**UNIT 3: EFFECTIVE VOCAL COMMUNICATION**

**EFFECTIVE TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS:**

## 1. Prepare for the call

It won’t sound natural if you prepare a script, but consider what you want to say, with whom you need to speak, and whether there is any information that the other person may want from you.

Are you likely to need any specific vocabulary that you don’t usually use? If so, you can look it up before you start the call.

If you are speaking with people in other parts of the world, consider whether there is a time difference and when would be the best time to make the call.

Try to find a quiet place to make the call so that you won’t be disturbed.

## 2. Be clear about what you want to achieve

Before you make the phone call, think about the purpose of the call. For example, do you want to gather information, communicate information, negotiate, obtain agreement, make arrangements, sell something, or develop an idea?

There are many reasons for making telephone calls. If you are clear about what you want to achieve, it will be easier to measure whether you were successful.

## 3. Remember the other person has no non-verbal cues

Unless you are on a videoconference, the other person will have no idea if you are nodding, shaking your head, smiling or scowling at them! They have no visual cues, so you need to communicate everything verbally.

## 4. Think about your tone of voice

People don’t just communicate with their words. Messages are also conveyed in the way that words are delivered. If you sound bored, angry or disinterested, the other person may well pick up on it and it will then be irrelevant how good your proposal is or how valid your arguments. It’s true that they can’t see you, but a lot can be communicated through your tone of voice, so make sure that it matches the message that you are trying to get across.

You may feel unsure about speaking in English, but try not to let this come across in your tone of voice. Otherwise people may think that you are unsure about your message too.

## 5. Make sure you listen carefully

Communicating is not just about speaking. You need to listen as well.

Particularly if you aren’t speaking your native language, there is a tendency to focus too much on your own words because you want them to be right. However you are having a dialogue and the other person will also be making contributions, asking questions or directing the conversation, so you need to be aware of these things as well. You don’t want the other person to think that you are not interested in what they have to say.

## 6. Speak clearly and be succinct

I worked with a learner who always spoke quickly so that the other person wouldn’t hear the mistakes. The problem with this strategy is that she often had to repeat herself because she spoke too quickly and the other person didn’t understand what she said. Don’t make this mistake!

Also, try to be clear. Long sentences don’t always show fluency. Sometimes they just result in the other person losing concentration or having no idea of the actual point.

Throughout the telephone call, Try to bring your ideas across in a structured way. Don’t be tempted to hop from one subject to another as new ideas come into your head.

## 7. If you don’t understand something, ask

This is actually a good idea in any situation. Especially if you are communicating on the telephone, or in another language, there will be times when you are not sure about something that the other person said. It could be because they have not been clear. Maybe there was background noise. It could be that they were speaking quickly or they have a regional accent. The reason doesn’t matter. It’s better to ask for clarification than to guess what the other person meant or to be unsure about what they think or are going to do.

## 8. Don’t be tempted to do other things at the same time

Even if the other person can’t see you, they are likely to hear if you are walking around, answering emails, tidying up or doing other activities that take your attention away from the phone call.

Give the other person your full attention. If you don’t, it can come across as disrespectful and they could think that you are not interested in them, or that you don’t think the conversation is important enough to give it your full attention.

If something really urgent happens, offer to call them back. Try not to take other calls or allow other people to disturb you unless the matter is really important.

## 9. Summarise the conversation so that everybody knows what’s expected of them

You could either do this at the end of the call or you could send an email afterwards. Either way, it’s good to be clear about what was agreed during the call, who is responsible for carrying out which tasks and whether you will get in touch again to check on progress, have a meeting or involve others. This gives everybody the same information and reduces the risk of misunderstandings.

## 10. Voicemails – be clear and keep it short

Most of the other tips were about direct communication with people but voicemails are also a way of communicating information using the telephone.

If you need to give a lot of information, an email is likely to be the better choice so that the recipient can refer to it easily without having to write down the details.

If you leave a voice message:

\* make sure that your message is clear  
keep to the point and avoid long, rambling messages  
\* make sure that the other person knows how they can contact you and what, if anything, you want them to do.

**EFFECTIVEMEETINGS**:

### 1. Obtain Written Agenda In Advance

Vague intentions to have a discussion on a topic rarely end on a productive note. If you are just getting started with agendas, start with a point form list of topics to be discussed and make sure that material is provided to attendees at least one day before the meeting. For better results, provide background information on the agenda so that everyone attending has the same information.

What about when you are asked to attend a meeting without an agenda? Ask, “Can you please send me an agenda for the meeting so that I can prepare?”

**Tip:** For frequently held meetings such as a weekly status meeting on a project, you can save time by creating a meeting template. Once you have that in place, preparing an agenda becomes a matter of filling in the blanks.

