

**NEW SYLLABUS  
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**B.B.A.  
B.B.A.  
(Computer Application)  
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B.B.A.  
(International Business)  
Semester-I**

# **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**Mrs. Radha Raj**



**SPPU New Syllabus**

*A Book Of*

# **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**For BBA : Semester - I**

[Course Code 102 : Credit - 03]

**BBA (CA) : Semester - I**

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**&**

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**Mrs. Radha Raj**

M.A. (Economics)

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# Syllabus ...

## **BBA & BBA (IB) : (Semester - I)**

### **1. Concept of Communication and Introduction to Communication**

- Role of Communication in Social and Economic System, Need for Effective Communication and Definition, Principles of Effective Communication, Barriers to Communication and Overcomings.

### **2. Methods and Types of Communication**

- Written Communication, Forms of Written Communication, Qualities, Difficulties in Written Communication, Constraints in Developing Effective Written Communication.
- Merits and Limitations of Written Communication, Listening Written Communication, Forms of Written Communication.
- Qualities, Difficulties in Written Communication, Constraints in Developing Effective Written Communication.

### **3. Business Correspondence**

- Concept, Need and Functions of Business Correspondence, Types of Business Letters, Layout Drafting of Business Letters, Sales, Orders Sales, Circulars and Business Promotion Letters, Written Methods and Types of Communication.

### **4. Analysis of Different Media of Communication**

- Fax Communication, Voice Mail, Emails, Teleconferencing, Communication through Social Media.



**1. Concept of Communication and Introduction to Communication**

- 1.1 Role of Communication in Social and Economic System
- 1.2 Need for Effective Communication
- 1.3 Meaning and Definition
- 1.4 Principles of Effective Communication
- 1.5 Barriers to Communication and Overcomings

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# 1...

## Concept of Communication and Introduction to Communication

### Learning Objectives...

- To understand the basic purpose of communication
- Ability to understand and comprehend the meaning of different forms of communication

1.1

### CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION AND INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

*"Communication is not a substitute for good management, but it is essential for good managements to operate effectively and efficiently".*

Communication is a process involving the sorting, selecting and sending of symbols in such a way, as to help the receiver perceive and recreate in his own mind, the meaning contained in the mind of the person who sends the communication. Communication involves the creation of meaning in the receiver by transferring a lot of information and thousands of potential stimuli. Communication enables us to grow as human beings, socially and in our business activities. It helps us learn to be aware of ourselves, to adjust to our environment and to become effective in all our endeavours.

To understand the importance of communication in our lives, let us look at the sad and at the same time, brilliant and inspiring story of Helen Keller and the isolation she felt before she was introduced by her teacher Miss Sullivan to the spelling of words and their association with objects. There cannot be a better example to explain the significance of communication in a person's life. Helen Keller, as is well known, lost her sight and hearing when she was eighteen months old. That deprived her of all contact with the outside world until she was nearly seven years old. She had an active mind and still retained the signs she learnt before the twin afflictions. Yet her impulses were crude and uncontrolled, and her thought process was unconnected. Miss Sullivan adopted innovative ways to teach her to recognise objects. Gradually, she started saying these words and was able to connect to the world. This helped her realise the joy of communication. There is a lot written about her contribution in various fields.

The need for communication is as basic as the hunger for food and drink, perhaps even more. It is said that, "The singing and chirping of birds, the croaking of frogs and

salamanders and the visual signals among birds and beasts are forms of communication. The dance of the honeybee is an extremely sophisticated means of communication, for it conveys to other bees, the precise direction and distance of the place where nectar will be found." Communication is a continuing process necessary to all life forms.

Communication is defined as the exchange of ideas, messages or information, by speech, signals, writing or behaviour. Communication is the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop. It includes all the symbols of the mind, together with the means of conveying them, such as words, facial expressions, attitude and gesture, the tones of the voice etc. It also includes the modes of communication such as talking, writing, printing, and also how it is transmitted, such as telephones, telegraphs, postal services, text messages, email, TV, films, social media and all such developments aimed at conquering space and time.

Through communication, people exchange and share information with one another, and also understand and influence one another's attitudes, behaviours, and understandings.

Communication helps organisations to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. People have to listen to others so as to understand them and also gain necessary information. Communication helps managers create a motivated work environment which is free of conflict. It helps them to negotiate successfully. In short, communication is the essence of a good and effective organisational environment.

Without communication, societies and organisations would not function. If the communication process is broken, the entire organisation suffers. When communication is thorough, accurate, and timely, the organisation tends to be vibrant and effective.

The ability to communicate well, both orally and in writing, is a critical managerial skill and forms the foundation of effective leadership. Though it is not specified as such, many recruitment and promotion decisions are taken on the basis of communication skills of the candidates. Given equal academic qualifications among them, the tipping factor is this ability, as the effectiveness of an employee depends on how he communicates with other employees at all levels within the organisation and also with the outside stakeholders.

