questions*. Ask *open-ended questions* that allow your audience to think and respond with interest and *pause after asking a question* to give the audience time to reflect on the question, whether or not you are expecting a response. Also *call for questions* to probe deeper thinking.
4. Engage your audience. Tell *stories* to communicate your message in a memorable way. Use *dialogue* or *discussion* to allow a continued interaction between you and your audience, or use *role play* where you and your audience assume the character(s) in your story.
5. Speak with grace. To sustain the interest of your audience, *speak out loud but don't shout*; *adjust tone, pitch and volume* to communicate emotions; *pace your speaking* to ensure your audience can easily follow; *pause* appropriately to allow your audience space to digest your message; use *vocal mimicry* to create different sounding "voices" for the characters in a dramatization of a story.
6. Spice things up with your expressions. Communicate energy with *vivid expressions*; speak in the *active rather than passive voice*, to sustain interest and motivate action; enrich your language with *figurative expressions*; display your creativity with *innovative expressions*; incorporate *humour* to create laughter and excitement.
7. Use expressions that are socio-culturally appropriate. Use *culturally appropriate expressions* for conventional functions; Use *inclusive and non-discriminatory person-neutral expressions* to ensure that no one of your audience is felt left out; Use *self-inclusion expressions* to soften commands and achieve greater level of friendly conversational style.
8. Use expressions to promote understanding. Use *simple language and short sentences* to ensure no one gets lost and fails to grasp the intended message; *paraphrase* to restate your idea in a different way; use *repetition* to emphasize your main points; *summarize* to recapture main points and ideas.
9. Keep the flow. Flow smoothly with *transitional words and phrases* that link ideas. If you forget something you were saying at any point, don't give off the impression that you've been destabilized. *Ask for help*, instead. When you have spoken a lot, inject *interludes* to provide your audience with a mental relief.
10. Use facial expressions to brighten your presentation. *Raise eyebrow* to suggest disbelief; *smile* genuinely to communicate confidence and warmth; use funny *facial expressions* to create humour.
11. Use body movements that strengthen your presentation. *Stand straight* to communicate confidence; *move your hands* as you speak, to communicate interest and excitement about what you are saying; *nod* to indicate agreement with or interest in an idea being

communicated by the audience; *move across the stage* to create a livelier setting, rather than standing transfixed on one spot.

12. Always be in control. *Set expectations* at the beginning of your presentation to create order; *increase voice volume* to dominate and drown other voices when audience begins to chat away; use *proximity and physical contact* to regain the attention of distracted audience; engage in the *private chat* with distracted audience during presentation break periods to deter further disturbance during the rest of the presentation; and lastly, manage your time well by making allowance for delivery, questions, and audience management.



After creating great content with appropriate visual tools, are there strategies that can be used to ensure that a presentation is delivered excellently?



In addition to having great content with appropriate visual tools, there are many strategies that can be employed before and during the presentation to ensure excellent delivery.



Summary of Study Session 9

In Study Session 9, you have learned that:

1. The presenter, the message, the audience, the setting, and the skills, strategies and tools are key elements of a presentation.
2. Developing content for presentations follow the typical writing process of planning, drafting, and revising, editing, and proofreading.
3. Beyond a great content, a presentation can be enhanced with the use of visual tools such as PowerPoint.
4. The effective use of some strategies both at the preparation and delivery stages can significantly improve the success of a presentation.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 9

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 9.1 (tests Learning Outcomes 9.1 and 9.2)

How does knowledge of presentation elements improve the design and delivery of effective

presentations?

SAQ 9.2 (tests Learning Outcomes 9.1 and 9.3)

Your company is planning a major project and your Head of Department has asked you to prepare a presentation for your Chief Executive and other stakeholders. How would you go about creating great content for your presentation?

SAQ 9.3 (tests Learning Outcome 9.4)

Your colleague is getting ready for a presentation but needs help with visuals to enhance the content. With your knowledge of designing and delivering presentations, how will you help?

SAQ 9.4 (tests Learning Outcome 9.5)

Every great presentation is enabled by strategies. As the newly appointed Head of Your Department, what guidelines will you give your team members to prepare and deliver effective presentations?

Links to OERs

https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Marketing/The_Power_of_Selling/10%3A_The_Presentation_-_The_Power_of_Solving_Problems/10.04%3A_Making_Your_Presentation_Work

References/Suggestions for Further Readings

Pollard, C. (2016). *5 tips for creating powerful key messages for your business*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/catriona-pollard/5-tips-for-creating-power_b_9775472.html

Wetherhead, D. (2011). *Key message development: Building a foundation for effective communications*. Retrieved from <http://prsay.prsa.org/2011/12/02/key-message-development-building-a-foundation-for-effective-communications/>

Williams, J. D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing: Research, theory, and practice* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum



Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.

Pollard, C. (2016). *5 tips for creating powerful key messages for your business*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/catriona-pollard/5-tips-for-creating-power_b_9775472.html

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NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum



Are you in need of General Help as regards your studies? Do not hesitate to contact the DLI IAG Center by e-mail or phone on:



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STUDY SESSION 10:

EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION



Introduction

High unemployment rate continues to be a concern in many societies. So, if you're looking to get your dream job, you must have a good understanding of Employment Communication. Simply put, this is communication between employers and job seekers. It includes verbal and non-verbal, as well as oral and written forms of communication. In this study session you will learn about various aspects of employment communication – writing CVs and résumés, writing cover letters, submitting, and following up on your applications, and interviewing for jobs.



