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# Elements of Communication and Networking Skills

Sub Code 553

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Developed by  
Prof. Chinmay Kamat

On behalf of  
Prin. L.N. Welingkar Institute of Management Development & Research

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# **SECTION 1**

## **BASICS OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

# Chapter 1

## Communication – The Role

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Characteristics of all forms of communication
- The attributes of communication
- Communication process and its main phases
- One way and two way communication
- Importance of feedback in communication process
- Intra and interpersonal communication
- Features of group communication
- Public communication

### Structure:

- 1.1 Elements of Communication
- 1.2 Essentials of Communication
- 1.3 Attributes of Communication
- 1.4 Definitions of Communication
- 1.5 Process of Communication
- 1.6 Levels of Communication
- 1.7 Importance of Communication
- 1.8 Summary
- 1.9 Self-Assessment Questions

## 1.1 Elements of Communication

### **Introduction**

Effective communication plays a vital role in the success of every professional and personal relationship. Becoming a skilled communicator requires you to learn the roles of every element of communication. You can use these elements in many ways, including public speaking, interpersonal relationships, media development and business relations. The basic communication model consists of five elements of communication: the sender, the receiver, the message, the channel and feedback.

The sender plays the specific role of initiating communication. To communicate effectively, the sender must use effective verbal as well as non-verbal techniques. Speaking or writing clearly, organizing your points to make them easy to follow and understand, maintaining eye contact, using proper grammar and giving accurate information are all essential in the effectiveness of your message. You will lose your audience if it becomes aware of obvious oversights on your part. The sender should have some understanding of who the receiver is in order to modify the message to make it more relevant. In the basic communication model, the sender is Point A in the diagram.

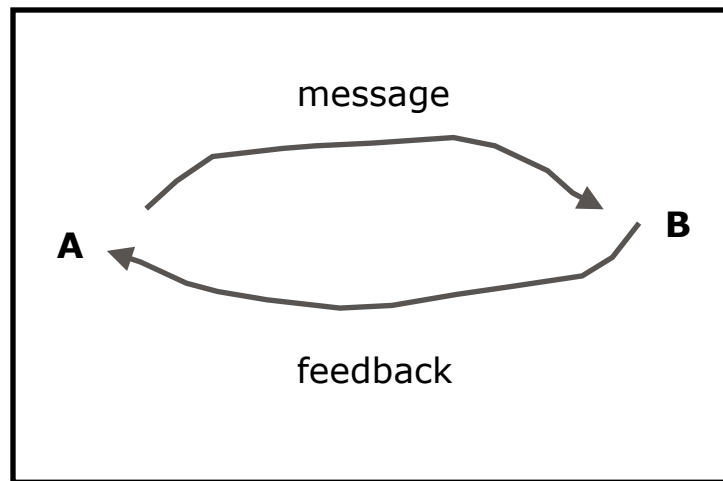
The receiver means the party to whom the sender transmits the message. A receiver can be one person or an entire audience of people. In the basic communication model, the receiver, labeled Point B, is directly across from the speaker. The receiver can also communicate verbally and non-verbally. The best way to receive a message is to listen carefully, sitting up straight and making eye contact. Do not get distracted or try to do something else while you're listening. Nodding and smiling as you listen to the sender speak demonstrate that you understand the message.



## Message

The message could be the most crucial element of effective communication. A message can come in many different forms, such as an oral presentation, a written document, an advertisement or just a comment. In the basic communication model, the arrow from Point A to Point B represents the sender's message traveling to the receiver. The message is not necessarily what the sender intends it to be. Rather, the message is what the receiver perceives the message to be. As a result, the sender must not only compose the message carefully, but also evaluate the ways in which the message can be interpreted.

The message travels from one point to another via a channel of communication. Many channels, or types, of communication exist, from the spoken word to radio, television, an Internet site or something written, like a book, letter or magazine. Every channel of communication has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, one disadvantage of the written word, on a computer screen or in a book, is that the receiver cannot evaluate the tone of the message. For this reason, effective communicators word written communications clearly so they do not rely on a specific tone of voice to convey the message accurately. The advantages of television as a channel for communication include its expansive reach to a wide audience and the sender's ability to further manipulate the message using editing and special effects.



## Feedback

The last element of effective communication, feedback, describes the receiver's response or reaction to the sender's message. The receiver can transmit feedback through asking questions, making comments or just supporting the message that was delivered. Feedback helps the sender to determine how the receiver interpreted the message and how it can be improved. In the basic communication model, the receiver transmits feedback from Point B back to the sender at Point A. As a result the model has a cyclical appearance, as the original receiver becomes the sender and vice versa.

## 1.2 Essentials of Communication

### Approach

Timing of communication; choice of medium; tone and point of view (perspective, attitude, and relationship regarding audience, purpose, and material); recognition of audience (reader vs. writer orientation); direct vs. indirect presentation (ordering of evidence and conclusions); persuasive strategies and rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, ethos) are all **essentials** of effective communication. At this stage you have to ensure that the timing and choice of medium are appropriate to the purpose, audience, and material. Your tone is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and material. You have checked that the material you plan to use in your communication is made relevant to the reader (reader's interests and concerns are recognized). You have taken necessary precautions and are certain that conclusions are presented directly (conclusion first, evidence last) to a



sympathetic audience, indirectly (evidence first, conclusion last) to an unsympathetic or hostile audience. You further need to check that persuasive strategy you wish to adopt incorporates a mixture of rhetorical approaches (appeals to logic, feelings, and ethics or credibility).

## **Development**

Organization (logical arrangement and sequence); evidence and support (relevance, specificity, accuracy and sufficiency of detail); knowledge of subject and material; quality of perception, analysis, and insight will assist you to develop your message and ensure it is clear and complete. Please check that material is arranged in a logical and coherent sequence; conclusion or closing restates the argument and identifies the action to be taken; examples are relevant, specific, detailed, sufficient, and persuasive. You have to provide adequate references and quotations in support of the argument. The entire material of the message has to be handled to demonstrate your knowledge and insight into the subject matter.

## **Clarity**

Presentation of thesis or central argument (statement of purpose, delineation or narrowing of topic, relevance of subordinate or secondary arguments); word choice; technical language and jargon; structure (sentence, paragraph, document); coherence devices (organizational statement, repetition of words and phrases, progression from familiar to unfamiliar, topic and transitional sentences); textual markers (headings, highlighting, formatting features) are essential components to add clarity to the message. Please check that purpose or central idea is sufficiently limited for meaningful discussion; purpose or central idea is stated clearly, usually in the opening; organizational statement is offered, usually at the end of the opening. Plus you have to identify and relate subordinate ideas are effectively clearly to the main purpose or central idea. Please make the language clear, specific, accurate, and appropriate to the audience, purpose, and material and choose words that are clear, specific, accurate, unassuming, and free of clichés and misused jargon.

**Activity 1.1**

Rewrite the message to improve communication (see box after Summary 1.8)

I was jogging one day and I noticed a person in front of me, some distance away. I could tell he was running a little slower than me and I thought, well, I shall try to catch him. I had about a mile to go my path before I needed to turn off.

So I started running faster and faster. Every block, I was gaining on him just a little bit. After just some time I was only little distance behind him, so I really picked up the pace and push myself. You would have thought I was running in the last leg of international competition. I was running, running and running to catch him.

On the inside I felt so good. "I beat him" of course, he didn't even knew we were racing. Finally, I did it! I caught and passed him by.

After I passed him, I realized I had been so focused on competing against him that I had missed my turn. I had gone nearly six blocks past it. I had to turn around and go all back.

Is not that what happens in life when we focus on competing with others, people we meet, those around us, trying to do something more, larger than them or trying to prove that we are more successful or more important? We spend our time and energy running after them and we miss out on what we were thinking of doing since morning. We thought we had done. The problem with unhealthy competition is that its a never ending bicycle.

There will always be somebody ahead of you, someone with bigger job, better car, large money in the bank, fast education, a prettier woman, a more handsome boy, better behaved children, etc. But realize that "You can be the good that you can be; you are not competing with no one." Some people are not thinking, they understand, because they pay much attention 2 what others are doing for so many hours, where others are going, wearing & driving.

Take what God has given you, the body, its shape, clothes and what not. Dress well and wear it proudly! You'll be blessed by it. Stay focused and lives a healthy life. There's no running about in DESTINY, walk your own RACE and say others WELL!!!

To bring in clarity to your message you double check that technical language and terms are defined and explained as needed (depending on knowledge of the audience); sentences are free of ambiguity; text is coherent, with new information linked to previously discussed information (ordered within sentences as “something old/something new”) and transitions between paragraphs are clear and helpful. It helps to appropriately highlight text with bullets, paragraphing, boldface, italics, underlining, etc. to engage the reader and reinforce the main points.

## Style

Word choice (economy, precision, and specificity of language and detail; abstract vs. concrete language; action verbs vs. linking or weak verbs with nominalizations; figures of speech: schemes and tropes); tone (personality and humor); active vs. passive voice; sentence variety are all fundamental for the style you deploy to convey the message effectively. Here you have to be careful about word choice that is economical, clear, specific, accurate, unassuming, and free of clichés and misused jargon ; action verbs are preferred over weak verbs with nominalizations (as in recommend over make a recommendation); language is appropriately concrete or abstract (signifying or not signifying things that can be perceived by the senses). It is well worth to remember here, that figurative language (metaphors and similes, as well as other tropes and schemes) enriches and deepens the argument. For effective communication active voice is preferred over passive voice (active voice is used to emphasize the performer of the action; passive voice is used to emphasize the receiver of the action). Your sentences are free of wordiness and unnecessarily complex constructions. There should be variety in sentence structure and sentence length to create desired emphasis. You may highlight author's values, personality and – when appropriate – humor in a way that reinforces the message.

## Correctness

Rules and conventions of spelling, grammar, punctuation, usage, and idiom; style (appropriateness of word choice and level of formality to

audience, purpose, and material); social and cultural appropriateness; accuracy in proofreading all go long way to add accuracy to the message you deliver. Written communication should be invariably spell-checked and the latest edition of dictionary referred whenever there is an iota of doubt about correct meaning of a term or word.

### 1.3 Attributes of Communication

#### **Qualities**

Effective communication involves accuracy in the sending and receiving processes and no type of barriers to encumber that accuracy. The seven qualities of effective communication are

<b>Communication Attributes</b>
Complete
Concise
Considerate
Correct
Clear
Courteous
Correct

1. **Completeness:** A message is complete when it contains all the facts that are needed by the listener or reader for the response you desire.
2. **Conciseness:** Getting your message through in the fewest possible words, keeping in mind all the other qualities of effective communication. Remember a concise message is more often complete without being wordy.
3. **Consideration:** Keeping the receiver in mind while preparing the message is what defines the quality of consideration. Putting oneself in the place of the receiver (empathy) is the key to effective communication.

4. **Concreteness:** Being concrete is being vivid, definite and specific rather than obscure, vague and general. This turns your message intense and then it glows.
5. **Clarity:** Getting the message through in an accurate manner is the purpose of clarity. Precision is the crux of any message. In chapter A 7 we discuss barriers to effective communication and techniques to overcome them.
6. **Courtesy:** Courtesy means not only to think about the receiver's reaction but also his / her feelings. It not only involves usage of polite words and gestures but also pure politeness that grows out of respect and concern for others. Remember it does not cost to be polite, but courtesy fetches rich dividends every time your message is read by each individual.

Last but not the least

7. **Correctness:** This quality means to correct use of grammar, spelling and punctuation. In terms of verbal communication, this refers to accuracy in pronunciation.

Basis	Verbal Communication	Non-verbal Communication
<b>1. Use of word</b>	Verbal communication uses oral or written words.	Non-verbal communication not uses any oral or written words.
<b>2.Types</b>	Verbal communication two types: Oraland and written.	Non-verbal communications may various types, visual,audio,audio-visual,silent etc.
<b>3.Understand</b>	Easy to understand.	Difficult to understand
<b>4.Structure</b>	verbal communication highly structure	Non-verbal communication lacks in formal structure.
<b>5.Distortion of information</b>	Less possibility of distortion of information	High possibility of distortion of information
<b>6. Continuity</b>	Verbal communication begins and ends with words.	Non-verbal communication continues until the purpose achieved.
<b>7.Feedback</b>	Verbal communication gives a less and delayed feedback.	Non-verbal communication gives a lot of feedback.

**Figure 1.1**

## Characteristics

Effective business communication is critical in today's workforce; more than ever before. Business communicators have a variety of tools to choose from and must use those tools carefully and with consideration of their audience and their intended communication goals. Effective business communicators will find that their efforts pay off in better relationships and business success. To be a successful communicator you need to digest these eight characteristics.

Communication Characteristics
Segmented
Specific
Accurate
Timely
Frequent
Multi-Channel
Face-to-Face
Two-Way

### 1. **Segmented**

Even in small organizations, it is wrong to assume that all employees will have the same needs, interests and desires when it comes to business communication. Effective business communication is segmented to meet the needs of specific audiences. Employees working in an administrative setting, for instance, will have different needs--and different access to information--than employees working in a manufacturing environment. The principle equally applies in non-business communication. You find that each group you have to communicate with has its own need, interest and desires.

### 2. **Specific**

As a result of such segmentation, generic business or any other communication does not meet the needs of anyone. Effective business communication is specific. The more specific communication is, the more it meets the needs of its audience, effectively delivers the intended message.

### 3. **Accurate**

When information is inaccurate it loses its credibility. The sender of the information also loses credibility. Effective business communication is

accurate in terms of the content conveyed and in terms of simple things that include grammar, spelling and punctuation.

#### **4. Timely**

Information has to be passed on without loss of time; otherwise it loses its purpose. Employees need to know what is going on in their organizations--and in the external environment--that impacts them. Today's technology-driven environment makes it more challenging than ever before for businesses to communicate with employees in a timely manner, but it is critical for effectiveness business communication.

#### **5. Frequent**

It cannot be assumed that a message has gotten across if it is sent just one time. If you want to ensure action on the message you convey, then it has to be repeated until you are certain it has reached and absorbed by the listeners. Effective business communication occurs frequently to ensure that it has been received by all employees. Employees leave, new employees join the company and employees transfer from one role to another, requiring new and updated information.

#### **6. Multi-Channel**

Effective business communication needs to be sent through a broad variety of channels to ensure that it is received by persons in different settings. Businesses, as well all of us, fortunately have a variety of channels to choose from--from the traditional (print, bulletin boards, meetings) to the new-technology (email, blogs, social media sites).

#### **7. Face-to-Face**

Face-to-face communication is still the most effective, and should be used whenever possible and practical. Distances and convenience of the two parties always make face to face communication impossible. And, in very large organizations this can be challenging, but even then, alternatives may include videoconferencing or the use of webinars which offer visual feedback during communication.



## 8. Two-Way

All communication is always two-way – one person has to deliver a message and another one/s needs to accept it. Employees need the opportunity to share their feedback, opinions and thoughts with managers and employers. Effective business communication offers the opportunity for two-way communication to benefit employees and employers.

### Features

Communication Features
Intentional and unintentional
Communication is a dynamic process
Communication is systematic
Communication is both exchange and sharing

There are four features of communication which have to be understood by you in order to improve your competence and skills in communication. Let us examine them one by one.

### 1. Intentional and Unintentional

We do not always convey exactly what we want to, the targeted receiver may receive less or more than what we intended to convey. A casual observer who is not the target audience, unintentional receiver, may receive information or idea which we did not intend for her/him. Our non-verbal behaviour conveys something about us; what we speak or write is accompanied by non-verbal behaviour. We cannot “not communicate”; even our non-communication in words communicates some meaning. It may convey that we wish to be left alone. We do not want to be disturbed. Communication takes place even when we do not plan it and we are not conscious about it, then we may communicate something that we had not intended at all.

## **2. Communication is a Dynamic Process**

A process is ongoing, non-static activity. Communication being a process is always changing, always in the motion. A process is a series of actions that has neither the beginning nor end. The notion of process involves a time dimension; which means that the characteristics, causes, and consequences of an act of communication are subject to change while the communication act takes place. An important element in communication is the concept of “change”.

Communication grows and develops; even if the same two persons exchange the same ideas again, the communication is not exactly the same as it was the first time, because the two persons have grown and developed and changed since then. Every time we consciously engage in the act of communication, we bring to it all our previous experience, feelings, thoughts, attitudes which have been formed by previous communication events.

## **3. Communication is Systematic**

Every component of the process is affected by every other component. The source, the environment, the goal, the medium, the nature of the message, the receiver, the feedback, all affect each other. If the audience is inattentive, uninterested, the source is not able to speak/convey effectively. If a wrong medium is chosen, a particular message may fail to have the intended result. If the goal is not clear, the message will be confused. Disturbance at any stage in the communication process affects the results of the entire process.

## **4. Communication is both Exchange and Sharing**

The two participants, the source and the recipient, exchange ideas and information and influence each other during the process of communication. They also come to a shared and common meaning as a result of the communication. They share as well as exchange thoughts and meanings. Communication thus is a meeting two minds.

## 1.4 Definitions of Communication

“Communication is transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver  
— **G.G. Brown.**

“Communication is the intercourse by words, letters or messages”  
— **Fred G. Meyer.**

“Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another”  
— **Keith Davis.**

“In dyadic communication or public speaking, the channel, or a means of sending or receiving information, is both verbal communication (the spoken word) and non-verbal communication (gestures and one’s appearance).”  
— **W. A. Kelly Huff.**

A wider and more comprehensive definition is provided by national Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities. It states, “Any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person’s needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge or affective states. Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or nonlinguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes.”  
— **Dr. Julia Sheba de Valenzuela.**

We can now proceed to define communication from what we have seen above. To define means to give the precise and exact meaning of a word. The exact meaning of the word communicate is ‘to share’ or ‘to participate’. The dictionaries say that communication is the transmission of a message or information by speaking or writing. Another dictionary declares that communication is giving or exchanging information, signals, messages by talk or gestures or writing. Yet another definition says that communication is social intercourse. Communication is all this and much more. A good definition should not only give the precise meaning but also throw light on the scope of the word/expression.

Communication is giving, receiving or exchanging ideas, information, signals or messages through appropriate media, enabling individuals or groups to persuade, to seek information, to give information or to express

emotions. This broad definition includes body-language, skills of speaking and writing. It outlines the objectives of communication. It emphasizes listening as an important aspect of communication.

Communication (from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning “to share”) is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures.

Communication requires a sender, a message, and a recipient, although the receiver does not have to be present or aware of the sender’s intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver understands the sender’s message



**Figure 1.2**

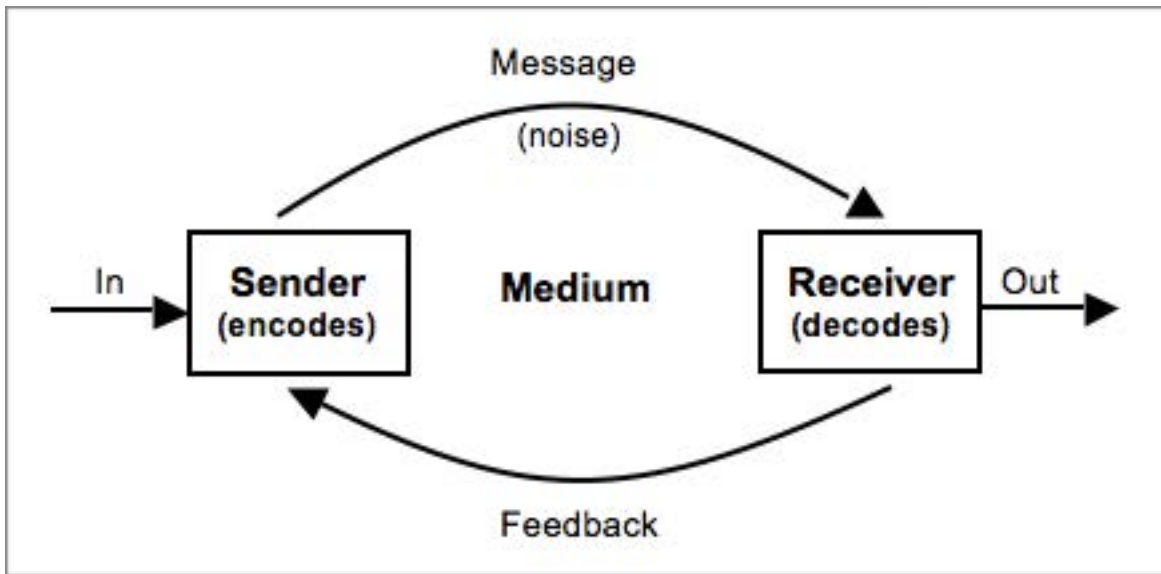
## Communicating with others involves three primary steps

1. **Thought:** First, information exists in the mind of the sender. This can be a concept, idea, information, or feelings.
2. **Encoding:** Next, a message is sent to a receiver in words or other symbols.
3. **Decoding:** Lastly, the receiver translates the words or symbols into a concept or information that a person can understand.

Communication can also be expressed by terms such as transmission, imparting, conveying, reporting, presenting, passing on, handing on, relay, conveyance, divulgence, divulgation, disclosure; spreading, dissemination, promulgation, broadcasting, circulation and circulating.

## 1.5 Process of Communication

Communication is a process of exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages. It is a continuous process. It involves decisions and activities by the two persons involved, the sender and the receiver. Pre-requisite of communication is a message. This message must be conveyed through some medium to the recipient. It is essential that this message must be understood by the recipient in same terms as intended by the sender. He/she must respond within a time frame. Thus, communication is a two way process and is incomplete without a feedback from the recipient to the sender on how well the message is understood by him/her.



**Figure 1.3**

The main components of communication process are as follows:

### **Context**

Communication is affected by the context in which it takes place. This context may be physical, social, chronological or cultural. Every communication proceeds with context. The sender chooses the message to communicate within a context. Context refers to the idea that every act of communication must happen in some sort of surroundings.... Most obviously there is the physical context– whether we are talking to someone in our living room or on the terraces or at a conference. But then there is the social context, which is to do with the occasion involved and the people in it. This might be a group of friends in a club or a family meal or a group of mourners at a funeral or members of the Board of Directors. And then there is the cultural context, which refers to an even broader set of circumstances and beliefs, which still may affect how we talk. For example, it would matter if the funeral was in a Hindu or an Anglican context. It is particularly important to see that the media are part of the cultural context in which we operate. How we talk, what we talk about, what music we listen to, has a lot to do with the influence of the cultural context of the media.

The circumstances of each participant in the process of communication, their position in the organization, the duties and responsibilities they

shoulder, their authority, the present state of mind can all influence this important process. Time is another element to be considered here. The time of the communication – start of the work day, just before lunch, at the end of the working day, affects the communication. The length of time required for the communication event influences the quality of communication. Longer the communication greater are the chances for boredom, misinterpretations, failure to achieve planned results. Too short a communication can result in inadequacy and a feeling among one of them of being ignored.

### **Sender/Encoder**

Sender/Encoder are a person who sends the message. A sender makes use of symbols (words or graphic or visual aids) to convey the message and produce the required response. For instance - a training manager conducting training for new batch of employees is a sender wanting to pass on training message to the learners... Sender may be an individual or a group or an organization. The views, background, approach, skills, competencies, and knowledge of the sender have a great impact on the message. The verbal and non-verbal symbols chosen are essential in ascertaining interpretation of the message by the recipient in the same terms as intended by the sender.

Since the sender initiates the process of communication, he/she has to be very clear about the **purpose, goal or objective** of the communication and the target audience, or the receiver, who is to receive the Message, is a key idea that the sender wants to communicate. It is a sign that elicits the response of recipient. Communication process begins with deciding about the message to be conveyed. It must be ensured that the main objective of the message is clear. Sender's functions account for half of the process of communication. They include:

- i) Establish the goal/purpose of the communication.
- ii) Determine the understanding and needs of the receiver of the communication, the target audience.
- iii) Encode the required information and ideas with symbols (text) to create the message to suit the intended audience.

- iv) Select the appropriate medium to transmit the message to the receiver.
- v) Make the necessary arrangements to obtain the feedback, the response of the target audience to the message sent.
- vi) Because communication is interaction, participants take turns 'sending' and 'receiving'. This turn-taking is even true for mass-mediated communication, for instance, the process whereby an entertainment program is created, programmed, and aired for an audience's enjoyment. If the audience watches and enjoys the program, it is likely to continue to be aired. If the audience is not amused, the program is cancelled....

Interaction means that both parties--persons or entities--can affect the other. In this way, both parties are senders and receivers. They are also co-persuaders in that they may take turns trying to affect one another by sharing symbols.

## Medium

Medium is a means used to exchange / transmit the message. The sender must choose an appropriate medium for transmitting the message else the message might not be conveyed to the desired recipients. The choice of appropriate medium of communication is essential for making the message effective and correctly interpreted by the recipient. This choice of communication medium varies depending upon the features of communication. For instance - Written medium is chosen when a message has to be conveyed to a small group of people, while an oral medium is chosen when spontaneous feedback is required from the recipient as misunderstandings are cleared then and there.

## Recipient/Decoder

Recipient or Decoder is a person for whom the message is intended / aimed / targeted. The receiver becomes aware that the message has arrived when he/she perceives it with the senses (hear, feel, see etc.). The receiver after receiving the message has to interpret it. This phase in the process is termed **decoding**. The receiver translates the symbols into ideas and interprets the message. The degree to which the decoder understands the message is dependent upon various factors such as



knowledge of recipient, their responsiveness to the message, and the reliance of encoder on decoder.

The receiver also feels a reaction to the message; this reaction may be conscious or unconscious; it may cause some change in the receiver's facial expression. It definitely leads the receiver to think and arrange for some action, if required. A response also may be initiated at this stage. This is known as feedback.

Receiver's functions account for the other half of the process of communication. They include:

- (i) Attend to the received message, listen, read or observe.
- (ii) Decode the message received.
- (iii) Interpret and understand the meaning of the message, what information is being conveyed and why?
- (iv) Respond to the message, if called for.
- (v) Provide feedback to the sender of the message

An interesting manifestation of the attention paid to the receiver in the study of the communication process is the concept of 'co-orientation,' which has become popular in the United States recently. The idea behind this concept is that two persons i.e. the sender and the receiver, can have similar perceptions and interpretations of the same object, and the greater the similarity (co-orientation), the more efficient will be the flow of communication between the persons. Conversely, an intense flow of communication may increase co-orientation.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is the main component of communication process as it permits the sender to analyse the efficacy of the message. It helps the sender in confirming the correct interpretation of message by the decoder. Receivers are not just passive absorbers of messages; they receive the message and respond to them. This response of a receiver to sender's message is called Feedback. Sometimes a feedback could be a non-verbal smiles, sighs etc.

Sometimes it is oral, as when you react to a colleague's ideas with questions or comments. Feedback can also be written like - replying to an e-mail, etc. Feedback is your audience's response; it enables you to evaluate the effectiveness of your message. If your audience does not understand what you mean, you can tell by the response and then refine the message accordingly.

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 the final link in the chain of the communication process. After receiving a message, the receiver responds in some way and signals that response to the sender. The signal may take the form of a spoken comment, a long sigh, a written message, a smile or some other action. Even a lack of response, is in a sense, a form of response. Without feedback, the sender cannot confirm that the receiver has interpreted the message correctly. Feedback is a key component in the communication process because it allows the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message... [and] take corrective action to clarify a misunderstood message.



**Figure 1.4.1: Earlier Means of Feedback**



**Figure 1.4.2: Modern Means of Feedback**

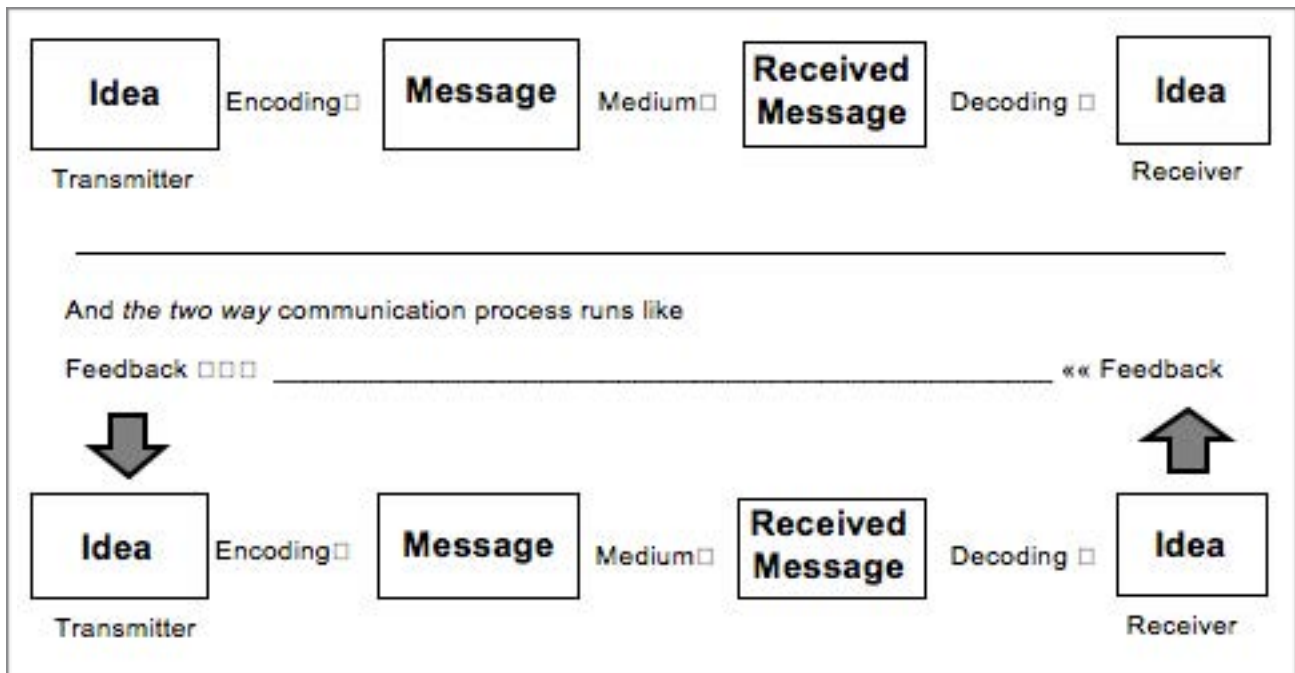
A manager should ensure that a feedback should:

1. **Focus on a Particular Behaviour** - It should be specific rather than being general.
2. **Impersonal** - Feedback should be job related, the manager should not criticize anyone personally.
3. **Goal Oriented** - If we have something negative to say about the person, we should always direct it to the recipient's goal and not towards the recipient.
4. **Well Timed** - Feedback is most effective when there is a short gap between the recipient's behaviour and the receipt of that feedback.
5. **Use "I" Statements** - Manager should make use of statements with the words like "I", "However" etc. For example instead of saying "You

were absent from work yesterday”, manager should say “I was annoyed when you missed your work yesterday”.

6. **Ensure Understanding** - For feedback to be effective, the manager should make sure that the recipients understand the feedback properly.
7. While giving negative feedback to the recipient, the manager should not mention the factors which are not in control of the recipient. It should focus on matters within the control of the recipient.

To summarise **the one way** communication process runs like



## 1.6 Levels of Communication

### **Intrapersonal Communication**

Intrapersonal communication is language used or thought internal to the communicator. Intrapersonal communication is the active internal involvement of the individual in symbolic processing of messages. The individual becomes his or her own sender and receiver, providing feedback to him or herself in an ongoing internal process. It can be useful to envision intrapersonal communication occurring in the mind of the individual in a model which contains a sender, receiver, and feedback loop.

Although successful communication is generally defined as being between two or more individuals, issues concerning the useful nature of communicating with oneself and problems concerning communication with non-sentient entities such as computers have made some argue that this definition is too narrow.

Intrapersonal communication can encompass:

- Day-dreaming
- Nocturnal dreaming, including and especially lucid dreaming
- Speaking aloud (talking to oneself), reading aloud, repeating what one hears; the additional activities of speaking and hearing (in the third case of hearing again) what one thinks, reads or hears may increase concentration and retention. This is considered normal, and the extent to which it occurs varies from person to person. The time when there should be concern is when talking to oneself occurs outside of socially acceptable situations.
- Writing (by hand, or with a wordprocessor, etc.) one's thoughts or observations: the additional activities, on top of thinking, of writing and reading back may again increase self-understanding ("How do I know what I mean until I see what I say?") and concentration. It aids ordering one's thoughts; in addition it produces a record that can be used later again. Copying text to aid memorizing also falls in this category.
- Making gestures while thinking: the additional activity, on top of thinking, of body motions, may again increase concentration, assist in problem solving, and assist memory.
- Sense-making, e.g. interpreting maps, texts, signs, and symbols
- Interpreting non-verbal communication e.g. gestures, eye contact
- Communication between body parts; e.g. "My stomach is telling me it's time for lunch."

## **Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication is defined by communication scholars in numerous ways, though most definitions involve participants who are interdependent on one another, have a shared history. Communication channels are the medium chosen to convey the message from sender to receiver. Communication channels can be categorized into two main categories: Direct and Indirect channels of communication.

Direct channels are those that are obvious and can be easily recognized by the receiver. They are also under direct control of the sender. In this category are the verbal and non-verbal channels of communication. Verbal communication channels are those that use words in some manner, such as written communication or spoken communication. Non-verbal communication channels are those that do not require silly words, such as certain overt facial expressions, controllable body movements (such as that made by a traffic police to control traffic at an intersection), color (red for danger, green means go).

Indirect channels are those channels that are usually recognized subliminally or subconsciously by the receiver, and not under direct control of the sender. This includes kinesics or body language that reflects the inner emotions and motivations rather than the actual delivered message. It also includes such vague terms as “gut feeling”, “hunches” or “premonitions”.

Interpersonal communication encompasses:

- Speech communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Unconscious communication
- Summarizing
- Paraphrasing
- Listening
- Questioning

- Initiating: Declaring one's conversational intent and inviting consent from one's prospective conversation partner
- Turn-taking: Managing the flow of information back and forth between partners in a conversation by alternating roles of speaker and listener.

Having good interpersonal communication skills support such processes as:

- parenting
- intimate relationship
- management
- selling
- counseling
- coaching
- mentoring and co-mentoring, which is mentoring in groups
- conflict management

Interpersonal communication is the subject of a number of disciplines in the field of psychology, notably Transactional analysis.

## **Group Communication**

Group communication refers to the nature of communication that occurs in groups that are between 3 and 12 individuals. Small group communication generally takes place in a context that mixes interpersonal communication interactions with social clustering. This is quite common when you are engaged in meetings with employees in your team, function or with other managers in the organization.

Group communication is both a science and an art. Behavioral scientists and management theorists have attempted to discern patterns in group communication and prescribe methods of increasing communication effectiveness for years. Although the merging of diverse cultures around the world makes this an ever-evolving topic, there are a number of elements that have been proven to encourage effective group communication processes.





**Figure 1.5**

Groups, or work teams, can accomplish great things in small and large businesses alike. A group's overall effectiveness, however, hinges to a great extent on the effectiveness of the participants' communication abilities. Without positive flows of communication, misunderstandings can occur between groups, creating a fractious work environment. Without clear communication between group leaders and workers, productivity can slow as workers struggle to understand their specific job functions. Communication styles can vary according to group dynamics. Geographically dispersed groups connected via the Internet, for example, are likely to communicate much differently than individuals who work in the same room with each other every day. Whatever the setting, the way groups communicate in your company (or for that matter, your family) can directly influence the success of your strategic goals.

Instilling a culture of openness, honesty and trust among co-workers is vital to effective group communication. All group participants must feel that they are free to contribute to the best of their ability without the fear of rejection, insult or political repercussions. Groups must be able to pool their intellectual resources to reach their full effectiveness, and that can only be accomplished when all members are ready and able to tackle new challenges in innovative ways. Individual respect is key to effective group communication. Clear hierarchical boundaries in meetings can stifle ideas and insights from lower-ranking employees. Every individual must truly



believe that their input will be valued and considered, without undue clout given to the input of managers and executives. This kind of respect for group members' individuality cannot come to fruition through formal policies; executives and managers must lead by example in this area by first encouraging employees to contribute in meetings, then recognizing and considering input from all participants.

## **Public Communications**

Public communication is the sending and receiving of messages on a large scale that impacts groups of people. For the communication to be considered effective, the messages must be clearly and accurately sent and received with full comprehension. Public communication is at the heart of our economy, society, and politics. Studios use it to promote their films. Politicians use it to get elected. Businesses use it to burnish their image. The purpose of effective public communication differs based on the intention of the message. For example, a public relations representative might use mass media to repair a company's public image after an alleged scandal breaks out. In this situation, effective public communication is intended to inform the public. On the other hand, a billboard's intention is to entice an audience to buy a product or service. Effective public communication is used to inform, educate, persuade and inspire the audience.

Advocates use it to promote social causes. It's a field built on ideas and images, persuasion and information, strategy and tactics. No policy or product can succeed without a smart message targeted to the right audience in creative and innovative. In public speaking, as in any form of communication, there are five basic elements, often expressed as "who is saying what to whom using what medium with what effects?" The purpose of public speaking can range from simply transmitting information, to motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. Good orators should be able to change the emotions of their listeners, not just inform them. Public speaking can also be considered a discourse community. Interpersonal communication and public speaking have several components that embrace such things as motivational speaking, leadership/personal development, business, customer service, large group communication, and mass communication. Public speaking can be a powerful tool to use for purposes such as motivation, influence, persuasion, informing, translation, or simply ethos.

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## 1.7 Importance of Communication

The importance of communication in an organization can be summarized as follows:

- a. Communication is considered to be the core of an organization; its structure; scope and effectiveness depend entirely on its communication techniques. For managers, communication is crucial for their work. Managers spend over 90% of their time on communication, about 75% being on face to face oral communication with peers, subordinates, superiors, customers.
- b. Communication promotes motivation by informing and clarifying the employees about the task to be performed by them, the manner they are performing the task, and how to improve their performance if it is not up to the mark.
- c. Communication is a source of information to the organizational members for decision-making process as it helps identifying and assessing alternative course of actions.
- d. Communication also plays a crucial role in altering individual's attitudes, i.e., a well-informed individual will have better and positive attitude than a less-informed individual. Organizational magazines, journals, meetings and various other forms of oral and written communication help in moulding employee's attitudes.
- e. Communication also helps in socializing. In creating and establishing team spirit. In today's life the only presence of another individual fosters communication. It is also said that one cannot survive without communication.

- f. Communication also assists in controlling process. It helps controlling organizational member's behaviour in various ways. There are various levels of hierarchy and certain principles and guidelines that employees must follow in an organization. They must comply with organizational policies, perform their job role efficiently and communicate any work problem and grievance to their superiors. Thus, communication helps in controlling function of management.

An effective and efficient communication system requires managerial proficiency in delivering and receiving messages. A manager must discover various barriers to communication, analyze the reasons for their occurrence and take preventive steps to avoid those barriers. Thus, the primary responsibility of a manager is to develop and maintain an effective communication system in the organization.

## 1.8 Summary

Effective communication plays a vital role in the success of every professional and personal relationship. The basic communication model consists of five elements of communication: the sender, the receiver, the message, the channel and feedback. The message may be the most crucial element of effective communication. A message can come in many different forms, such as an oral presentation, a written document, an advertisement. The last element of effective communication, feedback, describes the receiver's response or reaction to the sender's message or just a comment. The message travels from one point to another via a channel of communication.

Timing of communication; choice of medium; tone and point of view are all essentials of effective communication. Organization; evidence and support (relevance, specificity, accuracy and sufficiency of detail); knowledge of subject and material; quality of perception, analysis, and insight will assist you to develop your message and ensure it is clear and complete.

The simplest definition of communication is: "Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another"

— **Keith Davis.**

The seven qualities of effective communication are:

1. Completeness;
2. Conciseness;
3. Consideration;
4. Concreteness;
5. Clarity;
6. Courtesy; and
7. Correctness.

To be a successful communicator you need to digest eight characteristics of communication namely: - segmented; specific, timely, accurate, frequent, multi-channel, face-to-face and two way. Communication is a process of exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages. It is a continuous process.

Communication takes place at different levels. It can be intrapersonal. Then it is language used or thought internal to the communicator.

Interpersonal communication is defined by communication scholars in numerous ways, though most definitions involve participants who are interdependent on one another, have a shared history. Communication channels are the medium chosen to convey the message from sender to receiver. Communication channels can be categorized into two main categories: Direct and Indirect channels of communication. Group communication- refers to the nature of communication that occurs in groups like when you are engaged in meetings with employees in your team, function or with other managers in the organization. Public communication, the last level, is the sending and receiving of messages on a large scale that impacts groups of people. Public communication is at the heart of our economy, society, and politics.

### **Improved Communication** [Refer Activity 1.1]

I was jogging one day and I noticed a person in front of me, about half a kilometer. I could tell he was running a little slower than me and I thought, well, I shall try to catch him. I had about one and half kilometer to go my path before I needed to turn off.

So I started running faster and faster. Every block, I was gaining on him just a little bit. After just a few minutes I was only about 30 meters behind him, so I really picked up the pace and push myself. You would have thought I was running in the last leg of London Olympic competition. I was determined to catch him.

Finally, I did it! I caught and passed him by. On the inside I felt so good. “I beat him” of course, he didn’t even know we were racing.

After I passed him, I realized I had been so focused on competing against him that I had missed my turn. I had gone nearly six blocks past it. I had to turn around and go all back.

Is not that what happens in life when we focus on competing with co-workers, neighbors, friends, family, trying to outdo them or trying to prove that we are more successful or more important? We spend our time and energy running after them and we miss out on our own paths to our God given destinies. The problem with unhealthy competition is that it’s a never ending cycle.

There will always be somebody ahead of you, someone with better job, nicer car, more money in the bank, more education, a prettier wife, a more handsome husband, better behaved children, etc. But realize that “You can be the best that you can be; you are not competing with no one.” Some people are insecure because they pay too much attention to what others are doing, where others are going, wearing and driving.

Take what God has given you, the height, weight and personality. Dress well and wear it proudly! You’ll be blessed by it. Stay focused and live a healthy life.

There’s no competition in DESTINY, run your own RACE and wish others WELL!!!

## 1.9 Self-Assessment Question

1. What are main attributes of communication?
2. List factors that can make communication effective.
3. How does environment affect communication?
4. Describe the entire process of communication.
5. Stress importance of feedback in effective communication.

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 3](#)



# Chapter 2

## Verbal Communication

### Objectives

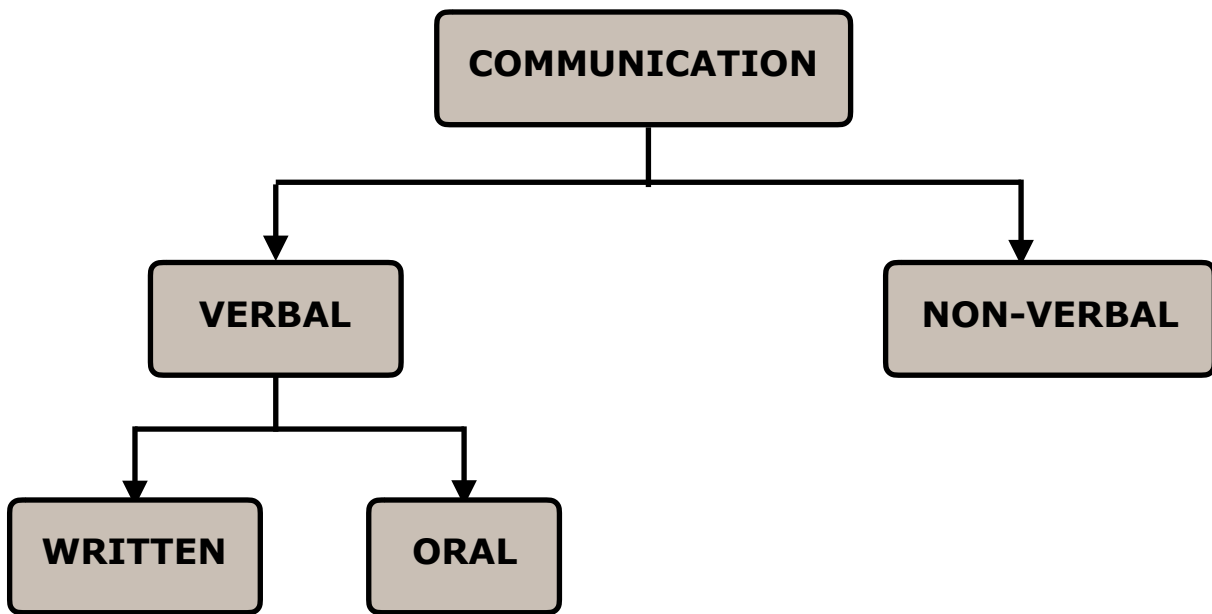
After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- The nature of oral and written communication
- The advantages and disadvantages of oral and written communication
- Media used for oral and written communication
- Office grapevine
- Selecting appropriate medium for delivery of your messages.

### Structure:

- 2.1 Nature of Oral Communication
- 2.2 Advantages of Oral Communication
- 2.3 Disadvantages of Oral Communication
- 2.4 Media for Oral Communication
- 2.5 Grapevine – A Variant of Oral Communication
- 2.6 Nature of Written Communication
- 2.7 Advantages of Written Communication
- 2.8 Disadvantages of Written Communication
- 2.9 Media for Written Communication
- 2.10 The Choice of Medium
- 2.11 Summary
- 2.12 Self-Assessment Questions

Communication is generated by verbal or non-verbal channels. Non-verbal communication is critical and sometimes carries more meaning and information than verbal one. But larger volume of communication is verbal. And it is either oral or written.



## 2. 1 Nature of Oral Communication

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.

Oral communication is more natural and immediate. We speak to communicate in informal situations. We also speak to communicate in formal and official situations like interviews, speeches, meetings or presentations. Many persons feel nervous and ill at ease while engaging in oral communication especially when environment is new or unfriendly, or persons you have to speak to hold a senior position or, many a times, belongs to opposite sex.

Oral communication is possible when both the parties are available at the same location – you have a direct conversation – or at different locations, but at the same time – as is the case with telephonic conversation. In case the other party is not available, you have to substitute oral communication with the written one ( or shall we term it recorded communication?) .

Since oral communication is spontaneous, it is not possible to be precise in choice of words nor is there time to hunt for the most appropriate and accurate words. But you have an opportunity to seek clarification on the spot by raising your doubts and queries – an alternative that is absent in case of written communication. While oral communication cannot boast of best of the words, it has the support of vocal tone, expressions and gestures which can enrich the meaning of the words. Some individuals are effective orators others effective writers. To succeed in your organization, you need to have high command on both these alternatives.

## 2.2 Advantages of Oral Communication

### **Thorough Understanding**

There is high level of understanding and transparency in oral communication as it is interpersonal. This is more so in face to face conversations. It is not necessary for parties to worry about how a particular message is to be interpreted, as there is ample scope to seek clarifications and explanations, whenever in doubt. At the end of every oral communication both the parties are clear about the message under discussion. Question answer session that takes place before the closure of any conversation adds clarity to reception and understanding of the subject matter under discussion.

Many a times, this opportunity to seek total understanding of the subject matter is lost by the participants. This happens when a party is reticent and unwilling to break silence and seek clarifications. When there is upward or downward communication, differences in the positions held by the participants can prevent a junior or younger person from asking for the required clarifications.

### **Flexibility**

There is no element of rigidity in oral communication. There is flexibility for allowing changes in the decisions previously taken. Based on immediate feedback received, either party can change its position after hearing the other side of the story. There is adequate scope to get your ideas cleared by seeking immediate clarifications, a facility not available in written communication. It is quite possible that both parties to the conversation have a better perception of the subject matter at the end of the dialogue.

Unlike in written communication, you do not need any stuff or material to converse. Just the availability of two (or more) individuals is adequate.

### **Spontaneity**

The feedback is spontaneous in case of oral communication. The pros and cons of a subject matter can be thoroughly discussed and examined from all angles, and required material for decision making can be easily and completely collected during oral communication. Thus, decisions can be made quickly without any delay. In the current competitive business environment, oral communication is critical for effective decision making process. Here we must mention that with availability of fast and reliable communication alternatives, oral communication is feasible 24:7 all over the globe paving way for the exchange of ideas among two persons located anywhere in the world in a matter of a few minutes.

### **Economy**

Oral communication is not only time saving, but it also saves upon money and efforts. Unlike written communication, you do not need to spend on writing material like paper and pen /pencil; nor is it necessary to pay for typing, printing and posting. Similarly the total time required for the communication process is shorter as both the sender and receiver are there together at the same time. When you write a message, sender spends time in writing it and then later, receiver has to devote time to read it; such duplication is not there in oral exchanges and costly time of the parties involved is saved.

### **Secrecy**

Oral communication can be best used to transfer private and confidential information/matter. The information is shared by the two parties in their privacy in face-to-face communication and otherwise by private telephones. Here we do not consider eaves dropping by secretaries or telephone operators when you get connected through telephone exchanges. Nor do we recognize the possibility of your phone connection being tapped by secret agents or tax authorities! Thus you have an advantage in exchanging secret important data and decisions without any third party holding you responsible for the same.

## **Team and Morale Building**

Oral communication is best in case of problem resolution. In day to day operations of a business or any other organization differences arise among the members, especially when they are handling diverse function or regions. Such conflicts, disputes and many issues/ differences can be put to an end by talking them over. When a person gets an opportunity to express his/her opinions, ideas, on the matters under dispute and has an assurance that others have understood, if not accepted, them, bad feelings created by the conflict diminish, if not disappear. The participants, on hearing all sides of the story, are more amenable to arrive at a solution that benefits all. If you were to engage in written communication to arrive at such decisions, it would take a long interval if at all possible.

You will thus observe that oral communication is an essential ingredient for teamwork and group synergy. It brings team members together to share their difficulties and seek solutions without any serious damage is caused. Such quick resolution of conflicts promotes a receptive and encouraging morale among organizational employees. This is a major contributor to organizations placing a very high priority for clean, quick and effective communication among their employees. And also for interviewers' placing such high weightage to your communication skills at the job interviews.

## **2.3 Disadvantages of Oral Communication**

### **Lack of Formality**

Relying only on oral communication may not be sufficient in associations and offices as business communication is formal and very organized. We have a tendency to believe in what we see in black and white. For clarity and ease in implementation all financial and business decisions are written and duly approved. Oral communication is less authentic than written communication as it is always informal and not as organized as written communication. In case of disputes oral communication cannot be produced before authorities as a piece of evidence to check its authenticity (unless it was previously recorded). Any communication requiring a stamp of approval cannot be in oral format.

## **Time Consuming**

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. On many occasions persons who have no direct connection with the matter under discussion are invited for a meeting and until it is over they are unable to carry their jobs. Oral communication requires attentiveness and great receptivity on part of the receivers who, therefor, have no option to carry any other activity. . This means they have to keep all their other, important, and sometimes critical, assignments aside, just to participate in exchange of ideas. Employees invariably complain that they are prevented from completing their tasks and have to stay late into night at their place of work, because they had a series of work related meetings to attend.

Oral communications are not easy to maintain and thus they are unsteady. You need a very strong knowledgeable person as a coordinator to keep conversations on track and concentrated on the subject matter. Every person has to be given an opportunity to talk. You cannot ask anyone to just shut up. And when provided a chance to speak, in their anxiety to uphold their ideas and position, the participants enter into verbal outpourings and mislead the audience away from the matter on hand. More time is devoted to minor, unrelated matters at the cost of the major critical issue.

## **Lack of Clarity**

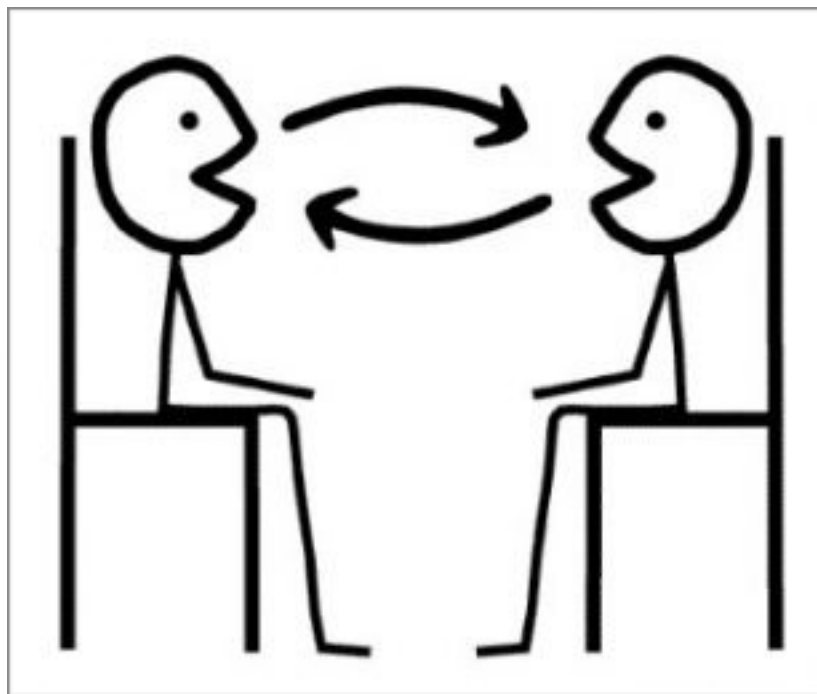
There may be misunderstandings in oral communication as the information is not complete and may lack essentials. Since ideas are not written down and prioritized, the speakers have not spent time in studying the subject and collecting their thoughts, there are gaps in decision making process. It is often observed that each person has materially different interpretation as to what was unanimously agreed at the end of the conversation. Well written minutes of the meeting can only resolve the misunderstandings.

Hence for all important business matters there is no option but to communicate them through clear and precise written communication.

## 2.4 Media for Oral Communication

### **Face to Face Communication**

Conventional wisdom tells us that face to face communication is more effective than other types of communication such as telephone or email. The argument in favor of face time is that telephone or email communication lacks important non-verbal cues to help us understand the message. What are those non-verbal cues and how important they are in communication? Even though we lack an all-encompassing non-verbal communication study, all the individual studies point to a common finding. Non-verbal cues play a significant role in understanding a verbal message. Non-verbal communication either confirms or contradicts verbal messages. Body language is a powerful enrichment of communication. While appointing persons to the important positions in marketing and sales, face to face interviews offer a richer communication experience owing to the close presence of the living personality whose voice, tone, expression, eye contact and movements add significance to the words.



Your face-to-face communication can be very effective if you remember to follow the simple rules below. Do give people honest, direct, and comprehensive information. Do not hold back bad news. The people you're working with are intelligent adults. Treat them that way. Do put messages

into context, so that recipients come away with insights as well as facts. Do not just tell people “what”; tell them “why, how, and where their job fits into the larger picture”, too. Do not make communication a one-way street. The more interaction you can build into your communications, the better. Develop group involvement mechanisms. Invite response. Discuss and debate, too. Do communicate first through action, then words. What you do in the hallways is even more important than what you say in the meeting. Do not assume that one communication channel fits all. While email may be the perfect way to transmit some messages, and the Internet may be ideal for others, many messages require a more “high touch” approach. Sort through your communications and decide which channel fits which message. (Hint: the more emotional the message - or the reaction to the message - the more likely it is that face-to-face will be the best communication strategy.)



**Table 2.1**



Do remember that effective communication also includes body language. Finger-pointing, fist-pounding, and making grandiose gestures are perceived as aggressive. On the other hand, smiling too much, speaking too softly, looking at the floor, and wringing your hands can make you seem uncertain and indecisive. Do not forget that one of the most important parts of communication is listening. And you must really listen -- giving people your full attention, asking for clarification about things you don't understand, and treating people's ideas and concerns as crucial to the organization's success. Do stay aware that the message sent isn't always the one received. George Bernard Shaw once said that the problem with communication is "the illusion that it has been accomplished." As communicators, you must be careful not to suffer that illusion. While managing at the speed of business today, you can't afford to find that what you thought had been clearly communicated was, in reality, never understood or believed by employees. Do not wait too long to ask for feedback. The greatest advantages come when organizational feedback is gathered immediately after the delivery of every important message. One manager uses this short questionnaire to query her audiences before they leave the meeting room:

- What in your view are the most important points we just covered?
- What didn't you understand?
- With what do you disagree?
- What else do you want to know?

Do realize that in the information era, communication becomes a part of everyone's job. And, like any critical skill, it is one you can and need to improve with training, practice, and coaching.

## Telephone Conversation



It is a personal and immediate means of oral communication. Short of talking with someone face-to-face, a phone call is the best way to get a personal response. If the person you called is available, you can take care of business on the spot. With other forms of communication, such as texting or email, you leave a message and hope for a quick response. Phone calls have a vocal backup in the form of voice mail. The caller can leave a detailed voice message, without the restriction of a certain number of characters or typing a text message on a tiny cell-phone keypad. In effective communications as we noticed earlier, : body language accounts for 55 percent, voice tone for 38 percent and spoken words for 7 percent. On the telephone, voice tone give dimension and emotion to words, increasing the effectiveness of the communication. Certain body language, such as smiling and standing while talking, may come through in the conversation. Texting and emails are simply words open to interpretation by the receiver, without the benefit of voice tone or body language.

Some communications, such as condolences, disciplinary issues, sensitive and confidential issues, should be handled with a personal phone call. Taking the time to make a phone call carries more weight than an

impersonal text or email. Without the opportunity for two-way communication, sensitive issues may be misinterpreted. Text messages and emails become legal documents and can be retrieved as evidence long after deletion. Some businesses monitor and record phone conversations between employees and customers for training purposes. Deleted voice-mail messages may not be retrieved and do not leave a record of the conversation.

Telephone communication involves a combination of effective speaking and listening skills. You must be able to speak clearly and use the correct tone of voice; you must also know when to be quiet and listen. Your behavior on the telephone can determine a degree of success in life, whether it is as a business person, an employee for someone else or as a person seeking to improve his personal relationships.

Always address the other party on the line by his/her name. This makes the individual feel that you think the contact is important. What name to address the party by, depends on how she/he introduces himself to you over the phone. For example, if the individual introduces himself as Mukund Shah, call him Mukund Shah over the phone. If he introduces himself as Mukund that is the name you should use when you call him next. While on phone avoid negative tone/language. It is not only essential that you avoid negative words or phrases such as "I can't", "I won't" or "you're wrong"; it also befits you to avoid implying that you won't or that the other party is wrong by the tone of your voice. Remember, a person on the other end of a phone line can't see you. All he has to go by is your tone of voice. Use a soft tone of voice; allow the other individual to hear a smile. Project the demeanor of a person who is eager to seek a solution to a problem.

When taking messages for other people, accuracy is always important. Take the name, telephone number, the time of the call, and what they wanted. Also ask questions such as, "What is the best way to get in touch with you?" and "What is the best time to call?" Ask only the important questions; avoid making the caller feel uncomfortable by asking questions that may be too personal.

Always be ready to listen. Pay attention to what the other party is saying. Do not interrupt. Do not try to finish the other individual's sentences for them. Keeping quiet and letting the person express himself in his own

words makes that person feel more comfortable telling you what his perception of the problem is, rather than causing him to feel that only your perception of his problem is important. Let the other party speak at his own pace.

## **Texting**

This service is also known as Instant Messaging Communication. When we text each other using a phone or a PDA, we only have words to send our message and to receive it. We are missing tone of voice, facial expressions, body language and presence to help us decode the message. To complicate matters, when we text we use shorthand (e.g. LOL for laughing out loud). We also misspell or shorten words because we don't want to use a tiny thumbboard to write long messages, and because we are in a rush to send the messages out. After all, it's instant messaging.

## **Teleconferencing**

In the past few years, corporations have gotten bigger and more spread out. Several busy employees all over the world also do at least some of their work from home.. Since offices and employees can be quite apart, getting everyone into the same room for business, meetings or training has become decidedly impractical for a lot of companies.

That's why teleconferencing -- the real-time exchange of information between people who are not in the same physical space -- has become such a big industry running into billions of dollars in revenue. Through teleconferencing, companies can conduct meetings, customer briefs, training, demonstrations and workshops by phone or online instead of in person.

The simplest phone teleconference is a three-way call, available in many homes as a service from the telephone company. Another very simple (but not necessarily effective) method is to have two groups of people talk to one another via speakerphone. The limits of three-way calling and the sound quality of speakerphones make both of these options impractical for most businesses.



**Figure 2.1**

Conference calls let groups of people -- from a few to hundreds -- communicate by phone. Banks and brokerages often use conference calls to give status reports to large numbers of listeners. Other businesses use conference calls to help coworkers communicate, plan and brainstorm. To connect to the call, attendees call a designated number (MeetMe conferencing), or an operator or moderator calls each participant (ad hoc conferencing).

Conference calls connect people through a conference bridge, which is essentially a server that acts like a telephone and can answer multiple calls simultaneously. Software plays a large role in the bridge's capabilities beyond simply connecting multiple callers.

A company can have its own bridge or can contract with a service provider for conference call hosting. Providers frequently offer add-on features for conference calls, such as:

- Attendee polling
- Call recording
- In-call operators or attendants

Companies using Voice over IP (VoIP) telephones can also host conference calls themselves if the VoIP software supports them. Many phone conferencing systems require a login and personal identification number (PIN) to access the system. This helps protect confidential and proprietary information during the call. Video phones can add a visual element to conference calls, but businesses often need to share other visual information.

Web conferencing allows people to communicate through text and video in addition to audio. The simplest web conferencing methods use chat and instant messaging programs to host text-based group discussions. More sophisticated programs exchange visual information with webcams and streaming video. Some allow people to share documents online.

Companies can either purchase conferencing software and host their meetings themselves or use a hosting service. Hosting services provide the software and server space on which to conduct meetings. Either way, the company or the hosting service must have software to coordinate the meeting and ample server space and bandwidth to accommodate it.

Web conferencing programs combine tools already common to web pages and Internet communication. They bundle these tools into one interface to create an interactive meeting environment. These tools include: HTML, XML and ASP markup; Java scripts; Flash animation; Instant messaging; Streaming audio and video. Some programs are entirely computer- and Internet-based. Others use the telephone system to distribute audio content.

To participate in the online meetings, participants must have:

- A computer
- An Internet connection
- A telephone, if audio content is not provided online

To participate in the online meetings, participants must have:







If the conferencing program relies on Internet-based audio chat and webcam feeds, the participants' PCs should have:

- Microphones
- Webcams
- Video capture cards

In general, every online presentation or meeting has a moderator and attendees. The moderator sets the time and date of the meeting, prepares the content and makes sure everything works properly before the meeting begins. Attendees can either view the presentation without giving feedback or can collaborate, based on the settings and capabilities of the programs. Often, moderators can record the presentation for later viewing and can pass their moderator capabilities to attendees during the meeting.

Web conferences are not just for businesses. Hospitals can use audio and video conferencing to supplement their emergency room staff. For example, some high tech hospitals use video conferencing to allow neurologists to confer with stroke patients. Web conferencing has also allowed deployed soldiers to communicate with their families and even get married.

Web conferencing programs come with a tremendous variety of features and capabilities. Some can merge with a company's existing e-mail, calendar, messaging and office productivity applications. Some allow attendees to view the presentation in their regular web browser without installing any additional software.