### 2. Review The Attendee List

The people in the meeting room make or break your effectiveness. I have been in MANY meetings where the key person – a manager or executive – is not present. As a result, no significant decisions can be made.

For Meeting Organizers: limit the number of people attending the meeting. The purpose of meetings is to make decisions and get work done. For the most part, meetings are not the best way to simply share information (exception: meetings are helpful to share sensitive information)

For Meeting Attendees: read the attendee list before you walk into the room. Do you see any unfamiliar names? If so, consider looking them up in your organization’s directory (or on LinkedIn). Surprises are not your friend when it comes to meetings.

### ****3. Manage The Meeting By The Clock****

Watching the clock is important in an effective meeting. When nobody takes charge of managing time, it is easy to become careless and unfocused. Remember – when people attend a meeting they cannot do anything else. Make the time count!

For Meeting Organizers: starting the meeting on time and ending on time (or a few minutes early!) will quickly enhance your reputation as an organized person. If you are running a large or complex meeting, consider asking a colleague to serve as time keeper. If managing meetings to the clock is challenging for you, the parking lot habit (see #4 below) will be a game changer!

For Meeting Attendees: start by arriving early at the meeting (I suggest 5 minutes for in person meetings and 1-2 meetings for conference calls). That means avoiding back to back committments on your calendar whenever possible.

### ****4. Use The “Parking Lot” To Manage Off Topic Discussions****

The first time I saw a meeting facilitator use a parking lot, I was impressed. This helpful device performs two useful functions. First, it serves to keep the meeting focused on the stated agenda. Second, the parking lot acknowledges important points raised by attendees.

Warning: The Parking Lot habit must be combined with the Follow Up habit if you wish to be truly effective. Otherwise, you are likely to gain a reputation for simply making a show of acknowledging other people.

As a meeting organizer, here are a few steps to use the parking lot concept.

1. At the beginning of the meeting, explain you expect everyone to focus their discussions on the agenda. Further, explain that this rule will help the meeting stay productive and end on time.
2. Keep the meeting agenda document in front of you as a guide.
3. Go through each agenda item
4. Monitor and contribute to the discussion
5. When someone raises an interesting point that does not relate to the agenda, say the following: “Thank you for that point, Tim. However, Microsoft Visual Studio tools go beyond the purpose of this meeting. Let me write down that item in the parking lot and I will include it in the meeting notes that I will send out by email so we can explore that point at the right time.”

### ****5. Prewire Important Points and Decisions****

From time to time, major decisions will be discussed in meetings. It could be a decision on which projects to fund or which projects to cancel. Serious decisions like this require the pre-wiring habit. In essence, you communicate with people one-on-one before the meeting about the decision before the meeting occurs. While time consuming, this approach increases your chances of success (and avoids surprises other meeting attendees).

**Tip:** For an extended discussion of the pre-wire concept, I recommend the excellent Manager Tools podcast: [How to Prewire a Meeting](http://career.managertools.com/2007/11/how-to-prewire-a-meeting).

### 6. Take Notes For Yourself

Taking notes in meetings is an essential skill yet I am often struck by how often people forget to do it. The key reason to take notes in a meeting is to record any questions or assignments that have been directed to you. Let’s look at how attendees and organizers can act on notes.

Take notes in a paper notebook (e.g. a Moleskine notebook or something similar) rather than using a computer, tablet or other device. Even if you have fantastic abilities to focus on the meeting, other people may assume that you are “catching up on email” instead of paying attention to the meeting if you take notes on a computer.

Taking notes for Meeting Organizers: if you plan to send minutes or a summary of the meeting to attendees, say this at the start of the meeting and explain what you will include. Sending out meeting minutes, even a few paragraphs or bullet points, is a best practice.

Taking notes for Meeting Attendees: bring a copy of the agenda and use that document to guide your note taking. Focus on the decisions made in the meeting and items that require further investigation or action on your part.

### 7. Follow Up On The Meeting

The art and science of follow up is vital professional habit and it also matters in the context of meetings. When it comes to meeting tips, following up in a timely basis is a great way to manage stress and make a good impression on others. For the best results, I suggest following up (e.g. making a phone call, writing an email etc) the same day as the meeting. For very important matters, make a note on your calendar or task management tool of choice to continue following up until you reach a resolution.

**BREAKING BAD NEWS**:

**Introduction:**

Recall the last time you received bad news. What was helpful for you? What could the bearer of bad news have done to make it easier for you?

