

English for Business Communication (Module – I)

Fundamentals of Communication

Lecture Notes

(To be exclusively distributed among students taught by PKP)

Communication is neither the transmission of a message nor the message itself. It is the mutual exchange of understanding, originating with the receiver. Communication needs to be effective in business. Communication is the essence of management. The basic functions of management (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing and Controlling) cannot be performed well without effective communication.

Business communication involves constant flow of information. Feedback is integral part of business communication. Organizations these days are very large and involve large number of people. There are various levels of hierarchy in an organization. Greater the number of levels, the more difficult is the job of managing the organization. Communication here plays a very important role in process of directing and controlling the people in the organization. Immediate feedback can be obtained and misunderstandings if any can be avoided. There should be effective communication between superiors and subordinates in an organization, between organization and society at large (for example between management and trade unions). It is essential for success and growth of an organization. Communication gaps should not occur in any organization.

Business Communication is goal oriented. The rules, regulations and policies of a company have to be communicated to people within and outside the organization. Business Communication is regulated by certain rules and norms. In early times, business communication was limited to paperwork, telephone calls etc. But now with advent of technology, we have cell phones, video conferencing, emails, satellite communication to support business communication. Effective business communication helps in building goodwill of an organization.

Business Communication can be of two types:

1. Oral Communication - An oral communication can be formal or informal. Generally business communication is a formal means of communication, like: meetings, interviews, group discussion, speeches etc. An example of Informal business communication would be - Grapevine.
2. Written Communication - Written means of business communication includes - agenda, reports, manuals etc.

Process of communication

Communication is an interactive process. The two communication agents involved in the communication process are the sender(s) and the receiver(r). Both the communication agents exert a reciprocal influence on each other through inter-stimulation and response. The process of communication consists of five steps that is ideation, encoding, transmission, decoding and feedback. These steps take place only between the sender and receiver.

Ideation: This is the initiation in the different stages of communication. Ideation refers to the formation of the idea and we tend select the message to be communicated. We also finalize the language for communication and the length and breadth of it. It consists of the 'What' of communication and is concerned with the content of the specific message to be presented. Ideation depends on the sender's knowledge, experiences, and abilities, as well

as the purpose of communication and the context of the communication situation. However, ideation depends on various factors. Messages are generally of two types as far as content is concerned, i.e. logical and emotional. Logical messages contain facts, figures and analysis whereas emotional messages consist of feelings. We finalize on the topic to communication in this step.

Encoding: It is the process of converting the idea into a particular language. The information to be sent is transformed into a logical and coded message. It depends on the type of relationship the sender and receiver enjoy. For example, if it is a formal situation then the sender has to keep various things in mind e.g. Selection of language, level of competency of the receiver to understand the language, selecting a medium of communication (speaking, writing or non-verbal means) and the form of communication (face to face, telephonic, one-to-one, one-to-many, group communication etc.)

Transmission: It refers to the transfer of message from sender to the receiver through a proper channel. It helps in confirming the process of encoding and keeps the channel free from interference. It decides the right time, place and method for communication. Through transmission only the intended message reaches the receiver without distortion and the listener is able to decode it in order to understand and comprehend the message.

Decoding: In order to understand the message, the receiver has to decode the message in form and content. It is the process of converting the message into thoughts by translating the received stimuli into an interpreted meaning in order to understand the message communicated. One must understand that the message is transferred not the meaning. It depends on the receiver to realize the meaning and understand it. The process also involves interpretation and analysis of a message. In case of oral communication it involves listening and understanding. As quick response is required in oral communication the decoding must take place rapidly, whereas, in case of written communication it involves reading and understanding, hence, the time taken can depend on the ability of receiver. Effective decoding is very much essential for successful communication to continue.

Feedback: It is most important step in the process of communication. Without feedback the process of communication won't be complete. It makes the process of communication two-way. This is the last stage in the process of communication but, one must keep in mind that, the communication doesn't end here. It just completes one loop in the communication cycle. The process of communication continues in a cyclical order. It is considered the reaction/response to the message. The feedback is given by the receiver, but when the receiver is giving the feedback he/she becomes the sender and the sender becomes the receiver. That's why it is also known as the reverse flow of communication. Feedback denotes whether the receiver has understood the message or not. The effectiveness of the process of communication depends on feedback.

Factors that influence the process of Communication:

There are various factors that influence the process of communication. Without having a proper understanding of the factors one cannot involve in the process of communication effectively. They control and regulate the process of communication. The factors are sender & receiver, code, channel, topic, message, context, feedback, noise, barriers and filters.

Sender and receiver: They are the two participants essential for the process of communication to take place. The flow of information takes place between these two sides. Sender initiates the process of communication.

Code: It is a system of symbols used for the purpose of communication. Language is the most prominent code used by human beings. Each language uses various symbols in the form of letters which are represented by different script in different languages for written communication and different sounds for oral communication. For the communication to be complete both sender and receiver must be well versed with code they use. In case of non-verbal communication, we use gestures/body language as code. "Code" is also a set of rules which we follow while using a particular language. Each language has different rules e.g. Grammar, sounds (phonetics) and syntax (sentence structure).

Channel: It refers to the medium through which the information passes. There are basically two types of channels. a) Auditory channel: The message in the transmission is converted into sounds and the sound wave passes through air to reach the receiver. b) Visual channel: In case of written communication we read symbols with the help of vision. This type of channel is also used while sending or receiving non-verbal messages. As most of the communication involves a mixture of verbal and non-verbal messages hence, both the channels are active in any process of communication.