***When an organisation encourages good communication at all levels, employees remain enthusiastic, empowered, confident and inspired.***

### **Significance of Business Communication**

The significance of communication in the entire management process of an organisation can be seen from the following statements:

- **Primary means for people to obtain and exchange information:** Decisions always depend upon the quality and quantity of the information received. If the information base is poor or incomplete, the decision will often be inappropriate or incorrect and result in huge losses to the organisation.
- **Most time-consuming activity of a manager:** It is reported that managers spend between 70 to 90 percent of their time communicating with employees and other internal and external customers.
- **Represent power in the organisation:** An employee cannot do anything constructive in a work unit unless he or she is informed about what is to be done, when it is to be accomplished, who else is involved and the resources available to help achieve the task. The staff members, who have this information, become power centres and communicate appropriate instructions.

## 1.2 MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a word of Latin origin "Communis", which means 'common'. It means sharing of information or intelligence. Listening, speaking, reading, writing, facial expressions, body movements, action, colours, gestures, ideas, facts, opinions, information, understanding and other means allow individuals to communicate thoughts to other people and to themselves.]

[The dictionary meaning of the term communication is: "The exchange of thoughts, message or information, as by speech, signals, writing or behaviours." ]

Communication is a very comprehensive and complex phenomenon. It encompasses all forms of expression which serve the purpose of mutual understanding. A very simple and concise definition of the term could be: "Communication is a process of transmitting information, thoughts, opinions, messages, facts, ideas, views, attitudes, emotions and understanding from one person, place or thing to another person, place or thing. Communication means pouring our viewpoints in the minds of others".

Thus, communication is the transfer or transmission of information and understanding from one person to another with an effort to produce meaning. It is the sum of all things a person does, when he wants to create understanding in the minds of others.

It is obvious that to create understanding, the sender and the receiver of the message share and understand the same symbols of communication and all references to these symbols would be similar.

Considering the various ways in which many scholars have defined communication and explained its significance highlights the fact that this subject is a matter of great significance as to warrant continuous study and analysis. It signifies the amount of attention it has received over the decades.

1. **Katz and Kahn:** "*Communication – The exchange of information and the transmission of meaning – is the very essence of a social system or an organisation.*"
2. **Norman B. Sigband:** "Communication is the transmission and reception of ideas, feelings and attitudes, both verbally and non-verbally, eliciting a response. It is a dynamic concept underlying all kinds of living systems."
3. **Keith Davis:** "*Communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. It is essentially a bridge of meaning between people. By using this bridge of meaning, a person can safely cross the river of misunderstanding that separates all people.*"
4. **Louis A Allen:** "*Communication is the sum of all things that one person does when he wants to create an understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.*"
5. **Dr. McFarland:** "*Communication is the process of meaningful interaction among human beings. More specially, it is the process by which meanings are perceived and understandings are reached among human beings.*"

6. **M.T. Myers and G.E. Myers:** "Communication refers to a special kind of patterning: patterning which is expressed in symbolic form. For communication to take place between or among people, two requirements must be met: (1) a symbolic system must be shared by the people involved (we need to speak the same language or jargon or dialects) and (2) the associations between the symbols and their referents must be shared."
7. **Bellows, Gilson and Odiorne:** "Communication is defined as intercourse by words, letters, symbols or messages and a way that one organisation member shares meaning and understanding with another."
8. **Charles E. Redfield:** "Communication is the broad field of human interchange of facts and opinions and not the technologies of telephone, telegraph, radio and the like".
9. **Brown C.A.,** "Communication is a process of transmitting ideas or thoughts from one person to another person for the purpose of creating understanding in the thinking of the person receiving the communication."
10. **Lundberg,** "Communication is the form of interaction which takes place through symbols. The symbol may be gestural, pictorial, plastic, verbal, or any other which operate as stimuli to behaviour which would not be evoked by the symbol itself in the absence of special conditions of the person who responds."

Organisations require smooth communication within, as well with outside agencies and the public at large so that all functions are carried out effectively, within the set time frame and without any misunderstandings or friction. This signifies the study of Managerial communication. Many scholars have spent considerable time and effort to highlight the importance of this area of study, especially in these days of severe competition, globalisation and mingling of various nationalities and cultures.

1. **The American Society of Training Directors:** "The interchange of thought or information to bring about mutual understanding and confidence or good human relation."
2. **William Newman and Charles Summer:** "Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons. Communication is also defined as intercourse by words, letters, symbols or messages and as a way that one organisation member shares meaning and understanding with another."
3. **Orday Tread:** "Communicating is a composite of information given and received, of a learning experience in which certain attitudes, knowledge and skills change, carrying with them alterations of behaviour, of listening effort by all involved, of a sympathetic fresh examination of issues by the communicator himself, of a sensitive interacting points of view, leading to a higher level of shared understanding and common intention."
4. **Chester Barnard:** "In an exhaustive theory of organisation, communication would occupy a central place because the structure, extensiveness and scope of organizations are almost entirely determined by communication techniques."
5. **Simon:** "The question to be asked of any administrative process is: How does it influence the decisions of the individuals without communication, the answer must always be: It does not influence them at all."