Depending on the software, people can:

1. View slide presentations from programs like PowerPoint
2. Draw or write on a common whiteboard by using their computer mice or typing
3. Annotate images and diagrams using the same whiteboard principle
4. Transmit still pictures or video to other attendees via a webcam (This increases the required bandwidth and can sometimes slow the transfer of the presentation.)
5. View information from the moderator's computer desktop using screen sharing
6. Share documents, often even if attendees don't have the software that created them, using application sharing
7. Hold interactive question-and-answer sessions that integrate video and audio
8. Send public or private messages through instant messaging
9. Annotate or modify documents and spreadsheets from compatible applications
10. Transfer files between attendees
11. Ask and answer questions through audio chat (as an integrated part of the software) or by phone

Since these meetings take place over the Internet, programs include options for security and encryption. Most programs require moderators and attendees to use a login name and password to access the meeting. Some use SSL or TLS encryption to protect data. Some companies also host web conferences on internal servers so that the data stays behind the corporate firewall. The moderator or host can monitor who is participating in the conference through sign-in logs and roll calls.

**Table 2.2**

Communication Media - A Comparison						
	Words	Voice	Visuals	Face	Body Language	Presence
Face to Face	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Video Conference	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Telephone	✓	✓				
Texting	✓	✓				

## 2.5 Grapevine – a Variant of Oral Communication

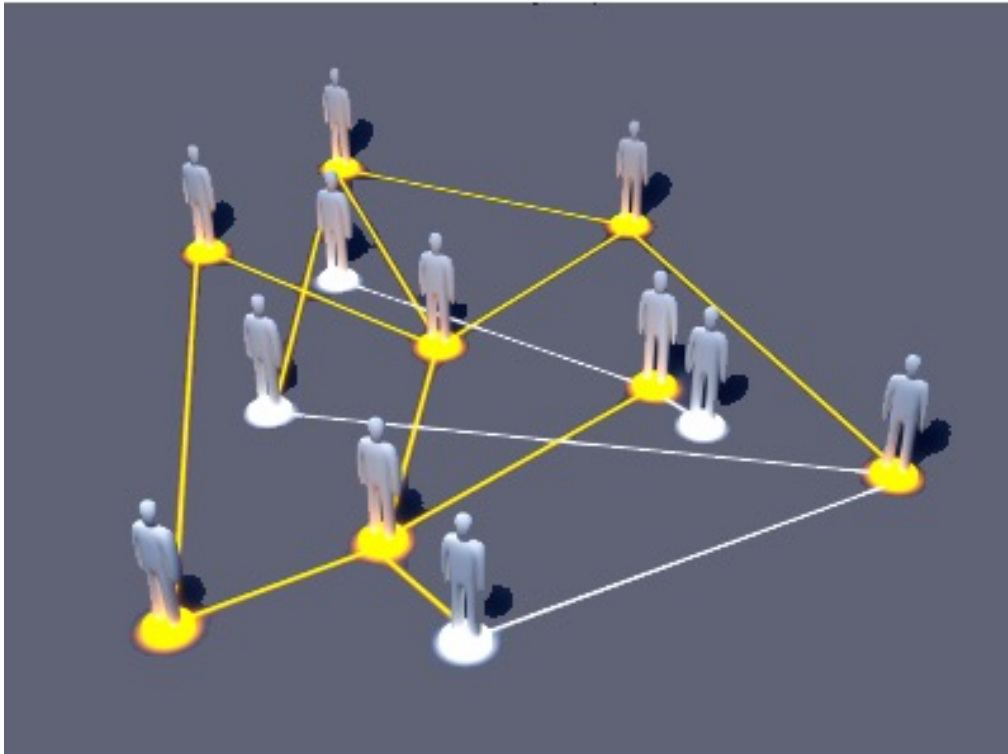
### **Grapevine Communication**

Grapevine communication is the informal communication network within an organization. The grapevine is used to spread information bypassing the formal communication structure. Just like the grapevine plant: it spreads in random ways and it goes where it can. The grapevine is formed by individuals and groups in an organization. The people in the groups have something in common that links them together. A person can belong to one or more groups. As an example, a manager can belong to a group of women that go to lunch together every Friday. She can also belong to a group of managers in her department that engage into frequent telephone calls about work in both formal and informal ways. She could have a third group of people scattered throughout the organization from which she receives periodic progress reports about the work.

The manager in this example is likely to pass information across her three main, informal networks. In some ways, she is verifying the accuracy of the rumors she hears. When more than one of her networks is in agreement about a given rumor, she is bound to believe it's true. Grapevine thus 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 at all but more at lower levels of organization.

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.



**Figure 2.2**

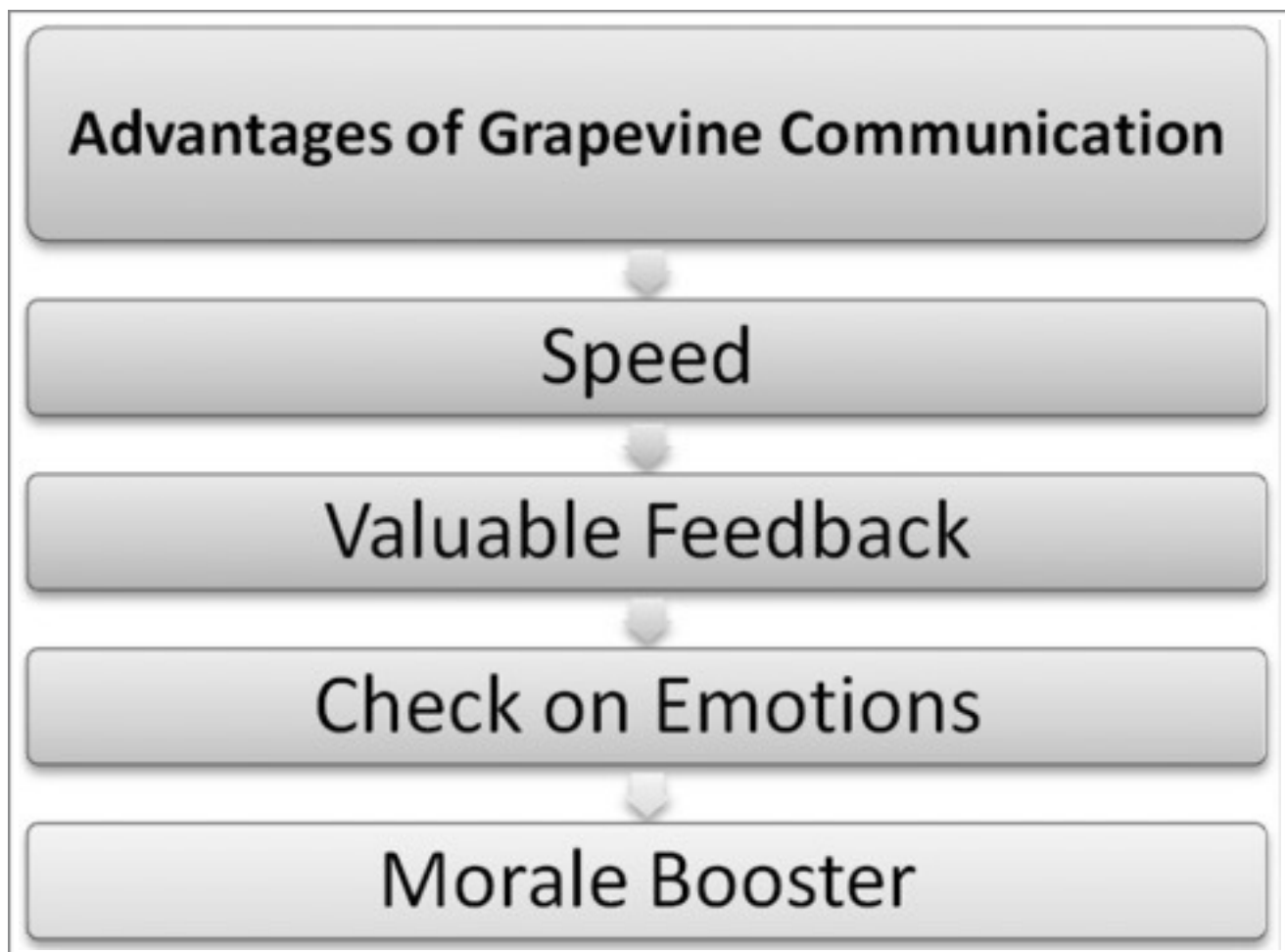
### **Grapevine Communication - Advantages**

Grapevine communication creates a social bond where none existed. People like to talk to one another; whether they talk about work or family, or anything else. Teams become more cohesive when members talk to one another outside of the project or assignment they may be working on. Informal communication lends itself to bonding. The grapevine fills in a gap that is left when official information is missing, especially in chaotic or changing times. Even in organizations where management is very proactive

about communicating change and keeping employees informed, grapevine exists to help fill in the blanks.

Grapevine channels carry information rapidly. As soon as an employee gets to know some confidential information, she/he becomes inquisitive and passes the details then to her/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. As said earlier, 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.

**Table 2.3**



## **Grapevine Communication - Disadvantages**

There are some intrinsic dangers in bypassing the organizational channels to get to the facts of the matter. The main danger is that much of the information that gets spread through the grapevine is not verified. Some of the information is likely false and difficult, if not impossible, to verify. We discount information when the source is a known gossip. But not completely... Even when the source is someone known to spread rumors, we believe that where there's smoke... Since we don't know what part is fire and what is smoke, we accept the whole rumor. To justify our participation in spreading the rumor, we tell ourselves that part of it must be true.

The main reason why we give credence to a rumor is that it seems to match what we think about the situation or person that the rumor is about. We also tend to believe the person sharing the rumor with us. Another main disadvantage of grapevine communication is that it's often used to spread more than rumors; it's used to spread gossip. The terms rumors and gossip are used sometimes interchangeably, but rumors are not quite the same as gossip. Both are pieces of information that can't be verified, but rumors tend to affect organizations or groups of people, while gossip refers to more personal matters.

When gossip is being spread through the grapevine, people's reputations, careers, and lives can get destroyed very rapidly.

Despite its disadvantages, the grapevine can serve a purpose. The grapevine in many ways helps keep people honest; it can dissuade people from engaging on behavior that they don't want others to know about. This is a two edge sword. On one hand, people will think twice about taking what they know is a wrong course of action. On the other hand, they may also think twice about taking a necessary risk and doing the right thing, fearful that the action may give rise to rumors.

Bottom Line is that grapevine communication is part of the workplace, it can't be eliminated. Recognizing its pros and cons can help you use it to your advantage. 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.

## GRAPEVINE

- Learn to live with it. It's here to stay.
- Tune into it. Pay attention to the information that's circulating and try to learn something from it. Remember: The more you know about grapevine information, the better you can interact with employees (who, in turn, will probably come to regard you as someone who keeps in touch with the things that concern them).
- Don't participate in rumors. Resist the temptation to add your two cents' worth, and don't make matters worse.
- Check out what you hear. Because it's your job to replace bad information with good information, you need to find out what's really going on.
- Take advantage of the grapevine. Its only function is to carry information, so there's no reason why you can't pump some useful information through it.

Perhaps most importantly, when alert managers notice that the grapevine is particularly active, they tend to reach a sensible twofold conclusion:

1. The organization's formal lines of communication aren't working as well as they should be.
2. The best way to minimize informal communication and its potential damage is to provide better formal communication from the outset—or, failing that, to provide whatever formal communication will counteract misinformation as thoroughly as possible.

## 2.6 Nature of Written Communication



**Figure 2.3: Written Communication**

Written communication involves any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. Communication is a key to any endeavor involving more than one person. Communicating through writing is essential in the modern world and is becoming ever more so as we participate in what is now commonly called the information age. In fact, written communication is the most common form of business communication. It is essential for small business owners and managers to develop effective written communication skills and to encourage the same in all employees. The information age has altered the ways in which we communicate and placed an increasing emphasis on written versus oral communications.

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.

The ever-increasing use of computers and computer networks to organize and transmit information means the need for competent writing skills is rising. Many inquiries float each month from managers and executives

requesting help with improving their own and their employees' writing skills. It is observed that millions of people previously not required to do a lot of writing on the job are now expected to write frequently and rapidly. And, unfortunately, many of them are not up to the task. The need to develop good writing skills is only highlighted by the fact that in the information age, it is not uncommon to have business relationships with customers and suppliers that are established and maintained exclusively through the use of written communications. In this environment, the words we write are very real representations of our companies and ourselves.

## 2.7 Advantages of written communication

### **Ease**

Written communication does not need presence of receiver of the message. The sender can prepare the message at her/his convenience, in privacy and over a time required to think, visualize the message and form it in clear-cut manner and format. This peace of mind is not there when message is to be conveyed to the receiver orally in presence of the two parties.

### **Formal**

Written communication helps in laying down formal principles, policies and rules for running of an organization. These are prepared by function heads and approved by the top management. Both workers and supervisors now know exactly what is expected of them, there is no inconsistency and no chance for misinterpretation of the instructions issued. Unlike oral instructions, they cannot be changed from time to time to create confusion.

It assists in proper delegation of responsibilities. While in case of oral communication, it is impossible to fix and delegate responsibilities on the grounds of speech as it can be taken back by the speaker or he may refuse to acknowledge.

### **Record and Evidence**

It is a permanent means of communication. Thus, it is useful for legal and official communication where record maintenance for evidence is required.



In case of disagreements and disputes, not oral, but written communication available in the form of records and documents can only provide proof for resolution and correct decisions. Recorded oral communication does not carry the degree of acceptance and reliability that is associated with written communication. Once the communication is written it cannot be altered surreptitiously. Any alterations arranged later on are always visible.

### **Precision and Accuracy**

Written communication is more precise and explicit especially when words and phrases are chosen with utmost care. In writing messages caution has to be exercised to make the meaning very clear because the receiver of the message is not present to seek clarifications. Clarity is possible because the writer can spend required time to phrase and rephrase the sentences until they convey the correct message. There is no time pressure for its delivery and required time can be provided to bring in required accuracy to the satisfaction of the sender of the message.

### **Image Building**

Effective written communication develops and enhances an organization's image. The benefits commonly associated with good writing skills include increased customer/client satisfaction through well drafted letters, product brochures, operating manual that are routinely couriered to the customers. Written communication improves inter-organizational efficiency and enhances the image of the company in the community and industry.

**Table 2.4**



## 2.8 Disadvantages of written communication

### **Expense**

Written communication does not save upon the costs. It costs substantially in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in composing and writing/typing/copying the message. Unlike oral communication delivery of message is not immediate here. The communication has to be delivered to

the receiver through post, courier or some other intermediary. This involves both loss of time and cost.

### **Delay in Delivery and Receipt of Feedback**

The written messages often take more time to compose, both because of their information-packed nature and the difficulty that many individuals have in composing such correspondence. Also, if the receivers of the written message are separated by distance and if they need to clear their doubts, the response is not spontaneous. For instance, unlike oral communication, wherein impressions and reactions are exchanged instantaneously, the sender of written communication does not generally receive immediate feedback to his or her message. This can be a source of frustration and uncertainty in business situations in which a swift response is desired.

Written communication is time-consuming as the feedback is not immediate. The encoding and sending of message takes time. In addition, Effective written communication requires great skills and competencies in language and vocabulary use. Poor writing skills and quality have a negative impact on organization's reputation.

## **2.9 Media for written communication**

Written communication is has to be conveyed both within the organization and externally outside the organization. Internal written communication is delivered through mail boys/girls or electronically by intranet. Electronic mail has emerged as a highly popular business communication tool in recent years. Indeed, its capacity to convey important corporate communications swiftly and easily has transformed it into a communications workhorse for business enterprises of all sizes and orientations. For external communication various alternatives are available to suit the urgency of the message, the distance over which it is to be delivered.

### **Postal Mail**

The primary function of post office is collection, processing, transmission and delivery of mails. All postal articles whose contents are in the nature of message can be classified as mails which include letters, postcard, Inland letter card, packets, ordinary, registered, insured, value payable articles,

speed post. These are classified as first class and second class mails. First class mails get free Air mail transmission within India; whereas second class mails get air lift only if prepaid with air surcharge. Automated Mail processing centre at major locations in the country has been set up to create an Automated Mail grid. Dedicated transport arrangements both road and air are made for expeditious transmission of mails. For overseas destinations documents are delivered via air mail and cost here is substantial and it may take a week for documents to reach.

## Courier

A “courier” delivers messages, packages, and mail. Couriers are distinguished from ordinary mail services by features such as speed, security, tracking, signature, specialization and individualization of express services, and swift delivery times, which are optional for most everyday mail services. As a premium service, couriers are usually more expensive than standard mail services, and their use is typically restricted to packages where one or more of these features are considered important enough to warrant the cost. Courier services operate on all scales, from within specific towns or cities, to regional, national and global services. Large courier companies include DHL, FedEx, EMS International, TNT, UPS, and Aramex. These offer services worldwide, typically via a hub and spoke model.



**Figure 2.4: Documents Delivered through Courier**

## **Fax Messages**

Fax (short for facsimile), sometimes called telecopying or telefax, is the telephonic transmission of scanned printed material (both text and images), normally to a telephone number connected to a printer or other output device. The original document is scanned with a fax machine (or a telecopier), which processes the contents (text or images) as a single fixed graphic image, converting it into a bitmap, and then transmitting it through the telephone system. The receiving fax machine reconverts the coded image, printing a paper copy. For many decades before digital technology became widespread, the scanned data was transmitted as analogue.

Although businesses usually maintain some kind of fax capability, the technology has faced increasing competition from Internet-based alternatives. Fax machines still retain some advantages, particularly in the transmission of sensitive material which, if sent over the Internet unencrypted, may be vulnerable to interception, without the need for telephone tapping. In some countries, because electronic signatures on contracts are not recognized by law while faxed contracts with copies of signatures are, fax machines enjoy continuing support in business. In Japan, faxes are still used extensively for cultural reasons

In many corporate environments, freestanding fax machines have been replaced by fax servers and other computerized systems capable of receiving and storing incoming faxes electronically, and then routing them to users on paper or via an email (which may be secured). Such systems have the advantage of reducing costs by eliminating unnecessary printouts and reducing the number of inbound analog phone lines needed by an office.

The once ubiquitous fax machine has also begun to disappear from the small office and home office environments.

## **E-mail – Popular Media**

Electronic mail, most commonly referred to as email or e-mail since the year 1993, is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author to one or more recipients. Modern email operates across the Internet or other computer networks. Some early email systems required that the author and the recipient both be online at the same time, in common with instant

messaging. Today's email systems are based on a store-and-forward model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver, and store messages. Neither the users nor their computers are required to be online simultaneously; they need connect only briefly, typically to a mail server, for as long as it takes to send or receive messages.

Despite its name implying that its use is faster than either postal (physical) mail or telephone calls, correspondence over email often varies incredibly steeply — ranging from communication that is indeed semi-instant (often the fastest when a person is already sitting in front of a computer with their email program open, or when the person has email services automatically set up to speedily check for new messages on their mobile phone) to communication that can quite literally take weeks if the receiver does not decide to check the incoming messages.

In the case of the latter, it often proves much more rapid to call the person via telephone or via some other means of audio. Therefore, as a rule, unless one's workplace or social circle already communicates heavily via email in a rapid manner, a person should assume that email runs a perpetual risk of actually being slower as a communication mode than either mobile phone or text messaging communication

Earlier there used to be limitations on the size of the message to be conveyed as attachments. With current technological advances vast amount of written data can be transmitted all over the world at very reasonable costs. The usefulness of email is being threatened by four phenomena: email bombardment, spamming, phishing, and email worms. Spamming is unsolicited commercial (or bulk) email. Because of the minuscule cost of sending email, spammers can send hundreds of millions of email messages each day over an inexpensive Internet connection. Hundreds of active spammers sending this volume of mail results in information overload for many computer users who receive voluminous unsolicited email each day. Email worms use email as a way of replicating themselves into vulnerable computers. Although the first email worm affected UNIX computers, the problem is most common today on the Microsoft Windows operating system. The combination of spam and worm programs results in users receiving a constant drizzle of junk email, which reduces the usefulness of email as a practical tool.

However a number of anti-spam techniques mitigate the impact of spam. The users have to be cautious and employ all the anti-virus facilities available every time they use this message transfer facility.

## 2.10 The choice of medium

The choice of media available to the present generation is quite wide from traditional oral and written channels to the latest electronic media. You have to do best to match your selection to the message and your intentions. Every medium has its benefits and limitations. The choice influences receiver's perception of the sender's intentions. Different cultures favor one medium over the other. The choice of appropriate media for transmission of messages depends upon several associated factors.

**Speed:** The pressure of time and the distance between the sender and receiver influence the choice of medium. Telephone, email are faster and have the advantage of person to person contact.

**Confidentiality:** all media do not ensure the same secrecy of the message. When you want to issue warning, or comment on a person's credit standing or wish to demand overdue payment, you cannot use fax which can be seen by others.

**Reliability:** when you wish to 100% certain about the delivery of the message instead of relying on post office, you would prefer to hand deliver the message at an extra cost.

**Cost:** when the message is a routine and not of an urgent or critical nature, cost would be the sole determinant of a suitable media.

**Feedback:** when it is necessary to seek immediate feedback, you would like to use telephone, make a person to person contact and seek the response.

**Formality:** A letter of gratitude or congratulations would be more effective if delivered formally through mail or a courier. The recipient would wish to show it his/her friends and acquaintances. The message would lose the impact if conveyed over the telephone.

And then there are some tough messages that need to be handed personally. Change in the well-established practice, a message withdrawing a facility enjoyed by an individual over a period of time, a notice advising that a person's services are no more required; are the typical cases where you would prefer to call a person and deliver the message personally.



## 2.11 Summary

Messages can be delivered orally or through written 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. Oral communication is flexible, assures thorough understanding and does not involve expenses. You receive immediate feedback so that you act without delay. Secrecy is maintained as no third party is involved. Teleconferencing is widely used to interact with employees of different departments working in offices located all over the world.

Grapevine communication creates a social bond where none existed. People like to talk to one another; whether they talk about work or family, or anything else. Teams become more cohesive when members talk to one another outside of the project or assignment they may be working on. Informal communication lends itself to bonding. However, when gossip is being spread through the grapevine, people's reputations, careers, and lives can get destroyed very rapidly.

The written communication is widely used for formal messages which create records that can be used in future for reference as evidence. All financial and legal communication, therefore, is always in writing.

Alternative media is available for both oral and verbal communication. The selection of appropriate media depends upon urgency of the matter and sender's intentions. Telephones and emails are most widely used media thanks to technological advances.

## 2.12 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the factors you will consider in selecting oral communication to deliver your message?
2. Why is oral communication not in use for messages dealing with financial and legal matters?
3. List disadvantages you face when you decide to communicate in writing
4. 'Office grapevine' is a mixed blessing. Why?
5. Enumerate factors that affect the choice of media for delivery of any communication.
6. Teleconferencing is a boon to every MNC. How?

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 3](#)

# Chapter 3

## Non-verbal Communication

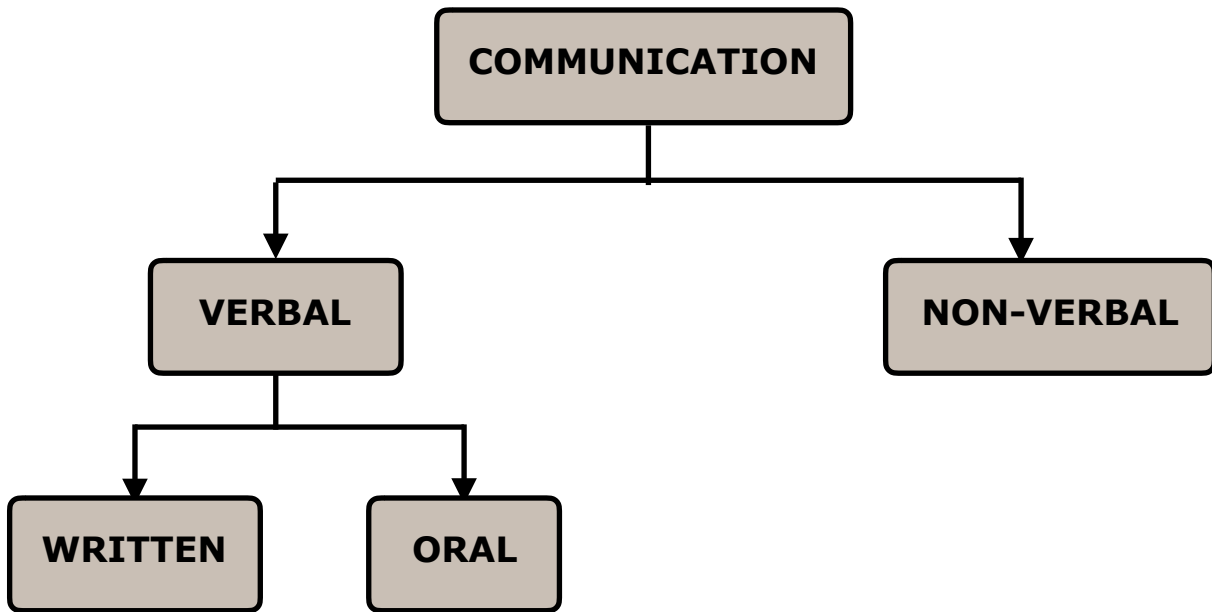
### Objectives:

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Understand non-verbal communication or how can you communicate without using words.
- Importance of non-verbal communication.
- In how many ways can you communicate without use of words?
- Use of signs, charts, maps to communicate.

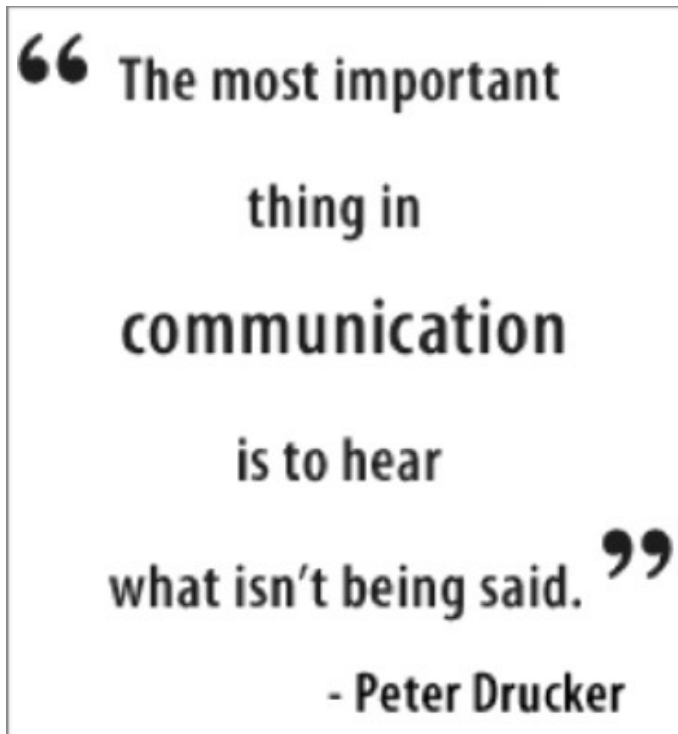
### Structure:

- 3.1 What is Non-verbal Communication?
- 3.2 Importance of Non-verbal Communication
- 3.3 Components of Non-verbal Communication
- 3.4 Paralanguage
- 3.5 Non-verbal Aspects in Written Communication
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Self-Assessment Questions



### 3.1 What is non-verbal communication?

Non-verbal communication is the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless (mostly visual) cues between people. It does not utilize any words. Only signs, gestures, body movements are used by the person to convey messages which otherwise would have been expressed in words.



Non-verbal communication is sometimes mistakenly referred to as body language, but non-verbal communication encompasses much more, such as use of voice, touch, distance and physical environments/appearance.

Typically overlooked in non-verbal communication is the informal space around the body and in such non-verbal interaction is the use of time as well as the eye contact, which comprises the actions of looking while talking and listening, frequency of glances, patterns of fixation, pupil dilation, and blink rate.

Even speech contains non-verbal elements known as paralanguage, including voice quality, rate, pitch, volume, and speaking style, as well as underlying features such as rhythm, intonation, and stress. Likewise, written texts have non-verbal elements such as handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words, or the physical layout of a page. However, much of the study of non-verbal communication has focused on interaction between individuals, where it can be classified into three principal areas: environmental conditions where communication takes place, physical characteristics of the communicators, and behaviors of communicators during interaction.

Non-verbal communication involves the processes of encoding and decoding. Encoding is the act of generating the information such as facial expressions, gestures, and postures. Decoding is the interpretation of information from word less signals sent by the person wishing to communicate. Here the person receiving messages has to use earlier sensations to interpret signs, gestures, sounds etc. and understand the message.

Only a small percentage of the brain processes verbal communication. Not so with non-verbal communication. Normally eyes, ears, nose, each organ is put to work by the brain to digest the messages passed on non-verbally. As infants, non-verbal communication is learned from social-emotional communication, making the face rather than words the major organ of communication. As children become verbal communicators, they begin to look at facial expressions, vocal tones, and other non-verbal elements more subconsciously.

If such full attention is not directed towards non-verbal communication, there is vast scope for the message to be misinterpreted or lost totally or in parts.

### 3.2 Importance of non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication represents two-thirds of all communication. Studies have concluded that your body language is responsible for 55% of the impression you make on the other person, how you speak makes 38% and balance seven per cent only is through verbal communication or words.



**Figure 3.1**

Non-verbal communication can portray a message both verbally and with the correct body signals. Body signals comprise physical features, conscious and unconscious gestures and signals, and the mediation of personal space. The wrong message can be established if the body language conveyed does not match a verbal message. Non-verbal communication strengthens a first impression in common situations like attracting a partner or in a business interview: impressions are on average

formed within the first four seconds of contact. First encounters or interactions with another person strongly affect a person's perception. When the other person or group is absorbing the message, they are focused on the entire environment around them, meaning the other person uses all five senses in the interaction: 83% sight, 11% hearing, 3% smell, 2% touch and 1% taste.

Someone once said, "To know a language and not the culture is to make a fluent fool of yourself ". Culture in this sense, includes all of the non-verbal communication, customs, thought, speech and artifacts that make a group of people unique. Whoever said this statement knew of the significant role that communication plays besides language. While most of the non-verbal communication is conveyed subconsciously, there are cultural similarities that enable us to understand the difference between what is being said and what is actually meant. But generalizing between non-verbal communication between cultures can be tricky since there are as many cultural differences in non-verbal communication as there are languages in the world.

While it may take a child a couple of years to speak understandably in a certain language, it is important to remember that the child is also learning the idiosyncrasies of non-verbal communication at the same time. In fact, the first couple of years of a child's life are spent learning most of these non-verbals. The differences between cultures are thus ingrained at the very earliest points of development.

The effect that eye movement has on human behavior has been widely studied. In some cultures, however, this study actually allows for insights into individuals whose only way of communication is by non-verbal means. Studies show that eye behavior shows special patterns with mental patients, autistic children, and persons from diverse cultures. In some countries, doctors use the study of oculusics to test stimulation among patients and interest levels in children who are not as expressive verbally. Normally, lack of eye contact in many cultures can signal either disinterest or respect, depending on the culture.





People can typically tell individuals who are angry from those who are nervous from those who are confident by what they do with their eyes. Furrowed brows or rolling of the eyes typically constitute impatience, anger or defiance. Looking down or batting the eyes typifies nervousness, while continuing to look at someone and simultaneously shutting the mouth signals compliance with self-confidence. Squarely looking someone in the eye connotes self-confidence. A confident, engaging public speaker instills confidence in his audience. Continually looking down while speaking either one-on-one or publicly, often purveys a feeling of nervousness, or lack of confidence. Notice how uncomfortable a person who won't make eye-contact with you makes you feel. It conveys a feeling of disquiet, or even distrust.

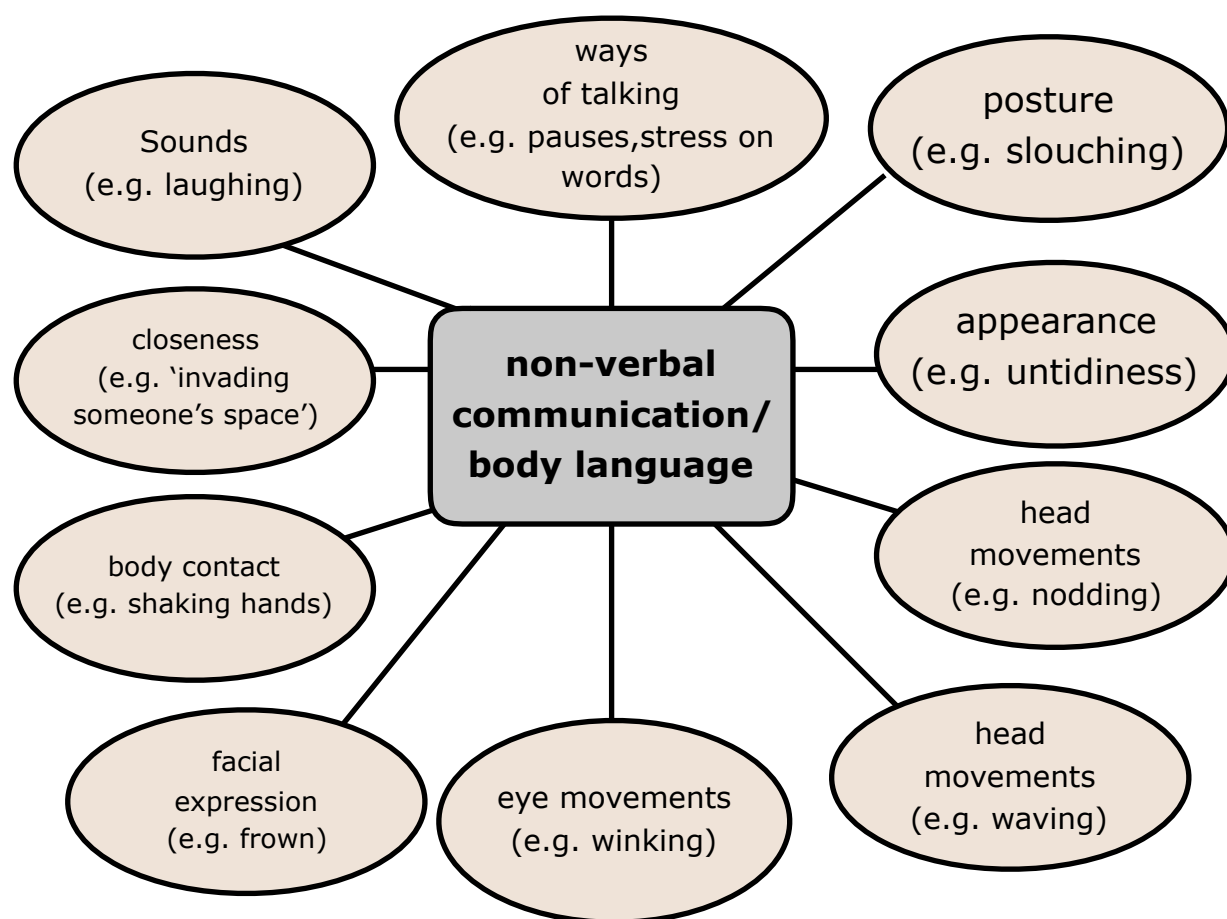
Politicians who lie while looking straight into the camera cause many individuals to almost believe them -- up until the teary-eyed truthful press conference. Oculistics not only studies the person communicating, but the person listening as well. Eye contact of the person listening helps gauge the response.

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. Good luck!

### 3.3 Components of non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication can happen when the person wanting to convey a message decides to employ gestures, eye contact, body touch, time interval, charts and body language instead of or in addition to words.

**Chart 3.1**



#### **Gestures (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? The term was first used (in 1952) by Ray Birdwhistell, an

anthropologist who wished to study how people communicate through posture, gesture, stance, and movement, and later popularized during the late 1960s by members of the counter-culture seeking to de-verbalize human communication.

Drawing heavily on descriptive linguistics, Birdwhistell argued that all movements of the body have meaning (i.e. are not accidental), and that these non-verbal forms of language (or paralanguage) have a grammar that can be analyzed in similar terms to spoken language. Thus, a “kineme” is “similar to a phoneme because it consists of a group of movements which are not identical, but which may be used interchangeably without affecting social meaning”.

One research estimated that “no more than 30 to 35 percent of the social meaning of a conversation or an interaction is carried by the words.” He also concluded that there were no universals in these kinesics displays - a claim disproved by Paul Ekman’s analysis of universals in facial expression.

In a current application, kinesics is used as signs of deception by interviewers. Interviewers look for clusters of movements to determine the veracity of the statement being uttered. Some related words may be:

1. Emblems - Substitute for words and phrases
2. Illustrators - Accompany or reinforce verbal messages
3. Affect Displays - Show emotion
4. Regulators - Control the flow and pace of communication
5. Adaptors - Release physical or emotional tension

Kinesics is an important part of non-verbal communication behavior. The movement of the body, or separate parts, conveys many specific meanings and the interpretations may be culture bound. As many movements are carried out at a subconscious or at least a low-awareness level, kinesic movements carry a significant risk of being misinterpreted, especially, in an intercultural communications situation.

A cheerful face or a gloomy face influences most people. A cheerful or appreciative smile, a displeased frown, a look of surprise, turning of the nose, and many such expressions on the face can convey, with or without words, tonnes of information about attitude, feelings, and reaction of the communicants.

### **An ode to 'Smile'**

"A smile costs nothing, but offers plenty. It enriches those who receive it, without making poorer, those who provide it. It takes only a moment, but the memory of it may last forever.

No one is that rich or mighty who can do without it, and none is so poor that he cannot be enriched by it.

A smile creates happiness in the schools, fosters goodwill in business and enhances relationships.

Yet it cannot be purchased, begged, borrowed, or stolen for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

If some people are too tired to give you a smile, please, give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as one who has no more to give."

**Unknown Author**

When you have a responsibility to deliver a message, your expressions accompany your words and they are being watched. Similarly you also get listeners reactions through their facial expressions which provide you with a continuous feedback. You have to be alert enough to analyze and digest them. Raised eyebrows convey disbelief or surprise, a frown reflects displeasure, pursed lips certainly indicate that your talk is not being accepted in a friendly manner.

A smile, on the other hand, is universal welcome gesture. It clears the atmosphere, believed to release chemical that generate feeling of happiness and bliss. And beware of involuntary, one sided, smile either on your own face or the other's face. It can be sarcasm, derision and certainly not conducive to good relationship

A big warm smile is an asset. But only when it comes a little slower, because then it has more credibility. Slower smile gives your personality a richer, deeper, more sincere cachet, status.

## Eye Contact (Oculesics)

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 oculesics. Only 7% of comes from words - that we actually say. As a social or behavioral science, oculesics is a form of non-verbal communication focusing on deriving meaning from eye behavior. It can also deal with the medical care of eyes, such as optometry and ophthalmology. The term "oculist" usually applies to a doctor of one of these medical specialties.

There are three levels of eye contact:

1. Direct eye contact
2. Indirect eye contact
3. Duration of eye contact

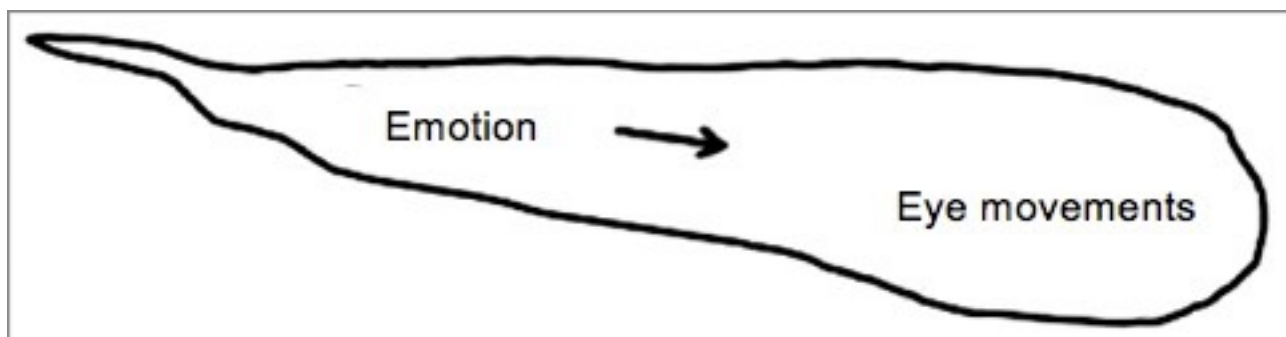
A complete definition of emotion must take into account all three of these aspects or components: (a) the experience or conscious feeling of emotion, (b) the processes that occur in the brain and nervous system, and (c) the observable expressive patterns of emotion, particularly those on the face. This third component is where oculesics plays a role in non-verbal communication of emotion.

Oculesics is a primary form of communicating emotion. According to this science, oculesics can show which type of thinking someone is using when they are communicating. A person thinking visually might physically turn their eyes away, as if to look at an imagined presentation of what they are thinking, even to the point of changing the focus of their eyes. Someone thinking in terms of hearing might turn their eyes as much as possible to one of their ears. A person thinking in terms of what they feel could look downwards, as if looking toward their emotion coming from their body.

Whether or not someone intends to send a particular meaning, or someone else perceives meaning correctly, the exchange of communication happens and can initiate emotion. It is important to understand these dynamics, because we often establish relationships (on small and grand scales) with oculesics. Dr. Ekman states there are 15 basic emotions- amusement, anger, contempt, contentment, disgust, embarrassment, excitement, fear,

guilt, pride in achievement, relief, sadness/distress, satisfaction, sensory pleasure, and shame- with each of these fifteen stemming out to similar and related sub-emotions.

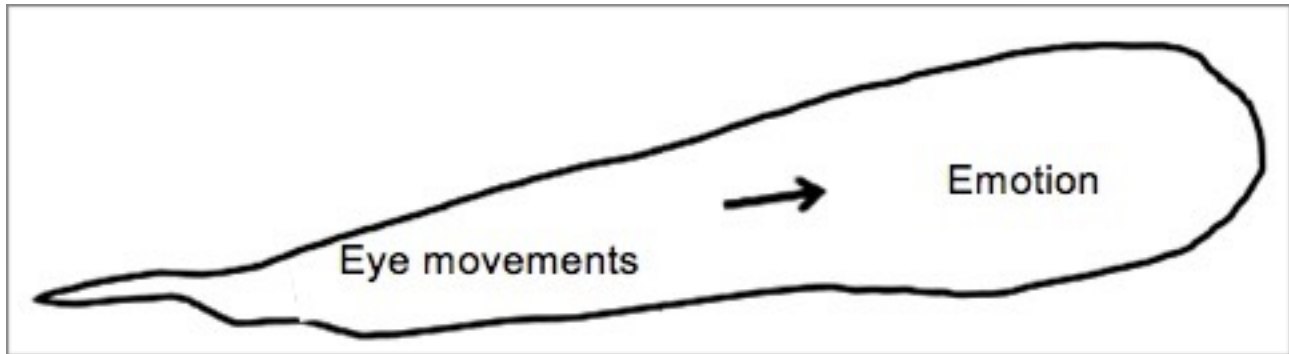
Perceptions and displays of emotions vary across time and culture. Some theorists say that even with these differences, there can be generally-accepted “truths” about oculusics, such as the theory that constant eye contact between two people is physically and mentally uncomfortable.



The following emotions and their associated eye behaviors need your attention.

- i. Anxiety - wetness or moisture in the eyes
- ii. Anger - eyes glaring and wide open
- iii. Boredom - eyes not focused, or focused on something else
- iv. Desire - eyes wide, dilation of pupils
- v. Disgust - rapid turning away of eye
- vi. Envy - glaring
- vii. Fear - eyes could be wide, or looking downward (could also be closed)
- viii. Happiness - “glittery” look to eyes, wrinkled at the sides
- ix. Interest - intense focus, perhaps squinting
- x. Pity - heavy gaze to eyes, moisture in eyes

- xi. Sadness - tears in eyes, looking downward (also possible sleepless appearance[35])
- xii. Shame - eyes looking down while head is turned down
- xiii. Surprise - eyes wide open.



We studied how emotions are expressed by communicator's eye movements. Now let us learn how to interpret communicator's eye movement.

- i. **Eyes up** - Different people look up for different reasons. Some look up when they are thinking. Others perform that action in an effort to recall something from their memory. It may also be a way for people to subconsciously display boredom. The head position can also come into play, however, as an upwards look with a lowered head can be a coy, suggestive action.
- ii. **Eyes down** - Avoiding eye contact, or looking down, can be a sign of submission or fear. It may also indicate that someone feels guilt. However, depending on the culture of the person, it may also just be a sign of respect.
- iii. **Lateral movement of eyes** - Looking away from the person to whom one is speaking could be a sign that something else has taken their interest. It may also mean that a person is easily distracted. Looking to the left can mean that a person is trying to remember sound, while the right can mean that the person is actually imagining the sound. Side to side movement, however, can indicate that a person is lying.



- iv. **Gazing** - Staring at someone means that a person shows sincere interest. Staring at a person's lips can indicate that someone wants to kiss another person. In general, staring means, "I want that."
- v. **Glancing** - Glancing can show a person's true desires. For instance, glancing at a door might mean that someone wants to leave. Glancing at a glass of water might mean that a person is thirsty.
- vi. **Eye contact** - Eye contact is powerful and shows sincere interest if it is unbroken. A softening of the stare can indicate sexual desire. Breaking that eye contact can be threatening to the person who does not break the eye contact.
- vii. **Staring** - Staring is more than just eye contact, it usually involves eyes wider than normal. A lack of blinking may indicate more interest, but it also may indicate a stronger feeling than a person may intend to portray. Prolonged eye contact can be aggressive, affectionate, or deceptive.
- viii. **Following with the eyes** - Eyes follow movement naturally. If a person is interested in someone, then their eyes will follow that person naturally.
- ix. **Squinting** - Squinting of the eyes may mean a person is trying to obtain a closer look. It may also mean that a person is considering whether something is true or not. Liars may use squinting as a tool to keep others from detecting their dishonesty. Of course, squinting may also just be a result of a bright sun.
- x. **Blinking** - Blinking is also a natural response that can occur for no other reason than having dry eyes. It can also be the result of a person feeling greater levels of stress. Rapid blinking can indicate arrogance while reduced blinking can move towards a stare.
- xi. **Winking** - Winking can indicate that two people understand something without using words. It can mean "hello" or it can be a sign of flirtation.
- xii. **Closing of eyes** - Closing the eyes serves to shut out the world. It can be a reaction to fear or embarrassment. Others may close their eyes as a way to think more sincerely about a particular subject.



- xiii. **Eye moisture** - Tears obviously indicate sadness, but moisture also has a more practical purpose to wash and clean the eyes. Damp eyes can be suppressed crying or an expression of extreme happiness or laughter. Men, in many cultures, are not expected to cry but may experience damp eyes in place of crying.
- xiv. **Pupil dilation** - Pupil dilation may be harder to detect by most people. Sexual desire may be a cause of such dilation. It may also be an indication of attraction. Physiologically, eyes dilate when it is darker to let in more light.
- xv. **Rubbing of eyes** - Eyes may water, causing a person to rub their own eyes. This can happen when a person feels uncomfortable or tired. It may also happen when a person simply has something in their eyes.

While all non-verbal communication differs greatly among cultures, perhaps none is so obviously different than the movement and study of eye contact. A particular non-verbal interaction between two individuals can have completely different meaning in different cultures. Even within that same culture, oculusics plays a tremendous role in obtaining meaning from other non-verbal cues. This is why, even among the same culture, humans still have trouble sometimes understanding each other because of their varying eye behavior, non-verbal cues, and cultural and personal differences.

People can typically tell individuals who are angry from those who are nervous from those who are confident by what they do with their eyes. Furrowed brows or rolling of the eyes typically constitute impatience, anger or defiance. Looking down or batting the eyes typifies nervousness, while continuing to look at someone and simultaneously shutting the mouth signals compliance with self-confidence.

Squarely looking someone in the eye connotes self-confidence. A confident, engaging public speaker instills confidence in his audience. Continually looking down while speaking either one-on-one or publicly, purveys a feeling of nervousness, or lack of confidence. Notice how uncomfortable a person who won't make eye-contact with you makes you feel. It conveys a feeling of disquiet, or even distrust. Politicians who lie while looking straight into the camera cause many individuals to almost believe them -- up until the teary-eyed truthful press conference. Oculusics not only

studies the person communicating, but the person listening as well. Eye contact of the person listening helps gauge the response.

## **Touching (Haptics)**

It is the study of touching. Did you know that acceptable level of touching vary from one culture to another? In Thailand, touching someone's head may be considered as rude. In many Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, people greet each other with one kiss on the cheek, for example in Argentina. In Spain, people greet each other with two kisses on the cheek. In Colombia, shaking hands or verbal greeting is common and probably without hugging. In Peru, when men greet one another, they usually do so shaking hands or with a verbal greeting, otherwise, whenever a woman is involved, greeting involves kissing on the cheek or verbal greeting. In Brazil, kisses when greeting women can vary from one to three, and be fake (kissing the air) or on the cheek; men can salute by shaking hands or demonstrate camaraderie by slapping one another's shoulders or backs. In the United States, the main form of greeting is shaking hands, though when greeting friends it is not uncommon for them to hug

Haptic communication is a form of non-verbal communication and the way by which people and other animals communicate via touching. Touch, or the haptic sense, is extremely important for humans; as well as providing information about surfaces and textures it is a component of non-verbal communication in interpersonal relationships, and vital in conveying physical intimacy. There are six different kinds of "touch". These include: positive, playful, control, ritualistic, task-related and unintentional. It can be both sexual (kissing is one such example that is sometimes sexual) and platonic (such as hugging or tickling). Touch is the earliest sense to develop in the fetus. The development of an infant's haptic senses and how it relates to the development of the other senses such as vision has been the target of much research. Hearing tends to fare much better.

Striking, pushing, pulling, pinching, kicking, strangling and hand-to-hand fighting are forms of touch in the context of physical abuse. In a sentence like "I never touched him/her" or "Don't you dare to touch him/her" the term touch may be meant as euphemism for either physical abuse or sexual touching.

There are five haptic categories:

1. **Functional/professional:** expresses task-orientation.
2. **Social/polite:** expresses ritual interaction.
3. **Friendship/warmth :** expresses idiosyncratic relationship
4. **Love/intimacy :** expresses emotional attachment
5. **Sexual/arousal :** expresses sexual intent

The intent of a touch is not always exclusive and touching can evolve to each one of above six categories.

Managers should know the effectiveness of using touch while communicating to subordinates, but need to be cautious and understand how touch can be misunderstood. A hand on the shoulder for one person may mean a supportive gesture, while it could mean a sexual advance to another person. Working with others and using touch to communicate, a manager needs to be aware of each person's touch tolerance. It is believed that a person in power is more likely to touch a subordinate, but the subordinate is not free to touch in kind. Touch is a powerful non-verbal communication tool and this different standard between a superior and subordinate can lead to confusion whether the touch is motivated by dominance or intimacy.

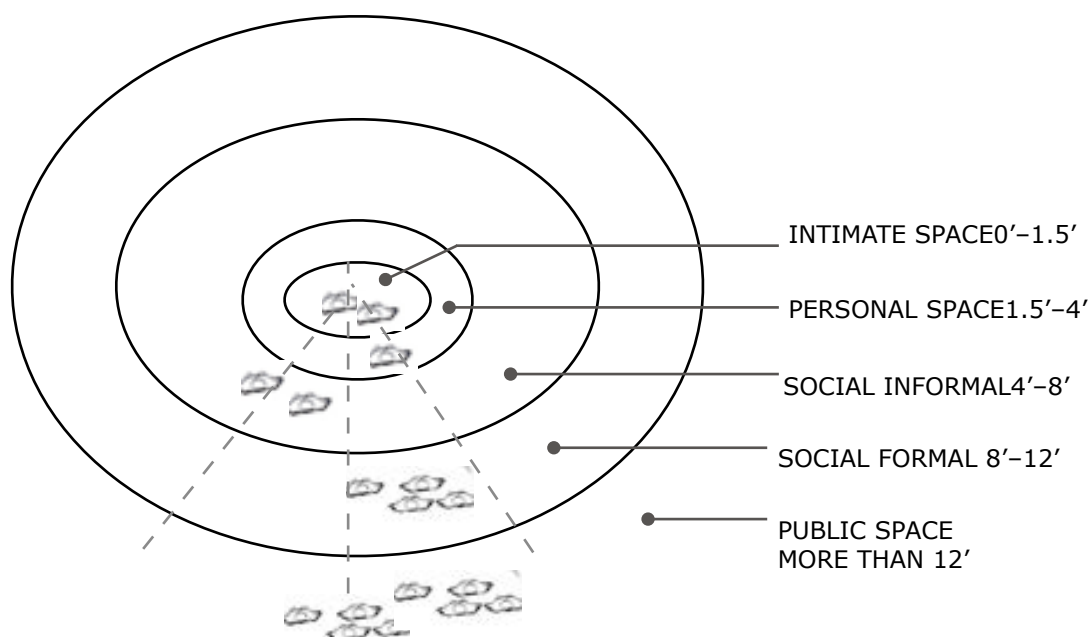
Always remember, if a word of praise is accompanied by a touch on the shoulder, it will carry more weight.

### **Distance (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 forty centimeters (18 inches) - one and a quarter meter (4 feet) while, the personal distance needed when speaking to a crowd of people should be around three to four meters ( 10-12 feet). Proxemics can be defined as "the interrelated observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture". A person's personal space is carried with them everywhere they go. It is the most inviolate form of territory. Much research in the fields of Communication, Psychology, and Sociology, especially under the category of Organizational Behavior, has shown that physical proximity enhances peoples' ability to work together. Face-to-face interaction is often used as a

tool to maintain the culture, authority, and norms of an organization or workplace.

**Chart 3.2**



The four distance zones of proxemics are concerned with distance between people.

In developing new communication technologies, the theory of proxemics is often considered. While physical proximity cannot be achieved when people are connected virtually, perceived proximity can be attempted, and several studies have shown that it is a crucial indicator in the effectiveness of virtual communication technologies. These studies suggest that various individual and situational factors influence how close we feel to another person, regardless of distance. The mere-exposure effect originally referred to the tendency of a person to positively favor those who they have been physically exposed to most often. However, recent research has extended this effect to virtual communication. This work suggests that the more someone communicates virtually with another person, the more he is able to envision that person's appearance and workspace, therefore fostering a sense of personal connection. Increased communication has also been seen to foster common ground, or the feeling of identification with another, which leads to positive attributions about that person. Some studies emphasize the importance of shared physical territory in achieving

common ground, while others find that common ground can be achieved virtually, by communicating often.

## **Use of Time (Chronemics)**

It is the study of the use of time in non-verbal communication. The way we perceive time, structure our time and react to time is a powerful communication tool, and helps set the stage for the communication process. Across cultures, time perception plays a large role in the non-verbal communication process. Time perceptions include punctuality, willingness to wait, and interactions. The use of time can affect lifestyles, daily agendas, speed of speech, movements and how long people are willing to listen.

Time can also be used as an indicator of status. For example, the boss in most companies can interrupt progress to hold an impromptu meeting during the middle of the work day, yet the average worker would have to make an appointment to see the boss. The way different cultures perceive time can influence communication as well. For example, most Americans will schedule a meeting for a specific time such as 2:15 p.m., and expect all involved parties to be punctual at the specified time. In many cultures in other countries, however, they may set a time to meet “sometime in the afternoon” and on many occasions the schedule is broken, changed or deadline unmet.

Monochronic and Polychronic time systems are two systems commonly used to refer time and its influence on society. A monochronic time system means that things are done one at a time and time is segmented into precise, small units. Under this system time is scheduled, arranged and managed.

The United States, like other western countries, is considered a monochronic society. This perception of time is learned and rooted in the Industrial Revolution, where “factory life required the labor force to be on hand and in place at an appointed hour”. For Westerners, time is a precious resource not to be wasted or taken lightly. They claim that “We buy time, save time, spend time and make time. Our time can be broken down into years, months, days, hours, minutes, seconds and even milliseconds. We use time to structure both our daily lives and events that we are planning for the future. We have schedules that we must follow: appointments that

we must go to at a certain time, classes that start and end at certain times, work schedules that start and end at certain times, and even our favorite TV shows, that start and end at a certain time.”

In the Monochronic business world, “the schedule is sacred.” “Time is tangible” and viewed as a commodity where “time is money” or “time is wasted.” The result of this perspective is that Americans and other monochronic cultures such as the German and Swiss, place a paramount value on schedules, tasks and “getting the job done.” These cultures are committed to regimented schedules and may view those who do not subscribe to the same perception of time as disrespectful.

A polychronic time system is a system where several things can be done at once, and a more fluid approach is taken to scheduling time. Unlike Americans and most northern and western European cultures, Latin American, Asian and Arabic cultures use the polychronic system of time. These cultures are much less focused on the preciseness of accounting for each and every moment. These cultures are deeply steeped in tradition rather than in tasks -- a clear difference from their monochronic counterparts. “Traditional societies have all the time in the world. The arbitrary divisions of the clock face have little saliency in cultures grounded in the cycle of the seasons, the invariant pattern of rural life, and the calendar of religious festivities”

Instead, their culture is more focused on relationships, rather than watching the clock. They have no problem being “late” for an event if they are with family or friends, because the relationship is what really matters. As a result, polychronic cultures have a much less formal perception of time. They are not ruled by precise calendars and schedules. Rather, “cultures that use the polychronic time system often schedule multiple appointments simultaneously so keeping on schedule is an impossibility.”

In the workplace, those in a leadership or management position treat time – and by virtue of position – have their time treated differently than those who are of a lower stature position. There exist three specific examples of how chronemics and power converge in the workplace – waiting time, talk time and work time.

## **Waiting Time**

The act of making an individual of a lower stature wait is a sign of dominance. They note that one who “is in the position to cause another to wait has power over him. To be kept waiting is to imply that one’s time is less valuable than that of the one who imposes the wait.” Employees of equal stature will not worry about whether they are running a few minutes behind schedule to meet with one another. On the other hand, for a mid-level manager who has a meeting with the company president, a late arrival might be a non-verbal cue that you do not respect the authority of your superior.

## **Talk Time**

There is a direct correlation between the power of an individual in an organization and conversation. This includes both length of conversation, turn taking and who initiates and ends a conversation. Extensive research indicates that those with more power in an organization will speak more often and for a greater length of time. Meetings between superiors and subordinates provide an opportunity to illustrate this concept. A superior – regardless of whether or not they are running the actual meeting – lead discussions, ask questions and have the ability to speak for longer periods of time without interruption. Likewise, research shows that turn-taking is also influenced by power. “Subordinates are expected to yield to superiors and there is a cultural expectation that a subordinate will not interrupt a superior” The length of response follows the same pattern. While the superior can speak for as long as they want, the responses of the subordinate are shorter in length. A deviation from this pattern can lead to negative perceptions of the subordinate by the superior. Beginning and ending a communication interaction in the workplace is also controlled by the higher-status individual in an organization.

## **Work Time**

It is not likely that you will ever see a president or a high level executive punching a time clock. Their time is perceived as more valuable and they control their own time. On the other hand, a subordinate with less power has their time controlled by a higher status individual and are in less control of their time – making them likely to report their time to a higher authority. Such practices are more associated with those in non-



supervisory roles or in blue collar rather than white collar professions. Instead, as power and status in an organization increases, the flexibility of the work schedule also increases. For instance, while administrative professionals might keep a 9 to 5 work schedule, their superiors may keep less structured hours. This does not mean that the superior works less. They may work longer, but the structure of their work environment is not strictly dictated by the traditional work day. Instead, as Koehler and their associates note "individuals who spend more time, especially spare time, to meetings, to committees, and to developing contacts, are more likely to be influential decision makers"

### Physical Appearance, Clothing

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. While selecting clothes, appropriateness for the occasion is essential; the formality of the occasion, the time of the day, the season, the cultural background of the people who will be present, and conventions of your own organization should provide you good guidance. Dress code is enforced by some companies in order to create a brand image. Do not wear anything that distracts listener from what you are trying to convey.

### Activity 3.1

Neeta, your group salesperson has just returned from an important sales meet with one of your major clients. She is reporting the progress at the meeting to you as her supervisor.

Even though she advises that the meeting was a great success, from her non-verbal communication you know, that is not the case. How did you decide? Because, during the conversation

Her hands: were folded and on her lap throughout the conversation.

Her eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Her tone: \_\_\_\_\_

Her breathing: \_\_\_\_\_

(Fill in the blanks)



### 3.4 Paralanguage

Paralanguage is a component of meta-communication that may modify or nuance meaning, or convey emotion, such as prosody, pitch, volume, intonation etc. It is sometimes defined as relating to nonphonemic properties only. Paralanguage may be expressed consciously or unconsciously. The study of paralanguage is known as paralinguistics. While the term 'paralanguage' is often used to refer to non-verbal elements of speech, it should not be confused with kinesics, or the study of body language. While kinesics is non-linguistic, it is not necessarily related to vocal or written language. Paralinguistic information, because it is phenomenal, belongs to the external speech signal. The paralinguistic properties of speech play an important role in human speech communication. There are no utterances or speech signals that lack paralinguistic properties, since speech requires the presence of a voice that can be modulated. This voice must have some properties, and all the properties of a voice as such are paralinguistic. However, the distinction linguistic vs. paralinguistic applies not only to speech but to writing and sign language as well, and it is not bound to any sensory modality. Even vocal language has some paralinguistic as well as linguistic properties that can be seen (lip reading)



Speech signals arrive at a listener's ears with acoustic properties that may allow listeners to identify location of the speaker (sensing distance and direction, for example). Sound localization functions in a similar way also for non-speech sounds. The perspectival aspects of lip reading are more obvious and have more drastic effects when head turning is involved.

The speech organs of different speakers differ in size. As children grow up, their organs of speech become larger and there are differences between male and female adults. The differences concern not only size, but also proportions. They affect the pitch of the voice and to a substantial extent also the formant frequencies, which characterize the different speech sounds. The organic quality of speech has a communicative function in a

restricted sense, since it is merely informative about the speaker. It will be expressed independently of the speaker's intention.

Paralinguistic cues such as loudness, rate, pitch, pitch contour, and to some extent formant frequencies of an utterance, contribute to the emotive or attitudinal quality of an utterance. Typically, attitudes are expressed intentionally and emotions without intention, but attempts to fake or to hide emotions are not unusual.

That is, a message may be made more or less coherent by adjusting its expressive presentation. For instance, upon hearing an utterance such as "I drink a glass of wine every night before I go to sleep" is coherent when made by a speaker identified as an adult, but registers a small semantic anomaly when made by a speaker identified as a child.

Emotional tone of voice, itself paralinguistic information, has been shown to affect the resolution of lexical ambiguity. Some words have homophonous partners; some of these homophones appear to have an implicit emotive quality, for instance the sad "die" contrasted with the neutral "dye"; uttering the sound / dai/ in a sad tone of voice can result in a listener writing that word significantly more often than if the word is uttered in a neutral tone. Like other aspects of body language, the tone cannot be disguised; even if you choose your words carefully, your tone may sound defensive or angry. Mixed messages caused by mismatch between words and tone of voice cause misunderstanding. While learning a new language it is more difficult to learn the stresses than to learn pronunciation.