Topic: The topic is the idea converted into a message. The topic should suit both the sender and receiver. They must enjoy some rapport with each other to undertake the process of communication and must have some understanding on the topic to be communicated. The topic can range from an event, action, object, person, experience, feeling, emotion, subject, theory, analysis, law, regulations, etc. The topic should be of mutual interest for the communication to be sincere and continuous. The participants in the process of communication finalize on the degree of involvement in a particular topic after initial exchange of ideas. There are some topics which are participant dependent e.g. entertainment, sports, behavior, attitude etc. whereas, some topics are topic dependent e.g. Science, technology, policies, economic theories, administrative functions etc. Hence, in topic dependent topics passive form of communication is used.

Message: In verbal communication it is the form in which the information is sent or received by the participants. It can be words/group of words or sentences/group of sentences. In case of non-verbal communication, it depends on the situation or context. In non-verbal communication the message becomes signal sent by means of signs, symbols, gestures, postures etc. The message depends of five factors. They are precision, confusion, exclusion, emotion and style.

a) Precision: The accuracy and strictness of the message need to be maintained in order to send it in proper content as it was devised in ideation.

b) Confusion: It should be free of mistakes and misconceptions. Mistakes may lead to misunderstanding of the message as a result the process may get disturbed or diluted.

c) Exclusion: Omission of unnecessary details is highly essential for the message to be clear and specific. We should also try to segregate the information in such a manner that no extra information is provided.

d) Emotion: The message should reflect proper sentiment and excitement. But one must keep in mind that it should not be an overflow of emotion which may distort the process.

e) It is individual specific. The encoders understanding, social position, context, cultural background and knowledge affects the style of a message.

Context: It is the setting in which the communication takes place. The context is dependent on factors like time of communication, place, sender/receiver, channel, code and topic etc. For complete communication to take place both the participants should be sensitive towards the context or else the message may be wrongly comprehended and the result can be disastrous. In case of written communication, the context is less visible.

Feedback: Feedback is the main component of communication process as it permits the sender to analyze the efficacy of the message. It helps the sender in confirming the correct interpretation of message by the decoder. Feedback may be verbal (through words) or non-verbal (in form of smiles, sighs, etc.). It may take written form also in form of memos, reports, etc. Feedback is your audience's response; it enables you to evaluate the effectiveness of your message. If your audience doesn't understand what you mean, you can tell by the response and then refine the message accordingly. Giving your audience a chance to provide feedback is crucial for maintaining an open communication climate. The manager must create an environment that encourages feedback. For example, after explaining the job to the subordinated he must ask them whether they have understood it or not. He should ask questions like "Do you understand?", "Do you have any doubts?" etc. At the same time, he must allow his subordinated to express their views also. Feedback is essential in communication so as to know whether the recipient has understood the message in the same terms as intended by the sender and whether he agrees to that message or not.

Noise: Any interference in the message sent and the message received leads to the production of 'noise'. Noise doesn't refer to the concept of sound but a break or disturbance in the communication process. If noise occurs because of technological factors, it is not too much of a problem as it can be removed or rectified by correcting the fault. But, if it is a result of human error, then both the participants should take corrective measures. It is an unplanned interference in the communication setup. This affects the transmission of the message. It can be of two types channel noise and semantic noise. Channel noise refers to the interference in the mechanics of the medium used, e.g. faulty connection, technical fault etc... In written communication it refers to illegible handwriting. Semantic noise is generated internally, resulting from internal problems/errors in the message itself. Sometimes semantic noise occurs because of misunderstanding of a given word/sentence/phrase by any of the participants. Grammatical error, faulty pronunciation, ambiguous sentence structure, misspellings etc. are other examples of semantic noise.

Barriers: Barriers creates obstruction in the process of communication. This controls the progress or movement of the process. It breaks the rhythm that is expected in a desired outcome. It stops the process of communication by partially sending the message. There can be different types of barriers e.g. physical barriers and emotional barriers. Physical

barriers include medium, crowd, physical object, distance, noise etc. Emotional barriers include intra personal behavior, inter personal behavior, categorical thinking, wrong assumptions etc.

Filters: Filters are like barriers but the only difference is, they filter the process of communication. They channelize or cleans the process as a result the message is not properly received by the receiver. It mainly occurs at the psychological level or individual level. E.g. Social status, skill, orthodox thinking, content, culture, gender etc.

Both barriers and filters distort the process of communication. The participant has to be conscious of their presence and act accordingly. If they want the process of communication to be fruitful they must eliminate as much as possible the barriers and filters from the process.

Barriers to Communication

Barriers to communication are factors that block or significantly distort successful communication. These barriers leave the communication ineffective. A number of situations crop up when the various elements of different kinds of obstacles begin to dominate. These obstacles may occur between any two of the communication process step or may affect all the steps in the process.

Physical Barriers:

1. **Noise:** This is a physical barrier which sometimes hinder the flow of communication. It can be referred to poor telephone connections, incorrect typing etc. It may be psychological like fatigue, anxiety, ego-hang ups etc. It may be a visual noise also. The late arrival of an employee may also act as a barrier in the understanding level of the other.
2. **Improper time:** Improper time also hinders the process of communication e.g. any work at the closing hour may cause resentment in the worker as he is ready to leave the office.
3. **Physical distance:** This happens where the staff sits at distant places or there are many divisions of the organization in various cities. If the receiver is at some distant place, then it gets difficult for the sender to know whether the receiver has got and understood the message or not. To communicate effectively we need proper distance, time and noise free environment.

Semantic Barriers:

1. **Variety of meanings:** Semantic is related to the meaning of the word. A single word has different meanings for different persons. If both the sender and the receiver choose different meanings for the same word, then it creates a barrier in the communication. This problem occurs because of differences in educational background or situations. People use either the same word in different ways or different words in the same way. A simple word "Run" in the dictionary has more than 70 meanings.
2. **Cultural Barriers:** The world today has become very small due to reduction in the communication gap. With the globalization the understanding of communication has become very critical. It becomes very difficult for the management to manage the affairs of the organization when they have to handle different people from different cultures and different languages. The same words, phrases, symbols,

actions, mean differently to different people. The greater the differences, the greater the chances of misunderstanding and miscommunication.

