



**Presents** 

# PLAYING IT SOFT:

A Newcomer's Guide to Soft Skills



## Acknowledgement

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Wikipedia.com , Wikihow.com, Parts of MIT OpenCourseware have been referred to and included in the book.

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### Chapter 1

#### COMMUNICATION- AN INTRODUCTION

#### Meaning of Communication

Communication may be understood as a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. This common understanding results not only through the transfer of information and idea but also from the transmission of the attitude. Communication is complete when the receiver understands in the same sense and spirit that the communicator intends to convey.

#### Nature / Features of Communication

- It is a universal phenomenon
- Is a continuous process
- Is a short-lived, purposeful process
- Multidimensional in nature
- Dispels misunderstanding
- Leads to the achievement of the organizational objectives

#### **Objectives of Communication:**

(General)

- INFORMATION: Information consists of facts and figures and data which are important for conducting the business. Information may be given orally or written. Both internal and external information plays a very important role in the running of the business.
- **PERSUASION**: Persuasion means making efforts to change or influence the attitude and behaviour of others. Persuasion requires skill and ability to use words, both spoken and written, as well as non-verbal methods in such a way as to have an influential effect on the target audience.

#### (Downward Communication)

- INSTRUCTIONS: Instructions are about how to carry out a process or procedure. In most cases, this can be done orally, individually or in groups. Oral instruction may be supplemented with written and visual materials.
- ORDERS: An order is a formal assignment of a task. It may be in the oral or written form. It must be clear and exact.
- MOTIVATION: Motivation means providing a person with a motive, an incentive, an inner urge to make an effort to do his best. Communication is the most important and critical element in the motivation of employees. Managers constantly try to improve performance in the workplace by motivating the staff.
- **ADVICE:** Advice is given by a superior to his subordinate on matters related to work on personal matters if the relationship is close. Communication for advice is oral, face-to-face, informal and confidential. The person giving advice must be tactful and have a sympathetic nature.
- **COUNSELLING:** Counseling is formal and specialized advice given by trained specialists (practitioners in psychiatry, medicine, law, etc.). Companies provide counselling service as part of employee welfare. Stress tension and emotional problems can be treated and corrected.
- WARNING: Warning means advising or cautioning someone of possible danger. It is also an authoritative and formal notice of something unfavourable. It is given only after milder methods like advice, request, instruction and order have failed to achieve

results. It may be given orally or in writing; it is always confidential.

- APPRECIATION: Appreciation means showing and expressing praise for the work of others. It can be expressed orally, in writing and by non-verbal methods.
- BOOSTING MORALE: People with high morale feel good about themselves and are highly motivated and have the courage to face problems and meet challenges. An open communication climate helps to keep morale high.

#### (Upward Communication)

- **APPLICATIONS:** Application is a written request giving full details of the matter and supported with reason whenever necessary. For example, Leave application
- **COMPLAINTS:** Complaint is made when there are faults or defects in the system or goods/services supplied. This may be written or oral.
- **SUGGESTIONS:** A suggestion is a new idea proposed for consideration. Everyone develops ideas about better ways in which to do their work to improve their conditions and environment. Many companies have suggestion boxes as suggestions from employees are greatly welcomed.

#### (Horizontal communication)

- **REQUESTS:** Requests are informal and formal requests made among peer groups for suggestions, advice, favours, etc.
- **CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** Conflicts are unavoidable when different personalities work together. Regular lateral communication can prevent and resolve conflicts that arise between departments or individual members of a team.

#### Importance of Communication in the Corporate World:

- Complexities of Business: Due to increase in size and scale of operations, business organizations have evolved from simple networks to complex structures. Management has to ensure free and flawless communication to coordinate and manage them effectively.
- IT Revolution: This has transformed the business operations, they now have to install communication devices that transmit the message at greater speed and care with minimum time loss and cost.
- Growing specialization: Due to complex business operations, different organizational tasks are handled by different specialists. These specialists are to be coordinated for

the accomplishment of organizational goals. Sound communication is essential to build an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and understanding among these professionals.

- Global village: Due to liberalization and globalization, the world has been reduced to a global village where organizations have to work in different countries. It has to ensure communications bridge the cultural gaps.
- Growing competition: Globalization has increased competition among organizations. To create new customers and maintain old ones, effective communication strategies in the form of advertisements, personal contracts and publicity campaigns are needed.

#### **Basic Types / Forms of Communication**

#### • ONE-WAY AND TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

One-way communication is characterised by the absence of feedback from the receiver to the sender. The effectiveness of this communication depends upon the speakers inferential ability and the receiver's listening to skill. Two-way communication involves feedback from the receiver to the sender, it is interactive and interpersonal and allows better mutual understanding.

#### • VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication is communication through spoken (telephone) or written words (mails). Nonverbal communication means the transmission of meaning other than oral or written words (facial expression, eye contacts).

#### • FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

Formal communication is structured on the basis of hierarchy and designed to ensure uniformity in the dissemination of information and to ensure accountability. Ex. Circulars, departmental meetings. It can be upward, downward, lateral and crosswise/diagonal.

> Upward Communication: To send suggestions, complaints & grievances of the

lower-level employees to the managers / top management. It is more participative in nature and results in increasing democratisation. Example: A factory level employee offering a suggestion to the top management on how the packaging of the product being manufactured by them can be improved to save resources and time.

- ➤ Downward Communication: Is based on the assumption that the people working at the higher levels have the authority to communicate/give orders and relevant information to the people at the lower level. It strengthens the authoritarian structure of the organisation. Example: Quarterly Sales Targets to be achieved by the team is notified to the junior sales executives by the manager.
- ➤ Lateral Communication: Communication can be seen taking place between persons working at the same level or working under the same superior. Helps to maintain coordination and review activities assigned to various subordinates. Example—Functional managers working at the same level in different departments.
- ➤ Diagonal or Crosswise Communication: Communication takes place when the people working at the same place interact with the people working at a higher level or lower level and across boundaries of their reporting relationships. Example: The manager of the sales department seeking out information about the receipt of a client payment from an executive of the finance department. Informal communication is spontaneous, arising out of the day to day routine and meetings among peers. Ex. Conversations at lunch or tea, employees travelling together to work etc.

#### INTERPERSONAL AND INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Intrapersonal communication is internal dialogue occurring within the mind of an individual. It may be clear or confused depending on the person's state of mind. Intrapersonal communication affects interpersonal communication. Thoughts, views and attitudes which are a part of intrapersonal communication influence how we speak/write and how we understand and interpret messages that we receive.

#### • WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATION

Written communication is used when the other person is not present and not available on the telephone. It is necessary for long and complex messages which may require repeated reading and reference; it serves as a record.

Oral communication requires both the parties to be present and attentive at the same time. This requires certain skills of both, each must be able to respond to the other's body language and must be able to make an immediate response to what the other says.

#### • INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Messages that move within the organization among its members are internal communication. The style and quantity of internal communication affect the atmosphere in the organization and have an impact on the business because employees who are comfortable and happy work better.

Messages that go out of the organizations and are received from outside are called external communication. The style and tone of outgoing communication affect the organization's public image.

#### • GROUP COMMUNICATION

A group is an association of 2 or more persons who interact with each other in such a way that each influences the other. Group discussion in organizations helps in understanding a situation, in exploring possibilities and in solving problems because it allows multiple points of view. Groups may be formal such as committees, quality circles which are formed voluntarily or intentionally to achieve specific goals. Informal groups are those that emerge spontaneously without deliberate design to meet social needs.

#### • PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

This involves speech by one person to a large group at a time. Ex. Speeches by political, religious or trade union leaders.

#### • MASS COMMUNICATION

The process of communicating to the public at large through mass media such as television, internet, publications, etc. It plays a pivotal role in boosting the image of a business organization and attracting customers, it requires heavy investment.

#### Principles of Communication (or) The 7 C's Of Communication

- CANDID: The message to be communicated should be candid frank and straightforward.
- **CLEAR**: The message, whether oral or written should be clear. Clear message stems from clear minds and clear hearts. The clarity in expression is brought about by using simple, precise, and familiar words with effective sentences and paragraphs.
- **COMPLETE**: Completeness is necessary for effective communication. Provide all necessary information that the reader needs for thorough and accurate understanding.
- **CONCISE:** Conciseness means conveying the message in fewest possible words without sacrificing its completeness and clarity. Use single and simple words.
- **CONCRETE:** The communicated statement should not be vague. It should be concrete and specific. Use specific words and figures. Avoid using words that lead to uncertainty. Use active voice rather than passive voice.
- **CORRECT:** The message to be communicated should be correct in spelling, grammar, format, contents, statistical information, etc. Incorrect and inaccurate statements mislead the reader, lower his / her confidence in the communicator and tarnish the image of the organization.
- **COURTEOUS:** Courtesy plays a dominating role in maintaining a congenial and healthy communication environment which is essential to ensure the effectiveness of communication.

#### Other Principles of Communication

- ✓ Principle of Integrity
- ✓ Principle of Informality

- ✓ Principle of Attention
- ✓ Principle of Consistency
- ✓ Principle of Timeliness
- ✓ Principle of Feedback

### Impediments of Effective Communication / Barriers to Effective Communication

Communication is complete and perfect when the receiver understands the message in the same sense and spirit as the communicator intends to convey, but in practice, this does not take place due to certain obstacles or other factors known as communication barriers

These barriers can be classified into the following groups:

- **A. SEMANTIC BARRIERS:** These are concerned with problems and obstructions in the process of encoding and decoding the message into words or other impressions.
- The use of different languages
- Different interpretations of different words and symbols
- Poor vocabulary and poor grammatical knowledge
- Technical jargon and usage of new words
- **B. PHYSICAL BARRIERS:** Interpersonal communication is communication among 2 or more persons.

Noise is any disturbance or interference that reduces the clarity and effectiveness of communication are called noise. It may be physical, psychological, written or visual.

