The Seven Cs of Effective Communication

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- To compose effective written or oral messages, you must apply certain communication principles. These principles provide guidelines for choice of content and style of presentation, adapted to the purpose and receiver of your message is called the "seven Cs," they are completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy, and correctness.
- The 7 Cs provide a checklist for making sure that your meetings, emails, conference calls, reports, and presentations are well constructed and clear so your audience gets your message.

THE SEVEN Cs

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

1- COMPLETENESS

Message is complete when it contains all facts the reader or listener needs for the reaction you desire.

As you strive for completeness, keep the following guidelines in mind;

- Provide all necessary information.
- Answer all questions asked.
- Give something extra when desirable.

Provide All Necessary Information

Answering the five W's helps make messages clear: Who, What, When, Where, and Why.

- Request for the merchandise
- Reserve a hotel banquet room

Answer All Questions Asked

Look for questions: some may even appear buried within a paragraph. Locate them and then answer precisely.

Give Something Extra, When Desirable

- Use your good judgment in offering additional material if the sender's message was incomplete.
- I think I would like to attend my first meeting of the association, even though I am not acquainted with your city. Will you please tell me where the next meeting is being held?

COMPLETENESS

EXERCISE

- 1. Please email me in return the departures from Lahore to Karachi on the 8th.
- 2. Today there is meeting in the office.
- 3. You are the president of an industry association and have received the following inquiry from an out of town member, "I think I would like to attend my first meeting of the association, even though I am not acquainted with your city. Will you please tell me where the next meeting is being held?
- How would you reply to this letter keeping in mind Completeness of the message?

Incomplete Letter

- "Thank you for the confidence you have showed us by the account you recently opened. All our facilities are at your disposal, and any time we can be of service, please call on us. Our appreciation is best expressed by our being of service to you."
- How would you like to revise this message this letter keeping in mind Completeness of the message?

Revised Letter

Thank you for the confidence you have shown in the First Federal by the savings account you recently opened. Our goal is to make all our services to you both pleasant and helpful.

Among the conveniences and services available to you at First Federal, you may be especially interested in these:

- YOUR PASSBOOK DEPOSTITS earn 61/2% interest compound monthly.
- BETTER-THAN-CHECKING services helps you pay bills by phone, earns, interest on your money, and permits using our 24-hour cash machines.
- MORTGAGE LOANS help you to buy, build, or refinance a home or to borrow for property repairs and improvements.
- With our MONEY MARKET CERTIFICATES you can earn interest at various current high rates, depending on time and amount of your investment. The enclosed leaflet gives you more details about these and other services available to you at First Federal.
- FREE CUSTOMER PARKING is provided in the lot north of your office. The teller stamps your parking slip, entitling you to free parking while doing business here. Office hours are 9:00am to 4:30pm weekdays except for Friday, when the doors remain open until 6:00pm.

You are most welcome to come in whenever we can assist you. Please consider this association your financial headquarters for your savings and borrowing needs.

2- CONCISENESS

Conciseness is saying what you want to say in the fewest possible words without sacrificing the other C qualities. A concise message is complete without being wordy.

To achieve conciseness, observe the following suggestions;

- Eliminate wordy expressions.
- Include only relevant material.
- Avoid unnecessary repetition.

Eliminate Wordy Expressions

 Use single words in place of phrases. Even Winston Churchill made extensive use of simple, one syllable words.

Example

Wordy: At this time

Concise: Now

Wordy: In due course

Concise: Soon

Wordy: Due to the fact that

Concise: Because

Exercise

- Find single word substitutes for the phrases
- Along the same lines
- In due course
- Consensus of opinion
- Date of policy
- Have need for
- During the time of the day
- During the year of
- Few and far between
- For a price of

Similarly

Soon

Consensus

Due date

Need

During the day

During xxxx

Almost

For \$

Include Only Relevant Material

Stick to the purpose of the message, avoid long introduction, unnecessary explanations, excessive adjectives and prepositions, and go to the important point tactfully and concisely.

Wordy: We hereby wish to let you know that our company is pleased with the confidence you have respond in us.

Concise: We appreciate your confidence.

Exercise

• At this time I am writing to you to enclose an interview card, which has been post-paid, for the purpose of arranging a convenient time when we might get together for a personal interview.

Please return the enclosed interview card to set up a convenient time for an interview.

Avoid Unnecessary Repetition

- Use a shorter name after you have mentioned the long one once. Instead of the "North Central Company," use "North Central"
- Use Pronouns or Initials rather than repeat long names.
 - Instead of the American Association of Technical Analysis, use "it" or "they" or AATA
- Cut out all needless repetition of phrases and sentences.