### Objectives of Communication

Communication is the actual transfer of information through various mediums in such a way that it caters to the needs of people from different strata of life. The objectives of communication are many, such as:

1. **Transfer of Ideas:** To transfer ideas from one person to another, communication plays a vital role. Every human being has some ideas that are unique to his own mind. Many of these ideas may get translated into successful concepts, projects or creations. To take an idea to the stage of implementation requires effective communication. The idea should be communicated as a plan, drawing or description so that it can be taken further.
2. **For Interacting with Society:** People interact with people in their surroundings continuously. Whenever a person talks to others, he is not only expressing himself, but also knowingly or unknowingly, reacting to their questions, actions or comments. Healthy and continuing communication is essential for a healthy society.
3. **For Education and Training:** To educate someone, we need to communicate the ideas in the syllabus or the study material to the student. Education in fact involves all kinds of communication i.e., audio, video, books and lectures. The objective here is not just to communicate, but to communicate effectively, so that the students understand and relate to the subjects taught. Inefficient communication can lead to transfer of ambiguous knowledge.
4. **To Update Oneself:** In the modern world, it is necessary for people to be well informed. Only through proper channels of communication can people be updated with current affairs and important events across the globe. News can actually stand for as a collection of information from the 4 directions, i.e. North, East, West and South, that, in turn, is delivered to us through various communication channels.
5. **For Entertainment:** Entertainment today is mostly through channels of mass communication like books, magazines, theatre, films and television, art shows, and also through social media like Face book, YouTube etc. Internet has emerged as a popular platform for entertainment, which again is a mode of communication. In short, we can safely conclude that communication and entertainment are intertwined in today's world and technological developments fuel this.
6. **To Understand the World:** Unless we communicate with the world, we will never understand the way things function. This exchange of information can take place through class room lectures, reading, watching informative shows, discussions, attending various interactive workshops, seminars etc.

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION IN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

William Scholz<sup>1</sup> lists the following five objectives of communication in a business organisation:

1. To assist in the attainment of the operating objectives of the business.
2. To help to improve performance and job satisfaction of employees at all levels.

<sup>1</sup> William Scholz – Communication in Business Organisation.

3. To enhance the corporate (or company) image with the employee and the community.
4. To win understanding, approval and support of the organisation's position on vital, economic, political and social issues.
5. To keep management informed of attitudes, trends and reactions among employees and other appropriate 'public' as an aid to decision-making and control.

#### 1.4 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

A process is a concept of changing rather than static existence. Events and relationships are seen as dynamic, continuous and flexible and are structured only in a relative sense, i.e., in relation to other events or relationships.

Communication as a process, must be considered as a dynamic interaction, affecting and being affected by many variables. The labels used to represent something, the order selected, and the ingredients specified, are really only tools for describing the world. They all assist in understanding and communicating, but they are not constant<sup>2</sup>. It includes the sending and receiving of messages at a conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional levels. The message may be verbal or non-verbal, visual or audiovisual.

Communication is a basic social process. It is essential for the growth and development of the individual, to the formation and continued existence of groups, and to the interactions among members of a group or among groups themselves. Business organisations bring individuals together to work for a common cause, forming them into groups or departments, and provide formal communication links or channels among groups. These links are the nerve-centres of an organisation.

It is not words alone that communicate but other non-verbal signals, also send meaningful messages. The successful business communication must know the languages of both, the senders and receivers and have sympathetic understanding of the attitudes and aspirations of both. (Willard Merrihue, Management by Communication).