- Improper time
- Distance
- Inadequate or overloaded information

- Channel issues
- Weather and climate
- C. ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS: These are barriers that pertain to within an organisation and its communication.
- Organisational Policies
- Rules and Regulations
- Status and Relationships
- Lack of Organisational Facilities
- Wrong Choice of Channel
- **D. SOCIO PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS:** Are barriers arise from within the minds of the sender and receiver that causes misunderstanding and hinders communication process.
- Attitude and/or Closed mind
- Differences in perception
- Inattention
- Premature Evaluation
- Distrust
- Resistance to Change
- Cultural Barriers
- **E. PERSONAL BARRIERS** Are barriers that exist owing to their roles and statuses and are mostly psychological in nature.
- i. Barriers in Superiors
- Attitude
- Fear of Challenge
- Underestimation of subordination
- Ignoring juniors
- The insistence of following proper channels
- ii. Barriers in Subordinates

- Unwilling to Communicate
- Lack of Proper Incentive
- iii. Poor Listening by individuals owing to egoism, emotions and selective perception

#### Overcoming Barriers / Impediments of Communication (Or) Strategies For Effective Communication

- CREATE SYNERGETIC ENVIRONMENT: Under a synergetic environment, cooperation breeds cooperation and trust breeds trust at an accelerating rate. For this top management should initiate and ensure trust and cooperation among employees at a lower level. They will respond with trust and cooperation. When an organization is operating with a high degree of cooperation and trust among employees, communication will automatically be effective.
- ENCOURAGE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION: The organization should ensure 2-way communication with a sound feedback system to overcome communication gaps because of distortions, filtering, colouring, etc.
- STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION FLOW & NETWORK: The organization should streamline and strengthen communication flow through proper organizational structure, decentralization and delegation of authorities. They should ensure timely dissemination of information through frequent meetings and social gatherings.
- ENCOURAGE OPENNESS / TRANSPARENCY IN COMMUNICATION: Lack of transparency and denial of information breeds rumours in the organization and consequently harms the organizational environment. To avoid this, management should make open door policy {employees are encouraged to approach superiors with any matter concerning the organization and its people} and Manage By Walking Around {senior executives should not restrict their operations by sitting in their offices but walk around the office to make contact with a large number of employees}.

### Chapter 2

#### NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

#### Introduction

Non-verbal communication stands for the innermost, instinctual form of human communication. It includes all things other than words and language that can convey meaning.

Non-verbal communication can be independent of verbal communication, but verbal communication is always accompanied by non-verbal communication. Anything that appeals to the senses can be considered non-verbal communication.

An understanding of non-verbal methods and aspects of communication helps a person to improve the oral and written presentation by using the methods and by gaining control over one's body language.

#### Importance of Non-verbal Communication

- Non-verbal methods have an almost instant effect because of quicker grasp by the receiver.
- Response to visuals and plain sounds is more powerful than language.

- Non-verbal communication is the best method to convey information to illiterates
- Nonverbal communication serves to reinforce the spoken message.

The different aspects/forms of nonverbal communication are:

#### I. Body language (Kinesics)

It means the changes that occur in the body position and the movements that show what the person is feeling or thinking. Much of it is involuntary and unconscious; most persons are not aware of their body language, but it makes a powerful impact on others. Body language always conveys meaning. It is:

- Omnipresent: It always accompanies spoken communication
- Emotionally Expressive: It expresses mainly the feelings of the speaker and also of the listener
- **Dominates Interaction:** It is more communicative than words
- Looks Trustable: It usually felt to be more truthful than spoken words.

Body language can be divided into two categories:

- Conscious movements: Postures and voice modulations are deliberately used Ex Actors
- Unconscious movements are of biological origin, acquired habits and cultural customs.

Elements of body language include:

- ✓ Facial Expressions
- ✓ Eye Contact
- ✓ Gestures
- ✓ Posture
- ✓ Appearance

Facial Expression

The face commands particular attention as a source of non-verbal messages. The expression on the face is the most obvious aspect of body language. It is the most difficult component of body language to understand. Facial expressions convey the attitude and reactions of the people communicating. An alert speaker can judge the listener's reaction by the facial expressions that act as constant feedback.

Surprise, shock, anger, sadness, fear, happiness and pleasure can all be expressed by means of facial expression. Eyebrows and lips are the most mobile parts of the face; an eyebrow raised unconsciously can convey disbelief or surprise. A cheerful and appreciative smile can be welcoming, just as pursed lips can indicate displeasure or lack of friendliness.

A smile is a universal gesture; it is understood by everyone, is generally unmistakable and clears the atmosphere; it is believed to release chemicals which create feelings of happiness. A smile can also be a useful noncommittal gesture when it is better to be silent.

The five basic descriptions of facial expression are:

- I Neutral: Expressions such as pleasure, respect, attentiveness and thoughtfulness
- ii. Relaxed Expressions such as love, submission
- iii. Tensed Expressions such as fear, disgust, contempt
- Iv. Uplifted Expressions such as happiness, shock, rage
- v. Droopy Expressions such as suffering, grief, depression

#### **Eye Contact**

Eye movement is a key part of facial behaviour, directing other's attention or showing surprise or happiness and other emotional displays. Eye contact (or the lack of it) is a very important communicative factor and can convey a wide range of meanings. However, the degree of eye contact that is appropriate is influenced by cultural and social norms and can vary cross-culturally.

It is commonly believed that avoiding eye contact indicates that the speaker is lying

or hiding something. Persons who lack self-confidence also generally avoid eye contact. Guidelines on eye contact include:

- While making an oral presentation it is important to create rapport with the audience with eye contact. A sweeping movement of one's eyes, covering the entire audience, not dwelling on any section for more than 10 seconds is appropriate.
- In individual interactions, maintain eye contact but avoid staring at the other person.

#### Gestures

Gestures are movements of arms, hands, head, legs and the body in total. They are a natural accompaniment of speech. Gestures are culture-specific. Gestures are closely related to personality, no two persons make exactly the same gestures, yet the general meaning is easily recognised. The occasions, the size and nature of the audience influence the speaker's gestures.

The different types of gestures are:

- a. Emblems Which serve as a substitute for words and phrases
- b. Illustrators Which accompany or reinforce verbal messages
- c. Affect Displays Those gestures that show emotion
- d. Regulators Which control the flow and pace of communication
- e. Adaptors Gestures that help release physical or emotional tension

#### Posture

Posture is the way we hold ourselves, the way we stand, sit and walk. It indicates something about our feelings and thoughts, attitudes and health. Posture can indicate disregard or disrespect for others; polite and well-bred persons are usually careful of how they stand or sit in the presence of visitors and informal situations. Slight movements and postures of the body are more basic and more reliable as cues; they are not easy to manipulate or control consciously as other body movements like fingers, hands, legs and feet.

An open stance posture i.e. erectness of posture, open hands, a firm handshake is indicative of a positive frame of mind and attitude whereas a closed stance i.e. arms folded across one's chest/body, legs crossed and body turned away from speaker indicates negativity, aloofness and rejection.

A person's general appearance depends on many things. The two important factors that contribute to appearance are grooming and personal hygiene. Appearance makes the first impression; lack of neatness or cleanliness, carelessness in grooming, clumsy look or clothes make a negative impression. State of health is a very important factor in a person's appearance.

#### II. CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES (ARTIFACTUAL COMMUNICATION)

Clothing is a very important aspect of nonverbal communication. The colour, design, cut and fit combine to make up the dress. Many organizations have a dress code for occasions in order to ensure that its representatives convey the desired impression. Accessories like footwear, jewellery, ties & belts, bags/purses need careful selection. Whatever you carry on your person or in your hand ought to look comfortable and gracefully carried; otherwise it will convey a poor image.

#### III. SPACE

The way we use space plays a subtle role in body language. Individuals naturally maintain a certain space between themselves in various social and interpersonal situations.

The way people structure the space around them also conveys meaning. Example: A manager can use space to create an impression of status, a spacious office, a large office desk, a large car suggests an important position. It may be understood as:

- Feature Fixed Space space utilization in the place where the communication is taking place
- Semi Fixed Feature Space the arrangement of room/stage/office in which the conversation takes place.
- Personal Space Intimate Zone (Physical contact to 18 inches), Personal Zone (18 inches to 4 feet),

• Social Zone(4-12 feet) and Public Zone (12 feet and beyond).

An untidy, poorly maintained space is not conducive to cheerful and comfortable communication. Speakers would be more relaxed and comfortable in a place which is clean, well ventilated and lit.

#### IV. TIME

Use of time is an even more subtle nonverbal factor in communication. Some people are in a hurry and make the other person feel uneasy by appearing to be hard-pressed for time; others may get the impression that they are not being given enough time and attention.

Punctuality and respect for one's own time and other people's time conveys the impression of efficiency. A sense of timing in conducting meetings, conveying good or bad news, in making presentations, all generate respect and goodwill.

#### V. PARALANGUAGE

The non-verbal aspects of the spoken word are known as paralanguage. It is possible to control and use paralanguage effectively by becoming aware of it and paying attention to one's voice and speech.

Paralanguage includes voice, volume, pitch, speed, pronunciation, accent, tone, stress, non-fluencies and silence. Note: The above-mentioned aspects are explained in detail in the section on Speaking.

#### VI. TOUCH

Touch is tactile communication. Where words fail, a simple touch can evoke myriad meanings. Pats on one's back as a gesture of appreciation or a hug as a form of greeting and /or welcome are examples of Haptics.

However, Haptics is influenced vastly by cultural and social norms. It is considered appropriate and may be used only when all involved are comfortable and have the

same understanding of the situation.

A handshake is one of the most common and visible aspects of this form of nonverbal communication. The right handshake can showcase one's confidence and attitude and also make the other person feel welcome.

#### **ENERGY**

Energy and enthusiasm as an aspect of body language are hard to describe, but most people experienced the impact of a person with a high level of energy. Some impress with a high level of physical energy which is almost infectious; some have high intellectual or emotional or spiritual energy. A healthy person is energetic and maintains a certain level of enthusiasm at work.

#### LISTENING AND SPEAKING

#### Listening

Listening is the receiver's activity in oral communication. Listening is the profound understanding of what is being communicated, the process of absorption of the meaning of the words and sentences. A speaker has the responsibility to make an effort to make the audience understand, so the listener has the responsibility to be attentive and to make an effort to understand the meaning of the speaker.

#### The five steps of listening / The listening process

- 1. Step 1-Hearing / Receiving: At this stage, the listener simply attends to hear the message. This step may fail if there is a great deal of noise or if the listener is occupied with something else.
- 2. Step 2-Interpreting: This depends on the listener's vocabulary, knowledge, experience and so on.
- 3. **Step 3-Remembering:** Sorting of the message by a listener for future reference, retaining what is heard by taking a note or by making an outline of the speaker's keynote.