Learning Outcomes for Study Session 10

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 10.1 Define and use correctly all the key words printed in **bold**. (SAQs 10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4)
- 10.2 Describe the parts of a CV and résumé and the process of writing them. (SAQ 10.1)
- 10.3 Describe the structure, steps, and style of writing a cover letter. (SAQ 10.2)
- 10.4 Explain the techniques for submitting and following up on application. (SAQ 10.3)
- 10.5 Enumerate basic tips for success before, during and after an interview. (SAQ 10.4)



Key Terms: Curriculum vitae, Resume, Cover letter

10.1 Writing CVs and Résumés

The **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** and **résumé** are marketing tools used as personal advertisement by job seekers. It is customized to meet the requirements of a position in a way that should convince a potential employer that you are an outstanding candidate for the job and that you will contribute to the organization. Although they are often used interchangeably, the CV and résumé are different in terms of the length, what is included, and what each is used for. While the CV is a comprehensive statement of your education, skills, experience, and other attributes, a résumé is a brief, informative summary of your abilities, education, and experience, in a way that highlights your strengths and

accomplishments as suitable for a particular position and differentiates you from other applicants seeking similar positions. Also, the CV is mainly used for academic and government positions, while the résumé is used for most other positions.

10.1.1 Parts of a CV and Résumé

CVs and résumés have several elements that employers look for. The information provided may be organized in distinct ways based on the overall design strategy of the résumé format, but all information should be accurate, clear, concise, and professional.

1. *Contact information*: This should be current and centred at the top of the page or left justified (NOT in header). Provide your name (should be the largest font size), address (both permanent and current address), telephone number(s) (preferably personal/mobile numbers), and e-mail address. Optionally, you may include your homepage.
2. *Objective and Qualifications summary*: This section is optional but recommended. The Objective is a concise statement indicating your career goals, and tells potential employers the sort of work you're interested in. Some employers, however, no longer require an Objective on a résumé since the information will be in your cover letter. The Qualifications Summary, which evolved from the objective statement, emphasizes your qualifications upfront supported by content from your résumé, matches your qualifications to what the employer is looking for, and gives an overview of who you are and what you bring to the table in a way that is captivating and draws the reader in.
3. *Education*: List all relevant post-secondary training, certifications, and education received in reverse chronological order, with expected/in-progress or most recently earned first. For each entry, provide name of institution and location (city and state); diploma, certificate, or degree title (full name with major/area of specialization in bold), and month and year the degree was (will be) awarded (on right margin). Mention academic honours including brief explanations where they are not self-explanatory. For CV, you may include thesis title in *italics* if it relates to your professional goals. You should leave out your grade point average unless requested by an employer or you're a recent graduate and your GPA stands out as a selling point.
4. *Experience*: List all experiences relevant to the job you're applying for. You can group experiences into relevant categories. For each position, include title, organization name (preferably in bold), location (city and state), and dates position was held. Place in reverse chronological order (the most recent first) with the date on the right side of each item. Use bullet points and action verbs to describe responsibilities by emphasizing accomplishments, successes, quantifiable results, and skills. Do not simply list duties or begin bullets with

“Responsible for” or “Duties included.” Each bullet point must be clear, accurate, and comprehensive, and the most impressive and relevant bullet should come first. Describe present position in present tense and past positions in past tense.

5. *Professional Associations*: List memberships in professional organizations, including student memberships. Also, list significant appointments to positions or committees in these associations. Prioritize the areas directly related to your career goals first.
6. *Institutional Service*: List institutional committees you have served on, including offices held, students supervised, or special academic projects you have assisted with.
7. *Community Involvement*: List and describe appropriate and relevant volunteer work, church work, campus community work, community service organizations, etc. Include leadership positions held and accomplishments in each role.
8. *Honours and Awards*: List receipt of professional and academic awards, competitive scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, etc. This is particularly pertinent for CV.
9. *Special skills*: Skills are included in other sections; still, it is worthwhile to provide a concise statement highlighting your strongest skills that can be an advantage to you – even if they don’t relate directly to the occupation you’re pursuing. Preferably, they should be testable skills, such as specific computer, language, or technical skills.
10. *Certifications and Licensures*: List all relevant certifications and licensures, including the year received.
11. *Grants Received*: Provide name of grant, name of granting agency, date received, and title or purpose of research project.
12. *Publications and Presentations*: Provide bibliographic citations for publications that you have authored or co-authored, that relate directly to your career goal. For résumé, it is recommended to create a separate list and indicate that publications are available upon request. Provide titles of professional presentations, name of conference or event, dates and location, and a brief description, if appropriate in your discipline.
13. *Recent/Current Research*: Usually for CVs, provide brief description of research recently conducted or in progress, including the type of research and the purpose.
14. *Extracurricular activities and Interests*: Provide one or two lines about your extracurricular activities, interests, hobbies, or travels. These can sometimes add interesting information at the interview and may spark conversation. For educational travel, provide names of countries, dates, and purpose.
15. *Other personal information*. Your résumé should include any other information that is important to your occupation, such as a completed portfolio, athletic participation, military

service, or a willingness to travel. Understand that your résumé is your own, and you should customize it to fit your needs. Some information, however, such as your health, disability, marital status, age, or ethnicity should not appear on a résumé.

Supporting Documents

A major supporting document for your CV or résumé is your reference sheet. Unless specifically requested, résumés do not include references. Notwithstanding, you should have them ready. You will need to create a separate reference sheet as an addendum if they are requested as part of your résumé submission or to provide when requested, and to carry with you to interviews. The reference sheet lists the name, title, office address, phone number, and email of three to five people (or the specific number requested) who know your abilities and can speak about your work values and ethics. These can be professionals, supervisors, or community leaders. If possible, provide names that are recognizable in your industry, but ensure that these people know you and have agreed to recommend you before offering them as references. At the top of the sheet, type your name and contact information, repeating the format you used in your résumé. Other documents you should have ready are copies of your credentials or whatever qualifications you have mentioned in your CV or résumé.



The CV and résumé are marketing tools used by companies to advertise the organization. True or false?



False. The CV and résumé are marketing tools used by job applicants to advertise themselves.

