

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

SEMESTER'S BUSINESS

- THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS
 - Definition of Communication
 - Why we communicate
 - The Communication cycle
 - Barriers of Communication
- BASIC SKILLS OF COMMUNICATION
 - Listening Skills
 - Reading Skills
 - Non-Verbal Skills.

SEMESTER'S WORK

- COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS
- What is an Organization?
- Organization Charts
- Lines of Authority
- Upward, Downward and Horizontal Communication.
- PREPARING EFFICIENT BUSINESS MESSAGES
- Audience Analysis
- Information Packaging

WRITING

- Narration
- Description
- Arguments
- Exposition.
- ORAL COMMUNICATION
- Speeches and Presentations
- Communication Apprehension
- interviews

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- Good News Letters
- Bad News Letters
- Curriculum Vitae
- Letters of Recommendation
- MEMOS, MEETINGS AND MINUTES
- REPORTS
- Types
- Purposes
- Formats
- PROPOSALS

REFERENCES

- *Critical Literacies* – Krista Ratcliffe.
- *Listening* – Andrew Wolvin, Carolyn Coakley.
- *Human Communication* – Judy Pearson et al
- *Academic Literacy* – Jill Lewis
- *Application.Communication* – James Payne
- *Communicating Technical Information* – Donald Pattow.
- *Technical Communication* – Rebecca Burnett
- *Business and Administrative Communication* – Kitty O. Locker
- *Fundamentals of Human Communication* – Patricia Kearney
- *Excellence in Business Communication* – John Thill
- *Learning and Communicating* – Yaw Sekyi Baidoo
- *Communication Skills* – P.P. Adolinama.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

- It is to help us to communicate better by talking about communication. Learning about communication helps us to do it better.
- The course is to help us to communicate better at the workplace.
- To help us to avail ourselves of any new technological developments to send and receive oral, written and non-verbal messages.
- To help us develop our skills of communication.

SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE

- There is a difference between a skill and knowledge:
- Having knowledge means having information, facts, ideas and principles. A skill is the ability to do something well.
- Knowledge is gained through study while skills are acquired through training and experience.
- Knowledge may or may not have an end product but a skill has an end product. A skill is always demonstrable while knowledge may not be.
- A skill is acquired over a long period and takes a long time to lose. Knowledge may be gained and lost in a short time.
- This course is about skills not knowledge.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

- A process is a sequence of interdependent and linked procedures to achieve a goal or an end product.
- Communication like other human activities is a process because it is a set of actions performed deliberately to achieve a result.
- Communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding in which participants create and share meaning. It is the process by which meaning is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols and signs.
- Examples: A baby crying. Two young people who want to marry. People demonstrating.

LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

- The Cliché Level: This is the level where we deal with platitudes, trite expressions like How are you? These questions demand no answers and when answered are not taken seriously. This is communication at the surface.
- Opinion Level: Opinions and preferences are sought and given. This level is deeper and more intimate than the first. Topics here could cover a wide range: food, colours, car models, football, politics and religion. This level could generate conflicts.
- The Emotional Level: The most intimate level where people share their feelings of hate, love, fear and rejection.

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

- Intrapersonal Communication: Before we communicate with others, we create in ourselves the meaning we want to transfer. We think to ourselves in words and images. We also think about the messages other people send us.
- Interpersonal Communication: When two or more people actively engage in exchanging messages
- Group Communication: This is communication within a group. It could also be public speaking where a speaker addresses an audience.
- Organizational Communication: This is communication within an organization or the processes through which messages are passed to members of an organization
- Cross cultural communication: Communication across cultures.
- Mediated Communication: This is mass communication or the processes through which professional communicators use technology to communicate the same message to a very large group of people at the same time. We need media literacy to become critical consumers and producers of mediated communication.

FEATURES OF COMMUNICATION

- Communication is complicated.
- An increased quantity does not increase the quality. Sometimes the more we communicate, the more we disagree.
- Communication is inevitable. We communicate by nature and by choice.
- Communication is irreversible. Cringeworthy comments and messages cannot be taken back
- Communication is unrepeatable.

THE GENERAL AIMS OF COMMUNICATION

- To inform: Giving data or messages to initiate or facilitate some action or decision.
- To persuade: Giving information to secure acceptance and compliance and to change the attitude of the recipient.
- To request: Giving information about needs or requirements so as to elicit information or action.
- To confirm: Giving information to clarify or crystallize previous communication, ensuring that both parties have the same understanding.
- To build relationship: Using information to maintain mutual trust, loyalty and respect between sender and receiver.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

- Communication is at the heart of human existence.
- Development has been made possible because of communication and our extended ability to communicate more swiftly, widely and accurately.
- Technical professionals who communicate effectively – regardless of their areas of expertise – usually achieve more career success and have greater job satisfaction.
- Communication is used at the workplace during meetings, negotiations, conferences and teleconferences.