- 4. Step 4-Evaluating: At this stage, the listener decides what to do with the received information. The judgments you make at the stage of evaluation are crucial to the listening process.
- 5. **Step 5-Responding:** The listener's response to the message may be in words or in body language. The response lets the speaker know whether the listener has got the message and what his/her reaction is.

#### Importance of Listening

- Inefficient listening affects interpersonal relations as well as decision-making and employee relations.
- If an individual is expecting cooperation and willingness, positive responses from his/her team members, listening to their ideas, suggestions and problems will pave the way.
- Listening with attention shows respect and wins goodwill.

#### **Benefits of Listening**

- Helps us respond, get feedback or give feedback
- Lets us participate in another's story and hear of others' experiences and insights
- To broaden our horizons, i.e. to learn
- To question and test the evidence and assumptions
- To create a relationship based on respect and value
- Learn about people and how their minds work
- Raise the morale of the employee
- Obtain suggestions and new ideas
- Discover why employees perform as they do
- Help with solving problems and resolving conflicts

#### Bad Habits of Listening / Problems of Listening / Impediments to Listening

**Distractions in Mind:** This is a great barrier to listening and must be firmly checked. It takes a great deal of self-control and discipline to stay tuned to another person,

particularly when one's mind is excited about something

Wandering Attention: The natural difference between speaking speed and listening speed. Average speaking speed is about 150 words a minute; the listener's mind goes off on various expeditions. To put the mind's excess time to good use in reviewing the talk and connecting the various ideas that are put across by the speaker.

**Planning a reply:** The listener's mind gets busy planning what to say when the speaker stops. In preparing a question to ask, an individual might miss the rest of the speech.

Lack of interest: Not being interested in the topic can cause faulty listening. It might make an individual reject the speaker or the subject as dull or boring. Such an attitude to the speaker arises from narrow interests and closed minds.

The tendency to criticise: Criticising the speaker's appearance, manner, voice and so on is another cause of poor listening. Many people may not cultivate style but have good content/matter to share; by paying attention to the speaker's style, an individual may lose out on valuable inputs.

Being Self-centred: Some persons are self-talking and like to keep on talking to themselves rather than share a conversation with others. They want others to listen to them but are not willing to listen to what others have to say. They listen selectively; only to what interests them and ignore everything else.

Avoiding what is difficult or boring/dry: If you are mentally lazy, you divert your attention when you find the subject difficult to follow.

**Excessive Note-Taking:** Trying to take down extensive notes is a sure way to disturb your listening and to miss some points. Cultivate the art of taking notes and limit it to writing down the general ideas.

**Emotional Block:** Most people have "Deaf Spots" this is a tendency to ignore and block out ideas that disturbs your emotional comfort. This defect can prevent a person from taking in and retaining certain ideas. Some people find it difficult to listen to stories of horror or destruction.

**Emotional Excitements:** Getting disturbed by the speaker's use of certain words. Words and phrases acquire different meanings and connotations in different cultures. It is important to guard against getting upset by words which may have been used quite innocently by the speaker.

**Impatience:** We often have no patience to wait until another has finished speaking. We want to answer or add our own points to the discussion or narrate our own experience.

**Personal Anxieties:** If we have serious personal worry or anxiety, it is difficult to get away from it. In such circumstances, it is better not to engage in any important listening responsibility. The responsibility may be delegated to someone else or it is worth seeking cooperation and requesting the other person to excuse you until you are out of the worrying situation.

**Poor Health:** Poor state of health reduces listening efficiency. Besides pain like headache or physical pain, the poor state of general health makes a person impatient, inattentive and unable to concentrate.

**Speaker related barriers:** Inappropriate accent, speed, pitch and tone, vocabulary, use of jargon, mannerisms and body language of the speaker can impede listening.

#### Cultivating Good Listening Skills / Principles of Effective Listening

- Together with the speaker, decide on the goals of a conversation
- Stop talking and be attentive, eye contact with the speaker is a must while listening
- Have positive body language, understand the speaker's nonverbal cues as well.
- Put in an appropriate remark or non-verbal sound. Ask interesting questions for clarification or to
- encourage the speaker, or to enlarge the scope of discussion.
- Take notes where possible, but not excessively so.
- Focus on the content, not on the person or the delivery
- Be empathetic, patient, objective and unbiased while listening,
- Avoid creating or allowing distractions and interruptions
- Reflect and understand the message, seek clarifications where needed
- Summarise what the speaker has said, without giving any judgement and look expectantly for more
- Information; the chances are that the person may add some more information. If your attitude and body
- language appears interesting and empathetic, the person is likely to speak up.
- Be a good listener and read in between the lines, whenever and wherever required

#### Profile of an effective/good listener

- Considering listening as an opportunity to be aware of their personal prejudices and can avoid judging the speaker.
- Listen to the ideas behind the speaker's words
- Consciously notice the speaker's non-verbal behaviour
- Indicates a positive attitude towards the speaker, shows readiness to listen, by means of body language and gestures
- Is objective, patient and listens to the entire message without prematurely evaluating it, blocking it or reacting to it.
- Listens with concentration and alertness, shuts out distractions.
- Asks probing questions, seeks clarifications
- Provides necessary feedback and appreciation to the speaker.
- Does not get overly affected by emotions, does not argue or get distracted.

### Chapter 3

#### **SPEAKING**

A good speaking gets attention and makes an impact on the audience.

#### Features of Spoken Language

- There is a significant difference between the language of oral communication and the language of written communication:
- The vocabulary of spoken language is simple and familiar.
- While speaking, we use shorter and more familiar words which can be easily understood when heard.
- Another feature is that a speaker often refers to oneself and therefore uses self-referencing pronouns
- such as I or my or mine.
- The sentences are shorter and simpler. Long, complex sentences are not comfortable to speak out and
- not easy for listeners to follow.

#### Pronunciation

- It means the way we make the sound of the word.
- English spelling does not always indicate how the word is pronounced; the mismatch between the spelling and the sound of many words in English makes it necessary to learn correct pronunciation.
- It is important to be careful with words that sound similar and can be confused.

#### Word Linking

- It is as important as pronunciation.
- When speaking each word in a sentence is pronounced separately. Several words are linked together.
- Examples: It's a fine day; I'm going for a walk.

#### Stressing on a word

- Stress is the amount of breath force or energy that is put into a sound.
- Function words in a normal sentence are not stressed unless the speaker wants to indicate a specific meaning.

#### Message in the voice

- Stress and tone are strong elements of speech and give meaning to the spoken word. The meaning and significance of a statement can be changed by shifting the stress from one word to another.
- The tone reflects the speaker's attitude. The tone usually carries the emotion behind the words.
- Intonation is the rise and fall of the voice in speaking. Spoken English depends on intonation for a large part of the meaning. The meaning of a sentence can change if you change the intonation.
- The accent is the way a sound is made. Although most languages share a set of sound, there are variations in the way the sounds are made.
- Rate of speech is the speed with which we speak. We usually change our rate of speech to express different thoughts and feelings.
- Volume is the loudness or softness of your voice. Adjust the volume of voice to the

size of the audience.

- Pitch means the highness or lowness of the voice. When you speak at the same pitch it sounds monotonous and listeners feel that you have nothing to emphasise.
- Pauses can be very effective; a pause can add interest, expression and feeling to speech when it is used skillfully.
- Articulation is saying words distinctly and clearly. Ex: Saying articulation instead of articulation.

#### The problem of Bad Speech habits

Many persons develop bad speech habits which interfere with their formal oral communication. The use of slang, conversational terms, habitually repeated phrases like basically, you know, like etc are not acceptable in formal situations.

#### Formal and Informal style

- Generally, spoken language is less formal than written language.
- There are formal and informal styles in both spoken and written language.
- The difference in both is in a tone of voice, vocabulary and syntax as suitable for the situation and the content.

#### **Elements of Oral Communication Process**

#### **Intrapersonal Communication**

- Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself.
- Much of it is at the subconscious level; physical sensation, things we have to do, memories etc give rise to some thoughts in a haphazard manner and no logical sequence.
- Thoughts and ideas that flow within the mind are influenced by the person's temperament, emotions, experience, knowledge, opinions, views, values and attitudes.

#### Self-esteem

- Self-talk has a great deal on self-esteem
- In order to maintain healthy self-esteem one should
- Quietly celebrate one's own achievement and take pride in one's strengths

- Think of one's own positive qualities and attributes
- Set standards which can be achieved.
- Judge oneself against peers
- Seek out and spend time with persons who are supportive and who nourish one's spirit.

#### Attitude towards the subject matter

- Interest and prejudice play a role in our attitude to certain subjects, topics and issues.
- If you hold strong views on a certain issue, your communication about it is likely to reflect the views.
- A good and open discussion is hardly possible if you have an inflexible opinion on the topic.
- To be good at discussion you need to have an open mind towards issues and other people's views.

#### Attitude towards the audience

- Our opinion of the audience's intelligence and ability to understand affects the way we formulate our message.
- Normally a speaker formulates messages differently for different audience depending on their intelligence level.
- We share more information with those whom we trust. Sometimes prejudice may make us distrust certain persons.

#### Knowledge Level

Our communication competence is affected by our knowledge of the subject matter, the channel and media of communication and the target audience.

- Subject Matter: To be able to communicate usefully, both persons must know enough about the subject of the communication. Knowledge of local, national and international issue, the state of the market and important social events helps a person to talk more intelligently in any situation.
- Media of Communication: Our choice of a suitable medium depends on our understanding of the different media and their impact. Events like videoconferencing

need special preparation to speak effectively.

• Understanding Target Audience: We need to know and understand the needs, circumstances and abilities of the target audience. The more we take time to think about and understand the receiver the better tailored the message will be to the knowledge and needs of the audience.

#### CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- Cross-cultural or intercultural communication denotes communication among persons, or groups of people, belonging to different cultural backgrounds.
- With globalization, most people find themselves in situations that require communication with people of another country and a very unfamiliar culture.
- The world has grown so close, that organisation and governments need to have contacts with people of various other countries and cultures.
- Knowledge and skills in interacting with people of other cultures ensure a higher success rate when doing business internationally; it also gives the company a competitive edge.