10.1.2 Process of Writing CV and Résumé

There are four main steps to writing a CV or résumé: Gather information about yourself, choose a résumé format, create the draft in the appropriate style, and lastly, edit, proofread and critique the document. Your CV and résumé should be updated regularly, even if you are not actively seeking a new job.

1. Gather and Organize the Facts

Collect and review information about yourself – previous positions, job duties, education, skills, experiences. Review your career goals and think about which past jobs you have liked, and why. Also, research the occupations that interest you. Note the duties they entail, as well as the credentials and skills required. Your résumé will need to show that you meet an occupation's requirements. So, you will probably need to write a different résumé for

each job, as each résumé will emphasize what is relevant to a particular position. Note that in addition to specialized and technical skills, most occupations also require generic abilities like communication, basic digital skills, and teamwork.

2. Choose a Résumé Format

The next step is to choose a résumé format that is best suited to your circumstances. There are four major résumé formats from which you may choose. Each is defined by the way it organizes your experience. Choose the one that shows your experience to its best advantage.

- i. *Chronological*: This is the most common and it organizes your experience around the jobs you have held. This format is an excellent choice for people with steady work histories or previous jobs that relate closely to their career objective.
- ii. *Skill-based*: This presents the same kind of information as the chronological résumé, but organizes your experience around skills rather than job titles, in an order which places the most significant first. Also, dates and company locations are often less emphasized. Some employers may find the skill-based résumé harder to read and assess quickly.
- iii. *Biographical*: Described as an entry level résumé, this may be used by fresh graduates with limited experience. It presents the same categories of information as other formats, but the information may be presented in full sentences that reflect the writer's personality.
- iv. *Personal Choice*: Some people may decide on a more personalized format. For example, some may choose a combination of the chronological and skill-based résumés because they want to focus equally on their skills/abilities and their consistent work history and progressive responsibilities. Others may choose a creative approach, particularly if the job they are seeking is one that requires written or visual creativity.

3. Draft in Style

Now that you have your information ready and have chosen a format, the next step is to create your draft. A recruiter may spend approximately 10 seconds scanning a résumé before deciding whether to read it closely. Within that short time, judgement is formed about what kind of person you are and the quality of work you will do as an employee. A strong résumé – with good design and formatting that looks neat/uncluttered, and organized, with information that stand out – can get past this scan to receive a serious

review. The following guidelines can make your résumé appealing and easy to read (scannable) by recruiters or recruiting software. Note that, to achieve a consistent flow, you should maintain the same style all through.

- i. *Paragraphs and length:* Keep paragraphs brief – no more than five to six lines. Break up long paragraphs into several shorter ones and be concise. Where paragraphs have bullets, the paragraphs should be no longer than ten to twelve lines, inclusive of the bullets. The overall length depends on the depth and scope of your individual experiences. However, most students and recent graduates use a one-page résumé while experienced professionals use one or two pages. Also, try to maintain full pages, not 1½. CVs require more sections and really have no length restrictions.
- ii. *Order and Alignment:* List all relevant items in reverse chronological order in each section. Strategically place the most important information near the top and/or left side of the page or the beginning of each section. In general, place the name of the position, title, award, or institution on the left side of the page and associated dates on the right.
- iii. *Margin and Indentation:* One-inch margins around the page (top, bottom, and sides) and blank lines between sections will make all the information easier to see. If you must use less than 1 inch, .75 or a minimum of .5 margin may do. Ensure the margin is consistent on all sides. Indentation should be 2-3 levels only.
- iv. *Language:* CV and résumé language should be active, not passive; concise, not wordy; descriptive, not narrative; factual, not flowery; formal, not informal; specific, not general; aim to express, not to impress; scannable, not just printable. Write in objective phrases. Avoid personal pronouns (I, me, my, we, etc.), slangs, and unfamiliar acronyms and abbreviations. Use key, industry-specific words. Keywords are typically nouns used by application software to sort/score digital résumés. Recruiters also look for them as they scan résumés. Identify keywords by reading postings of desired jobs.
- v. *Typeface:* This should be non-decorative. Choose one font type, such as Arial, Calibri, Courier, Garamond, Georgia or Times New Roman, and use it throughout. Font colour should be black on white background, with font size 10-12 point for body, and 14-18 point for your name. Sparingly, use

bold to emphasize school/organization name, and italics to emphasize position. Use round or square solid, black bullets or italics to draw attention to key accomplishments. Except where relevant and consistent with your occupation's standards, avoid horizontal or vertical lines, script, tables, graphics, text boxes, columns, headers, underlined words, symbols, colours or shading, as they may appear fanciful or may be unreadable by application software. You may use footer with page numbers and your name, however, to preserve the order of pages.

4. Edit, Proofread and Critique

Review your résumé to avoid the top résumé mistakes, such as résumé that is too long or unorganized, missing email and phone information, has spelling and grammar errors, and uses passive language instead of action words. Check for grammar, spelling, punctuation, personal pronouns and typing errors. Get constructive feedback on your résumé *before* submitting it to an employer. Get multiple critiques from people who know about the career field, grammar, writing résumés, and how to market content. Make sure your résumé is properly fine-tuned to meet the employer's criteria and it shows the employer why you are the right fit for the job.



You will most likely need several versions of your résumé. True or false? Why?



True. A résumé must be tailored to meet an occupation's requirements in a way that emphasizes what is relevant to the position. So, a different résumé will be needed for every new application.

10.2 Writing Cover Letters

A **cover letter** is a writing sample submitted together with a résumé for a specific advertised position (letter of application), or a specific possibly open (but not advertised) position (letter of inquiry). The purpose of the letter is to introduce yourself to an employer, state your interest in an organization and a particular position, and emphasize why you're the right fit for the position by highlighting specific information from your résumé. So, just like your résumé, your cover letter must be customized to the specific position of interest. Unless you're attending a job fair or have been directed not to provide one, a cover letter is expected when submitting a résumé.