3. **Bypassing:** Miscommunication that occurs when two individuals think that they understand each other but actually they miss each other's meaning. There are two types of bypassing that are the most common, the first is when two people use different words or phrases to represent the same thing. The second is when people give different meanings to the same word or phrase. For example, when people say or use the word gay. One person might think it's related to the sexuality of someone. There are others that say "that's gay" to them, it might mean that's sucks, or others might use the word gay as happy. That's a word that can get people into problems and or arguments, there are many words like that in the English language, gay and dowry being two of many.
4. **Badly expressed message:** If the message lacks clarity and recession, then it creates a bad impression. Choice of wrong, incorrect organization, poor sentence structure, improper vocabulary all result in unclear and poor expression.
5. **Jargons:** Jargons are the technical words which are used within a particular group of a special field. Such words, when used with a layman, are difficult to understand.
6. **Unclarified assumptions:** When the sender does not complete the message and doesn't make anything clear in the message and leaves everything on the listener that he will understand the message automatically. While on the other hand the receiver reads whatever the sender has written and assumes the message and tries to interpret it as it is.

Psychological Barriers:

1. **Selective Listening:** In this type of barrier, the receiver is not ready to listen to any new thing which conflicts the existing belief. Thus he listens to only these beliefs or views which support his own existing beliefs. Thus those new ideas are avoided.
2. **Premature Evaluation:** In the modern world, people are lacking patience and they are not ready to listen to others. They try to frame their own judgments even before listening to the complete message.
3. **Emotional Attitude:** Sometimes it so happens that the sender and the receiver are not able to communicate properly with each other. The reason may be the short temperedness of one person. In that case the subordinate will not feel free to express his views.

Personal barriers:

1. **Resistance to change:** Many people resist changes. If there is any change which interfere with their present routine life or working conditions, then they don't accept such changes. They fear that such changes will affect their authorities and responsibilities.
2. **Lack of trust and confidence:** The management and the workers lack trust and confidence in each other if they are not having cordial relations. The communication cannot flow effectively. In that case communication or the message is rejected.
3. **Inattention:** Sometimes the listener is not ready to receive the message or even listen to it. People generally skip over reports, circulars, bulletins, notices etc. Sometimes the listener is physically present but mentally somewhere else. The

other reason is that people are ready to listen to those things only which are of their interest.

4. **Fast speed of speaking:** If the speaker speaks too fast, it gets difficult for the listener to understand him. This gives the listener enough time to wander to other matters rather than concentrating on what the speaker says.
5. **Lack of communication skills:** If the speaker is unable to present the message in an effective way, the audience will not give attention to the speaker. Lack of communication skill can break down the communication process.
6. **Negative feelings:** The emotions and feelings of two persons can contradict with each other. No two person perceive reality in identical manners.

Organisational Barriers:

Multiple channels: Various channels make the communication ineffective. When the information passes through several lines of hierarchy, there is a possibility of message distortion.

Status differences: The authority or superiority complex leads to various problems. The differences of higher and lower rank create doubt and fear.

The above factors are not limiting or end of the list in the process of communication. Some other factors do creep in as a factor that can influence the process of communication from time to time e.g. Mother tongue influence, pronunciation, cross-cultural situation etc.

The importance of audience and purpose

Audience: Before one begins the process of communication one must ask few questions to oneself. 'Why am I communicating?', 'With whom I am going to communicate?' the obvious answer is we are going to communicate with another human being like us not with animals. Whether we are trying to persuade, command, motivate, and entertain or to train we are communicating with an audience. The sole purpose of our communication revolves round the audience. Our communication should always strive to be audience oriented, for the process of communication to be successful and complete. We must understand that without the receiver's attention and interest the process will fail. The sender must give due importance to the receiver. Before beginning the process of communication the sender must clear the objective of the communication in his mind. Then only, he will be able to make it clear to the audience (receiver). The sender must keep the following things in mind to keep the communication audience specific.

- i) Always respect the receiver's point of view.
- ii) Sender must know receiver's interests, tastes, preferences, background, education, culture etc. in advance.
- iii) Never underestimate the receiver. There must be a sense of respect for the receiver (vice-versa).
- iv) Communication should be a collaborative activity between sender and receiver.
- v) Effective planning is required. The planning involves 3 things. a) Language skills and intelligence, b) Knowledge and understanding of the topic/subject and c) relationship/rapport enjoyed by both the sender and receiver with each other.

Purpose: As we have already discussed in the previous chapters that communication is a

human need. Communication is instrumental or directly satisfies certain needs like physical, emotional, social, psychological etc. For that reason, each and every communication has a definite purpose. The purpose is linked with both the sender and the receiver. Without purpose any communication can be rendered useless. A statement of purpose not only describes what we want to accomplish, but also helps us know at the end of the communication whether it has been achieved. The purpose can be classified into two broad categories. I.e. General or specific. General purposes can be to entertain, to inform, to attract, to regulate, to instruct etc... Specific purposes involve to influence, to motivate, to enquire, to persuade etc... The listeners of communication play an important role in the communication process because they influence the medium of communication. When communication is targeted towards audience with a purpose it yields desired result. We must understand that some purposes are sender related and some purposes are receiver related.

To inform: Any sentence that is informative in nature. e.g. i) this road leads to the main hall of the compound. ii) I'm a student of IST year B.Tech from CET.

To entertain: Cracking a joke or delivering a dialogue which amuses the audience or listeners.

To attract: In this purpose the listeners or audience or receivers are attracted to listen or give attention to the speaker. The listeners might not have a direct interest or role in what the sender is telling but the communication is such designed that they get attracted. Advertisement hoardings, Ads in TV channels.