#### **Cultural Competence**

It means the ability to interact effectively with people of a different culture which include

- → Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
- → Knowledge of different cultural practices and world view
- → Attitude towards cultural difference
- → Cross-cultural skills

#### **Conducting Oneself in Other Cultures**

- Interacting with persons from other countries and cultures needs preparation.
- Manners and rules of social behaviour are culture-specific; awareness and knowledge of the other country's norms of behaviour and etiquette make the interaction more comfortable and smooth.
- Business clients and colleagues who are visiting a country must be treated with sensitivity and with an awareness of their unique culture.

• When visiting a new country, make the effort to learn the country's styles of greeting and leave-taking, customs related to gift-giving and rules of conversation.

#### **Problems in Intercultural Communication**

Cross-cultural factors naturally increase the possible problems that exist in communication even within the same culture. Culture is so much a part of an individual's manner of talking, behaving and thinking, that communication style and competence are influenced by it.

Culture is the shared set of values and attributes of a group of people; it is the sum total of the ways of living built up a group and transmitted from one generation to another. It grows over generations and becomes a part of the personality of individuals in the group.

#### Non Verbal aspects of Speech

Body Language: Body language is a major factor that varies between cultures.

Gestures: Not only are gestures understood differently, but the amount of use of gestures varies.

Ex: Indians use much more natural gestures than the British; the Japanese have many formal gestures for social interaction but useless free body movements.

Eye contact: Eye contact requirements during conversation vary among cultures.

Ex: In Western cultures, failure to make eye contact may be interpreted as being guilty, unsteady or not straightforward, whereas in a few South-East Asian Cultures it may be disrespectful to maintain eye contact and converse with older / more experienced / senior people.

Concept of space: it has an important effect on behaviour and the distance that speakers maintain between themselves during the conversation; in some cultures, speakers stand close enough to touch often, while in others they may maintain distance to denote respect.

Ex: People in South Asian countries like India and Srilanka maintain less interpersonal distance.

#### **Etiquette**

Social customs and ways of behaviour between persons are culture-specific. Styles of greeting and leave-taking, table manners, giving gifts etc are some of the aspects of etiquette that can lead to embarrassment. Awareness of the requirements of social interaction in the other person's culture eases the interaction; showing awareness of and respect for the other's customs and acknowledging difference is better than

blundering through lack of knowledge.

#### **Thought Process**

The process of thinking varies between cultures; some are strictly logical and rational while others may be holistic and emotional. Thinking process of a person is influenced by one's acceptance or rejection of superstitions, beliefs and so on.

Perception is influenced by culture. We perceive some things and ignore others; we particularly perceive what is contrary to our own culture and things that make us uncomfortable.

Values are our ideas of what is right/good and what is wrong/bad; they form the basis of our behaviour and actions

#### **Business Procedures**

Business-related cross-cultural barriers include differing approaches to some aspect of business procedures such as invoicing and payments, credit terms, customer preferences, packaging, colour etc.

A country's ethical values and practices must be taken into account in negotiations, gift-giving, persuasion techniques, giving and understanding negative responses, advertising and so on.

#### **Improving Cross-cultural Communication**

- Be aware and know of the diplomatic missions/embassies of different countries which conduct seminars and courses to introduce their culture and customs to persons who are about to visit or receive visitors from their country.
- Be understanding of the fact that there will be cultural differences when interacting with people of other cultures.
- Even if one is not appreciative of the cultural differences, we have to at least be tolerant of them.
- Considering one's culture and social norms to be superior is a definite problem area that needs to be overcome.
- To reduce misunderstanding when communicating with people from a different culture, some of the guidelines are:
  - Avoid assuming similarity in thinking and being, habits and practices, until you are sure, even if the host or guest is a person from a neighbouring country.
  - Depend on description rather than evaluation or interpretation; persons from different cultures evaluate and interpret differently. Before communicating, try to feel yourself in the other's position values and frame of reference.
  - Ask open-ended questions and avoid asking two questions at once, which may confuse the other person.

### Chapter 4

#### PUBLIC SPEAKING

#### INTRODUCTION:

#### **SPEECH:**

A speech is a talk given to a large gathering. It is rendered on a social or official occasion such as an anniversary, an inauguration, a farewell or some such event. Its purpose is usually to inform, encourage, appreciate, congratulate or entertain; it is followed by applause from the audience. The tone of such speeches is cheerful and congratulatory.

#### PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE SPEECH

- Be Natural: People want to listen to someone who is comfortable, relaxed and interesting. We focus too much on ourselves and on making a great impression.
- Make it personal: Audiences respond best when a speaker personalises the communication, no matter what the subject may be. Include a personal interest element in your speech. This can help greatly to make you feel comfortable besides winning over the audience.
- Visualise and practice: Imagining the situation and seeing and hearing you making the speech, practising it in your mind helps to overcome some of the anxiety.

- Well sequenced: Sequence the speech in a manner that it makes sense and follows a logical flow of thought. Don't switch between ideas/topics that may confuse the audience.
- 7 C's are taken care of: Ensure that the speech adheres to the principles of effective communication and/or the 7 C's of communication.
- Be confident: Even an experienced speaker might make a slip sometimes. Usually, no one notices, except you. If you make a mistake, just keep going. People do not expect perfection from the speaker, they relate better to a person who is human and sincere
- Serve the audience: The objective of your speech is not to benefit yourself, but to benefit the audience and the occasion, through informing, motivating, teaching, encouraging or entertaining.
- Never waste time: In a public speech, keep strictly within your time. It is better to leave your listeners wishing you had spoken for just a few more minutes than fidgeting in their seats waiting for your speech to end.

#### Essential Qualities of a Public Speaker:

- ✓ Has a neat and presentable personal appearance
- ✓ Is enthusiastic and energetic
- ✓ Has clarity of thought and speech
- ✓ Is confident
- ✓ Is audience-friendly
- ✓ Exhibits positive body language

#### **SPEECH PREPARATION:**

- 1. Finding out about the surroundings
- The venue: Be familiar with the physical environment.
- The Occasion: It is important to know the occasion. It may be an anniversary, or a celebration or an inauguration or a farewell. You will have to refer to it in your speech. The tone and style of your speech must be suitable to the occasion.
- Time available: Always check beforehand, the time that has been allotted to you. Preparation work depends on the given time.

- The Organisers: Find out everything possible about the organisers; the name of the organisation, names of the president, the secretary, office bearers and any other important persons who will be sitting on the dais.
- The Audience: Knowledge of the audience is the most important for any speaker. The speech must be in a form and style that suits and interests the audience. The content and the tone of the speech depend on the nature of the audience.

Factors to be taken into account are

- Size of audience
- Age group
- Status

#### 2. Preparing the text

The most important thing is to decide exactly what to say, find out the required information and give it a proper shape. It must have a smooth flow from one point to the next. For beginners, it is advisable to write down the whole speech, including the address, the opening sentences and the ending sentences.

- *Style:* A talk must sound like a conversation, not like a written text. Speaking style is different from writing style. In speaking use simple common words and short sentences to enable the audience to grasp them at once.
- *Humour:* Humour makes a speech more interesting and personal; it engages the audience, but it is not easy to be humorous. Use humour only if you are definitely good at it and can tell it in your natural style without feeling nervous or self-conscious.
- *Style of addressing:* A speech is presented at an organised meeting; the meeting has a chairperson who must be addressed first; other members of the organization who are seated on the platform are addressed next, in order of their seniority.

#### 3. Composition of Speech

The content of the speech must be carefully prepared. Preparation of a draft and correction of the same is essential. Find a general theme suitable to the occasion; this

enables the speaker to focus and give a good body to the speech.

- Opening of Speech: Your first words are: greeting, self-introduction and expression of pleasure for the opportunity to speak. You have 10 seconds in which to make a good starting impression. Smiling helps. Don't start with a joke; it can backfire. Don't begin with apologies for anything
- **Focus attention** on the central theme of the talk. This may be done by making statements of facts and figures, quotations and proverbs, telling a story/anecdote.
- Body of the speech: The main text depends on the occasion and the objective of the speech. The objective of an inaugural or annual function is to encourage and felicitate; the speech may mention the highlights of the achievements, elaborate on the value of the effort and express faith in the participations' ability to do even better.
- Conclusion: The closing must leave a clear message. For a speech of encouragement, a good conclusion is to express confidence in further achievement.

#### Speaker's Appearance and Voice

- Oral communication comes with the speaker. Once physical appearance and personality make an important impact.
- Your body language is noticed by the audience before you begin to speak.

#### Suggestions for taking care of Body language while making a speech

- Comfortable posture: While standing, balance your weight on both feet. Standing with your weight on one foot, leaning on the table or the podium, or constantly shifting the weight from one foot to the other, look uncomfortable. Never put your hands in your pockets while speaking; it is considered bad manners.
- Eye contact: Eye contact is important for creating rapport with the audience. Hold eye contact, for a second, with a person in one corner of the audience, then move your eyes to the opposite corner of the audience, taking in the whole audience as you move your eyes making brief eye contact with as many people as possible.
- Movements: Too much movement or walking around distracts the audience's attention. Movements must be natural and only as much as needed for establishing lively rapport with the audience.

- Facial Expressions and gestures: We all naturally make gestures and have expressions on our face while speaking. While making a speech, gestures and expressions should be natural and friendly.
- **Voice:** If there is a mike, speak as you would to a person sitting across the table, keeping the mike 6 inches away from the mouth.
- Pauses: Speak at a comfortable speed. Fast speech, without pauses, overloads the listeners. A short silence before making an important point helps to emphasise it. A pause after making an important point gives the listeners' time to absorb it.
- Health: Health affects body language. If you are in good health your speech has energy and confidence. Your state of health also affects your voice.

# 4. Practising Delivery of the speech

- No matter how much time and care you have spent on preparing the text, the delivery is largely responsible for the success of the speech.
- One has to practice and rehearse until they are "conversationally comfortable" with the material.
- Never learn the speech by heart or attempt to memorize it; it creates dependence and if you forget even a single word can cause you great confusion.