10.2.1 Steps in Writing Cover Letter

Most of the time, you will be responding to a job posting that outlines the responsibilities and

qualifications of that job. When writing a cover letter in this situation, follow these steps:

1. Read through the job posting, so you know the qualifications and responsibilities of the position.
2. Compare the required qualifications/responsibilities of the job position description to the qualifications (education, experiences, and skills) you have on your résumé.
3. Write your letter to show how your qualifications meets the position description. Customize your cover letter to fit each job and the organization you are sending it to.
4. Edit and proofread your draft for clarity, tone, accuracy, spelling, punctuation, and grammar. If possible, have someone else review your letter, as a fresh pair of eyes can spot errors that you may miss.

10.2.2 Structure of a Cover Letter

A cover letter has four sequential parts: the header, the opening or introductory paragraph, the body paragraph(s), and the closing paragraph.

1. The Header

The header should contain your contact information, date, the employer's contact information and salutation. Your contact information should include your name, full address, cell phone or home number, and email address (optional). The employer's contact information should include the office designation, company name and address. In your salutation, address the letter to a named person – the person responsible for hiring and follow the salutation with a colon. With advertised openings, you may be instructed to send your information to an office, or a title, or a specific name. Otherwise, you should research the organization to find the name and office title of the individual to whom you are writing. Avoid sending a letter “to whom it may concern.” Also ensure the name is spelled correctly and the title is correct and formal.

2. The Opening/Introductory Paragraph

This brief paragraph of two or three sentences introduces who you are and why you are writing to the employer. Specify the position or type of work for which you are applying or inquiring, and how you got to know about the opening or why you selected this employer for an inquiry. If someone the reviewer knows suggested you apply, mention that recommendation. If you are responding to an advertisement, refer to it and the source that published it. Then indicate clearly why the position is interesting to you and why you are the right fit for the position. Briefly mention how your qualifications, skills and experience match the company and/or position.

3. The Body Paragraph(s)

In a paragraph or two, explain why you are interested in the position and organization, and why you make an excellent candidate for the position. Focus more on what you can do for the organization, than what the organization can do for you. Mention specific qualifications (education, experience, and skills) listed in the job posting, and in short complete sentences or in a bulleted format, illustrate with specific examples of your accomplishments, how you meet those qualifications. Refer to your attached or enclosed résumé, but do NOT simply restate the résumé. In showing your interest, refer to research you have conducted on the position and employer. Try to stimulate interest in you as a possible hire, and maintain a positive, confident tone. Paragraph length should be about three to five sentences.

4. The Closing Paragraph

This paragraph should reiterate your interest, convey your appreciation to the employer for considering you for the position, and ask for action (state that you would like an interview). Refer to your résumé (mention that it is enclosed), mention flexibility options (e.g. willing to work weekends), and provide specific information about contacting you. Be positive in your attitude. Expect an interview. Mention that you look forward to being contacted. The closing is your chance to show your commitment. So, you may also indicate that you will follow-up regarding the interview. Following up helps to keep your name in the mind of the recruiter. The paragraph length should be about two or three sentences. End with “Sincerely” or “Best regards” or something similarly professional, your signature, and your typed name.

10.2.3 Cover Letter Style

Just like your CV and résumé, the cover letter is a marketing tool. It serves as an example of your writing skill and style. To increase the likelihood that an employer will take the time to read your cover letter, it should be written in standard business format. It should be easy to read, and easily sell your top skills in 4–5 seconds. The things you should consider include:

1. *Length:* Keep letters concise and factual. Cover letters are preferably three or four paragraphs that fit easily on one page. Each paragraph should be no more than four or five sentences and each sentence a maximum of two lines. Vary the sentence structure. The first sentence in a paragraph should introduce the topic of focus in that paragraph.
2. *Language:* Use language that is conversational, while communicating confidence and professionalism. Avoid flowery language. Use action verbs that take a proactive rather than passive stance. Write in your own words so that it sounds like you, not like something out

of a book. Use first person narrative but avoid starting each sentence with “I” as this makes the letter dull and repetitive.

3. *Spacing and margin*: A cover letter should be single-spaced with a space (blank line) between each paragraph. Use about 1" margins on all sides.
4. *Font*: Your cover letter should complement your résumé. Use the same font style (type and size) and paper. The font size should be between 10 and 12 points. If converting to a .pdf, check that your formatting is intact.



Should a cover letter be customized just like a résumé?



Yes. Just like the résumé, the cover letter must be customized to the specific position of interest in an application.

10.3 Submitting and Following Up on Your Application

Submitting and following up on your application appropriately is just as important as creating great documents. Wrong submission can render all efforts a complete waste.

10.3.1 Submitting Employment Application

Employment applications are mostly submitted as hardcopy, softcopy or through an online portal. Many times, employers will specify how to apply. You should follow whatever instructions are given for submission.

Hardcopy Submission

If submitting hardcopy, print or copy on good quality white or off-white paper of 8-1/2- x 11-inch size. Use a laser printer and print on one side of the paper. Be sure photocopies are dark and clean. Do not fold or staple your CV, résumé or cover letter. If you're sending by mail, put the documents in a clean and crisp 9x12 envelope.

Softcopy Submission

If emailing document, combine your cover letter and résumé into one document, each starting on a fresh page, name the document with your name (not “Résumé” or Cover Letter”), and PDF the document to preserve the formatting. Don't send your résumé in Word unless directed. Then type your cover letter in the body of the email and attach the document to your email. When the employer opens your email, they read your persuasive cover letter content and you make a professional first impression. Then they can download and save your complete application. Ensure you have the correct email address for the application.