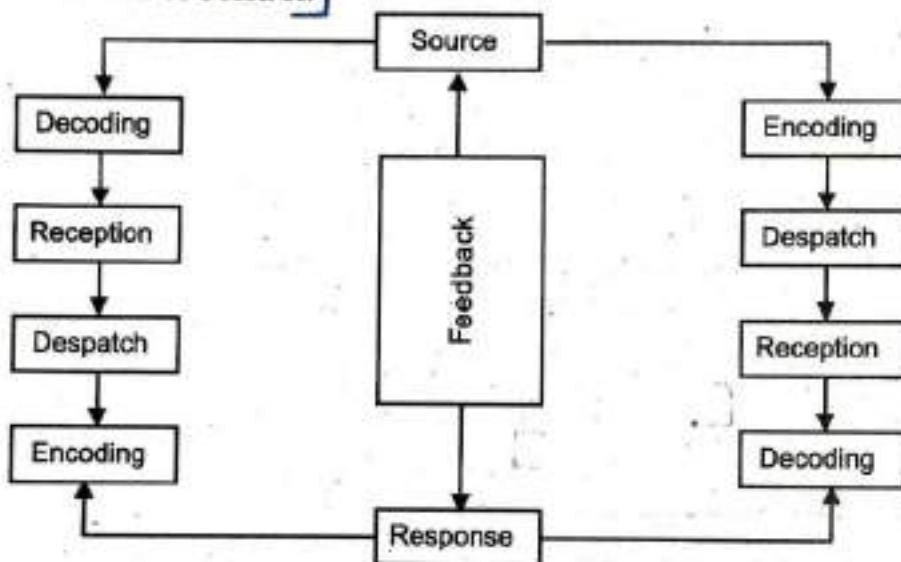
Communication therefore, is a set of processes, "a subtle and ingenious set of processes" (Smith). It is also varied as it uses several and different means, such as oral and written, verbal and non-verbal, visual and audio visual and so on. The means are determined by many factors: personal, social, political and economic. For instance business organisations use both - the more interpersonal means, such as, oral communication in person or over the telephone, letters, emails etc., as well as mass media to communicate with large number of people. With its own employees, an organisation uses face to face communication, communication through the intercom, written memos, and reports.

Within an organization, business communication is between individuals and groups within the organization and takes place during the process of administration and management of its various constituents. It is a process of linking superiors and subordinates in various departments to each other and to the overall management. "Communication is a dynamic interactive process, of people relating to other people, relying on feedback." It is goal-oriented and purposive in nature.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert G. Hicks, *The Management of Organisation* McGraw Hill Book Company, Kogakusha Company Ltd. Tokyo 1967, Pages 297 – 298.

### Process or Stages of Communication

1. **Information Source or Ideation or the generation of Idea:** Communication begins when an idea or information is generated in the communicator's mind, and there is need to share it. Thus, the purpose of communication also gains significance. In short, the communicator/sender should have some information, guidelines, motivational material or coordinative concepts that may be important to the receiver. As Davis has said, "The motto should be: "Don't start talking until you start thinking." Considering the purpose of communication and the nature of the person to whom the idea is to be communicated, the sender reduces it to its essentials. The idea is now present in the sender's mind.
2. **Encoding:** The source or the sender initiates a message by encoding his thoughts keeping in mind the needs of the receiver and his/her level of understanding and also the feedback or action expected. That is, he puts the ideas and thoughts into some form of a logical and coded message, which may be oral or written and uses appropriate media to send it.



**Fig. 1.1: Process of Communication**

According to Berlo, there are four conditions that affect the encoded message, viz., skill, attitudes, knowledge and socio-cultural system. A person's success in communicating depends on his writing, speaking, reading, listening and reasoning skills, apart from his attitude and behaviour. At this stage, the essentials of the message are organised into signals, gestures, facial expressions, sounds, words etc. Thus, encoding, in short, is the process of reducing ideas and impulses into signals. The most common form of encoding is the use of words.

3. **Despatch and Reception:** A message is the actual physical product originating from the encoding source. "When we speak, the speech is a message; when we write, the writing is the message, when we paint, the picture is the message, when we gesture, the movements of our arms and the expression on our faces are the messages." The message is affected by the code or group of symbols used to transfer meaning.

For sending the message, some channel or medium has to be selected based on various considerations, ease of communication, requirement of the receiver,

urgency, suitability for the message concerned etc. It may be sent directly or through a channel. The channel bridges the gap between the source and the receiver. [The encoded message is dispatched to its destinations by using various media.] Oral communication delivered face to face is the fastest, whereas, a message sent by post may involve delay of a couple of days. On the other hand, a document sent by post can be lengthy containing a lot more details and also creates a documentary evidence for future reference.

4. **Decoding of the Message:** Once again, on receipt of the message, the receiver translates the symbols into a form that can be easily understood by him. This process of retranslation or interpretation of the signals is called decoding. This requires that the receiver is skilful in listening, observing and reading and can understand the decoded message.
5. **Receiver's Response:** When the message has been decoded by the receiver, he has to respond to it in a suitable manner.
6. **Feedback:** Feedback is a very essential part in the communication process. It is the response which the receiver communicates back to the sender. Like in sending, feedback also involves encoding, dispatch, reception and decoding. Here, the receiver of the message becomes the sender, and the original sender becomes the receiver. When the new receiver (the original sender) decodes the feedback, one round in the cycle of communication is completed. In face-to-face communication, both the sender and the receiver continuously give feedback to each other in a variety of ways nonverbally by showing suitable expressions such as question, surprise, nodding in agreement or shaking in disagreement, frowning or smiling, yawning, engaging or avoiding eye contact etc., apart from verbal interaction. [The feedback could be either positive or negative.]