# TYPES / CLASSIFICATION OF SPEECHES:

# On the Basis of Expression & Delivery:

- ➤ Impromptu
- > Extemporaneous
- ➤ Manuscript
- > Memorized

# On the Basis of Technicality:

- > Technical
- > Non-Technical

# On the Basis of Occasion / Commemoration / Commemorative Speeches

Commemorative or Occasional speeches delivered on specific occasions such as anniversary, farewell function, annual celebration or any occasion. Speeches for different occasions have different requirements; a few types of commemorative speeches are listed below:-

- Welcome Speech
- Inaugural Speech
- Vote of Thanks
- Farewell and Sendoff
- Condolence Speech

#### **BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS**

A presentation is a talk on a serious topic; its purpose is to inform, to explain, to present a point of view or to persuade the audience. Presentation skills can be cultivated and developed with some knowledge of formal aspects and practice.

#### Elements of a Presentation

- Each of the elements needs attention and preparation.
- The human elements include the organiser or host, the audience and any other invited speakers.
- The venue, the equipment, the arrangements, the occasion and the time.
- The manner in which the speaker handles questions from the audience, the personality and style of the speaker and the competence of the delivery.

#### **Designing a Presentation**

- > **Finding out about the environment** in which the presentation is to be made- The venue, the organisers, the time allotted, other speakers on the occasion must be needs and interest and speaker's relationship with the audience.
- > Preparing text and visuals- Includes length of presentation, style of talk, humour
- > Composition of presentation-A presentation has five parts and the composition of the same takes the longest time, as the material has to be collected, organised and formatted.

The five parts of a presentation are:

- Opening/Introduction: Greeting, the introduction of self, statements of facts and figures, appropriate quotation or proverb to draw the attention of the audience.
- Preview of the presentation
- Body/Main part of the presentation
- Summary A brief summing up of all that has been presented
- Conclusion- thanking the audience, inviting questions from the audience

#### Visual aids for presentation:

Visual aids may be used to make a greater impact on the audience. The visual aid can be Posters, Charts, OHP sheets and PowerPoint Presentations

#### Making a PowerPoint presentation

It is most commonly used for sophisticated presentations. It is easy to use but requires equipment for projection. A presentation must have simple slides that support the oral presentation. Visuals must fit well into the presentations.

# Guidelines for preparing effective PowerPoint presentations

- Never put up entire paragraphs on the slide, keep the text to the minimum.
- Use good font types, size and font colours to enable the presentation to be

audience-friendly.

- All mails in UPPERCASE are difficult to read on the screen.
- Use graphs and pictures to communicate, but ensure that they are self-explanatory to an extent.
- Avoid garish colour schemes, backgrounds and templates that serve to distract or irritate the audience.
  - > Speaker's appearance and Posture- Be formally dressed, Practice standing comfortably, decide what to do with your hands (but never in pockets), eye contact with the audience is very important, keep movements and gestures to the minimum, and speak audibly so that your voice reaches those sitting at the back, use pauses where ever required.
  - ➤ **Delivering the presentation:** Content is what you say, deliver is how you say it. No matter how much time and care you have spent on preparing the text, the success of the preparation depends on the delivery. Reading out loud is not enough. Only actually delivering the presentation to an audience will show whether the words are natural and comfortable in speech. Practising delivery of the talk is essential.

Handling Questions from the Audience: When a question is asked, repeat it for the entire audience. You can also rephrase it. Wait for the questioner to complete asking the question before beginning to answer. Take a moment to reflect on the question before answering it.

Keep your answer short and to the point. When you have finished answering a question, ask the person who asked that question whether your answer has been sufficient. This shows respect for the questioner's concern and demonstrates your genuine interest in taking up audience issues.

# Chapter 5

# **INTERVIEWS**

# Meaning

# Types of Interviews

An interview is a formal meeting in which a person or group of people questions, consults, or evaluates another person or group of persons. It is usually an oral face-to-face communication, sometimes might be telephonic or video-based. A person who conducts the interview is called the "interviewer" while the person who is being interviewed is called the "interviewee".

Interviews may be classified into many types on the basis of different attributes, they are:

# On the Basis of Structure: Structured and Unstructured, In-depth Interview

**Structured interviews** are the ones where all the details are decided upon previously, from the list of questions to be asked to the exact order in which the interview has to be conducted and the questions asked.

These types of interviews are also called standardised, patterned, directed or guided interviews as they are very consistent and have minimum bias involved. Unstructured interviews are also known as non-directed interviews, wherein preparations for the interview are done in a more flexible manner.

The questions are not decided in advance. The questions posed are meant to gather

more information and to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the candidate and his/her skills, competencies and behavioural tendencies.

**In-depth interviews** are semi-structured interviews where candidates are asked specific questions so that detailed information about their background, subject area expertise may be understood by the interviewer.

This is more time consuming and requires the interviewer to have a good understanding of human behaviour.

# On the Basis of Formality: Formal and Informal Interviews

**Formal interviews** are held in a formal atmosphere and manner, usually conducted in offices only. These are usually planned and structured.

**Informal interviews** are interviews which take place in a more informal setup. The questions are not sequenced or pre-planned. Informal interviews may take place in restaurants, coffee shops etc.

#### On the Basis of Number of Interviewers; Individual and Panel Interviews

An individual interview is a one on one conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. The purpose of this interview is to understand the competitiveness of the candidate and his/her suitability for the job.

Panel interviews involve three to five members who may be a part of the selection committee that is appointed for interviewing the candidates. The panel may consist of experts from different backgrounds who will need to collectively judge and evaluate the candidates.

#### On the Basis of Interview Objectives:

- Employment interview
- Promotion interview
- Grievance interview
- Appraisal or an Assessment interview
- Problem interview

- Reprimand interview
- Exit interview

# 1. Employment interview:-

The most important objective of the employment interview is to assess the suitability of the candidates for specific jobs. The interview is the basis for important decisions for both, the employer and the candidate. The interviewer has to decide whether the candidate is the right fit for the job position and should be appointed. The candidate has to decide whether he will accept the job as this decision will influence his/her career. Employment interviews are usually conducted as part of the selection process. A candidate may have to face multiple rounds of interviews, either taken by individuals or by a panel of interviewers, before being offered a job.

#### 2. Promotion Interview:-

The persons due to promotion are interviewed. The interview is likely to be informal and serves as induction into a new team, with new responsibilities. Clarifications about the nature of duties and responsibilities and expectations are made during the promotional interview. If there is a competition for a promotion, the interview helps in the selection process.

#### 3. Grievance Interview:-

Employees who have a grievance or feel they have suffered injustice may make a written representation to the authorities or ask for a personal meeting. The purpose of the interview is to understand the problem and find a solution. Usually, grievance interviewers are taken by the HR Manager.

# 4. Appraisal or Assessment Interview:-

An appraisal interview is one of the methods of periodical assessment of employees.

An annual appraisal and interview is the best method for judging employees' attitude. The interview is more like a discussion rather than question-answer based interaction.

### 5. Reprimand Interview:-

When an employee does not behave and work according to the requirements the supervisor first tries to correct the employee by speaking to him/ her. This is called a reprimand interview. It is taken for the purpose of warning an erring employee.

#### 6. Exit Interview:-

An exit interview is conducted for an employee who has resigned, usually on the last day of their tenure.

Several things can be accomplished in an exit interview

- 1. Find out the precise reason for the employee's decision to leave.
- 2. Get feedback or opinion of the employee on the organisation and specific job.
- 3. Give the final paycheque or information when it will be ready.
- 4. Give information about PF, group insurance etc.
- 5. Check if all books, manuals, tools & equipment which were issued to the employee have been returned/handed over to the concerned person.

#### 7. Problem Interview:

A problem interview is a meeting with a problem employee. An employee whose performance or behaviour is unsatisfactory in spite of warning represents a problem. The Interview can be used for giving a clear understanding of what is expected and what will be the consequences of unacceptable conduct.

# Methods / Techniques of Interview:

#### **Telephonic Interviews**

Telephonic interviews are initially done as a screening test for employment interviews. This interview method serves to conserve the time and energies of all

involved, especially if the candidate and job location are distant from one another.

#### Video Interviews

Video interviews are also known as video conferencing and are one step ahead of telephonic interviews. The advantage of this method is that it has a more personal touch to it and allows for better interactions as the non- verbal cues are better understood and evaluated by both the interviewer and interviewee.

#### Traditional face-to-face Interviews

This is the same as either an individual or panel interview that serves to evaluate the interviewee.

#### **Group Interviews**

They are also known as group discussions wherein informal groups of 8 to 15 candidates are formed. Each group is given a topic and a timeline to discuss the given topic. The interviewers focus on how the candidates interact with others in the group and how they put across their views in the presence of others and how well they influence others.

#### Stress Interview

It puts the candidate in difficult situations in order to test his/her reaction to stress. This method is used for selection for positions in which the person must be able to face difficult situations.

Several methods are used to stress the candidate. Rapid-fire question on several topics, cross-question, arguing, disputing the candidate's statements etc. The candidate must be informed at the end that it was a stress interview.

# Preparation for Interviews:

#### Preparation for Interview - Interviewee's Perspective:

The candidate must be physically, mentally and psychologically prepared for the interview because it is not only the information & knowledge of the candidate that is assessed at an interview, the whole personality is assessed.

# **Physical Preparation**

The interviewee needs to groom oneself well prior to the interview. Clean and well-cut nails, appropriately styled hair and general personal hygiene are important. Well-fitting clothes, neat footwear and a suitable handbag or briefcase are required for appearing formal.

The candidate has to physically keep ready the following things before the interview:

- Personal identification which serves to identify themselves at the venue security.
- Directions to the venue of the interview
- Names and details of contacts
- E-mail confirmation/interview call mail
- Notepad and two pens to help one fill out any paperwork to be done or to write down any information collected
- Copies of resume
- A few passport and stamp-sized photographs to be furnished if required

#### **Mental Preparation**

- For new job seekers, it is necessary to revise subjects studied for the completed courses; knowledge in the field of specialization must be up-to-date.
- Current events and affairs of the country and across the world will be the subjects in the interview.
- Information about the interviewing company, it's history and profile, details of owners, top management, products and services, branches and presence across the globe etc.

# **Psychological Preparations**

Several situations or questions during an interview can cause discomfort or embarrassment to the candidate. Balance of mind is needed to deal with discouraging situations.

Honesty in answering questions is the best policy.