Online Submission

When submitting your résumé online, read carefully and follow the instructions provided. Some may have word limits or no text box to include information you would normally put in a cover letter. Some websites may provide additional space for including a cover letter or additional documents. If the space provided allows you to attach only one file, put the cover letter and résumé together and attach as one document.

10.3.2 Following Up on Employment Application

If you responded to an advertised opening, you can expect to wait anywhere from a week to more than a month for a response. If by the second week you haven't received any response, resist the temptation to call, as this can be considered obtrusive, unless you're applying to a sales position where aggressiveness may be considered a good thing. Rather, you may send a follow-up email or letter.



Apart from hardcopy, in what other forms can an application be submitted?



Softcopy and online submissions are also acceptable, depending on the specific form requested. Now that you have successfully submitted your application, get ready for the interview!

10.4 Interviewing for Jobs

The **interview** is, perhaps, the most important part of your job search as it provides the most authentic communication opportunity for both the employer and candidate. For the employer, it is an opportunity to know more about your background, skills, and qualifications; determine if your qualifications fit the requirements of the position; and evaluate your personality and motivation for the job. As the job candidate, it is an opportunity for you to show who you are, how you would contribute to the organization, and why you are the best candidate for the position, as well as assess the job and the organization, to see if they are right for you.

10.4.1 Types of Interviews

Interviews may be structured differently, depending on the purpose and mode. You should be told what type of interview to expect; otherwise, you can contact the organisation and find out.

Type by Purpose of Interview

An interview may serve one of two primary purposes: Screening, and Follow-up.

- i. A **screening interview** is a short session in which the employer tries to narrow down the pool of candidates who meet the job qualifications. Screening interviews may be conducted as telephone interview or in-person interview.
- ii. **Follow-up interviews** are almost always conducted in person, and involve either a single interview or a series of sequential interviews with individuals or groups. Depending on the nature of the job, a presentation, meal, and/or social events may be included. The purpose, here, is to further evaluate candidates' match with the position, to choose among the top candidates, and to "sell" the workplace and position to the candidates.

Type by Mode of Interview

An interview can also take on various modes, whether via a communication medium or in person.

- a. **Telephone/video or web cam interviews** involve the use of telephone, video, or web cam. Due to a company's geographic location, travel costs, and divergent schedules, this type of interview may be your initial contact with a prospective employer. You should prepare ahead by confirming the interview time, choosing a conducive location without background noise or possibility of disturbance, and having your materials with you (such as paper, pen, calendar, and copy of your résumé). You should also get into an interview mode – adjust your mind set, and dress and behave as it is an in-person interview. When the interview is over, indicate your interest in scheduling an in-person interview at the interviewer's place of business.
- b. **In-person** interviews involve physical presence and can take various forms.
 - In **one-to-one interviews**, one person interviews the candidate and makes the hiring decision. These interviews can range from being very informal and conversational to being more formal and structured. Follow the lead of the interviewer, but keep in mind that no matter how informal, this is a conversation with an agenda. **Panel interviews** involve being interviewed by a group of people. Often each member of the panel will have their own set of questions. Be sure that when you answer a question from one panel member, you direct the answer to everyone, not just that one person, using eye contact.
 - Another form of in-person interviews includes **Group interviews** where you will be interviewed at the same time as a number of other candidates. You may also be invited to **Informal 'chats'** with different people followed by a formal interview, or you may have a **series of interviews** with different people at different times.



An interview can serve two main purposes for an employer. What are these?



Screening and following up on candidates!

10.4.2 How to Excel at Interviews

Practically everyone finds job interviews difficult, but you can take steps to minimize your anxiety and improve your success before, during and after the interview. The following will guide you to ensure your interview is successful.

Before the Interview

You have a very limited amount of time to make a good impression, so preparation is key. Your preparation *before* the interview should cover three areas: Research, Resourcing, and Practise.

1. *Research.* You should find out as much as you can about the organisation. Look at the company website, marketing material, external reports, etc. You can also talk anyone who works for the organisation. Also find out about the job, the responsibilities, and things that will have an impact on your decision, such as location, travel, overtime etc. Find out the type of interview to expect and, if possible, the name and title/position of the person (or people) who will interview you. Confirm where and when the interview will be, so that you can plan properly. Finally, do a self-evaluation to identify the skills, experiences, achievements, interests, and values that you would like to showcase to the potential employer. These must match the employer's requirements for the position.
2. *Resourcing:* Prepare to take relevant materials to the interview, such as, copies of your résumé, certificates and other documents mentioned in your résumé, portfolio of your work, reference list, checklist of qualities and skills, and a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer(s) about the company and the job. You will also need check the location and plan your journey in such a way that allows you to arrive early. Finally, it is important to dress for the job you want. Find out ahead what the dress code is for the company at which you are going to interview, then dress one level above.
3. *Practice:* Practicing will not only improve your performance, but also reduce your anxiety on the interview day. Practice answers to common, possible, and even awkward interview questions. Don't stop until you feel comfortable answering each question. Also practice tasks that you may be asked to perform to demonstrate your skills, e.g., a short presentation or a group activity. Finally, practice your introduction – a strong statement that highlights your

skills and how you developed them. This introduction answers the most common of all interview questions, “Tell me about yourself?”

Don’t fail to get a good night’s sleep before the interview. Poor quality sleep can destroy the gains of all your planning efforts.