A gasp is a kind of paralinguistic respiration in the form of a sudden and sharp inhalation of air through the mouth. A gasp may indicate difficulty breathing, and a panicked effort to draw air into the lungs. Gasps also occur from an emotion of surprise, shock or disgust. Like a sigh, a yawn, or a moan, a gasp is often an automatic and unintentional act. Gasping is closely related to sighing, and the inhalation characterizing a gasp induced by shock or surprise may be released as a sigh if the event causing the initial emotional reaction is determined to be less shocking or surprising than the observer first believed.

A sigh is a kind of paralinguistic respiration in the form of a deep and especially audible, single exhalation of air out of the mouth or nose that

humans use to communicate emotion. It is voiced pharyngeal fricative, sometimes associated with a guttural glottal breath exuded in a low tone. It often arises from a negative emotion, such as dismay, dissatisfaction, boredom, or futility. A sigh can also arise from positive emotions such as relief, particularly in response to some negative situation ending or being avoided. Like a gasp, a yawn, or a moan, a sigh is often an automatic and unintentional act.

Non-fluencies and hesitation form a part of the spoken language. Sounds like er-er; mm-um – indicate that speaker is hesitant or not convinced about what is being said. Sounds like Ahem, Ouch, oh-oh can convey various ideas and emotions. To get the complete picture attention has to be paid to facial expressions accompanying these hesitations.

Silence and long pauses too can be very effective means of non-verbal communication. Please remember this is not a negative absence of speech, but a deliberate positive withdrawal or suspension of speech. This very difficult means of communication as silence is not easy as it takes a good deal of self-control and self-confidence to be able to hold one's tongue for required interval. Silence in such situations can mean any of the following – sympathy with someone who has suffered a loss, inability to formulate feelings, flood of emotions that make speech impossible, or uncontrollable anger that cannot or should not be expressed in words.



For listeners, silence and long pauses are difficult to handle and as indicated earlier, they must interpret body language like eye contact, facial expressions and posture to understand its meaning and continue dialog. If such pause or silence occurs during a telephone conversation absence of such physical clues obstructs flow of communication. Pauses in the form of short silences, however, are very effective in providing emphasis to what is being conveyed. A pause before or after a word, results in the word stand out from the rest. A skillfully placed pause succeeds in making a listener more alert. On many occasions a pause at correct juncture is more effective than wild gestures or table-thumping. Such pauses and silence must be distinguished from unforced ones caused by speaker's inability to express the thoughts or find words to express them. This is a sign of weakness. On the other hand, keeping silent, holding one's peace and deliberately not responding while having a confident and peaceful expression on the face, is a sign of strength and power.

**SOMETIMES  
SILENCE IS  
A REALLY  
GOOD ANSWER**

Enthusiasm and energy with which we talk or listen inspire respect and esteem. A lively, vigorous colleague is far more communicative than a weary, exhausted one. This energy that enables the speaker to dominate over the audience can come from physical good health and spirit, mental strength and intellectual power and spiritual control. Whichever the source enthusiasm and energy are very influential and contagious.

### Activity 3.2

It is necessary to 'read' the eyes of the person with whom you are communicating.

#### **If you notice**

Wetness / moisture in eyes

xxxx

Rapid turning away of eyes

xxxx

xxxx

Pity

Shame

#### **It indicates**

Anxiety

Sadness

xxxxx

Desire

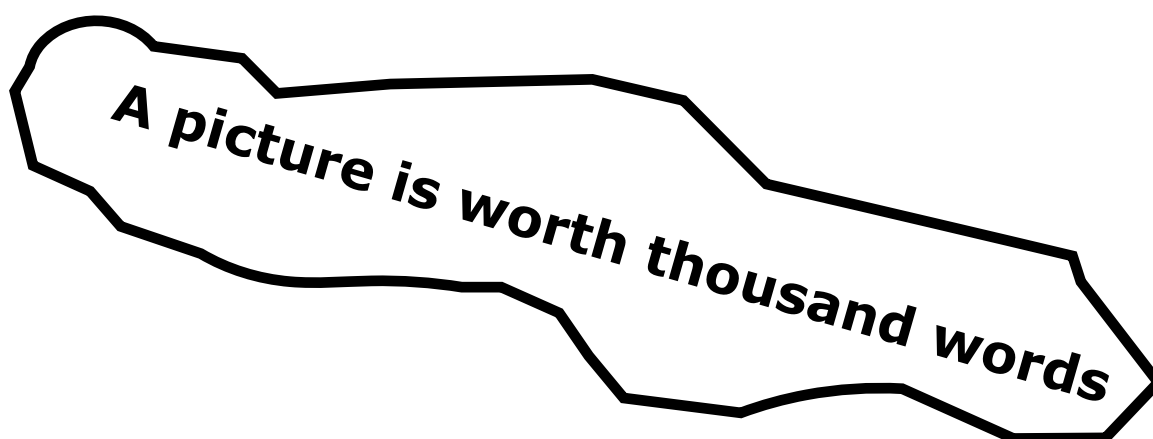
Boredom

xxxx

xxxx

**Fill the data against xxxx**

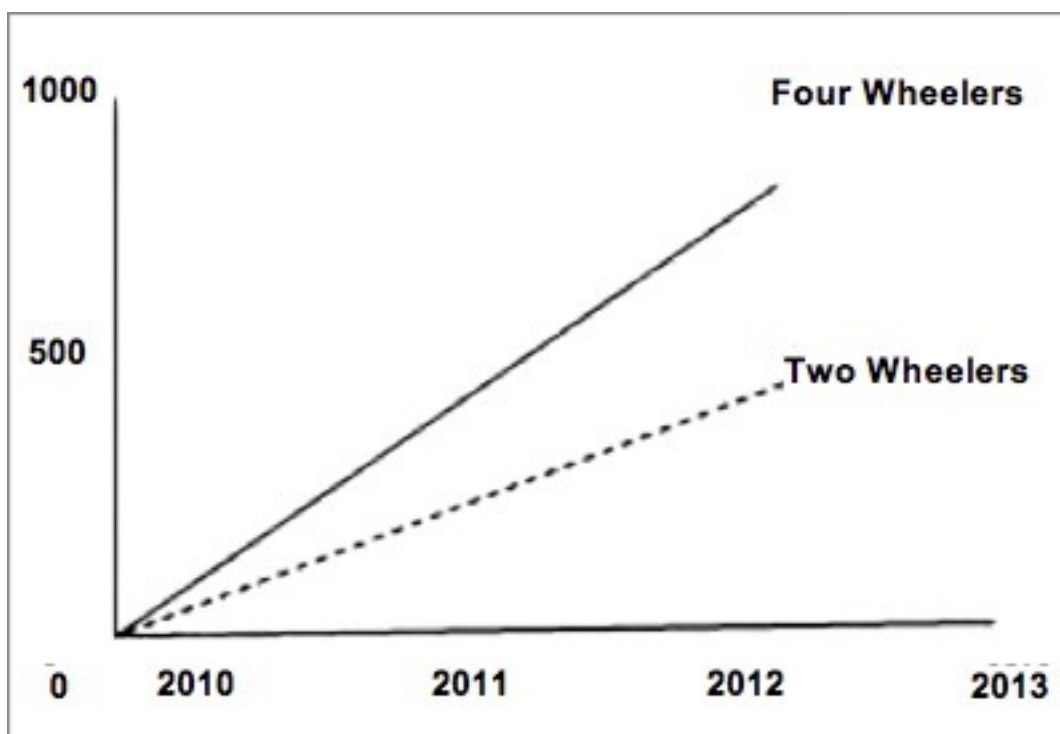
### 3.5 Non-verbal aspects in written communication



Written communication can be enhanced by using various symbols and graphics. Even the font size selected, margins allowed or spacing of written communication can add to or reduce the value of communication. Drawings, pictures, symbols or pictographs often convey a message succinctly which hundreds of words may not be able to convey. Plus such visuals are universally understood, more easily remembered and make an immediate impact as they are easy to 'take-in'; digest. Usually processes are effectively conveyed using diagrams rather than words.

Put up a graph or a chart, and suddenly everything you're saying makes sense! Graphs or charts help people understand data quickly. Whether you want to make a comparison, show a relationship, or highlight a trend, they help your audience "see" what you are talking about. The trouble is there are so many different types of charts and graphs that it's difficult to know which one to choose. Click on the chart option in your spreadsheet program and you're presented with many styles. They all look smart, but which one is appropriate for the data you've collected?

**Chart 3.3: A Line Graph**

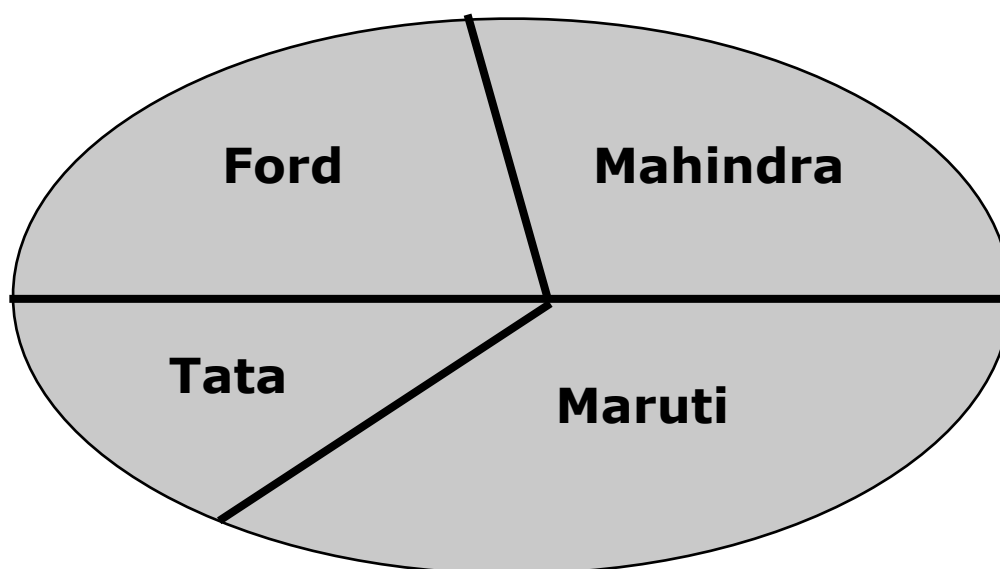


A line graph compares two variables say sales of vehicles by types over a period of say four years. It allows a comparison, e.g. sales of four wheelers are growing at faster rate than those of two wheelers. Since it reflects the trend it also allows you to predict possible future results.

A pie chart is a circular diagram that shows percentages or share of say each company in total market of automobiles sold in New Delhi in the year 2013.

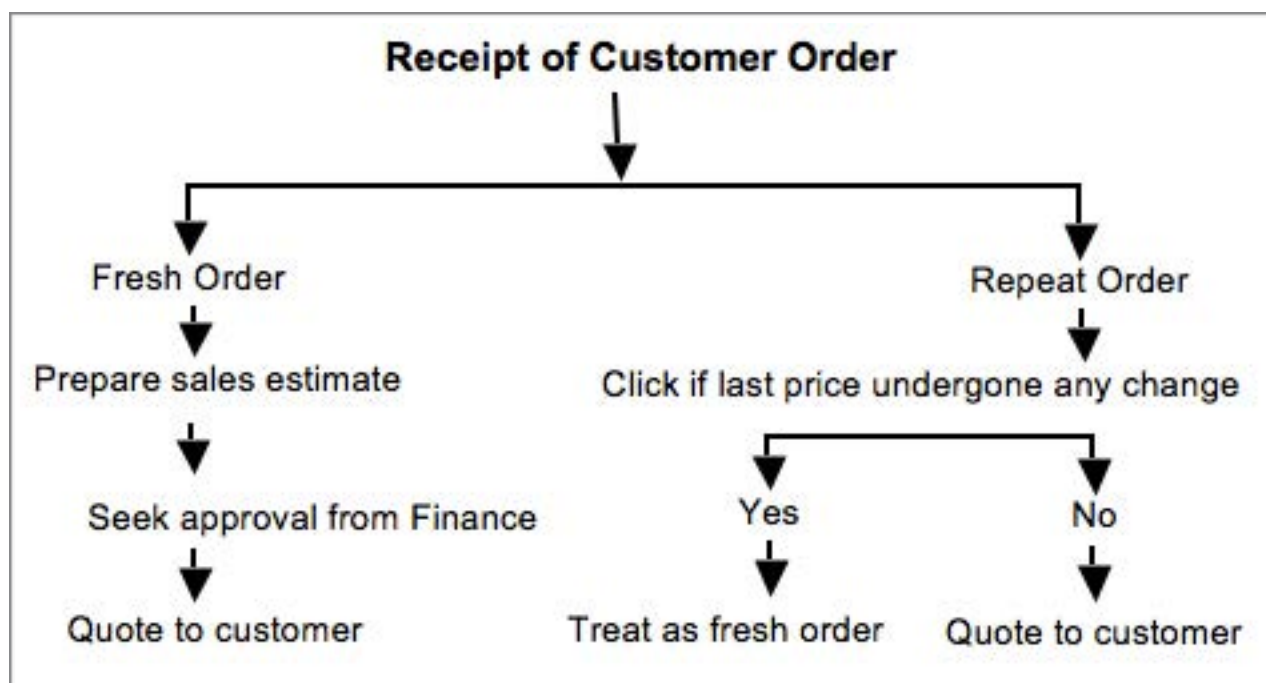
The circle of the chart represents 100%. Each portion that takes up the space in this circle stands for a part of that 100% In this way it is possible to know how a particular quantity (vehicles sold per year) of a group ( Indian manufacturers of automobiles) is divided over its members.

**Chart 3.4: A Pie Chart**



Flow charts are used to indicate procedures in which alternative actions have to be taken depending on the result of the previous step. Maps convey geographical information like transport routes, climatic conditions, distribution of population etc.



**Chart 3.5: Flow Chart**

Signs and signals are other non-verbal means to communicate express



Smile or



Direction or



Heat etc.

Use of signs and signals help you break the monotony of the text and keep the reader interested in your message.

However, it is necessary to remember that overuse of signs and signals can distract the reader from your main message.

### 3.6 Summary

We communicate by exchanging symbols to describe our ideas and experience. Language is a common symbol system which we use for sharing our experience with others. Communication through words is termed verbal communication; communication through other symbols is called non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication has almost instant effect because of the quicker grasp by the receiver. Non-verbal communication enhances the value of normal verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication can be conducted through gestures, eye contact, touch, sound, pause and silence and even by clothing and appearance. Each means has its own impact. Charts, signs, pictographs, flow diagrams are also used to convey data effectively.

Body language includes all the movements and changes that occur in the body position. Listeners often rely more on the message conveyed by the body language rather than that conveyed by mere words.

It is always possible to gain a good deal of control on body language and paralanguage and use them effectively as actors and other communicators do.

### 3.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What is the significance of non-verbal communication?
2. List different components of non-verbal communication and how do they enhance the impact of the message a speaker is intending to convey?
3. Can body language convey different messages? How? Provide an example.
4. How will you ensure that your body language is positive when you prepare for a job interview?

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 3](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 4](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 5](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 6](#)

## Chapter 4

# Removing Barriers to Communication

### Objectives:

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Different factors – both physical and psychological – that obstruct free and complete flow of communication among individuals
- How can you ensure your communication is clear and complete
- Office environment impact on communication
- What are the steps needed to ensure that organizational communication is clear and complete
- Channels of communication
- Feedback is an effective instrument to detect and improve flaws in communication
- Characteristics of cross cultural communication

### Structure:

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Barriers to Individual Communication
- 4.3 Barriers to Organizational Communication
- 4.4 Overcoming Barriers to Communication
- 4.5 Cross Cultural Communication
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Self-Assessment Questions

## 4.1 Introduction

We have understood how free flow of meaningful communication enhances our personal as well as organizational wellbeing. Constant efforts are called for to ensure that the flow of information is not interrupted and messages transferred are not misunderstood by the receiver on any occasion. Unfortunately there are several factors present in our day to day life that create barriers to effective communication. It is, therefore, prudent for you to, first, understand the nature of such barriers; and then, explore ways and means to successfully overcome them. This way you get ready to traverse a route that avoids communication barriers and, by chance, if you do hit any, you already know how to overcome it. Once you master the techniques to control communication barriers, you will be in a position to handle any form of communication with desired effects.

## 4.2 Barriers to Individual Communication

First let us consider the barriers that exist when one is engaged in one to one conversation.

### **Perceptual and Language Differences**

Perception is generally how each individual interprets the world around him. All generally want to receive messages which are significant to them. But any message which is against their values is not accepted. A same event may be taken differently by different individuals. For example: A person is on leave for a month due to personal reasons (family member being critical). The HR Manager might be in confusion whether to retain that employee or not, the immediate manager might think of replacement because his team's productivity is being hampered, the family members want to offer him required emotional support.

Or you are selling a product; you are impressing upon the prospective customer how you have priced your product economically so that it is within the reach of the customer. But if the message is not carefully delivered, the receiver may misinterpret it to mean that you are treating him /her as a poor person. While delivering the message have a good grasp of the way your message is being perceived by the receiver.

The linguistic differences also lead to communication breakdown. Same word may mean different to different individuals. For example: consider a word “value”.

- a. What is the value of this Laptop?
- b. Do you value our relation?
- c. What is the value of learning technical skills?

“Value” has different meaning in three sentences. Communication breakdown occurs if there is wrong perception of the word value by the receiver.

In case of the laptop, ‘value’ means the price at which laptop can be bought by the customer. In case of relations the term ‘value’ denotes the importance, sincerity, depth with which a person is behaving with the other over a period of time. When you turn to technical skills, the word ‘value’ means the benefits that can accrue to an individual who acquires those skills.



**Figure 4.1**

## Information Overload

Managers are surrounded with a pool of information. It is essential to control this information flow else the information is likely to be misinterpreted or forgotten or overlooked. As a result communication is less effective. At given time a person can hold only a certain quantum of data in his brain. If you shower a number of statements on the listener, there is certainty that some of them will not be correctly interpreted and hence understood by the listener in the way you intended. Like when you are feeding a baby, the information has to be passed on in little pieces with patience.

## Inattention

Effective communication cannot happen if the receiver is mentally preoccupied. At times we just not listen, but only hear. For example a traveler may pay attention to one "NO PARKING" sign, but if such sign is put all over the city, he no longer listens to it. Thus, repetitive messages should be ignored for effective communication. Similarly if a superior is engrossed in his paper work and his subordinate explains him his problem, the superior may not get what he is saying and it leads to disappointment of subordinate. That is the reason we emphasized the importance of eye contact in communication, in the third chapter on non-verbal communication. Is the listener looking squarely at you when you talk? If so, there is a good chance your message will be received in the right spirit.

Priti wanted to go through the complete budget of the sales, marketing and the operations team. She passed on this information to Jay at his workstation around which lots of other employees were shouting, the base phone was constantly ringing and the room air-conditioner machine was making a terrible noise. At the end of the day, Jay submitted the report but the budget for the operations team was missing in the report. Jay actually had heard only about sales and marketing department and thus skipped the report of the operations team. Priti fired Jay and even stopped his appraisal. Unwanted distractions, noise, chit chats of the other employees etc. played the culprit and poor Jay missed out on his promotion. Noise reduces the chances of the correct flow of information from the sender to the receiver. If the surroundings are noisy, errors are bound to happen and thus increasing conflicts among the team members and decreasing the efficiency of the employees.



## **Time Pressures**

Often in organization and in daily life the targets have to be achieved within a specified time period, the appointments to be kept, and children to be picked up from schools, the failure of which has adverse consequences. In a haste to meet deadlines, the formal channels of communication are shortened, or messages are partially given, i.e., not completely transferred. Listeners in such situations are not tuned to listen to you; naturally communication is incomplete, incoherent, and unsuccessful. Select convenient time for effective communication; sufficient time should be given for effective communication. Remember effective communication demands mandatory time considerations.

## **Emotions**

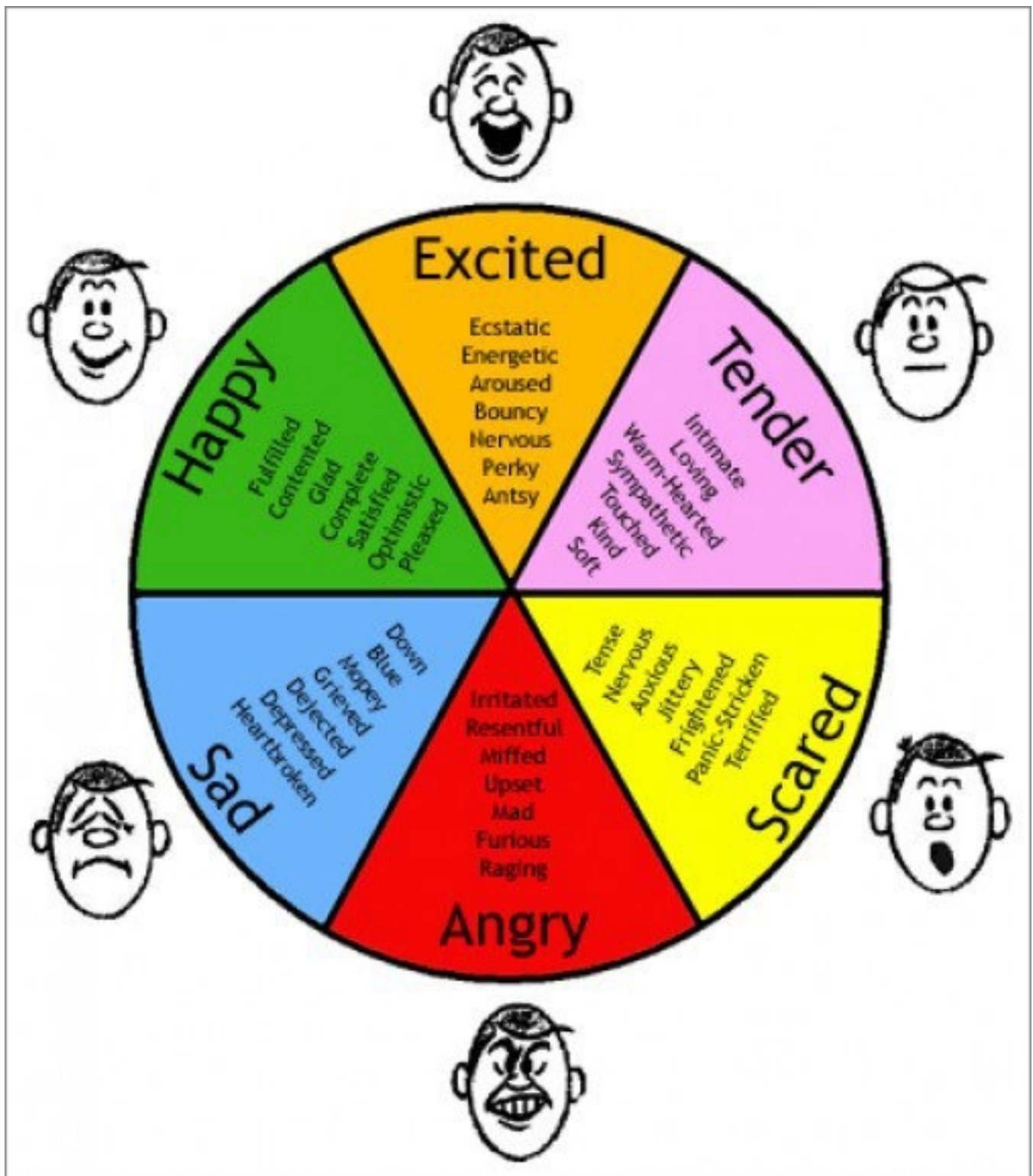


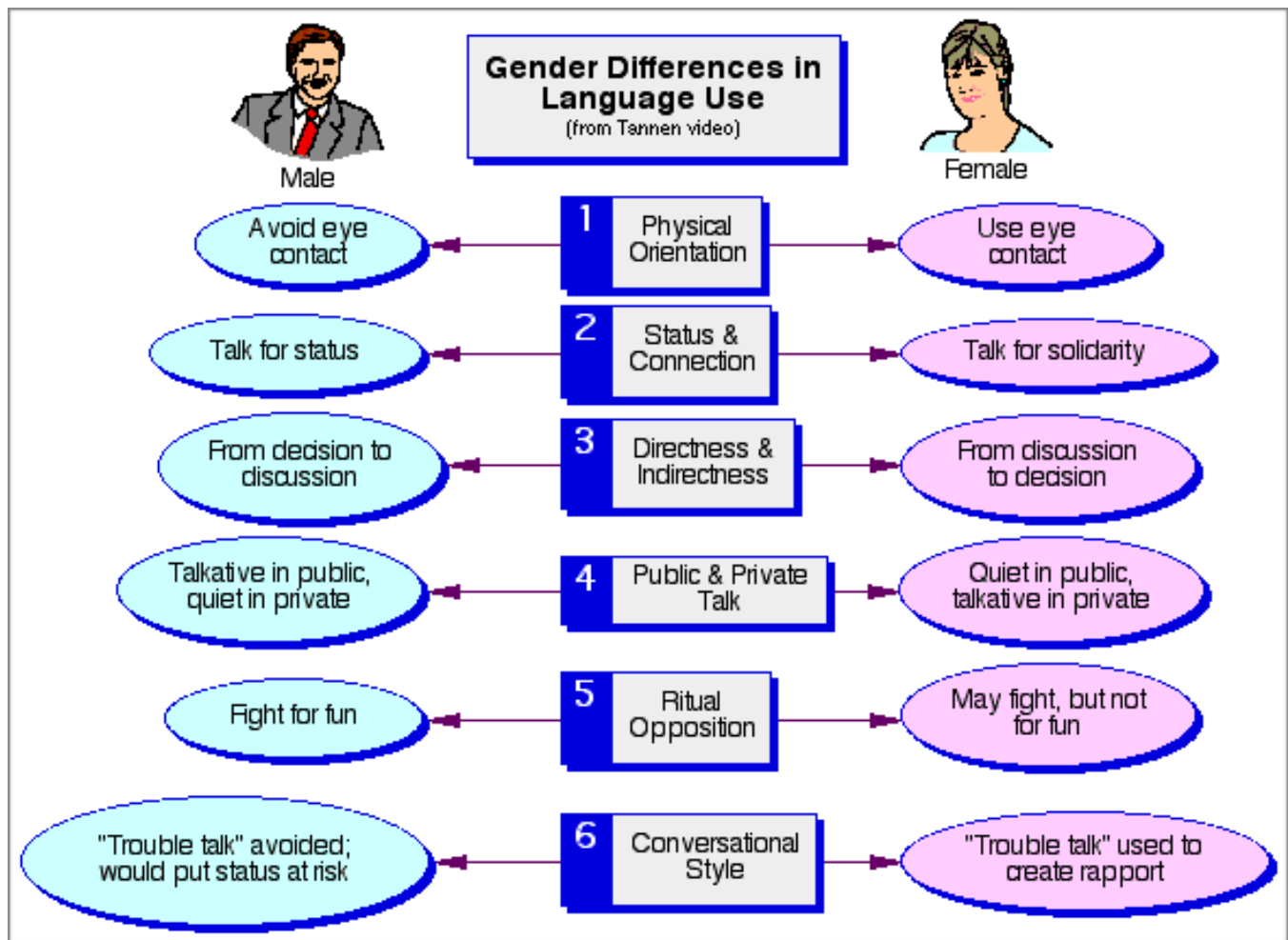
Figure 4.2

Emotional state at a particular point of time also affects communication. If the receiver feels that communicator is angry he interprets that the information being sent is very bad. While he takes it differently if the communicator is happy and jovial (in that case the message is interpreted to be good and interesting). Many times a person is under tension, worried and therefore, unable to concentrate on what is being communicated. In such emotional situations a message can neither be received fully nor correctly.

### **Poor Retention**

Human memory cannot function beyond a limit. One cannot always retain what is being told specially if one is not interested or not attentive. This could be situation at the end of a session or the work day. This leads to communication breakdown. And this is the reason why effective speakers prioritize their messages and start with material points first when human memory is fresh and alert. Many organizations start a work day with morning meetings when individuals are fresh and their minds are not pre-occupied. Any communication passed at this juncture has maximum chances of being retained by the listeners all throughout the day. Japan has such morning meetings for all its work groups throughout the organization and credits them for clear communication that increased their national productivity.

## Gender Differences



**Figure 4.3**

## 4.3 Barriers to Organizational Communication

In addition to roadblocks to individual communication, there exist a few barriers to organizational communication which we explore now.

### Complexity in Organizational Structure

Greater the hierarchy in an organization (i.e. more the number of managerial levels), more is the chances of communication getting destroyed. Only the people at the top level can see the overall picture while the people at low level just have knowledge about their own area and a

little knowledge about other areas. In many organizations these managerial levels are not formally established. And if established are not defined with any degree of clarity. As a result some members receive same information repeatedly while others are dark about it, even though it relates to their day to day activities and responsibilities. As a result their performance is impaired.

For the successful running of an organization, it is important that transparency is maintained among the employees at all levels. Communication barriers must be overcome in organizations to ensure the free flow of information between the sender and the recipient and for an effective communication among the employees. Effective communication reduces the error rate, reduces conflicts and misunderstandings and in turn increases the profitability of the organization. All employees must try their level best to avoid the communication barriers in organizations for an effective business communication.

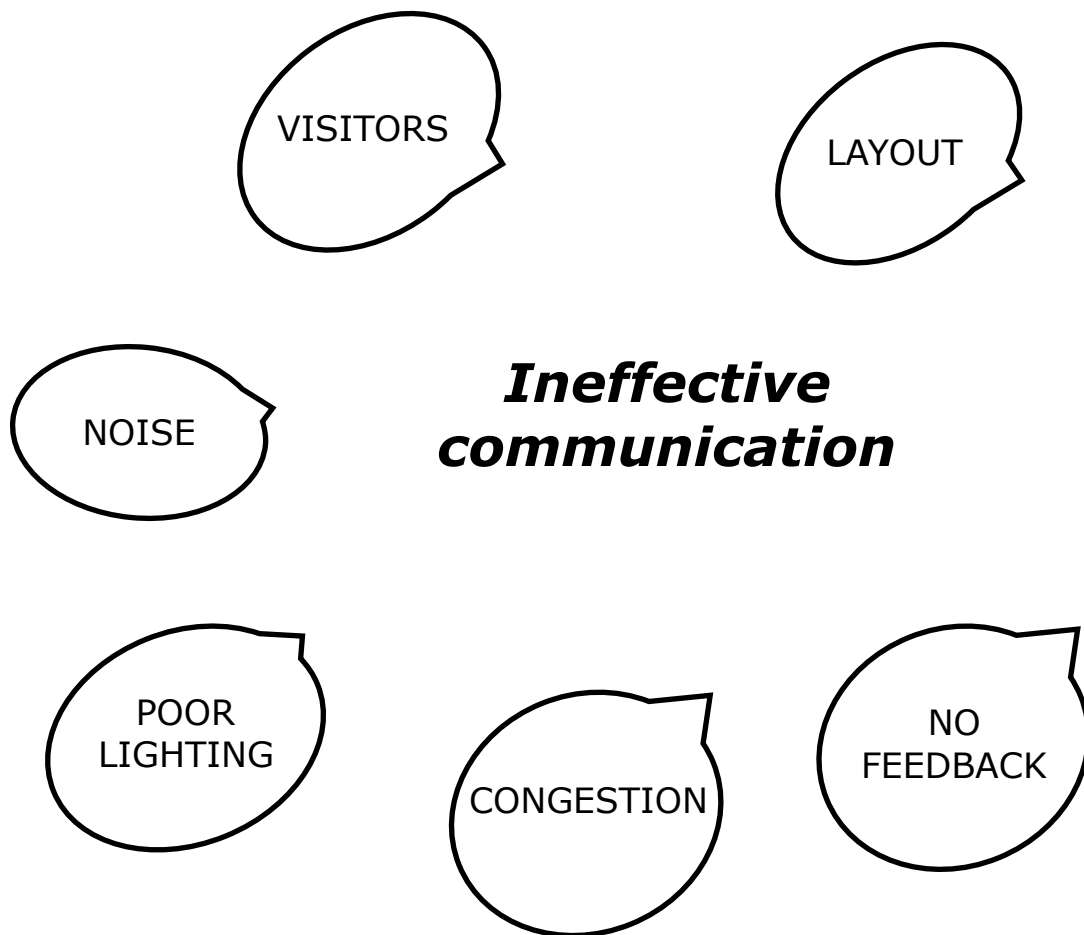
### **Distraction / Noise**

Communication is also affected a lot by noise and distractions. Physical distractions are also there such as, poor lighting, uncomfortable sitting, even unhygienic room also affects communication in a meeting. When such distractions are present, employees have to raise their voices to get heard, these results in overall high noise levels and inability of listeners to receive messages completely and clearly. Office layout is initially checked to avoid all barriers and implemented. But as the organization grows, additional employees are appointed and located without reference to principles and assumptions of the original layout. This haphazard seating arrangement is often not conducive to smooth communication.

Many offices are overcrowded and do not reserve any space for visitors' room away from the main office where the staff is working. In absence of such separate room for them, visitors move in and out of the office to realize their task and in the process cause disturbance to nearby staff members. Noise acts as a devil in business communication. Any information downloaded at a noisy place is bound to get distorted and result in a complete mess.

During any business meeting, presentation or seminar, the speaker has to be very careful about his pitch and tone. It has been observed that during

seminars or presentations only the front benchers are attentive, the last benchers are almost lost in their own sweet world. The person who chairs the meeting has to speak very clearly, has to be very confident and must maintain a tone audible to everyone, even to the individuals sitting on the last row.



**Figure 4.4**

Information must pass to them also to expect the best out of them and increase their efficiency. Many speakers fail to try to make the seminar or the meeting interactive. They just speak, and never invite questions from the team. Any mis-communication gets resolved if there is a question answer session after every meeting. Similarly coordinator of any seminar or meeting must prepare and circulate the minutes of the meeting through

e mail to all the required recipients to avoid last minute confusions and discrepancies.

### **Media used for Communication**

Many organizations use notice and bulletin boards to disseminate information that affects all employees working together in a group. These need to be placed at easily visible and approachable location so that each employee has access to them. It is not uncommon to come across notices that are poorly drafted, and run into many pages. Words selected are also complex. In such situations readers fail to read the documents fully and the purpose behind the bulletins is thus lost.

Use of mobile phones is a boon as well as a curse. Instead of intercoms, employees can use them for instant passage of a piece of information. Answering customer queries at the front desk by seeking information from those in the know, or getting a product from store room for a customer at the counter, are speeded up when the employees have mobile phones. But personal calls from outside the organization and frequent calls from colleagues on non-business matters obstruct efficiency and sometimes compel employers to ask employees to leave their mobile phones in the individual lockers allotted to them.

The intranet is the most modern way of having all members of an organization to communicate with each other with speed and ease and thus exchange information throughout the company all over the world. However, use of the electronic communication within the organization requires careful planning and staff training. The use of email internally has caused many offices to have an overload of information because people develop the tendency to send copies to everyone in their anxiety to keep others informed. Since it is very easy to post copies by email, many persons do not take the time and precaution to consider who needs to be kept informed and simply send it to all. Internal communication policy, therefore, has to be drafted and subsequently implemented to prevent such spread of needless communication.

### **Channels of Communication**

'Who received what information through whom' is an important aspect of communication in an organization. The information in an organization has



to pass through official channels no one would like to receive major company information from anybody other than one's supervisor. A senior expects that such information should be provided to him /her first before it is known to his /her juniors.

Hence Human Resource function in an organization ensures that such communication channels are scientifically established and utilized without exception by all employees working there. Towards this objective, the HR manager often formulates a formal communication policy for the company. This policy guides managers as to what information has to be provided, to whom and through which channels. Some data, especially about performance of the company, changes in its manpower, etc. have to be released per time table provided in the communication policy.

To be effective, communication channels must be short to ensure quick movement of information so essential in competitive environment that prevails in modern organizations. Most channels use electronic media to cover wide area without loss of even a minute. In some organization managers follow 'open door policy' so that an employee can pass on information without waiting for formalities of appointments etc.

If management does not succeed in formulating and implementing communication channels in an effective manner, there are good chances that information would flow through 'company grapevine' and this would undermine the initiative and prestige of company executives. Ultimately company performance too would deteriorate.



## 4.4 Overcoming Barriers to Communication

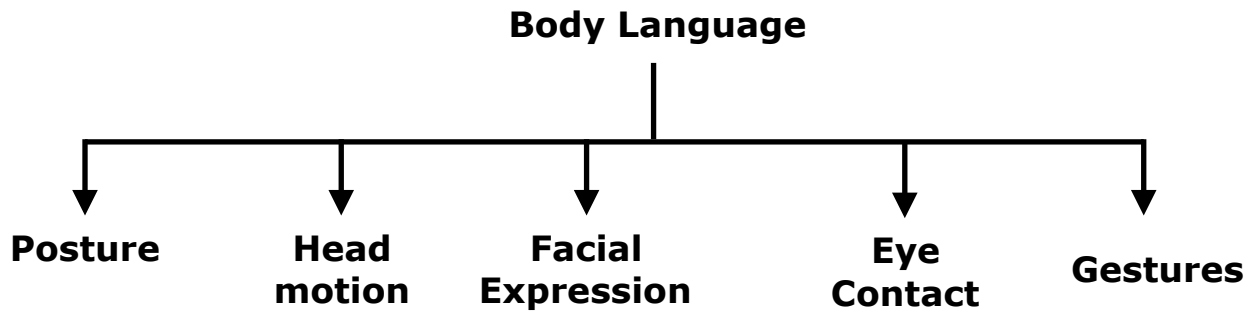
### **Personal Communication: Ability to Speak Effectively**

As earlier we first study the techniques to overcome communication barriers in personal communication. Persons in responsible positions need to overcome their barriers in order to be able to manage their work. Having effective communication skills is imperative for your success. Positive communication will certainly increase the opportunities you find in your career and business. Having good communication skills will enable you to get ahead in certain areas where others who are less assertive may not succeed. A few things to keep your eyes on while practicing the fine art of communication are:

#### **1. Body Language**

Do not shy away from the person with whom you are speaking. Be sure to maintain a relaxed, but not slouching posture, regardless whether you are the one speaking or listening. Other things that ensure your body is communicating your attentiveness to the conversation can include:

- Making eye contact.
- Nodding occasionally to acknowledge a strong point in the conversation.
- Standing with hands clasped in front of you, never crossing your arms.
- Not displaying nervous ticks such as wringing hands, picking at your nails, or anything that the person communicating with you will view as a distraction from their conversation.

**Table 4.1**

Features of Body Language

## 2. **Speech and Attentiveness**

When speaking, you need to be clear and concise. Speak on important matters directly and do not waste time with long drawn out stories that will cause your listener's mind to wander. Make sure you ask whether they understand, and be willing to further explain any of your points. Do not expect someone to just "know" what you are saying, even if it is crystal clear in your own mind.

In addition, one of the most important aspects of verbal communication is the ability to practice active listening. This is not just actively waiting to talk. Always make mental notes of key points when someone is speaking to you. That way once you are given a chance to speak, you can respond to the most vital issues being dealt with. When others are speaking, try to think about the exact words that they are saying. If you practice this, you will comprehend and contain 75 percent more of the information that you hear.

## 3. **Communication Consistency**

Maybe your weakness is in the quality or quantity with which you communicate to your employees. Communication seems to have dwindled to superficial small talk. Great communicators practice the ability of consistent communication by remaining available. Do not be afraid to be the one who voices any concerns or difficulties. However, ensure that you are practicing open and honest communication with those who may depend on you. Be available and handle your staff with tact.

Be sure to leave communication lines open to those who may need to address problems with you. You will find that you prevent the small issues that normally have the habit of becoming large ones by making those in your life aware that you are open to discussing issues at any time.

#### **4. Patience**

During your communications with others always give them time to communicate their issues as well. Remaining focused on what they are trying to communicate will show them that you are indeed open to assisting with their issues. Many of people's communication lines tend to break down on the side where impatience is in a rush to get out of the conversation. Since you cannot control the other side, do yourself a favor and take a breath. The conversation you're involved in is important.

If you are confused as to what someone may be requesting, than repeat back to him or her what you think they said and ask if that is correct. Often this will inspire the speaker to be more in-depth about their needs, which will help you to understand them fully.

#### **5. Practicing Effective Communication Skills**

If someone has communicated a need or an issue to you, then your main priority should be to aid him or her in repairing the problem. Following up on an issue is the only way to convince others whom you need to communicate with that you have listened to them and that their problems or issues are important to you as well.

Practicing strong follow-up will also leave the impression that you are involved in the bigger picture. When people see this commitment, they will know you are open to future communications. This creates a loyal and discerning surrounding that cultivates positive movement and communication. This will develop a strong sense of confidence in those with whom you communicate.

Since the world is so incredibly diverse and communications come in such a wide variety of forms, it is important to know many appropriate and helpful interpersonal skills. By practicing the few suggestions found

here, you will find yourself understanding more of what people say and repeating yourself less to other people. Your co-workers and friends will have the confidence to come to you when they find themselves in need. Remember, great communication skills take practice. Do not give up on Day One. Your ability to express yourself will grow almost daily as long as you apply yourself in improving communication skills.

## **Personal Communication: Ability to Listen Effectively**

### **1. What is listening?**

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively messages are easily misunderstood – communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. Listening is so important that many top employers provide listening skills training for their employees. This is not surprising when you consider that good listening skills can lead to: better customer satisfaction, greater productivity with fewer mistakes, increased sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative work.

Many successful leaders and entrepreneurs credit their success to effective listening skills. Effective listening is a skill that underpins all positive human relationships, spend some time thinking about and developing your listening skills – they are the building blocks of success. Good listening skills also have benefits in our personal lives, including: A greater number of friends and social networks, improved self-esteem and confidence, higher grades at school and in academic work and even better health and general well-being. Studies have shown that, whereas speaking raises blood pressure, listening brings it down.

### **2. Listening is not the same as hearing**

Hearing refers to the sounds that you hear, whereas listening requires more than that: it requires focus. Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and

understand these messages. The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.

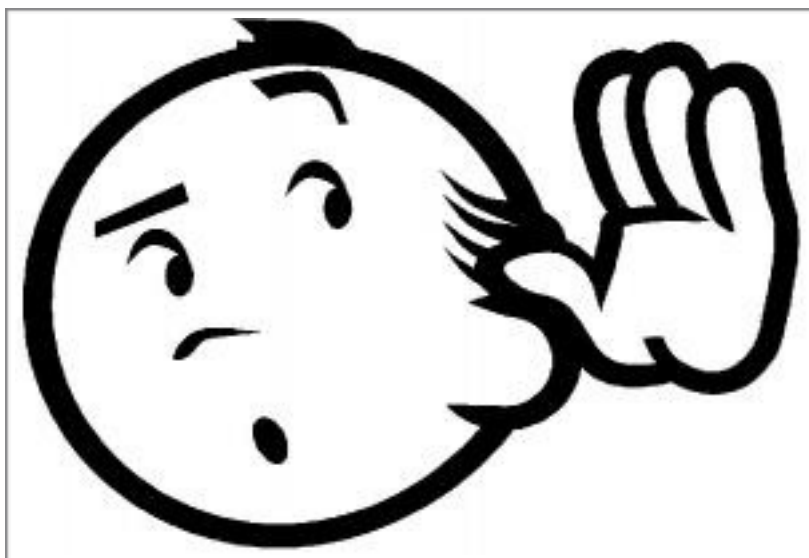
### **3. We Spend a lot of time listening**

Adults spend an average of 70% of their time engaged in some sort of communication, of this an average of 45% is spent listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. Effective listening requires concentration and the use of your other senses - not just hearing the words spoken. Listening is not the same as hearing and in order to listen effectively you need to use more than just your ears.

### **4. Principles of listening**

- a. You need to pay attention not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said. Effective listening involves observing body language and noticing inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages. For example, if someone tells you that they are happy with your service or product, but through gritted teeth or straight face, you should consider that the verbal and non-verbal messages are in conflict, they maybe don't mean what they say.
- b. Stop talking: "If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear," said Mark Twain. Don't talk, listen. When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them. Stop, just listen. When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.
- c. Prepare Yourself to Listen: Relax. Focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time do I need to meet the boss, is the long pending big sales order going to realize – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.
- d. Put the speaker at ease: Help the speaker to feel free to speak. Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or

- words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact but don't stare – show you are listening and understanding what is being said. If called for seek clarification.
- e. Remove distractions: Focus on what is being said: don't doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, and pick your fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviours disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted. Keep you mobile phone on the silence mode.
  - f. Empathise: Try to understand the other person's point of view. Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas. Don't hasten to judge on half cooked ideas. By having an open mind we can more fully empathise with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.
  - g. Be patient: A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished. Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. The speaker has the ideas and she needs some time to articulate them. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.
  - h. Avoid personal prejudice: Try to be impartial. Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what they are really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.
  - i. Listen to the tone: Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying. A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.



- j. Listen for ideas – Not just words: You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces. Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus getting to the core of what is being said and grasping it becomes easier.
- k. Wait and watch for non-verbal communication: Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important. We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication. Refer earlier chapter a – 3. Do not jump to conclusions about what you see and hear. You should always seek clarification to ensure that your understanding is correct. One way to do that is arranging for a feedback.

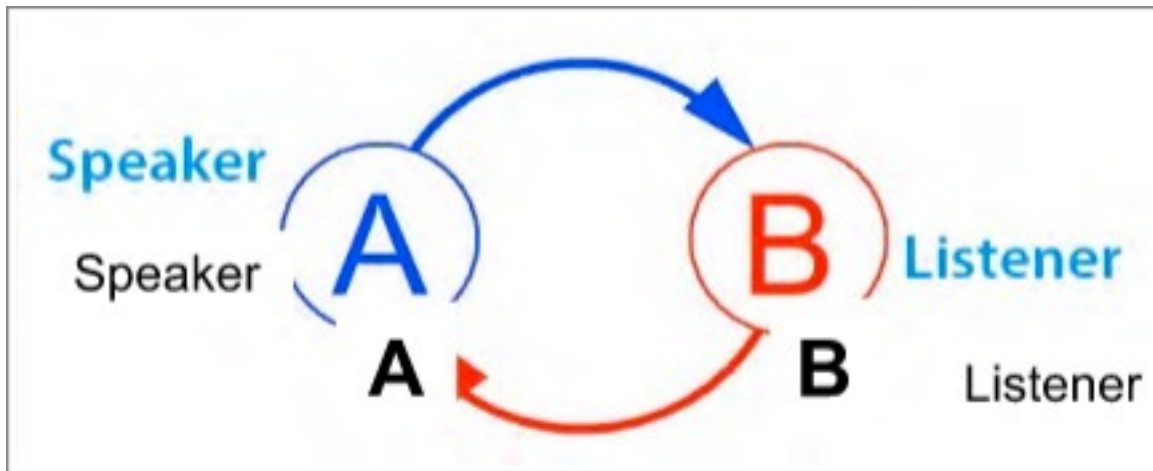
### **Feedback – A Major Component in Effective Communication**

Feedback is helpful information or criticism that is given to someone to say what can be done to improve a performance, product, etc. In human resources or industrial psychology, 360-degree feedback, also known as multi-rater feedback, multi-source feedback, or multi source assessment, is feedback that comes from members of an employee's immediate work circle. Most often, 360-degree feedback will include direct feedback from an employee's subordinates, peers, and supervisor(s), as well as a self-evaluation. It can also include, in some cases, feedback from external



sources, such as customers and suppliers or other interested stakeholders. It may be contrasted with “upward feedback,” where managers are given feedback only by their direct reports, or a “traditional performance appraisal,” where the employees are most often reviewed only by their managers.

The results from a 360-degree evaluation can often be used by communicators receiving the feedback to plan and map specific paths in their methods of communication. Results are also used by some organizations in making administrative decisions related to corporate communication program. . When this is the case, the 360 assessment is for evaluation purposes, and is sometimes called a “360-degree review.” However, there is a great deal of controversy as to whether 360-degree feedback should be used exclusively for development purposes or should be used for appraisal purposes as well.



**Figure 4.5**

Both giving and receiving feedback needs all skills of communication, especially listening and great degree self-control. Those who cultivate feedback skills reap rich benefits. Seek and arrange for feedback by allocating adequate time and opportunity. Inviting questions from the receiver is a common method of getting feedback. But this method may not prove effective if the receiver has not understood your message to ask you intelligent questions. Many a times receiver/s have no courage to admit that they have failed to absorb what was being explained.



In which case, it can be a good idea to ask questions on the key points so that a lucid summary is provided for all in the process of answering all the questions put up by the speaker. But asking questions without hurting the feelings of the persons towards whom you are directing the questions is crucial. Under no circumstances there should be a feeling that a person is being examined or judged. Open questions solicit better responses.

One more means of seeking feedback is to request tactfully someone in the group to summarize what has been said until then. You can say this exercise will allow you to check whether you had missed any important element while communication with them. Thus the feeling that a person's understanding is being questioned is eliminated and audience is eager to respond. Obtaining feedback on physical contents of your message is not as difficult as finding out receivers' emotional response and critical evaluation. A simple, open question, "how do you feel about this?" or for that matter, "how do you think you (your team) will be affected by this?" may succeed in eliciting a home's response.

It is neither easy to seek feedback from your juniors. They are smart enough to tell you what you always want to hear. They will listen to you but will seldom provide you their emotional response. For this you have to build an environment of mutual trust and open communications as a long term goal. But honest feedback from juniors is of much value first as they know the subject matter thoroughly; and second, decisions arrived at by you on the data collected has to be implemented by them. When they know their feedback is considered and reflected in organizational decisions, they are bound to be willing to execute them, quickly and efficiently.

Listening skills count very much for getting correct feedback. An impatient, inattentive person cannot get a good feedback. You must be willing to maintain silence and interested while others speak. Be alert to note their non-verbal feedback which is provided unconsciously and indicates real emotional reactions.

In the role of receiver of communication, you have the responsibility to provide feedback. You can check your own understanding by offering to summarize, by asking for clarifications, and whenever possible by stating your own views and feelings and responses to the communication. Managers are duty-bound to provide their feedback to their direct reports, especially during appraisal meetings. Skill in providing this feedback can

turn the appraisal interview less stressful for both the appraiser and the person being appraised. Correcting and training subordinates is the prime function of managers, ability to provide feedback proves an asset in performing these two tasks.

### **Providing Feedback**

Some points to be remembered while providing meaningful feedback include:

- a. Provide feedback on a timely basis. Feedback delayed is feedback denied. Delayed feedback appears as grudges held by you for something that happened long ago. Delayed feedback is another form of fault finding exercise. People relate to what happened recently than to what happened long ago. Past is history.
- b. Provide feedback in a positive manner so that a person feels mentally prepared for it; untimely and negative feedback always puts the person on defensive thereby losing the whole purpose of the feedback exercise.
- c. Always be specific, not general nor vague. A comment "you never listen" is too general to have any impact. It is much more preferable to say, "You were not listening when our customer was here after lunch hours, with a complaint about the way we handled his order for product xx we launched in April this year."
- d. Be descriptive, not evaluative. Correcting someone by saying, "you made a serious mistake, it is not correct to scold the saleswoman we appointed last week like that, others present there were also shocked," is evaluative and puts the other person on defensive. Descriptive feedback would be to say, " you were rather blunt with the saleswoman and did not provide her with adequate evidence, it upset the young lady and also drew the attention of others present at the workplace." Here the wrong doer knows exactly what mistakes were made and thus how to correct them. The person is in a position to understand impropriety of his/her conduct and arrange for appropriate improvements.
- e. Your feedback should be on what and how the other person said or did something. Not on why was it done. When you ask why; you are

challenging the motives or intent of a person and that can generate resentment, suspicion or distrust.

- f. Be certain your feedback relates to things that are under control of the person and, therefore, there is scope for their improvement. Providing feedback on items not under control serves no purpose. Similarly provide feedback on a few items at a time, overload confuses and depresses the person.

## **Receiving Feedback**

1. Welcome constructive feedback Your attempts to find out how your communication has been received by the audience are equally important in improving the quality of communication. Your powers of self-perception only go so far. People around you notice things, both good and bad, which you don't and you might learn from their input. There is a "virtuous circle" of feedback whereby the more you actively seek it out, the less you can hide bad behaviour, and generally your feedback is better. E-bay seller feedback is an excellent example of a transparent feedback process, encouraging positive behaviours.
2. Do not Justify Your Position Telling the person why their feedback is wrong will not work. Ever. Arguing, justifying your position or denial are all powerful negative emotions, making the conversation more challenging than it need be. The only way for the conversation to go is downhill, with tempers flaring and insults flying.
3. Do Accept Feedback At Face Value Although the feedback might feel like a personal insult challenging your whole identity, keep some perspective. The feedback relates to specific instances, in your talk or message and now you know about it, you have the opportunity to do something about it.
4. Do not Ruminates on Feedback Only cows need ruminate before they digest. Chewing over feedback again and again will not make it clearer or easier to understand, particularly if the feedback is less than glowing. Avoid the temptation to re-enact the conversation to a friend as this only makes you feel ten times worse. Do talk about it with someone else, but make sure you're emotionally detached first.

5. Do Evaluate Feedback Before Responding For example, you receive internal customer feedback saying you don't do "x" and they think you should. You've actually spent some time considering "x", and it's simply not cost effective. How about thanking them for the feedback, letting them know the history and asking how else you could meet their needs. Chances are they will be happy enough, and go off not noticing that you didn't respond directly to their feedback. Slick!

Giving or receiving feedback, in particular job performance feedback, can be an emotional roller-coaster if you let it be. Learn how to receive feedback gracefully, giving you the emotional headspace to learn and grow from the experience.

- a. Summarize and reflect what you hear. Your feedback provider will appreciate that you are really hearing what they are saying. You are ascertaining that you 'are' really hearing.
- b. Ask questions to clarify. Focus on questions to make sure you understand the feedback.
- c. Ask for examples and stories that illustrate the feedback, so you know you share meaning with the person providing feedback.
- d. Just because a person gives you feedback, doesn't mean their feedback is right. They see your actions but interpret them through their own perceptual screen and life experiences.
- e. Be approachable. People avoid giving feedback to grumpies. Your openness to feedback is obvious through your body language, facial expressions, and welcoming manner.
- f. Check with others to determine the reliability of the feedback. If only one person believes it about you, it may be just him or her, not you.
- g. Remember, only you have the right and the ability to decide what to do with the feedback.

Remember these tips when you provide or receive a feedback

1. Try to show your appreciation to the person providing the feedback. They'll feel encouraged and believe it or not, you do want to encourage feedback.
2. Even your manager or supervisor finds providing feedback scary. They never know how the person receiving feedback is going to react.
3. If you find yourself becoming defensive or hostile, practice stress management techniques such as taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly.
4. Focusing on understanding the feedback by questioning and restating usually defuses any feelings you have of hostility or anger.
5. If you really disagree, are angry or upset, and want to dissuade the other person of their opinion, wait until your emotions are under control to reopen the discussion

What you do with the feedback and how you react is your choice. Rather, than argue individual points, respect that what has been presented to you was presented with the intention of helping you. Choose which parts, if any, of the feedback you will implement or explore further. Thank the provider and act accordingly.

But always finish feedback session with a Thank You.

**Activity 4.1**

From nine feedbacks below, identify negative feedback. Convert them into positive ones

1. You were a much better worker before your family member got cancer.
2. Shirish. Great job. Excellent presentation. Save it on the company data board....

But that's not what I was looking for...

3. You need to become a dynamic speaker!!
4. Your growth is like a tree branching out in all directions.
5. Your sense of urgency does not go unnoticed. Your passion is exemplary.
6. Thanks for taking the load while I travel around — you're the best. Always in a good mood even when more tasks are heaped on you!
7. We value you!
8. You always provide great service to both fellow employees and the public. They always walk away with a smile.
9. Your review skills are good, but try to limit your conversation and let your employees have a chance to speak. It is supposed to be a tool to open up communication.

You can see one solution after Summary 4.6

**Suggestion Scheme**

Suggestion scheme is one more means of establishing constructive communication in an organization.

It is a recognized programme through which employees can formally submit their ideas for improvement for consideration by management. A

suggestion scheme helps to ensure that good ideas are not lost. Employees need to know that they can put forward ideas, which will be evaluated objectively, and that they are a vital and valued part of the organization. Such schemes will generate cost savings, improvements to customer service, increased efficiencies and will improve employee morale in the workplace. Further they provide a vital communication channel between employees and management within the organization. Normally suggestion scheme is an integral part of total quality and ensures that everyone in the organization has the opportunity to be involved in continuous improvement.

The employee suggestion scheme is next to the continuous improvement process (CIP) and employee inventions a part of innovation or idea management. The continual corrective procedure represents guided brainstorming with a moderator and a regularly recurrent process, whereby the suggestions of improvement are distinguished by spontaneous brainstorming. Remember the employee suggestion scheme is not an instrument for giving feedback or to express employee satisfaction.

The scheme is operated by a committee specially appointed for handling suggestion is headed by a very senior executive of the organization.

## 4.5 Cross Cultural Communication

### **Introduction**

We all communicate with others all the time -- in our homes, in our workplaces, in the groups we belong to, and in the community. No matter how well we think we understand each other, communication is hard. Just think, for example, how often we hear things like, "He doesn't get it," or "She didn't really hear what I meant to say." "Culture" is often at the root of communication challenges. Our culture influences how we approach problems, and how we participate in groups and in communities. When we participate in groups we are often surprised at how differently people approach their work together.

Culture is a complex concept, with many different definitions. But, simply put, "culture" refers to a group or community with which we share common experiences that shape the way we understand the world. It includes groups that we are born into, such as gender, race, or national origin. It

also includes groups we join or become part of. For example, we can acquire a new culture by moving to a new region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly, we realize we all belong to many cultures at once.

Our histories are a critical piece of our cultures. Historical experiences -- whether of five years ago or of ten generations back -- shape who we are. Knowledge of our history can help us understand ourselves and one another better. Exploring the ways in which various groups within our society have related to each other is key to opening channels for cross-cultural communication.

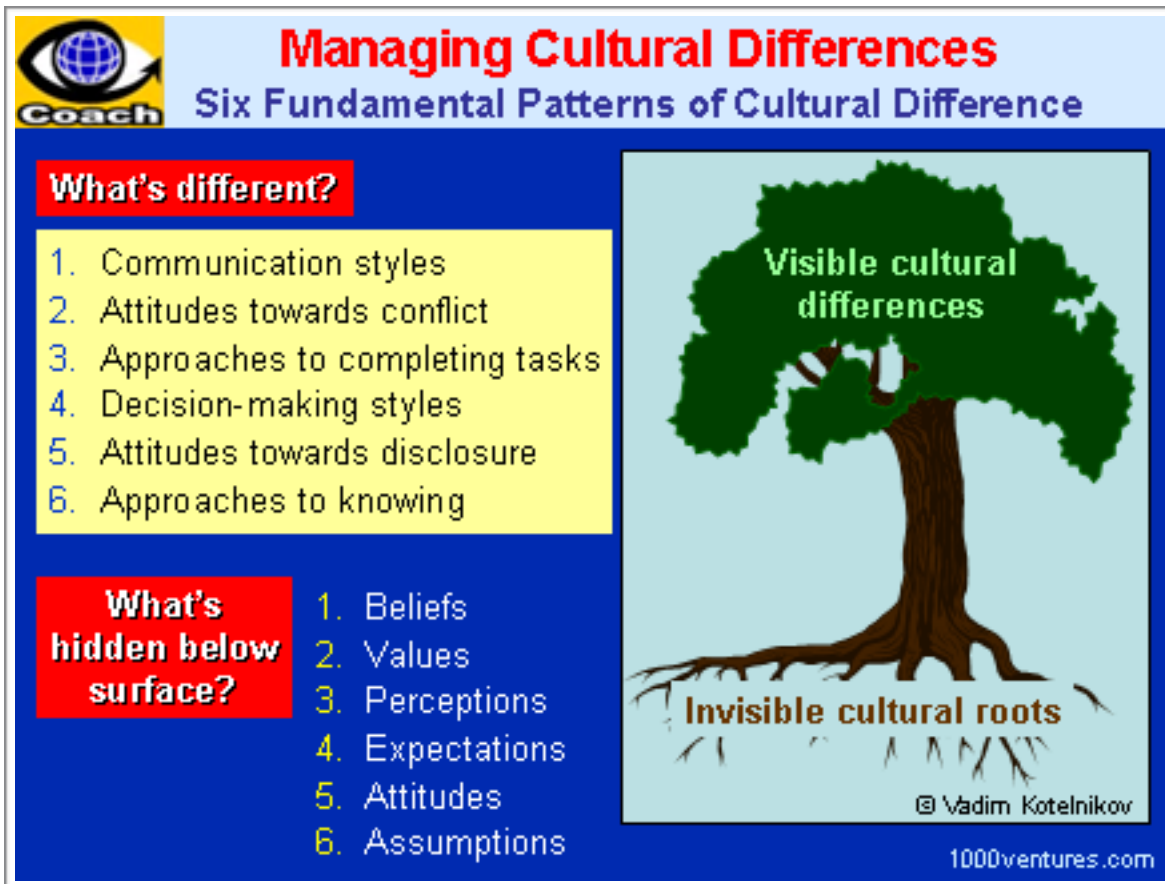
## **Six Fundamental Patterns of Cultural Differences**

In a world as complex as ours, each of us is shaped by many factors, and culture is one of the powerful forces that acts on us. The culture is important. One's own culture provides the "lens" through which we view the world; the "logic"... by which we order it; the "grammar" ... by which it makes sense. In other words, culture is central to what we see, how we make sense of what we see, and how we express ourselves.

As people from different cultural groups take on the exciting challenge of working together, cultural values sometimes conflict. We can misunderstand each other, and react in ways that can hinder what are otherwise promising partnerships. Oftentimes, we aren't aware that culture is acting upon us. Sometimes, we are not even aware that we have cultural values or assumptions that are different from others.

Six fundamental patterns of cultural differences -- ways in which cultures, as a whole, tend to vary from one another -- are described below. The descriptions point out some of the recurring causes of cross-cultural communication difficulties. As you enter into multicultural dialogue or collaboration, keep these generalized differences in mind. Next time you find yourself in a confusing situation, and you suspect that cross-cultural differences are at play, try reviewing this list. Ask yourself how culture may be shaping your own reactions, and try to see the world from others' points of view.



**Figure 4.6****1) Different Communication Styles**

The way people communicate varies widely between, and even within, cultures. One aspect of communication style is language usage. Across cultures, some words and phrases are used in different ways. For example, even in countries that share the English language, the meaning of “yes” varies from “maybe, I’ll consider it” to “definitely so,” with many shades in between.