- Inability to discuss a topic makes a bad impression. Preparation to talk of anything that may be asked is required to be done.
- Salary is a topic that must be discussed in the interview, without appearing to be bargaining or being defensive. Having prior information about industry standards for the job being applied and one's qualifications, together with one's honest self-assessment is the psychological preparation needed by the candidate to be confident to negotiate the compensation package.
- Having clarity of purpose and seeking information about the nature of responsibilities, future prospects, other benefits and any other information must be sought in an interview. Being psychologically prepared to ask the questions is important.

#### Self - Assessment

Knowing one's own strong points & weaknesses is very useful in gaining self-confidence. The self-assessment takes time and needs to be done carefully and patiently. The help of family and friends can be taken to perform the self – assessment. A SWOT analysis of the same may be prepared; while strengths and weaknesses are mostly internal and within one's control, opportunities and threats are in the external environment.

# Structure of the Interview (Facing The Interview)

An interview can be considered as having four parts all of which must be properly performed.

# 1. Pre-Entry – Arrival and Waiting

The candidate should arrive at the place of the interview at least 10 minutes before the scheduled time. The candidate is expected to be properly groomed and formally dressed, well laundered and well-fitting clothes, neat footwear etc.

The way a candidate carries oneself while standing, walking & sitting reveals a good deal about him/her, self-confidence, nervousness or overconfidence are reflected in the posture & bearing of the candidate. Good manners and conduct are necessary

# 2. Entry

The candidate walks into an unfamiliar room. He or she must be able to adjust quickly

to the size and appearance of the room, style of opening and closing of the door, walking greeting, and taking the chair will show whether the candidate is clumsy, nervous, and well mannered.

#### Guidelines:

- ✓ Do not offer to shake hands unless it is offered by the interviewer.
- ✓ Do not sit until you are asked to sit down if you are not asked to sit, ask for permission to sit.
- ✓ Take care while handling the chair, it should not be dragged.
- ✓ Either put your bag or briefcase on your lap or on the floor depending on its size.
- ✓ Do not place elbows or hands on the table.

#### 3. Answering the Questions

The questions range from details about education and experience, family background and circumstances.

The questions are meant to test the candidates' information and knowledge as well as personal qualities, character, attitude to work and life. Maintain comfortable posture throughout the interview

# 4. Leaving

The interviewers generally indicate when the interview is over. They may say something like, 'Thank you',

we'll get in touch with you later. Like the entry, leaving takes a very short time, but can be confusing and uncomfortable for an inexperienced candidate. Leave-taking should be responsive to the interviewer.

- ✓ Thank all the interviewers.
- ✓ Collect and pack all papers and files.
- ✓ Get up gracefully, without scraping the chair.
- ✓ Wish them a good day.
- ✓ Put the chair back in its place.

- ✓ Walk away with a good bearing.
- ✓ Shut the door carefully and noiselessly.

#### **Interviewer's Function**

Interviews have the dual role of attracting candidates and selecting candidates. In order to make an interview fruitful, the interviewer must be adequately prepared. The interviewer must have a clear idea of the qualities and skills required for a particular job must be kept in mind.

The candidates should be neatly received with proper welcome and directions to go to the right room.

The scheduled time must be followed, else it makes a negative impression. The environment where the candidates wait and the room in which they are interviewed must be pleasant. The interview must be a well-organized process, clear information of job description, required qualification, previous employment details, organization's mission, goal and other organizational information readily available. The candidates should be given feedback on the result of the interview as soon as possible so that they are not kept waiting.

### Preparation to Conduct an Interview

- Preparation for conducting an interview has to be made well in advance. An interviewer / a panel of interviewers is to be selected on the basis of requirements of the job and assessment which has to be made at the interview.
- The candidates' names and other details are tabulated for use during the interview. A copy of the tabulation sheets is made available to the interview panel.
- On the day of the interview, the room in which the interview is to be conducted is suitably arranged. A waiting room for the interviewees to be seated before the interview is also identified and kept ready.
- The interviewer must see all the conditions suitable for the assessment of candidates so that the purpose of the interview is fulfilled.

#### **Preparing Questions**

Besides these physical preparations, each panel member has to examine the resume of

the candidates and prepare questions based on the position being hired for.

# Conducting the Interview

The interviewer requires several social and interpersonal communication skills.

#### 1. Welcoming

The interviewers must welcome the candidate when he enters, offer him a chair and make him feel comfortable. A nervous and uncomfortable candidate is difficult to assess, suitable conditions of assessment must be created in order to not waste time and the opportunity of finding suitable staff, a relaxed atmosphere can be created by having a brief conversation unrelated to the interview and by using the candidate's name.

# 2. Asking questions

It is the most important and longest part of the interview. The interviewers must take care to see that the candidate speaks the most. It is important not to be sarcastic and the candidate must never be humiliated.

If the candidate is subjected to 'stress' interview to judge his stress balance, the candidate should be told at the end of the interview. Giving information the candidate needs about the job, the organization. If the information cannot be given the candidate should be told so.

# 3. Concluding

When all required information has been satisfactorily exchanged, the interviewer must conclude the interview with a suitable remark to indicate the candidate's interview is over. The most direct way to end the interview is, "well, is there anything more you'd like to say or ask?" If the candidate is to be called for a second interview after clearing the first round, mention that the person would be called in the next couple of days and the second round would be scheduled. If he has not cleared the first round, tell him that interviews will take up next few weeks and that all the

candidates will be contacted at the end of the process, or just say we'll get back to you regarding the interview.

#### 4. Assessment

It is a continuous process during the interview. The assessment and grading are constantly reviewed as more candidates are assessed. In the end, a final ranking is made.

# Chapter 6 MEETINGS

# **Meeting:**

A meeting is a formally arranged gathering for the purpose of discussing an issue/problem or subject that concerns a large number of persons. Members participating in the meeting may be individuals concerned with the issue or representatives of the group concerned.

# **Need and Importance of Meetings:**

- Meetings are usually conducted with a group of people and meant to provide multiple points of view on an issue.
- Group communication takes place in a meeting.
- It helps in understanding a situation, in exploring possibilities and in solving problems because it allows multiple points of view.
- It also gives a sense of participation to all those who participate in it.
- A meeting is an education for all persons who take part in it, including the leader/Chairman.
- Participants get an overview of the organization and the different aspects of its activities.

# Types of Meetings:-

The method of conducting a meeting depends on the type of meeting. The meeting can be classified on the basis on their formality as:

> Very formal meeting - like meeting of the parliament, state assemblies, company

shareholders meeting, management – union negotiations, university senate, councils and executive bodies.

- > Formal meetings like committees, managing councils and general bodies of voluntary organizations, briefing sessions, advisory bodies and management meetings.
- ➤ Informal meeting like group discussion, ad hoc meeting of task groups and brainstorming.

# Advantages and disadvantages of meetings:-

Meetings have many advantages. Some of them are given below.

- ✓ There is an enormous amount of information and knowledge in every field. Activities' have become complex and it is difficult for one person to handle the task with several aspects.
- ✓ Being involved in group activity and discussion provides social and emotional support to the participants.
- ✓ Discussing ideas and problems in a meeting is a democratic way of functioning. Its shows respect for individuals, their opinions and views.

On the other hand, meetings have disadvantages like:

- **✗** Both, formal and informal meetings can be time − consuming and expensive.
- \* A great deal of money and time has to be spent making preparations and on the actual conduct of the meeting.
- \* A meeting may end without and a useful conclusion is there much disagreement among like participants.

#### CONDUCT OF A MEETING:

It involves 4 steps:

- 1. Opening the meeting
- 2. Running the meeting
- 3. Closing the meeting

#### 4. Post-meeting tasks

#### **OPENING THE MEETING:**

The opening remarks or introduction by the chairman sets the tone of the meeting. A good leader begins on a positive note. The leader must outline the goal and objective of the meeting. The chairman's introductory remarks should be limited to two or three minutes, and the discussion should be passed on to the participants.

#### RUNNING OF THE MEETING:

The discussion can be passed on to participants by putting a general question to the group; if this does not work, a specific question may be addressed to a particular person. The major task of the leader is to deal with difficult participants; there may be the professional opposers, the non-contributors, the show stealers, the complainers and ramblers. If the discussion seems to come to stop, the chairman may put a question to stimulate ideas or summarize the points brought out so far. The minutes of the meeting need to be documented and any resolutions taken have to be carefully noted.

#### CLOSING THE MEETING:

When the time allowed for the meeting is over; and the meeting has arrived at a good conclusion, the chairman/ leader should re-state or summarize the conclusion and ensure that it is noted down. The closing remarks should have a positive note of accomplishment.

#### **POST-MEETING TASKS:**

Whatever the type of meeting the conclusion reached the meeting must be recorded. The chairman/leader may write the report or get it written by the secretary. In the case of a formal meeting, the secretary prepares the minutes in consultation with the chairman. Copies of the report are sent to all participants.

#### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

Group discussion is one of the important and popular techniques being used in the number of personality tests. It involves understanding listening, sharing ideas, experience, accepting others point of view and criticism.

It is a systematic oral exchange process. It is a systematic interactive process of exchanging information, views, issues, problems, and opinions about a topic, or situation among members of a group.

#### **Definition of a Group Discussion:**

Group discussion may be defined as a form of a systematic and purposeful oral process characterized by the formal and structured exchange of views on a particular topic, issue, problem or situation for developing information and understanding essential for decision making or problem-solving.

# FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED BY PARTICIPANTS IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1. Subject knowledge
- 2. Presentation
- 3. Language
- 4. Logical thinking
- 5. Clarity in thoughts
- 6. Body language
- 7. Dress code
- 8. Exchange of information
- 9. Discuss each other's interpretation
- 10. Stay on topic.

# CONDUCTING GROUP DISCUSSION

# 1. Setting up the group

Inputting together a group the following aspects should be considered

- a) Convenience- time and location
- b) List of topics- planned in advance
- c) Process/structure
- d) People,
- e) Complexity

#### 2. Role of facilitator

The facilitator should pay attention to process and time. He should ensure that the discussion is as per agenda. He should ensure that the group continues discussing the topic of interest without moving away from the agenda.

#### 3. Holding a discussion

A facilitator has to decide on the formal and informal style of discussion. There are certain ground rules that have to be followed. They are: To respect opinions that are expressed as an individual's honest perception, to respect the time limitations given and to listen and participate actively.