During the Interview

1. Arrive about 15 minutes early. This gives you time to determine where you need to go, and will give you a few minutes to collect your thoughts. While there may be a designated interview time and space, you should know that your interview begins right from the time you step into the premises of the interviewer. Everything counts!
2. Be nice to everyone and be prepared to make small talk with the people you meet. Have some general conversation topics ready, but avoid negativity and controversial topics, like religion and politics. While waiting until you’re invited by your host, sit comfortably, but do not slouch. Also, do not chew gum.
3. When you enter the interview room, greet the interviewer(s) with a firm handshake, and introduce yourself. Smile and make eye contact with all the interviewers throughout this process and from time to time throughout the meeting. When offered a seat, adopt a good posture. Let your body language show that you’re interested, professional, and confident. Be comfortable, but not casual. Sit up straight and don’t fidget!
4. Look for something in common. Try to find something in common between you and your interviewer – the office decoration, a degree certificate hanging on the wall, etc. – and make a quick comment about it. Interviewers sometimes feel more comfortable with people with whom they have something in common. However, be sincere.
5. Listen before answering, and give brief, accurate answers. Ensure you understand the question asked; if not, ask the interviewer to clarify it. It is fine to take some time to think before answering. Make your answer concise and to the point. Know your résumé and be prepared to talk about every fact on it but be honest! Do not exaggerate or lie.
6. Speak clearly and purposefully. Speak with assurance; don’t mumble. Do not make money your primary interest. Rather, relate your education and experience directly to the job. Keep the conversation professional. Never say anything negative about your present or previous employers. Avoid intimate topics or gossip. Don’t get too comfortable with the interviewer that you start telling them things about yourself that they really shouldn’t know. If the interview includes an employer-sponsored social event, conduct yourself appropriately. This is not the time to party.

7. Watch the interviewer for clues that your time is up, but before you leave, check your lists to make sure you have asked all your questions and emphasized all your strengths and skills. Ask the interviewer when s/he expects to get back to you on her/his decision. Also, get the business cards of all the people with whom you visited. If you cannot do that, ask a secretary for their names and e-mail addresses after you leave. Shake hands firmly and thank the interviewer for taking the time to interview you.

After the Interview

1. *Take time for reflection.* Take a few minutes to assess your performance. Make notes about the things that you felt good about and what you need to improve on. This will be useful if you are required to attend a second interview. Also, keep a record of all the interviews you attend, résumés you send out, the dates sent, and answers received.
2. *Send thank-you letter.* Within a day or two, send thank-you letters to all the interviewers with whom you spoke. Email is usually appropriate. The purpose of this letter is to appreciate the employer's interest in you, as well as reiterate your interest in the position and the organization, and your suitability for the position. The letter further allows you to demonstrate your writing skill, and provide any information omitted during the interview or requested to be provided after the interview. You should be informed about the organization's follow-up procedure, that is, how you will be contacted. If the interviewer did not tell you, and you did not ask, use your letter to ask.
3. *Follow-up.* If the employer has not contacted you more than a week after the time frame mentioned, it is appropriate to contact them to follow-up on your status, preferably via email. The email should be concise and friendly. If a time frame was not mentioned, you can wait two weeks after the interview to follow-up. A polite inquiry shows that you are still interested in the organization and may prompt a response. In your inquiry, mention the name of the person who interviewed you, the time and place of the interview, the position for which you are applying, and then ask about the status of your application. Do not follow-up too often to avoid annoying the employer.



During an interview, only the interviewer is expected to ask questions. True or false?



False. The candidate should ask questions, particularly about the organisation and the job.



Summary of Study Session 10

In this study session, you have learnt that:

1. There are standard parts of a CV and résumé and process for writing them.
2. A cover letter has a standard structure and writing it involves definite steps and style.
3. The process of submitting and following up on an application can impact on the success of the application.
4. Following some basic guidelines before, during and after an interview can increase the success of your interview.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Unit 10

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning Outcomes by answering these questions. Write your answers in your Study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next Study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment Questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 10.1 (tests Learning Outcomes 10.1 and 10.2)

You recently saw an advertised position in a newspaper and you're thinking it is time to move from the organization you've been with for three years. How would you improve the quality of your résumé to ensure that you maximize your chances of landing a better job?

SAQ 10.2 (tests Learning Outcomes 10.1 and 10.3)

A friend that works in a different organization from yours has asked you to submit your résumé to their company for a recent opening. You have taken time to prepare a good résumé. Now you're wondering if a cover letter is necessary to go along with the résumé. What will you do?

SAQ 10.3 (tests Learning Outcomes 10.1 and 10.4)

Your cousin has just finished preparing a well-written résumé and a cover letter for a possibly open (but not advertised) position but does not seem to know much about submitting applications. With your knowledge of employment communication, how will you help out?

SAQ 10.4 (tests Learning Outcomes 10.1 and 10.5)

You have just been invited to an interview for a position you earlier applied for and you are so anxious and afraid of what the outcome will be. What will you do to overcome your fear and face the task ahead with the confidence that will improve your chances of success?

Links to OERs

[https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Business_English_and_Communication/Book%3A_A_Student_Engagement_Activities_for_Business_Communications_\(Ashman_et_al.\)/11%3A_E](https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Business_English_and_Communication/Book%3A_A_Student_Engagement_Activities_for_Business_Communications_(Ashman_et_al.)/11%3A_E)

[mployment communications](#)

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Should you require more explanation on this study session, please do not hesitate to contact your e-tutor via the LMS.



Are you in need of General Help as regards your studies? Do not hesitate to contact the DLI IAG Center by e-mail or phone on:



iag@dli.unilag.edu.ng



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APPENDIX 1: SOLUTIONS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS STUDY SESSIONS ONE TO TEN

STUDY SESSION 1: FOUNDATIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Section A

1. D
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. A
6. A
7. C
8. D
9. B
10. B
11. D
12. A
13. A
14. B
15. C
16. D
17. B
18. A
19. A
20. D
21. D
22. D
23. D
24. D
25. A
26. D
27. D
28. A

- 29. A
- 30. D
- 31. D
- 32. A

STUDY SESSION 2: ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Section A

SAQ1: There are at least two people involved in communication. They are sender and the receiver. They engage in sending messages, symbols, signs, information and ideas between themselves. We take communication for granted because it is an activity we embark upon most often and almost effortlessly.