Another major aspect of communication style is the degree of importance given to non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance, and sense of time. In addition, different norms regarding the appropriate degree of assertiveness in communicating can add to cultural misunderstandings. For instance, some white Americans typically consider raised voices to be a sign that a fight has begun, while some black, Jewish and Italian

Americans often feel that an increase in volume is a sign of an exciting conversation among friends. Thus, some white Americans may react with greater alarm to a loud discussion than would members of some American ethnic or non-white racial groups.

## **2) Different Attitudes Toward Conflict**

Some cultures view conflict as a positive thing, while others view it as something to be avoided. In the U.S., conflict is not usually desirable; but people often are encouraged to deal directly with conflicts that do arise. In fact, face-to-face meetings customarily are recommended as the way to work through whatever problems exist. In contrast, in many Eastern countries, open conflict is experienced as embarrassing or demeaning; as a rule, differences are best worked out quietly. A written exchange might be the favored means to address the conflict.

## **3) Different Approaches to Completing Tasks**

From culture to culture, there are different ways that people move toward completing tasks. Some reasons include different access to resources; different judgments of the rewards associated with task completion, different notions of time, and varied ideas about how relationship-building and task-oriented work should go together.

When it comes to working together effectively on a task, cultures differ with respect to the importance placed on establishing relationships early on in the collaboration. A case in point, Asian and Hispanic cultures tend to attach more value to developing relationships at the beginning of a shared project and more emphasis on task completion toward the end as compared with European-Americans. European-Americans tend to focus immediately on the task at hand, and let relationships develop as they work on the task. This does not mean that people from any one of these cultural backgrounds are more or less committed to accomplishing the task or value relationships more or less; it means they may pursue them differently.

## **4) Different Decision-Making Styles**

The roles individuals play in decision-making vary widely from culture to culture. For example, in the U.S., decisions are frequently delegated --

that is, an official assigns responsibility for a particular matter to a subordinate. In many Southern European and Latin American countries, as well as in India, there is a strong value placed on holding decision-making responsibilities to oneself. When decisions are made by groups of people, majority rule is a common approach in the U.S.; in Japan consensus is the preferred mode. Be aware that individuals' expectations about their own roles in shaping a decision may be influenced by their cultural frame of reference.

### **5) Different Attitudes Toward Disclosure**

In some cultures, it is not appropriate to be frank about emotions, about the reasons behind a conflict or a misunderstanding, or about personal information. Keep this in mind when you are in a dialogue or when you are working with others. When you are dealing with a conflict, be mindful that people may differ in what they feel comfortable revealing. Questions that may seem natural to you -- What was the conflict about? What was your role in the conflict? What was the sequence of events? -- may seem intrusive to others. The variation among cultures in attitudes toward disclosure is also something to consider before you conclude that you have an accurate reading of the views, experiences, and goals of the people with whom you are working.

### **6) Different Approaches to Knowing**

Notable differences occur among cultural groups when it comes to epistemologies -- that is, the ways people come to know things. European cultures tend to consider information acquired through cognitive means, such as counting and measuring, more valid than other ways of coming to know things. Compare that to African cultures' preference for affective ways of knowing, including symbolic imagery and rhythm. Asian cultures' epistemologies tend to emphasize the validity of knowledge gained through striving toward transcendence.

Recent popular works demonstrate that our own society is paying more attention to previously overlooked ways of knowing. Indeed, these different approaches to knowing could affect ways of analyzing a community problem or finding ways to resolve it. Some members of your group may want to do library research to understand a shared problem better and identify possible solutions. Others may prefer to visit

places and people who have experienced challenges like the ones you are facing, and get a feeling for what has worked elsewhere.

## **Respecting Our Differences and Working Together**

In addition to helping us to understand ourselves and our own cultural frames of reference, knowledge of these six patterns of cultural difference can help us to understand the people who are different from us. An appreciation of patterns of cultural difference can assist us in processing what it means to be different in ways that are respectful of others, not faultfinding or damaging.

It is often noticed that, when faced by an interaction that we do not understand, people tend to interpret the others involved as “abnormal,” “weird,” or “wrong.” This tendency, if indulged, gives rise on the individual level to prejudice. If this propensity is either consciously or unconsciously integrated into organizational structures, then prejudice takes root in our institutions -- in the structures, laws, policies, and procedures that shape our lives. Consequently, it is vital that we learn to control the human tendency to translate “different from me” into “less than me.” We can learn to do this.

We can also learn to collaborate across cultural lines as individuals and as a society. Awareness of cultural differences doesn’t have to divide us from each other. It doesn’t have to paralyze us either, for fear of not saying the “right thing.” In fact, becoming more aware of our cultural differences, as well as exploring our similarities, can help us communicate with each other more effectively. Recognizing where cultural differences are at work is the first step toward understanding and respecting each other.

Learning about different ways that people communicate can enrich our lives. People’s different communication styles reflect deeper philosophies and world views which are the foundation of their culture. Understanding these deeper philosophies gives us a broader picture of what the world has to offer us.

Learning about people’s cultures has the potential to give us a mirror image of our own. We have the opportunity to challenge our assumptions about the “right” way of doing things, and consider a variety of approaches. We have a chance to learn new ways to solve problems that

we had previously given up on, accepting the difficulties as “just the way things are.”

Lastly, if we are open to learning about people from other cultures, we become less lonely. Prejudice and stereotypes separate us from whole groups of people who could be friends and partners in working for change. Many of us long for real contact. Talking with people different from ourselves gives us hope and energizes us to take on the challenge of improving our communities and worlds.

## 4.6 Summary

Open, clear and complete communication is a must for any organization striving to improve its performance, Individual communication is often hampered by perceptual and language differences; information overload, listeners' inattention, time pressures under which employees have to operate in this competitive world, employee emotions and other psychological factors and poor retention of information, especially when surrounded by phones, emails, reports and appointments.

Complexity in organizational structure, distractions / noise, media used for communication and channels of communication can cause barriers to organizational communication. These could be overcome by: improving personal communication by building an ability to speak effectively as well as the ability to listen effectively. Feedback is a major component in effective communication and employees must know the art of providing feedback and receiving feedback. Feedback skills is most wanted requirement in senior employees of an organization these days with greater importance that is being placed on corporate communication. Suggestion Scheme is considered to be an excellent means to generate healthy and productive communication among employees.

Cross cultural communication has assumed importance with globalization of business and growth of e-commerce. Extra care and caution has to be exercised while dealing with persons from other cultures in the course of work.

### **Activity 4.1: One Solution**

Negative feedbacks: 1, 2, 3, and 9.

After converting them to positive feedbacks

1. You are a much better worker in spite of the fact that your family member got cancer.
2. Shirish. Great job. Excellent presentation. Save it on the company data board... it was what I was looking for...
3. You have now become a dynamic speaker!!
4. Your review skills are good, plus you let your employees have a chance to speak.

It is supposed to be a tool to open up communication.

## 4.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are major barriers to effective personal communication?
2. List down the factors that obstruct smooth flow of organizational communication.
3. What is the role of feedback in removing obstacles to clear and complete communication?
4. Receiving feedback is more complex than providing one. Do you agree? Why?
5. What are major considerations to be handled when engaged in cross cultural communication?



## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 3](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 4](#)

# Chapter 5

## Listening

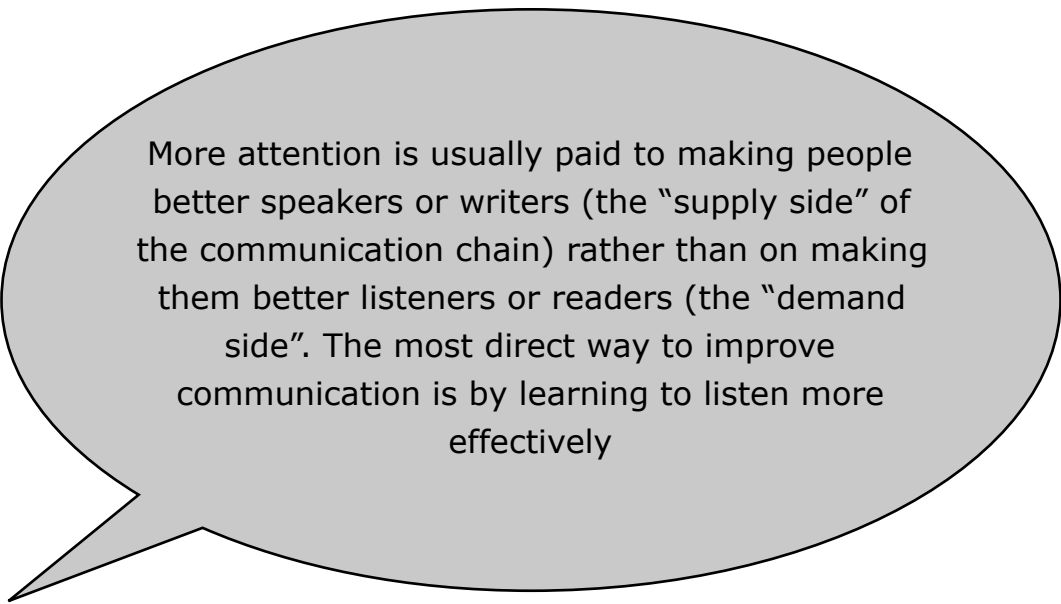
### Objectives:

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Listening – an art and science
- Factors affecting good listening
- Four stages in the process of listening
- How to be a good listener?
- How will you ensure you are being listened to?
- Barriers to effective listening
- Strategies to remove these barriers.

### Structure:

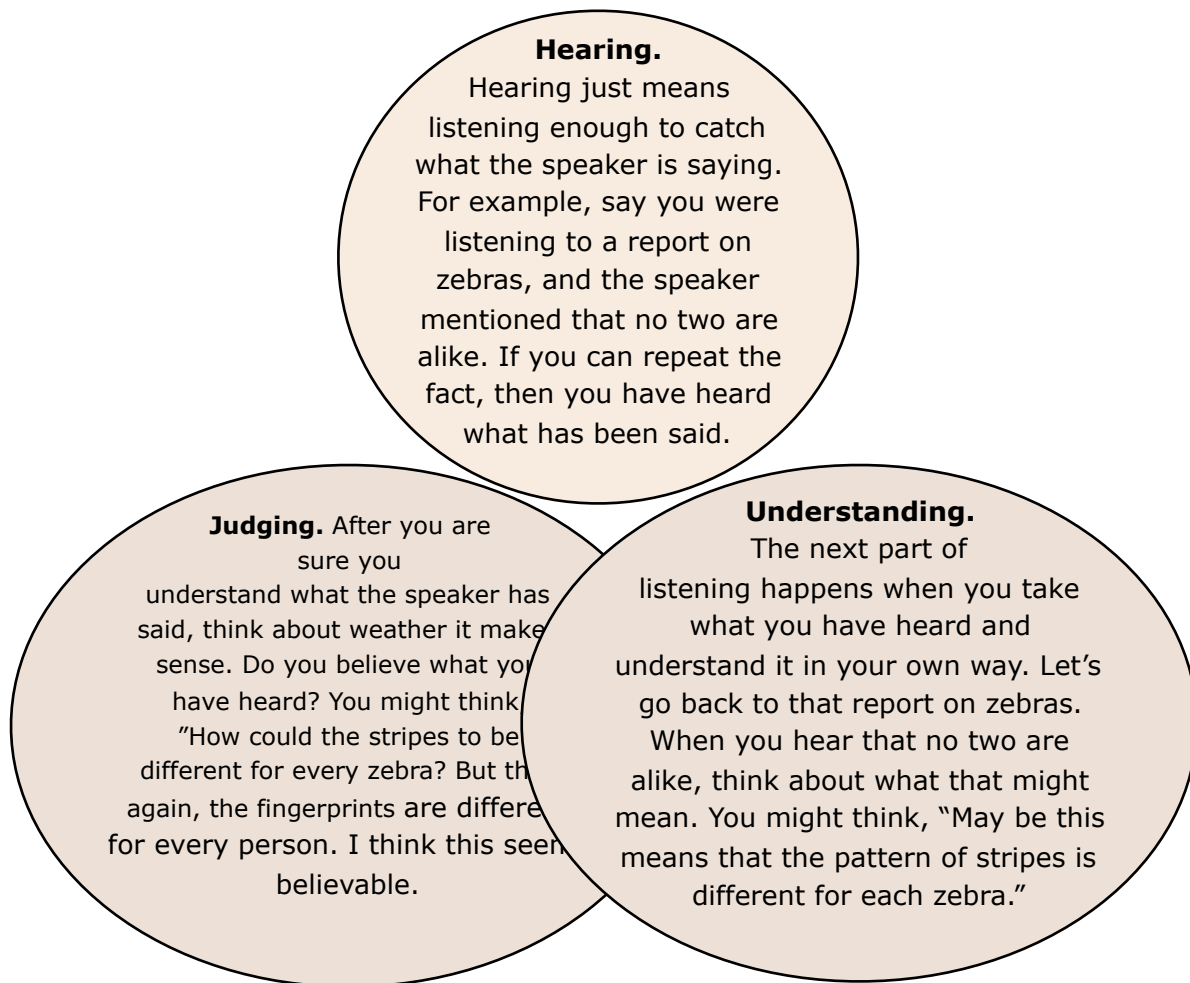
- 5.1 Listening – An Art and Science
- 5.2 How to be a Good Listener?
- 5.3 Ensure they are Listening to you - Safeguards
- 5.4 Barriers to Effective Listening
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Self-Assessment Questions



More attention is usually paid to making people better speakers or writers (the “supply side” of the communication chain) rather than on making them better listeners or readers (the “demand side”. The most direct way to improve communication is by learning to listen more effectively

## 5.1 Listening - an art and science

### The Art of Listening. Learn How to Develop Your Listening Skills



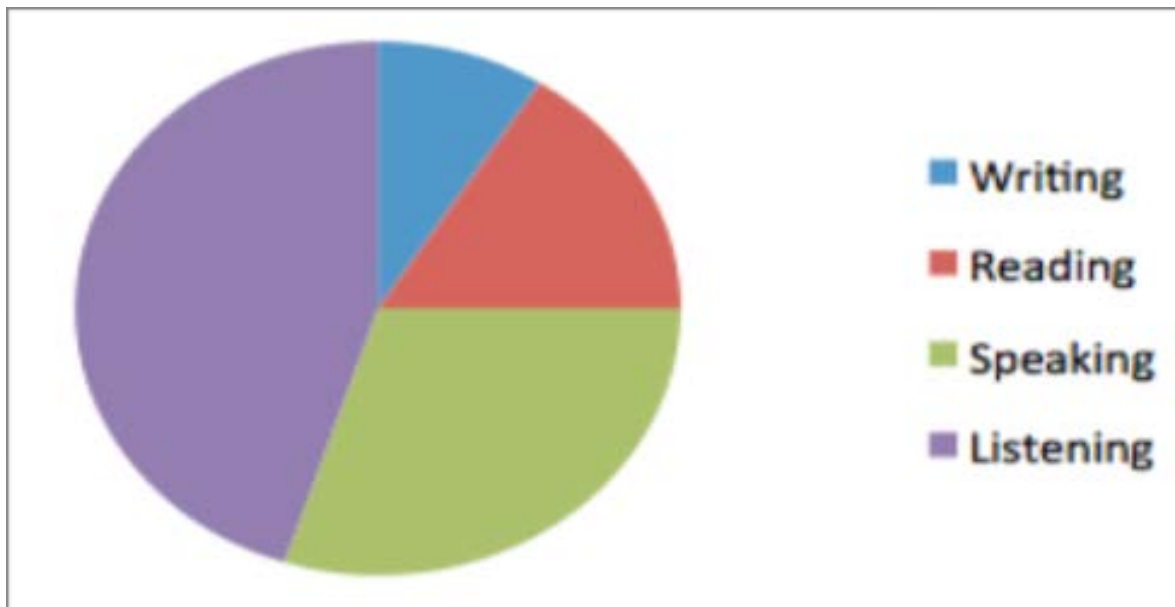
In 2014 the art of listening is a lost art. A magazine article published as far back as in 1960, notes how people in conversations are often not good listeners. It indicated that people keep talking when they should be listening. When they do have a chance to listen, their thoughts are elsewhere, and perhaps even thinking of what they will say next. With all our communication advances, it is something we may have neglected over the last 54 years.

Learning the art of listening is vital for successful managers. To be a great speaker, you need to be a great listener. For your message to reach the ears of those you speak to, you need to know what they want to hear.

Everyone has a job to be done. You can only find out what that is by listening to what your audience is saying prior to preparing your speech.

Listening is defined as applying oneself to hearing something. In verbal communication it is to hear while giving attention to what is being said. It is an ability that can be cultivated and practiced into a skill. From this standpoint it can be viewed as an art. Our listening efficiency can be affected by numerous factors. How much we have on our minds, recently hearing distressing event in the market or office, and even culture can affect our listening efficiency.

Of all kinds of skills of communication, listening is the most important of all. Communication process succeeds the moment the message has been clearly understood by the receiver. This can happen only when the receiver listens and digests your message. Although listening is such a critical part in our daily life, it is never taught in schools or colleges. In these all the focus is on writing, reading and speaking only.



**Figure 5.1: How does a Manager Engage in Communication**

While in reality, as per one study, managers in all organization spend their communication time as under:

Writing 9%  
Reading 16%  
Speaking 30% and balance 45% in listening.

The higher your position in the organization, the greater is your listening responsibility.

Effective Listening or science of listening is knowing the difference between what is said, what you hear, and what is meant. Effective listening involves four stages.

### **Sensing**

The sense of hearing is being employed to take in the message. Our minds have the ability to listen four times faster than a person can talk. One challenge to effective listening would be focusing our minds on hearing what is said rather than the several other things going on in our lives at any given moment. To improve the skill, look directly at the person talking. As you hear the words said, also start reading the body language. Listen for tone and intonation. With advancement in the art, you will be able to notice even more subtle body language such as pupil movement. On the flip side, if your taking part in public speaking, your audience will face the same challenge you do with the art of listening. Understanding this will be an aid to developing and improving your public speaking skills. If you can repeat the speaker's words, you have heard the message. This stage may fail if there is a great deal of noise (unfavorable physical environment) or if the listener is occupied in some other activity (unfavorable psychological environment).

### **Understanding**

Understanding means processing and interpreting of the message. Rather than thinking what you are going to say next, try to think of what is being said from the standpoint of the communicator. Think of yourself as their advocate and your purpose is to help everyone understand what the speaker is trying to communicate. If the listener fails to interpret correctly the words heard, the message is misunderstood. This happens because of varying levels of knowledge, vocabulary, experience, attitudes, culture and background. Such failure occurs often because listener has not paid

required attention towards speaker's non-verbal communication through body language.

## **Evaluating**

Evaluation requires appraising the message. Tap into the filing cabinet of your little gray box on conveniently mounted on the top of your body. First sort and classify what you are hearing. What are the implications, the applications, benefit or damage of the information? You will have plenty of time to draw a conclusion. You will only have a few seconds to quickly make a fool of yourself however. So put prejudices aside. Stifle any desire to respond emotionally. The cliché, consider the source is not only outdated, it could be costly advise to follow. I have worked with numerous supervisors who for whatever reason choose not to progress beyond their station in the organization. Some have developed their knowledge and assessment skills beyond that of many others and built successful careers. For me personally, when they bring a bit of information to me I take heed. I cannot tell how many times mishaps, expenses have been saved because of listening to their input. For future public speaking jobs, it is vital you not only learn about your audience, you need to practice the art of listening on them. Find out what floats their boats. Find out how best to reach them.

Or if you happen to listen to a sales talk, you may believe or not believe in benefits being claimed by sales person, your judgment to buy or not to buy is crucial part of the listening process.

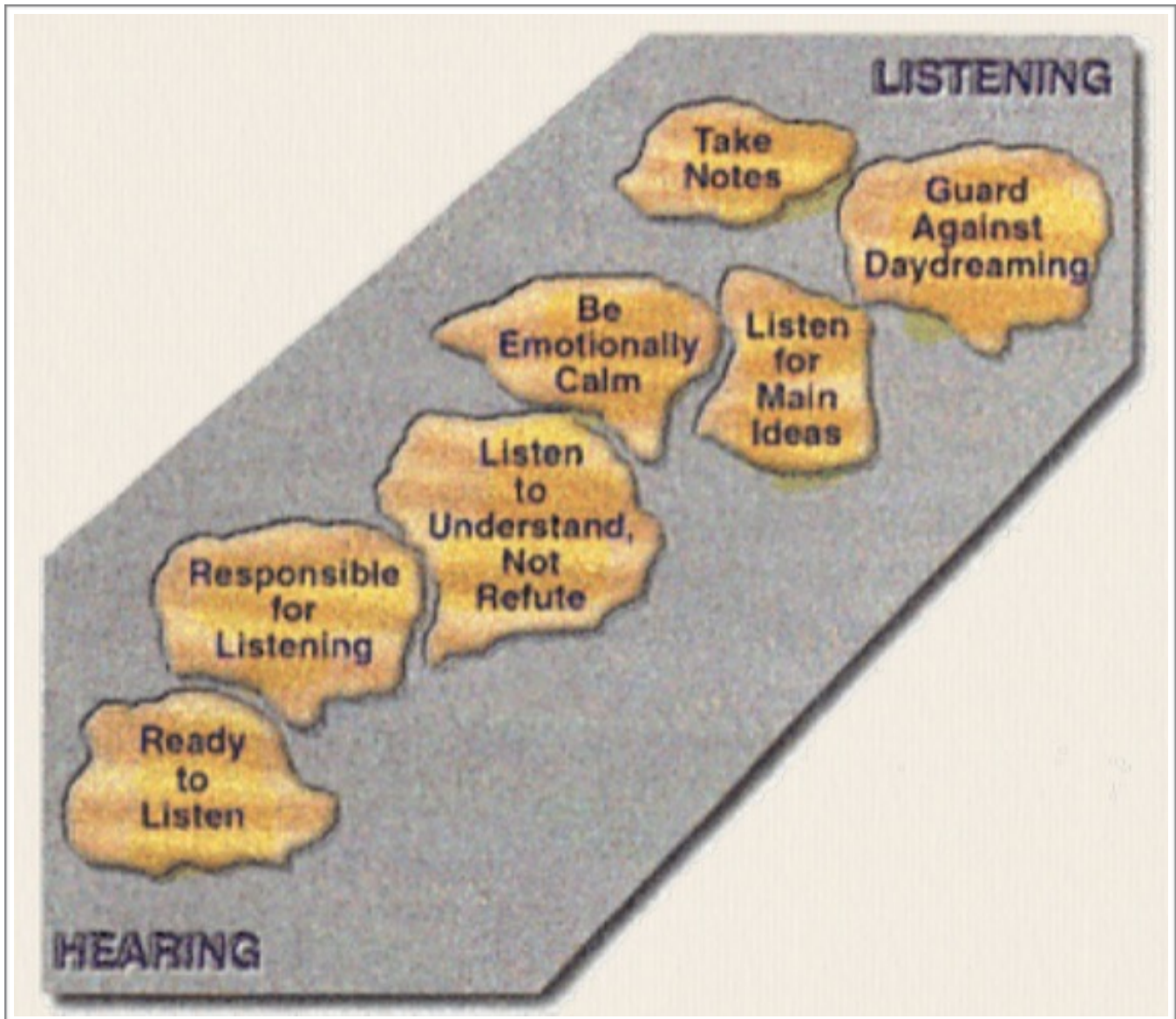
## **Responding**

Response is acting on the message. You will benefit little if you do not act on the direction or advice. A simple credo in this regard, there are three things a true professional does not do when being given counsel or advice - justify, minimize or shift the blame. Reasonableness in the art of listening dictates that there is always more to learn on a subject. This response allows speaker to know whether the message was correctly delivered and communication was successful. If your public speaking is reasonable, it will be easy for the audience to be reasonable in listening to you.

Not only will improved communication help your relationships, it will help your bottom line. What is the foundation of the information age? Is it not communicating information? Improvement in listening to the wants and

needs of customers will increase the ability to meet and satisfy those needs thereby increasing sales volumes. More importantly however, it will enrich your life. How many problems could be solved if we practiced good communication?

Thus process of hearing to listening travels through getting ready to listen, listening to understand and not to refute (at this stage), maintain emotional balance, focus on main ideas, avoid day dreaming and final get the message – you may make notes if necessary.



**Figure 5.2: The Process of Hearing to Listening**



## 5.2 How to be a good listener

### **Hear**

Here is a trick question for you, reader. What do you hear right now? If your home is like mine, you hear the humming sound of a your computer/ printer, the low throbbing of traffic from the nearby highway and the noise created by the cartoon characters on the TV next door being watched by your kids at home.

The slight trick in the question is that, by asking you what you were hearing, I prompted your brain to take control of the sensory experience — and made you listen rather than just hear. That, in effect, is what happens when an event jumps out of the background enough to be perceived consciously rather than just being part of your auditory surroundings. The difference between the sense of hearing and the skill of listening is attention.

Hearing is a vastly underrated sense. We tend to think of the world as a place that we see, interacting with things and people based on how they look. Studies have shown that conscious thought takes place at about the same rate as visual recognition, requiring a significant fraction of a second per event. But hearing is a quantitatively faster sense. While it might take you a full second to notice something out of the corner of your eye, turn your head toward it, recognize it and respond to it, the same reaction to a new or sudden sound happens at least 10 times as fast.

This is because hearing has evolved as our alarm system — it operates out of line of sight and works even while you are asleep. And because there is no place in the universe that is totally silent, your auditory system has evolved a complex and automatic “volume control,” fine-tuned by development and experience, to keep most sounds off your cognitive radar unless they might be of use as a signal that something dangerous or wonderful is somewhere within the kilometer or so that your ears can detect.

## Be Attentive

This is where attention kicks in. Attention is not some monolithic brain process. There are different types of attention, and they use different parts of the brain. The sudden loud noise that makes you jump activates the simplest type: the startle. A chain of five neurons from your ears to your spine takes that noise and converts it into a defensive response in a mere tenth of a second — elevating your heart rate, hunching your shoulders and making you cast around to see if whatever you heard is going to pounce and eat you. This simplest form of attention requires almost no brains at all and has been observed in every studied vertebrate.

More complex attention kicks in when you hear your name called from across a room or hear an unexpected birdcall from inside a subway station. This stimulus-directed attention is controlled by pathways through the temporo-parietal and inferior frontal cortex regions, mostly in the right hemisphere — areas that process the raw, sensory input, but don't concern themselves with what you should make of that sound. (Neuroscientists call this a "bottom-up" response.)

But when you actually pay attention to something you are listening to, whether it is your favorite song or the cat meowing at dinnertime, a separate "top-down" pathway comes into play. Here, the signals are conveyed through a dorsal pathway in your cortex, part of the brain that does more computation, which lets you actively focus on what you're hearing and tune out sights and sounds that aren't as immediately important.

In this case, your brain works like a set of noise-suppressing headphones, with the bottom-up pathways acting as a switch to interrupt if something more urgent — say, an airplane engine dropping through your bathroom ceiling — grabs your attention. Hearing, in short, is easy. You and every other vertebrate that hasn't suffered some genetic, developmental or environmental accident have been doing it for hundreds of millions of years. It's your life line, your alarm system, and your way to escape danger and pass on your genes.

## **Stay away from Distractions**

But listening, really listening is hard when potential distractions are leaping into your ears every fifty-thousandth of a second — and pathways in your brain are just waiting to interrupt your focus to warn you of any potential dangers. Listening is a skill that we're in danger of losing in a world of digital distraction and information overload.

And yet we dare not lose it. Because listening tunes our brain to the patterns of our environment faster than any other sense, and paying attention to the non-visual parts of our world feeds into everything from our intellectual sharpness to our dance skills. Luckily, we can train our listening just as with any other skill. Listen to new music when jogging rather than familiar tunes. Listen to your dog's whines and barks: he is trying to tell you something isn't right. Listen to your supervisor's or colleague's voice — not only to the words, which after a few years may repeat, but to the sounds under them, the emotions carried in the harmonics. Stop Talking! You can't multi-task speaking and listening. If you're talking, you're not listening. This rule also applies to the talking inside your head. If you're thinking intently about what you want to say, you're not listening to what is being said.

"Our boss never listens to us" is not just the complaint of a problematic relationship; it has also become an epidemic in an organization that is exchanging convenience for content, speed for meaning. The richness of life doesn't lie in the loudness and the beat, but in the timbres and the variations that you can discern if you simply pay attention. After all by not listening it is the boss who is at a loss not the workers who talk to him.

## **Wait before you Respond**

Do not be in hurry to form your opinion How often we have passionately expressed a gut reaction only to become turned around and regret what we said after hearing more of the facts? Hearing the 'complete' story? Allow for a thoughtful pause between reacting, a space in which to ask yourself, "Do I have the whole story?" People are unique. We tend to create labels like Liberal, Dead Head, Wise Guy, and think we know what's inside. Suddenly, we believe we know everything about someone, but they are not really all alike. More you listen, more do you realize this fact. While we may not consciously feel the need to be right, we tend to have certain ideas

about reality and feel groundless when they're threatened. Groundless now and then isn't a bad thing. Without it we can't break new ground or find common ground; it's okay to be unsure.

## **Concentrate**

When someone is speaking, stay focused. If you're paying attention, you are likely be showing signs of focus – such as making eye contact – without thinking about it at all. Below are some of the ways we show we're listening. Maintain eye contact. In the US, not making eye contact has the connotation of someone untrustworthy. But realize, too, that steady eye contact in some cultures is considered impolite or aggressive. Give non-verbal clues. Nod, lean toward the speaker, take on the general demeanor of someone who is interested. Encourage the speaker to go on. Especially over the phone, hearing no response feels like no one is listening. Do not be a verbal trespasser. A verbal trespasser is one who interrupts or finishes the speaker's sentences. Allow speaker to complete in his / her own words.

## **Visualize**

Visualization is a technique that can enhance listening: a picture is worth a thousand words. One way to use visualization is to visualize what you are being told. Some people are more visual than others. If visualization is more a chore than a help, you may not be a visual person. But anything new takes some adjustment and might take a few tries before feeling natural. The first step in remembering names is deciding that they are important to remember. Listen when you're told about someone prior to introductions. Repeat the names when you are introduced. Make associations to remember names.

## **Hear Non-verbal Messages**

Do you know, you need your eyes as well as ears to listen? Non-verbal message can only be seen, and not heard. A spoken message does not come only through words. And non-verbal message can occupy as much as 90% of the contents in a message. In order to get the message from the speaker, you have to pay attention to body language which carries 55% of the meaning and the tone of voice which carries 35% of the meaning. The speaker's body language and voice can tell about speaker's state of mind

and feelings. How many times have been influenced by the way a person looks at you? And by someone's tone of voice?

Facial expressions, gestures, and posture are important carriers of meaning. Over-enthusiasm or excitement can be seen in a person's face and gestures. Posture shows the level of interest a person feels in the current activity. Lack of eye contact, looking away, and turning the corners of mouth downward all show that the speaker is unhappy. To be a good listener, you have to be aware of your own body language also. Your body language can affect the speaker. Remember, you can stay silent but you can hardly disguise your body language.

### **Observe. Listen. Ask.**

Ask open questions. Open questions encourage the speaker. They elicit a more detailed response than closed questions. "What" and "Why" are usually helpful starts to open questions. Going into a listening situation with questions in your mind will help you remember and, often, put information into the framework of your existing knowledge. Listen to body language and be quick to clarify assumptions if you are unsure or are getting a negative message. Observe. Listen. Ask. Also summarize what you understood and check with the speaker. Summarizing is often helpful, especially if you have had a misunderstanding, are unsure of expectations, or have just reached an agreement. Ensure that everyone is coming away with the same idea. In case you have missed something, it is likely that it could be the case with other listeners too. All of you get a chance to clear your understanding when the speaker comments on your summary. We must be aware of the speaker, aware of verbal and non-verbal cues, and aware of our own listening strengths and challenges.

## 5.3 Ensure they are listening to you - safeguards

Here are the eight steps to ensure your audience is listening to you.

### **Choose the Right Time**

As the cliché states, there is a time and a place for everything, and communicating is no different. Avoid leaving discussions about heavy topics such as finances or weekly planning until late evening. Few people will be thrilled to be faced with sorting out major issues when they're at

their most tired. Instead, leave heavy topics for mornings and afternoons when people are alert, available, and more likely to be able to respond with clarity. Successful managers have observed that if they wish to discuss a matter which can evoke strong reactions, bringing them up during coffee or lunch breaks brings good results. Listeners being in casual environment are more cordial and less aggressive to ideas being presented to them. Many a times a solution that has support of all participants has been arrived at during such communications.

### **Choose the Right Place**

If you need to tell someone something that isn't going to be well received (such as news of loss of a customer or delay in promotion), do not say it in public, around colleagues or near other people. Be respectful and mindful of the person receiving the communication and communicate to them in a private secluded place. This will also enable you to provide space to open dialog with them about the communication, and helps to ensure that the two-way process is occurring properly. If you are presenting to a group of people, be sure to check the acoustics beforehand and practice projecting your voice clearly. Use a microphone if needed to ensure that your audience can hear you.

### **Remove Distractions**

Turn off ALL electronics that could go off during the conversation. You can request the participants to switch off their mobile phones or keep them on silent (not vibration – as it will distract the particular listener) mode. If the phone rings, laugh it off the first time, then request to turn it off immediately and continue talking. Do not allow external distractions to act as crutches that keep sidetracking your concentration. They will distract both you and your listener, and effectively kill the communication.

### **Organize and Clarify Ideas in your Mind**

This should be done before you attempt to communicate these ideas. If you are feeling passionate about a topic, you may become garbled if you haven't already thought of some key points to stick to when communicating it. A good rule of thumb is to choose three main points and keep your communication focused on those. That way, if the topic wanders off course, you will be able to return to one or more of these three key

points without feeling flustered. Writing these key points down (if appropriate) can also help.

### **Be Clear**

Make it clear what you are wishing to convey from the outset. For example, your purpose could be to inform others, obtain information or initiate action. People need to know in advance what you expect from your communication.

### **Stay on Topic**

Once you start addressing your three main points, make sure everything you're saying adds to the conversation or debate. If you have already thought through the issues and the essence of the ideas that you wish to put across, it is likely that some pertinent phrases will stick in your mind. Do not be afraid to use these to underline your points. Even very confident and well-known speakers reuse their key lines again and again for major effect.

### **Make use of Time**

Every now and then take a breather. Look into the eyes of the listeners to understand whether the message is being received the way you wished. If not use the technique of questioning.

### **Thank your Listener(s)**

Thank the person or group for the time taken to listen and respond. No matter what the outcome of your communication, even if the response to your talk or discussion has been negative, it is good manners to end it politely and with respect for everyone's input and time.



## 5.4 Barriers to effective listening

The following are eight common barriers to good listening, with suggestions for overcoming each.

### **Knowing the Answer**

“Knowing the answer” means that you think you already know what the speaker wants to say, before she actually finishes saying it. You might then impatiently cut her off or try to complete the sentence for her. Even more disruptive is interrupting her by saying that you disagree with her, but without letting her finish saying what it is that you think you disagree with. That’s a common problem when a discussion gets heated, and which causes the discussion to degrade quickly. By interrupting the speaker before letting her finish, you’re essentially saying that you don’t value what she’s saying. Showing respect to the speaker is a crucial element of good listening. The “knowing the answer” barrier also causes the listener to pre-judge what the speaker is saying — a kind of closed-mindedness. A good listener tries to keep an open, receptive mind. He looks for opportunities to stretch his mind when listening, and to acquire new ideas or insights, rather than reinforcing existing points of view.

### **Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

A simple strategy for overcoming the “knowing the answer” barrier is to wait for three seconds after the speaker finishes before beginning your reply. Three seconds can seem like a very long time during a heated discussion, and following this rule also means that you might have to listen for a long time before the other person finally stops speaking. That’s usually a good thing, because it gives the speaker a chance to fully vent his or her feelings. Another strategy is to schedule a structured session during which only one person speaks while the other listens. You then switch roles in the next session. It’s worth emphasizing that the goal of good listening is simply to listen — nothing more and nothing less.

During the session when you play the role of listener, you are only allowed to ask supportive questions or seek clarification of the speaker’s points. You may not make any points of your own during this session. That can be tricky, because some people’s “questions” tend to be more like statements. Keeping the mind open during conversation requires discipline and



practice. One strategy is to make a commitment to learn at least one unexpected, worthwhile thing during every conversation. The decision to look for something new and interesting helps make your mind more open and receptive while listening. Using this strategy, most people will probably discover at least one gem — and often more than one — no matter whom the conversation is with.

### **Trying to be Helpful**

Another significant barrier to good listening is “trying to be helpful”. Although trying to be helpful may seem beneficial, it interferes with listening because the listener is thinking about how to solve what he perceives to be the speaker’s problem. Consequently, he misses what the speaker is actually saying. An old Zen proverb says, “When walking, walk. When eating, eat.” In other words, give your whole attention to whatever you’re doing. It’s worth emphasizing that the goal of good listening is simply to listen — nothing more and nothing less. Interrupting the speaker in order to offer advice disrupts the flow of conversation, and impairs the listener’s ability to understand the speaker’s experience. Many people have a “messiah complex” and try to fix or rescue other people as a way of feeling fulfilled. Such people usually get a kick out of being problem-solvers, perhaps because it gives them a sense of importance. However, that behavior can be a huge hurdle to good listening.

Trying to be helpful while listening also implies that you have made certain judgments about the speaker. That can raise emotional barriers to communication, as judgments can mean that the listener doesn’t have complete understanding or respect for the speaker. In a sense, giving a person your undivided attention while listening is the purest act of respect you can offer. Because human beings are such social animals, simply knowing that another person has listened and understood is empowering. Often that’s all a person needs in order to solve the problems on his or her own.

If you as a listener step in and heroically offer your solution, you’re implying that you’re more capable of seeing the solution than the speaker is. If the speaker is describing a difficult or long-term problem, and you offer a facile, off-the-cuff solution, you’re probably forgetting that he or she may have already considered your instant solution long before.

**Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

Schedule a separate session for giving advice. Many people forget that it is rude to offer advice when the speaker is not asking for it. This applies even if the advice is good. In any case, a person can give better advice if he first listens carefully and understands the speaker's complete situation before trying to offer advice. If you believe you have valuable advice that the speaker is not likely to know, and then first politely ask if you may offer what you see as a possible solution. Wait for the speaker to clearly invite you to go ahead before you offer your advice.

**Treating Discussion as Competition**

Some people feel that agreeing with the speaker during a heated discussion is a sign of weakness. They feel compelled to challenge every point the speaker makes, even if they inwardly agree. Discussion then becomes a contest, with a score being kept for who wins the most points by arguing. Treating discussion as competition is one of the most serious barriers to good listening. It greatly inhibits the listener from stretching and seeing a different point of view. It can also be frustrating for the speaker.

**Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

Although competitive debate serves many useful purposes, and can be great fun, debating should be scheduled for a separate session of its own, where it won't interfere with good listening. Except in a very rare case where you truly disagree with absolutely everything the speaker is saying, you should avoid dismissing her statements completely. Instead, affirm the points of agreement. Try to voice active agreement whenever you do agree, and be very specific about what you disagree with. A good overall listening principle is to be generous with the speaker. Offer affirmative feedback as often as you feel comfortable doing so. Generosity also entails clearly voicing exactly where you disagree, as well as where you agree.

**Trying to Influence or Impress**

Because good listening depends on listening just for the sake of listening, any ulterior motive will diminish the effectiveness of the listener. Examples of ulterior motives are trying to impress or to influence the speaker. A

person who has an agenda other than simply to understand what the speaker is thinking and feeling will not be able to pay complete attention while listening.

Psychologists have pointed out that people can understand language about two or three times faster than they can speak. That implies that a listener has a lot of extra mental “bandwidth” for thinking about other things while listening. A good listener knows how to use that spare capacity to think about what the speaker is talking about.

A listener with an ulterior motive, such as to influence or impress the speaker, will probably use the spare capacity to think about his “next move” in the conversation — his rebuttal or what he will say next when the speaker is finished — instead of focusing on understanding the speaker.

### **Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

“Trying to influence or impress” is a difficult barrier to overcome, because motives usually cannot just be willed away. Deciding not to have a motive usually only drives it beneath your awareness so that it becomes a hidden motive. One strategy is to make note of your internal motives while you’re listening. As you notice your motives in progressively closer and finer detail, you will eventually become more fully conscious of ulterior motives, and they may even unravel, allowing you to let go and listen just for the sake of listening.

### **Reacting to Red Flag Words**

Words can provoke a reaction in the listener that was not necessarily what the speaker intended. When that happens the listener won’t be able to hear or pay full attention to what the speaker is saying. Red flag words or expressions trigger an unexpectedly strong association in the listener’s mind, often because of the listener’s private beliefs or experiences.

**Technology is often seen as the driver of improved communications, but technology, in itself, creates noise and discord as much as it melds minds.**

Good listeners have learned how to minimize the distraction caused by red flag words, but a red flag word will make almost any listener momentarily unable to hear with full attention.

An important point is that the speaker may not have actually meant the word in the way that the listener understood. However, the listener will be so distracted by the red flag that she will not notice what the speaker actually did mean to say.

Red flag words don't always provoke emotional reactions. Sometimes they just cause slight disagreements or misunderstandings. Whenever a listener finds himself disagreeing or reacting, he should be on the lookout for red flag words or expressions.

### **Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

When a speaker uses a word or expression that triggers a reflexive association, you as a good listener can ask the speaker to confirm whether she meant to say what you think she said.

When you hear a word or expression that raises a red flag, try to stop the conversation, if possible, so that you don't miss anything that the speaker says. Then ask the speaker to clarify and explain the point in a different way.

### **Believing in Language**

One of the trickiest barriers is "believing in language" — a misplaced trust in the precision of words. Language is a guessing game. Speaker and listener use language to predict what each other is thinking. Meaning must always be actively negotiated.

It is a fallacy to think that a word's dictionary definition can be transmitted directly through using the word. An example of that fallacy is revealed in the statement, "I said it perfectly clearly, so why didn't you understand?" Of course, the naive assumption here is that words that are clear to one person are clear to another, as if the words themselves contained absolute meaning.

Words have a unique effect in the mind of each person, because each person's experience is unique. Those differences can be small, but the overall effect of the differences can become large enough to cause misunderstanding. A worse problem is that words work by pointing at experiences shared by speaker and listener.

If the listener never had the experience that the speaker is using the word to point at, then the word points at nothing. Worse still, the listener may quietly substitute a different experience to match the word.

### **Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

You as a good listener ought to practice mistrusting the meaning of words. Ask the speaker supporting questions to cross-verify what the words mean to him. Don't assume that words or expressions mean exactly the same to you as they do to the speaker. You can stop the speaker and question the meaning of a word. Doing that too often also becomes an impediment, of course, but if you suspect that the speaker's usage of the word might be slightly different, you ought to take time to explore that, before the difference leads to misunderstanding.

### **Mixing up the Forest and the Trees**

A common saying refers to an inability "to see the forest for the trees". Sometimes people pay such close attention to detail, that they miss the overall meaning or context of a situation. Some speakers are what we will call "trees" people. They prefer concrete, detailed explanations. They might explain a complex situation just by naming or describing its characteristics in no particular order.

Other speakers are "forest" people. When they have to explain complex situations, they prefer to begin by giving a sweeping, abstract, bird's-eye view. Good explanations usually involve both types, with the big-picture "forest" view providing context and overall meaning, and the specific "trees" view providing illuminating examples.

When trying to communicate complex information, the speaker needs to accurately shift between forest and trees in order to show how the details fit into the big picture. However, speakers often forget to use "turn indicators" to signal that they are shifting from one to another, which can

cause confusion or misunderstanding for the listener. Each style is prone to weaknesses in communication. For example, “trees” people often have trouble telling their listener which of the details are more important and how those details fit into the overall context. They can also fail to tell their listener that they are making a transition from one thought to another — a problem that quickly shows up in their writing, as well.

“Forest” people, on the other hand, often baffle their listeners with obscure abstractions. They tend to prefer using concepts, but sometimes those concepts are so removed from the world of the senses that their listeners get lost.

“Trees” people commonly accuse “forest” people of going off on tangents or speaking in unwarranted generalities. “Forest” people commonly feel that “trees” people are too narrow and literal.

### **Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

You as a good listener can explicitly ask the speaker for overall context or for specific exemplary details, as needed. You should cross-verify by asking the speaker how the trees fit together to form the forest. Having an accurate picture of how the details fit together is crucial to understanding the speaker’s thoughts. Your questions can be put up with speaker’s consent, either during or after the message being passed on to you.

An important point to remember is that a “trees” speaker may become confused or irritated if you as the listener try to supply missing context, and a “forest” speaker may become impatient or annoyed if you try to supply missing examples.

A more effective approach is to encourage the speaker to supply missing context or examples by asking him open-ended questions.

Asking open-ended questions when listening is generally more effective than asking closed-ended ones.

For example, an open-ended question such as “Can you give me a concrete example of that?” is less likely to cause confusion or disagreement than a more closed-ended one such as “Would such-and-such be an example of what you’re talking about?”

Some speakers may even fail to notice that a closed-ended question is actually a question. They may then disagree with what they thought was a statement of opinion, and that will cause distracting friction or confusion.

The strategy of asking open-ended questions, instead of closed-ended or leading questions is an important overall component of good listening.

### **Over-splitting or Over-lumping**

Speakers have different styles of organizing thoughts when explaining complex situations. Some speakers, “splitters”, tend to pay more attention to how things are different. Other speakers, “lumpers”, tend to look for how things are alike. Perhaps this is a matter of temperament.

If the speaker and listener are on opposite sides of the splitter-lumper spectrum, the different mental styles can cause confusion or lack of understanding. A listener who is an over-splitter can inadvertently signal that he disagrees with the speaker over everything, even if he actually agrees with most of what the speaker says and only disagrees with a nuance or point of emphasis.

That can cause “noise” and interfere with the flow of conversation. Likewise, a listener who is an over-lumper can let crucial differences of opinion go unchallenged, which can lead to a serious misunderstanding later. The speaker will mistakenly assume that the listener has understood and agreed.

It’s important to achieve a good balance between splitting (critical thinking) and lumping (metaphorical thinking). Even more important is for the listener to recognize when the speaker is splitting and when she is lumping.

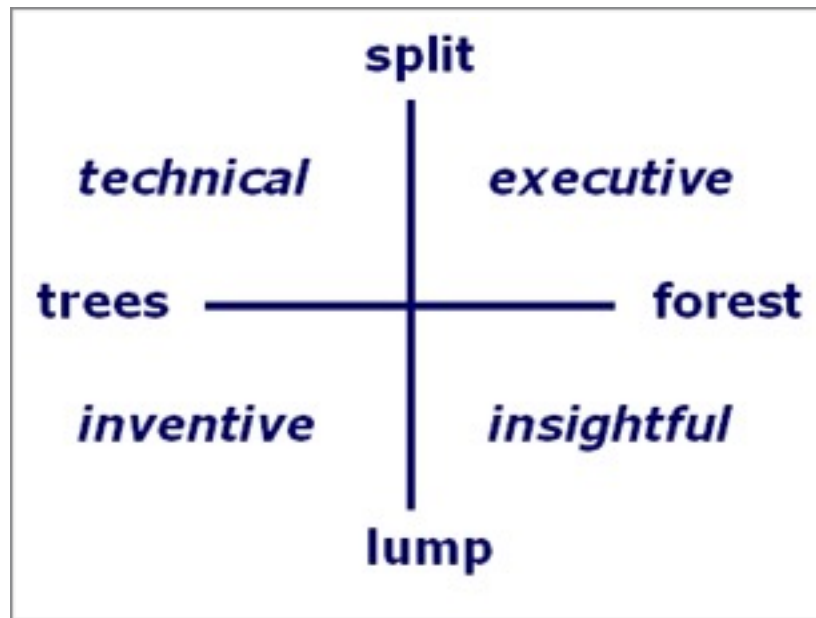
### **Strategy for Overcoming this Barrier**

An approach to overcoming this barrier when listening is to ask questions to determine more precisely where you agree or disagree with what the speaker is saying, and then to explicitly point that out, when appropriate.

For example, you might say, “I think we have differing views on several points here, but do we at least agree that ...?” or “We agree with each other on most of this, but I think we have different views in the area of ....”



By actively voicing the points of convergence and divergence, the listener can create a more accurate mental model of the speaker's mind. That reduces the conversational noise that can arise when speaker and listener fail to realize how their minds are aligned or unaligned.



**Figure 5.3: Quadrant of Cognitive/Explanatory Styles**

More than one barrier may often be present at once. For example, a speaker might be an over-splitter who has trouble seeing the forest, while the listener is an over-lumper who can see only the forest and never the trees. They will have even more difficulty communicating if one or both also has the habit of “knowing the answer” or “treating discussion as competition”.

## Conclusion

Good listening is arguably one of the most important skills to have in today's complex world. Families need good listening to face complicated stresses together. Corporate employees need it to solve complex problems quickly and stay competitive. Students need it to understand complex issues in their fields. Much can be gained by improving listening skills.

When the question of how to improve communication comes up, most attention is paid to making people better speakers or writers (the “supply



side” of the communication chain) rather than on making them better listeners or readers (the “demand side”).

More depends on listening than on speaking. An especially skillful listener will know how to overcome many of the deficiencies of a vague or disorganized speaker. On the other hand, it won’t matter how eloquent or cogent a speaker is if the listener isn’t paying attention.

The listener arguably bears more responsibility than the speaker for the quality of communication.

## 5.5 Summary

Listening is defined as applying oneself to hearing something. In verbal communication it is to hear while giving attention to what is being said. It is an ability that can be cultivated and practiced into a skill. From this standpoint it can be viewed as an art. Our listening efficiency can be affected by numerous factors. How much we have on our minds, recently hearing distressing event in the market or office, and even culture can affect our listening efficiency.

Effective Listening or science of listening is knowing the difference between what is said, what you hear, and what is meant. Effective listening involves four stages namely: Sensing, Understanding, Evaluating, and Responding.

To be a good listener you need to hear the message as it is being delivered, be attentive all throughout, focus and attempt to stay away from distractions, wait before you respond and not rush in with your queries, concentrate on the speaker, visualize in your mind what is being conveyed, pay attention to non-verbal messages and always observe. Listen and ask until you have grasped the message in total.

Here are the eight steps to ensure your audience is listening to you:

1. Choose the right time
2. Choose the right place
3. Remove distractions
4. Organize and clarify ideas in your mind
5. Be clear
6. Stay on topic
7. Make use of time
8. And do not forget to thank your listener(s).

The following are eight common barriers to good listening, with suggestions for overcoming each. Listeners feel they know what the speaker is going to say. They know the answer and fail to listen. A simple strategy for overcoming the “knowing the answer” barrier is to wait for three seconds after the speaker finishes before beginning your reply. Use that interval to understand, again, what was said. Another significant barrier to good listening is “trying to be helpful”. Schedule a separate session for giving advice and do not interrupt immediately. Some people

feel that agreeing with the speaker during a heated discussion is a sign of weakness. Although competitive debate serves many useful purposes, and can be great fun, debating should be scheduled for a separate session of its own, where it will not interfere with good listening. Because good listening depends on listening just for the sake of listening, any ulterior motive will diminish the effectiveness of the listener. "Trying to influence or impress" is a difficult barrier to overcome, because motives usually cannot just be willed away. Reacting to red flag words; words can provoke a reaction in the listener that was not necessarily what the speaker intended. When a speaker uses a word or expression that triggers a reflexive association, you as a good listener can ask the speaker to confirm whether she meant to say what you think she said. A common saying refers to an inability "to see the forest for the trees". Sometimes people pay such close attention to detail, that they miss the overall meaning or context of a situation. You as a good listener can explicitly ask the speaker for overall context or for specific exemplary details, as needed.

## 5.6 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Is listening an art or a science? Why?
2. How will you ensure that your message is being listened to?
3. Enumerate barriers to listening.
4. A common saying refers to an inability “to see the forest for the trees”. How does it apply to listening?

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 3](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 4](#)

## **Section 2**

# **ESSENTIALS OF MASTERING THE INTERVIEW**

# Chapter 6

## The Interview Basics

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- The essential factors for behavioral interview
- Technical and professional knowledge in Interviews
- Common questions asked and interview checklist
- Critical elements of the Interview Checklist

### Structure:

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 An Overview of Interviewing
- 6.3 Behavioral Interviewing Essentials
- 6.4 Technical and Professional Knowledge in Interviews
- 6.5 Common Questions
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## 6.1 Introduction

Just as in learning any skill, successful interviewing requires preparation and practice. This is not the best time to go unprepared. A successful interview is very much like a sales encounter. If you want to appear that you want the position for which you being interviewed, then you must demonstrate your interest by finding out everything you can about the company and the position before the actual interview.

The kinds of things you should know about the company include:

- How long has the company existed?
- What services does the company provide or what products does it make?
- Who are their major competitors?
- What divisions or subsidiaries exist?
- What is the parent company?
- What geographic areas are covered?
- How many people are employed by the company?
- What are the company's assets and earnings?
- Does the company have any international operations?

This information is available from various sources including the local libraries in major cities around the globe (both periodicals and reference materials can help - ask the librarian for assistance), the World Wide Web (many companies have web pages), the Career Center (many companies send them recruiting brochures) and the Company itself (don't be afraid to stop by their offices and pick up some information).





The kinds of things you should learn about the interview itself include:

- If possible, know and be able to pronounce the name of the interviewer
- Find out what you can about the format and length of the interview
- Will you meet with a panel?
- Will you meet with several people individually?
- Will you have a lunch meeting?
- Be certain you have clear and precise directions to the interview site (a trial run ahead of time can save you the potentially fatal embarrassment of arriving late)

Create a list of your strengths - From your research of the company and the industry; refine your list of strengths into three to five attributes that a company might want in an employee. Be ready to offer evidence through scenarios and stories. It's up to you to market the connection of your skills to their requirements. Also knowing your "learning edges" and speaking confidently about how you approach challenge is important.

## 6.2 An overview of interviewing

### **How to Dress for an Interview**

#### **Good grooming**

Check your hair, fingernails, and make-up application. Clothing should be neatly pressed and shoes should be in good condition.

## **Dress conservatively**

The emphasis should be on appropriate dress; there is no rule that fits all people. For male and female professionals, a conservative and properly fitting business suit is recommended. If in doubt, dress up. Jewelry should be limited. Beards and mustaches are generally accepted when nicely groomed.



## **Types of Interviews**

Employers often use a variety of interview techniques and settings to determine your candidacy and hire-ability. It is to your advantage to be aware of which type of interview you'll be experiencing and how to respond to fit the situation. Following are common interview types and tips for success in each situation.

### **Campus Interviews**

The On-Campus Interview invites employers to campus to interview graduating students for full-time career positions. Employer participants include business, industry, non-profit organizations and government agencies. Positions are generally entry-level in nature and encompass a broad range of functional areas, including, but not limited to: finance, marketing, management, sales, operations, social service, technology, engineering and laboratories. Campus interviews will determine who will be invited for on-site interviews.



**Tip:** You must impress the campus recruiter with your enthusiasm for your field of study and your potential.

## Screening Interview

Screening interviews may be conducted in person, over the phone, or via video to help employers determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for the position. This type of interview is often used when an organization is considering sending candidates to their headquarters for a full round of interviews. These interviews are generally handled by a representative of the HR team and tend to follow a set format. Sometimes a written “personality” profile will accompany this type of interview.

Screening interviews are usually conducted by a recruiter (typically not the hiring manager) who will review your experience and personality, compare it with other candidates and determine your relative fit with a job description. The objective of the initial screen is to reduce the volume of candidates to a manageable number and then call some back for more extensive interviews. Typically screening interviews take place over the telephone.

Expect some open questions where the recruiter will be probing to see if you are operating from a compatible set of values, interests, and information. You should also expect specific questions about your past experience and skills. You will usually have a chance to ask some questions of your own. Keep your answers short and concise. Typically, you will only

have 20-25 minutes in a screening interview to outline why you should be considered for the job. Practice your answers so that you can get a feel for how long they should be. Two to three minutes is about as long as you should speak for a single answer.



Recruiters often use screening interviews to establish whether a candidate's salary expectations fit with the position. Here are a few suggestions for how to answer or delay salary screening questions:

- Let's discuss the position and responsibilities first to be sure that there is a fit
- Salary is only one element of a successful partnership
- At this time, I'm sure we are both interested in making the best match.
- Salary is always relevant to the employee's work and contributions
- I'd like to know a little more about the position and I'm sure you need assurances about what I'd bring to the table before we can agree on a specific compensation package
- I'm sure we can agree on compensation if the match is right
- Could we review the level of responsibility and my potential for contributing to your group before moving into compensation?

- So far, the job content and responsibilities seem right to me and I'm sure you've considered salary in establishing this position. What did you have in mind?

**Tip:** Emphasize concisely and directly that you bring the desired skills/abilities for the position. For phone interviews, keep your notes and portfolio within reach for easy access and reference. In phone interviews, your voice is your only presentation. For video interviews, rehearse in advance to prepare for a natural and focused presentation.

## One-on-One Interview

This is the most common interview format and is usually conducted on site by the hiring manager. The interview focuses on questions to assess your skills, knowledge, and abilities specific to the job. A one-on-one interview is basically an interview or meeting between two people, one of whom asks the questions while the other answers. The One to One Interview is a conversation and both parties will end such conversation with an opinion.



**Tip:** In addition to selling your key strengths, ask what problems the supervisor is facing currently and then suggest strategies that he or she could implement to resolve the issue.

## Panel Interview

In some cases, the candidate will meet separately with the panel. In other cases, there will be panel of interviewers and multiple candidates all in the same room. During a typical panel interview where there are multiple candidates interviewing for the same job, the applicants sit behind a long desk and the interviewers sit facing the desk. Each interviewer asks each candidate several questions and possibly asks a follow-up question, as well. Three or more people, representing varied departments within the company, typically conduct group interviews. These representatives generally ask you questions that relate to their areas of interest and expertise.



**Tip:** Remember to direct your answers to the person who asks the question, but maintain eye contact with other members of the group as well. Gather business cards from the group. Place the cards in front of you in the configuration of the people in the room to remember names and key in to their represented functions. Following the interview, send a thank you note to each of the participants, personalizing with comments or questions specific to that individual or division.



## Peer Group Interview

This type of group interview will introduce you to your potential co-workers. These team members will not have the ultimate authority to hire you, but each person's input has influence. Each will be evaluating you and making recommendations about your fit with the group and the company.



**Tip:** Focus on being agreeable and approachable rather than someone with all the answers.

## Luncheon Interview

The purpose of a lunch interview is to assess how well you handle yourself in social situations. You will probably be dining with your potential boss and co-workers along with HR professionals. Interviews are often stressful - even for job seekers who have interviewed many times. Interviewing can be even more stressful when you are expected to eat and talk at the same time. One of the reasons employers take job candidates out to lunch or dinner is to evaluate their social skills and to see if they can handle themselves gracefully under pressure.



Dining with a prospective employee allows employers to review your communication and interpersonal skills, as well as your table manners, in a more relaxed (for them) environment. Table manners do matter. Good manners may give you the edge over another candidate, so, take some time to brush up your dining etiquette skills.

**Tip:** Make your meal selection carefully. Select light, healthy and easy things to eat. Steer clear of spaghetti or any other potentially messy foods that are not easy to eat gracefully. Do not order alcohol even if others do.

### **Second Interview or Series Interview**

The series interview consists of consecutive interviews with three or more people in the organization, all in one day. The interviewers may consist of someone from personnel, the person who will be your boss, two or three people from the department, and someone from a different department. You may have a combination of individual, panel and peer group interviews throughout the process. The focus of the second interview is to ensure you have the necessary skills and that you will blend well with the organization's culture. The key to performing well in this interview is to know in advance that you will be having it; advance warning will give you time to get mentally prepared.





**Tip:** Switch your focus from emphasis on your specific strengths to selling yourself as a well-balanced package. Listen carefully to the interviewers to determine any underlying concerns and attempt to dispel them. Prove that you've researched the company and demonstrate that you will work as a dedicated member of the organization.