# 4. Evaluation of group discussion

In any kind of GD, the aim is to evaluate the participants based on personality, knowledge, communicative ability to present knowledge and leadership skills. Today team players are considered more important than individual contributors. Hence the potential to be a leader is evaluated and also the ability to work in a team is tested.

#### BRAINSTORMING

The term brainstorming was first used by ALEX OSBORN. It is a process for generating creative ideas and solutions through intensive and freewheeling group discussion. Every participant is encouraged to think aloud and suggests as many ideas as possible, no matter how bizarre or impractical they seem to be.

#### PROCESS OF BRAINSTORMING

- Define the problem/situation at hand, clearly and to the point, so that no member should have second thoughts or doubts about the same.
- Decide the number of people-too small or too large groups do not help stimulate the thought process. An ideal number is 6-15 participants.
- Have a moderator who will ensure that the process is undisturbed and continued till the job is done.

- Appoint one member of the group to write down or record all the ideas generated in the process. Announce the time frame within which the activity has to be conducted.
- Give a brief input to the members about being open-minded and not to judge their thoughts in their thinking and speak out freely.
- After the session is completed, the recordings have to be carefully filed for further scrutiny and future reference.

#### BENEFITS OF BRAINSTORMING

- It stimulates creative thinking.
- It helps in decision making.
- It helps in forward planning.
- It helps in team building.
- It leads to enhanced productivity and efficiency.
- It helps in problem-solving.

#### ADVANTAGES OF BRAINSTORMING

- It can be used by people from all walks of life.
- In the workplace, it creates a repository of ideas for solving immediate and even future problems.
- It allows every participant to have an equal chance to voice out their thoughts without any fear and prejudice.
- Participating employees experience a creative process and this can allow them to learn and explore more options in the future.
- Employees feel acknowledged as their thoughts have been given importance in the process.

#### DISADVANTAGES OF BRAINSTORMING

- Many ideas generated may need serious/further scrutiny to even decide if they are viable.
- Ideas may have cost and financial obstacles.
- Although the process of brainstorming was bias-free, implementation can be hampered by prejudice and waste the entire process.
- It can be time-consuming and thus needs the employees to spend time away from their core duties.
- Participants who participate as a formality will not be resourceful.

# E-meetings

An e-meeting is a meeting that takes place over an electronic medium using a specific software package. The most common form of an e-meeting takes place over the internet using any form of web-based meeting software.

These software packages allow busy businessmen to hold meetings with others from anywhere in the world, without having to travel to a predetermined destination.

Almost all e-meeting software platforms allow meeting participants to speak to one another in real-time through the use of Voice over Internet Protocol or VOIP. VOIP eliminates the need for a telephone or conference phone and allows participants to visually see those which they are meeting with. Many e- .meeting packages include virtual whiteboards, which allow participants to write and draw models and charts in real-time. Many software packages allow participants to record and save the e-meetings so that it can be reviewed at a later date or viewed by those who were unable to attend the original meeting

# Chapter 7

# **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

# **Meaning of Business Emails**

The written correspondence between businesses i.e between the people managing or working with an enterprise for the purpose and objective of the business is called a business mail. It provides a channel for communication between business houses and is a permanent record of the communication from the point of view of the writer. It is sent internally to those within a company and externally to those outside a company. The content may vary as per requirement but their patterns and forms are uniforms.

# Objectives of Business Mail

- To persuade others to take action
- To propose ideas
- To advertise or to promote Circular mail
- To persuade –sales mails
- To express an opinion mails to the press
- To get something done mail of complaints
- To supply somebody with information mail of application/invitation
- To obtain information enquiry

# Types of Messages in Business Mails

#### Good News Mails

All mails that grant a request or provide a positive response to an earlier message are Good News mails. The list includes mails of Appreciation, mails of Promotion, mails of Congratulations, mails agreeing to offer terms and awarding a contract, Granting a customer's claim, Offering admission/employment/grant in response to an application etc.

#### **Goodwill Messages**

Good Will Messages are those that are written without the motives of having to sell or seek favours. These are messages that simply serve to earn goodwill and sustain the business relationship. These mails include mails of Congratulations, mails of Appreciation etc.

#### Bad News mails

All mails conveying negative replies and unpleasant messages qualify as Bad News mails. These mails although not pleasant to write, they cannot be avoided. Bad News mails have elements of persuasion and information as well and also need to be always ended on a positive note. Bad News mails can include mails denying information (on basis of non-availability or confidentiality), inability to give a quotation, cannot grant customer credit or rejection of a claim, cannot accept delivered goods, not selected for the job after an interview, termination of service or contract, complaint of any kinds etc.

#### Persuasive mails

They are highly individualized forms of advertising and publicity. They address an individual personally and attempt to convert the person into an interested potential buyer.

#### Guidelines to Write a Business mail

✓ Write with clarity and vigour − ensure accuracy and completeness, avoid jargon and unfamiliar

words

- ✓ Prefer short, simple words
- $\checkmark$  Write concisely avoid redundancy, complicated sentence construction and lengthy mails
- ✓ Prefer positive language even when having to deliver bad news, end on a positive note.
- ✓ Use the right tense, sentence types and voice, as required
- ✓ Control paragraph length and maintain structuring of the same.

#### Parts of a Business Mail

#### 1. Heading

The heading is also called 'mailhead'. It consists of the name of the organisation, its address, telephone numbers, fax, website and email. A logo may also be included in the heading. Usually, the heading is given at the top centre or top right side of the sheet.

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- 2. Reference Number Business mails carry a reference number to which the receiver may refer in all future correspondence. It serves the purpose of quick reference and linking up the chain of emails going out of the organisation. Also helps in identifying the memos issued by a department within the organisation. Examples: Ref. No. 123/05/12-13 Ref. No. 15/HO/HRD/158 Ref. No. 852/NHC/BBA/2015-16
- 3. Date Is of crucial importance and is usually written on the right-hand side, parallel to the reference number. Abbreviated forms of the date such as 10.09.2015 or Sept 10, 2015, or 10 September, 15 should be avoided as they can be confusing and do not leave a good impression on the mind of the receiver.

Ref. No. 123/05/12-13 September 10, 2016

4. Inside Address Contains the name and address of the organisation or the individual to whom the mail is being sent. It should be written below the Reference number,

leaving some space. It should be accurate and complete.

- A. Mode of Address: While addressing individuals, be sure about prefixing the n addressee.
  - i. 'Mr' or 'Sri' is used for addressing a man.
  - ii. 'Miss' is used for an unmarried woman.
  - iii. 'Mrs' or 'Shrimathi' (Smt.) is used for a married woman.
  - iv. 'Ms' is used for a woman whose marital status is not known. Most women prefer the use of 'Ms'.
  - v. 'Messrs' is the plural form of 'Mr' and is used while addressing a partnership firm. Messrs can also be written as M/s. It can best be used when the name of the firm contains personal names like Example: Messrs Lal Bros. M/s K Lal and Sons.
  - vi. Titles / Ranks such as Colonel, Professor, Doctor, Reverend etc., are used as follows: Col. Y P Deva Capt. R N Singh Prof. B N Arora Padmashri R S Goyal (not Padmashri Mr R S Goyal) Rev. T L Joseph Maj. Gen. D K Patil
- **B.** Addressing by designation: When a particular person is addressed by designation, 'Mr' or 'Messrs' (in case of a limited company) is not used. Ex 1: The General Manager Marketing, Hillside India Pvt. Ltd. Ex 2: The Secretary, Youth Sports Club.
- 5. Salutation Is the greeting of the addressee. The salutation is chosen on the basis of our familiarity with the reader and the formality of the situation. The commonly used salutations are Sir/Madam, Dear Sir / Dear Madam Dear Mr. .................... Your Excellency (while addressing the Ambassador or High Commissioner of a foreign country)
- 6. Subject Line Enables the reader to quickly identify the subject of correspondence. It may also contain the date of the previous mail, invoice number, order number etc. It is placed just below the salutation line. It usually begins at the left margin, although it may be placed in the centre. The subject line may be worded in a number of ways and also can be followed by a Reference:

Subject:	Your	${\bf December}$	16	inquiry	about	$\label{eq:Reference:Reference:} Reference:$	Your	${\bf December}$	16	order
for	•									

Sub: Loan facilities for......

7. Body of the mail The body carries the message or content of the mail. It is generally

divided into three or four paragraphs, each having its own function. The first paragraph links up the correspondence and establishes the rapport with the reader. The second paragraph may be called the main paragraph that contains the subject proper. If need be, the points in the main paragraph are elaborated or further developed upon in the third paragraph. The fourth or final paragraph brings the mail to a goodwill ending, leaving the door open for further business. Whatever the circumstances, the last paragraph brings the mail to a close on a positive note. It is generally followed by phrases like 'with regards', 'best wishes', 'warm regards', 'thank you', etc.

- 8. Formal Close The formal close of the mail must match the salutation given. If the salutation is Dear Sir/ Dear Madam/ Sir/ Madam, Yours faithfully is used as the formal close. If the salutation is Dear Mr Jayanth/ Dear Ms Jaya/ Dear Arvind, Yours sincerely is used. 'Yours respectfully' or 'Respectfully yours' is used when writing to a person who is occupying a very high position or is a very elderly person.
- 9. **Signature block/slot** There is a fixed space for the signature of the writer. Just as the signature is important, so is its place in the layout of the mail. It contains the writer's name, designation, department, company and appears just below the complimentary close.
- 10. Enclosures (Encl) Very often a mail carries along with it some important papers such as price lists, copies of certificates, receipts, drafts, bills, copies of passport, proof of date of birth/death, etc. The writer makes a mention of these papers at the bottom left margin. Ways of writing the same: Enclosures:

Three Encl:	
i	_
ii	
iii	
Enclosed	etc

# Types of Business Mails:-

# **Enquiry Mails**

An enquiry mail is addressed to a specific person. An introduction should lead into the body of the mail with a firm statement about the subject of inquiry and enough

supporting information to keep the reader reading. The objective in an enquiry mail is communicated by one or more questions to which the writer desires a response. If multiple information is being sought, then they should be mentioned in the bulleted list. An enquiry mail is written in the active voice. Closing remarks should request for help with a timeline in which the information is to be offered. It should close with a professional tone and style. They may be put in the following categories:

- An enquiry made at the buyers initiative: unsolicited enquiry.
- An enquiry made in response to the seller's offer or advertisement: solicited enquiry.
- A routine enquiry made by an old buyer in the usual course of business, and
- An enquiry of some favorites like special price, relaxation of terms and conditions etc.