THE IMPORTANCE ...

- Effective communication is crucial in certain professions like law, marketing, selling insurance, medicine and teaching.
- We need effective communication skills to manage ethnic, racial and regional differences.
- Effective communication and managers' communication skills are extremely important for effective organizational behavior.
- Employers value good communication skills over technical expertise and computer skills.
- Computer is crucial in inter-personal relationships. It is therapeutic, cathartic, phatic, informative and pragmatic. We learn about ourselves through the mirror of other people. Chronic depression is caused by lack of communication. In marriages the greatest cause of breakdown in America is lack of communication.
- In our professions we are promoted to don the dress of the communicator.

THE COMMUNICATION CYCLE

- Communication is a cycle with four main ingredients: The Sender, The Message, The Receiver and the Feedback.
- The Sender: He has an impulse to communicate. He selects and plans the message.
- He encodes the message or turns the idea into a message. The code could be verbal or non-verbal, oral or written.
- He then relays the message. He selects the medium and the channel. The medium could be visual – gestures, charts, pictures, diagrams, slides. It could also be written. It could also be the oral medium, face-to-face or the telephone. The channel could be the notice board, the house journal, the computer.

THE CHOICE OF MEDIUM AND CHANNEL

- Time: How fast the message is prepared and transmitted. How fast the message must reach the receiver.
- The complexity of the message.
- Distance and location of audience
- The need for a written record to confirm a transaction or for a legal documentation.
- The need for interaction.
- The need for confidentiality.
- Sensitivity to the effect of the message.
- Cost – real or relative.

THE RECEIVER

- He receives the message. He should learn to listen and read well.
- He decodes the message. If all goes well he assigns the same meaning to the words as the speaker meant or intended.
- He sends a feedback.
- The feedback indicates to the sender that the message has or has not been successfully received, understood or interpreted.
- It may be positive or negative.
- In Business Communication, do not take silence as agreement or understanding.
- The feedback may indicate significant communication barriers.

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

- These are obstacles that prevent effective exchange of thoughts and ideas.
- There are two main communication barriers: Distortion and Noise.
- Distortion refers to the way the meaning of a communication is lost in handling at the decoding and the encoding stages.
- It happens when the precise intention of the sender is not translated accurately into words and so the 'wrong message' is sent.
- It also happens when the message is not properly understood by the receiver so that the 'wrong message' is received.

DISTORTION

- Causes of Distortion
- Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.
- Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents. Pants or trousers.
- Incorrect use of words, eg terminate.
- Technical or obscure terms.
- Cultural differences leading to differing attitudes and opinions.
- Lack of attention, interest, distractions and irrelevance to the listener. Lack of concentration or cooperation.
- Emotional barriers and taboos: Some topics are off limits for some people

NOISE

- It is any distraction or interference in the communication environment which obstructs the process of communication by affecting the clarity, accuracy or even the arrival of the message.
- Physical Noise: Any unpleasant, irritating or unwanted sound which interferes with the reception of a message. Passing traffic, loud music.
- Technical Noise: This involves the failure of the channel or medium of communication while information is being transmitted. Examples: breakdown in the PA system, poor and illegible handwriting, poorly produced duplicates, bad grammar and wrong punctuation.

NOISE

- Psychological Noise: This is how the psychological or mental state of the communicator influences how the message is sent received or perceived. Emotions of anger, fear, prejudice, nervousness or shyness.
- Differences in mental ability or understanding, linguistic or numerical ability.
- Social Noise: The way people interact or relate to one another may also be a barrier to communication.
- Personal differences: Racial, ethnic, political or religious.
- Different social classes: Different values, opportunities and expectations.
- Education and training.
- Age: Hearing, sight, mobility and experience
- Gender.
- Personality traits and types.

OTHER POTENTIAL BARRIERS

- The impulse not to communicate.
- Information overload: Giving more information than the brain can handle in the time available.
- Perceptual bias and selectivity: People only hear what they want to hear.
- Poor listening or reading habits.
- Subordinate fear of transmitting bad information to superiors.
- Lack of credibility and congeniality. Credibility is whatever inspires trust or belief in the receiver. Congeniality is positive appeal to the recipient.

FACTORS IN CREDIBILITY

- Prestige or reputation: Knowledge, expertise or experience.
- An implied expert like an actor wearing a lab coat may command credibility.
- Prestigious or famous people: Ads normally use them.
- When the source of information appears honest and straightforward giving both sides of the argument
- An objective and unbiased expert.
- Someone appearing to be acting against his own interests.
- Disinterest: Not having anything to lose or gain makes a source credible.

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THANKS FOR READING**

for clarification and questions,
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