To regulate: This purpose generally serves rules and regulations, sometimes maintaining discipline in a particular environment. No smoking here.

To instruct: This purpose has a greater role in training, teaching, directing, and administrating.

To influence: This purpose is specific in nature, where we try to influence an individual's decision, attitude, thought and impression.

To motivate: This purpose gives attention to particular individual or group to get some work done or to do better in life, like sermonizing etc.

To persuade: Here the sender is trying to extract some work or job by continuously involving in conversation with the receiver. This purpose requires a lot of skills. This may also take some time to get fulfilled.

To enquire: When we try to extract information from someone on a specific issue or with a specific motif we use this purpose. What is your name? Where do you read? etc...

Human beings are social beings. Though we claim that we cannot exist without communication but in reality we use communication for achieving our own selfish motifs. Hence, we may conclude that all communication taking place in this world revolves around some purpose or the other.

The information gap principle: given and new information, information overload

Information gap principle: In the process of communication sometimes the desired outcome doesn't take place. We failure of the process is attributed to barriers/filters. But, it is not always true. There can also be other reasons for the failure in communication. E.g. difference in perception, preconceived notion (bias), unwanted topic, physical discomforts, disinterest in the subject, drab topic etc... Hence, it gives rise to a new perception about communication process.

When a particular piece of information is already known by the receiver then the receiver won't be interested in receiving that piece of information. That information is known as 'old information'. Prior knowledge of the information suggests the receiver will not show any interest in the present process. When the sender assumes that the receiver already has some information to their knowledge and continues with that notion, it is known as 'given information.' If the receiver already has some knowledge, then the flow of communication will continue but if the receiver doesn't know head and tail about the information than the communication is bound to fail and there will be breakdown in the process. Any individuals' show interest to a particular topic when they find it to be new. When the receiver is provided with information beyond its knowledge it is known as 'new information.' Sometimes the receivers react critically to the new information but mostly they try to receive the information out of curiosity and shows interest in the process. While providing new information the sender must always keep in mind the background (educational, social, and economical) of the listeners. The condition that arises from failure in communication due to presence of old information and given information is known as information gap principle. We need to overcome this gap to make the process of communication fruitful and effective. In general, listeners/receivers or readers are interested in new subject like small kids. The sender should always maintain a strategy to make the audience feel more comfortable in the process. While providing, new information the sender should move from the known to the unknown.

Information overload: We are living in the age of information overload. For a particular query, we get many information to such an extent that, it becomes difficult to gauge which piece of information is necessary and which is redundant or useless. This situation confuses us to take a proper decision regarding which information to retain and which to discard. Here, we must understand that information is not knowledge. This is a world of 'information technology.' We tend to get many information with the click of a button through internet. But all the information received by the internet are not handy or useful. Most of the stuff are pure junk. One must have sane mind to differentiate between real piece of information and trash materials. The bombardment of information makes the task much more difficult. It consumes a lot of time to select a few relevant pieces from such an overload of information. Hence, we have to be cautious in approach while dealing with such information. This particular problem has been aggravated by the presence of internet in our day today life. Internet boom has confused the minds of the youngsters. They confuse between information and knowledge.

Overcoming Communication Barriers

There are a lot of communication barriers faced these days by all. The message intended by the sender is not understood by the receiver in the same terms and sense and thus communication breakdown occurs. It is essential to deal and cope up with these communication barriers so as to

ensure smooth and effective communication. Let's talk about how to overcome these barriers of communication.

Eliminating differences in perception: The organization should ensure that it is recruiting right individuals on the job. It's the responsibility of the interviewer to ensure that the interviewee has command over the written and spoken language. There should be proper Induction program so that the policies of the company are clear to all the employees. There should be proper trainings conducted for required employees (for eg: Voice and Accent training).

Use of Simple Language: Use of simple and clear words should be emphasized. Use of ambiguous words and jargons should be avoided.

Reduction and elimination of noise levels: Noise is the main communication barrier which must be overcome on priority basis. It is essential to identify the source of noise and then eliminate that source.

Active Listening: Listen attentively and carefully. There is a difference between "listening" and "hearing". Active listening means hearing with proper understanding of the message that is heard. By asking questions the speaker can ensure whether his/her message is understood or not by the receiver in the same terms as intended by the speaker.

Emotional State: During communication one should make effective use of body language. He/she should not show their emotions while communication as the receiver might misinterpret the message being delivered. For example, if the conveyer of the message is in a bad mood then the receiver might think that the information being delivered is not good.

Simple Organizational Structure: The organizational structure should not be complex. The number of hierarchical levels should be optimum. There should be a ideal span of control within the organization. Simpler the organizational structure, more effective will be the communication.

Avoid Information Overload: The managers should know how to prioritize their work. They should not overload themselves with the work. They should spend quality time with their subordinates and should listen to their problems and feedbacks actively.

Give Constructive Feedback: Avoid giving negative feedback. The contents of the feedback might be negative, but it should be delivered constructively. Constructive feedback will lead to effective communication between the superior and subordinate.

Proper Media Selection: The managers should properly select the medium of communication. Simple messages should be conveyed orally, like: face to face interaction or meetings. Use of written means of communication should be encouraged for delivering complex messages. For significant messages reminders can be given by using written means of communication such as: Memos, Notices etc.

Flexibility in meeting the targets: For effective communication in an organization the managers should ensure that the individuals are meeting their targets timely without skipping the formal channels of communication. There should not be much pressure on employees to meet their targets.

Oral Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Limitations

Oral communication implies communication through mouth. It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation. Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication. Oral communication is

generally recommended when the communication matter is of temporary kind or where a direct interaction is required. Face to face communication (meetings, lectures, conferences, interviews, etc.) is significant so as to build a rapport and trust.