#### **Elements of Communication Process:**

A complete communication process requires the following elements:

1. **Two Parties - Receiver and Sender:** Communication can take place only if there are at least two persons viz. receiver and sender. The message of the sender must be received by one for whom it is meant. In other words, the sender knows to whom the message is being sent and the purpose of communication.
2. **Media of Communication:** The message has to be sent by the sender to the receiver and the feedback received with the help of a medium. There are several modes of communication, such as spoken and written words, symbols, non-verbal means like symbols, body language etc., presented through various media.
3. **Continuous Process:** Communication is a continuous process. The sender sends the message to the receiver, who in turn acknowledges or responds in various ways. Even silence can be used to communicate a response.
4. **Facts and Feelings:** Communication involves exchange of information, facts, ideas, and feelings. It also provides for a feedback mechanism so as to ensure that the message has been understood by the receiver. Mutual understanding is the key to effective communication.
5. **Understandable Information:** Information exchanged must be understandable by the receiver. This means that the words, grammar, idioms, symbols etc. are understood by both the parties. However, understanding does not mean that the

receiver must agree with the sender. Even though there is disagreement, if the information is understood, communication can take place. Thus, a significant feature of effective communication is that the message or information sent is understood and evokes proper response.

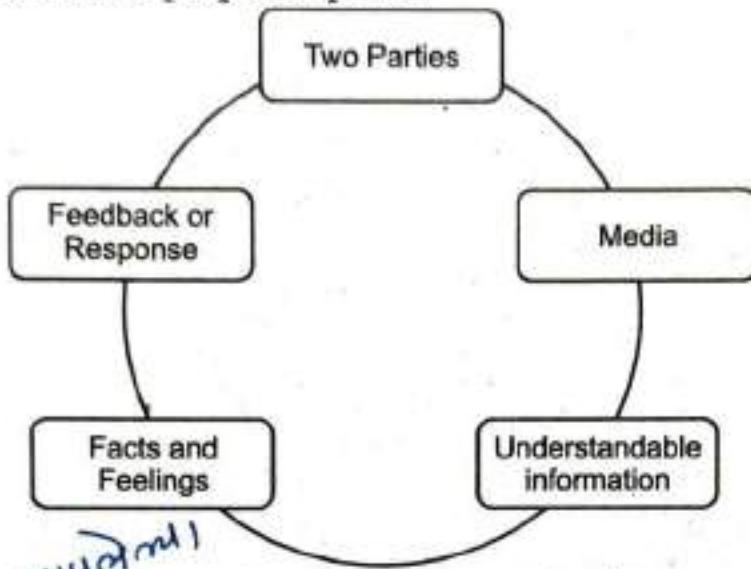


Fig. 1.2: Elements of Communication

6. **An All-pervading Activity:** Communication is an all-pervading activity. In an organisation, it is of vital importance for all levels of managers in all functions of management. An organisation cannot exist without communication.
7. **Feedback is an Essential Component:** Feedback is an essential component of communication. It is a two-way affair. It is an open dialogue rather than a monologue.

## 1.5 NEED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication can simplistically be explained as a process of understanding others and be understood by them. It helps us to give and to receive information. The ultimate purpose of communication is to transmit meaning from one person to another. This is very evident in an organisation where a number of people from varying backgrounds are brought together to pursue a common organisational goal and in that process, they develop and enrich themselves.

### 1. Need for Communication

In every business, activities are taken up with some purpose. To fulfill this, people at various departments and levels have to work together and also interact with outside stakeholders like customers, vendors, recruiters, shareholders, associations and chambers of commerce, concerned government departments, media, civic society groups and the community at large. In a flat world that is characteristic of a globalised work place and markets, people from different ethnic and linguistic groups, religious orientations and cultural nuances come together. Business administration is a collective enterprise, which takes up a lot of time and energy of people who work there.

Within an organisation, without communication, between two different departments, there will be no co-ordination. An organisation is basically a teamwork process and without communication, teamwork is not possible. The business executive is concerned with better understanding among all persons. He is interested in overcoming

barriers to communication at all levels so that the overall work environment is free from conflicts, so that the organisational goals are achieved. In effect each and every manager in an organisation is a human relations person.

Hence there is growing realisation that managers should understand the importance of communication.

## 2. Need to Develop Effective Communication Skills

In an organisation, communication skills are needed at all levels, starting from a receptionist or clerk to the top most level of management. However, as a person moves up the corporate ladder, and his span of supervision increases, his human relations capabilities are constantly tested. In order to build goodwill and cohesion within his department and with other department heads, he will have to hone his communication skills continuously.

In any business organisation, there is a variety of communication situations. There may be letters of enquiry, complaints, orders, negotiation of business deals, etc. to name a few. Such correspondence and replies to such letters have to be very carefully formulated. The sender has to be tactful, courteous and positive. Every effort should be made to avoid conflict situations. However, even if there are misunderstandings and standoffs, business relations must continue. This again indicates that managers must develop excellent communication skills.