#### Quotations

A quotation is a formal statement of promise submitted usually in response to a request by a potential supplier to supply the goods or services required by a buyer at specified prices and within a specified period. A quotation may also contain terms of sale, payment and warranties. It is supposed to be competitive in nature in order to procure an order from the organisation that makes an enquiry.

#### **Orders**

It is also known as PO – purchase order. The objective of order mails is to provide detailed instructions to a vendor fulfilling an order; it confirms the seller that the customer requires a particular number of products within a specified time. While placing an order the customers make reference to the supplier's reply/catalogue or the prices quoted therein, specification of goods, quantity required, mode of payment, time limit, etc. This makes the matter clear to both the parties and helps expedite the fulfilling of the order.

#### **Acknowledgement Executions**

A mail of acknowledgement serves a dual purpose – one of receipt and second of public relations. When these mails are short and restricted to just informing about receiving a package, a mail itself or notice, it acquires the role of mail of Receipt. When this mail is more than just the Acknowledgement mail of Receipt it becomes a

means of public relations. An acknowledgement mail is essentially what most other mails are meant for, i.e. to inform and communicate. The information can be regarding a complaint, follow up, debt, donation, gift, payment, project, resignation, retirement, etc. but mostly it confirms the receiving of inquiry, request or order.

#### **Complaint Mails**

A buyer may have many reasons for making a complaint – goods received in a damaged condition, unsatisfactory quality of goods, wrong goods received, the number of goods different from what was ordered, goods delivered at the wrong place, delay in delivery, unsatisfactory work, discourtesy from staff, etc. The complaint mail should include the following points: reference to the order, its date and number; clear description of the mistake or deficiency; clear statement of the inconvenience or loss caused and the action the supplier should take to lessen the inconvenience; request for adjustment and/or investigation.

#### Claims And Adjustment Mails

An adjustment mail is a response to a written complaint. The objective is to inform the reader that their complaint has been received. It is also a legal document recording what decisions were made and what actions have or will be taken. When the customer is right, include a forthright admission to the effect and extend a sincere apology. When the customer is not right, explain the reasons clearly and courteously. Its focus must be on the facts of the adjustments done for the reader to comprehend that corrective action is being offered or already implemented. Types of adjustment mails may be – granting or refusing customers claim, offering a compromise, apologising for errors when damage cannot be rectified, the stop-gap mail informing the customer that investigation is being made, etc. A claim is granted when there is a fault in the execution of the order or the goods are defective or damaged.

#### **Collection Mails**

Collection mails are written to the customers to collect payment and at the same time retain the customer and maintain goodwill. They are usually sent in a series. The first is mildest and most understanding, with the mails gradually more insistent. The final mail in this series, when all efforts have failed, threatens to turn the matter over to a lawyer or collection agency or court of law. The intervals between the mails may

vary, from 10 days to a month at the start, from 1 to 2 weeks later on. It should contain the amount owed, bill overdue period and the action to be taken by the customer.

#### **Banking Correspondence**

Correspondence with banks is essential for organizations. Computerized accounts, Automatic Teller Machine, Credit and Debit cards have enlarged the scope of business. Banking correspondence is of special nature because it deals with finance. Mails have to be carefully written to protect the interest of the bank as well as its clientele. In the first place, it has to be confidential in nature. Ex: Request for opening account, statement of account.

The existing branch is closed when more discounts are being allowed to sell old stock, etc. A circular mail is prepared once and it is duplicated for distribution to the various parties. Recipient names, addresses and individual salutations can be inserted after this to personalize the mail.

#### **Persuasive Mails**

A persuasive mail is written to persuade an organization/s or individual/s towards accepting the writer's issue, interest or perspective. Persuasion is the process of changing people's attitudes or influencing their actions. Persuasive messages aim to influence audiences who are inclined to resist. It can be related to any matter – complaint, sale, petition, request or any other matter which requires convincing.

#### Sales Mail

It is a mail from the seller/manufacturer/advertiser to a potential customer to sell the product or service. When writing a sales mail, it is important to have a good attitude in order to sell the product or service, as the reader will want to know why they should spend their valuable time reading the mail. Hence there is a need to provide clear, specific information which will explain to the reader why they should be interested in buying the product or service.

# Job Application Mails

Every organization must have an HR department wherein all the human resource requirements of the organization are sent, for selecting the right person for the right job. Whenever the need for recruitment arises, one may have to plan to call for various candidates to several recruitment processes. It is the duty of the HR team to send a mail stating all the details of the recruitment process and the initial stage being the written test. It must contain the purpose, time, date and other related details about the written test. Generally, written test format will be posted to each candidate personally, but, if the number of candidates is in thousands and spread over the entire country, a general notification communicating the date, time, and venue of the written test will be published in daily newspapers or an arrangement will be made to broadcast such information through electronic media.

#### Resume / Curriculum Vitae

A résumé is a brief document that summarizes one's employment history, education, and experiences that are relevant to one's qualifications for a particular job.CV means curriculum vitae or a statement containing personal information about a candidate. It is lengthier than a resume.

#### Contents of the Resume:

**Heading:** Name of the candidate is to be highlighted and easily visible. The address(permanent and temporary), phone numbers and e-mail ID to be written clearly and without clutter

**Educational qualification:** Are to be mentioned in chronological order (Preferably beginning with the most recently awarded degree and working backwards). The details to be given include: Name of the degree or certificate programme Name and location of the institution & University where the degree was granted Year that the degree was granted Percentage / CGPA / Scale

Relevant Work Experience: Are to be mentioned in chronological order (Preferably beginning with the most recent employment details and working backwards as required). ). The details to be mentioned include: Name and address of organization/employer Dates of employment, Position title and Responsibilities Skills learned (if the job has little relevance to the position for which you are applying)

Accomplishments / Achievements on the particular job

Related Skill sets and Expertise Put the most important skills at the beginning. If necessary, separate different categories of skills (software, secretarial, laboratory skills etc.) Don't overdo it! (Remember to only include skills which are applicable to the position.)

Achievements and Accomplishments Mention Noteworthy awards, commendations received. By who, when and why it was conferred on you?

**Activities / Interests / Hobbies** Employers are interested in activities, professional affiliations, volunteer work etc. Include hobbies that are not commonplace.

Remember to limit your activities to those which fit one or more criteria: Shows leadership, communication, creativity and is related to your field

**References:** Mention the references only if it is specifically sought. Else, just mention that the references will be furnished upon request.

Note: All lines in your resume must start with Action verbs.

You must cover at least 75% of each line.

#### Characteristics of a successful Résumé

- ✓ Is focused.
- ✓ Uses action words (design, develop, establish, streamline, coordinate, lead etc.) to define the responsibilities of job-related experience.
- ✓ Easy to read (colour of paper, font size and style are easy on the eye) and understand.
- ✓ Visually powerful (bullets, headings and subheadings are consistently present) and free of gimmicks.
- ✓ Has been accurately proofread to ensure that the grammar, spellings are all correct.

#### Cover mail

A covering mail must always accompany the resume. It should briefly elaborate on the accomplishments and highlight prior experience. Before writing the mail, research the position for which you are applying and find out whatever you can about the organization. This will help you to present yourself as a perfect fit for the organization. State what you can do and how you will be useful to the employers. Write in a fresh natural style. The mail must reflect an energetic, well cultivated and poised personality.

#### Interview mail

An interview is an oral tool to test a candidate's knowledge, interest towards the job and organization. Interviewer directly checks the skill, presentation, body language, and communication behaviour of the candidate. The received applications are scrutinised and those applications that fulfil all the requirements of the organizations are short-listed and information about the interviews will be sent. It should mention the applicant's name, name of the post applied for, place, date and time of interview.

#### Reference mail

When candidates are shortlisted for an interview, the organization may wish to verify the claims that applicants make about themselves. Enquiries are made with references provided by the applicants; information and opinions may also be sought from persons in the institutions and organizations in which the applicant has been before. A reference is written in reply to an enquiry about a candidate or applicant. It is addressed to the person who has signed the enquiry.

#### Minutes

Minutes are the records of the meeting. The function of minutes is to — confirm decisions, record agreed actions, record responsibilities, record date by which an action is to be completed, inform those who did not attend the meeting, inform other affected and concerned persons about outcomes, and serve as a record of the meeting's discussion. Most meetings do not need detailed discussion to be recorded. The focus is on 3 categories of information — decisions reached, action items that are to be followed up (indicating who is assigned the task and the deadline) and open issues. This becomes the starting point of the next meeting and also a reference for future meetings to ensure those meeting objectives and any decisions or actions agreed upon are successfully carried out.

There are 2 main types of minutes -

- **1. Action notes** this simply records what actions have been decided upon, who is responsible and by what date the action is to be completed. This is used mostly for informal meetings and social committees.
- **2. Summaries** this type of minutes includes a summary of the discussion in addition to the action points.

# PLAYING IT SOFT:



# A Newcomer's Guide to Soft Skills

The KGPian Dream: A Message from Team Communiqué

A long standing demand to initiate a culture of effective resource production for IIT KGP has finally come to a start. Playing it Soft has been a dream and brainchild of our executive team since the very start of the tenure, not only is it a complete guide to soft skills for the industry, it is a message of strength to the KGPian dream.



A message that says, no matter what, we are committed to upskill ourselves even in the non technical domain to shine higher than ever when we step into the corporate world.

This Institute has more students than any other IIT, but that's not what makes us large. We have the most number of courses and departments, but that's not what makes us complete, Our professors with the greatest research profiles and and students with the best job offers are the envy of the world, but that's not what makes the country coming up to our shores. Instead it is that KGPian spirit, that KGPian promise that binds us together in spite of our differences, that makes us fix our eye, not on what is seen, but what is unseen, it is a promise that we make to ourselves when we get into sleep, everynight, it is a promise that you make to yourselves too. This book is a hope, that soft skills can never get in the way of KGPians and this colossal KGPian dream.

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