Advantages of Oral Communication

- ✓ There is high level of understanding and transparency in oral communication as it is interpersonal.
- ✓ There is no element of rigidity in oral communication. There is flexibility for allowing changes in the decisions previously taken.
- ✓ The feedback is spontaneous in case of oral communication. Thus, decisions can be made quickly without any delay.
- ✓ Oral communication is not only time saving, but it also saves upon money and efforts.
- ✓ Oral communication is best in case of problem resolution. The conflicts, disputes and many issues/differences can be put to an end by talking them over.
- ✓ Oral communication is an essential for teamwork and group energy.
- ✓ Oral communication promotes a receptive and encouraging morale among organizational employees.
- ✓ Oral communication can be best used to transfer private and confidential information/matter.

Disadvantages/Limitations of Oral Communication

- ✓ Relying only on oral communication may not be sufficient as business communication is formal and very organized.
- ✓ Oral communication is less authentic than written communication as they are informal and not as organized as written communication.
- ✓ Oral communication is time-saving as far as daily interactions are concerned, but in case of meetings, long speeches consume lot of time and are unproductive at times.
- ✓ Oral communications are not easy to maintain and thus they are unsteady.
- ✓ There may be misunderstandings as the information is not complete and may lack essentials.
- ✓ It requires attentiveness and great receptivity on part of the receivers/audience.
- ✓ Oral communication (such as speeches) is not frequently used as legal records except in investigation work.
- ✓

Written Communication - Meaning, Advantages and Disadvantages

Written communication has great significance in today's business world. It is an innovative activity of the mind. Effective written communication is essential for preparing worthy promotional materials for business development. Speech came before writing. But writing is more unique and formal than speech. Effective writing involves careful choice of words, their organization in correct order in sentences formation as well as cohesive composition of sentences. Also, writing is more valid and reliable than speech. But while speech is spontaneous, writing causes delay and takes time as feedback is not immediate.

Advantages of Written Communication:

- i) Accurate and precise: Any written communication is an outcome of careful study, reading and drafting, editing, re-drafting. To make it authentic collection of information and data is essential.
- ii) It can be used repeatedly. Number of times and number of readers is not binding.

- iii) Permanent Record: It can be stored for ages. Useful for future reference.
- iv) Legal Document: Legal validity (legal document)
- v) Useful in case of organizational matters.
- vi) Wide accessibility: Internet, newspapers, books etc.)
- vii) Assigning jobs and responsibilities is easy through written orders.
- viii) More use of written communication increases one's language ability.
- ix) For students the best advantage of this is it is easy to remember once you write it.

Disadvantages/Limitations of Written Communication

- i) Time consuming: Drafting a document takes a lot of time.
- ii) Not economical.
- iii) No immediate feedback is possible in this type of communication.
- iv) Language cannot represent the seriousness of the message. Explanation is needed to apply the emotion.
- v) Absence of paralanguage makes it difficult to comprehend the meaning unless one is used to it.
- vi) In a country like India, oral communication is more effective than written. Illiteracy, negative attitude, stubbornness, unwillingness etc.

Non Verbal Communication

Scenario 1 – You are sitting in front of an interview panel with arms crossed. So far you have not been asked a single question, however, your crossed arms have spoken louder than the words.

Tip 1 – Never keep your arms crossed especially during formal one-on-one meetings. It suggests you are not open to feedback and could also suggest that you are trying to dominate the situation.

Scenario 2 – You are giving a presentation to a group of 20 people. You keep your gaze fixed at the centre of the class / room through the presentation – your gaze has spoken louder than your words.

Tip 2 – Your gaze at one person should not be more than 4 - 5 seconds while delivering a presentation / communicating with a large group unless you are addressing an individual. Scenario 1 and 2 clearly demonstrate the importance of Non Verbal Communication.

What is Non Verbal Communication?

It is communication of feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body movements / gestures / eye contact, etc. The components of Non Verbal Communication are:

Kinesics: It is the study of facial expressions, postures & gestures. Did you know that while in Argentina to raise a fist in the air with knuckles pointing outwards expresses victory, in Lebanon, raising a closed fist is considered rude?

Oulesics: It is the study of the role of eye contact in non-verbal communication. Did you know that in the first 90 sec - 4 min you decide that you are interested in someone or not. Studies reveal that 50% of this first impression comes from non-verbal

communication which includes oculistics. Only 7% of comes from words - that we actually say.

Haptics: It is the study of touching. Did you know that acceptable level of touching differ from one culture to another? In Thailand, touching someone's head may be considered as rude.

Proxemics: It is the study of measurable distance between people as they interact. Did you know that the amount of personal space when having an informal conversation should vary between 18 inches - 4 feet while, the personal distance needed when speaking to a crowd of people should be around 10-12 feet?

Chronemics: It is the study of use of time in non-verbal communication. Have you ever observed that while AN employee will not worry about running a few minutes late to meet a colleague, a manager who has a meeting with the CEO, a late arrival will be considered as a nonverbal cue that he / she does not give adequate respect to his superior?

Paralinguistics: It is the study of variations in pitch, speed, volume, and pauses to convey meaning. Interestingly, when the speaker is making a presentation and is looking for a response, he will pause. However, when no response is desired, he will talk faster with minimal pause.

Physical Appearance: Your physical appearance always contributes towards how people perceive you. Neatly combed hair, ironed clothes and a lively smile will always carry more weight than words.

Remember, "what we say" is less important than "how we say it" as words are only 7% of our communication. Understand and enjoy non-verbal communication as it helps forming better first impressions.