The basic requirement of any communication is to obtain results. The objective may be to seek a promotion or a raise, it may be to get a pet project approved by the top management, or the objective may be to promote the organisation's products or services. The manager may have the responsibility of training people in his department. Whatever the communication situation, the sender is interested in a positive response. Hence managers have to develop effective communication skills.

Communication is essential for passing on information, training, motivation, raising the morale of the people etc. Absence of communication or communication gap results in misunderstandings, whereas timely communication helps in creating more goodwill for the organisation. If a customer pays his bill regularly or if he places large orders with the company frequently, a letter of appreciation can create a lot of goodwill. At the other end, good public relations is essential to retain or increase market share and create positive public opinion. Therefore, business cannot survive without effective communication.

### 1. Effective Communication is an Essential Ingredient in Management-Employee Relations:

Effective and meaningful communication between management and employees is an important ingredient for smooth running of an organisation. It should help maintain cordial relationship, so that the employees feel 'one' with the management and it boosts their morale. According to Charles Redfield "It is the mechanism, through which human relations develop".

### 2. Communication is a Tool of Supervision:

It is through communication that supervisors give instructions to employees. Management lays down rules and sets targets for supervisors, who in turn get their team to complete the tasks by way of quality expectations, time frame etc. If there are practical problems or bottlenecks, the employees can discuss this with their superiors. Thus, it is through departmental communication that targets are achieved. Without effective communication, things would not move. The result would be chaos and confusion and the manager, his team as well as the organisation would suffer.

3. **Communication is a Tool of Information:** Peter Drucker says, "The manager has a specific tool. He does not 'handle' people; he motivates, guides, and organises people to do their own work. His tool - his only tool - to do all this is the spoken or written word or the language of the numbers. No matter whether the manager's job is engineering, accounting or selling, his effectiveness depends on his ability to listen and to read, on his ability to speak and to write. He needs skills in getting his thinking across to other people as well as skills in finding out what other people are after." This statement clearly highlights how important it is for managers to develop appropriate communication skills to succeed.
4. **Good Communication is Essential for Effective Co-ordination:** Good communication is essential for co-ordination of tasks within the organisation. It has to be upward, downward and sideways and through all levels of authority for transmission, interpretation and adoption of policies, for sharing of knowledge and information and to fulfill the overt and subtle needs of creating an environment of trust and goodwill all around.
5. **Flow of Information and Understanding:** Through communication, one can pass on information to concerned persons and thus enlist their understanding and cooperation.
6. **Releasing the Emotional Tension of Workers:** Through communication workers are able to express their opinions and feelings, offer suggestions or voice complaints. If the flow of information is free and in an environment of trust, unnecessary and sometimes dangerous discussions, rumours, gossip etc. can be avoided. By ensuring a free flow of communication, the top management can understand and address the genuine difficulties of the workers and thus ensure employee loyalty. Employee attrition and turnover can be very costly for organisations. This could also affect the credibility of organisations as just and fair employers.
7. **Encouraging Free Flow of Information, Ideas, Suggestions etc.:** Communication helps workers in expressing their views and offering suggestions for improvement in the work place and for promoting efficiency. When the management accepts and appreciates these suggestions, and acts on them, the employees would feel better self worth. It would encourage them to contribute more towards the success of the organisation. Workers' participation in the management increases and they will work willingly toward their target.
8. **Maintaining Good Human Relations:** According to Berth, "It is impossible to have human good relations without communication and vice versa." Good communication among employees and the management is an essential component for success in any organisation. It develops good relationships and helps in solving their problems, if any, at the immediate level without escalating to higher levels, which at times may be counter-productive.
9. **Basic Tool for Motivation and Building Employee Morale:** Effective and good communication between workers and management helps to resolve many tricky situations, thereby avoiding any misunderstanding or rumour-mongering among employees. It also helps in boosting the morale of workers, which in turn raises

productivity levels in an organisation. Appreciation letter, awards, rewards, sponsoring employee training programmes, encouraging employees to participate in social events and community programmes etc. are many ways in which an organisation can communicate with the employees to sustain their interest in the organisation.

## 1.6 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The above discussions lead us to the principles that make communication effective and successful. This will help managers to overcome all barriers.

**1. Principle of Clarity of Message:** Before beginning the process of communication one should be *clear about the purpose*. Once the sender is clear about why, what, when, to whom and how the message is to be addressed, he will have to sift out all irrelevant material and make the message *adequate, precise, intelligible and effective*. He has to make sure that the information base is *correct and complete*. He will have to determine the main message and the supporting data. All necessary supporting facts, figures, graphs, charts, documents etc. should be compiled painstakingly. This will help the sender to prepare a clear message which gives the correct impression to the reader. This is very important in business communication, as it reflects on the *credibility of the sender and the organisation he belongs to*. A clear message is one which is *self-explanatory* and does not require back and forth movement of messages for the sake of obtaining clarifications. For instance, an order form should be complete with all expectations of the sender, including all technical requirements, date of delivery, price and terms of payment, credit period, name and designation of the sender, date of dispatch of the order letter etc. Similarly, a market survey report should have all the information, systematically analysed and presented, such that the organisation can take appropriate decisions.