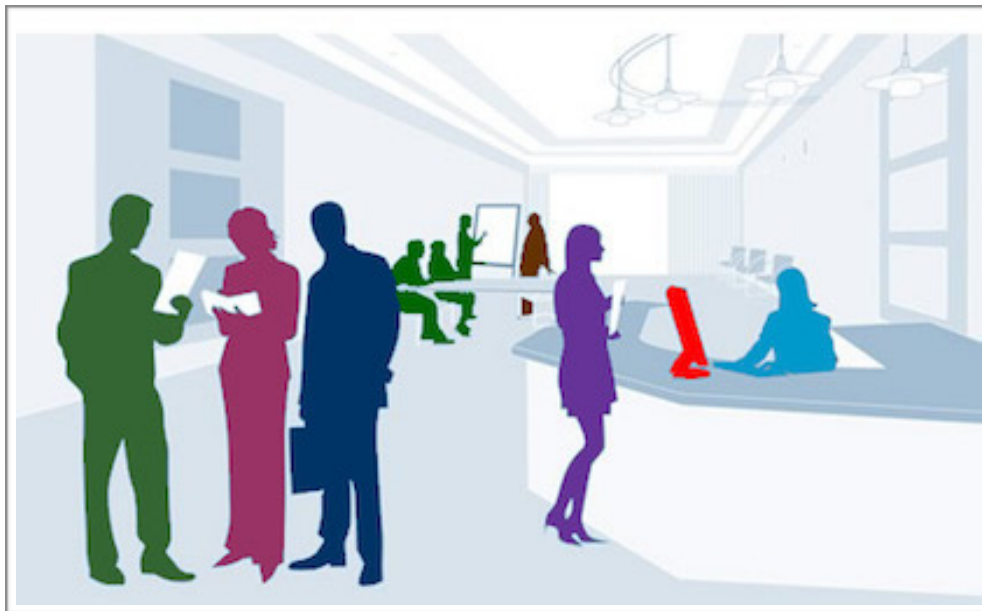
### **Qualities Employers Evaluate During the Interview**

- Self-esteem
- Self-confidence
- Goal setting
- Realistic assessment of strengths and limitations
- Mature behavior and judgment
- Communication skills
- The ability to interact with others
- The ability to listen actively
- Leadership potential, often demonstrated in extra-curricular activities and on the job
- Personality
- Enthusiasm
- Poise
- Cheerfulness
- Flexibility
- Sense of humour

- Patterns of accomplishment
- Problem solving
- Analytical abilities
- Interest in and knowledge of career field
- Work ethic
- Acceptance of responsibility
- Ability to keep commitments
- Appearance
- Dress and grooming
- Politeness and etiquette

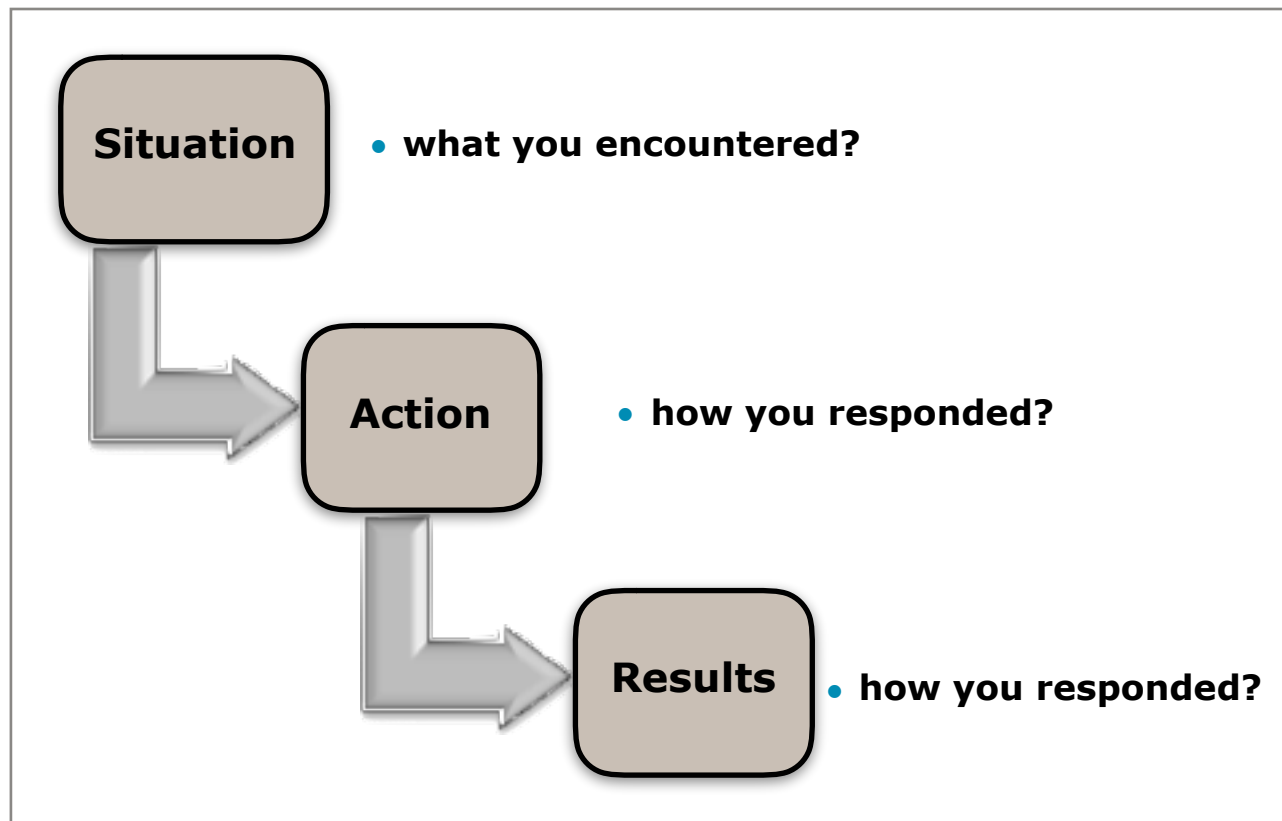
### 6.3 Behavioral Interviewing Essentials

In this sort of interview, the interviewers tend to ask questions about general situations, with the candidate asked to describe how they did or would handle a specific problem. The goal of the interview is to assess the candidate's ability to respond to the sorts of situations that the job may present them with. The questions asked will therefore be based on the job description, the performance indicators, the skills/personal qualities required and the interviewer's knowledge of operating in the role. Questioning will usually be based on historical examples from your current or previous experience ('when situation X arose, how did you deal with it?'). Either way, the interviewer is interested in (a) the thought process used and (b) the values of the candidate and the outcome of the situation.



Behavioral interviewing techniques evaluate a candidate's experiences and behaviors to determine potential for success. The approach is based on the premise that your past performance is the best predictor of your future performance. You can anticipate questions to assess fact-based, past behavior (e.g. what did you do, tell me about a time when...) rather than subjective judgment of theoretical answers (what would you do if...)

A rating system is often developed and selected criteria are employed during the interview. As a candidate, you should be prepared to answer the questions and statements thoroughly. Prepare for responses using the Situation – Action – Result model.



### **Situation – Action – Result Model**

- Develop and write out many such examples from your courses and work experiences.
- Develop anecdotes or scenarios that demonstrate your strengths. Use the questions to follow as your guide. If you do not have a ready reply

for the specific question, stay cool, smile and ask if you could think a bit and come back later to respond to that question.

- Behavioral interviewing can be stressful. Good preparation will boost your confidence

## **Get ready to tell your story**

Companies devise behavioral or competency-base questions to mine your past performance based on common dimensions expected by most employers.

## **Sample response**

“Give an example of a time when you demonstrated initiative.”

For my senior project, I was working with a team of five students to design a roofing system for a resort in Manali, to handle high snow and wind loads. (S) As the project progressed it appeared that the original design parameters provided by the contractor (our client) were not realistic for this area of the country.

Rather than design a system that wouldn't work, I spearheaded a meeting between our design team and the contractor to discuss our findings and possible solutions. (A) The contractor listened, provided feedback, and encouraged us to re-calculate the design parameters using the new methodologies and local data. (R) Although it was many hours of additional work, we implemented the contractor's recommendations and our team felt very proud of delivering an excellent quality product to our client.

## **Focus and dedication to the industry**

1. Why did you choose this major and career?
2. At what point did you make this decision
3. What attracts you to this industry as a career? Be specific.

## 6.4 Technical and professional knowledge in Interviews

### **Technical and Professional Knowledge**

Your level of understanding of technical and professional information and your ability to apply technical and professional skills

1. Sometimes it's easy to get in over your head. Describe a situation where you had to ask for help or assistance on a project or assignment

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

2. Give an example of how you applied knowledge from previous coursework to a project in another class.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

3. Describe how you went about learning a new technical skill.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

### **Teamwork/Collaboration**

Working effectively with others in the organization and outside the formal lines of authority (i.e., peers, other units, senior management and the like) to accomplish organizational goals and to identify and resolve problems. Considering the impact of your decision on others:

1. Describe a situation where others on your project team disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

2. Describe a time where your results did not meet your supervisor's expectations. What happened? What action did you take?

Situation

Action

Result

3. Talk about a situation where you worked with a colleague who did not complete their share of the work. Who, if anyone, did you tell or talk with about the challenge? Did the manager take any steps to correct the colleague? Did you agree or disagree with the manager's action?

Situation

Action

Result

4. Describe a scenario in which you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to one?

Situation

Action

Result

5. Have you held leadership roles in extracurricular activities? How did you lead?

Situation

Action

Result

6. Talk about your best boss. Why? Your worst boss. Why?

Situation

Action

Result

## **Communications**

This involves the ability to clearly express ideas in writing—including grammar, organization and structure.

1. Tell of a time when your active listening skills really paid off for you, maybe a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed.

Situation

Action

Result

2. What has been your experience giving presentations to small or large groups? What has been your most successful experience in speech making?

Experience	Steps to presentation	Result
------------	-----------------------	--------

3. What difficulties have you encountered in trying to communicate technical information?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

4. Tell me about a time when you were most persuasive in overcoming resistance to your point of view.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

5. Give me an example of a time when you first resisted a change at work and then accepted it.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

## Work Standards

This involves the ability to set high goals or standards of performance for self, subordinates, others and the organization. Also experiencing dissatisfaction with average performance is a factor in determining work standards.

1. Compare and contrast the times when you did work which was above the standard with times when your work was below the standard.

Above standard	Below standard
----------------	----------------

2. Describe some times when you were not very satisfied with your performance. What did you do about it?

Situation

Action

Result

3. What are your standards of success in school/work? What have you done to meet these standards?

Situation

Action

Result

4. How have you differed from your professors in evaluating your performance? How did you handle the situation?

Situation

Action

Result

### **Job Motivation**

This is the extent to which activities and responsibilities available in the job overlap with activities and responsibilities that result in personal satisfaction.

1. Give examples of your experience at school or in a job that were satisfying.

Situation

Why?

2. Give examples of your experience at school or in a job that were not satisfying.

Situation

Why?

3. What are your standards of success in your school?

Describe and define.

4. What have you done to meet these standards?

Cite examples



5. What conditions are most frustrating to you?

Describe and define

6. Describe the last goal you set for yourself that you feel particularly proud of. What happened?

Note the details.

## Initiative

This involves making active attempts to influence events to achieve goals. This determines whether a candidate is self-starting rather than passively accepting. Taking action to achieve goals beyond what is necessarily called for, originating action.

1. Describe some projects or ideas (can or cannot be your own) that were implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your actions.

Idea	Role in implementation	Result
------	------------------------	--------

2. Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

3. Tell me about a situation where you were able to make a difference, where something was accomplished that would not have been if you were not there.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

4. Can you think of a scenario you had to handle in which old solutions did not work?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

5. Talk about your most innovative or creative project or assignment. What did you do that was resourceful? How did it turn out?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

### Analysis / Problem Assessment (Defining)

Relating and comparing data from different sources, identifying issues, securing relevant information and identifying relationships.

1. What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

2. We can sometimes identify a small problem and fix it before it becomes a major problem. Give an example (s) of how you have done this.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

3. In a supervisory or group leader role, have you ever had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member? What was the nature of the discipline? What steps did you take? How did that make you feel?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

4. Recall a time from your work experience when your manager or supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle that situation? How did that make you feel?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

5. Describe a situation in which you had to collect information by asking many questions of several people.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

6. Have you recognized a problem before your boss or others in your department/team?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

7. Describe the most difficult trouble-shooting challenge you faced?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

8. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

### **Judgment / Problem Solving**

Using past experience, knowledge, and sometime intuition to quickly and clearly identify the crux of the issue or situation at hand. Identify a “game plan” or process by which to develop best solution(s).

1. What kinds of decisions do you tend to make rapidly, and which ones do you take more time to determine?

Cite examples.

2. Tell me about a decision you have made which was the wrong one, and what you did about it.

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

3. Give an example of a time when you used logic to solve a very difficult problem. Cite a situation where you had the longest time to consider a decision before making it. Why was it difficult? What were your alternatives? Was this a good decision in the end?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

**Adaptability**

Assimilating and applying new job-related information properly.

1. What tricks or techniques have you learned to make school or a job easier? How did you learn that skill?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

2. What tricks or techniques have you learned to make yourself more effective? How did you learn that skill?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

**Planning & Organizing / Work Management**

This aspect involves establishing a course of action for yourself (and/or others) to accomplish specific goals. Planning proper assignments for personnel and appropriately allocating resources.

1. How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.

Priority	How determined	Result
----------	----------------	--------

2. Describe a time in school when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

3. Tell me about a time when your course load was heaviest. How did you get all your work done?

Situation	Action	Result
-----------	--------	--------

4. If you are balancing work with full-time school, how do you prioritize your activities?

Situation

Action

Result

5. We all encounter situations where something just “slips through the cracks.” Can you give me an example of when this happened to you? Cause? Results?

Situation

Action

Result

### **Customer Service Orientation**

Making efforts to listen to and understand the customer (both internal and external), anticipating customer needs and giving high priority to customer satisfaction.

1. Talk about the most difficult customer service experience that you have handled, perhaps an angry or irate customer. Be specific and tell what you did and what was the outcome?

Situation

Action

Result

2. Give an example of how you anticipated a customer need (internal or external) and the steps you took to meet it.

Situation

Action

Result

### **Sensitivity**

This aspect involves acting out of consideration for the feelings and needs of others.

1. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle that situation?

Situation

Action

Result

2. Describe a scenario where you found yourself dealing with someone who did not like you. How did you handle it?

Situation

Action

Result

## Practical Learning

Assimilating and applying new job-related information promptly.

1. Describe a course in which you felt challenged. How did you do? What did you learn from the experience?

Situation

Action

Result

2. Describe a time when you had difficulty learning something complex?

Situation

Action

Result

3. Tell me about a situation in which you were able to treat a negative experience as a learning opportunity?

Situation

Action

Result

## Key Behaviors / Performance Skills

You may be evaluated on these skills and behaviors.

<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Attention to detail</b>
Communication –oral	Communication –written	Control
Decisiveness	Delegation	Development of subordinates
Energy	Entrepreneurial insight	Equipment operation
Fact finding – oral	Financial analytical ability	Flexibility
Impact	Independence	Initiative
Innovation	Integrity	Judgment
Leadership/Influence	Listening	Motivation
Negotiation	Organizational sensitivity	Participative Management
Planning and organizing	Practical learning	Presentation skills
Process operation	Rapport building	Resilience
Risk taking <sup>1</sup>	Safety awareness	Sales ability/ persuasiveness
Sensitivity	Strategic analysis	Stress
Teamwork/ collaboration	Technical/professional knowledge	Technical/ professional proficiency
Tenacity	Training	Work standards

## 6.5 Common questions

### Common Questions You May Be Asked

- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives and how have you prepared yourself to achieve them? What do you see yourself doing five years from now?

- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing? What led you to choose your field of major study?
- In what jobs have you been most interested? Why? (Full-time or part-time)
- Why did you choose your college? What college subjects did you like best? Why?
- What college subjects did you like least? Why?
- What changes would you make in your college or university?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years? Do you have a minimum salary for which you will work?
- Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
- Why should I hire you?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- Why are you interested in this industry? Our company?
- What do you think you will be doing in this job you are applying for?
- What kind of person do you think this job requires and how do you match those requirements?
- What questions do you have about our organization?
- What are you looking for in an organization?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
- What do you know about our company?
- Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?



- What geographic location would you prefer? Why do you want to work there?
- Are you free to relocate?
- What constraints do you have about relocation?
- How do you feel about traveling?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What do you consider your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What are your major accomplishments? Your failures? Your disappointments? What did you learn from each of these?
- Do you have plans for continued study and/or an advanced degree?
- How would your friends describe you?

### **Questions to ask your Interviewer**

Asking targeted and intelligent questions in an interview demonstrates that you have done your homework and research and are motivated to do well if you land the job. Here are some sample questions recruiters like to hear from students.

#### **1. What do you do in a typical work day? In a typical work week?**

Ask this question in your interview with a hiring manager. It shows that you are enthusiastic about the company and want to know about life on the job.

#### **2. Why did you choose to work for this company?**

This question gives the recruiter or hiring manager the chance to “sell” the company and gives you an idea of why someone else picked this firm.

3. If I am hired, where do you see me best suited, which area or division? If you have learned about the company, its products and departments from their website, be sure to incorporate that information. Again, this question demonstrates your research preparation and interest.

4. What is the natural career progression or path for employees with my skills?

This question shows that you are thinking about the future and would be interested in staying with the company, progressing within.

5. Does your organization have a coaching or mentoring program?

Through your answer, you indicate your desire to continue to learn and grow.

6. What kind of internal and external training do you provide?

Your question demonstrates a desire and willingness to stay current in the marketplace develop professionally.

7. How would you describe your company's culture?

This question offers an opportunity for you and the recruiter to evaluate if you and the company are suited for each other.

8. Does your organization use strategic planning? How often? Who participates? Does the firm have a strategic plan in place?

This question shows that you have considered how organizations work and understand the value of strategic direction.

9. What is your company's policy on sustainable development? (Defined as maintaining a delicate balance between the human need to improve lifestyles and feeling of well-being and preserving natural resources and ecosystems, on which we and future generations depend.)

This query helps determine your interest in the company and its long range approach.

10. What is the compensation range for this position? (always ask using a range)

Be sure this is not the only question you ask the interviewer. Pose it within other questions about the company. If the salary range is posted and known, it is best not to ask at all. This is best reserved until a secondary interview or until the interviewer raises the topic of salary.

## 6.6 Interview Checklist

- Arrived early for the interview.
- Dressed appropriately; clean, pressed clothing; shoes shined.
- Presented a firm handshake.
- Presented a professional image.
- Prepared for interview by knowing resume inside and out.
- Prepared for interview by knowing the skills required.
- Prepared for the interview by knowing the company's products/services.
- Prepared for the interview by researching company's problems, strengths, and possible plans for the future.
- Maintained good eye contact.
- Spoke with authority and confidence.
- Conveyed enthusiasm about the job. Appeared relaxed.
- Adjusted the volume of your voice and the accentuation of words.
- Did not laugh inappropriately (nervous laughter).
- Did not fidget or squirm. Good posture.
- Presented a natural, not stiff or rigid, posture and appearance.

- Body language supported what you were saying.
- Demonstrated good listening skills.
- Presented your skills and abilities well, and gave a concrete personal example of how the skills were used.
- Presented your benefits to the employer well, indicating how you would apply that benefit directly to the company.
- Clarified any misunderstandings that may have arisen.
- Gave examples from your experience to illustrate skills and benefits.
- Gave interviewer the impression that you were prepared for this interview.
- Communicated to the employer the reasons why you are applying to and chose this company.
- Thanked the interviewer for the interview.
- Complimented the interviewer, the company or the office.
- Indicated commitment to the position.
- Projected confidence that you are the right person for the job.
- Asked what the next steps in the selection process will be and when they will be.
- Made sure you have the interviewer's name for the after-interview letter. (Ask for his/her business card.)
- If asked about your weaknesses, expressed them as areas of skills that you are working on. Showed a plan for improvement, using an example.
- Showed excitement and enthusiasm.

- If given the opportunity, asked questions of the interviewer to help you gain further knowledge about the position, the company, and the organization's structure, work climate, stability, etc.
- If given the opportunity, provided additional qualifications that you have that either you forgot when asked earlier, or feel a need to elaborate or expound upon.
- Honestly presented your qualifications for and commitment to the position.

## 6.7 Activities

1. Screening interviews may be conducted in person, over the phone, or via video as discussed in this chapter. Browse online and research the major corporations in the world who leverage this method.

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2. Browse and research the benefits and drawbacks related to Behavioral Interviewing Essentials?

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## 6.8 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that just as in learning any skill, successful interviewing requires preparation and practice. This is not the best time to go unprepared. A successful interview is very much like a sales encounter. If you want to appear that you want the position for which you being interviewed, then you must demonstrate your interest by finding out everything you can about the company and the position before the actual interview.

Some of the kinds of things you should know about the company include:

- How long has the company existed?
- What services does the company provide or what products does it make?
- Who are their major competitors?
- What divisions or subsidiaries exist?
- What is the parent company?
- What geographic areas are covered?

This information is available from various sources including the local libraries in major cities around the globe (both periodicals and reference materials can help - ask the librarian for assistance), the World Wide Web (many companies have web pages), the Career Center (many companies send them recruiting brochures) and the Company itself (don't be afraid to stop by their offices and pick up some information). Good grooming and dressing conservatively are of extreme importance from the context of an interview.

Employers often use a variety of interview techniques and settings to determine your candidacy and hire-ability. It is to your advantage to be aware of which type of interview you'll be experiencing and how to respond to fit the situation. Following are common interview types and tips for success in each situation:

**Campus Interviews:** The On-Campus Interview invites employers to campus to interview graduating students for full-time career positions. Employer participants include business, industry, non-profit organizations and government agencies.

**Screening Interviews:** may be conducted in person, over the phone, or via video to help employers determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for the position. This type of interview is often used when an organization is considering sending candidates to their headquarters for a full round of interviews. These interviews are generally handled by a representative of the HR team and tend to follow a set format. Sometimes a written “personality” profile will accompany this type of interview.

**One-on-One Interview:** This is the most common interview format and is usually conducted on site by the hiring manager. The interview focuses on questions to assess your skills, knowledge, and abilities specific to the job. A one-on-one interview is basically an interview or meeting between two people, one of whom asks the questions while the other answers. The One to One Interview is a conversation and both parties will end such conversation with an opinion.

**Peer Group Interview:** This type of group interview will introduce you to your potential co-workers. These team members will not have the ultimate authority to hire you, but each person’s input has influence. Each will be evaluating you and making recommendations about your fit with the group and the company.

**Luncheon Interview:** The purpose of a lunch interview is to assess how well you handle yourself in social situations. You will probably be dining with your potential boss and co-workers along with HR professionals. Interviews are often stressful - even for job seekers who have interviewed many times. Interviewing can be even more stressful when you are expected to eat and talk at the same time.

**Second Interview or Series Interview:** The series interview consists of consecutive interviews with three or more people in the organization, all in one day. The interviewers may consist of someone from personnel, the person who will be your boss, two or three people from the department, and someone from a different department. You may have a combination of individual, panel and peer group interviews throughout the process. The focus of the second interview is to ensure you have the necessary skills and that you will blend well with the organization’s culture.

In this chapter we have also looked at some of the qualities that employers evaluate during the interview, some of them are:

- Self-esteem
- self-confidence
- Goal setting
- Realistic assessment of strengths and limitations
- Mature behavior and judgment
- Communication skills
- The ability to interact with others
- The ability to listen actively
- Leadership potential, often demonstrated in extra-curricular activities and on the job

We have also discussed the Behavioral Interviewing. In this sort of interview, the interviewers tend to ask questions about general situations, with the candidate asked to describe how they did or would handle a specific problem. The goal of the interview is to assess the candidate's ability to respond to the sorts of situations that the job may present them with. The questions asked will therefore be based on the job description, the performance indicators, the skills/personal qualities required and the interviewer's knowledge of operating in the role. Behavioral interviewing techniques evaluate a candidate's experiences and behaviors to determine potential for success. The approach is based on the premise that your past performance is the best predictor of your future performance.

A rating system is often developed and selected criteria are employed during the interview. As a candidate, you should be prepared to answer the questions and statements thoroughly. Prepare for responses using the Situation – Action – Result model.

Also discussed are 'Technical and professional knowledge in Interviews' which include essential elements such as:

- Technical and Professional Knowledge
- Teamwork/ Collaboration
- Communications
- Work Standards
- Job Motivation
- Initiative
- Analysis / Problem Assessment (Defining)
- Judgment / Problem Solving
- Adaptability



- Planning & Organizing / Work Management
- Customer Service Orientation
- Sensitivity
- Practical Learning
- Key Behaviors / Performance Skills

Some of the common questions have also been briefly covered in this introductory chapter. Some of them are:

- What are your long-range and short-range goals and objectives and how have you prepared yourself to achieve them? What do you see yourself ! doing five years from now?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing? What led ! you to choose your field of major study?
- In what jobs have you been most interested? Why? (Full-time or part-time)
- What do you expect to be earning in five years? Do you have a minimum! salary for which you will work?
- Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic ! achievement?
- Why should I hire you?

Questions to ask your Interviewer have also been briefly covered in this introductory chapter. Some of them are:

- What do you do in a typical work day? In a typical work week?
- Why did you choose to work for this company?
- If I am hired, where do you see me best suited, which area or division?
- What is the natural career progression or path for employees with my skills?
- Does your organization have a coaching or mentoring program?

Interview Checklist has also been briefly covered in this introductory chapter. Some of the important points in this context are:

- Arrived early for the interview.
- Dressed appropriately; clean, pressed clothing; shoes shined.
- Presented a firm handshake.
- Presented a professional image.
- Prepared for interview by knowing resume inside and out.
- Prepared for interview by knowing the skills required.
- Prepared for the interview by knowing the company's products/services.
- Prepared for the interview by researching company's problems, strengths, and possible plans for the future.

## 6.9 Self-assessment questions

1. Just as in learning any skill, successful interviewing requires preparation and practice. This is not the best time to go unprepared. In this context, a successful interview is very much like -
  - a. A sales encounter
  - b. A planning encounter
  - c. A Management session
  - d. A government meeting
2. From the context of obtaining information on the research of the company and the industry, refine your list of strengths into three to five attributes that a company might want in an employee. Be ready to offer evidence through -
  - a. Scenarios and stories
  - b. Operations and situations
  - c. Brainstorming
  - d. Idea generation
3. Which kind of interviews may be conducted in person, over the phone, or via video to help employers determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for the position?
  - a. Screening interviews
  - b. Campus interviews
  - c. Stress interviews
  - d. Either b or c
4. The purpose of a handle yourself in social situations.
  - a. Lunch interview
  - b. Stress interview
  - c. Behavioral interview
  - d. Campus interview

5. Behavioral interviewing techniques evaluate a candidate's experiences and behaviors to determine potential for success. The approach is based on the premise that your -
  - a. None of them
  - b. Past performance is the best predictor of your future performance
  - c. Critical performance is the best predictor of your past performance
  - d. Present performance is the best predictor of your future performance
6. A rating system is often developed and selected criteria are employed during the interview. As a candidate, you should be prepared to answer the questions and statements thoroughly. In this context candidates can prepare for responses using -
  - a. The Situation – Action – Result model
  - b. The Specific – Action – Result model
  - c. The Situation – Action – Section model
  - d. The Situation – Access – Result model
7. Asking targeted and intelligent questions in an interview demonstrates that you have done your homework and research and are motivated to do well if you land the job.
  - a. True
  - b. False
8. Which of the following is not one of the qualities which are a requisite for any interview?
  - a. Arrived early for the interview
  - b. Dressed appropriately; clean, pressed clothing; shoes shined
  - c. Presented a firm handshake
  - d. Arrived late for the interview

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

# Chapter 7

## Planning for the Interview

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Essentials of interview preparation
- How to avoid interviewing mistakes
- Essential steps in planning for an interview

### Structure:

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Essentials of Interview Preparation
- 7.3 Avoiding Interviewing Mistakes
- 7.4 Essential Steps in Planning for an Interview
- 7.5 Activities
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Self-Assessment Questions

## 7.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to help prepare candidates for interview, for whatever trade, role, profession, college or university place they wish to go on to. It could be argued that being good at interviews is one of the most important skills that you can have; no matter how good you look on paper (the quality of your C.V., your qualifications, skills, experience etc.) ultimately it all boils down to how you come across at the interview. This is where they are deciding to hire you / give you a place or not.



Yet it is surprising how many people give bad interviews. With so many common mistakes; such as being late, to the wrong clothing, not knowing your C.V. or answering your phone during an interview, being easy to avoid. Preparation is the key when applying for interviews and students are taught that the best way to prepare is to read through as many interview questions and answers as possible. The job advertisement will usually indicate the competencies that a position requires and, therefore, the types of question that can be expected.

The power of good first impressions, based on a polished appearance and good body-language, are also important when it comes to interviews, described as 'forming the foundation from which all future thoughts about someone will be based'.

Candidates are asked to consider the concept that, for the length of the interview, 'the job is yours!': It takes time and money to recruit someone. If you have been invited for interview then you have already been short-listed, the employer is interested to meet you and find out if you will fit in with their company or are considered able to do the job. They want to know their search is over, so for the length of the interview, the job is yours. You have 30-60 minutes to 'sell yourself'.

## 7.2 Essentials of Interview preparation

Preparation is definitely the key to a successful interview. Most interviewers will make a decision about you in the first 30 seconds of the interview. Your level of professionalism and the mannerisms you exude are very important throughout the interview process. The way you enter a room, the clothes and accessories you wear, the way you shake hands and your tone of voice all create an impression.



Researching the company as well as networking with any contacts there will help organize your efforts as you prepare to meet company representatives. What should you do in the 24 hours before your interview?



Here are a few last minute tips to help you get yourself together before the interview.

### **The Day Before**

1. Get plenty of sleep: Refrain from staying up too late or partying. Alcohol and smoke aromas tend to linger. You want to impress the interviewer and not annoy them.
2. If you are not sure where the interview is taking place, do a practice-run the night before the interview: Check the railway time-table, vehicle condition or the bus schedule to minimize delays on the day of the interview.
3. Review your organization research and your resume: Make notes on the skills you acquired in each job or activity. Come up with a short list of why your skills and experience match the position. Prepare a small list of questions for the employer. If you have a portfolio of your work, mark relevant pages to refer to during the interview. Think about what makes you stand out from other job candidates.
4. Lay out your clothes: Bring extra stockings or an extra tie, 10 copies of your resume, paper and a pen. Use a professional portfolio or bag to carry your materials.

### **Women**

- Think professional and reserved.
- Dress in a dark or neutral color suit (matching jacket and skirt/pants),!
- conservative shoes and neutral hosiery.
- Keep make-up as natural as possible. Avoid flashy or bright nail polish.
- Indian women can wear a Punjabi suit or tunic.
- Avoid wearing high heels
- Minimize jewelry: leave the nose ring and tongue jewelry at home. Wear!
- one pair of small earrings.



## Men

- Wear a freshly pressed jacket and tie.
- Have your shoes polished.
- Make sure you have a clean shave.
- Your hair should be neat, clean and trimmed—including your sideburns.
- Keep your hands groomed—clean and trimmed nails.



## **Interview Day**

1. Eat a high-protein, high-carbohydrate breakfast to boost your energy.
2. Review your resume and notes.
3. Practice answering potential questions. This will help you feel comfortable with the process.
4. Read the newspaper or check the Internet to be prepared for the “ice breaking” small talk around the day’s events.
5. Schedule your time to arrive at the interview location ten to fifteen minutes prior to your scheduled interview. You might want to check the traffic conditions to help you plan your commute.
6. Avoid perfume/cologne and smoking before the interview.
7. Carry a small portfolio to hold your resume and a pen. Women, this will help avoid carrying a purse.
8. Do not wear your outerwear into the interview. Overcoats should be taken off before you go into the interview.
9. Do not wear sunglasses during the interview.

## **Ten Minutes Before**

1. Arrive with time to stop by the restroom for any last-minute touch-ups. Check for dandruff, shoulder flakes, and static cling. If you get sweaty! palms, this is a good time to wash and dry your hands.
2. Be courteous to all support staff including the security guard. You never know who is providing input for the selection process.
3. While you are waiting for the interview to begin, people watch and pick up clues to office culture. Observe how people dress and interact with one another. How diverse is the workforce? Will you feel comfortable working here?

4. Turn off your cell phone alarms prior to the interview.
5. Still nervous? Try taking slow, deep breaths to help you relax.

### **During the Interview**

1. A firm brief handshake with eye contact and a smile is important to start the meeting.
2. Wait to be seated and sit in the chair in a straight position.
3. Try not to convey nervousness. Playing with items on a desk, swinging legs, or cracking knuckles will distract from your presentation.
4. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer(s).
5. Do not interrupt the interviewer. Listen to the questions carefully and do not respond until the question is asked.
6. Speak with confidence and enthusiasm.
7. If you do not know an answer to a question, do not pretend that you do.
8. Take your time answering questions; be thoughtful in your answers.
9. Remember to ask them what the next step is and when you can expect to hear from them.
10. Be yourself!
11. At the end of the interview ask for business cards.

### **Things to Avoid**

1. Do not take notes during an interview as it prevents you from focusing on your interviewer.
2. Do not welcome yourself to the interviewer's desk space by placing your portfolio on the desk. It is best to keep it on your lap at all times.

3. Do not chew gum or breath mints during the interview.
4. Do not listen in on telephone conversations or read or inspect documents on an interviewer's desk.
5. If someone enters the office during the interview, you do not need to stand. It is only appropriate to stand if you are introduced to the person who has entered the room.
6. Do not call an interviewer "sir" or "madam." Use the interviewer's name in the interview, but do not overdo it.
7. Do not criticize others, including past employers or associates.
8. Do not give one- or two-word answers. It is best to develop answers that use your personal and professional history to prove how well you match the profile of the ideal candidate. To do this, find a way to make small stories, narratives, and examples for each of the possible questions that you might be asked.
9. Remember not to overpower the interview.
10. Do not use profanity, even if the interviewer does.
11. Do not ask "Will I get the job?"
12. Do not discuss salary until later in the process.
13. Sharing jokes or being overly humorous during an interview could cast doubt on the seriousness of your candidacy. You should be reserved, because after all, the interview process is formal.

### **After the Interview**

1. Take some time to write down some impressions of the interview. List the names of the people you met. Did you forget to mention something about your background that you would like to include in a thank-you note?

2. Within 24 hours of completing your interview, write a thank-you note or e-mail to the people you met.
3. Evaluate the interview. What questions were most difficult? Make notes for yourself about how you can improve your interviewing skills before the next interview.
4. If you still have not heard from the company by the date they gave you, go ahead and contact them.

## 7.3 Avoiding Interviewing mistakes

### **Arriving Late**

- Arriving late suggests poor time management skills and may indicate a lack of respect for the company, position or even the interviewer. Go to the extra length to ensure that you arrive on time, or preferably, 10 minutes early.
- Not knowing anything about the company
- Don't let your potential employer stump you with the question, "What do you know about this company?" It's one of the easiest questions to answer, if only you do some research before your interview.
- Background information including company history, locations, and a mission statement are available in an "About Us" section on most company websites. Review it ahead of time, then print it out and read it over just before your interview to refresh your memory. Also check the company's LinkedIn page and Facebook page, if they have one.



### **Not Knowing your CV**

Even if you have submitted a C.V. when you applied for the job, you may also be asked to fill out an application form on arrival. Make sure that you know the information you will need to complete an application including dates of qualifications, achievements, prior employment, graduation dates, and employer/reference contact information. It's understandable that some of your older experiences may be hard to recall. Review the facts before your interview. It can be helpful to keep a copy of your C.V. for yourself to refer to during your interview, although certainly don't rely on it; you should know the information off-hand. Of course, you should never "fudge" any facts on your C.V. The more truthful you are, the better you will be able to discuss your past experience during your interview.

### **Not Paying Attention**

- Don't let yourself 'zone out' (get distracted) during an interview. Make sure you are well-rested, alert and prepared. Getting distracted and missing a question looks bad on your part. If you zone out, your potential employer will wonder how you will be able to stay focused during a day on the job, if you can't even focus during one interview.
- If you feel your attention slipping away, make the effort to stay engaged. Maintain eye contact, lean forward slightly when talking to your interviewer, and make an active effort to listen effectively.





## Talking Too Much

- Don't go on and on and on... The interviewer really doesn't need to know your whole life story. Keep your answers concise, to-the-point and focused and don't ramble - simply answer the question.
- Also, don't get sidetracked and start talking about your personal life - your boyfriend/girlfriend, your home life etc. These are not topics that you should delve into. No matter how warm, welcoming or genial your interviewer may be, an interview is a professional situation - not a personal one.





**Not being Prepared to Answer (and ask) Questions**

- To get a feel of your aptitude for a job, your interviewer is going to take advantage of the allotted time and dish out everything he or she needs to know about you as an employee.
- Don't let yourself be caught off guard. Prepare for your interview by thinking about what questions to expect, and how to answer them. You also need to be prepared with a list of questions to ask the employer.

**Being Negative about Past Employers/School/Teachers/ Fellow Pupils**

- Don't make the mistake of badmouthing your school / fellow pupils (or, if you've had a job, your past employer/co-workers). You don't want the interviewer to think that you might speak that way about his or her company if you leave on terms that aren't the best. When interviewing for a job, you want your employer to know that you can work well with other people and handle conflicts in a mature and effective way, rather than badmouthing or talking about other people's incompetence. Even if you're asked hard questions like "Have you worked with someone you didn't like? If so, how did you handle it?" always try to answer positively – we will look at types of interview questions shortly.

## 7.4 Essential steps in planning for an interview

### **1. Research the Organization**

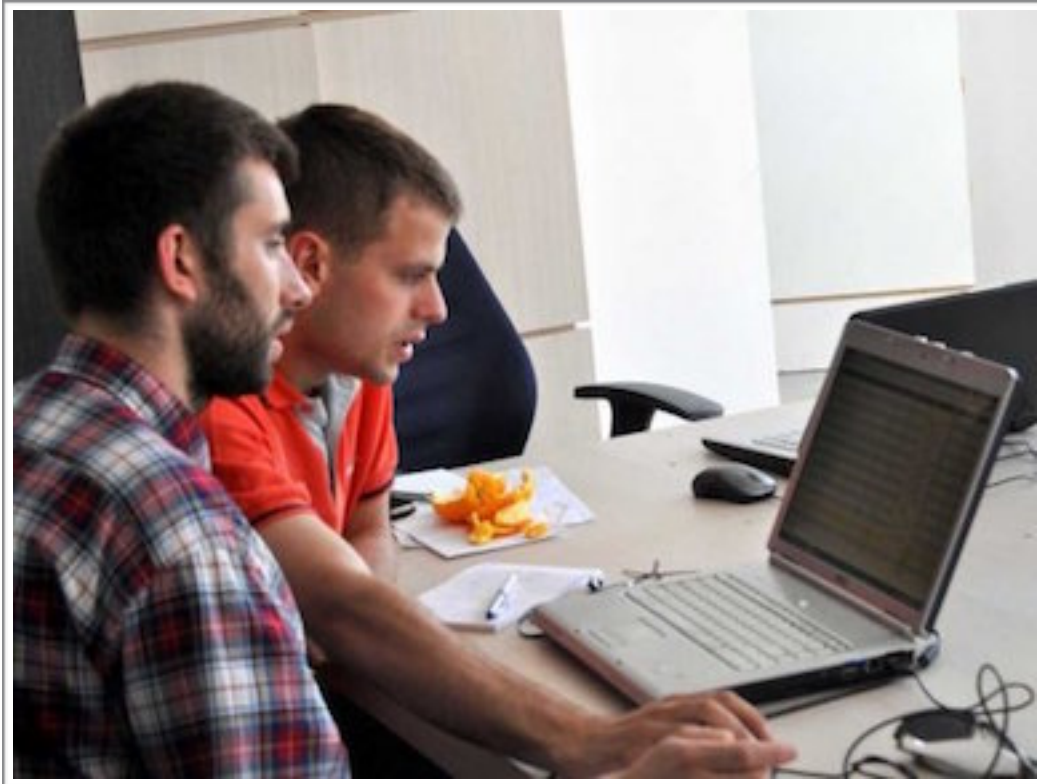
If you are invited to an interview, you should spend some time researching the organization as this will give you confidence should you be asked any questions on what the organization does. It will also allow you to ask the employer questions. You should always look at their website and see if any further information is available to you.

It's helpful to find out the following things about the employer:

- What they do?
- Who are their customers or service users?
- What sort of organization are they?
- What is the job likely to involve?
- How can you best fit your skills to match the job?

## 2. Plan for the Interview

Find out what the interview will involve to make sure you're well-prepared. If you have a disability, all employers must make reasonable adjustments for you to have an interview. If you need the employer to make particular arrangements(for example, to help you get into the building), contact them before your interview to make sure they can make these arrangements.



You should think about who will be interviewing you. If it is the person who would be your manager if you got the job, the interview may be more detailed. If it's the personnel manager, the interview may be less detailed but could still be as testing. Find out how many people will be interviewing you and their positions in the organization. This will help you prepare for the kinds of questions they may ask.

Finding out how long the interview is likely to last will give you an idea of how detailed the interview will be. You should also find out if you will have to take a test or make a presentation.

### 3. Plan your Journey

Find out where the interview is and go there the day before, taking a note of how long it took you to get there. If you need to go by bus, plan the journey before hand. Plan an alternative route just in case of an accident or road works on the day of the interview. If you have a disability, ask about disabled access to the building.

### 4. Appearance

Always turn up to an interview dressed smartly and professionally. First impressions are important, so take your time and get it right.

### 5. Make Sure you Bring Everything you Need

- Any relevant paperwork (for example, proof of ID if required)
- Copy of CV
- Copy of covering letter
- Any information you've gathered about the organization

### 6. On the Day of the Interview

Give yourself plenty of time to get to the interview. Try to arrive 10 minutes before the interview. If you are delayed, contact your consultant to explain why so that we can try and get another appointment for you.

Try and stay calm. Everyone gets nervous going into an interview – if you have done your preparation and researched the organization (and possibly the person interviewing you) this will make you feel more confident.

### 7. Interview Dos and Don'Ts

Do:

- Enter the room confidently
- Shake hands firmly when you introduce yourself
- Be polite and friendly - look the interviewer straight in the eye as soon as you enter the room

- Look interested - ask questions as well as answering
- Answer questions as fully as you can - avoid yes and no answers
- Provide examples to prove your achievements
- Ask if you don't understand a question
- Try and speak as clearly as possible
- Sell yourself – be positive about your achievements

Don't:

- Sit until invited to do so
- Fidget or slouch in the chair
- Criticize former employers
- Interrupt your interviewer
- Draw attention to your weaknesses
- Go over the top - stay calm and stick to the facts

## **8. You should Describe**

- All skills & duties relevant to the new position
- Equipment and software packages used
- Your responsibilities
- Type and level of people you've dealt with
- Length of employment
- Any promotions

## 7.5 Activities

1. The power of good first impressions is discussed in this chapter. Browse online and research the websites to find recommendations from experts on this aspect.

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2. Browse and research some more of the essential steps in planning for an interview apart from the ones discussed in the chapter?

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## 7.6 Summary

In this chapter we have discussed how to help prepare candidates for interview, for whatever trade, role, profession, college or university place they wish to go on to. It could be argued that being good at interviews is one of the most important skills that you can have; no matter how good you look on paper (the quality of your C.V., your qualifications, skills, experience etc.) ultimately it all boils down to how you come across at the interview. This is where they are deciding to hire you / give you a place or not.

The power of good first impressions, based on a polished appearance and good body-language, are also important when it comes to interviews, described as 'forming the foundation from which all future thoughts about someone will be based'. Candidates are asked to consider the concept that, for the length of the interview, 'the job is yours!': It takes time and money to recruit someone. If you have been invited for interview then you have already been short-listed, the employer is interested to meet you and find out if you will fit in with their company or are considered able to do the job.

Through this chapter we have also understood that preparation is definitely the key to a successful interview. Most interviewers will make a decision about you in the first 30 seconds of the interview. Your level of professionalism and the mannerisms you exude are very important throughout the interview process. The way you enter a room, the clothes and accessories you wear, the way you shake hands and your tone of voice all create an impression.

We have also discussed interview preparation for 'the day before the interview':

- Get plenty of sleep
- If you are not sure where the interview is taking place, do a practice-run the night before the interview
- Review your organization research and your resume
- Lay out your clothes

We have also discussed interview preparation for 'on the day of the interview':

- Eat a high-protein, high-carbohydrate breakfast to boost your energy.
- Review your resume and notes.
- Practice answering potential questions. This will help you feel comfortable with the process.
- Read the newspaper or check the Internet to be prepared for the "ice breaking" small talk around the day's events.
- Schedule your time to arrive at the interview location ten to fifteen minutes prior to your scheduled interview. You might want to check the !! traffic conditions to help you plan your commute.
- Avoid perfume/cologne and smoking before the interview.
- We have also discussed interview preparation for 'Ten minutes before the interview':
  - Arrive with time to stop by the restroom for any last-minute touch-ups.
  - Be courteous to all support staff including the security guard. You never know who is providing input for the selection process.
  - While you are waiting for the interview to begin, people watch and pick up clues to office culture.
  - Turn off your cell phone alarms prior to the interview.
- We have also discussed interview preparation for 'During the interview':
  - A firm brief handshake with eye contact and a smile is important to start the meeting.
  - Wait to be seated and sit in the chair in a straight position.

- Try not to convey nervousness. Playing with items on a desk, swinging legs, or cracking knuckles will distract from your presentation.
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer(s).

Here we have also covered the things to avoid, some of them are:

- Do not take notes during an interview as it prevents you from focusing on your interviewer.
- Do not welcome yourself to the interviewer's desk space by placing your portfolio on the desk. It is best to keep it on your lap at all times.
- Do not chew gum or breath mints during the interview.
- We have also discussed interview preparation for 'During the interview':
- Take some time to write down some impressions of the interview.
- Within 24 hours of completing your interview, write a thank-you note or e-mail to the people you met.
- Evaluate the interview.

Avoiding interviewing mistakes is one of the most important topic from the context of mastering the interview, which has been covered here. Some of them are:

- Arriving late
- Not knowing anything about the company
- Not knowing your CV
- Not paying attention
- Talking too much
- Not being prepared to answer (and ask) questions
- Being negative about past employers/school/teachers/fellow pupils

Some Essential steps in planning for an interview have also been discussed which are:



- **Research the organization:** If you are invited to an interview, you should spend some time researching the organization as this will give you confidence should you be asked any questions on what the organization does.
- **Plan for the interview:** Find out what the interview will involve to make sure you're well-prepared. If you have a disability, all employers must make reasonable adjustments for you to have an interview.
- **Plan your journey:** Find out where the interview is and go there the day before, taking a note of how long it took you to get there. If you need to go by bus, plan the journey beforehand.
- **Appearance:** Always turn up to an interview dressed smartly and professionally. First impressions are important, so take your time and get it right.
- Make sure you bring everything you need:
  - ➔ Any relevant paperwork (for example, proof of ID if required)
  - ➔ Copy of CV
  - ➔ Copy of covering letter

## 7.7 Self-assessment questions

1. Which of the below provided is the key when applying for interviews and students are taught that the best way to prepare is to read through as many interview questions and answers as possible?
  - a. Preparation
  - b. Planning
  - c. Manipulation
  - d. Forecasting
2. The power of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, based on a polished appearance and good body-language, are also important when it comes to interviews-
  - a. None of them
  - b. Good first impressions
  - c. General first impressions
  - d. Ideal first impressions
3. Which of the following is not one of the recommended things to do during the interview day?
  - a. Eat a high-protein, high-carbohydrate breakfast to boost your energy
  - b. Review your resume and notes.
  - c. Practice answering potential questions.
  - d. Eat a highly-oily breakfast to boost your energy
4. It is a recommended practice to wear your outerwear into the interview. Overcoats should be put on before you go into the interview, in order to impress the interviewer.
  - a. True
  - b. False

5. If someone enters the office during the interview, you do not need to stand. It is only appropriate to stand if -
- a. None of them
  - b. You are introduced to the person who has entered the room
  - c. You are not introduced to the person who has entered the room
  - d. If the person has glimpsed from outside the room
6. Arriving late suggests poor time management skills and may indicate a lack of respect for the company, position or even the interviewer. Go to the extra length to ensure that -
- a. You arrive on time
  - b. Either a or c
  - c. Preferably, 10 minutes early
  - d. Preferably, 1 hour early
7. If you feel your attention slipping away, make the effort to stay engaged. Maintain eye contact, lean forward slightly when talking to your interviewer, and make an active effort to listen effectively..
- a. True
  - b. False
8. If you \_\_\_\_\_, your potential employer will wonder how you will be able to stay focused during a day on the job, if you can't even focus during one interview?!
- a. Arrive early
  - b. Dress appropriately
  - c. Zone out
  - d. Prepare well
9. All employers must make reasonable adjustments for the candidate to have an interview in which of the below provided condition?!
- a. If the candidate has a disability
  - b. If the candidate has dressed appropriately
  - c. If the candidate is from out of station
  - d. If the candidate is above average in logic

10. Find out where the interview is and go there the day before, taking a note of how long it took you to get there. If you need to go by bus, plan the journey beforehand. Plan an alternative route just in case of -!
- a. An accident on the day of the interview
  - b. Normal conditions on the day of the interview
  - c. Either a or d
  - d. Road works on the day of the interview

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture](#)

## Chapter 8

# Skills related to preparing the appropriate resume for the job

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- How to build a good resume
- Various formats of resume
- What are the essential factors for writing the cover letter
- Tips for resume writing

### Structure:

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Five Steps for Building a Good Resume
- 8.3 Content: What to Include, What not to Include
- 8.4 Composition and Editing
- 8.5 Resume Format Specifications
- 8.6 On-line, Electronic, and Scannable Resumes
- 8.7 Most Popular Formats
- 8.8 Essentials of Cover Letter
- 8.9 Resume Writing Tips
- 8.10 Activities
- 8.11 Summary
- 8.12 Self-Assessment Questions

## 8.1 Introduction

Your resume is seen as the reflection of you and it is unique for every individual. It is the most important element in the process of employment. It provides your first look to the perspective employer about who you are. So it is necessary that your resume should be convincing and must be easily read. It works as a marketing tool which allows you to sell yourself before the perspective employer. You must be really careful on not giving the employer any reason to eliminate you from their consideration. It is very important that your resume needs to be clear, relevant and accurate in terms of the job description and it has to be focused on the industry or the employer.



Who is the best person to write your resume? It is none other than you who can write the best resume as you know yourself and the kind of job you are seeking better than anyone else. Keep in mind that a well-crafted email is the only thing which will set you apart from other candidates. It has to do a bit more than summarizing your educational qualification, professional experience and your skills.

## Significance of a Resume

A well written resume makes a significant contribution in you getting a job. All though there are no hard and fast rule for writing a resume, but the basic purpose of resume remains the same with any kind of resume. The purpose is to get you a job. The primary assessment necessary for evaluating the best candidate for job is done through a resume. Hence it is pretty much necessary that the resume in the most effective manner so you could have a first good impression on the potential employer.

## What are the Principles of Resume?

A resume is supposed to convince the employer that you are worth an interview. It is necessary that a resume is to be kept as brief as possible without sacrificing any relevant and essential information. It tells the employer about your academic qualifications, qualities, skills and professional qualifications. You need to keep the following principles in mind before you draft a resume.

- **No ugly resume:** It is very important that the resume should look good and should be pleasing to the eyes.
- **Your choice of words:** Do not lie, exaggerate or use words that the interviewer has to look up in a dictionary
- **What to highlight:** You need to focus on your Strengths and Accomplishments.

## 8.2 Five steps for building a good resume

- Analyze job description:** It is quite essential that you thoroughly read the job description provided. Later you must highlight the key words which show the preferred and required abilities, qualifications and skills. For instance, if the employer is looking for an individual who is attentive, punctual and innovative you may use similar words for highlighting such qualities and skills.
- List your accomplishments:** It is advisable that you create an inventory of your skills, accomplishments and talents. You also need to include your educational qualifications, trainings, projects or



assignments, travel or team work. It is advisable to focus more on the outcomes than the efforts. If possible try and quantify your results and do not be too humble here. Remember, a resume is a professional tool.

**III. Identifying your areas of skills:** Your experiences need to be framed in such a way that they focus on your achievements and skills needed for the given position. Ensure that every accomplishment listed highlights a skill which the employer is looking for.

**IV. Writing a descriptive phrase:** Always ensure that the phrases you write are clear and concise. The accomplishments mentioned on the resume needs to ultimately target the need of the employers. You need to put efforts for ensuring that the information on the resume is relevant and the most relevant has to be on the top.

**V. Choosing a format:** It is essential to choose the right format while formulating your resume. It may be tempting for you to choose different templates or may be even to combine two templates. However, they may tend to be inflexible. It may even be possible that the employers may be familiar with them and it may be perceived as you lack ingenuity. It is recommended that you mention your actual qualifications and experience with appropriate justification which will make your resume unique and interesting. Even if your work experience is good, highlight other accomplishments. Take time while drafting your resume and if possible have a word with a career counselor to get some advice on resume building.

## 8.3 Content: what to include, what not to include

### **Information That Should Be Included**

What you choose to include in your resume will paint a picture of you. It will often lead interviewers' questions, so be prepared to talk about, expand on, and articulate clearly everything on your resume. Your resume should include:

**I. Identifying information:** Include your name, present and permanent addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail address. Do not include personal information such as age, gender, ethnicity, health, height, weight,

marital status, or a photo of yourself. You may want to include your citizenship status.

**II. Summary of qualifications and keywords:** Many candidates are including a summary statement at the beginning of their resume, instead of a "Career Objective" so employers can get a snapshot of their strengths in the first few lines. A Summary of Qualifications is a short list of your key strengths and experiences. It communicates what you offer.

**III. Education:** List your institution's name(s) and degree(s) in reverse chronological order and include the month and year you expect to or did receive your degree.

- Include all the certifications along with the school, college and post-graduate education. Listing your extra-curricular courses is optional - many employers prefer that you do not list courses unless they are directly related to the work you will be doing.
- Include special programs of study, such as study abroad or other off-campus study experiences.
- Include honors and awards. You might put a tag phrase after an award that is not self-explanatory. For example, "The John and Caroline H. Smith Prize, awarded for outstanding academic achievement and leadership."

**IV. Experience/employment/work history:** This is one of the most important content areas on your resume. Include your full-time and part-time work experience. Use the heading "Work Experience" or "Employment" for paid positions. Non-paid experiences can also be included here. Examples are non-paid internships, community service positions, and some undergraduate leadership positions. Use the "Experience" heading if you list both paid and unpaid positions in the same section.

- Both paid and non-paid experiences should be described and formatted in the same way. Treat a non-paid, volunteer experience as you would a paid position. Do not reference your volunteer work as "non-paid," as this devalues it.

- It is important to note that not all experiences are relevant for each position. Your resume must be targeted to the employer's needs. Read the job/internship description and select those experiences that highlight your relevant skills.
- This section is the one that will require the most work on your part. Be sure to carefully reflect on your positions and accurately describe them.

To get started, reflect on your past experiences and consider the following:

- What were your job responsibilities?
- What skills did you develop?
- Did you supervise or train others?
- What decisions did you make?
- Did you work with people? How?
- Can you quantify the results of your work?
- Did you produce any written documents or reports?
- Were you able to meet deadlines and handle pressure?
- Did you assume a leadership role?
- How did you make a difference in the position?
- What were your major accomplishment(s)?

### **Co-curricular Activities**

Your involvement in organizations can demonstrate a breadth of background that is attractive to many employers. Be selective about the activities you list. Include those that highlight a desirable skill, interest, or leadership trait; you do not need to include them all.

### **Optional Categories**

These sections may be headed "Summary of Qualifications," "Skills," "Interests," "Personal," or may be given a specific functional heading such as "Languages" or "Computer Skills." Create whatever categories market your background best, and break it into several sections if necessary. Possible categories include:

- I. Languages:** Include your level of proficiency, but do not stretch it. Some employers will test your professed language skills in an interview.

Examples: “fluent in spoken French,” “conversational German,” “Japanese: intermediate spoken, basic Kanji,” “Trilingual: French, English, Hindi.”

- II. **Computer skills:** You can list applications, operating systems, or give a generic description of your knowledge. How specific you are depends largely on your goals and the level of expertise an employer is seeking.

Examples: “Extensive experience with Excel, Lotus, and a variety of word processing and graphics applications,” “Programming in Visual Basic and C++,” “Proficient with Windows, UNIX, and Macintosh platforms and applications.” If you are looking for a computer science job, consider including an addendum of your skills and languages for keyword searches.

- III. **Interests:** Listing your personal interests can help spark conversation with an interviewer and allow him/her to get to know you better. List interests that distinguish you, catch the eye of the recruiter, or demonstrate a trait you know the employer will value. Generic interests such as “reading” or “running” are best left off.

For example, “marathon runner” is more likely to attract attention than “running.”

- IV. **Volunteer & Service:** Depending on your level of involvement, you may include a volunteer or community service section. List volunteer job title, organization name, city, state, and dates.

Examples: “Competitive Youth Soccer Association Coach,” “Volunteer teacher in the Junior Achievement, Business Basics, Program to educate inner city students about business.” If these experiences demonstrate job skills related to your career goals, include them in your main experience section.

- V. **Professional certifications or Affiliations:** These are best listed if they have significance to the reader and are related to your intended field, such as Society of Women Engineers.



## Information That Should Not Be Included

### Personal Information

It is illegal for employers to use personal information, such as marital status, height, ethnicity, or health in employment decisions. Do not include this information in your resume.

## **Career Objective**

Objectives are no longer standard on business resumes. One reason is that an objective is geared toward what you want from an employer, not what you can offer. A general objective can also portray you as unfocused or inexperienced. You can better tailor your objective to each employer in a cover letter. If you do choose to include an objective, make sure it strengthens your case.

### **Examples:**

- Poor: To obtain a challenging entry-level sales position.
- Better: An entry-level brand management position with a consumer products firm in the Northeast.

## **High School**

You may include your high school if you are a freshman or sophomore, however by the time you are a junior, employers want to see your recent history and college experiences. You may list high school achievements if they demonstrate skills that are not represented by your college background, but consider including these in an Honors section.

## **References**

A list of references is no longer standard on business resumes. Provide a list of your references to select employers on a separate sheet. You should ask individuals to serve as references before you apply for jobs. A minimum of three references is recommended, and it is good practice to give your references a copy of your resume.

## **8.4 Composition and Editing**

The key to a resume that gets results is great composition. Here are some guidelines for telling your story. Note the effective choice of powerful words in each rewrite. The original statement is flat. The rewrite is vigorous.





## Convey Action

In your descriptive statements, use past-tense action verbs to give statements punch, rather than passive voice.

- **Poor:** "Was responsible for redesigning fundraising plan to cancer research."
- **Better:** "Redesigned fundraising plan to benefit cancer research."

## Demonstrate and Quantify Results

Highlight accomplishments, not tasks. Use numbers to quantify your experiences when possible.

- **Okay:** "Redesigned fundraising plan to benefit cancer research."
- **Better:** "Developed innovative fundraising campaign that resulted in 32% increase in donations to cancer research."

## Apply the “So What?” Test

Is your statement a compelling description of the difference you made or what you learned? Does your description answer the question “so what happened as a result?”

- **Poor:** “Helped raise funds for cancer research.”
- **Better:** “Played key role in establishing innovative fundraising events, resulting in consistently exceeding philanthropy goals.”

## Write for the Reader, Demonstrate Skills

View your work experience from the recruiter’s perspective. What transferable skills are key in the job you are seeking? Identify those skills, such as analytical, communication, or leadership skills, and then cite examples demonstrating that you possess them. Each statement in your description should relate to a known skill requirement for the job you want. Here are several examples:

- **Analytical skills:** “Synthesized statistical information on a benchmark study for ROI generation in Retail Malls. Analyzed how digital and email! campaigns influenced the public’s awareness.”
- **Budget experience:** “Oversaw annual college newsletter series with a budget of Rs. 275,000.”
- **Supervisory skills:** “Recruited, trained, and managed a team of seven employees for profitable cosmetic care business.”
- **Project leadership skills:** “Led a team of seven committee heads and 30 volunteers in the implementation of a technology fair that attracted 40,000 visitors.”
- **Communication skills:** “Completed intensive peer counselor training program focusing on effective listening, communication, and crisis intervention.”



## Choose Job Titles Thoughtfully

Hierarchical titles such as “Intern” do not convey as much information as functional titles. If you want to use a functional title that is different than your official title, it is a good idea to clear this through your former supervisor before including it on your resume.

- **Poor:** “Summer Intern”
- **Better:** “Public Relations Intern”
- **Poor:** “Summer Associate”
- **Better:** “Summer Associate, Global Portfolio Management”

## Avoid Jargon

This is particularly important if your area of study or experience is different than the job function or industry you are targeting. Make sure your resume is understandable to someone in the field you are pursuing. Do not play down your experience by overloading your resume with “university” language. For example, if you are a computer lab assistant, describe the people you help as “users” or “customers” rather than “students.”

## Break-up Long Sentences

Read your statements aloud. Your voice will tell you where a natural break should occur.

- **Poor:** “Direct management responsibilities over seven committees and 30 volunteers responsible for budget, fundraising, publicity, entertainment, and promotion of annual techno exhibition.”
- **Better:** “Managed annual techno exhibition staff of 30 volunteers on seven committees. Scope of committees covered budget, fundraising publicity, entertainment, and promotion.”

## Use Key Words

Employers who have in-house electronic resume databases with tracking systems use key word searches to find candidates who fit their criteria. Most systems will find derivations of key words. For example, a search for “manage” will yield “managed,” “manager,” and “management.” Note that

“key words” are buzzwords applicable to a particular function or industry only. You may want to create several resumes that include different key words if you are job searching in a few career areas. Another alternative is to attach a separate page to your resume containing a keyword list. This is especially important for technical resumes.

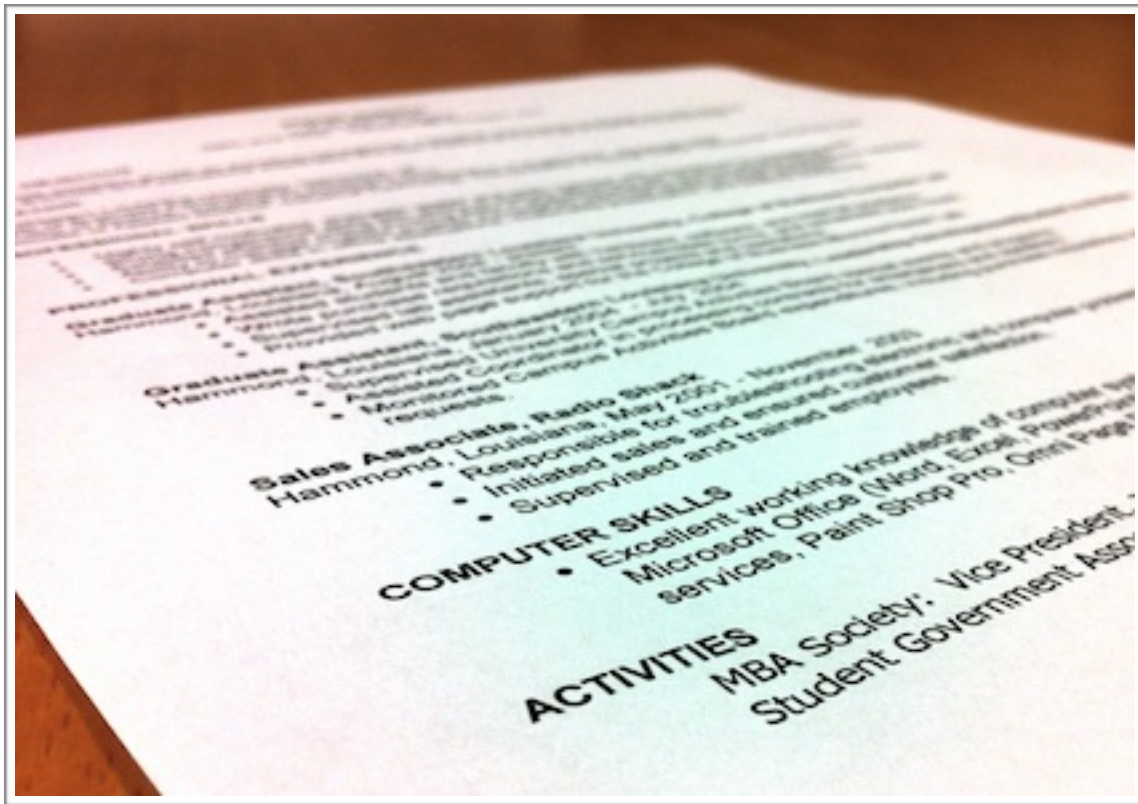
## 8.5 Resume Format Specifications

Overall, you want to make your resume the most readable document that you can. Keep it clean and simple.

### **General Guidelines**

There are a number of good resume formats. The key is to pick one and stay with it. Keep in mind that you may need to create several different resumes - one polished resume that you would submit by mail or in person and one that is ready for electronic transfer or scanning.

- Think of your resume as an outline there should be consistent formatting among items that relate to each other, such as major headings or job titles.
- Headings should intuitively indicate the content in each section and should stand out from the body text. Think of the headings as clear signposts to indicate the path through your resume.
- Use bold type to highlight schools, titles, or employer names in a consistent way throughout your resume. Used selectively, it can add to the readability of your text; overused, it decreases impact. Do not use underlining – it clutters the text and does not scan well.
- Put cities, states, and dates in the same place consistently throughout the resume. They do not have to be in an attention-grabbing position, just easy to find when the employer looks.



**Size and length** - Use standard A4 sized paper, and limit your resume to one page. Some employers do not mind two-page resumes; however, the majority of employers say they want one-page documents, so it is recommended to go on the short side here.

**Paper** - Be careful with paper color. Because your resume may be faxed, e- mailed, scanned, or copied by an employer, we suggest you stay with a white or cream colored paper, and avoid texture. Use a high-quality bond resume paper. And with the advent of scanning, it is now preferable to mail your resume flat in a large envelope.