Channels of Business Communication

In an organization, communication flows in 5 main directions-

- ✓ Vertical Downward
- ✓ Vertical Upward
- ✓ Horizontal or Lateral
- ✓ Diagonal
- ✓ Grapevine

Downward Flow of Communication: Communication that flows from a higher level in an organization to a lower level is a downward communication. In other words, communication from superiors to subordinates in a chain of command is a downward communication. This communication flow is used by the managers to transmit work-related information to the employees at lower levels. Employees require this information for performing their jobs and for meeting the expectations of their managers. Downward communication is used by the managers for the following purposes -

- ✓ Providing feedback on employees performance
- ✓ Giving job instructions
- ✓ Providing a complete understanding of the employees job as well as to communicate them how their job is related to other jobs in the organization.

- ✓ Communicating the organization's mission and vision to the employees.
- ✓ Organizational publications, circulars, letters to employees, group meetings etc are all examples of downward communication.

Upward Flow of Communication: Communication that flows to a higher level in an organization is called upward communication. It provides feedback on how well the organization is functioning. The subordinates use upward communication to convey their problems and performances to their superiors.

The subordinates also use upward communication to tell how well they have understood the downward communication. It can also be used by the employees to share their views and ideas and to participate in the decision-making process.

Upward communication leads to a more committed and loyal workforce in an organization because the employees are given a chance to raise and speak dissatisfaction issues to the higher levels. The managers get to know about the employees' feelings towards their jobs, peers, supervisor and organization in general. Managers can thus accordingly take actions for improving things.

Grievance Redressal System, Complaint and Suggestion Box, Job Satisfaction surveys etc all help in improving upward communication. Other examples of Upward Communication are - performance reports made by low level management for reviewing by higher level management, employee attitude surveys, letters from employees, employee-manager discussions etc.

Lateral / Horizontal Communication: Communication that takes place at same levels of hierarchy in an organization is called lateral communication, i.e., communication between peers, between managers at same levels or between any horizontally equivalent organizational members. The advantages of horizontal communication are as follows:

- ✓ It is time saving.
- ✓ It facilitates co-ordination of the task.
- ✓ It facilitates co-operation among team members.
- ✓ It provides emotional and social assistance to the organizational members.
- ✓ It helps in solving various organizational problems.
- ✓ It is a means of information sharing
- ✓ It can also be used for resolving conflicts of a department with other department or conflicts within a department.

Diagonal Communication: it is the product of modern changes in information technology and management and is the result of the growing realization of fraternity and equality in the corporate sector. It is basically a response to market needs that demand speed and efficiency. As the diagonal channel occurs between people who do not have to follow rigid norms of communication protocol. It flows in all directions. Communication that takes place between a manager and employees of other workgroups is called diagonal communication. It generally does not appear on organizational chart. For instance - To design a training module a training manager interacts with an operations personnel to enquire about the way they perform their task.

Grapevine Communication

Grapevine is an informal channel of business communication. It is called so because it stretches throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels. Man as we know is a social animal. Despite existence of formal channels in an organization, the informal channels tend to develop when he interacts with other people in organization. It exists more at lower levels of organization.

Grapevine generally develops due to various reasons. One of them is that when an organization is facing recession, the employees sense uncertainty. Also, at times employees do not have self-confidence due to which they form unions. Sometimes the managers show preferential treatment and favour some employees giving a segregated feeling to other employees. Thus, when employees sense a need to exchange their views, they go for grapevine network as they cannot use the formal channel of communication in that case. Generally during breaks in cafeteria, the subordinates talk about their superior's attitude and behaviour and exchange views with their peers. They discuss rumours about promotion and transfer of other employees. Thus, grapevine spreads like fire and it is not easy to trace the cause of such communication at times.

Advantages of Grapevine Communication

- ✓ Grapevine channels carry information rapidly. As soon as an employee gets to know some confidential information, he becomes inquisitive and passes the details then to his closest friend who in turn passes it to other. Thus, it spreads hastily.
- ✓ The managers get to know the reactions of their subordinates on their policies. Thus, the feedback obtained is quick compared to formal channel of communication.
- ✓ The grapevine creates a sense of unity among the employees who share and discuss their views with each other. Thus, grapevine helps in developing group cohesiveness.
- ✓ The grapevine serves as an emotional supportive value.
- ✓ The grapevine is a supplement in those cases where formal communication does not work.

Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication

- ✓ The grapevine carries partial information at times as it is more based on rumours. Thus, it does not clearly depicts the complete state of affairs.
- ✓ The grapevine is not trustworthy always as it does not follows official path of communication and is spread more by gossips and unconfirmed report.
- ✓ The productivity of employees may be hampered as they spend more time talking rather than working.
- ✓ The grapevine leads to making hostility against the executives.
- ✓ The grapevine may hamper the goodwill of the organization as it may carry false negative information about the high level people of the organization.
- ✓ A smart manager should take care of all the disadvantages of the grapevine and try to minimize them. At the same time, he should make best possible use of advantages of grapevine.

Applications of communication for professional or any other purpose

We refer of communication as a skill, it means we are going to apply this skill for some purpose. The purposes can vary from simple social interactions to running governance, it can range from giving a small presentation in the office to make headlines in the media. We use communication on a daily basis. It is an important medium to achieve and acquire many personal and professional goals. Having looked at the key elements in the

communication process, we next examine three common communication settings or situations and explore how these elements vary from setting to setting. There are four different types of communication:

1. Intra-personal Communication
2. Inter-personal Communication
3. Extra-personal Communication
4. Mass Communication

Intra-personal Communication

"A process of communication by which one person communicates with himself either consciously or unconsciously is called intra-personal communication." In this form of communication, one person is the messenger and same is the receiver. "The silent conversation with our own-self is called intra-personal Communication." This is the base for all forms of communication. As we know communication is a continuous process in which man is always being involved either by sitting silently, crying, shouting or sleeping. This communication takes place within the individual. With the help of this communication system, individuals can make decisions on the basis of information that they received through various sources.