Delivering bad news is often difficult for the doctor and the patient. With the bad news, patients are often thrust into a world of uncertainty and anxiety, which is often how medical students feel when they are asked to deliver bad news. It is very helpful to observe an experienced clinician deliver bad news, but this is a time when patients least likely want someone else present.

There has been a lot of research into the best way to deliver bad news and key concepts from patient and physician feedback have been developed. There are a number of different acronyms available to help remember the steps in delivering bad news. They are very similar and it doesn’t matter which you chose to use, as long as you have an approach which covers the main concepts. The aim of this module is to describe the SAD NEWS model. This has been developed based on the SPIKES model, but the SAD NEWS model emphasizes that after the bad news has been delivered, it is important to anticipate the emotional response and wait for the patient to signal that he/she is ready to move on. When the patient is ready to continue, a discussion can ensue and the patient’s concerns can be addressed and questions answered. This module outlines the SAD NEWS steps.

VIDEO CONFERENCING:

## Definition - What does Video Conferencing mean?

Video conferencing refers to conducting a video conference or video teleconference in which two or more sets of hardware and software interact while simultaneously transmitting and receiving video and audio signals from two or more geographic locations. Video conferencing may also involve sharing documents, various presentation materials, whiteboards, flip charts and similar group presentation visual aids. A telepresence system is most often used at the corporate or enterprise level and represents high-end video conferencing systems. Video conferencing is differentiated from video phone calls, which serve individuals as opposed to a conference. Video conferencing is also known as online video conferencing and PC video conferencing.

**UNIT4: EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

**EMAIL WRITING:**

## How to write a formal email

Follow these five simple steps to make sure your English emails are perfectly professional.

1. Begin with a greeting
2. Thank the recipient
3. State your purpose
4. Add your closing remarks
5. End with a closing

### Begin with a greeting

·Always open your email with a greeting, such as **“Dear Lillian”**. If your relationship with the reader is formal, use their family name (eg. **“Dear Mrs. Price”**). If the relationship is more casual, you can simply say, **“Hi Kelly”**. If you don’t know the name of the person you are writing to, use: **“To whom it may concern”** or **“Dear Sir/Madam”**.

### Thank the recipient

If you are replying to a client’s inquiry, you should begin with a line of thanks. For example, if someone has a question about your company, you can say, **“Thank you for contacting ABC Company”.** If someone has replied to one of your emails, be sure to say, **“Thank you for your prompt reply”** or **“Thanks for getting back to me”.** Thanking the reader puts him or her at ease, and it will make you appear more polite.

### State your purpose

If you are starting the email communication, it may be impossible to include a line of thanks. Instead, begin by stating your purpose. For example, **“I am writing to enquire about …”** or **“I am writing in reference to …”**.

Make your purpose clear early on in the email, and then move into the main text of your email. Remember, people want to read emails quickly, so keep your sentences short and clear. You’ll also need to pay careful attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation so that you present a professional image of yourself and your company.

### Add your closing remarks

Before you end your email, it’s polite to thank your reader one more time and add some polite closing remarks. You might start with **“Thank you for your patience and cooperation”** or **“Thank you for your consideration”** and then follow up with, **“If you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to let me know”** and **“I look forward to hearing from you”**.

### End with a closing

The last step is to include an appropriate closing with your name. **“Best regards”**, **“Sincerely”**, and **“Thank you”** are all professional. Avoid closings such as **“Best wishes”** or **“Cheers”** unless you are good friends with the reader. Finally, before you hit the send button, review and spell check your email one more time to make sure it’s truly perfect!

**BUSINESS REPORT WRITING:**

## Parts of a Business Report

Let's say Michael wanted to share with his principal information he has accumulated regarding best practices for teaching Latin. He could write a business report which may include some of the following fairly standard sections:

#### Executive Summary

Michael would likely start his report with an **executive summary**. Think of it as the Cliff's Notes of the business report. Michael would summarize the main points of the report, such as the report topic, the data obtained, the data analysis methods, and recommendations based on the data. The summary could be as short as a paragraph or as long as four pages, depending on the length of the full report. If Michael's principal is short on time, Michael would provide the executive summary to him so that he doesn't have to read the entire report. While the executive summary comes first in a report, it is written after the main part of the report has been written.

#### Table of Contents

If the report is lengthy, Michael will include a **table of contents**. The table of contents lists the main topics the report covers and the page on which that information may be found. If Michael's principal is looking for specific information, he can go straight to the page that contains it.

#### Introduction

When it comes to writing the report, Michael will probably start with the **introduction**. The introduction sets the stage for what is included in the report. It highlights the major topics that are covered and provides background information on why the data in the report was collected. For example, Michael might state that the report describes the two most common teaching philosophies when it comes to teaching Latin and why he felt there was a need for a change from the teaching style usually supported by administration.