SAQ2: Communication is important in all facets of our lives. Without communication, there is no life. Imagine you wake up in a day, you cannot talk. Imagine all telephone networks are not working. Imagine you cannot communicate through social media. How about if print and electronic media are not working. This underscores the importance of communication. There are many other important roles which communication plays which you must develop.

SAQ3: Communication is transactional. The principals involved show that participants are continuously and simultaneously engaged. It also shows a history of communication, and each person plays a role in the communication situation.

SAQ4: There are elements involved in communication. An understanding of these elements will provide further insight and knowledge of the nature of communication.

SAQ5: Feedback is very important in communication. In inter-personal communication, it is immediate and instantaneous. It will help to modify/correct further messages.

STUDY SESSION 3: ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

SAQ1: You have been involved in communication all the days of your life. You have been sending and receiving messages. You have been making telephone conversations. But have you experienced a situation when the message you sent was not understood the way you sent it? Hence, you have not communicated effectively. Effective communication therefore means sending a message and understanding it the way it is intended to be understood by the sender. In other words, it means both the sender and the receiver attach the same meaning to the message.

SAQ 2: Effective communication is very important. If the message is not effective, there will be problems. It means the message is not understood. And when there is no understanding between

the sender and the receiver, the message will not produce any effect. And if the message does not produce any effect, it is a waste of time and effort. The desired feedback will not be achieved. And when this happens, the desired and correct feedback that should generate further reaction in the communication process will be impaired.

SAQ 3: There are certain principles that pertain to effective communication. These are called the principles of effective communication. They are simple and self-explanatory. They are clarity, conciseness, completeness, coherence, correctness, courteousness, and credibility.

SAQ 4: It is wrongly assumed that effective communication is mostly needed in interpersonal communication. This is because it is a one-on-one informal situation. But effective communication is needed in all communication situations whether verbal or non-verbal. As it is needed in oral, so it is needed in written communication.

STUDY SESSION 4: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. A, C and D
6. A, C and D
7. D
8. D
9. A
10. A, C and D
11. A, B and D
12. A, B and D

STUDY SESSION 5: BUSINESS CONVERSATIONS

SAQ 5.1

Different modes and channels of communication can be effective for different communication needs. In the case described, business conversations may prove to be more effective to achieve more results at a faster rate than written forms of communication. Two of these conversation choices that can be employed are telephone communication and meetings.

SAQ 5.2

Being a part of an organization's success, one must always act professional, including handling telephone communication. In this case, the phone will have to be answered with careful adherence to proper telephone etiquette and techniques for handling the demands of the call in order to be able to resolve the caller's issues, and where necessary take a message, put the call on hold, or transfer the call to someone who is in a better position to satisfy the caller.

SAQ 5.3

Knowledge of business conversations, especially facilitating meetings, is expedient here. To ensure a productive meeting, decisions will have to be made regarding the planning and execution of the meeting. These will include the purpose and objectives, participants, modalities, roles, agenda, tools, materials, and space. Specific techniques can be employed to achieve effective engagement of participants and reaching specified meeting outcomes.

STUDY SESSION 6: DEVELOPING BUSINESS MESSAGE: THE WRITING PROCESS

1. B
2. D
3. D
4. A
5. D
6. A
7. A
8. D
9. C
10. B
11. A

Study Session 8: Writing Comprehensive Business Documents

SAQ8.1 List key things you need to do to adapt to your audience in report writing

Being Sensitive to Your Audience's Needs

Headings and Links

Transitions

Previews and Reviews

Building Strong Relationships with Your Audience

Controlling Your Style and Tone

SAQ8.2 List eight (8) elements of Report Introduction

- Authorization.

- Problem/opportunity/purpose.
- Scope.
- Background.
- Sources and methods.
- Definitions.
- Limitations.
- Report organization.

SAQ8.3 Explain the concept ‘proposal body’

The proposal’s body gives complete details on the proposed solution and specifies what the anticipated results will be.

Proposals are persuasive messages, and the audience expects confidence and professionalism, but maintain an objective tone so that you don’t risk overselling your message.

In addition to providing facts and evidence to support your conclusions, an effective body covers this information:

STUDY SESSION 9: DESIGNING AND DELIVERING IN-PERSON AND ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

SAQ 9.1

Presentations typically have certain key elements, such as the presenter, the message, the audience, the setting, and the skills, strategies, and tools. Knowledge of these elements is useful, not only in the design but also the delivery of effective presentations. Such knowledge is important to determine the amount of content required, how best to plan the delivery, what strategies will be most effective, etc.

SAQ 9.2

Creating great content for presentations involves many processes, beginning with planning. This means to identify the presentation topic, determine the purpose of the presentation, analyze the audience expected, craft a working title, research and organize useful information and materials, state the core message of the presentation, outline the key points, and anchor the core message and key points. In the drafting stage, a strong opening will be created, the key points will be developed logically, followed by a closing that throws a powerful call to action. The content will then be formatted appropriately, for instance, using PowerPoint, with careful attention to the design, features and ordering of slides. After the draft is ready, it will go through revision, editing and proofreading, to ensure that it meets the predetermined expectations.

SAQ 9.3

Visual tools can be used to enhance presentation content if done correctly. In the case of PowerPoint, for example, which is one of the most popular tools, attention will have to be given to the features, design, and ordering of the slides such that the content comes off appealing, clearer, and easier to understand. Beyond proper formatting, skill is also required to interact with the tool and use it effectively during presentation, in a way that is complementary rather than distracting from the message. One of the ways PowerPoint can distract from the message is when the presenter must keep turning away from the audience to look at a projector screen behind.