**Font** - Use the same font style throughout your resume. Changing fonts decreases the readability and clutters the text. It is acceptable only when done effectively by those seeking graphic design jobs. Use CAPITAL LETTERS or bold or italic font to emphasize information on your resume.

**Margins** - The minimum is 1/2 inch on all four sides. If you can expand the margins to 3/4 inch or 1 inch, all the better. Overall, you want everything to be balanced on the page.

**Clutter** - Many candidates think that they need to make their resumes stand out visually by using unusual type, oversized type, or lines to separate sections. This clutters the resume and confuses scanners. Stick to a basic style and size for a clean, crisp appearance. Employers actually prefer a basic style. Be sure to include some white space. It makes your resume easier to read. It is preferable to use a smaller font (size 10), thereby opening up margins and having some white space, than to use a larger font (size 12) with dense text.

**Templates** – Many word processing applications give you resume templates. It is suggested that you do not use these! Instead, type your resume from scratch, using the guidelines above. Templates often result in a cluttered appearance, can create scanning and electronic nightmares, and are difficult to manipulate when you need to tailor your layout to your individual situation.

## **Proofreading the Resume**

Review Critically and Proofread!

Employers state that there is nothing that rules out a candidate faster than if they have a spelling or grammatical mistake. Proofread your resume carefully and ask others to review it as well. Find several objective individuals to critique your resume for content. The Career related websites are available to assist you with this, and alumni are another good resource. Review the spelling, spacing, and the use of italics and bold print. Do not rely on spell check. A word may be spelled correctly, but not be the word you want to use.

## **Edit Ruthlessly**

Someone once said that words are a lot like inflated money - the more of them that you use, the less each one of them is worth. Go through your entire resume just as many times as it takes. Search out and eliminate all unnecessary words and sentences, and even entire paragraphs.

## 8.6 On-Line, Electronic, and Scannable Resumes

To maximize your job search opportunities, prepare your resume to be e-mailed, scanned or posted on the Internet. More and more employers are using technology to help them reach qualified candidates. They post jobs on the Internet so that you can apply online. They encourage you to send your resume by e-mail. Some employers scan your paper resume using specific keywords as the search criteria. If your resume is to be submitted electronically or scanned, a traditional style of resume will not stand up to search engines and will, most likely, be overlooked.

### **Prepare Two E-Resumes**

1. The first is an e-resume with formatting. This appears identical to your hard copy resume and contains formatting such as boldface, lists with bullets, and tabbed indentations. There are two key differences from your hard copy resume. First, add a keyword list. Second, save your document in "Rich Text Format." This allows the employer to download or open the document on the other end without compromising the formatting. You use this resume if you are attaching it to an e-mail ! message, or posting it online in a database that accepts formatted resumes.
2. The second is an e-resume without formatting, or a "plain text" resume. In this document, remove all of your formatting (bold, italics, lines, bullets, tabs). Clean up the layout of this resume so that it is easy to read. Use this resume if you are pasting the text into the body of an e-mail message, or if you are posting it online in a database that does not accept formatted resumes.

### **Use Keywords**

In both resumes, assemble a keyword list. You can include this as an addendum at the end of your resume, incorporate the keywords throughout your resume in the text of your descriptions, or work them into a Summary of Qualifications at the beginning of your document.

Keywords are industry specific. Research the industry and job in which you are interested to determine the keywords to include. You can do this by reviewing job postings and job descriptions in newspapers, online listings,

and employer websites. Analyze the descriptions and identify the top skills, keywords, and industry terms that employers will recognize. Use the words that match with your experiences. Generally, keywords include nouns and buzzwords like manager, editor, or computer programmer. A keyword section can appear at the top of your resume after your contact information or at the end of your resume. It should be about 30 words in length.

## **Do's and Do Not's for Electronic Resumes**

### **Formatting:**

- DO use 12pt font size.
- DO use a simple font like Times New Roman or Arial.
- DO justify your text to the left, avoid tabs, and keep a 1" margin.
- DO save your resume in Plain Text.
- DO leave a blank line after each job description.
- DO use a separate line for each heading and address.
- DO use capital letters to distinguish HEADINGS.
- DO list your name at the top followed by address and contact ! information, then keyword summary.
- DO NOT use columns or tabs.
- DO NOT use parentheses around an area code.
- DO NOT use slashes. Example: design/develop.
- DO NOT use italics, bold, underlining, shadows, graphics, or reverse ! type

### **Content:**

- DO use keywords.
- DO use nouns in your keyword section.
- DO use action verbs to describe your work experience.
- DO list all computer-related skills.
- DO limit the number of screens to 5.
- DO spell out acronyms.

### **Production and Mailing**

- DO send your resume and cover letter via e-mail in one file.

## 8.7 Most popular formats

### Chronological Resumé

<b>Your Name</b> <b>Street Address . City, State of Prospective, Zip</b> <b>Phone Number . <u>email_address@email.com</u></b>							
<b>Objective OR Summary</b> <hr/> <p>A resume Objective or Summary can help describe the value you bring to a prospective employer and entice a hiring manager to read your resume. Get help: <a href="http://www.squswkfox.com/2008/12/18/anatomy-of-a-killer-resume">www.squswkfox.com/2008/12/18/anatomy-of-a-killer-resume</a></p>							
<b>Professional Experience</b> <hr/> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 50%;">Job Title</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 50%;">Years</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="padding-top: 10px;">Company and Location</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="padding-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action words</li> <li>Keywords</li> <li>Skill</li> <li>knowledge</li> <li>Be specific by using numbers and percentages.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Job Title	Years	Company and Location		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action words</li> <li>Keywords</li> <li>Skill</li> <li>knowledge</li> <li>Be specific by using numbers and percentages.</li> </ul>	
Job Title	Years						
Company and Location							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action words</li> <li>Keywords</li> <li>Skill</li> <li>knowledge</li> <li>Be specific by using numbers and percentages.</li> </ul>							
<b>Relevant Skills</b> <hr/> <p>Skill Group or Titles: List skills here.</p>							
<b>Education</b> <hr/> <p>Example Education:</p> <p>B.Sc., Computer Science (High Honors), University of British Columbia, 2002.</p>							

This format presents facts in reverse chronological order. Start from present job or position and move date wise backward. This type of resume is mostly popular in many countries around the world including India. With

this resume format the problem what occurs at times is with the filling up the gaps. If you show a year or two where you have not been doing anything, it creates a bad impression. It is necessary that these gaps should be filled sensibly telling what you have been doing, e.g. you were busy with your father's business, or you were on foreign tour etc.

## **Functional Resume**

This format allows you to organize your accomplishments and skills in the functions performed. If you have worked in any organization, the skill and expertise what you may have learnt has to be mentioned. For instance, you may mention that you have team building skills or you are well capable of organizing events.



**NAME**  
 Street  
 City, State Zip  
 Phone  
 Email

## **YOUR OCCUPATIONAL TITLE**

Specializing in [area(s) of expertise, such as Consumer Electronics]

### **SUMMARY**

- ✓ Write three or four bullet statements that summarize why you would be good at your job objective. Each statement should be no longer than two lines.
- ✓ Highlight your relevant strengths (experience, skills, certificate)..
- ✓ Prioritize the statements in this section so the most relevant one comes first.

### **EXPERIENCE**

#### **KEY SKILL**

- ✓ Write two or more bullet statements about how you used this skill in your paid and unpaid activities and what you learned or accomplished that's relevant to your job objective.
- ✓ Describe relevant projects, using keywords that demonstrate your skill level.

#### **KEY SKILL**

- ✓ Write two or more bullet statements, using the tips above. For ideas, see Phrases That Work.
- ✓ Prioritize the statements under each Key Skill section so the most relevant one comes first.

### **WORK HISTORY**

Job Title, 20xx-present	Company or Organization, City, State
Job Title, 20xx-xx	Company or Organization, City, State
Job Title, 20xx-xx	Company or Organization, City, State
Job Title, 20xx-xx	Company or Organization, City, State

### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Degree, Major, 20xx  
 School, City, State

Relevant certificate, 20xx  
 Relevant training or workshop, 20xx

### **VOLUNTEER WORK**

Position Held, Organization, 20xx  
 Position Held, Organization, 20xx [Date optional]

## Targeted Resume

This format has the primary focus on the specific jobs which has been targeted which just holds information relevant to the target. No matter what format you chose, it would provide the best format for you to portray your most relevant skills. You need to first mention what is required and what you need to offer. Matching your skills and requirements does significantly help you to get a call for the interview.

### **Matt Bancroft**

**11500 W. Olympic Blvd, Los Angeles, CA – 90064, USA**  
**555 555 555 – [matt.bancroft@resumebuilder.org](mailto:matt.bancroft@resumebuilder.org)**

### **Experience**

Title Processor (Nov.2011 – Feb. 2012)

- Direct Title Solutions, Winchester, Virginia, USA
- Responsible for managing incoming data from banks and loan processors.

Experienced in multi line telephone system filing, faxing, copying.

Daily interaction with title companies to ensure outstanding customer services.

Patient Access Specialist (Jun. 2008 – Sep. 2011)

- Winchester Medical Center, Winchester, Virginia, USA
- Excelled in role requiring the ability to handle a variety of customer service and administrative tasks and resolve customers issues with expediency.

Demonstrated proficiencies in telephone and front desk reception within a high volume environment.

Researched and rapidly solved upset/angry customers and rebuild client trust to present failed accounts.

**Education**

Triplett Business & Technical institute. 1990. Mr. Jackson

- Virginia, USA
- Accounting and Data Processing 1 and 2. Diploma
- It was analyzing financial data and processing spreadsheets.

**Creative Resume**

This format requires you to present your skills and qualifications in the most creative form. Your resume has to be creative not created. It means that it should not create false facts. The format for a creative resume is most suitable for jobs which involve creativity. The generally accepted approach is to be creative when submitting resumes. For building such resume, the job seeker needs to be aware that the employer would be verifying the facts mentioned on the resume.

**Gimmickry Resume**

The primary purpose of this type of resume is also to get the attention of the prospective employer. When your background does not fit the position, emphasize skills and experiences that would contribute to success in the job under consideration. When you do not have the experience or skill directly required for the particular job, you can mention your skills which are most relevant for that specific job.

**PAMELA EVENS**

145 Tahquitz Canyon + Palm Springs, California 92262 + 760-555-1212 +  
[support@resumeedge.com](mailto:support@resumeedge.com)

**PROFILE**

- Award-winning, multilingual Business Student with extensive professional and entrepreneurial experience.
- Awarded 2001 Student Leader for exemplary service in student government.
- Received 2001 Service Award for outstanding contributions to campus activities.
- Fluency in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Technically proficient in MS Word, Excel and Power Point; Programming in Visual Basic and HTML; Web design.

**EXPERIENCE**

**TRANSLATOR**, Orange Country, California

**Private Contractor**.....4/00 – Present

- Team with two secretarial assistants to provide conversation-based translation and mediation services to non-English speaking business owners and employees.

*Accomplishment:*

- Awarded Hispanic Business Community recognition for assisting immigrants.

**TTMXC, LLC**, Santa Ana, California

**Foreign Currency Trader, Intern** .....12/01 – 02/02

- Handled \$ 50,000+ monthly in trades and investments, specializing in Euros, Dollars and Yen transactions, investigated trends and issued market reports.

*Accomplishment:*

- Increased profitability by exploiting Euro-to-Dollar exchange rate fluctuations.

**CHILDREN'S LEARNING CENTER**, Fullerton, California

**Founder/Business Manager**.....06/00 – 8/01

- Established and operated an educational institution with a staff of 20.

*Accomplishment:*

- Built revenues through direct student recruitment and cooperative local network.

**PREMIER LEARNING ACADEMY**, Irvine, California

**Assistant Business Manager/Spanish Tutor**.....12/99 – 3/00

- Aided management and coached students for educational preparation institute.

*Accomplishment*

- Boosted student enrollment; won Employee of the Month Award.

**SEDA YFIBRAS, S.R.L.** Hernandarias, Alto Parana, Paraguay

**Assistant Business Translator**.....02/97 – 12/98

- Conducted English-Spanish-Portuguese translations of business documents and person-to-person conversations for global textile exporter.

**Education  
&  
Activities**

**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**, Irvine, California**Business Administration Major**.....2000 – Present

- 4.00 GPA, President's List, Alpha Gamma Sigma, Phi Alpha MU, Mu Alpha Theta.
- 2001 Associated Board of Trustees Member.
- Student Representative to Academic Senate, Spring 2001.
- Student Representative to Transfer Advisory Board, Spring 2001.
- Student Advisor to Business Club, Fall 2001.

## 8.8 Essentials of cover letter

### **Why is a Cover Letter Required?**

A covering letter is a very sensitive document. The primary purpose of a covering letter is to put flesh and bones on your resume. The cover letter you add will demonstrate your writing style. The way you write your cover letter will show that you have all the qualities needed to do the job in an effective manner. Covering letter acts as a very crucial supplement to your resume. The way you write your covering letter will decide if the recruiter will look at your resume or not. It is a very short piece of document so the words have to be carefully chosen.

### **How should a Cover Letter Look?**

A cover letter is a formal document which works as a supplement to the resume. It should give the employer a reason to look at the resume. So it is very important for you to ensure that it is the most convincing piece of formal document which you may have created. It should have just 3 to 5 bulleted points leading to the resume. Remember if the cover letter does not "speak well," the resume will not be read! Be sure to check out the wealth of books about cover letters and resumes located on the Internet websites. This is the section where you need to mention your qualities and skills. You may possess numerous skills, but the once you need to mention are the once which the potential employer would be looking for. Your cover

letter must effectively describe your skills as your selling points in maximum two to three paragraphs. When it comes to closing the cover letter, always close the cover letter with a promise of action.

## JANE S. DOE

54321 Street Drive  
Toledo, Ohio 12345

P: (877)875-7706 F: (904) 239-3165  
[Info@greatresumesfast.com](mailto:Info@greatresumesfast.com)

(Date)

(Hiring Manager)

(Title)

(Company)

(Street Address)

(City, State Zipcode)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Hiring Manager's Name),

I am writing to express my interest in the Market Controller position that is currently available with your organization. With over 25 years of experience in Accounting & Financial Management, including a solid background in budget development and management, forecasting and planning, variance analysis, and business leadership, I feel that your needs and my skills are an excellent match. Please note the following additional qualifications:

- Spearheaded and coordinated restructuring and consolidation of financial/business departments of 5 radio stations in 4 different markets without generating additional costs.
- Initiated and directed numerous changes in accounting procedures to facilitate company transition to new technologies, and assisted technical department in implementing computer system to automate processes.
- Proven track record of responsibility, integrity, and commitment to company objectives, with serious focus on providing quality, cost-effective business and accounting solutions.
- Demonstrated ability to build successful teams and collaborate effectively with various departments to implement new technologies and procedures and achieve overall goals.

Enclosed is my resume for your review. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you and demonstrate more fully how my qualifications can meet your needs and benefit your organization, so please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email as listed above.

Thank you sincerely for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,

Jane S. Doe

Enclosure (Attachment)



## References

While getting a reference sheet ready ensure that you keep the following points in mind.

- The document for reference sheet should go along with the resume
- Always carry the reference sheet when you have to attend an interview
- Do not attach the reference sheet with the cover letter and the resume
- Reference sheet should be presented separately on request

Remember that, the supplement for references does not go with the resume. It should be given only when requested. It should have the same header as on the resume. You also need to ensure that the contact details arranged are presentable. In terms of the kind of references you need to use. You need to ensure that the individuals mentioned have a good image of you and the individuals mentioned are familiar with your job roles and responsibilities.

You also need to make sure that the individual is aware that his name has been sent in the reference sheet and he should have the details on the projects you have worked on. It is advisable for you to inform them if it has been a long time that you have been in touch.

## 8.9 Resume writing tips

### 1. **Know the purpose of your resume**

Some people write a resume as if the purpose of the document was to land a job. As a result they end up with a really long and boring piece that makes them look like desperate job hunters. The objective of your resume is to land an interview, and the interview will land you the job.

### 2. **Back up your qualities and strengths**

Instead of creating a long (and boring) list with all your qualities (e.g., disciplined, creative, problem solver) try to connect them with real life and work experiences. In other words, you need to back these qualities



and strengths up, else it will appear that you are just trying to inflate things.

### 3. **Make sure to use the right keywords**

Most companies (even smaller ones) are already using digital databases to search for candidates. This means that the HR department will run search queries based on specific keywords. If your resume doesn't have the keywords related to the job you are applying for, you will be out even before the interview starts. These keywords will usually be nouns. Check the job description and related job ads for a clue on what the employer might be looking for.

### 4. **Use Effective titles**

Like it or not, employers will usually make a judgment about your resume in 5 seconds. Under this time frame the most important aspect will be the titles that you listed on the resume, so make sure they grab the attention. Try to be as descriptive as possible, giving the employer a good idea about the nature of your past work experiences. For example:

**Bad title:** Accounting

**Good title:** Management of A/R and A/P and Record keeping

### 5. **Proofread it twice**

It would be difficult to emphasize the importance of proofreading your resume. One small typo and your chances of getting hired could slip. Proofreading it once is not enough, so do it twice, three times or as many as necessary.

### 6. **Use bullet points**

No employer will have the time (or patience) to read long paragraphs of text. Make sure, therefore, to use bullet points and short sentences to describe your experiences, educational background and professional objectives.

## **7. Where are you going?**

Including professional goals can help you by giving employers an idea of where you are going, and how you want to arrive there. You don't need to have a special section devoted to your professional objectives, but overall the resume must communicate it. The question of whether or not to highlight your career objectives on the resume is a controversial one among HR managers, so go with your feeling. If you decide to list them, make sure they are not generic.

## **8. Put the most important information first**

This point is valid both to the overall order of your resume, as well as to the individual sections. Most of the times your previous work experience will be the most important part of the resume, so put it at the top. When describing your experiences or skills, list the most important ones first.

## **9. Attention to the typography**

First of all make sure that your fonts are big enough. The smaller you should go is 11 points, but 12 is probably safer. Do not use capital letters all over the place; remember that your goal is to communicate a message as fast and as clearly as possible. Arial and Times are good choices.

## **10. Do not include "no kidding" information**

There are many people that like to include statements like "Available for interview" or "References available upon request." If you are sending a resume to a company, it should be a given that you are available for an interview and that you will provide references if requested. Just avoid items that will make the employer think "no kidding!"

## **11. Explain the benefits of your skills**

Merely stating that you can do something will not catch the attention of the employer. If you manage to explain how it will benefit his company, and to connect it to tangible results, then you will greatly improve your chances.

## **12. Avoid negativity**

Do not include information that might sound negative in the eyes of the employer. This is valid both to your resume and to interviews. You don't need to include, for instance, things that you hated about your last company.

## **13. Achievements instead of responsibilities**

Resumes that include a long list of "responsibilities included..." are plain boring, and not efficient in selling yourself. Instead of listing responsibilities, therefore, describe your professional achievements.

## **14. No pictures**

Unless you are applying for a job where the physical traits are very important (e.g., modeling, acting and so on), and unless the employer specifically requested it, you should avoid attaching your picture to the resume.

## **15. Use numbers**

This tip is a complement to the 13th one. If you are going to describe your past professional achievements, it would be a good idea to make them as solid as possible. Don't merely mention that you increased the annual revenues of your division, say that you increased them by \$100,000, by 78%, and soon.

## **16. One resume for each employer**

One of the most common mistakes that people make is to create a standard resume and send it to all the job openings that they can find. Sure it will save you time, but it will also greatly decrease the chances of landing an interview (so in reality it could even represent a waste of time). Tailor your resume for each employer. The same point applies to your cover letters.

### **17. Identify the problems of the employer**

A good starting point to tailor your resume for a specific employer is to identify what possible problems they might have at hand. Try to understand the market of the company you are applying for a job, and identify what kind of difficulties they might be going through. After that illustrate on your resume how you and your skills would help to solve those problems.

### **18. Avoid age discrimination**

It is illegal to discriminate people because of their age, but some employers do these considerations nonetheless. Why risk the trouble? Unless specifically requested, do not include your age on your resume.

### **19. You don't need to list all your work experiences**

If you have job experiences that you are not proud of, or that are not relevant to the current opportunity, you should just omit them. Mentioning that you used to sell newspapers when you were 17 is probably not going to help you land a good position.

### **20. Go with what you got**

If you never had any real working experience, just include your summer jobs or volunteer work. If you don't have a degree yet, mention the title and the estimated date for completion. As long as those points are relevant to the job in question, it does not matter if they are official or not.

### **21. Sell yourself effectively**

Remember that you are trying to sell yourself. As long as you don't go over the edge, all the marketing efforts that you can put in your resume (in its content, design, delivery method and so on) will give you an advantage over the other candidates.

## **22. Don't include irrelevant information**

Irrelevant information such as political affiliation, religion and sexual preference will not help you. In fact it might even hurt your chances of landing an interview. Just skip it.

## **23. Use Mr. and Ms. if appropriate**

If you have a gender neutral name like Alex or Sheetal make sure to include the Mr. or Ms. prefix, so that employers will not get confused about your gender.

## **24. Refrain from lying**

Seems like a no brainer, but you would be amused to discover the amount of people that lie in their resumes. Even small lies should be avoided. Apart from being wrong, most HR departments do background checks these days.

## **25. Keep the salary in mind**

The image you will create with your resume must match the salary and responsibility level that you are aiming for.

## **26. Analyze job ads**

You will find plenty of useful information on job ads. Analyze not only the ad that you will be applying for, but also those from companies on the same segment or offering related positions. You should be able to identify what profile they are looking for and how the information should be presented.

## **27. Get someone else to review your resume**

Even if you think your resume is looking effective, it would be a good idea to get a second and third opinion about it. We usually become blind to our own mistakes or way of reasoning, so another person will be in a good position to evaluate the overall quality of your resume and make appropriate suggestions.

## **28. One or two pages**

The ideal length for a resume is a controversial subject. Most employers and recruiting specialists, however, say that it should contain one or two pages at maximum. Just keep in mind that, provided all the necessary information is there, the shorter your resume, the better.

## **29. Use action verbs**

A very common advice to job seekers is to use action verbs. But what are they? Action verbs are basically verbs that will get noticed more easily, and that will clearly communicate what your experience or achievement were. Examples include managed, coached, overseen, counseled, enforced and planned.

## **30. Use a good printer**

If you are going to use a paper version of your resume, make sure to use a decent printer. Laser printers usually get the job done. Plain white paper is the preferred one as well.

## **31. No hobbies**

Unless you are 100% sure that some of your hobbies will support your candidacy, avoid mentioning them.

## **32. Update your resume regularly**

It is a good idea to update your resume on a regular basis. Add all the new information that you think is relevant, as well as courses, training programs and other academic qualifications that you might receive along the way. This is the best way to keep track of everything and to make sure that you will not end up sending an obsolete document to the employer.

## **33. Mention who you worked with**

If you have reported or worked with someone that is well known in your industry, it could be a good idea to mention it on the resume. The same

thing applies to presidents and CEOs. If you reported to or worked directly with highly ranked executives, add it to the resume.

### **34.No scattered information**

Your resume must have a clear focus. It would cause a negative impression if you mentioned that one year you were studying drama, and the next you were working as an accountant. Make sure that all the information you will include will work towards a unified image. Employers like decided people.

### **35.Make the design flow with white space**

Do not jam your resume with text. Sure it was recommended that you should make your resume as short and concise as possible, but that refers to the overall amount of information and not to how much text you can pack in a single sheet of paper. White space between the words, lines and paragraphs can improve the legibility of your resume.

### **36.Lists all your positions**

If you have worked a long time for the same company (over 10 years) it could be a good idea to list all the different positions and roles that you had during this time separately. You probably had different responsibilities and developed different skills on each role, so the employer will like to know it.

### **37.No jargon or slang**

Slang should never be present in a resume. As for technical jargon, do not assume that the employer will know what you are talking about. Even if you are sending your resume to a company in the same segment, the person who will read it for the first time might not have any technical expertise.

### **38.Careful with sample resume templates**

There are many websites that offer free resume templates. While they can help you to get an idea of what you are looking for, do not just copy

and paste one of the most used ones. You certainly don't want to look just like any other candidate, do you?

### **39. Create an email proof formatting**

It is very likely that you will end up sending your resume via email to most companies. Apart from having a Word document ready to go as an attachment, you should also have a text version of your resume that does not look disfigured in the body of the email or in online forms. Attachments might get blocked by spam filters, and many people just prefer having the resume on the body of the email itself.

### **40. Remove your older work experiences**

If you have been working for 20 years or more, there is no need to have 2 pages of your resume listing all your work experiences, starting with the job at the local coffee shop at the age of 17! Most experts agree that the last 15 years of your career are enough.

### **41. No fancy design details**

Do not use a colored background, fancy fonts or images on your resume. Sure, you might think that the little flowers will cheer up the document, but other people might just throw it away at the sight.

### **42. No pronouns**

Your resume should not contain the pronouns "I" or "me." That is how we normally structure sentences, but since your resume is a document about your person, using these pronouns is actually redundant.

### **43. Don't forget the basics**

The first thing on your resume should be your name. It should be bold and with a larger font than the rest of the text. Make sure that your contact details are clearly listed. Secondly, both the name and contact details should be included on all the pages of the resume (if you have more than one).



#### 44. **Consider getting professional help**

If you are having a hard time to create your resume, or if you are receiving no response whatsoever from companies, you could consider hiring a professional resume writing service. There are both local and online options are available, and usually the investment will be worth the money.

#### 45. **What do you do if you have gaps in your work experience?**

You could start by looking at it differently.

**General Rule:** Tell what you were doing, as gracefully as possible-- rather than leave a gap. If you were doing anything valuable (even if unpaid) during those so-called "gaps" you could just insert that into the work-history section of your resume to fill the hole. Here are some examples:

- 2002-04 Full-time parent -- or
- 2003-05 Maternity leave and family management -- or
- Travel and study -- or Full-time student -- or
- Parenting plus community service

#### 46. **What if you have a fragmented, scrambled-up work history, with lots of short-term jobs?**

To minimize the job-hopper image, combine several similar jobs into one "chunk," for example:• 1993-1995 Secretary/Receptionist; Jones Bakery, Micro Corp., Carter Jewelers – or• 1993-95 Apprentice; Khanna Accountants, Singh Accountants, Traders Coffee Shop. Also you can just drop some of the less important, briefest jobs. But don't drop a job, even when it lasted a short time, if that was where you acquired important skills or experience.

#### 47. **What's the best way to impress an employer?**

Fill your resume with "PAR" statements. PAR stands for Problem-Action-Results; in other words, first you state the problem that existed in your workplace, then you describe what you did about it, and finally you point out the beneficial results. Here's an example: "Transformed a

disorganized, inefficient warehouse into a smooth-running operation by totally redesigning the layout; this saved the company thousands of rupees in recovered stock."Another example: "Improved an engineering company's obsolete filing system by developing a simple but sophisticated functional-coding system. This saved time and money by recovering valuable, previously lost, project records."

48.What if your job title doesn't reflect your actual level of responsibility

When you list it on the resume, either replace it with a more appropriate job title (say "Office Manager" instead of "Administrative Assistant" if that's more realistic) or use their job title and your fairer one together, i.e. "Administrative Assistant (Office Manager)"

## 8.10 Activities

1. Browse online and research the major online job sites that provided some advice on resume building through their career counseling services.

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2. Browse and research the benefits and drawbacks related to Targeted and Creative types of resume?

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## 8.11 Summary

In this chapter we have understood that the resume is seen as the reflection of you and it is unique for every individual. It is the most important element in the process of employment. It provides your first look to the perspective employer about who you are. So it is necessary that your resume should be convincing and must be easily read. It works as a marketing tool which allows you to sell yourself before the perspective employer. You must be really careful on not giving the employer any reason to eliminate you from their consideration. It is very important that your resume needs to be clear, relevant and accurate in terms of the job description and it has to be focused on the industry or the employer.

Thus we can acknowledge that a well written resume makes a significant contribution in you getting a job. All though there are no hard and fast rule for writing a resume, but the basic purpose of resume remains the same with any kind of resume. The purpose is to get you a job. The primary assessment necessary for evaluating the best candidate for job is done through a resume.

You need to keep the following principles in mind before you draft a resume:

- No Ugly Resume
- Your choice of words
- What to Highlight

We have also understood the five steps for building a good resume:

1. Analyze Job Description
2. List Your Accomplishments
3. Identifying your areas of skills
4. Writing a descriptive phrase
5. Choosing a format

Your resume should include:

- Identifying Information
- Summary of Qualifications and Keywords
- Education

- Experience/ Employment/ Work History
- Co-Curricular Activities
- Optional Categories

Here is a brief list of items that you should choose not include in your resume:

- Personal Information
- Career Objective
- High School
- References

We have also discussed that the key to a resume that gets results is great composition. Here are some guidelines for telling your story. Note the effective choice of powerful words in each rewrite. The original statement is flat. The rewrite is vigorous. View your work experience from the recruiter's perspective. What transferable skills are key in the job you are seeking? Identify those skills, such as analytical, communication, or leadership skills, and then cite examples demonstrating that you possess them. Each statement in your description should relate to a known skill requirement for the job you want. In this context it is wise to: Choose Job Titles Thoughtfully, Avoid Jargon, Use Key Words While discussing about the resume format specification you will need keep some essential points in mind such as:

- Think of your resume as an outline
- Headings should intuitively indicate the content in each section and should stand out from the body text
- Use bold type to highlight schools, titles, or employer names in a consistent way throughout your resume
- Put cities, states, and dates in the same place consistently throughout the resume
- Use standard A4 sized paper, and limit your resume to one page
- Be careful with paper color i.e. stay with a white or cream colored paper, and avoid texture as a suggestion.

- Use the same font style throughout your resume
- The minimum is 1/2 inch on all four sides
- Stick to a basic style and size for a clean, crisp appearance.
- It is suggested that you do not use resume templates. Instead, type your resume from scratch, using the guidelines above

Also you will have to review your resume critically and also proofread it and edit if required. To maximize your job search opportunities, prepare your resume to be e-mailed, scanned or posted on the Internet. More and more employers are using technology to help them reach qualified candidates. They post jobs on the Internet so that you can apply online. They encourage you to send your resume by e-mail. In case if e-mail resumes prepare two resumes one e-resume with formatting and other e-resume without formatting, or a "plain text" resume.

We have also discussed some do's and don'ts for e-resumes, some of them are:

- DO save your resume in Plain Text.
- DO use capital letters to distinguish HEADINGS.
- DO NOT use columns or tabs.
- DO NOT use italics, bold, underlining, shadows, graphics, or reverse type
- DO use nouns in your keyword section.
- DO list all computer-related skills.
- DO spell out acronyms.
- DO send your resume and cover letter via e-mail in one file.

Most popular formats of resumes used in general are Chronological Resume, Functional Resume, Targeted Resume, Creative Resume, Gimmickry Resume,

A covering letter is a very sensitive document. The primary purpose of a covering letter is to put flesh and bones on your resume. The cover letter you add will demonstrate your writing style. The way you write your cover letter will show that you have all the qualities needed to do the job in an effective manner. A cover letter is a formal document which works as a supplement to the resume. It should give the employer a reason to look at the resume. So it is very important for you to ensure that it is the most convincing piece of formal document which you may have created. It should have just 3 to 5 bulleted points leading to the resume. Remember if the cover letter does not “speak well,” the resume will not be read. While getting a reference sheet ready ensure that you keep the following points in mind.

- The document for reference sheet should go along with the resume
- Always carry the reference sheet when you have to attend an interview
- Do not attach the reference sheet with the cover letter and the resume
- Reference sheet should be presented separately on request
- Some of the resume writing tips discussed here are:
  - Know the purpose of your resume
  - Proofread it twice
  - Use bullet points
  - Where are you going?
  - Put the most important information first
  - Achievements instead of responsibilities
  - No pictures
  - Use numbers
  - One resume for each employer

- Sell yourself effectively
- Don't include irrelevant information
- Use Mr. and Ms. if appropriate
- Refrain from lying
- Use action verbs
- Use a good printer
- No hobbies
- Update your resume regularly
- No jargon or slang
- Careful with sample resume templates
- Create an email proof formatting
- Remove your older work experiences
- What do you do if you have gaps in your work experience?
- What if you have a fragmented, scrambled-up work history, with lots of short-term jobs?
- What's the best way to impress an employer?
- What if your job title doesn't reflect your actual level of responsibility?



## 8.12 Self-assessment questions

1. Your resume is seen as the reflection of you and it is unique for every individual. It is the most important element in the process of employment. It provides your first look to the perspective employer about who you are. So it is necessary that your resume should -
  - a. Be convincing
  - b. Both a & d
  - c. Be over-emphasized
  - d. Must be easily read
  
2. A resume is supposed to convince the employer that you are worth an interview. It is necessary that a resume is to be kept as brief as possible without sacrificing any relevant and essential information.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
3. Which of the following is one of the most important content areas on your resume?
  - a. Experience/Employment/ Work History
  - b. Summary of Qualifications and Keywords
  - c. Education
  - d. Identifying Information
  
4. Listing your personal interests can help spark conversation with an interviewer and allow him/her to get to know you better.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
5. A keyword section can appear at the top of your resume after your contact information or at the end of your resume. It should be -
  - a. About 30 words in length
  - b. About 50 words in length
  - c. About 80 words in length
  - d. About 100 words in length

6. With which resume format the problem what occurs at times is with the filling up the gaps. If you show a year or two where you have not been doing anything, it creates a bad impression?
- a. Chronological Resume
  - b. Functional Resume
  - c. Targeted Resume
  - d. Either b or c
7. No employer will have the time (or patience) to read long paragraphs of text. Make sure, therefore, to use \_\_\_\_\_ and short sentences to describe your experiences, educational background and professional objectives.
- a. Bullet points
  - b. Short cuts
  - c. Both b& d
  - d. Resume keywords
8. The ideal length for a resume is a controversial subject. Most employers and recruiting specialists, however, say that it should contain -!
- a. One page at maximum
  - b. One or two pages at maximum
  - c. Two to four pages at maximum
  - d. None of them
9. It is a good idea to update your resume on a regular basis. Add all the new information that you think is relevant, as well as courses, training programs and other academic qualifications that you might receive along the way.!
- a. True
  - b. False

- 10.If you have been working for 20 years or more, there is no need to have 2 pages of your resume listing all your work experiences, starting with the job at the local coffee shop at the age of 17! Most experts agree that -
- a. The last 5 years of your career are enough
  - b. The best 10 years of your career are enough
  - c. The last 10 years of your career are enough
  - d. The last 15 years of your career are enough

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

## Chapter 9

# Preparing for the Interview from the employer's perspective

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Characteristics of all forms of communication
- Pre- interview and during interview preparation
- Post interview process
- Essential tips for interview preparation
- Broad types of interview questions
- Essential tips for telephone interview

### Structure:

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Pre-interview Preparation
- 9.3 Preparation During the Interview
- 9.4 Post Interview Process
- 9.5 Essential preparation for The Phone Interview
- 9.6 Activities
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Self-Assessment Questions

## 9.1 Introduction

There are some easy steps that you can take that will increase your chances of success at interviews. First, remember that job interviews should be a process of two-way communication. Not only are they a tool for employers to use to evaluate you, but they are also an opportunity for you to assess the job, the organization, and to see if there is a “fit.”

The keys to a successful interview are preparation and practice. The following suggestions will help you prepare for an interview:

**Self-evaluation:** It is important for you to think about yourself and your past experiences in order to be ready to articulate what you have to offer an employer. Consider the following topics:

- How your present and past experience relate to the position
- Your current and future career goals
- What skills and expertise you have to offer
- The skills that you would like to develop or improve
- Location, salary, and lifestyle priorities
- Kinds of people and environments you prefer
- Past experiences you want to highlight such as volunteer work, hobbies, travel.



## 9.2 Pre-interview Preparation

- **Research the company** - A company's website is an excellent place to begin. It usually gives you information on whether it is international or domestic, what its revenues are, how many locations it has, and the nature of its major products. Most companies are very proud of their websites. Don't be surprised if one of the first questions interviewers ask when you arrive is, "Have you have had a chance to look at our website?"
- **Practice interviews** - Write down a list of possible questions that you think may be asked, then have a friend act as an interviewer and direct them to you in a practice interview situation. Don't stop until you feel comfortable answering each question. Practicing beforehand will make you feel more comfortable and relaxed during the interview.
- **Dress professionally** - In today's environment, wearing a suit isn't always necessary. Contact the HR Manager of the company or your recruiter, and find out what the dress code is for the company at which you are going to interview. Then dress one level above. For instance, if it is business casual, men can wear dress pants, dress shirt, and sport coat. Women can wear a pantsuit, dress, or a skirt and blouse. Visual impressions are very important. Therefore, if in doubt, always dress on the conservative side.
- **Arrival** - Try to arrive at the interview location a little early. This gives you time to determine where you need to go, and will give you a few minutes to collect your thoughts. DO NOT arrive late. Nothing destroys your chance at impressing an employer more than arriving late and offering no explanation. If you learn at the last minute that you are going to be arriving late at the interview, call and let the interviewer know. Interviewers understand that things can come up suddenly. You are never considered late if you call and make them aware of the fact.

## 9.3 Preparation during the interview

- **First impressions:** First impressions take only thirty seconds. Establishing rapport, direct and sustained eye contact, a firm handshake, a warm smile, good posture, and introducing yourself in a confident manner are important ingredients. A well-groomed, professional appearance is critical. Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake, whether it is a woman or a man. (No one likes a weak handshake.) Always maintain eye contact while shaking hands.
- **Smile:** A smile denotes confidence in a candidate. Try to smile often. Also, don't be afraid to use some hand animation while answering questions. This suggests enthusiasm in a candidate.
- **Body language:** Use good posture, and look the interviewer right in the eye. Sit up straight. Never slouch.
- **Speak clearly:** Don't mumble. It portrays a lack of confidence. Speak with assurance. This indicates confidence.
- **Listen before answering:** Allow the employer to begin the interview, but be prepared with some opening statements or questions such as, "I understand that this position involves...", or "What are you looking for in a job candidate?" Make sure you understand the question. If not, ask the interviewer to clarify it. Don't be afraid to take some time to think before answering. Interviewers are impressed with someone who thinks out an answer before speaking.
- **Give brief answers** - Make your answer concise and to the point. Rambling tends to suggest that you really don't have the answer to the question(s) asked.
- **Previous employers** - Never, ever say anything negative about your present or previous employers. No matter how much you may have disliked someone, find a way to give your experiences a positive spin.
- **Be truthful** - Don't lie when asked about something you haven't done. The next question will be "tell us about it."



- **Know your resume** - Be prepared to talk about every fact that is on your resume. Many people embellish their accomplishments on their resumes. Avoid this, since the only point of reference an interviewer has about you is the resume you provide to him/her beforehand.
- **Keep things at a professional level** - Sometimes near the end of an interview, the two parties start feeling comfortable with each other. Don't let this comfortable feeling lead you to telling them something about yourself that they really shouldn't know. Always keep things at a professional level.
- **Look for something in common** - This is something that has given us an edge in the past. Try to find a common bond between yourself and your interviewer. If you are being interviewed in an office, look at how the office is decorated. Look for something you can identify with. Is his/her college diploma hanging on the wall? Did you attend a nearby school, or perhaps one in the same Division? If so, make a quick comment about it: "Did you attend ABC College? I attended the University of Mumbai." Interviewers sometimes feel more comfortable with people with whom they have something in common. This approach has helped several candidates obtain a position over other qualified candidates. Above all, be sincere.

## 9.4 Post interview process

- **Back in touch** - Ask the interviewer when s/he expects to get back to you on her/his decision.
- **Get everyone's business card** - Before you leave, be sure to get the business cards of all of the people with whom you visited. If you cannot do that, ask a secretary for their names and e-mail addresses.
- **Thank the interviewer** - Verbally thank the interviewer for taking the time to interview you, before leaving. Within a day, send thank-you letters to all of the interviewers with whom you spoke. This does not need to consist of a written letter sent via snail mail; an e-mailed thank-you works just as well.
- **Do not give up** - Sometimes, within ten minutes of the start of an interview you will know that the job is not one you want to pursue. If you

begin to feel this way, don't give up on the interview. Continue to interview as if the job was the most important thing in the world. This provides you with practice for your next interview, which may be for your dream job! Not all interviews will lead to offers of employment, but, if you approach every interview as if it's the most important interview you ever had, you will come out a winner

## 9.5 Essential preparation for The Phone Interview

Due to a company's geographic location, travel costs, and divergent schedules, a phone interview may often be your initial contact with a prospective employer. Therefore, we're offering some phone interview tips.

**Objective** - The idea behind a phone interview is to gain an invitation for a personal interview, and to gather more information for future steps in the process. Telephone interviews, also known as telephone screening interviews, are a convenient way for employers to narrow the pool of applicants to be invited for in-person interviews. Additionally, phone interviews are more efficient and minimize the expenses involved in interviewing out-of-town candidates. For job seekers, the objective of a phone interview is to establish rapport with the interviewer.

**Calling procedures** - Employers typically prefer to call candidates at their convenience and will arrange the interview time accordingly. However, employers may ask a candidate to call them to test how serious they are. If you receive a call from an employer at a bad time, ask if you can call the employer back in ten minutes or so in order to position yourself in a location free from distraction. It's better to ask to reschedule than to come across unprepared. If there is a chance that you might miss an expected call from an employer, make sure your voicemail message is clear and professional. When rescheduling, remember to request a time that will also be convenient for the employer. Try to avoid arranging the interview too early in the morning or late on Friday afternoons. Remember to always clarify what time zone, the length of the interview, and who will be conducting the interview.

Occasionally, there will be more than one person conducting the interview.

**Preparation** - Have a pad, pen, and a copy of your resume near the phone. Use a phone in a quiet area. Avoid any background noise. Also

avoid using a cordless phone, because they tend to transmit poorly. You want to present yourself as professional as possible. It is a well-researched fact that most people don't prepare for screening telephone interviews as rigorously as they do for face-to-face meetings, thus the failure rate is high. Prepare for a telephone interview just as you would for a traditional face-to-face encounter.



### **Finer points in preparation: Do's**

- Practice: Use a voice recorder to get an idea of how others hear you on the phone or have a mock telephone interview at the Career Centre
- Dress in a professional manner: If you're dressed for business, both your
- language and paralinguistics will convey greater professionalism.
- Choose professional clothing that you will be comfortable wearing
- Research the organisation

- Have a pen and paper ready for note taking
- Warm up your voice and practice smiling: A smile can be heard over the telephone
- Keep your resume or CV, cover letter, career portfolio, and job advertisement in clear view: If possible, have pictures and/or bios of the interviewer(s) in front of you
- Have a short list of your accomplishments available to review
- Prepare a short list of questions about the job and the organisation
- Have a calendar available should you be asked to schedule another interview
- Ensure interview materials are strategically laid out and that you are familiar with them
- No employer wants to hear shuffling papers
- Turn off call waiting so you are not interrupted
- Close the door and ensure the interview location is free of distractions (e.g., kids, pets)
- Turn off your stereo and television
- Have a clock nearby to monitor the time you have remaining in the interview
- Respect the time parameters set by the interviewer.

### **Finer Points in Preparation: Don'ts**

- Do not use a cell phone. To ensure quality of the conversation and to guard against dropped calls, use a land-line phone.
- Have important points written down on paper, but do not write entire paragraphs or sentences and read them when you are conversing with an

employer. It is very easy for someone to tell if you are reading, and they may test how quickly you can think on your feet

- Think of your notes as a “cheat sheet” that you can refer to when making important points, not a script.

## **During the Telephone Interview**

### **Do's**

- Have a glass of water by the phone in case your throat gets dry
- Speak slowly, clearly, and directly into the phone receiver
- Enunciate your words, use correct grammar, and complete sentences
- Be careful with the tone of your voice: It is your visual representation, make sure you sound interested, confident, and capable
- Smile so your friendliness can be heard
- Address the interviewer by name. If more than one person is interviewing, know who asked you the question and address the answer to that person and their possible “interests.”
- Repeat the question if necessary to clarify your response
- Sit up erect at a desk/table or consider standing: Your voice may sound stronger and more alert
- Pace the call: Let the caller do most of the talking, without interruptions
- Reaffirm your qualifications and end with a strong closing
- Express your interest in the job and the organisation
- Ask the interviewer at the end of the conversation where you stand and what the next step will be (e.g., time line, second phone interview, arranging a on-site interview, etc.)

- If things sound good to you, say so. The interviewer can't see you, so he/she can't read your body language
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity
- Request contact information for follow-up questions and thank you letter submission
- As with all interviews, ask for the job. Restate your interest and desire to move to the next step



## Don'ts

- Don't smoke, chew gum, eat, or drink
- Avoid the overuse of the following words: "ah," "err," "hum," "uhhh," and "like." This habit is especially noticeable on the telephone and eliminating it takes practice.
- Avoid the simple "yes" or "no" response; add selling points at every opportunity by backing up your answers with specific examples from previous work and/or education experience



- Do not mention compensation. This conversation typically comes at the end of the interviewing cycle and not during the telephone interview stage.

### **After the Telephone Interview**

1. Take notes about what you were asked and how you answered.
2. Evaluate the conversation to improve your performance in future phone interviews.
3. Follow-up with a thank-you note that reiterates your interest in the job.
4. Send any requested material immediately. Employers are conducting telephone interviews with greater frequency and use these as a screening process. So take them seriously, prepare thoroughly, and remember that your goal is to set- up a face-to-face interview.



## **Speaking**

- a. Smile and be enthusiastic. Your enthusiasm will carry through to the interviewer.
- b. Speak in a conversational manner, and be sure to speak loudly enough to be heard. Speak with some inflection and tone.
- c. Let the interviewer do most of the talking. When s/he asks you a question, expound upon the answer. Use the opportunity to sell your skills and experience.
- d. When the interview is over, let her/him know that you are very interested in scheduling a personal interview at her/his place of business.

## **Benefits of Telephone interviews**

### **Telephone interviews are:**

- Cost effective and efficient
- Often given using standardized questions
- Used to differentiate between candidates who appear similar on paper
- Helpful in determining the organizational “fit” of a potential candidate
- An easy method for the employer to check if the candidate is affordable and available
- Convenient screening devices for out-of-town applicants





## 9.6 Activities

1. The technique of Self-evaluation has been discussed in this chapter. Browse online and research more on this method.

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2. Browse and research the drawbacks related to essential preparation for the phone interview?

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## 9.7 Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed about preparing for the Interview from the employer's perspective.

The keys to a successful interview are preparation and practice. It is important for you to think about yourself and your past experiences in order to be ready to articulate what you have to offer an employer. Consider the following topics:

- How your present and past experience relate to the position
- What skills and expertise you have to offer
- Location, salary, and lifestyle priorities
- Past experiences you want to highlight such as volunteer work, hobbies, travel.

In pre-interview preparation you will need to keep the following things in mind:

- **Research the company** - A company's website is an excellent place to begin.
- **Practice interviews** - Write down a list of possible questions that you think may be asked, then have a friend act as an interviewer and direct them to you in a practice interview situation.
- **Dress professionally** - Contact the HR Manager of the company or your recruiter, and find out what the dress code is for the company at which you are going to interview. Then dress one level above.
- **Arrival** - Try to arrive at the interview location a little early.

While preparation during interview you will need to keep the following things in mind:

- **First impressions** - Establishing rapport, direct and sustained eye contact, a firm handshake, a warm smile, good posture, and introducing yourself in a confident manner are important ingredients.
- **Smile** - A smile denotes confidence in a candidate.

- **Body language** - Use good posture, and look the interviewer right in the eye. Sit up straight. Never slouch.
- **Speak clearly** - Don't mumble. It portrays a lack of confidence. Speak with assurance.
- **Listen before answering** - Allow the employer to begin the interview, but be prepared with some opening statements or questions
- **Give Brief answers** - Make your answer concise and to the point.
- **Previous employers** - Never, ever say anything negative about your present or previous employers.
- **Be Truthful** - Don't lie when asked about something you haven't done.
- **Know your resume** - Be prepared to talk about every fact that is on your resume.
- **Keep things at a professional level** - Sometimes near the end of an interview, the two parties start feeling comfortable with each other.
- **Look for something in Common** - This is something that has given us an edge in the past.

In post-interview process keep the following things in mind:

- **Back in touch** - Ask the interviewer when s/he expects to get back to you on her/his decision.
- **Get everyone's business card** - Before you leave, be sure to get the business cards of all of the people with whom you visited.
- **Thank the interviewer** - Verbally thank the interviewer for taking the time to interview you, before leaving.
- **Do not give up** - Sometimes, within ten minutes of the start of an interview you will know that the job is not one you want to pursue. If you begin to feel this way, don't give up on the interview. Continue to interview as if the job was the most important thing in the world.

After the interview, write a brief thank you letter. Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview and learn about the organization, re-confirm your interest, and re-emphasize how your background and skills might be of interest to the organization.

We have also discussed some broad types of interview questions those can be asked in an interview and they are:

- Case Questions are often used by consulting companies to assess analytical and problem solving skills.
- Behavioral or situational questions are used to assess how you would behave in different circumstances and to predict your behavior in future, similar situations.
- Role-play questions entail the interviewer asking you to put yourself in another role and decide how you would handle a specific problem.
- Industry-specific questions are questions regarding the latest trends or issues in the industry.
- Brainteasers are quick questions where the obvious answer is not necessarily the right answer
- General questions

The idea behind a phone interview is to gain an invitation for a personal interview, and to gather more information for future steps in the process. Telephone interviews, also known as telephone screening interviews, are a convenient way for employers to narrow the pool of applicants to be invited for in-person interviews. Employers typically prefer to call candidates at their convenience and will arrange the interview time accordingly. However, employers may ask a candidate to call them to test how serious they are. Have a pad, pen, and a copy of your resume near the phone. Use a phone in a quiet area. Avoid any background noise. Also avoid using a cordless phone, because they tend to transmit poorly.

Telephone interviews are cost effective and efficient; often given using standardized questions; used to differentiate between candidates who appear similar on paper; helpful in determining the organizational “fit” of a potential candidate; an easy method for the employer to check if the candidate is affordable and available; convenient screening devices for out-of-town applicants.

## 9.8 Self-assessment questions

1. There are some easy steps that you can take that will increase your chances of success at interviews. In this context it is important to remember that job interviews should be -
  - a. A process of two-way communication
  - b. A process of one-way communication.
  - c. A process of managed communication
  - d. A process of superficial communication
2. It is important for you to think about yourself and your past experiences in order to be ready to articulate what you have to offer an employer. This process is known as -
  - a. Self-evaluation
  - b. Situational awareness
  - c. Reverse-Brainstorming
  - d. Idea selection
3. What is the process of writing down a list of possible questions that you think may be asked, then have a friend act as an interviewer and direct them to you in a practice interview situation known as?
  - a. Screening interviews
  - b. Practice interviews
  - c. Stress interviews
  - d. Behavioral interviews
4. Nothing destroys your chance at impressing an employer more than arriving late and offering no explanation.
  - a. True
  - b. False

5. It is vital in the context of an interview to establish rapport, direct and sustained eye contact, a firm handshake, a warm smile, good posture, and introducing yourself in a confident manner are important ingredients. Thus it can be said that -
- a. None of them
  - b. First impressions take only thirty seconds
  - c. First impressions take only ten seconds
  - d. First impressions take only two seconds
6. From the context of interviewing the aspect of Body Language is critical. In this context it is vital to use good posture, and look the interviewer right in the eye. The candidate should -
- a. Sit up straight
  - b. Never slouch
  - c. Both a & b
  - d. Slouch in a comfortable manner
7. Interviewers sometimes feel more comfortable with people with whom they have something in common. This approach has helped several candidates obtain a position over other qualified candidates. Above all, be sincere.
- a. True
  - b. False
8. Which of the following types of questions are often used by consulting companies to assess analytical and problem solving skills? The interviewer presents a situation and asks you to discuss possible solutions.
- a. Case Questions
  - b. Situational questions
  - c. Role-play questions
  - d. Brainteasers

9. Have a pad, pen, and a copy of your resume near the phone. Use a phone in a quiet area. In this context what is/are the thing(s) to avoid?
- a. Any background noise
  - b. Both a & c
  - c. Avoid using a cordless phone
  - d. Any silence
10. While speak on the telephone it is recommended to speak in a manner, and be sure to speak loudly enough to be heard. Speak with some inflection and tone.
- a. Questionable
  - b. Situational
  - c. Conversational
  - d. Animated

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture](#)



## Chapter 10

# Essentials of preparing for Selection tests

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- Characteristics of properly designed selection tests
- Types of employment tests
- Various elements of the employment interview
- Techniques to succeed in employee selection test

### Structure:

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Characteristics of Properly Designed Selection Tests
- 10.3 Types of Employment Tests
- 10.4 Selection Tests
- 10.5 Techniques to Succeed at Selection Tests
- 10.6 Activities
- 10.7 Summary
- 10.8 Self-Assessment Questions

## 10.1 Introduction

### **Administration of Selection Tests**

Evidence suggests that the use of tests is becoming more prevalent for assessing an applicant's qualifications and potential for success. Tests are used more in the public sector than in the private sector and in medium-sized and large companies than in small companies. Large organizations are likely to have trained specialists to run their testing programs. From an assessment standpoint, a test is a standardized series of problems or questions that assess a person's knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics.

### **When do Employment Tests make the Most Sense?**

Employees affect an organization's performance and profitability. Hiring or promoting people who are unsuitable costs time, money, and potential new business. Carefully developed and administered employment tests can provide organizations with a way to decide systematically and accurately which people have the ability to perform well on the job, will not turnover, won't engage in counterproductive behaviors, or will be able to learn from training programs. Tests can also benefit individuals who are better matched to positions for which they are suited and in which they will wish to remain.



## Advantages of Selection Tests

Selection testing can be a reliable and accurate means of selecting qualified candidates from a pool of applicants. As with all selection procedures, it is important to identify the essential functions of each job and determine the skills needed to perform them. Selection tests must be job related. Since tests are standardized, they provide information about job candidates that is comparable for all applicants. Thus tests are useful in selection, promotions, performance appraisal and potential appraisal.

## Potential Problems using Selection Tests

Selection tests may accurately predict an applicant's ability to perform the job, but they are less successful in indicating the extent to which the individual will want to perform it. Another potential problem, related primarily to personality tests and interest inventories, has to do with applicants' honesty. Also there is the problem of test anxiety. Applicants often become quite anxious when confronting yet another hurdle that might eliminate them from consideration.

## 10.2 Characteristics of properly designed selection tests

Properly designed selection tests are standardized, objective, based on sound norms, reliable and—of utmost importance—valid.

1. **Standardization:** Refers to the uniformity of the procedures and conditions related to administering tests. It is necessary for all to take the test under conditions that are as close to identical as possible.
2. **Objectivity:** Achieved when all individuals scoring a given test obtain the same results.
3. **Norms:** Provide a frame of reference for comparing applicants' performance with that of others. A norm reflects the distribution of scores obtained by many people similar to the applicant being tested. The prospective employee's test score is compared to the norm and the significance of the test score is determined.

4. **Reliability:** The extent to which a selection test provides consistent results. If a test has low reliability, its validity as a predictor will also be low. To validate reliability, a test must be verified.
5. **Validity:** The extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure. If a test cannot indicate ability to perform the job, it has no value as a predictor.



### 10.3 Types of employment tests

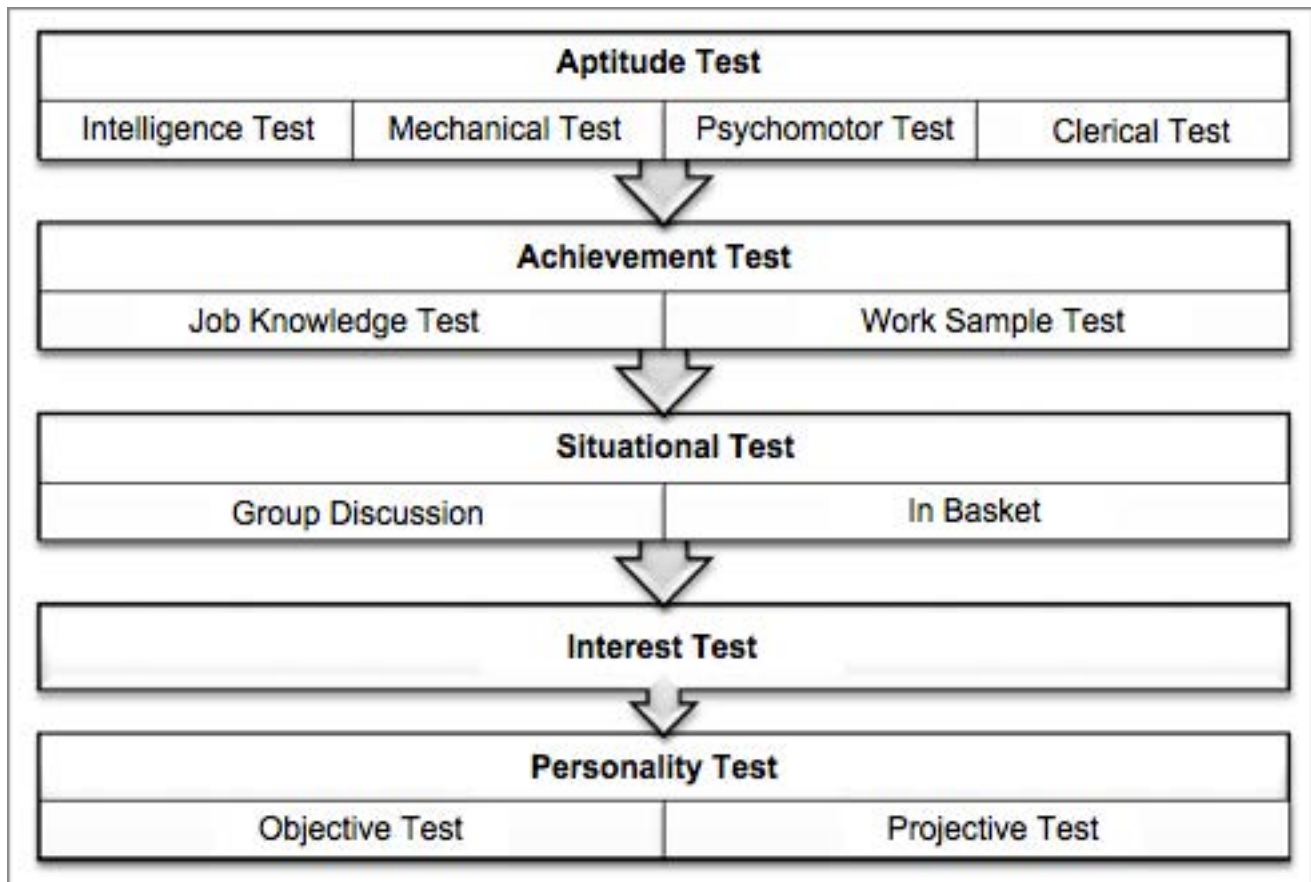
Individuals differ in characteristics related to job performance. These differences, which are measurable, relate to cognitive abilities, psychomotor abilities, job knowledge, work samples, vocational interests, and personality. Various tests measure these differences. There are different kinds of tests. Tests vary according to their mode of administration (e.g., paper and pencil vs. Web-based), their content (e.g., interpersonal skills, mathematical ability), their level of standardization or structure, their costs, their administrative ease, and many other factors.

- a. **Cognitive Aptitude Tests** — Measure an individual's ability to learn, as well as to perform a job. Job-related abilities may be classified as verbal, numerical, perceptual speed, spatial, and reasoning.
- b. **Psychomotor Abilities Tests** — Measure strength, coordination, and dexterity. It is feasible to measure many abilities that are involved in many routine production jobs and some office jobs.
- c. **Job Knowledge Tests** — Designed to measure a candidate's knowledge of the duties of the position for which he or she is applying.
- d. **Work-sample Tests (Simulations)** — Identify a task or set of tasks that are representative of the job. The evidence concerning these tests, to date, is that they produce high predictive validity, reduce adverse impact, and are more acceptable to applicants.
- e. **Vocational Interest Tests** — Indicate the occupation in which a person is most interested and is most likely to receive satisfaction.
- f. **Personality Tests** — As selection tools, personality tests have not been as useful as other types of tests. They are often characterized by low reliability and low validity. Since some personality tests emphasize subjective interpretation, the services of a qualified psychologist are required.
- g. **Drug and Alcohol Testing** — Few issues generate more controversy today than drug testing. Proponents of drug-testing programs contend that it is necessary to ensure workplace safety, security, and productivity.
- h. **Genetic Testing** — As genetic research progresses, confirmed links between specific gene mutations and diseases are emerging. Genetic testing can now determine whether a person carries the gene mutation for certain diseases, including heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer, and Huntington's disease.
- i. **Internet Testing** — The Internet is increasingly being used to test various skills required by applicants.

- j. **Written Test** — Designed to measure a candidate's knowledge of the duties of the position for which he or she is applying. This test is administered as the name goes in a written manner.

## 10.4 Selection Tests

Tests: The next stage in the selection process is conducting different tests. The objective of tests is to solicit further information to assess the employee suitability to the job. The important tests are:



- Develop and write out many such examples from your courses and work experiences.
- Develop anecdotes or scenarios that demonstrate your strengths. Use the questions to follow as your guide. If you do not have a ready reply for the specific question, stay cool, smile and ask if you could think a bit and come back later to respond to that question.

- Behavioral interviewing can be stressful. Good preparation will boost your confidence.
1. **Aptitude Tests:** These tests measure whether an individual has the capacity or latent ability to learn a given job if given adequate training. Aptitudes can be divided into general and mental ability or intelligence or specific aptitudes such as mechanical, clerical, manipulative capacity etc. These are:
    - a. **Intelligence Tests:** These tests in general measure intelligence quotient of a candidate. In detail these tests measure capacity for comprehension, reasoning, word fluency, verbal comprehension, ! numbers, memory and space.
    - b. **Mechanical Tests:** These tests measure the capacities of spatial visualization, perceptual speed and knowledge of mechanical matter.
    - c. **Psycho meter Tests:** These tests measure abilities like manual dexterity, motor ability and eye hand coordination of candidates.
    - d. **Clerical Aptitude:** Measure specific capacities involved in office work, items of this test include spelling, computation, comprehension, copying, word measuring etc.
  2. **Achievement Tests:** These tests are conducted when applicants claim to know something as these tests are concerned with what one has accomplished. These tests are more useful to measure the value of specific achievement when an Organization wishes to employ experienced candidates. These are:
    - a. **Job Knowledge Test:** Under this test a candidate is tested in the knowledge of a particular job.
    - b. **Work Sample Test:** Under this test a portion of the actual work is given to the candidate as a test and the candidate asked to do it.
  3. **Situational Test:** This test evaluates a candidate in a similar real life situation. In this test the candidate is asked either to cope with the situation or solve critical situation of the job.