Example

The encoding-decoding process that occurs when a man is waiting alone outside an office, or thought processes of deciding whether to stay at home or to go out for a walk, all are the examples of intra-personal communication.

Inter-personal Communication

"A process in which one person (or group) is interacting with another person (or group) without the aid of a mechanical device. The source and receiver in this form of communication are within each other's physical presence. Talking to your roommate, participating in a class discussion, and conversing with your professor after class are all examples of inter-personal communication. The source in this communication setting can be one or more individuals, as can the receiver. It is also called face-to-face communication.

Machine-assisted Inter-Personal Communication

Machine-assisted inter-personal communication (or technology-assisted communication) combines characteristics of both the inter-personal and mass communication situations. In this setting, one or more people are communicating by means of a mechanical device with one or more receivers. One of the important characteristics of machine-assisted inter-personal communication is that it allows the source and receiver to be separated by both time and space. The machine can give a message permanence by storing it on paper, magnetic disc, or some other material. The machine can also extend the range of the message by amplifying it and for transmitting it over large distances.

Examples

The telephone allows two people to converse even though they are hundreds even thousands of miles apart (*American president Richard Nixon placed a person-to-person call to the Apollo 11 astronauts while they were on the moon.)

- ✓ A letter can be read several years after it was written and communicates a new sense.
- ✓ ii. E-mail allows people to send messages across the world in a matter of minutes.
- ✓ iii. People get money out of automatic teller machines by inserting a magnetic (ATM) card and following the machine's instructions.
- ✓ iv. Chat rooms and newsgroups on the internet allow individuals to communicate by typing messages on their computer for all to see.

Essentials of Inter-personal Communication

For successful process of inter-personal communication, four main things are essential, which make perfect and effective inter-personal communication:

- ✓ Suitable environment
- ✓ Holding attention
- ✓ Compatibility
- ✓ Frame of reference

Extra-personal Communication

Communication between human and non-human is known as extra-personal communication and it is further divided into two types:

- (i) Communication with animals: In everyday life, we communicate with animals, we train them and they react according to our instructions and commands. For example, pet dogs, horses, cats and monkeys etc.
- (ii) Communication with plants: In everyday life, sometime we find some persons, who have the habit of talking at with plants. Certain plants react to our touch, for example, touch me not plant.

Mass Communication

Public communication becomes mass communication when it is transmitted to many people through print or electronic media. Print media such as newspapers and magazines continue to be an important channel for mass communication, although they have suffered much in the past decade due in part to the rise of electronic media. Television, websites, blogs, and social media are mass communication channels that you probably engage with regularly. Radio, podcasts, and books are other examples of mass media. The technology required to send mass communication messages distinguishes it from the other forms of communication. A certain amount of intentionality goes into transmitting a mass communication message since it usually requires one or more extra steps to convey the message. This may involve pressing "Enter" to send a Facebook message or involve an entire crew of camera people, sound engineers, and production assistants to produce a television show. Even though the messages must be intentionally transmitted through technology, the intentionality and goals of the person actually creating the message, such as the writer, television host, or talk show guest, vary greatly. The president's State of the Union address is a mass communication message that is very formal, goal oriented, and intentional, but a president's verbal gaffe during a news interview is not.

Mass communication differs from other forms of communication in terms of the personal connection between participants. Even though creating the illusion of a personal connection is often a goal of those who create mass communication messages, the relational aspect of interpersonal and group communication isn't inherent within this form of communication. Unlike interpersonal, group, and public communication, there is no immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback loop in mass communication. Of course you could write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or send an e-mail to a television or radio broadcaster in response to a story, but the immediate feedback available in face-to-face interactions is not present. Many radio and television hosts and news organizations specifically invite feedback from viewers/listeners via social media and may even share the feedback on the air.

The technology to mass-produce and distribute communication messages brings with it the power for one voice or a series of voices to reach and affect many people. This power makes mass communication different from the other levels of communication. While there is potential for unethical communication at all the other levels, the potential consequences of unethical mass communication are important to consider. Communication scholars who focus on mass communication and media often take a critical approach in order to examine how media shapes our culture and who is included and excluded in various mediated messages.

Organizational Communication

We define organizational communication' as the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals. Organizational communication is highly contextual and culturally dependent. Individuals in organizations transmit messages through face-to face, written, and mediated channels.

Organizational communication helps us to 1) accomplish tasks relating to specific roles and responsibilities of sales, services, and production; 2) acclimate to changes through individual and organizational creativity and adaptation; 3) complete tasks through the maintenance of policy, procedures, or regulations that support daily and continuous operations; 4) develop relationships where "human messages are directed at people within the organization-their attitudes, morale, satisfaction, and fulfillment"; and 5) coordinate, plan, and control the operations of the organization through management. Organizational communication is how organizations represent, present, and constitute their organizational climate and culture—the attitudes, values and goals that characterize the organization and its members.

Organizational communication largely focuses on building relationships and interacting with internal organizational members and interested external publics. For organizations to be successful, they must have competent communicators. Organizational communication study shows that organizations rely on effective communication and efficient communication skills from their members. A number of surveys identify effective oral and written communication as the most sought after skills by those who run organizations.

Organizations seek people who can follow and give instructions, accurately listen, provide useful feedback, get along with coworkers and customers, network, provide serviceable

information, work well in teams, and creatively and critically solve problems and present ideas in an understandable manner. Developing organizational communication awareness and effectiveness is more than just having know-how or knowledge. It is has two dimensions, Internal operational and external operational communication. Efficient work with diverse groups or individuals, communicate in complicated and changing circumstances, as well as having the aptitude or motivation to communicate in appropriate manners.

Plain English

plain English is good, clear writing which communicates as simply and effectively as possible. It is clear, concise, organized, and appropriate for the intended audience and it should use straightforward, concrete and familiar words to make it concise and easy to understand.