SAQ 9.4

To prepare for a presentation, team members will be advised to practice the presentation ahead of the delivery and get feedback to make improvements. They also need to prepare physically by eating well, getting good rest, and of course, pick out appropriate clothing for the presentation. Finally, they must ensure that all your materials required are intact, double-checked, and certified okay. During the actual delivery, some of the things they can do are they should make a grand entrance with their opening and close powerfully; build rapport through eye contact and using audience's names; engage the audience with stories, questions and activities; use expressions that are vivid, inclusive and culturally acceptable; and they should remember to use their bodies effectively to ensure a livelier experience for the audience.

STUDY SESSION 10: EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION

SAQ 10.1

The résumé is an important marketing tool for getting a desired job. Preparing it well will involve very intentional steps, including reviewing personal information and information about the position. A résumé format that best represents personal value will then have to be chosen and a draft created in the appropriate style. The résumé must provide relevant information and emphasize areas of strength to convince the employer of being the right fit for the job. Then editing, proofreading, and critiquing will have to be done before submitting it.

SAQ 10.2

Even if it is not expressly requested, a cover letter should accompany a résumé submission. Just like the résumé, it must be tailored to the needs of the employer for the specific position on offer and help to improve the chances of securing the job. Preparing it will involve a series of steps, and adherence to the standard structure and style of writing a cover letter.

SAQ 10.3

Following appropriate procedures for applying can be just as important as creating great application documents. One needs to be aware of various forms of submissions and follow the techniques that are applicable to the requested or most appropriate form per time. Following up on

application must also receive the same amount of consideration.

SAQ 10.4

There are different types of interviews and knowing the type one will be attending is important. Whatever the type, however, there are techniques that one can apply before, during and after an interview that will increase confidence for a successful interview. These include techniques to prepare effectively, to engage with interviewers, and follow up after the interview.

APPENDIX II GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Bulletins A bulletin is a notice posted in a communal area to inform employees of emergencies and important matters.

Business communication is the process of sharing information between people within and outside a company.

Channel This is the medium through which the message is sent.

Clarity A message must be clear to be effective. Clarity will ensure that the message is understood.

Coherence This means that all parts of the message must fit together. It must flow smoothly from the beginning to the end.

Communication is defined as the act of sending information from the point of view of one person to the mind of another person.

Correctness For the communication to be effective, it must be correct. Correctness means that it is error-free and devoid of falsehood.

Courteous To be courteous means to show good manners, be polite and kind.

Cover letter is a writing sample submitted together with a résumé for a specific advertised position (letter of application), or a specific possibly open (but not advertised) position (letter of inquiry).

Credibility For communication to be effective, it must have credibility. By credibility means that the message can be believed.

Curriculum vitae (CV) is a comprehensive statement of your education, skills, experience, and other attributes.

Drafting is the preliminary writing of a document.

Editing refers to the process of assessing a writing draft to ensure it fit in to standards of good English, style, and recognized business-writing preparation.

Effective communication means that the message sent by the sender is understood by the receiver the same way by both parties.

Extensive In this type of reading, you read the material in-depth with a view to understanding it.

External Noise This comes from the environment and prevents the message from being understood by the receiver.

Feedback This is the response of the receiver to the message sent by the sender.

Formal communication is viewed as communication which takes place through the official organizational channels or is undertaken by an employee while performing his/her tasks.

Informal communication is a form of communication which occurs outside the recognized communication networks and is popularly known as ‘grapevine’.

Intensive This means reading in detail with a high level of concentration.

Interactive Communication Interactive communication is valuable when communication is essential between peers involved in tasks that require coordinated effort.

Interpersonal communication is defined as a form of communication between two or more people and involves the transfer of information, message, idea or thought from one person to the other(s).

Intrapersonal communication Is a communication that occurs within an individual.

Language This is the means of expression or communication used in speech or writing. The language of communication must be common between both parties involved so as to aid understanding.

Lateral Communication A communication between people within the same organization is labeled as lateral communication.

Mass Communication Mass communication encompasses sending a single message to a group and permits communication of intended message to many people.

Medium The medium through which a message is delivered or sent can be a barrier to effective communication.

Meetings are opportunities to bring the right people together to discuss for a predetermined outcome.

Memos These short letters are usually used to communicate with the employees of the same organization.

Message This is the idea, feeling or information that a sender transmits to the receiver.

Noise This is anything that interferes with the transmission of the message from the sender to the receiver.

Non-verbal communication refers to the ways in which beings convey information about their emotions, needs, intentions, attitudes, and thoughts without the use of verbal language.

Physiological Noise “physiological noise or biological influences such as sweaty palms, pounding heart and butterflies in the stomach induced by speech anxiety or feeling sick or exhausted at work, can produce dramatic interference on both sender and receivers”.

Presentation is a conversational performance in which the presenter communicates a message with an audience, in each setting, using an array of skills, strategies and tools

Prewriting entails deciding what to write about (the topic) and gathering of all relevant information to support or elucidate what the subject matter and planning how to arrange ideas/thoughts in a way that efficiently develops the topic.

Psychological Noise This manifests when we allow our biases, prejudices, assumptions, and preconditions interfere “with effective message transmission and reception”

Publishing is the publication of the final report for audience and readers attention.

Receiver This is the person that decodes the message.

Résumé is a brief, informative summary of your abilities, education, and experience, in a way that highlights your strengths and accomplishments as suitable for a particular position and differentiates you from other applicants seeking similar positions.

Revising entails reconsidering the ideas and content of the write-up as well as cleansing the style and arrangement of the paper.

Scanning This means looking for information in a text or document quickly but not carefully.

Semantic Noise It manifests in the choice of words used which can be distracting thereby creating interference.

Sender This is the originator of the message.

Skimming means reading to know the usefulness of the information.

Telephone communication refers to communication between or among persons through the medium of a telephone.

Verbal communication is the sharing of information between individuals by using speech.

Visual Communication Visual communication is the process of using objects such as photographs, art, drawings, sketches, charts, and graphs to convey or disseminate information.

Writing Process Writing is a process or course of actions that involves several distinct stages or steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.