- a. **Group Discussion:** This test is administered through group discussion approach to solve a problem under which candidates are observed in the areas initiating, leading, proposing valuable ideas, conciliating skills, oral communicating skills, co-ordination and concluding skills.
  - b. **In Basket Test:** The candidate in this test is supplied with actual letters, telephone and telegraphic message, reports and requirements by various officers of the Organization, adequate information about the job and Organization. The candidate is asked to take decisions on various items based on the in basket information regarding requirements in the memoranda.
4. **Interest Tests:** These tests are inventories of the likes and dislikes of candidates in relation to work, job, occupations, hobbies and recreational activities.
  5. **Personality Tests:** These tests prove deeply to discover clues to an individual's value system, his emotional reactions, and maturity and characteristic mood.
    - a. **Objective Test:** most personality tests are objective tests as are suitable for group testing and can be scored objectively.
    - b. **Projective tests:** Candidates are asked to project their interpretation of certain standard situations basing on pictures, figures etc., under these tests.

## 10.5 Techniques to succeed at Selection Tests

1. **Understand the purpose of psychometric testing.** Knowing why companies and organizations use psychometric testing can ease some of your possible concerns that the tests are out to typecast or dismiss you. On the whole, the tests are aimed at finding out the most able and best suited persons for a job or course of study in the most efficient manner.
  - Psychometric testing can be an indicator that there are a lot of applicants for a job and the employer is seeking to identify the most suitable candidates in the most economical way possible.



- It is viewed as an efficient way of gauging a potential employee's thinking, ability to be a part of a team, and personal priorities.
- See it realistically: if you're not the best fit, you're better off not working in this work environment. It doesn't reflect on your worth as a person.

2. **Know what to expect in the testing environment.** Psychometric tests can be given in the potential workplace, or on the premises of a business that runs the testing on behalf of the company or organization. Read the attendance instructions carefully and if you don't know where to go, be sure to work it out well in advance rather than turning up late. Also, read any instructions about the test itself with great care and learn what you can about the types of questions, the timing permitted, and the sequences the testing will be provided in.

- Psychometric tests can be written (pen and paper), on a computer, or a combination of both.
- While most testing will take place seated at a desk, it's also possible to be given psychometric tests while undertaking a workplace task, or even when in a gym or on a running machine.
- Average testing time is around 15 minutes but it varies depending on the extent of tests being taken. Even the timing can be treated as part of the assessment of completion or non-completion of particular tests.
- If you have a disability that might impact your ability to take the test, let the employer know in advance. They may be able to rearrange the testing process to accommodate your needs.
- Dress smartly. You are competing with other people; every little part of you that suggests you care and are taking this seriously will count in your favor.
- Bring along anything you're asked to bring, including gym clothes if necessary.

3. **Have the right attitude.** This can be hard if you're prone to dismissing the worth or resenting taking psychometric tests. You might harbor personal disbelief or even disgust at the use of such tests to sort through people but it's about facing the reality that these tests stand between you and a job, not about fighting your personal war against using psychology as a corporate tool. Instead, expect to give the tests your absolute best shot by taking the right mental approach and being determined to work hard.
  - Sleep well the night before.
  - Look forward to the challenge.
4. **Practice in advance.** For those who have never had psychometric tests or who have been out of formal education for a while, practice can be an important introduction to the things that you'll be expected to answer. As soon as you're told to attend for the tests, start practicing. Practice is the best chance that you have for succeeding, especially when you work with materials that are similar to those you'll be tested on. It is recommended that you do a minimum of 20 hours of practice if you can, so if you have enough lead-in time, break up the practice to a few hours a day.
  - Ask the potential employer for samples of the questions expected. If you receive any, this will give you an opportunity to work out the type of questions you'll need to practice.
  - Find websites and books that have practice tests. Do as many as you can before your own testing day.
  - Focus on your areas of weakness. If you're great at spelling and word association but lousy at spotting patterns or number skills, don't spend too much time on the easy stuff. Instead, focus most of your energies on practicing the skills in which you're weakest, to improve them and your confidence.
  - Challenge yourself and push past what you cannot do. Practice will only be effective when you force yourself to do that which you don't believe you can.



5. **Practice working against the clock.** As most of the aptitude part of the psychometric tests is timed, it pays to practice under pressure. Practicing this will get you used to answering a lot of questions in a short space of time and to learn to balance speed and accuracy. Use a timer to practice with; a good time period is to allow yourself about 20 seconds per question before moving on to the next one. Either follow the time allotted on the practice tests, or use about a 10 to 15 minute period (the time you're likely to get in the actual test).
  - Practice time-keeping without checking the clock. Get to know how long 20 seconds feels like when approaching and answering each question.
  - Don't fuss about running out of time. Just keep practicing to improve your time.
6. **Broaden your test material.** As well as using psychometric tests, find all sorts of relevant test material to broaden your knowledge and fast answering ability.
  - If you find magazines that have surveys that tell you your personality, do these; again, set up a timer for 15-20 seconds per question. Usually the personality tests are not timed, but there are a couple of hundred

questions - it's about sufficiency of evidence in this case. The timer part of this step is, again, about helping you get used to reading quickly, and to give you some more practice at time pressure.

- Any sort of IQ test, visual puzzles, trivial pursuit style questions - the name of the game is to tone up your mental mathematics, reading, and comprehension skills. Attempt to complete all of this within short time frames.
- Find puzzles where there are simple graphics. The types of questions you'll be asked will include picking the odd one out, or "if this is to this, then that is to ...?" type pattern sequences; these kinds of tests look at your reasoning and spatial abilities. Find them, time them, do them. Sudoku helps you look at patterns, and again, add a timer to spur you on.
- Use any online word-of-the-day type services, along with crosswords, hangman, word match, and other sorts of word puzzles. Keep doing the puzzles with a timer, and try to get faster, and of course, accuracy is the name of the game. Challenge colleagues, friends and family.

7. **Refresh your math skills.** Mathematics questions usually take the form of problem, with five or six possible answers. If you've slipped away from percentages, fractions, decimals, proportions, ratios, and numerical relationships - it's time to return to those kinds of questions and get them accurate.

8. **Take the test.** Once it is test time, be prepared. Read or listen to the instructions with great care (after all, if you can't get that right now, will you actually listen on the job?). Avoid feeling pressured and be prepared to enjoy the experience. If there are sample questions, use these as a way to warm up calmly, check your answers, and to get a feeling for the layout and style of the questions.

- If you're not clear on the time period allotted, ask again. Be aware of the need for any delays prior to or after tests.
- The timing doesn't start until you start the test, so spend a few moments relaxing and getting yourself ready for action.

9. **Get the best answer down and move on.** Trust yourself. You get a better chance to find questions you can answer if you move on rather than spend two minutes grinding away on a single problem. Doing that would waste the opportunity of another 6 questions at 20 seconds each! Just keep working through and if you have time left, come back to skipped questions.

Remember that everyone will get something wrong and it is better to push through to answers in which you excel than to remain stuck in the ones that won't click.

- Notice any little messages at the bottom of a page asking you to "Turnover". Unfortunately, a lot of people miss that and think they've finished the test!
  - Educated guesses are worth trying when you don't know the answer.
  - Maximize your speed on the easier questions; this will free up time for the more challenging ones.
10. **Seek feedback.** Whether or not you're successful in getting through to the next stage of the job hunt, ask for feedback on the psychometric tests. This can give you important insights into how your personality and aptitude have been perceived and which areas it might be worth concentrating on more. While there are no wrong or right answers in personality tests, there can be indicators of areas in which you would benefit from self-improvement, such as training in ethics or assertiveness.
- Keep trying. If at first you don't succeed, try again until you do. Failure at psychometric tests stands at around half of the candidates sitting the test. It can be an indicator that you need to practice the tests more, so try to recall which areas of the tests caused you the most difficulties and concentrate on improving those for the next time. Apply again after practicing more. Be confident that your refocused practice will enable you to pass the psychometric tests the next time around.

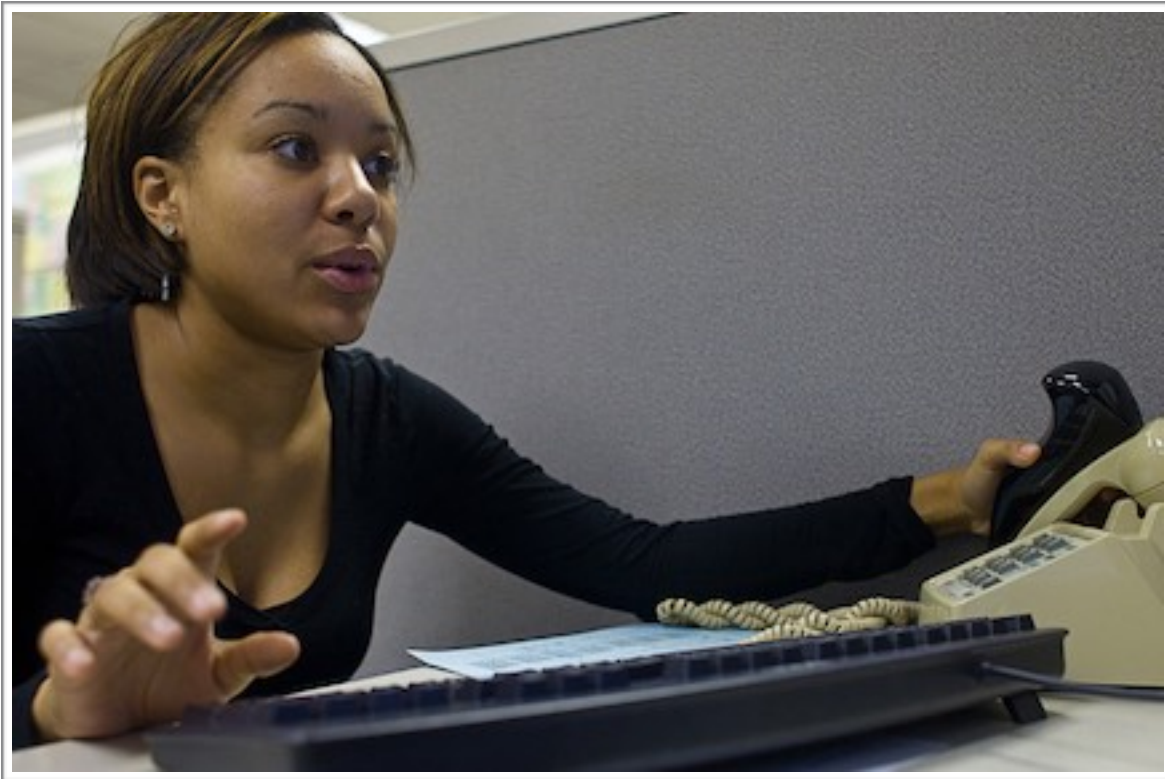
## Tips

- Don't waste time or energy getting upset with what might appear to be dumb or repetitive questions. If you don't know the answer, or can't work it out, go for your best guess, and move on to the next question. The more answers you get through, the better your chances are. Like in so many things in life, a good attitude to it helps.
- Don't panic if you don't finish the tests - they're designed to give results even if you don't answer every question.
- Mathematics - if this hasn't been your strong point, relax and keep it simple. Try to pick up tips, tricks, and shortcuts. For example, if you add two even numbers, the answer has to be an even number. Two odd numbers add up to an even number. An odd and an even number add up to an odd number. So, even if you can't figure out the answer, it's possible you can find the answer by deduction and eliminating the wrong answers. It's fine to count on your fingers, make notes on paper and come up with something like it: the answer has to be bigger than that and that, and it has to end in an even number because the problem added two numbers that ended in odd numbers...
- If you're chasing a job, you can't control the interviewer or how they ask the questions, and you can't read the minds of the interview panel or know how they'll read your resume. One thing you can do is get proactive and do some practice and preparation for the test. And don't forget, even if you don't get the job, and you don't bedazzle the testers, there's a very good chance many of the successful people throughout history would also have failed at this kind of testing process. You're probably in good company. Take some heart that the company short-listed you enough to offer you the test in the first place, and persevere.
- Psychometric testing is an indication; it's not you. If you're a creative, artistic person, it's very possible that the mathematics and writing tests are not going to show all of your best sides. If, as a result, you miss the job, it's possible you should thank your lucky stars while you're running like the wind in the opposite direction - you probably don't want to work for a company that will cramp your style like that anyway



## Warnings

- If the tests are in English, and it's not your first language, you really need to practice. The language used can be quite complex and full of confusing double negatives.
- Slipping in to complete psychometric tests during a lunch break might not put you in the best frame of mind if you're suddenly starting to run out of time. Be sure to allow yourself all the time needed; ask in advance how long you need to be present for. If the tests are using USA or UK questions (and you're not from either country) the wording or the cultural content can be a little strange. Remember, in the case of mathematics, it's about the numbers - don't be put off by pounds (or dollars).
- Don't overthink the tests; very accomplished people can have this tendency and therefore fail the test even though they're ideal for the job. Practice answering under pressure more if you find yourself reflecting too much.



## 10.6 Activities

1. The intelligence tests in general measure the intelligence quotient of a candidate as discussed in this chapter. Browse online and research some of the websites that provide these tests online.

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2. Browse and research the benefits and drawbacks of the Unstructured (Nondirective) Interview?

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## 10.7 Summary

In this chapter we have seen tests are used more in the public sector than in the private sector and in medium-sized and large companies than in small companies. Large organizations are likely to have trained specialists to run their testing programs. From an assessment standpoint, a test is a standardized series of problems or questions that assess a person's knowledge, skills, abilities, or other characteristics. Carefully developed and administered employment tests can provide organizations with a way to decide systematically and accurately which people have the ability to perform well on the job, will not turnover, won't engage in counterproductive behaviors, or will be able to learn from training programs. Tests can also benefit individuals who are better matched to positions for which they are suited and in which they will wish to remain.

We have also seen the Advantages of Selection Tests — Selection testing can be a reliable and accurate means of selecting qualified candidates from a pool of applicants. As with all selection procedures, it is important to identify the essential functions of each job and determine the skills needed to perform them. Selection tests must be job related. Since tests are standardized, they provide information about job candidates that is comparable for all applicants. Thus tests are useful in selection, promotions, performance appraisal and potential appraisal.

Potential Problems using Selection Tests—Selection tests may accurately predict an applicant's ability to perform the job, but they are less successful in indicating the extent to which the individual will want to perform it.

Some of the Characteristics of properly designed selection tests have been discussed as follows:

- **Standardization:** Refers to the uniformity of the procedures and conditions related to administering tests.
- **Objectivity:** Achieved when all individuals scoring a given test obtain the same results.
- **Norms:** Provide a frame of reference for comparing applicants' performance with that of others.

- **Reliability:** The extent to which a selection test provides consistent results.
- **Validity:** The extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure.

The Types of employment tests have also been studied here, in this context we have learnt that individuals differ in characteristics related to job performance. These differences, which are measurable, relate to cognitive abilities, psychomotor abilities, job knowledge, work samples, vocational interests, and personality.

- Cognitive Aptitude Tests
- Psychomotor Abilities Tests
- Job Knowledge Tests
- Work-Sample Tests (Simulations)
- Vocational Interest Testss
- Personality Tests
- Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Genetic Testing
- Internet Testing
- Written Test

The objectives of interview have been discussed which are:

- To secure information through face to face contact.
- To provide the candidates with the facts of the job and the organization:
- To gather qualitative facts
- To study oral and speech aspects of behaviour
- To judge and evaluate the suitability of the candidate to the job, basing on job and organizational requirements

Interviews may be classified by the degree to which they are structured.

#### a. **The Unstructured (Non-directive) Interview**

An interview where probing, open-ended questions are asked. This type of interview is comprehensive, and the interviewer encourages the applicant to do much of the talking.

**b. The Structured (Directive Or Patterned) Interview**

An interview consisting of a series of job-related questions that are asked consistently of each applicant for a particular job. A structured interview typically contains four types of questions.

- **Situational questions**
- **Job knowledge questions**
- **Job-sample simulation questions**
- **Worker requirements questions:** Seek to determine the applicant's willingness to conform to the requirements of the job.

**c. Behavior Description Interviewing**

A structured interview that uses questions designed to probe the candidate's past behavior in specific situations. It avoids making judgments about applicants' personalities and avoids hypothetical and self-evaluative questions.

Interviews may be conducted in several ways.

**a. One-On-One Interview**

In a typical employment interview, the applicant meets one-on-one with an interviewer.

**b. Group Interview**

Several applicants interact in the presence of one or more company representatives.

**c. Board Interview**

One candidate is interviewed by representatives of the firm.

**d. Stress Interview**

Intentionally creates anxiety to determine how an applicant will react to stress on the job.

**e. Realistic Job Previews**

Conveys job information to the applicant in an unbiased manner, including both positive and negative factors.

Some of the Techniques to succeed at Selection Tests are:

Understand the purpose of psychometric testing.

- Know what to expect in the testing environment
- Have the right attitude
- Practice in advance
- Practice working against the clock
- Broaden your test material
- Refresh your math skills

## 10.8 Self-assessment questions

1. Which of the below provided characteristic of properly designed selection tests refers to the uniformity of the procedures and conditions related to administering tests?
  - a. Standardization
  - b. Objectivity
  - c. Norms
  - d. Reliability
  
2. Which of the below provided type of test measure strength, coordination, and dexterity. It is feasible to measure many abilities that are involved in many routine production jobs and some office jobs?
  - a. Cognitive Aptitude Tests
  - b. Psychomotor Abilities Tests
  - c. Vocational Interest Tests
  - d. Genetic Testing
  
3. Which of the below provided type of test indicate the occupation in which a person is most interested and is most likely to receive satisfaction?
  - a. Cognitive Aptitude Tests
  - b. Psychomotor Abilities Tests
  - c. Vocational Interest Tests
  - d. Genetic Testing
  
4. The Structured Interview is an interview where probing, open-ended questions are asked. This type of interview is comprehensive, and the interviewer encourages the applicant to do much of the talking.
  - a. True
  - b. False

5. Which of the below provided type of questions involve situations in which an applicant may be actually required to perform a sample task from the job?
- a. Situational questions
  - b. Job knowledge questions
  - c. Job-sample simulation questions
  - d. Worker requirements questions
6. Which type of interview is one that uses questions designed to probe the candidate's past behavior in specific situations. It avoids making judgments about applicants' personalities and avoids hypothetical and self-evaluative questions?
- a. Behavior Description Interviewing
  - b. The Unstructured (Nondirective) Interview
  - c. The Structured Interview
  - d. None of them
7. In the Realistic Job Previews the job information is conveyed to the applicant in an unbiased manner, including both positive and negative factors.
- a. True
  - b. False
8. Which of the following types of tests measure specific capacities involved in office work, items of this test include spelling, computation, comprehension, copying, word measuring etc.?!
- a. Intelligence Tests
  - b. Mechanical Tests
  - c. Psycho meter Tests
  - d. Clerical aptitude

9. Which type of candidates are asked to project their own interpretation of certain standard situations basing on ambiguous pictures, figures etc., under these tests?
- a. Projective tests
  - b. Both a & c
  - c. Objective tests
  - d. Interest Tests
10. The candidate in which type of test is supplied with actual letters, telephone and telegraphic message, reports and requirements by various officers of the Organization, adequate information about the job and Organization?
- a. Group Discussion
  - b. In-basket Tests
  - c. Interest Tests
  - d. None of them

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)



# **Section 3**

## **ESSENTIALS OF NETWORKING SKILLS**

# Chapter 11

## Basics of Networking Skills

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- The concept of networking
- The process of using your network map
- Opportunities for Networking
- Networking essentials

### Structure:

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Benefits of Business Networking
- 11.3 Opportunities for Networking
- 11.4 Networking Essentials
- 11.5 Three Important Types of Business Networks
- 11.6 Activities
- 11.7 Summary
- 11.8 Self-Assessment Questions

## 11.1 Introduction

Networking is building and developing mutually beneficial relationships. It is extremely essential as it is a connection to opportunities for skill development, work experience, business, your next job and future promotion. Networking thus is an essential tool for career entry and career management throughout our lives. From the context of seeking jobs over half of all jobs are found through networking channels. Networking provides the information for decision-making, opportunity sourcing and applications and is a connection to opportunities for skill development, work experience, business, your next job and future promotion. For many people, the thought of business networking can seem like a chore or even a nerve-wracking ordeal. When done properly, business networking can be enjoyable and helpful to one's career. In the past business networking was usually done in- person; however, today many people also use the Internet as another means of widening their professional networks. In both cases, it is important to brush up on networking strategies and etiquette for successful results.



One of the first advantages of business networking is that it allows us to meet new people. While it is a great way to increase our profiles or business awareness, not all of these people will necessarily turn into new customers or sales leads; however, they can help to introduce us to other business opportunities further down the line. Meeting other professionals provides a fresh forum for people from different professional backgrounds to exchange ideas. They might offer information on how to do something better, or how things are done elsewhere. Sometimes, business networking leads to new connections, mentors, or careers. When you get to a level in the organization where your peers are as good as you are in terms of intelligence, in terms of track record, in terms of credentials and in terms of raw smarts,” she says. “When you look at what top companies do as they try to grow their future leaders and as they try to assess the leaders they currently have, they will tell you very explicitly that the ability to manage relationships across boundaries and to sell ideas is a critical competency.”

### **What it is Networking?**

- Building strong, lasting relationships
- Using existing skills in focused way
- Making the most of arranged and chance meetings
- Following up your contacts
- Being prepared to play the long game

### **What it Isn't**

- Meeting one-off contacts who get you something
- A drawer full of business cards
- Making direct approaches with a request for jobs

## **11.2 Benefits Of Business Networking**

Business networking is the process of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with other business people and potential clients and/or customers, it's quite simply the art of relationship-building; although this type of networking is a little more focused and deliberate than the kinds of networking one does in other aspects of life. Probably the most important benefit of networking is making a lasting impression, networking is less about meeting new people than having them remember you after the fact.

In spite of the growing use of technology and the Internet, people still do business with people.



Networking is the best way to meet new people and build those relationships that turn into repeat sales and referrals, it's a long-term business development strategy. The key to good business networking is the establishment of a mutually beneficial relationship, and that's an incredibly rare occurrence at the standard shake hands and exchange your business card events that are touted as business networking "opportunities".

Unfortunately, people have lost their innate ability to connect (hence the bad networking) but if you are willing to take a chance and set yourself apart from the rest of the herd, you can make some great connections and truly develop your business. You can cultivate a network of endless referrals by not thinking of "networking" as something you go to "networking events" to do, make it an integral part of your everyday business promotions. Aim to create and nurture quality relationships. Keep in mind that networking is about being genuine and authentic, building trust and relationships, and seeing how you can help others.

Looking back, any investment of my time in those extra-work activities have had a dramatic return-on-investment in terms of the people I met

and got to work with. Something that is often over looked is that networking is a more cost-effective method of generating new business than advertising or public relations efforts. Business networking provides you with invaluable contacts that give your company a dramatic boost, regardless of size or turnover, nurturing cooperative relationships with other specialized companies is an effective way to optimize your complementary skills and at the same time, maintain a degree of flexibility that is required in this increasingly competitive global marketplace.

Networking has at least 4 major benefits:

- i) It will help increase your sales, through referrals.
- ii) It will help you learn things that you need to know to manage and grow your business.
- iii) It will help you find people that you can buy goods and services from.
- iv) It can help stimulate your creativity about new things or approaches for your business.

Networks are important because they help strengthen and support your business. Networks can be formal or informal. You should also consider joining a women's association - where you will find a larger group of women, and resources that you should take advantage of - such as information on contracts and seminars on various subjects.

### 11.3 Opportunities for Networking

After initially meeting a potential business contact, whether online or in person, the best way to keep in touch is through meaningful follow-ups. Give them a call or send over an email to let them know that you appreciated meeting them. Continue to follow-up each month. This might be done by referring a customer to them, offering insightful tidbits, or inviting them out for lunch or coffee. Always thank them when they do something to help you. To meet other people, join a variety of groups. People can also extend business networking to several other places. For example, the person in the next seat on an airplane, or people who volunteer with you at a local charity, could easily turn out to be potential business contacts.



Some of the places which help people network are:

- Professional bodies
- Industry/sector events (e.g. branch events, training courses)
- Course-organized external input (e.g. guest lecturers, industry experts)
- On campus careers events – fairs, presentations, drop-ins
- Networking organizations (e.g. AIESEC, Chambers of Commerce, networking clubs)
- Student networking opportunities (e.g. student societies, sports clubs, syndicate groups)
- Social events
- and if working. Colleagues, customers, suppliers and networking events



## 11.4 Networking essentials

### **Treat Networking Like a Game**

Networking is a time-honored tradition that most people apply every day without knowing it. View it as making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, even as making friends. Networking is based on the premise that we're all humans and need each other. This is as true in business as it is in other areas of your life. You may need to ask me for ideas or referrals about getting a job, but I'll gladly reciprocate because I know that at some point, I may need to call on you for something. At that point, whether the help is for me or someone else, I'll expect you to reciprocate. It's that simple. You lob the ball over the net, and it comes back to you. Networking for a job can be fun. Consider it today's answer to the lost art of conversation and its cousin, letter writing. It's all about communicating—making phone calls, conducting information interviews in person or writing letters—to learn if your contacts can refer you to anyone who might want to hire someone with your skills.

The first step is to know what you want to do. Before you pick up the phone to begin networking, take a moment to collect your thoughts. Ask yourself, what do I want? If it's help, be specific. Do you need ideas, names or introductions? Make a list of the items that will help you stay focused during your conversation. Most people really want to help you, a new graduate, with your job search, but first, they must understand what you want. Then they can determine how best to help you.

### **Realize that you, Too, Have Something to Offer**

When you're just starting out in a career, it's easy to be intimidated by the concept of networking. After all, you're a new graduate and your knowledge of business may be limited, and your contacts are likely to be already established professionally. What do you have to offer that they might value and why would they make time for you? It's simple. Most seasoned business people understand the concept of networking. They know that what goes around comes around. Everyone has had to start somewhere. We all remember the folks who took time to counsel, guide and direct us on our first forays into the business world. It's a debt that's never really repaid, unless it's through helping someone else just starting a career.



## Honor the Networking Code

Another way to say this is “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” If you want to have your phone calls returned, return phone calls. If you want help with your career, you must be willing to help others. To be a successful networker, you also must take contacts’ suggestions. If someone provides a lead—an idea or referral name—follow up on it, especially if the person has agreed to “pave the way” for you by making an introductory call. You aren’t obligated to accept a position from a referral, but you are expected to follow up. You’re also expected to report back to your original contact to say thanks. During that call, you can recount your progress and ask for additional leads.

## Make Networking a Priority

If you’re in the throes of a job search, your first priority should be networking. Create a list of people you know and ask them for ideas, referrals and contacts. Generate a buzz about your abilities and your job search, and before you know it, people will be calling you for networking ideas. After you’ve accepted a job, it’s easy to heave a sigh of relief and assume your networking days are over—at least until your next job search. Think again. Every contact you make while working is a potential jewel in your networking crown.



## **Keep Track of your Contacts — and Keep Up with Them**

That means if you landed the job of your dreams, let networking contacts know that your search has ended and where you're working, and thank them for their assistance. Add their names to your business holiday card list. Call contacts occasionally to see how they're doing with no agenda other than keeping in touch. Let them know what you're up to and do a little self-promotion. This isn't the time to complain or gossip. Maybe there's something they need that you can help them with. Visualize yourself building a large bank of networking good will and making regular deposits.

## **Don't Wait Until you're Desperate to Network**

Networking is a lot like flossing your teeth. For it to do you any good, you have to do it regularly. Keep your network alive and well so that if and when there's a change in the wind, you're ready for it. It takes time to rev up your network's engine if it's been cold or idle for too long. You want to keep it humming so you can quickly shift into high gear. Today's job market is volatile and employees are changing jobs often; one of them could be your boss. You may need your network sooner rather than later.

Look for opportunities others might miss. Networking isn't just about finding people who can help you locate a job. Sometimes the most valuable networking you can do is within your company. Perhaps your employer sponsors a charity ball. Other employees might consider this a real groaner, but it's a great opportunity to meet senior managers and their spouses and to support a cause the company considers worthy. Or perhaps a senior executive from your firm is giving a luncheon speech to a local organization. Not only can you learn from this presentation, but you'll be providing him or her with support and building a bond for the future. You'll also be adding new contacts to your network.

## **Ask Permission to Use a Name**

Suppose you visited a contact to conduct an information interview—a short, friendly question-and-answer session designed to help you learn more about a profession or company. Your contact gives you the names of several referrals. Before you leave, ask permission to use your contact's name as the original source. He or she may want to contact the referrals

first, which will make your calls proceed more smoothly. But the main reason for asking permission is courtesy. When you mention names, you're capitalizing on your contact's rank and reputation within the business world, so you want to make sure you have his or her knowledge and approval.

### **Never Underestimate the Power of a Thank-you Note**

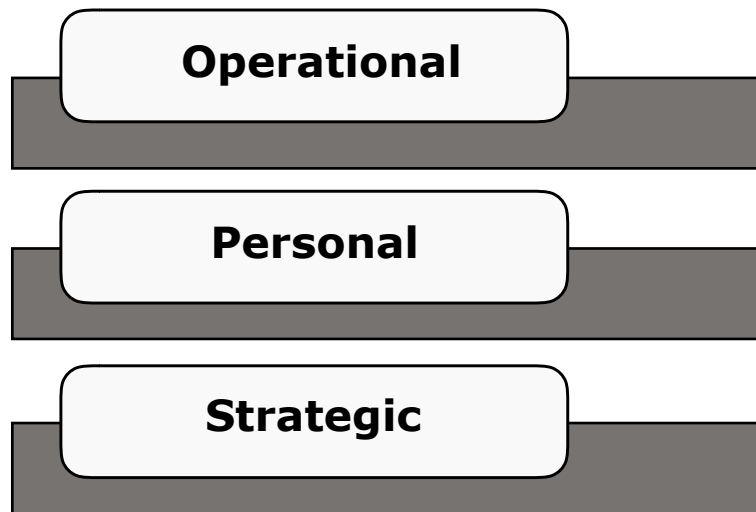
If a busy executive takes time to meet you and assist with your job quest, acknowledge the help you receive with a handwritten note. This lets him or her know that you understand and appreciate the his or her effort and contribution. It also allows you to provide a short progress report and feedback about the referrals. Last but not least, it paves the way for future contact.

Remember that you're never too old or successful to network.

Don't think that executives or others in authority positions are uninterested or unreachable. Many senior executives are delighted to be contacted and want to share the knowledge they've acquired over the years. Because of their seniority, they may be isolated and appreciate the chance to impart wisdom or learn something new from a prospective graduate. And when you reach a pinnacle of your own career, remember to keep your network fresh and alive. It's fun, plus you never know when it may come in handy.

## **11.5 Three important types of Business Networks**

There are three types of networks important in business: operational, personal and strategic. While a lot of managers excel at building and using their operational network, they often overlook their personal and strategic networks.



Operational networking involves cultivating the relationships with people you need to accomplish your job. This may mean working closely with your Human Resources manager to make sure you hire the right people or developing relationships within other departments to win support for your initiatives. “This is the network you need to have to basically get things done. It’s good relationships with the people in your critical path, your customers, your suppliers, your team members,” Most people master this skill or they wouldn’t be in management. But some managers don’t reach out widely enough to build all the relationships they need longer term or they miss key changes in overall company priorities because they get bogged down in the day-to-day functions of their jobs.

Personal networking is an afterthought for many busy managers. When you work 60-80 hour weeks, the easiest thing to eliminate from your schedule is your alumni meeting, the annual golf fundraiser and your scuba diving course. But these networks allow you to meet a diverse group of like-minded professionals. They also are a way to develop important social skills for many professionals and may be the first place you turn when you start thinking about changing careers. “These are professional contacts that are discretionary, that are not as closely tied to the immediate job (so) that you can neglect or even abandon and still get your work done today. But these are the contacts that allow you to continue to develop professionally, to benchmark yourself with peers outside, to remain a bit on the cutting edge of your profession. These are the networks that people often use when they want to make a career move,”.



Strategic networking is the toughest but most essential if managers want to become business leaders. Contact with peers and with senior executives in your field is vital and she encourages managers to look beyond their industry as well. This allows managers to share ideas about best practices in management, learn new approaches and keep close tabs on developments in business and technology. It helps managers to see the bigger picture and create their own visionary approach. “How do you link your contacts outside the firm (and) your contacts inside in order to add value, to leverage the knowledge and the ideas that you get outside to make things happen inside?” These are the networks that make a huge different in leadership. This is where strategic ideas come into play. This is what allows people to line up stakeholders and, frankly, this is the area where most people have serious gaps.”

## 11.6 Activities

1. The Business networking advantages have been discussed in this chapter. Browse online and research two corporate blogs which have increased the networking power of these respective organizations.

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2. Browse and research two more techniques related to looking for opportunities in networking that are novel and uncommon in nature

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## 11.7 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that Networking is building and developing mutually beneficial relationships. It is extremely essential as it is a connection to opportunities for skill development, work experience, business, your next job and future promotion. Networking thus is an essential tool for career entry and career management throughout our lives. From the context of seeking jobs over half of all jobs are found through networking channels. Networking provides the information for decision- making, opportunity sourcing and applications and is a connection to opportunities for skill development, work experience, business, your next job and future promotion.

One of the first advantages of business networking is that it allows us to meet new people. While it is a great way to increase our profiles or business awareness, not all of these people will necessarily turn into new customers or sales leads; however, they can help to introduce us to other business opportunities further down the line. Meeting other professionals provides a fresh forum for people from different professional backgrounds to exchange ideas.

### **What it is Networking?**

- Building strong, lasting relationships
- Using existing skills in focused way
- Making the most of arranged and chance meetings
- Following up your contacts
- Being prepared to play the long game

### **What it Isn't**

- Meeting one-off contacts who get you something
- A drawer full of business cards
- Making direct approaches with a request for jobs

From the context of the benefits of Business Networking we have discussed that it is process of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with other business people and potential clients and/or customers, it's quite simply the art of relationship-building; although this type of networking is a little more focused and deliberate than the kinds of networking one does

in other aspects of life. Probably the most important benefit of networking is making a lasting impression, networking is less about meeting new people than having them remember you after the fact. In spite of the growing use of technology and the Internet, people still do business with people.

**Networking has at least 4 major benefits:**

- i. It will help increase your sales, through referrals.
- ii. It will help you learn things that you need to know to manage and grow your business.
- iii. It will help you find people that you can buy goods and services from.
- iv. It can help stimulate your creativity about new things or approaches for your business.

Some of the places which help people network are:

- i. Professional bodies
- ii. Industry/sector events (e.g. branch events, training courses)
- iii. Course-organized external input (e.g. guest lecturers, industry experts)
- iv. On campus careers events – fairs, presentations, drop-ins

The following are some of the important Networking essentials discussed in the particular chapter:

Treat networking like a game: Networking is a time-honored tradition that most people apply every day without knowing it. View it as making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, even as making friends. Networking is based on the premise that we're all humans and need each other. This is as true in business as it is in other areas of your life. Realize that you, too, have something to offer: When you're just starting out in a career, it's easy to be intimidated by the concept of networking. After all, you're a new graduate and your knowledge of



business may be limited, and your contacts are likely to be already established professionally.

Honor the networking code: Another way to say this is “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” If you want to have your phone calls returned, return phone calls. If you want help with your career, you must be willing to help others.

Make networking a priority: If you’re in the throes of a job search, your first priority should be networking. Create a list of people you know and ask them for ideas, referrals and contacts. Generate a buzz about your abilities and your job search, and before you know it, people will be calling you for networking ideas.

Ask permission to use a name: Suppose you visited a contact to conduct an information interview—a short, friendly question-and-answer session designed to help you learn more about a profession or company. Your contact gives you the names of several referrals. Before you leave, ask permission to use your contact’s name as the original source. Never underestimate the power of a thank-you note: If a busy executive takes time to meet you and assist with your job quest, acknowledge the help you receive with a handwritten note.

Three important types of Business Networks: There are three types of networks important in business: operational, personal and strategic. While a lot of managers excel at building and using their operational network, they often overlook their personal and strategic networks.

Operational networking involves cultivating the relationships with people you need to accomplish your job. This may mean working closely with your Human Resources manager to make sure you hire the right people or developing relationships within other departments to win support for your initiatives. “This is the network you need to have to basically get things done.

Personal networking is an afterthought for many busy managers. When you work 60-80 hour weeks, the easiest thing to eliminate from your schedule is your alumni meeting, the annual golf fundraiser and your scuba diving course. But these networks allow you to meet a diverse group of like-minded professionals.

Strategic networking is the toughest but most essential if managers want to become business leaders. Contact with peers and with senior executives in your field is vital and she encourages managers to look beyond their industry as well. This allows managers to share ideas about best practices in management, learn new approaches and keep close tabs on developments in business and technology.

## 11.8 Self-assessment questions

1. In the past business networking was usually done in-person; however, today many people also use the \_\_\_\_\_ as another means of widening their professional networks.
  - a. Internet
  - b. PR
  - c. Strategy
  - d. None of them
2. Which of the below given provides a fresh forum for people from different professional backgrounds to exchange ideas?
  - a. Avoiding other professionals
  - b. Meeting other professionals
  - c. Either a or
  - d. Arguing with other professionals
3. Business networking is the process of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with other business people and potential clients and/or customers, it's quite simply -
  - a. The art of relationship-building
  - b. The art of logic-building
  - c. The science of problem-solving
  - d. Either b or c
4. Probably the most important benefit of networking is making a lasting impression, networking is less about meeting new people than having them remember you after the fact. In spite of the growing use of technology and the Internet, people still do business with people.
  - a. True
  - b. False

5. Networking is the best way to meet new people and build those relationships that turn into repeat sales and referrals, it's a long-term business development strategy. The key to good business networking is the establishment of -
- a. A mutually beneficial relationship
  - b. A mutually independent relationship
  - c. A Win-Lose relationship
  - d. A Lose-Win relationship
6. A rating system is often developed and selected criteria are employed during the interview. As a candidate, you should be prepared to answer the questions and statements thoroughly. In this context candidates can prepare for responses using -
- a. The Situation – Action – Result model
  - b. The Specific – Action – Result model
  - c. The Situation – Action – Section model
  - d. The Situation – Access – Result model
7. Networking is a time-honored tradition that most people apply every day without knowing it. View it as making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, even as making friends. Networking is based on the premise that we're all humans and we do not need each other.
- a. True
  - b. False
8. Networking is a lot like \_\_\_\_\_. For it to do you any good, you have to do it regularly. Keep your network alive and well so that if and when there's a change in the wind, you're ready for it.
- a. None of them
  - b. Wearing clean clothing
  - c. A firm handshake
  - d. Flossing your teeth

9. Which kind of networking involves cultivating the relationships with people you need to accomplish your job. This may mean working closely with your Human Resources manager to make sure you hire the right people or developing relationships within other departments to win support for your initiatives.
- a. Operational networking
  - b. Strategic networking
  - c. Personal networking
  - d. Reflective networking
10. Which kind of networking is the considered the toughest but is most essential if managers want to become business leaders. Contact with peers and with senior executives in your field is vital and she encourages managers to look beyond their industry as well?
- a. Operational networking
  - b. Strategic networking
  - c. Personal networking
  - d. Reflective networking

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture](#)

## Chapter 12

# Developing Avenues for Effective Business Networking

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- The important principles for effective business networking
- The categories of networking situations, events and methods
- Essential Avenues for Networking
- Attributes of a skillful networking professional

### Structure:

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Important Principles for Effective Business Networking
- 12.3 Essential Networking Checklist
- 12.4 Categories of Networking Situations, Events and Methods
- 12.5 Attributes of a Skillful Networking Professional
- 12.6 Avoiding Networking Pitfalls
- 12.7 Activities
- 12.8 Summary
- 12.9 Self-Assessment Questions

## 12.1 Introduction

Business networking is an effective low-cost marketing method for developing sales opportunities and contacts, based on referrals and introductions - either face-to-face at meetings and gatherings, or by other contact methods such as phone, email, and increasingly social and business networking websites. A business network of contacts is both a route to market for you, and a marketing method. Business networking offers a way to reach decision-makers which might otherwise be very difficult to engage with using conventional advertising methods. In addition, business networking brings with it the added advantage of recommendation and personal introduction, which are always very helpful for developing business opportunities.

Why are some people more successful in life and in business? Why do they seem to get better deals, more sales, better promotions, or just live a better life? This can be particularly frustrating if you believe that you are better qualified or have a better product. Some may just dismiss this success and explain it as luck or result of being in the right place at the right time. If we were to delve into these things a little deeper we would discover that most of these highly successful people are just ordinary people just like you and me – who happen to possess highly refined networking skills. These ordinary people achieve brilliant results as they team up with other ordinary people to achieve more than they could by themselves.





Successful people surround themselves with a well-developed, sophisticated support network that they use to get everything from relevant information, to the right supplier, getting the right employee, to being referred to the right clients. Networking is essential for success in every area of your life. Consider it as making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, even as making friends. Networking is based on the premise that we're all humans and need each other. This is as true in business as it is in other areas of your life. If someone provides a lead—an idea or referral name—follow up on it, especially if the person has agreed to “pave the way” for you by making an introductory call. You aren't obligated to accept a position from a referral, but you are expected to follow up. You're also expected to report back to your original contact to say thanks. During that call, you can recount your progress and ask for additional leads.

You may need to ask people for ideas or referrals about getting a job, but people will gladly reciprocate because they know that at some point, they may need to call on you for something. At that point, whether the help is for them or someone else, they'll expect you to reciprocate. It's that simple. You lob the ball over the net, and it comes back to you. Networking is all about communicating—making phone calls, conducting information interviews in person or writing letters—to learn if your contacts can refer you to anyone who might want to hire someone with your skills.

## 12.2 Important principles for effective business networking

### **Be Different and Ambitious**

If there is no special difference between you and other networkers, then people have no reason whatsoever to choose to work with you. Look again at how you describe your business offering (or yourself as a person) - what's different or special about it (or you) compared with all the others? If there is no difference, you must find a way to create one. Sometimes this is merely a matter of redefining or placing different emphasis on what you already are and already do. This difference must be something that plenty of people will find appealing; ideally irresistible. If you are struggling to find a difference or market advantage, look at your competitors and talk to your customers, and discover what's missing and what can be dramatically improved out there. There is always at least one thing, usually more - perhaps you can bundle two or three powerful market advantages together.

This difference needs to shine out in your elevator speech, and be echoed in your subsequent discussions whenever initial interest develops towards supplying something, or putting a collaborative project together. Aim high and big when thinking about and expressing yourself and your aims. Be realistic of course, but aim to be the best and to lead in some way, in whatever specialisms and market-place you operate. Your aims should also suggest what you are seeking from business networking - otherwise, there's no reason for you to be networking. Business networking is not simply finding customers in one-to-one meetings and connections; it's building a strong network, helpful for your aims. Accordingly project yourself as a great networker, as well as being a great supplier or specialist. Business networkers want to work with other networkers who aim high, who have great ambitions; people who see what can be, not merely what is; and who strive for change and improvement. These attitudes make things happen.

When you meet like-minded networkers with these attitudes, your network will grow because they'll see you can make things happen too.

### **Help Others – Give before you Receive**

Always prioritize helping and giving to others ahead of taking and receiving for yourself. You must give in order to receive. Be helpful to others and you will be helped in return. Networks of people are highly complex - often it is not possible to see exactly how and why they are working for you, so you must trust that goodness is rewarded, even if the process is hidden and the effect takes a while. Use the principle of 'what goes around comes around'. You could think of this as Karma in business. A possible explanation of how Karma (or whatever you call it) produces positive outcomes is found in the rule of 'cause and effect', or the scientific law (loosely speaking) that 'every action has an equal reaction'. Good deeds and helpfulness tend to produce positive effects. They are usually remembered and often repaid. The giver builds reputation and trust. Referrals tend to result. Imagine yourself having lots of personal connections like this. You become known as a helpful person. Word about you spreads, and your reputation grows.



People who give are seen to have strength to give. Followers gravitate to strong giving people. Helping others extends far beyond your personal specialism or line of work. Networking is about working within a system (of people) enabling relevant high quality introductions and cooperations, which get great results for the participants. These enabling capabilities transcend personal specialisms.

### **Keep your Integrity - Build Trust and Reputation**

Always keep your integrity, sometimes a situation arises which tempts us to do the wrong thing, causing harm or upset that could have been avoided. Making such a mistake can damage personal integrity. We are all human; mistakes happen. If you do make a mistake or wrong decision - whether it significantly undermines your integrity or not - always admit it and apologize. Failing to apologize for wrong-doing often damages a person's integrity and reputation far more than the original misjudgment itself. We only need to think of how we view people in high and public authority, notably politicians, when they fail to take responsibility and admit their mistakes. Some integrity is lost. Do it a few times and all integrity is lost.

People of low integrity sooner or later find that the only friends they have left are other people of low integrity. Significantly, integrity is vital for trust to develop. Trust is simply not possible without integrity. Building trust is essential for growing a strong business network. Lack of trust prevents successful business networking. Certain connections are absolutely impossible to make until a very high level of trust is established. Empathy and effective listening greatly assist the process of building trust. These qualities require you to be genuinely interested in others; to listen properly, and to reflect back meaningfully and helpfully.

You will probably know a few very solid people who always keep their commitments, and who never make a commitment which they cannot keep. Aim to be like this. Reliability and dependability are highly valued qualities in relationships, especially relationships involving referrals and recommendations, because someone's reputation is at stake. The words 'reliable' and 'dependable' do not mean that you are always available to everyone. These words mean simply that when you say you will do something you will do it.

### **Seek Relevant Groups and Connections**

In this context it is necessary to identify and target groups and connections which are relevant to your aims and capabilities. Relevance can be according to several different things, for example:

- Geography
- Size
- Sector
- Social grouping (e.g., ethnic, gender, age, seniority, etc.)
- Political or religious grouping
- Trade or society grouping
- Academic or technical grouping
- Specifically organized networking/referrals groups
- Other common interest (e.g., social enterprise, environmental, Trade, Fair etc.)

The more relevant your targeting of groups and contacts, then more useful your meetings and referrals will be. Other professional people can be important networking contacts. Direct your targeting beyond obvious business people and obvious networking groups, but be mindful of the

nature of the group, and conduct yourself appropriately. Consider how different groups and networks operate, online and elsewhere. Some networking commentators/writers refer to 'hard contact' and 'soft contact' networking groups (and to 'hard contacts' and 'soft contacts'). See the definitions below in networking situations. Essentially these 'hard' and 'soft' terms differentiate between groups where there is: clear agreement and purpose to produce business referrals for each other, and where a group has no significant aim or expectation of referring business. Be aware of the group's needs, expectations, rules (official and unofficial), and membership composition (formal or entirely random), and adapt your style and methods accordingly.





Certain non-business professional people can be hugely influential in networks, and greatly trusted because of their neutrality and professional standing - educators and scientists, for example and Journalists, surgeons, and magistrates, also. There are many others. It is not easy to make connections with these people through conventional business networking, but remember that a network is not only made of business-people, and be awake to these non-commercial connections when the chance comes. If you find that your networking is producing very low opportunities for follow up and referral, try to improve your targeting. Find different groups and methods, in other words. A true business network is a connected system of people within which referrals and opportunities can be passed through several connections, or circulated to all those connected. Networking thus can extend far beyond simply having lots of random one-to-one meetings. A given number of people who are connected for a reason will generally be more productive than the same number of random connections. So don't go aimlessly after every networking opportunity which comes your way; instead try to find networks which already function well or have the potential to do so; and consider and decide which sort of groups and contacts will be most helpful for your aims and capabilities - ideally remembering that you need to be able to help them, as well as they should be able to help you.

Within most networks people tend to have a few close and trusted connections. Choose these, your most trusted and closest associates, very carefully. Reputations are built according to your chosen contacts, in addition to how you yourself behave. So focus your efforts on groups and connections of integrity, as well as relevance. You can identify your target group criteria in your networking strategy or plan, explained next.

### 12.3 Essential networking checklist

- Understand and use facilitative questioning - The techniques use careful questions to help people clarify their choices and decisions easier. It's a powerful ethos - applicable widely beyond selling.
- Develop a concise and impressive description of who you are and what you do. Aim high. Think Big.
- Develop a description of yourself and what you do as a written statement, and as a verbal statement (an 'elevator speech' or 'elevator

pitch' - so called because it makes a successful impact in the time you share an elevator with someone who asks: "What do you do?").

- Develop slightly different descriptions of yourself for different situations - so that you are as relevant as possible. As you work with these descriptions or 'elevator speeches', you will find that a series of mix-and-match phrases take shape. Continue to refine and adapt these statements. Get feedback from people, and notice what works best, for different situations.
- Be different to everyone else - especially your competitors.
- Try to see all your competitors as potential allies. There is often not much difference - just a frame of mind. This can be very significant if you are spending a lot of time looking over your shoulder at what your competitors are doing, and not concentrating on building your own business.
- Direct all your efforts to growing your own positive activities, and resist losing valuable energy and time and resources combating or worrying about the apparent successes or advantages of others.
- Be positive. Use positive language. Smile. See the good in people. Be known as a really positive person. It rubs off on others and people will warm to you for being so.
- Keep your emotional criticisms and personal hang-ups about others to yourself. If you hear someone being negative about another person, you will often wonder, "I wonder if he/she says that sort of thing about me too?"
- Saying negative things at the expense of another person brings everyone down.
- Be passionate and enthusiastic, but not emotional and subjective. Avoid personalizing situations. Remain objective.
- Seek feedback and criticism about yourself and your ideas from others. It is the most valuable market research you can obtain - and it's totally free.

- Be tolerant, patient, and calm. Particularly when others are agitated. Followers gather around calm people.
- Always carry a pen. Always carry a diary. Always carry your business cards.
- Keep fit, or get fit, and then keep fit. Success and followers tend to gravitate towards people who take care of their bodies, as well as their thoughts and actions.
- As soon as you can, create or have built a clean and clear website for yourself or your business. It is the ultimate universal calling card, brochure, and CV, all rolled into one, and perpetually available.
- Only promise or offer what you can fully deliver and follow up. Always aim to under-promise, and then over-deliver.
- Take great care with quick electronic messages (texts, messages, emails, etc.) - you will be amazed at how many misunderstandings and breakdowns in relationships occur because a message is wrongly interpreted. Check and read twice everything you send.
- Always follow up everything that you say you will do, however small the suggestion.
- If you accept a referral or introduction to someone, always follow it through.
- Say "Thank you" to people whenever the opportunity arises - especially to people who get taken for granted a lot.
- Be interested in all people. Invest your time, attention and genuine understanding in them.
- Understand what empathy really means, and practice it. Look people in the eyes. Listen with your eyes. This is about communicating at a deeper empathic level than business folk normally employ. Very many business discussions are superficial - like a game or a set of dance steps; instead make a determined effort to concentrate and care about the other person. Listen properly.



- Find reasons to give positive feedback to people - give and mean it.
- Stand up for what's right and protect less strong people from wrong, especially where you see bullying, cruelty, discrimination, meanness, etc. You will hear it everywhere when you step back and out of the crowd.
- Networking is about building a wide and relevant network of meaningful contacts - not just having lots of one-to-one meetings. Big strongly connected networks inevitably capture more opportunities than networks with lots of holes and weak connections.
- Choose your most trusted and closest associates very carefully - reputations are built according to the company you keep, beyond how you yourself behave.
- Target groups and connections that are relevant - which fit your purposes, and you fit theirs.
- Don't waste your time on groups and connections that lack integrity or relevance.
- Recommendations reflect powerfully on the recommender, therefore: Recommend only those people you are confident will reflect well on you, and always ensure you reflect brilliantly and memorably on anyone who recommends you.
- Seek and take opportunities to make a positive difference towards a positive aim (of anyone's) wherever you can - even if some of these opportunities are unpaid and unrewarded in conventional terms. You will learn a lot, create new opportunities for yourself, and develop a reputation for producing good results out of nothing. This is a powerful personal characteristic which people find completely irresistible.
- Be clear and realistic about what you want when you are asked. Have a plan.
- Research the customs and expectations of foreign cultures before networking with foreign business-people. What is considered normal in ! your own part of the world could be quite inappropriate in another.

## 12.4 Categories of Networking Situations, Events and Methods

There are many types of networking situations and methods. Most people tend to think only of the best known business networking clubs and websites, but business networking can be done virtually anywhere that you find business-people relevant to your aims and capabilities. This is important when you remember that other professional people outside of the business community can also be very helpful in networking (for example, scientists, lecturers, educators, councilors, etc.) Understand the nature of different groups and how they operate - online and physical 'real world' - their purposes, rules (official and unofficial) and compositions (the types of people in the groups and their aims, needs, expectations, etc.).

Some commentators/writers refer to 'hard contact' and 'soft contact' networking groups, and to the 'hard contacts', and 'soft contacts' within such groups. In the context of networking these 'hard' and 'soft' contact meanings are broadly as follows (but note the warning below the definitions):



**'Hard contacts' (or a 'hard contact' group/network)** - refers to a networking group specifically designed to produce referrals among group members, who may be (according to certain definitions) the only representatives of their particular service/offering in the group. This is usually a group of business people who meet regularly for the purposes of presenting their offerings to the group and who undertake to refer sales prospects to each other. Often such groups are organized under the rules/structure/franchise of an over-arching 'business networking' body or corporation. Aside from this quite specific description, 'hard contact' terminology may be used more generally in referring to a group/network/person with whom a specific business referral expectation/relationship exists, i.e., the main or substantial reason for the relationship is the mutual referral of potential business opportunities/prospects.

**'Soft contacts' (or a 'soft contact' group/network)** - refers to any group or network of people offering possibilities for business networking, sales referrals, introductions, job openings, business opportunities, etc. This can be physical groupings which meet face-to-face (for example, trade associations, interest groups, family and friends, professional institutes, societies and clubs, etc.) or virtual groups which are organized via the internet (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.). In this context, 'soft contacts', and 'soft contact networks' may be organized in extremely varied ways, with little or no expectation/need of business referral activity, and consequently the sales/business person is responsible for assessing and defining how best to approach and develop networking opportunities within each group according to the situation.

Here are some of the main examples of situations and methods suitable for business networking, including specially organized business networking events, meetings, activities and systems. Many of these are not organized networking activities. Many of these networking situations are simply opportunities to meet people relevant to your aims, when your initiative and creativity can turn vague potential into worthwhile networking. For all networking opportunities, your success is dependent on the relevance of the situation and the quality and energy of your involvement. Brief pointers and tips are shown alongside each networking opportunity.

**Conferences:** Conferences are full of people with common interests. Coffee breaks are an ideal time to make introductions.

**Exhibitions:** Exhibitions are obviously full of business people with a common interest. Most exhibitions rightly do not like visitors to canvass the exhibitors, but there are plenty of other situations to meet people and network.

**Seminars:** Seminars attract business people of all sorts. Again there are usually coffee breaks which are ideal for making introductions and getting to know people.

**Training courses:** Open training courses are excellent for meeting other business people. Many will encourage informal networking among delegates because this adds value to the quality of the event; certain types of training bring people together in work teams, making it extremely easy to get to know all attendees very well.

**Chambers of Trade or Commerce:** All towns have at least one 'chamber of commerce', specifically to bring local business-people together. Many run networking events and/or other meetings and activities which are ideal for networking.

**Breakfast networking clubs:** Several companies run regular breakfast networking clubs as their primary business. Other companies will run one-off events to connect with the local business community. These purpose-designed events obviously provide a good opportunity to engage with other business people.

**Business networking websites:** Since the development of interactive website technology in the late 1990s there are increasing numbers of online business networking organizations. Each has its own culture and systems. Some are vast, covering all types of business imaginable, for example linkedin.com. Others are industry or trade specific, and some are geographically focused. All can be found quickly and easily by searching the web.

**Website forums:** Website forums exist for every subject you can think of. Each offers a networking opportunity for the subject matter concerned.

**Website user groups:** User groups are a further variation of groups found online. User groups are typically within the websites of major internet corporations such as Google and Yahoo. Many user groups are highly

specialized, and by implication, internet networking is second-nature to most of these people.

**Professional body websites:** Every profession and trade is represented and connected by at least one official body, which tends to act on behalf of its members, and also offers various opportunities for outsiders to get involved and make helpful connections.

**Interactive special interest websites:** Networking has been made much easier with the advent of interactive membership websites. When you have identified your target groups, there will be a specialist membership website somewhere which represents and brings them together.

**Community social websites:** Facebook is the obvious example. There are many others. Culture and demographic profile are different in each. Some of these websites and memberships are vast. Bigger than countries. This is because of the social aspect, which might initially be appealing, but making a business impact can be very challenging due to the scale of these operations.

**Online/mobile communications applications:** Twitter is the obvious example. New internet platforms like these can grow from nothing to be hugely popular social connection systems in just a few months. Business people can use them to good effect if approached in a very dedicated and technically informed way. Otherwise they can become big time-wasters, so beware.

**Local networking events:** Anyone can set up a networking event, so you can find isolated or more permanent networking operations cropping up at a town near you.

**Speed networking events:** Speed networking is a highly structured type of networking event, in which an organizer (there are several, of varying type and quality) coordinates quick introductions among a group of typically between 20-40 people. The concept is similar, and probably modeled on speed-dating formats.

**Societies and associations:** Every specialist subject has its own society or association. These organizations offer various ways to meet their members.

**Institutes for industries:** Every industry has its own institute or similar. Various events and methods generally exist by which outsiders can engage with the institute's membership.

**Lectures and talks:** Lectures and talks occur widely, held or promoted by various organizations for all sorts of purposes. Obviously a lecture/talk will attract a common grouping of people interested in the subject concerned.

**Universities and colleges:** Universities and colleges are like little towns in their own right. Some are like quite big towns. They are also now run like big businesses. These communities contain a vast number of very interesting people, many of whom are very relevant to business. For the past twenty years or so, these big educational establishments have been increasingly keen to engage with business people of all sorts. It's a matter of talking to them and discovering what opportunities exist for getting involved.

**Hospitality events:** Corporate hospitality events - a rarer thing in modern times - are typically organized by big corporations to get to know their suppliers and customers better. If you find yourself involved in one of these it will present some of the best conditions for business networking that you will ever experience. Fill your boots, as they say.

**Shareholders meetings:** If you have company shares, especially in a big corporation, you will tend to meet a lot of business people at shareholder gatherings. Many shareholders do not invest just for financial reasons - many invest because they have an enthusiasm for the company's technology or culture, which in some cases can offer a relevant target group for your business networking aims.

**Annual General Meetings:** AGMs are by their nature a regular occasion offered by corporations and membership organizations to engage with its members. Some are very formal and tightly run with little networking opportunities, but others are more sociable affairs, in which case if the group is relevant to your aims, and you can become a member it's worth consideration.

**Conventions:** Conventions are organized for all sorts of special interest groups. If the group is relevant to your aims in any way, then their convention could offer excellent networking opportunities.



**Pressure groups:** Pressure group meetings are strongly connected and usually attended by very active and energized people. If the subject is relevant to your aims there will be opportunities to meet some interesting people at this sort of event. These situations often also have scope for volunteering and becoming involved at a strategic level.

**Public meetings:** Public meetings are held for all sorts of reasons, for example local planning consultations; presentation of local development plans. These events attract business people, especially if the subject relates to commerce, as many will do. At meetings like these, most attendees sit and listen for quite a while, and consequently are ready for conversation during breaks and at the close of the meeting.

**Product launches:** Product launches invariably offer at least one situation when attendees stand and mingle together drinking tea/coffee. Some have receptions afterwards. If you are able to attend one of these events where the subject is relevant to your aims, then you will find opportunities to network. The same applies to book launches and similar publicity events.



**Opening ceremonies:** Opening ceremonies, especially for notable new buildings, attract many local business people and dignitaries. If the community concerned is relevant to your aims this sort of event can

provide useful networking opportunities. The same applies to unveiling ceremonies, especially where there is a reception afterwards.

**Festivals and shows:** Festivals are organized for many interests, and naturally attract a large group of people with related involvement, including business-people. Agricultural and county shows are a further example. If the subject is relevant, there'll be networking potential.

**Foreign trade visits:** Local chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, and similar business bodies routinely organize trade missions and gatherings to promote international trade for their region and/or members. Such activities offer excellent networking scope.

**Sports clubs:** Lots of business people enjoy sport, and enjoy mixing sport with business. Golf is the stereotypical example for sports club networking, although all sports, and other special interest clubs, tend to have many business people in their membership. If the group is relevant to your aims and you enjoy the activity concerned, consider becoming a member yourself.

**Trains, boats, planes, etc.:** Business-people tend to travel around a bit. When you are travelling too, keep your eyes and ears open and be ready to start conversation. Delays are particularly useful for making introductions. So are long plane and train journeys when you could be sat next to another business person for several hours. Make the most of these opportunities.

## 12.5 Attributes of a Skillful networking professional

Networking these days is crucial for getting everything from new clients, new employees, jobs, keeping abreast of industry trends, to getting the right information. Networking is more than just shaking hands and passing out business cards. Some of the key attributes of a Skillful networking professional are:

1. **Follows up on referrals:** The No. 1 trait of successful networkers. If you present an opportunity, whether it's a simple piece of information, a special contact or a qualified business referral, to someone who consistently fails to follow up successfully, it's no secret that you'll eventually stop wasting your time with this person.



2. **Positive attitude:** A consistently negative attitude makes people dislike being around you and drives away referrals. Positive business professionals are like magnets. Others want to be around them and will send their friends, family and associates to them.
3. **Enthusiastic:** It's been said that the best sales characteristic is enthusiasm. To be respected within our networks, we at least need to sell ourselves with enthusiasm. Once we've done an effective job of selling ourselves, we'll be able to reap the reward of seeing our contacts sell us to others!
4. **Trustworthy:** When you refer one person to another, you're putting your reputation on the line. You have to be able to trust your referral partner and be trusted in return. Neither you nor anyone else will refer a contact or valuable information to someone who can't be trusted to handle it well.
5. **Good listening skills:** Our success as networkers depends on how well we can listen and learn. The faster you and your networking partner learn what you need to know about each other, the faster you'll establish a valuable relationship. Communicate well, and listen well.
6. **Network always:** Master networkers are never off duty. Networking is so natural to them that they can be found networking in the grocery store line, at the doctor's office, at a party, as well as at the chamber mixers and networking meetings.
7. **Thank people:** Expressing gratitude to business associates and clients is just another building block in the cultivation of relationships that will lead to increased referrals. People like to refer others to business professionals that go above and beyond. Thanking others at every opportunity will help you stand out from the crowd.
8. **Enjoy helping:** Helping others can be done in a variety of ways, from literally showing up to help with an office move to clipping a helpful and interesting article and mailing it to an associate or client. Master networkers keep their eyes and ears open for opportunities to advance other people's interests whenever they can.

## 12.6 Avoiding Networking Pitfalls

1. Moving from networking group to networking group: constantly dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of referrals they get from each.
2. **Talking more than listening:** Very often you meet someone who talks on and on about their services, what they can provide for you, how they can help you increase your bottom line and so on and doesn't seem genuinely interested in your business. This is another pitfall in networking. A skilled networker will want to learn all about you, what your professional goals are, and how they can play a part in helping you accomplish those goals.