Exercise

Will you ship us sometime, anytime during the month of October would b fine, or even November if you are rushed (November would suit us just as well, in fact a little bit better) 300 of the regular 3 by 15 inch blue felt armbands with while sewn letters in the center. Thank you in advance for sending these along to us by parcel post, and not express, as express is too expensive.

Please ship parcel post, before the end of November, 300 regular 3 by 15 inch blue felt armbands with while sewn letter in the center.

Exercise

Make the following sentences concise:

- Due to the fact that the seat belt broke, the passenger sustained a high degree of injury.
- The broken seat belt caused severe injury of a passenger.
- In accordance with the will of the clients, we undertook the steps mentioned in the report.
- Steps from the aforementioned report are taken according the clients' will.
- During the month of April, we will begin to package our product in boxes rectangular in shape and yellow in color.
- In April, we will begin to package our product in yellow rectangular boxes.

3-CONSIDERATION

Consideration means preparing every message with the message receivers in mind; try to put yourself in their place. You are considerate, you do not lose your temper, you do not accuse and you do not charge them without facts. The thoughtful consideration is also called "you-attitude".

- Focus on "You" instead of "I" and "We".
- Show audience benefit or interest in the receiver.
- Emphasize positive, pleasant facts.

Focus on "You" Instead of "I" or "We"

• Using "you" does help project a you-attitude. But overuse can lead to a negative reaction.

Example

We-Attitude: I Am delighted to announce that we will be extending our hours to make shopping more convenient.

You-Attitude: You will be able to shop evenings with the extended hours.

Show Audience Benefit or Interest in the Receiver

 Reader may react positively when benefits are shown them. Benefits must meet recipients needs, address their concerns, or offer them rewards. Most important they must be perceived as benefits by the receivers.

Exercise

Write with a 'you' attitude, it shows consideration

- I want to send my congratulations for ----
- Congratulations to you on winning ----
- We will ship soon the goods by May 4 order—
- Your order will be shipped by May 4----
- We pay eight percent interest on ----
- You earn eight percent interest on----

Emphasize positive, pleasant facts.

Negative- Unpleasant	Positive - Pleasant
It is <u>impossible to ope</u> n an account for you today.	As soon as your signature card reaches us, we will gladly open an account
We <u>do not refund</u> if the returned item is <u>soiled and unsalable</u> .	We <u>refund</u> when the returned item is <u>clean and resalable.</u>
When you travel on company expense, you will <u>not receive</u> approval for <u>first class</u> fare.	When you travel on company expense, your <u>approved fare</u> is for <u>tourist</u> class.

4-CONCRETENESS

Communicating concretely means being specific, definite, and vivid rather than vague and general. Often it means using denotatives (direct, explicit, often dictionary based) rather than connotative words (ideas or notions suggested by or associated with a word or phrase).

Example:

<u>General</u>: He is very intelligent student of class and stood first in the class.

<u>Concrete:</u> Ali's GPA in BSCS was 3.9/4.0; he stood first in his class.

CONCRETENESS

The following guidelines should help you compose concrete, convincing message;

- Use specific facts and figures.
- Put action in your verbs.
- Choose vivid, image building words.

Use Specific Facts and Figures

• It is desirable to be precise and concrete in both written and oral business communication.

Vague, General, Indefinite Student GMAT scores are higher. Concrete, Precise

In 1996, the GMAT scores averaged 600; by 1997 they had risen to 610.

Exercise

- Rewrite the following in concrete form as the sentences are too general and vague.
- This computer reproduces letters fast
- New generation computer types 400 letters in one minute
- Our product has won several prizes.
- Our product 'xyz' has won five prices for performance and durability.
- These brakes stop a car within a short distance.
- These brakes stop a car within five meters.

Put Action in Your Verbs

 Verbs can activate other words and help make your sentences alive, more vigorous.

Use active rather than passive verbs.

- Example: The tests were administered by the professors.
- Concrete: The professors administered the tests.

Put action in your verbs rather than nouns and infinites.

- Example: Professor H. will give consideration to the report.
- Concrete: Professor H. will consider the report

Use active rather than passive voice

Use active rather than passive voice because it shows life in a sentence when a subject acts.

- Active verbs are; <u>More specific</u> as "A dean decided" than "a decision has been made by"
- 2. **Personal** as "You will note" rather than "it will be noted"
- 3. Concise as "Figures show" rather than "it is shown by figures"
- 4. <u>Emphatic</u> as "Students held a contest" rather than " A contest was held by the students".

USE PASSIVE VOICE WHEN..