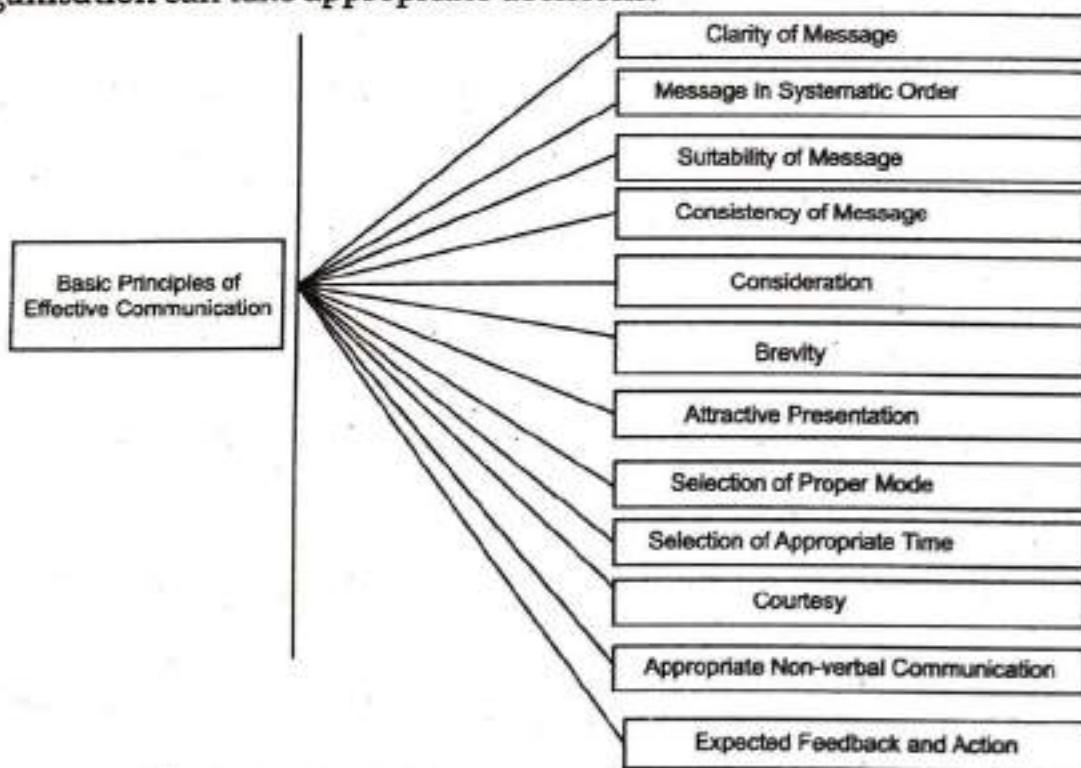


Fig. 1.3: Basic Principles of Effective Communication

2. **Principle of Systematic Arrangement of the Message<sup>3</sup>:** The message to be conveyed must be organised in a systematic manner, keeping in mind the needs of the receiver, his level of understanding and the time available with him. For instance, in a written message, apart from systematic arrangement of the points to be covered in the message and the supporting documents, attention should be paid to qualities such as neatness, type-spacing, paragraphs, style, and layout of the document. In spoken messages, the sender has to mentally organise the facts and present them in an order of importance, in a concise manner so that the receiver can understand it properly and frame an appropriate response.
3. **Principle of Understanding - Message should be suitable to the Needs of the Receiver:** The message to be conveyed should be suitable to the needs of the receiver. The message should be encoded in language, pictures or symbols which can be easily understood. This means that the sender is aware of the background of the receiver. For instance, in a communication either oral or written, the amount of technical details to be included would depend on the education and experience of the receiver. Similarly, a presentation made to a very senior officer in the organisation should not be too long, as the person will have too many preoccupations. This is the reason why most reports carry a brief executive summary which the top decision maker will read and the detailed report will be read by his subordinates who will help him in taking decisions or are responsible for implementing the decisions.
4. **Principle of Consistency of Message:** Apart from clarity, consistency in the message has to be maintained. This indicates that the sender is completely aware of the overall interests, policies and procedures and also the context in which the message is being sent, previous correspondence if any in this respect, any verbal assurance given by the superiors or subordinates etc. Thus, the message has to be well-integrated with the overall context. Let us take the case of a home improvement services company. The sales person visits the home of the prospective client, explains the procedure that would be followed by the painting contractor etc. His one and only consideration is to get the contract as he will get commission on each site. If he does not communicate this to the painting contractor, the work quality will suffer. An alert customer can raise doubts about the work done. The news will spread by word of mouth and this will affect the credibility of the company and its business prospects.
5. **Principle of Brevity or Conciseness:** The manager should know that the receiver will not have a lot of time to read a lengthy letter with disjoint content. The message should be presented in as briefly and to the point as possible without losing the essential information. Lengthy messages fail to sustain the attention of the receivers. Short messages provide grace and beauty and force to what one wishes to explain whether orally or in writing. Unnecessary words do not necessarily lead to clarity of expression. Superfluous words do not make the