- ✓ Identify your audience and the point you're trying to make
- ✓ Put the most important point at the beginning
- ✓ Use common, easily understood words
- ✓ Use only technical terms when necessary, and make certain you've explain their meaning
- ✓ Use active voice
- ✓ Use bullets, tables, and other design features that break up the text and add visual interest
- ✓ Use short sentences and paragraphs (Sentences should average 15-20 words)
- ✓ Avoid acronyms and abbreviations

Cross-cultural Communication is a field of study that looks at how people from differing cultural backgrounds communicate, in similar and different ways among themselves, and how they endeavour to communicate across cultures. Intercultural communication is a related field of study. Cross cultural communication in business plays a vital role in successfully establishing the product or service in a different area of the globe. When the communication is effective, the product or service is appropriately tailored to the cultural norms and expectations resulting in the use or purchase of the product. Ineffective communication cross culturally can offend, confuse or send a misunderstood message which could lead to broken relations with investors or employees.

It does not only indicate towards the understanding of visible parts of communication but also towards the understanding of invisible or hidden parts of communication like hidden signs and signals. These hidden symbolic elements embedded in the culture give meaning to the visible communication process. As we know, culture influences almost everything about communication or we can say that culture influences all attributes of communication like language, non-verbal signals, word meanings, time and space issues, rule of human relationship, traditions, backgrounds, outlooks, experiences, attitude, behavior and degree of respect.

But generally, the common crowd experiences problems or lacks comfort while interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. The main causes for such uneasiness are the sources of differences like race, gender, sexual identity, ideology, age, nationality, body

structure, family background, appearance, socio-economic status, occupation, language, caste, ethnicity, etc.

For the above mentioned sources of differences it is obvious that the importance of culture is becoming more and more relevant in the modern times as international business is fast gaining importance. People of different countries and diverse cultural backgrounds are meeting each other for various purposes.

So the question arises as to how do we make our communication effective while dealing in business in the diverse culture. We are aware of the fact that when we come into the contact of different people, their culture profoundly influences ours and vice versa and there we find complex problems.

Bias-Free Language

Bias-free language is language that is sensitive to people's sex, race, age, physical condition and many other categories. Bias-free language does not discriminate and therefore includes all readers in a fair and friendly manner. Sometimes the language we use reflects our stereotypes. While in speech our facial expressions or even gestures may convince our listeners that we are not being offensive, in writing it is a lot harder to do.

To avoid confusion and needless anger on the part of the reader, use language that is clear, objective, and stereotype-free. Avoid making generalizations when talking about gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or people with disabilities.

Gender

Use gender parallelism: use the word woman in the context where you would use man, lady where you would use gentleman, and girl where you would use boy.

Biased: I gave my name to the girl at the main desk.

Better: I gave my name to the woman at the main desk.

Use appropriate pronouns when referring to people that may be either male or female.

Biased: Each manager must debrief his department.

Better: Each manager must debrief his or her department.

Replace gender-biased terms such as salesman and foreman with bias-free terms.

Biased: Give your report to the committee chairman.

Better: Give your report to the committee chair.

Avoid using masculine pronouns when the gender of the person is not known:

Biased Each consultant has to submit his project proposal before the next team meeting.

Unbiased Each consultant has to submit his or her project proposal before the next team meeting.

Unbiased All consultants have to submit their project proposals before the next team meeting.

When a word has the suffix -man or -woman, check to see if it reflects the gender of the person described. Use more neutral alternatives when gender is not important to the idea you are getting across. For example, use chairperson or chair instead of chairman, fire fighter instead of fireman, or sales person instead of salesman.

Here is a list of occupational terms that can be problematic:

Avoid	Use Instead
anchorman	anchor
businessman	businessperson, executive, manager, business owner, retailer, etc.
cleaning lady, girl, maid	housecleaner, housekeeper, cleaning person, office cleaner
clergyman	member of the clergy, rabbi, priest, etc.
congressman	representative, member of Congress, legislator
forefather	ancestor
housewife	homemaker
insurance man	insurance agent
mailman, postman	mail or letter carrier
policeman	police officer or law enforcement officer
spokesman	spokesperson, representative
stewardess, steward	flight attendant
weatherman	weather reporter, weathercaster, meteorologist

Race and Ethnicity

If race or ethnicity is used to describe a person, it has to be relevant to the information presented.

Ethnic and racial labels often change and deciding which term is the correct one can be hard. Should we say African American or black? Hispanic or Latino/Latina? American Indian or Native American? Likewise, Oriental should be substituted with Asian. Avoiding Racism and Ageism. Mention a person's race or age only if it is relevant to the story.

Biased: A strange Black man spoke to me at the grocery store.

Better: A strange man spoke to me at the grocery store.

Be aware of preferred group terms.

Biased: The bus of Oriental senior citizens took a detour.

Better (only if the age and race are relevant): The bus of Asian older adults took a detour.

Disability

Labels are often generated when we use adjectives as collective nouns. Avoid using labels the disabled, the schizophrenics; instead, use people with disabilities, people diagnosed with schizophrenia.

The APA Manual of Style also recommends using emotionally neutral expressions when describing people with disabilities: a person with AIDS rather than an AIDS victim, a person with emphysema rather than a person suffering from emphysema. Focus on people rather than conditions.

Biased: I met an epileptic on the bus today.

Better: I met a person with epilepsy on the bus today

Sexual Orientation

According to Random House's Sensitive Language, "The term homosexual to describe a man or woman is increasingly replaced by the terms gay for men and lesbian for women." Therefore, the following terms are preferred to make the meaning clear: lesbians, gay men, bisexual men or women.

The important thing to remember is to be sensitive, clear, and unbiased when describing any particular group of people.