#### Body

Michael is now ready to address the **body** of the report. The body of the report describes the problem, the data that was collected, how the data was collected, and discusses the major findings. The body may be broken into subsections, with **subheadings** that highlight the specific point to be covered in that subsection. Michael could use headings such as 'How Do We Acquire Language' or 'Input Versus Output.' This additional structuring will make the report easier to read and understand.

#### Conclusion

Finally Michael will bring it all together with the **conclusion**. The conclusion explains how the data described in the body of the document may be interpreted or what conclusions may be drawn. The conclusion often suggests how to use the data to improve some aspect of the business or recommends additional research. For example, Michael may recommend that the principal allow him to remove the desks from his room, based on his research that suggested taking notes can sometimes detract from the language learning process.

#### Reference

If Michael used other sources of information to help him write his report, such as a federal database, he would include that in the **references**. The references section lists the resources used to research or collect the data for the report. References provide proof for your points and enable readers to review the original data sources themselves.

#### Appendix

Lastly, Michael may want to include an **appendix**. The appendix is optional and may include additional technical information that is not necessary to the explanation provided in the body and conclusion but supports the findings, such as charts or pictures, or additional research not cited in the body but relevant to the discussion.

If Michael isn't sure how to structure his report, he may want to investigate the wide variety of reports that many businesses use. Business reports generally fall into two categories: informational and analytical

**MEMO &ITS ANSWERING :**

* **Header**

1. Open your word processing software and select a “Memo” template. If the software doesn't have a template, go to the Microsoft Office Templates website, enter “memorandum” in the "Search For" field, and click “Search." Locate and select a memo template, click “Download” and follow the on-screen instructions to open it in your software.

2. Address the memo to a person, department or team next to “To:” on the template. If you're copying the memo to several people, type their names next to the "CC:” option.

3. Type your entire name and title next to “From:” on the document.

4. Insert the date on which you’re distributing the document on the “Date:” line.

5. Enter the title of the topic of the memorandum on the "Subj:,” “Subject:,” “Re:” or “Regarding:” line.

## Body

1. Place your cursor at least two lines down from the horizontal line that separates the header from body.

2. Type the section title “Introduction" and press "Enter" on your computer keyboard twice.

3. Enter an introductory sentence about the topic and a brief summary paragraph of the memo's purpose. For example, if questions relate to a recent meeting, you might type, “At our meeting on (date and time) we discussed (topic). This memo provides answers to the questions asked about (brief summary).” or “In response to your request, this memo answers questions about (brief summary).”

4. Type the first question and its answer, press "Enter" twice and then type another question and answer. Repeat as needed until you've covered all of the questions and answers you want to address.

5. Close the memo with one or two sentences outlining actions the recipient or recipients should immediately take in regard to the topic. In addition, provide the name and contact information of the person designated to address additional questions.

6. Format the memorandum. Edit titles and questions with bold, underline, bullet point or number formatting to make them stand out on the page. If the memo is more than one page long, add page numbers to the bottom of each page or add a right-aligned header featuring the memo sender or recipient’s name, the date and the page number to the top of each additional page

#### Tips

* To create a memo from scratch, type “Memo” at the top left corner of a blank document in bold, 48 point (pt) “Arial” font. Switch to non-formatted 10 pt or 12 pt “Arial” font, press “Enter” twice, add the header information, insert a horizontal line under the header to separate it from the text body and then write your memo as you would with a template.
* Always align text to the left margin and break information into short, single-spaced paragraphs. Separate paragraphs with a space.
* If you’re printing the memo and not using paper preprinted with the company letterhead, insert the company name or logo at the top right side of the first page of the memo and sign the memo next to your name in the header with initials.

**TAKING MINUTES OF MEETING**.

### The Main Parts of Meeting Minutes

Many organizations use a standard template or a special format for keeping minutes, and the order of the parts may vary.

* **Heading**The name of the committee (or other unit) and the date, location, and starting time of the meeting.
* **Participants**The name of the person conducting the meeting along with the names of all those who attended the meeting (including guests) and those who were excused from attending.
* **Approval of previous minutes**A note on whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and whether any corrections were made.
* **Action items (including unfinished business from the previous meeting)**A report on each topic discussed at the meeting. (For each item, note the subject of the discussion, the name of the person who led the discussion, and any decisions that may have been reached.)
* **Announcements**A report on any announcements made by participants, including proposed agenda items for the next meeting.
* **Next Meeting**A note on where and when the next meeting will be held.
* **Adjournment**A note on the time the meeting ended.
* **Signature line**  
  The name of the person who prepared the minutes and the date they were submitted.