- USE PASSIVE VOICE WHEN:
- 1. When you want to <u>avoid personal comments</u> as in "The October cheque was not included" is better than "you failed to include the October cheque"
- OR "Attendance at the meeting is required" is less harsh than "you must attend the meeting".
- 2. When you want to **stress the object of action**.
- As "You are invited" is more suitable than, "we invite you"
- 3. When the **doer is not important.**
- As "Three announcements were made before the meeting started" the announcer is not important.

Put action in verbs, not in nouns

Example: The function of this office is the collection of payments and compilation of statements.

Concrete: This office collects payments and compiles statements.

Put action in Verbs, not in infinitives

Example: The duty of a secretary is to check all incoming mails and to record it.

Concrete: A secretary checks and record all the incoming mails.

Exercise-2

Put action into the words by using active instead of passive voice.

- Tests were made by us
- A full report will be sent to you by the supervisor.

5- CLARITY

Getting the meaning from your head to the head of your reader (accurately) is the purpose of clarity. Of course you know it is not simple. We all carry around our own unique interpretations, ideas, experiences associated with words.

- Choose precise, concrete and familiar words.
- Construct effective sentences and paragraphs.

Choose Precise, Concrete, and Familiar Words

 Clarity is achieved in part through a balance between precise language and familiar language. Precise words need not be pretentious.

Familiar

About

After

Home

For example

Pay

Invoice

Pretentious

Circa (L)

Subsequent

Domicile

e.g. (L)

Remuneration

Statement for

Payment

Unfamiliar

After our perusal of pertinent data, the conclusion is that a lucrative market exists for the subject properly.

Familiar

The data we studied show that your property is profitable and in high demand.

Plumber's Story

A plumber wrote to the Bureau of Standards saying that he had found hydrochloric acid is good for cleaning out clogged drains.

In reply to the plumber's message, a technical specialist of the bureau wrote:

The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable, but chlorine residue is incompatible with metallic permanence.

The plumber replied that he was glad the bureau agreed.

We cannot assume responsibility for the production of toxic and noxious residues with hydrochloric acid, and suggest that you use an alternate procedure.

The plumber again said that he was glad the bureau agreed with him.

Don't use hydrochloric acid; it eats the hell out of the pipes.

Construct Effective Sentences and Paragraphs

- At the core of clarity is the sentences. This grammatical statement, when clearly expressed, moves thoughts within a paragraph. Important characteristics to consider are length, unity, coherence, and emphasis.
- Unclear: Being an excellent lawyer, I am sure you can help us.
- Clear: Being an excellent lawyer, you can surely help us.

6- COURTESY

True courtesy involves being aware not only of the perspective of others, but also their feelings. Courtesy stems from a sincere you-attitude.

The following are suggestions for generating a courteous tone;

- Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful, and appreciative.
- Use expressions that show respect.
- Choose nondiscriminatory expressions.

Be Sincerely Tactful, Thoughtful, and Appreciative

• Though few people are intentionally abrupt or blunt, these negative traits are a common cause of discourtesy.

Tactless, Blunt

Stupid letter; I can't understand any of it.

Clearly, you did not read my latest fax.

More Tactful

It's my understanding...

Sometimes my wording is not precise; let me try again

Use Expressions that Show Respect

No reader wants to receive message that offend.

Omit Irritating Expressions

You are delinquent You failed to Contrary to your inference Inexcusable Simply nonsense

Choose Nondiscriminatory Expressions

• Another requirement for courtesy is the use of nondiscriminatory language that reflects equal treatment of people regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, and physical features.

Questionable

Freshman

Manpower

More Desirable

Entering students; first year student.

Workers; employees; work force personnel

Exercise

Use gender friendly substitutes

- Mankind
- The best man for the job
- Manmade
- Manpower
- Businessman
- Sales man
- Chairman

Exercise

- You guys should all be concerned about the issue.
- Each manger has an assigned place he should park his car....
- Each customer will have change noted on his bill

7- CORRECTNESS

Note: Read handout for the correctness.

At the core of correctness is proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

However a message may be perfect grammatically and mechanically but still insult or lose a customer. The correctness, as applied to business messages, also means the following three characteristics:

- Use the right level of language.
- Check accuracy of figures, facts, and words.
- Maintain acceptable writing mechanics.

Use the Right Level of Language

• Informal writing is more characteristics of business writing—even more so if that writing occurs in an E-mail message.

More Formal

Participate

Procure

Endeavor

Less Formal

Join

Get

Try

Check Accuracy of Figures, Facts, and Words

A good check of data is to have another person read and comment on the validity of the material.