3. **Networks at inappropriate opportunities/events:** There's something to be said about constantly looking for an opportunity to develop a business relationship, but a serious networker is always aware of how that networking comes across. The key to networking at all times is to do it in a way that's appropriate. While it can be entirely appropriate to begin a relationship at such an event as a wedding or a funeral, going around looking for an opportunity to pass out your business cards isn't the right way to do that.

## 12.7 Activities

1. Discussed in this chapter are four important principles for effective business networking. Browse online and research the two more important principles for effective business networking.

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2. Browse and research the benefits and drawbacks related to 'Soft contacts' in Networking from the business context

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## 12.8 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that Business networking is an effective low-cost marketing method for developing sales opportunities and contacts, based on referrals and introductions - either face-to-face at meetings and gatherings, or by other contact methods such as phone, email, and increasingly social and business networking websites. A business network of contacts is both a route to market for you, and a marketing method. Business networking offers a way to reach decision-makers which might otherwise be very difficult to engage with using conventional advertising methods.

Successful people surround themselves with a well-developed, sophisticated support network that they use to get everything from relevant information, to the right supplier, getting the right employee, to being referred to the right clients. Networking is essential for success in every area of your life.

Consider it as making contacts, creating relationships, finding out about essentials, even as making friends. Networking is based on the premise that we're all humans and need each other.

Some of the important principles for effective business networking that were discussed are:

**Be different and ambitious:** The sales training and marketing sections contain lots of guidance about developing or refining your offering so that it is strongly differentiated from what is already available in the market-place, whatever your market-place is.

**Help others:** Give before you receive: Always priorities helping and giving to others ahead of taking and receiving for yourself. You must give in order to receive. Be helpful to others and you will be helped in return.

**Keep your integrity:** Build trust and reputation: Always keep your integrity, sometimes a situation arises which tempts us to do the wrong thing, causing harm or upset that could have been avoided. Making such a mistake can damage personal integrity.

## Seek Relevant Groups and Connections

In this context it is necessary to identify and target groups and connections which are relevant to your aims and capabilities. Relevance can be according to several different things, for example:

- Geography
- Size
- Sector
- Social grouping (e.g., ethnic, gender, age, seniority, etc.)
- Political or religious grouping
- Trade or society grouping

Here we have discussed that certain non-business professional people can be hugely influential in networks, and greatly trusted because of their neutrality and professional standing - educators and scientists, for example and journalists, surgeons, and magistrates, also. There are many others. It is not easy to make connections with these people through conventional business networking, but remember that a network is not only made of business-people, and be awake to these non-commercial connections when the chance comes. If you find that your networking is producing very low opportunities for follow up and referral, try to improve your targeting.

## Essential Networking Checklist

- a. Understand and use facilitative questioning
- b. Develop a concise and impressive description of who you are and what you do. Aim high. Think Big.
- c. Develop a description of yourself and what you do as a written statement, and as a verbal statement
- d. Develop slightly different descriptions of yourself for different situations
- e. Be different to everyone else - especially your competitors.
- f. Try to see all your competitors as potential allies. There is often not! much difference

- g. Always follow up everything that you say you will do, however small the suggestion.
- h. If you accept a referral or introduction to someone, always follow it through.
- i. Say "Thank you" to people whenever the opportunity arises - especially to people who get taken for granted a lot.
- j. Be interested in all people. Invest your time, attention and genuine understanding in them.

### **Categories of Networking Situations, Events and Methods**

There are many types of networking situations and methods. Most people tend to think only of the best known business networking clubs and websites, but business networking can be done virtually anywhere that you find business-people relevant to your aims and capabilities. This is important when you remember that other professional people outside of the business community can also be very helpful in networking.

**'Hard contacts' (or a 'hard contact' group/network):** Refers to a networking group specifically designed to produce referrals among group members, who may be (according to certain definitions) the only representatives of their particular service/offering in the group. This is usually a group of business people who meet regularly for the purposes of presenting their offerings to the group and who undertake to refer sales prospects to each other.

**'Soft contacts' (or a 'soft contact' group/network):** Refers to any group or network of people offering possibilities for business networking, sales referrals, introductions, job openings, business opportunities, etc. This can be physical groupings which meet face-to-face (for example, trade associations, interest groups, family and friends, professional institutes, societies and clubs, etc.) or virtual groups which are organized via the internet (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.).

Some of the common places to network are discussed which are: Conferences, Exhibitions, Seminars, Training courses, Chambers of Trade or Commerce, Breakfast networking clubs, Business networking websites,

Website forums, Website user groups, Local networking events, Lectures and talks, Universities and colleges, AGMs and Conventions.

Networking these days is crucial for getting everything from new clients, new employees, jobs, keeping abreast of industry trends, to getting the right information. Networking is more than just shaking hands and passing out business cards. Some of the key attributes of a Skillful networking professional are:

1. **Follows up on referrals:** The No. 1 trait of successful networkers. If you present an opportunity, whether it's a simple piece of information, a special contact or a qualified business referral, to someone who consistently fails to follow up successfully, it's no secret that you'll eventually stop wasting your time with this person.
2. **Positive attitude:** A consistently negative attitude makes people dislike being around you and drives away referrals.
3. **Enthusiastic:** It's been said that the best sales characteristic is enthusiasm.
4. **Trustworthy:** When you refer one person to another, you're putting your reputation on the line.
5. **Good listening skills:** Our success as networkers depends on how well we can listen and learn.
6. **Network always:** Master networkers are never off duty. Networking is so natural to them that they can be found networking in the grocery store line, at the doctor's office, at a party, as well as at the chamber mixers and networking meetings.
7. **Thank people:** Expressing gratitude to business associates and clients is just another building block in the cultivation of relationships that will lead to increased referrals.
8. **Enjoy helping:** Helping others can be done in a variety of ways, from literally showing upto help with an office move to clipping a helpful and interesting article and mailing it to an associate or client.

Avoiding Networking Pitfalls was also discussed in this chapter which included the following elements:

- i) Moving from networking group to networking group
- ii) Talking more than listening
- iii) Networks at inappropriate opportunities/events



## 12.9 Self-assessment questions

1. Business networking brings with it the added advantage of \_\_\_\_\_ and personal introduction, which are always very helpful for developing business opportunities.
  - a. Recommendation
  - b. Both a & d
  - c. Emphasis
  - d. Complication
2. Successful people surround themselves with a well-developed, sophisticated support network that they use to get everything from relevant information, to the right supplier, getting the right employee, to being referred to the right clients.
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. A possible explanation of how Karma (or whatever you call it) produces positive outcomes is found in which of the below provided -
  - a. The rule of 'cause and effect'
  - b. Either a or d
  - c. The law of appearance
  - d. The scientific law
4. People who give are seen to have strength to give. Followers gravitate to strong giving people. Helping others extends far beyond your personal specialism or line of work.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. Reputations are built according to your chosen contacts, in addition to how you yourself behave. So focus your efforts on groups and connections of -
  - a. Integrity
  - b. Both a & d
  - c. Complications
  - d. Relevance

6. Which kind of networking is a highly structured type of networking event, in which an organizer (there are several, of varying type and quality) coordinates quick introductions among a group of typically between 20-40 people?
- a. Speed networking
  - b. Functional networking
  - c. Targeted networking
  - d. Combined networking
7. Which kind of meetings are strongly connected and usually attended by very active and energized people?
- a. Pressure group meetings
  - b. Public meetings
  - c. Both b & d
  - d. Conventions
8. A consistently negative attitude makes people dislike being around you and drives away referrals. From this perspective positive business professionals are like -!
- a. Magnets
  - b. Arguments
  - c. Blindfolds
  - d. None of them
9. Public meetings are held for all sorts of reasons, for example local planning consultations; presentation of local development plans.
- a. True
  - b. False
10. When you refer one person to another, you're putting your reputation on the line. You have to be able to -
- a. Either b or d
  - b. Trust your referral partner
  - c. Show dis-trust your referral partner
  - d. Be trusted in return

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 1](#)

[Video Lecture - Part 2](#)

# Chapter 13

## Essentials of Social networking skills

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

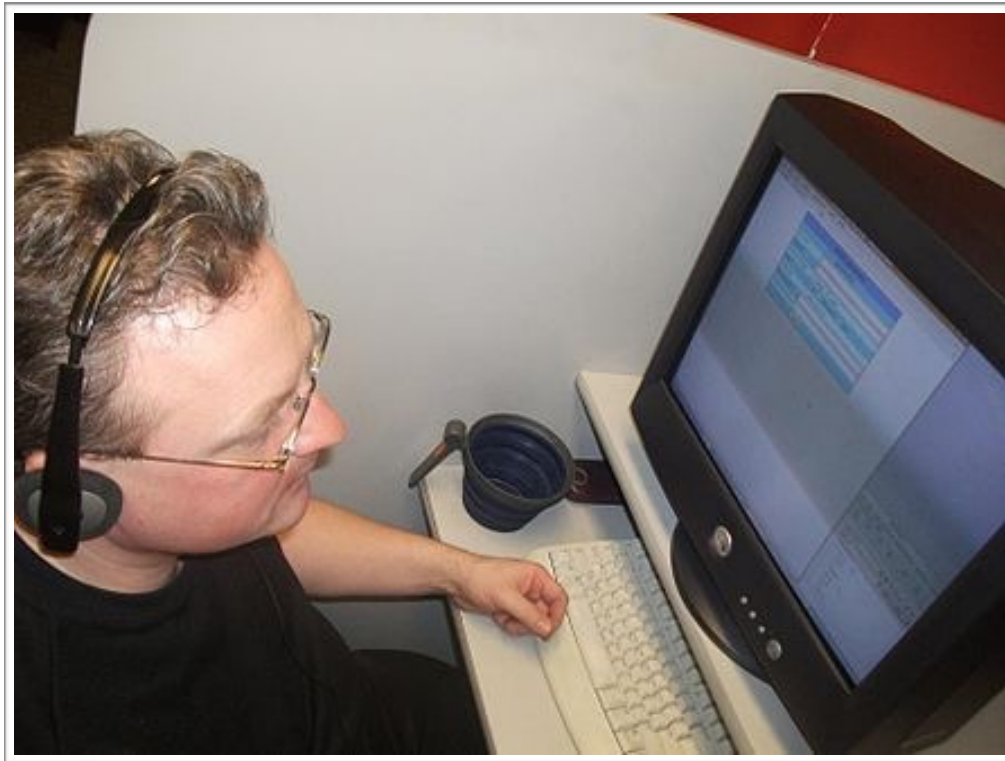
- Social Networking Activities
- How to handle questions in interviews
- Benefits and Concerns of Social Networking
- Social Exchange Theory
- Object Relations Theory
- Social Networking on Facebook and Twitter
- Business Networking on LinkedIn

### Structure:

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Social Networking Activities
- 13.3 Quality of Social Networking Relationships
- 13.4 Benefits and Concerns of Social Networking
- 13.5 Social Exchange Theory
- 13.6 Object Relations Theory
- 13.7 Social Networking on Facebook
- 13.8 Social Networking on Twitter
- 13.9 Business Networking on LinkedIn
- 13.10 Activities
- 13.11 Summary
- 13.12 Self-Assessment Questions

## 13.1 Introduction

Social networking is a current phenomenon that consists of both web-based communication with Internet users through websites (Facebook, MySpace, YouTube) and interaction with others via cellular phones. According to Facebook statistics, there were 526 million daily active users on average in March 2012. Further, the 2010 Media Industry Fact Sheet reported that two-thirds of the population over the age of 13 are connected by cell phones. Social networking has become common in today's society, especially among adolescents and young adults, and continues to grow in popularity. These activities occur among people who already know each other personally as well as those who have never met in person. Increased utilization of computers and cell phones to communicate, tasks that have historically required interpersonal skills and face-to-face interaction, may be altering the means in which young people attain and practice skills that are necessary to function in their daily lives. Over the past decade, technological advances have reached all segments of the population across the globe. The 20th century was epitomized by youth staying connected through face-to-face interaction or the use of the landline telephones.



Social networks, thought of as a set of people in which support is exchanged or relationships that are important to an individual were typically managed through interpersonal or conventional telephone contact. However, the growth in Internet access and software availability as well as advancements of cell phones, combined with a population of youth who have grown up exposed to this technology, has resulted in social networks being replaced online and through telecommunications. The youth of today use technology such as the Internet more than any other method through which to communicate and socialize. Recent studies have shown that communication technology is increasing exponentially with each generation and is becoming a mainstay within our society.

According to statistics gathered by ComScore Networks, 713million people ages 15 or older, which was 14% of the global population, used the Internet in June 2006, with 153 million being in the United States. Further, adolescents use the Internet much more often than children, but the age of first Internet use is rapidly descending. In fact, even young children are online and there are numerous social networking sites that cater to this population. As technological advancements are made, the residual impact of social networking on society's young generation is of valuable importance to researchers in the social work field. Left unattended, the lack of skills to effectively communicate and resolve conflicts in person may negatively affect behavior and impair the ability to develop and maintain relationships. Once envisioned as an efficient tool for researchers to share files and access data by remote login, commercialization of the Internet has resulted in the creation of email and the World Wide Web. The enormous technical complexity of the Internet has expanded to include thousands of networks, millions of computers, and billions of users across the world. The Web 2.0 experience, which was exemplified by connectivity, Internet entrepreneurs, and the potential of substantial monetary profits has been replaced by Web 2.0, which is detailed by user-generated content, group formation, and social networking. Combining the tremendous expansion of the Internet and the advances in communication technology has resulted in new capabilities not foreseen by the original developers.

## 13.2 Social Networking Activities

Advancements in technology have resulted in people being able to access a wealth of information and participate in virtual opportunities not previously available. Through the tools of computers and cell phones, society has moved from engaging in face-to-face interaction while performing these activities to endeavors that do not require in-person interaction with others. The devices have therefore become the actual mediators between people and knowledge or entertainment. Within recent years, technology has also made available different avenues for communicating. The capabilities of computers and cell phones have allowed users to develop means to participate in the world of social networking, now making the device the mediator of communication between individuals.

**Internet Surfing:** The term “Internet surfing” appeared after the creation of the personal computer and the Internet and is seen as an extension of “channel surfing”, where viewers randomly change channels on a television using a remote control with no real physical effort. Internet surfing is activity described as spending time visiting either random or targeted websites on the Internet for non-communication purposes. Users can view websites to gather information, play interactive games, shop, and view photos and movies. Surfing the Internet can be addictive in nature because individuals receive short-term gratification every time they go online, making it very desirable to continue to go online to receive this gratification. Studies have demonstrated that excessive Internet surfing may increase depression and social anxiety. Therefore, individuals who struggle with Internet surfing and also participate in social networking as a means of meeting their social needs may be at risk for a significant decline in communication and conflict resolution skills due to their isolative behaviors. It was found through studies that young persons with low perceived friendship quality reported significantly higher depression and social anxiety. Since excessive computer use can inhibit exploring one’s actual environment and impact the growth of friendships, this is of major concern.

**Instant Messaging:** In contrast to surfing, instant messaging (IM-ing) consists of sending real- time online computer messages to another user in a mutually established conversation. Researchers found that IM-ing is the most popular method of communication among teens who go online, with 75% using this medium and 48% doing so at least once a day. This format

is typically private and can be an opportunity for adolescents to practice and develop social skills. However, a recent longitudinal study showed that IM-ing. The effects of Internet surfing and IM-ing on internalizing problems may be closely related due to the finding that adolescents who spend more time IM-ing also spend more time surfing.



**Texting:** The Short Messaging Service (SMS), more commonly known as “texting”, is the cellular phone version of IM-ing and also results in virtually instant messages between the sender and receiver. Cell phones have been engineered over the past years to accommodate the demand of texting, such as offering a full QWERTY keyboard, and many cell phone carriers offer plans that contain unlimited texting. In fact, experts expected SMS to dominate mobile messaging in regards to both traffic volume and revenue well into the last quarter of the decade.

In a European study of 635 participants ages 16-55 years old who visited a website and completed an online questionnaire, 48.9% reported preferring to use their cell phones for texting over voice calls and 26.1% reported texting too much. This study also measured levels of loneliness, expressive control, interaction anxiousness, and conversational involvement.



### 13.3 Quality of Social Networking Relationships

Personal interaction is and has always been an important function of the human experience. Prior to the technological revolution and creation of personal computers and cellphones, relationships were typically developed and maintained by means of face-to-face interaction and verbal or written communication. With the development of the Information Age, characterized by the ability for people to freely and conveniently access and exchange information through technology, the way in which our society interacts with one another has continued to transform. Technological Determinism Theory attempts to help explain how changes in methods of communication through advancements in technology impacts general society.

According to this theory, media technology shapes how individuals in a society feel, act, and think as well as influences how society functions as they move from one technological age to another. In other words, people learn how to think and feel the way they do based upon the messages they receive through the current technology. This theory supports the belief that “the medium is the message” and that people adapt accordingly and will utilize the means in which society as a whole is using to communicate. As the medium changes, so does society’s way of communicating. If the medium is impersonal, then the message itself is also impersonal.



With the creation of the virtual world, individuals have the opportunity to interact with others, both known and unknown, in a variety of ways. With the change in nature of these relationships, it has been of interest to gauge the perceived quality of online relationships. Because Internet sites, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, allow groups of users to connect with other groups, users engage in group forming activities that are comparable to face-to-face groups. Social networking sites on the Internet may be used to strengthen relationships that already exist, therefore acting as a bridge between the online and offline worlds. Due to the potential attached meaning to these virtual relationships and the possibilities that human interaction may become volatile and unpredictable, it is of explicit interest to investigate how users, specifically adolescents and young adults, manage to communicate and resolve conflicts within these communities. Therefore, more research is needed in this area.

### 13.4 Benefits and Concerns of Social Networking

Different theories have surfaced regarding the impact of social networking. It has been found that participation in social network sites provides a number of potential benefits for adolescents. It was found that benefits of online interaction include that it provides a means in which to learn the ability to relate to others, tolerate differing viewpoints, express thoughts and feelings in a healthy way, and practice critical thinking skills. communicating with others on the Internet is an opportunity to explore self-identity and enhance self-discovery.

Another perceived benefit is that the Internet increases the possibility to contact peers, thus enhancing self-esteem and feelings of well-being. Further in regards to social networking, the Internet provides a virtual place to spend time and share thoughts and objects with personal meaning, such as pictures and stories, and remain closely connected with friends regardless of geographic. Also, it is believed that individuals may feel empowered when using social networking to establish relationships that provide information, mutual assistance, and support. Finally, it was found that teens with difficulties may use online relationships as temporary bridges that bring them into safe and comfortable face-to-face relationships. All of these mentioned benefits to participants, especially youngsters who are attempting to practice social skills and explore who they are as individuals, add to the justification of including social networking into the current developmental perspective.

Despite the potential advantages of social networking, there are a number of concerns. The social networking users would increase their sense of social support and feel less lonely, be less affected by stress, and have improved mental health. However, the results of the study showed the opposite. Associations were found between increased Internet use and decreased social involvement, feeling more lonely, and an increase in depressive symptoms. Another result was that higher Internet use was related to a decrease in communication among family members. The results of the original study were criticized and caused much controversy, prompting a second study. The follow-up study found varying results that contradicted the results of the first study in all areas except life stress. Another consequence of social networking that has been addressed in the research is the issue of cyber bullying. Much data exists regarding the negative aspects of social networking and the incidence of cyber bullying and victimization among users. Traditionally, bullying has taken place during face-to-face interaction.

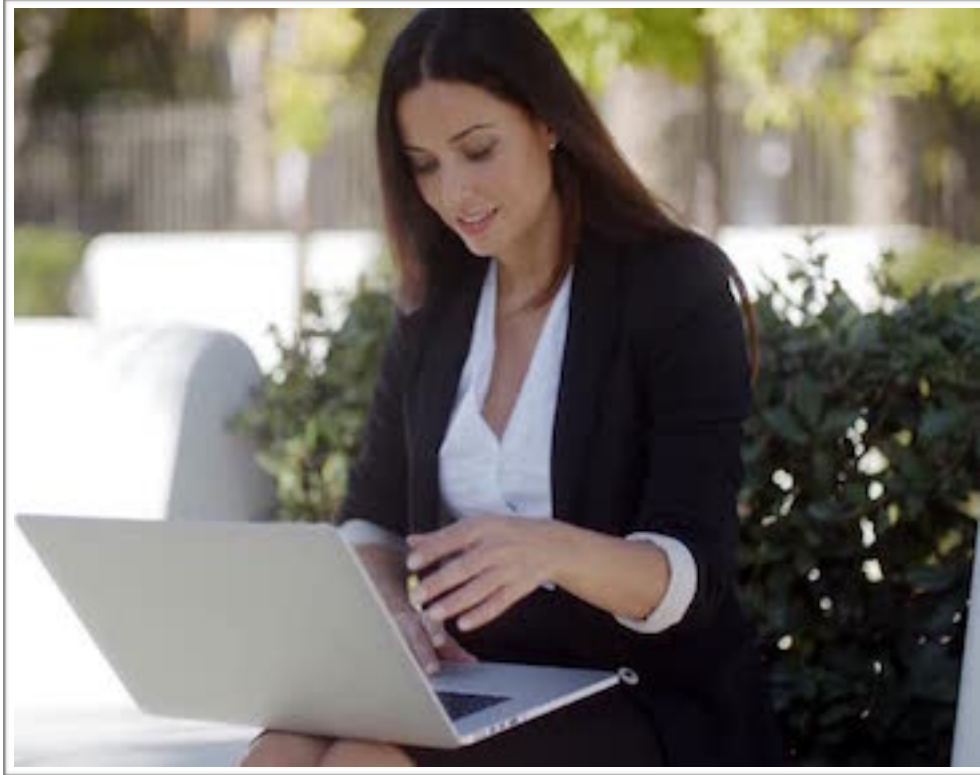
However, advances in technology have opened up new ways for this to occur over electronics, from texting on cell phones to the posting of comments or videos on websites.

The issue of cyber abuse (bullying, unwanted sexual advances, and stalking) should be taken very seriously due to the detrimental effects on victims, which include feelings of depression, guilt, shame, as well as self-harm and withdrawing from family and friends. Whether due to low self-esteem or poor social skills, adolescents who turn to online relationships because of feelings of isolation by peers may find that online relationships are filled with complications. It is within these relationships that adolescents may be victimized by cyber bullying, unwanted sexual advances, and even cyber stalking.

### 13.5 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is derived from basic principles of economics and compares human behavior to that of transactions in a market place environment. The theory begins with the principle that human social behavior is based upon the drive to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. In other words, during social exchange, one must give in order to receive. However, to allow for maximum satisfaction, the level of perceived rewards need to be greater than the amount of the perceived costs

expended during the interaction process. In social exchange theory, the six main rewards that exist, consisting of both the tangible and intangible, are love, money, status, goods, information, and services. The identified costs in social exchange theory are time and energy.



Within social exchange theory, relationships are evaluated using a cost-benefit analysis with an expectation that social relations will be established and continued based on being mutually gainful, a leader in social exchange theory, denied that cultural and social environments impacted behavior and that only psychological factors were relevant. It has been argued that history is only important because a history of rewards tells an individual what is in his or her best interest. However, many theorists have since added their perspectives to social exchange theory and emphasized the role that social, economic, political, and historical contexts play in social exchanges. A major premise within social exchange theory is regarding the issue of power. Whether acknowledged or not, persons with greater resources often hold more power over others during social exchanges. This power can relate to not only control of potential rewards and punishments, but also the ability to influence the thoughts and behaviors of others within social exchanges. The basis for this control exists when one person is dependent on another for his or her own sense of rewards. When applying

social exchange theory to the phenomenon of social networking, it can be said that the technological exchanges between individuals capture a mutual cost-benefit structure. The amount of time and energy one designates to texting or posting comments and status updates on Facebook relates directly to perceived rewards, such as number of “likes” or responses. In other words, given the ability to disperse information efficiently to a mass audience with little time and effort, the potential for rewards in social networking are unrestricted. This drastically differs from conventional face-to-face interaction where more effort and calculated thought is needed for mutually beneficial social exchanges.

Further, it may be that the greater the number of people within one’s social network, including cell phone contacts, viewers of videos, and online friends, the greater the amount of perceived status and power the person has by self and others. This power can be exerted over those who are dependent on acceptance and the desire that their cyber social exchanges produce rewards, resulting in potential atypical thoughts and behaviors from the person seeking affirmation. Fear of rejection can be a powerful influence on altering one’s actions and the perceived costs of such rejection intolerable. Another display of power exists in social networking when an individual makes a conscious decision to ignore or deny attempts from others seeking social exchanges. The receiver of such exchanges may perceive limited or no cost to not responding. However, the initiator may perceive a high level of costs and even make multiple attempts to conduct social exchanges, continuing to receive zero rewards.

## 13.6 Object Relations Theory

With contributions from multiple writers in the psychodynamic field, object relations theory is not necessarily a single theory, but is called so in order to differentiate itself from other theories with common characteristics. With an emphasis on their inner world, object relations theory examines the dual process of people experiencing themselves as separate and independent from others, while also feeling an intense attachment to others. Within this theory, it is believed that all people have an internal and often unconscious world of relationships that differs from, and in many ways are more significant and powerful, than what exists in their external world of social relationships. The focus then is placed on interactions individuals have with others, the way in which these interactions are



internalized, and the central role these internalized object relations play in psychological life.

Thus, the term “object relations” encompasses actual relationships with others, as well as internalized representations of others and self. As just stated, object relations include not only the intricacies of external relationships, but also an internal word of relations between self and others. Further, object relations extend to how others have been internalized and ways in which they become part of the self. This is represented in people’s fears, fantasies, wants, and desires. Interestingly, a characteristic that differentiates object relations theory from similar theories such as drive theory and ego psychology is its attention on how needs are met or not met in relationships, which contrasts to the idea of drives and impulses. Since a person’s external needs are to be met by other people, the relationship is placed at the center of the experience. These needs include being viewed and valued by others as an individual, to be accepted for both positive and negative qualities, and to be given love, care, and protection. One important aspect of object relations theory is the importance placed on how a developing person transitions from requiring attachment to others to a position of separateness.



Basically, anything that assists a person in successfully maintaining a mental representation of valued others in their absence can be considered a transitional object. For children, these objects may include a favorite book read at bedtime, a piece of jewelry from a parent, or even a favorite song that is usually sung together. When considering object relations theory, it may be reasonable to view items such as cellphones, computers, the Internet, and even ring tones as transitional objects. For example, the acts of carrying a cell phone or hearing a ring tone designated to a valued other may create a sense of comfort for someone struggling with independence in that it creates internal images of social networking relationships. Even entering an establishment with the Internet, and therefore perceived access to social networks, may itself ease someone who is experiencing discomfort due to feeling disconnected. Without proper coping skills, individuals who engage in social networking to meet their psychological needs may feel distress that impairs their daily functioning when having limited or no access to these technological transitional objects. In the social networking context, object relations theory highlights the notion that people both desire to establish themselves as separate individuals with status as well as have their need for attachment be met by those in their social network.

The significance of these relationships may not be fully understood in reality, but once internalized take on a powerful and meaningful existence and adds to one's sense of self. Interpretations of the meaning and value of these relationships rely on virtual communication, which can be subjective in nature. Along with the need for attachment, the desire to feel accepted and valued in the social networking environment can create insurmountable pressure. Not only is a person attempting to develop relationships with individuals, but also with their larger social networking group. As object relations theory states this includes both the good and the bad that individuals bring to relationships, resulting in potential conflict between users. For example, an individual would set aside undesirable characteristics of another in order to maintain the level at which he or she feels valued and accepted. As part of the social networking experience, users may incorporate and digest qualities of communication experiences within their online realm into their own individual identity.



The activities of texting and Internet-based communication facilitate a virtual world of relationships and allow users to internalize mental representations of others within their social network. Since no face-to-face interaction exists, people are left to rely on their creative imagination and constructions to incorporate meaning into these relationships. Therefore, each user's internal world may be vastly different from what the evident facts might suggest in their actual social networking environment. When issues with communication and conflict arise, users are left to reconcile what is presented in reality with their internal definitions and meanings of social networking relationships. Poor communication and the inability to resolve these conflicts may impair both the real status and internal representation of these relationships.

### 13.7 Social Networking on Facebook

The social network that emerged as the most popular in the late 2000s is Facebook. Founded in February 2004, Facebook started as a service for college students but then opened its doors to anyone to join. By October 2013, Facebook reported having nearly 1.2 billion monthly active users. That compared to 800 million in December 2011. The median age of a



Facebook user also increased from 26 in May 2008 to 33 in October 2009, according to a Pew Internet and American Life survey. By 2011, more than 42 percent of the U.S. population were Facebook users, according to an eMarketer survey. By August-September 2013, 64 percent of U.S. adults were Facebook users, according to a Pew Research Center survey. A few important Facebook features related to social networking are provided below:

### **Facebook Connect**

In May 2008, Facebook launched Facebook Connect, which lets other websites utilize Facebook users' profiles and networking features. A news website can have users register at the site using their Facebook accounts and then explore content on the site, comment on it or share links to it with their friends on the Facebook network. Thus a news organization can integrate a social network into its website without having to create one itself and take advantage of the huge audience of an existing social network like Facebook.



### **Friend**

"Friending" someone is the act of sending another user a friend request on Facebook. The two people are Facebook friends once the receiving party accepts the friend request. In addition to accepting the request, the user has the option of declining the friend request or hiding it using the "Not Now" feature. Deleting a friend request removes the request, but does allow the sender to resend it in the future. The "Not Now" feature hides the request but does not delete it, allowing the receiver to revisit the request at a later date.

It is also possible to remove a user from one's friends, which is referred to as "unfriending" by Facebook. Many Facebook users also refer to the process as "de-friending." "Unfriend" was New Oxford American Dictionary's word of the year in 2009. Facebook profiles also have advanced privacy features to restrict content to certain users, such as non-friends or persons on a specific list.

## **Wall**

The Wall is the original profile space where Facebook users' content, as of December 2011, had been displayed. It allowed the posting of messages, often short or temporal notes, for the user to see while displaying the time and date the message was written. A user's Wall is visible to anyone with the ability to see his or her full profile, and friends' Wall posts appear in the user's News Feed.

In July 2007, Facebook allowed users to post attachments to the Wall, whereas previously the Wall was limited to text only. In May 2008, the Wall-to-Wall for each profile was limited to only 40 posts. Facebook later allowed users to insert HTML code in boxes attached to the wall via apps like Static FBML which has allowed marketers to track use of their fan pages with Google Analytics.

## **Tagging**

The concept of tagging in status updates, an attempt to imitate Twitter, began September 14, 2009. This meant putting the name of a user, a brand, an event or a group in a post in such a way that it linked to the wall of the Facebook page being tagged, and made the post appear in news feeds for that page, as well as those of selected friends. This was first done using the "@" symbol followed by the person's name. Later, a numerical ID for the person could be used. Early in 2011, tagging in comments was added.

In addition to postings by other users, the Wall also displayed other events that happened to the user's profile. This included when information was changed, when they changed their profile picture, and when they connected with new people, among other things. The Wall has been replaced by the Timeline profile layout, which was introduced in December 2011.

## 13.8 Social Networking on Twitter

Twitter is the most popular Micro-blogging site today. Micro-blogging is defined as a quick update usually containing a very limited number of characters. It is a popular features of social networks like Facebook where you can update your status, but it has become best known because of Twitter. In essence, micro-blogging is for people who want a blog but don't want to blog. A personal blog can keep people informed on what is going on in your life, but not everyone wants to spend an hour crafting a beautiful post about the vibrant colors seen on a butterfly spotted in the front time. Sometimes, you just want to say "went shopping for a new car but didn't find anything."



So what is Twitter? It's a great place for keeping people informed on what you are up to without the need to spend a lot of time crafting an entire post on the subject. You just say what's up and leave it at that.

### **Twitter is Social Messaging**

While Twitter may have started as a micro-blogging service, it is grown into much more than simply a tool to type in quick status updates. So when asked "What is Twitter?", it is often described it as a cross between blogging and instant messaging, though even that doesn't do it justice. Put

simply, Twitter is social messaging. With the ability to follow people and have followers, and the ability to have interact with Twitter on your cell phone, Twitter has become the perfect social messaging tool. Whether you are out on the town and want to coordinate with a group of people as to what hot spot to hit next, or keeping people informed of developments at a company- sponsored event, Twitter is a great tool for quickly communicating a message to a group of people.

Twitter has a language of its own. Here are the terms you need to know:

1. **DM/Direct Message:** A private note between two users on Twitter. The person receiving the message must follow the person sending it and the message is bound by the 140-character limit.
2. **Follow:** The act of connecting with someone on Twitter. People who have elected to follow you will see your tweets in their timeline. You are not obligated to follow people back and you have the ability to block followers (usually used only for spammers) from seeing your posts.
3. **Following:** Electing to see someone's tweets in your own timeline. Follow people and companies that you're interested in hearing from.
4. **Handle:** Your Twitter username is referred to as your handle, and is identified with the @ symbol. For example, Constant Contact's handle is @constantcontact. The @ is used to refer to a specific person and link to that account on Twitter within a tweet.
5. **Hashtag:** Words preceded by a # sign (i.e., #ctctsocial) can be used to tie various tweets together and relate them to a topic, be it a conference, TV show, sporting event, or any happening or trend of your choosing. Twitter automatically links all hashtags so users can search for other tweets using the same tag.
6. **Lists:** A way to combine select people you follow on Twitter into a smaller feed. A list can be made up of friends, competitors, people in the same state: anything you want. Lists let you view a slice of your followers at a time and are a great way to focus on specific folks when you're following a large number of people.

7. **RT/Retweet:** This is the Twitter equivalent of forward-to-a-friend. When someone posts something you find interesting, you can retweet it and share it with all the people who follow you.
8. **Search:** Since the majority of tweets are public, you can use Twitter's search feature to look for tweets containing a keyword or phrase. The search results will update in real time with any new tweets that contain the word or phrase searched on.
9. **Timeline:** The chronological listing of all tweets in a given feed, be it your own, in a list, or another user's.
10. **Trending Topics:** Along the right side of the main web interface, Twitter lists 10 topics that are "hot" on Twitter at the given moment based on certain algorithms. You can see trending topics for all of Twitter or for certain geographic areas.
11. **Tweet:** What posts are called on Twitter.
12. **Tweetup:** A term for in person events (i.e., meetups) that spring from Twitter connections. Tweetups are typically informal gatherings that let Twitter followers meet in real life, and coordinators often use a hashtag to unite tweets related to the event.
13. **Unfollow:** By unfollowing someone, you no longer receive their updates in your own timeline.

### 13.9 Business Networking on LinkedIn

LinkedIn still seems to grab a lot of people as a recruiter/job hunting site. In reality, it has already become many things. LinkedIn in reality is a Social network, news aggregator, personal branding platform, and networkers' paradise. Online networking is one of those skills that many of us need to learn. We might be enthusiasts or cynics, we might not know what steps to take or we might look down on the very idea of using sites like LinkedIn to boost our personal brand power. The reality though is we all need new ways to convert weak ties into business. LinkedIn always ranks near the top, with strong support from seasoned marketers.



LinkedIn was built on a professional business model, capitalizing on methods of networking used in the pre-digital world. With continued and significant improvements to increase its usage, LinkedIn is a feature rich platform steadily organizing connections and content from the other upper tier platforms. Benefits and Key Features include:

**LinkedIn Benefits:** Besides being a go-to platform for B2B social media marketing, LinkedIn generates more leads than other popular social media platforms, providing a measure of the ROI. Other key LinkedIn metrics include Followers, Referring Traffic, References, Group Members, and Discussions Created. LinkedIn's focus on professional interests, work, education, and demographics leads to fine-tuned targeting. LinkedIn is also an obvious online reputation management tool, helping establish your professional networking, and as an online business card. Close monitoring of group discussions allows quick response to resolve any negative comments. LinkedIn Profiles also rank well for your name in Google search. SEO is improved with the planned use of keywords in all parts of your profile including Job Title, Skills, and Summary. These keywords also help fine tune ads to the different demographics defined by LinkedIn Profiles and organize your search for potential customers.

## LinkedIn Key Features

**Profile:** Your profile is the basis for searches on and off the LinkedIn platform. Fill out all sections, include a professional photograph, remember keywords in each section, and avoid keyword stuffing or any other spammy information. Promote your Profile with the link added to your business cards, email signature, and Facebook and Twitter pages.

**Groups:** LinkedIn features hundreds of groups with members joining up to 50 groups related to industry, location, keywords, and content. Join a few key groups, to allow development of content and connections with regular monitoring.

**Recommendations:** A key benefit is giving and receiving personal and business recommendations. Soliciting recommendations from customers and leaders increases your connections.

**Applications:** This section allows importing of your business content from several sources, including slide shows, blog feeds, Twitter updates, and published content. This helps build your reputation and expertise level on LinkedIn.

**Status Updates:** Update with new business events, training, products, and services, with Likes and Comments. To optimize B2B content via LinkedIn, post on Sunday from 9 am to 11 am, using exclamation points and hashtags, but not question marks, according to a Compendium platform study in 2012.

LinkedIn continues to become more feature rich and competes best in B2B social media marketing platforms. It is positioning to be a curated filter, importing the best from the other top tier social media marketing platforms and funneling directly into the business networking realm.

## 13.10 Activities

1. Different theories have surfaced regarding the impact of social networking. We have already discussed two important ones. Browse online and research the two more important theories on social networking.

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2. Browse and research the benefits and drawbacks related to the 'Hashtag' feature of Twitter.

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## 13.11 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that Social networking is a current phenomenon that consists of both web-based communication with Internet users through websites (Facebook, MySpace, YouTube) and interaction with others via cellular phones. According to Facebook statistics, there were 526 million daily active users on average in March 2012. Further, the 2010Media Industry Fact Sheet reported that two-thirds of the population over the age of 13 are connected by cell phones. Social networking has become common in today's society, especially among adolescents and young adults, and continues to grow in popularity. These activities occur among people who already know each other personally as well as those who have never met in person. Increased utilization of computers and cell phones to communicate, tasks that have historically required interpersonal skills and face-to face interaction, may be altering the means in which young people attain and practice skills that are necessary to function in their daily lives.

The Web 2.0 experience, which was exemplified by connectivity, Internet entrepreneurs, and the potential of substantial monetary profits has been replaced by Web 2.0, which is detailed by user-generated content, group formation, and social networking. Combining the tremendous expansion of the Internet and the advances in communication technology has resulted in new capabilities not foreseen by the original developers. Advancements in technology have resulted in people being able to access a wealth of information and participate in virtual opportunities not previously available. Through the tools of computers and cell phones, society has moved from engaging in face-to-face interaction while performing these activities to endeavors that do not require in-person interaction with others.

We have discussed here that The term "Internet surfing" appeared after the creation of the personal computer and the Internet and is seen as an extension of "channel surfing", where viewers randomly change channels on a television using a remote control with no real physical effort. In contrast to surfing, instant messaging (IM-ing) consists of sending real-time online computer messages to another user in a mutually established conversation. Researchers found that IM-ing is the most popular method of communication among teens who go online, with 75% using this medium and 48% doing so at least once a day. The Short Messaging Service (SMS), more commonly known as "texting", is the cellular phone version of IM-ing

and also results in virtually instant messages between the sender and receiver.

Personal interaction is and has always been an important function of the human experience. Prior to the technological revolution and creation of personal computers and cellphones, relationships were typically developed and maintained by means of face-to-face interaction and verbal or written communication. With the development of the Information Age, characterized by the ability for people to freely and conveniently access and exchange information through technology, the way in which our society interacts with one another has continued to transform. Technological Determinism Theory attempts to help explain how changes in methods of communication through advancements in technology impacts general society.

Different theories have surfaced regarding the impact of social networking. It has been found that participation in social network sites provides a number of potential benefits for adolescents. It was found that benefits of online interaction include that it provides a means in which to learn the ability to relate to others, tolerate differing viewpoints, express thoughts and feelings in a healthy way, and practice critical thinking skills. communicating with others on the Internet is an opportunity to explore self-identity and enhance self-discovery. Despite the potential advantages of social networking, there are a number of concerns. The social networking users would increase their sense of social support and feel less lonely, be less affected by stress, and have improved mental health. However, the results of the study showed the opposite. Associations were found between increased Internet use and decreased social involvement, feeling more lonely, and an increase in depressive symptoms. Another result was that higher Internet use was related to a decrease in communication among family members.

The issue of cyber abuse (bullying, unwanted sexual advances, and stalking) should be taken very seriously due to the detrimental effects on victims, which include feelings of depression, guilt, shame, as well as self-harm and withdrawing from family and friends. Whether due to low self-esteem or poor social skills, adolescents who turn to online relationships because of feelings of isolation by peers may find that online relationships are filled with complications. It is within these relationships that

adolescents may be victimized by cyber bullying, unwanted sexual advances, and even cyber stalking.

Social exchange theory is derived from basic principles of economics and compares human behavior to that of transactions in a market place environment. The theory begins with the principle that human social behavior is based upon the drive to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. In other words, during social exchange, one must give in order to receive. Within social exchange theory, relationships are evaluated using a cost-benefit analysis with an expectation that social relations will be established and continued based on being mutually gainful, a leader in social exchange theory, denied that cultural and social environments impacted behavior and that only psychological factors were relevant.

With contributions from multiple writers in the psychodynamic field, object relations theory is not necessarily a single theory, but is called so in order to differentiate itself from other theories with common characteristics. With an emphasis on their inner world, object relations theory examines the dual process of people experiencing themselves as separate and independent from others, while also feeling an intense attachment to others. Thus, the term "object relations" encompasses actual relationships with others, as well as internalized representations of others and self. As just stated, object relations include not only the intricacies of external relationships, but also an internal word of relations between self and others. Further, object relations extend to how others have been internalized and ways in which they become part of the self.

In this chapter we have also discussed the Social Networking on Facebook. The social network that emerged as the most popular in the late 2000s is Facebook. Founded in February 2004, Facebook started as a service for college students but then opened its doors to anyone to join. By October 2013, Facebook reported having nearly 1.2 billion monthly active users. That compared to 800 million in December 2011. The important features being:

- Facebook Connect
- Friend
- Wall
- Tagging

Twitter is the most popular Micro-blogging site today. Micro-blogging is defined as a quick update usually containing a very limited number of characters. It is a popular features of social networks like Facebook where you can update your status, but it has become best known because of Twitter. In essence, micro-blogging is for people who want a blog but don't want to blog. Some of the important features being:

- DM/Direct Message
- Follow
- Following
- Handle
- Hastag

LinkedIn still seems to grab a lot of people as a recruiter/job hunting site. In reality, it has already become many things. Linked in reality is a Social network, news aggregator, personal branding platform, networkers' paradise. Online networking is one of those skills that many of us need to learn. We might be enthusiasts or cynics, we might not know what steps to take or we might look down on the very idea of using sites like LinkedIn to boost our personal brand power. LinkedIn Benefits -Besides being a go-to platform for B2B social media marketing, LinkedIn generates more leads than other popular social media platforms, providing a measure of the ROI. Other key LinkedIn metrics include Followers, Referring Traffic, References, Group Members, and Discussions Created. LinkedIn's focus on professional interests, work, education, and demographics leads to fine-tuned targeting.

### **Linked In Key Features**

- Profile
- Groups
- Recommendations
- Applications
- Status Updates

### 13.12 Self-assessment questions

1. Social networks, thought of as a set of people in which support is exchanged or relationships that are important to an individual were typically managed through which of the below provided?
  - a. Interpersonal telephone contact
  - b. Both a & d
  - c. Wireless contact
  - d. Conventional telephone contact
  
2. The term "Internet surfing" appeared after the creation of the personal computer and the Internet and is seen as an extension of "radio surfing".
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
3. With the creation of the \_\_\_\_\_, individuals have the opportunity to interact with others, both known and unknown, in a variety of ways. With the change in nature of these relationships, it has been of interest to gauge the perceived quality of online relationships.
  - a. Virtual world
  - b. Qualified world
  - c. Perfect world
  - d. Information age
  
4. The issue of cyber abuse (bullying, unwanted sexual advances, and stalking) should be taken very seriously due to the detrimental effects on victims, which include feelings of depression, guilt, shame, as well as self-harm and withdrawing from family and friends.
  - a. True
  - b. False

5. With contributions from multiple writers in which field, the object relations theory is not necessarily a single theory, but is called so in order to differentiate itself from other theories with common characteristics?
  - a. The psychodynamic field
  - b. The psycho-analytics field
  - c. The psycho-objectives field
  - d. None of the them
  
6. Which of the below provided facilitate a virtual world of relationships and allow users to internalize mental representations of others within their social network.?
  - a. The activities of texting
  - b. The activities of Internet-based communication
  - c. The activities of traditional communication
  - d. Both a&b
  
7. In addition to accepting the request, the user has the option of declining the friend request or hiding it using -
  - a. None of them
  - b. The "Not Now" feature
  - c. The "unfriend" feature
  - d. The "Not Well" feature
  
8. Which of the below provided is a way to combine select people you follow on Twitter into a smaller feed?
  - a. Hastag
  - b. Tagging
  - c. List
  - d. Following

9. Your profile is the basis for searches on and off the LinkedIn platform. Fill out all sections, include a professional photograph, remember keywords in each section, and avoid keyword stuffing or any other spammy information.
- a. True
  - b. False
10. Which of the below provide LinkedIn section allows importing of your business content from several sources, including slide shows, blog feeds, Twitter updates, and published content.
- a. Applications
  - b. Groups
  - c. Profile
  - d. The Recommendations

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

[Summary](#)

[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture](#)



# Chapter 14

## Essential networking skills for the job

### Objectives

After studying this chapter you should be able to understand:

- How to Connect With Your Contacts
- Overcoming Nervousness in Networking
- The Three PS of Networking
- Professional Email Etiquette

### Structure:

- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 How to Connect With Your Contacts
- 14.3 Overcoming Nervousness in Networking
- 14.4 The Three PS of Networking
- 14.5 Professional Email Etiquette
- 14.6 Using Social Media in Your Career
- 14.7 Activities
- 14.8 Summary
- 14.9 Self-Assessment Questions

## 14.1 Introduction

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” This common When it comes to finding a job, you’ve got to network! According to Cornell University’s Career Center, 80% of available jobs are not advertised. These jobs are often referred to as the “hidden job market.” expression is the basis for understanding the importance of networking as a strategy for career development and exploration. Everyone has a network, even if you don’t realize it, and when it comes to job searching, this network may be just as important as your skills and experience. A personal network is that group of people with whom you interact every day – family, friends, parents of friends, friends of friends, neighbors, teachers, bosses, and co-workers. With these people, information and experiences are exchanged for both social and potential professional reasons. Networking occurs every time you participate in a school or social event, volunteer in the community, visit with members of your religious group, talk with neighbors, strike up a conversation with someone at the store, or connect with friends online. Networking for the purpose of career development, means talking with friends, family members, and acquaintances about your goals, your interests, and your dreams. Most people actually learn about job openings through friends, relatives, or others who are part of their personal network, and because each person in your network has a network of his or her own, your potential contacts can grow exponentially.

This is important because more often than not, hiring managers would rather talk to a potential candidate who has been recommended by someone they know or already employ. Even if a position is not currently available, networking can lead to informational interviews that can help you not only learn about possible career paths, but also be great exposure for you to be thought of as a potential candidate when a job opens up. An informational interview is not the same as a job interview by any means, but it is probably the most effective form of networking there is. In fact, according to Quintessential Careers, one out of every 12 informational interviews results in a job offer. This is a remarkable number considering the fact that research indicates that only one in every 200 resumes (some studies put the number even higher) results in a job offer. Though networking is an important skill, and one that can certainly be taught, it rarely is. Therefore the activities in this section focus on the process of networking and its relevance and importance to career development. Participants will learn about taking initiative and overcoming fear (which is

quite common), informational interviewing, as well as potential guidelines to consider when using social networks, texting, and email for networking purposes.



Developing networking skills is important for all youth, but particularly for those with limited work experiences, which is unfortunately often the case for youth with disabilities. By creating opportunities whereby young people can research, talk to, and network with those working in careers of interest, the more likely they will be able to make informed choices regarding their future. For youth who are hesitant to network or take the steps necessary to arrange informational interviews (for any reason), consider using pairs of two for many of the activities in this section. Teaming is one strategy that may help participants feel as if they have the support they need while trying out new skills and learning how to become a strategic and “seasoned” networker.

## 14.2 How to Connect With Your Contacts

You can initiate a conversation in several ways. To create an immediate link in your introduction, use the name of the person who referred you. It may take multiple attempts to make contact. Send an Initial, Introductory E mail Sending an introductory e-mail allows you to compose your thoughts carefully, and its arrival will not interrupt the individual's work. Because most individuals prefer to talk by phone, an e-mail serves only as a means of introduction, and will rarely yield a written response. Therefore, you must take responsibility for the follow-up. In your e-mail, state "I will call you next week to set up an appointment." Then make the telephone call. Be selective, and keep your list of contacts manageable by spreading out your mailings.



The main advantage of sending an e-mail is that the individual you are contacting can learn something about your needs and interests prior to his or her conversation with you. The greatest disadvantage of sending an e-mail is the potential for over-familiarity and informality. Remember that this correspondence should be of a professional nature. If you are unsure about your introductory e-mail, have someone review it before you send it out.

## **Make a Telephone Call**

- Many candidates have discovered that direct calls are quicker and more productive than e-mails. When you telephone a contact, explain why you are calling, and ask to set up a phone or personal appointment. Have a 30- second introduction ready



Do not ask the person to answer your questions during your initial call, but be prepared to start the conversation immediately if he indicates that he is available now. The key advantage of the telephone contact is that it saves time for both you and the person you are calling. Most people conduct business via the telephone and find it easier to schedule a call than to schedule a meeting. A face-to-face meeting is the best option because the individual can get a much better feel for who you are, and will remember you later. Regardless of the method you choose, you will need to explain your purpose in requesting the interview. Remember, your purpose is to gain information as you investigate a particular field, not necessarily to obtain a job.

## 14.3 Overcoming Nervousness in Networking

The prospect of asking for help can be daunting. Some people find it awkward to make telephone calls to people they don't know.

- Keep in mind that people are usually very willing to give advice. Everyone likes being regarded as an expert
- If you keep in mind that the purpose of your information interview is to provide you with facts and perspectives, you have nothing to lose. You will become more knowledgeable and skillful as you conduct more meetings
- View informational interviewing as relationship building. You are developing advocates for your professional life. Understand that it might take conversations with 20 or 30 individuals to turn up three or four who “mentor” you. Those individuals will be worth their weight in gold.
- Practice with a friend, and try out being on both sides of the fence. You will quickly see how easy it is for you to be helpful to your friend. Extrapolate this lesson to those who are helping you.
- Prepare a 30-second pitch to explain your purpose in calling, and a list of your questions. Practice your pitch until it rolls off your tongue.
- Smile into the phone. Your voice tone, attitude, and self-confidence will improve markedly.
- Practice your story with those contacts you have less interest in, and save the people at the top of your list for last. People are generally eager to grant your request. For the most part, people enjoy talking about themselves and like to be helpful.



## 14.4 The Three Ps of Networking

1. **Prepare:** Do what you need to do to get ready. For example:

- To prepare for a telephone call, write a script and practice it. Know why you are calling (have notes). Prepare yourself on how to leave a message if the person doesn't pick up or isn't available.
- To prepare for a face-to-face meeting, do a lot of the same as you would for a phone call. If you're meeting with someone to get information about the work they do or a particular company, visit the company's website (if they have one) to learn more about it ahead of time.

2. **Practice:** Practice what you want to say over and over and over.

- The more you hear yourself say what you want to say, the easier it will be – and the more confident you will feel.
- Ever think about smiling when you're on the telephone? Believe it or not people can hear that confidence in your voice. People can determine friendliness from the tone of your voice. Along the same lines, fear can be heard over the phone, too. Concentrate on speaking clearly, be calm, and breathe
- Prepare for one-to-one meetings by practicing with a friend, parent, or someone you know and trust. Ask them to role play with you – they could pretend to be the person you are going to meet with and you could practice asking the questions you have prepared.

3. **Pull yourself together:** Part of feeling confident at a networking meeting is feeling good about yourself.

- If you feel good about your appearance, you tend to give your confidence a big boost. Good grooming is extremely essential. Don't forget about those day-to-day essentials like showering, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, and using deodorant (this sounds silly, but many adults need to be reminded of this, too!) Don't wear too much perfume or cologne as sometimes people are allergic – and wearing too

much will make them remember you because of your smell, not for your skills or your ideas.

- Dress the way you think the other person will be dressing. If you were networking with your uncle at a family BBQ, shorts and flip-flops might be just fine. But if you're meeting with someone in a professional setting, try to find out what the dress code is and see if you can come close to dressing the same (or even one step above). For example, if you're meeting someone in an office, and people usually wear ties, then you should wear a tie, too. If you're going to meet the head of a landscaping company and people usually wear jeans and t-shirts, go one step above and wear khakis and a button down shirt, if you have them.
- Don't forget other important things like a pen and a pad of paper. Your contact might say something really great and you'll want to write it down. It's always a good idea to take a resume with you, even if you're not meeting with someone for a job. It's a good way to leave someone with a reminder of your skills, talents, and experiences. After all, who knows what might happen? Also, ask the person to suggest additional people you could contact to learn more.

## 14.5 Professional Email Etiquette

Professional Email Etiquette has become extremely important as Email has become an inseparable part of our daily lives and greatly influence our networking efforts. The below provided is an exhaustive list of the Professional Email Etiquette:

**Email Etiquette:** Include a subject line that "helps" the reader.

**Possible Reasons:** A meaningful subject line helps to clarify what your message is about – and also might help the reader to prioritize reading your email.

**Email Etiquette:** Include a greeting (Dear...) and a closing (Sincerely,)

**Possible Reasons:** Email should mimic a written letter. Always begin with Dear... – and end with Sincerely. Sincerely is often the best "professional" choice for a closing.



**Email Etiquette:** Use business language, spell check, and avoid abbreviations.

**Possible Reasons:** Emails are considered professional or business correspondence. You want to be sure everything is spelled correctly and can be easily understood.

**Email Etiquette:** Use business punctuation and formatting.

**Possible Reasons:** Same as above.

**Email Etiquette:** Avoid using ALL CAPS.

**Possible Reasons:** ALL CAPS USUALLY MEANS YOU ARE SCREAMING. NO ONE LIKES TO BE YELLED AT, EVEN IN AN EMAIL.

**Email Etiquette:** Do not use jokes, witty remarks, or sarcasm

**Possible Reasons:** Jokes and witty remarks may be inappropriate and often do not translate well in email (since the reader decides the “tone”).

**Email Etiquette:** Avoid gossiping or complaining

**Possible Reasons:** Emails can be forwarded to others quickly. You never know who will see/hear what you wrote.

**Email Etiquette:** Keep the communication short and to the point

**Possible Reasons:** Anything long or complex should be addressed in person or over the telephone.

**Email Etiquette:** Do not use emoticons (for introductory emails)

**Possible Reasons:** Business emails should not use emoticons because they are not considered “professional” – plus not everyone knows what they mean. If you know the person, you can use them sparingly (if you want to shed light on how you are feeling).

**Email Etiquette:** Reread before hitting “send”

**Possible Reasons:** Once you hit “send,” there is no turning back!

## 14.6 Using Social Media in Your Career

Social media (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blogs) has allowed us to extend our network beyond our location or geographical territory, and as a result, allows us to communicate with friends, family, and business contacts from all around the world. Social media technology continues to grow and change in order to accommodate business relationships as well as networking for professionals. While many employers are now using social media for recruitment, keep in mind that they are also choosing to use it to connect with colleagues, as well as to promote their products and services; meaning more professionals are online than ever before, allowing you to interact and network with them in a new way.



### **Build a Professional Profile**

Whichever social media venue you use, make sure your profile is professional and current. This means:

- Using a professional, not casual picture; be consistent through all your social media

- Separating the personal from the professional e.g. restrict access on Facebook so professional contacts only see what is appropriate; don't link all your tweets to your LinkedIn profile if they aren't relevant
- Updating your profile regularly with relevant information
- "Google" yourself; is there information that you would rather professional contacts not see? Ask your friends to untag you and improve your professional presence so it is first in the search results
- Introducing yourself when adding a new friend or for a connection; don't send a generic link, explain who you are and why you would like to connect with them, including information such as mutual friends connections if applicable
- Viewing the LinkedIn videos that help you get the most out your account. Go to <http://learn.linkedin.com/>

## **Building Your Network**

- Import your contacts from your email. Doing this step can help you establish your first set of contacts, and eventually allow you to extend your network beyond just your mutual friends
- Join groups that relate to your career area, follow people in your industry. This could include professional associations, alumni groups, individuals or organizations who are tweeting or blogging about your career/industry area. LinkedIn also has groups such as "Students and Recent Grads" where students, recent grads, career professionals and industry reps exchange useful information and leads.
- View the connections of your connections. People you know may be connected to people in your career area; if so, ask your connections for an introduction (remember, personalize requests, explaining why this connection could be helpful).

## **Finding Career and Employment Information**

- Monitor and participate in group discussions; you can learn a great deal about your career area/industry by listening to these professionals and asking relevant questions.
- Ask for advice: Not for a job; advice and information can help you understand what a career is really like and what you need to do to be competitive when you graduate. As you establish connections, you can ask about potential opportunities and hiring/recruitment practices, but not for someone to tell you where the jobs are.
- Don't be ashamed to say you're looking for work. People have been successful finding work by using social media by letting others know they are unemployed. Still, remember that status updates should be used in moderation. If you don't get any results this way, don't post a similar update every day until someone responds. Many people have so many friends on their profile, they seem to forget that they have a large network at their disposal – why not use it?

## 14.7 Activities

1. You can initiate a conversation in several ways as discussed in this chapter. Browse online and research the certain novel ways of initiating conversations to enhance your networking skills.

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2. Browse and research the benefits and drawbacks related to using Social Media in Your Career?

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## 14.8 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that a personal network is that group of people with whom you interact every day – family, friends, parents of friends, friends of friends, neighbors, teachers, bosses, and co-workers. With these people, information and experiences are exchanged for both social and potential professional reasons. Networking occurs every time you participate in a school or social event, volunteer in the community, visit with members of your religious group, talk with neighbors, strike up a conversation with someone at the store, or connect with friends online. When networking for the purpose of career development, this means talking with friends, family members, and acquaintances about your goals, your interests, and your dreams. Most people actually learn about job openings through friends, relatives, or others who are part of their personal network, and because each person in your network has a network of his or her own, your potential contacts can grow exponentially.

Though networking is an important skill, and one that can certainly be taught, it rarely is. Therefore the activities in this section focus on the process of networking and its relevance and importance to career development. Participants will learn about taking initiative and overcoming fear (which is quite common), informational interviewing, as well as potential guidelines to consider when using social networks, texting, and email for networking purposes. Developing networking skills is important for all youth, but particularly for those with limited work experiences, which is unfortunately often the case for youth with disabilities. By creating opportunities whereby young people can research, talk to, and network with those working in careers of interest, the more likely they will be able to make informed choices regarding their future.

Here we have learnt the essential of initiating a conversation. To create an immediate link in your introduction, use the name of the person who referred you. It may take multiple attempts to make contact. Send an Initial, Introductory E-mail Sending an introductory e-mail allows you to compose your thoughts carefully, and its arrival will not interrupt the individual's work. The main advantage of sending an e-mail is that the individual you are contacting can learn something about your needs and interests prior to his or her conversation with you. The greatest disadvantage of sending an e-mail is the potential for over-familiarity and informality. Many candidates have discovered that direct calls are quicker

and more productive than e-mails. When you telephone a contact, explain why you are calling, and ask to set up a phone or personal appointment. Have a 30-second introduction ready.

The prospect of asking for help can be daunting. Some people find it awkward to make telephone calls to people they don't know.

- Keep in mind that people are usually very willing to give advice
- If you keep in mind that the purpose of your information interview is to provide you with facts and perspectives, you have nothing to lose.
- View informational interviewing as relationship building
- Practice with a friend, and try out being on both sides of the fence
- Prepare a 30-second pitch to explain your purpose in calling, and a list of your questions
- Smile into the phone.

Here we have also discussed the Three Ps of Networking

1. **Prepare:** Do what you need to do to get ready.
2. **Practice:** Practice what you want to say over and over and over.
3. **Pull yourself together:** Part of feeling confident at a networking meeting is feeling good about yourself.

We have also discussed that Professional Email Etiquette has become extremely important as Email has become an inseparable part of our daily lives and greatly influence our networking efforts. Some elements of the Professional Email Etiquette are :

- **Email Etiquette:** Include a subject line that "helps" the reader.
- **Possible Reasons:** A meaningful subject line helps to clarify what your message is about – and also might help the reader to prioritize reading your email.

- **Email Etiquette:** Include a greeting (Dear...) and a closing (Sincerely,)
- **Possible Reasons:** Email should mimic a written letter. Always begin with Dear.... – and end with Sincerely. Sincerely is often the best “professional” choice for a closing.
- **Email Etiquette:** Use business language, spell check, and avoid abbreviations.
- **Possible Reasons:** Emails are considered professional or business correspondence. You want to be sure everything is spelled correctly and can be easily understood.



## 14.9 Self-assessment questions

1. Networking for which purpose means talking with friends, family members, and acquaintances about your goals, your interests, and your dreams?
  - a. The purpose of interpersonal development
  - b. Both a & d
  - c. The purpose of career development
  - d. The purpose of educational development
  
2. Since most individuals prefer to talk by phone, an e-mail serves only as a means of introduction, and will rarely yield a written response. Therefore, you must take responsibility for the follow-up.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
3. Which of the below provided can be cited as the greatest disadvantage of sending an e-mail is the potential for -.
  - a. Over-familiarity
  - b. Conflicts
  - c. Either a or d
  - d. Informality
  
4. To prepare for a face-to-face interview, write a script and practice it. Know why you are calling (have notes). Prepare yourself on how to leave a message if the person doesn't pick up or isn't available.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
5. Which of the below provided has become extremely important as Email has become an inseparable part of our daily lives and greatly influence our networking efforts?
  - a. Professional Email Etiquette
  - b. Professional networking
  - c. Casual Email Etiquette
  - d. None of the them

6. From the context of overcoming networking nervousness it is useful to keep in mind that people are usually very willing to give advice. This is so because -
- a. Everyone likes being regarded as an expert
  - b. Everyone likes being regarded as a novice
  - c. Everyone likes being regarded as a professional
  - d. Both b&c
7. View \_\_\_\_\_ as relationship building. You are developing advocates for your professional life.
- a. None of them
  - b. Informational interviewing
  - c. Intentional interviewing
  - d. Impressive interviewing
8. To prepare for a face-to-face meeting, do a lot of the same as you would for a phone call. If you're meeting with someone to get information about the work they do or a particular company, visit the company's website (if they have one) to learn more about it ahead of time.
- a. True
  - b. False
9. Which of the below provided continues to grow and change in order to accommodate business relationships as well as networking for professionals?
- a. Social media technology
  - b. Social Groups
  - c. Communities
  - d. None

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Click on the links below to view additional reference material for this chapter

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[PPT](#)

[MCQ](#)

[Video Lecture](#)