<sup>3</sup> The message is the actual physical product of the source-encoder's efforts to create meaning for the receiver. The spoken word, the printed word, a graphic drawing, an expression of the face, a gesture of the arm - all are messages.

message clear and understandable. It is necessary to avoid the use of irrelevant and inappropriate words, terms and repetitions of thoughts. It is always desirable to use simple sentences and words. This highlights the need to organise one's thoughts before creating the message. Time is of value for both the sender and receiver of the messages.

One additional advantage in creating short written messages is that the scope for making spelling, grammatical and typographic errors is reduced.

- 6. Attractive Presentations - Principle of Creating and Maintaining Interest:** Communication will never be effective unless the receiver takes the message seriously. The receiver will perceive the importance of a message if it catches his interest. Hence, the manager should take special effort to make the presentations interesting. Thinking, reading, observing and listening can help him a lot in this effort.

In oral presentations, eye contact, facial expressions, body language, variations in voice tone, pitch, introduction of humour etc., can make the receiver take active interest in the entire process. The sender can see the response of the receiver and adjust accordingly. Having charts, graphs, pictures, models etc., to help in clarifying the issue being discussed will make the communication more effective. Similarly, the manager has to pay attention to make the written communication readable and interesting with illustrations, use of colour, proper formatting, error-free typing of the content etc.

- 7. Principle of Selection of Proper Media:** Different media are available to communicate. For instance, for placing an order for an item, the person can visit the supplier directly, talk on telephone, send a messenger, write an e-mail, write a letter or access the website of the company and use a predesigned order form etc. Let us take the case of a supervisor wanting to give some instructions to a factory operator. If the work environment is noisy, a written instruction would be received better. Hence, the choice will depend on a number of factors which affect the communication environment, like, the urgency, technical details to be included, level to be approached in the receiver's organisation, type of inspection of the product, documentary evidence that needs to be maintained, need to remember the contents for further action (like meeting notices, step-by-step instructions, technical specifications and so on.) etc. Whatever the medium, the message should be communicated clearly. Another aspect of this is the use of *formal as well as informal media* to promote better understanding among the communication parties. For instance, prior to an official meeting, the presenter can have informal interaction with those who matter in the decision-making process. This will help him present the facts in such a way that the decision maker understands and appreciates it. Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Dennel have aptly described the importance of informal communication as follows: "the most effective communication results, where managers utilize the informal organisation to supplement communication channel to formal organisation."

- 8. Principle of Selection of Appropriate Time:** Many messages fail to achieve result because they do not reach their destination at an appropriate time. For instance, the sale of fans, coolers, air conditioners etc., peak in the beginning of summer. If

a company selling them does not time his advertisements properly, he will have lost his opportunities. Within an organisation, if a meeting notice is issued too much in advance, the recipient may forget and not attend the meeting. If the notice is sent too close to the event, he may not be able to include it in his schedule. Another situation may be that the receiver is going through a stress period or personal difficulties and hence may not be in a position to understand or respond appropriately. The sender has to be alert to the situation in which the receiver is going through.

9. **Principle of Consideration:** The sender has to keep in mind the feelings, sentiments and emotions of the receiver while preparing the message. A good understanding of the background of the receiver is important. This is more so in a globalised environment where people from various cultures and backgrounds interact. The interpretation of messages by the receivers and their reactions depends on the societal background and culture they come from. This is the reason why many global organisations undertake sensitization programmes and cultural exchange programmes periodically.
10. **Principle of Courtesy:** A manager has to ensure that the basic good relationships are maintained by observing courteous approach towards the receiver. Even if a complaint against an employee is being investigated, the manager should listen carefully to what the employee has to say, and try to diffuse the situation by using appropriate language. Even employees, who have resigned, should be given an opportunity to explain the circumstances and allowed to leave with goodwill. The need for courtesy while dealing with outside agencies like vendors, customers, recruiters etc., can never be over-emphasised.
11. **Careful use of Body Language:** Body language plays a vital role, particularly in oral communication. It adds meaning to the messages. However, it should be remembered that the interpretations of certain signs and symbols is not universal. Hence, care should be taken to understand these cultural nuances.
12. **Principle of Feedback and Prompt Action from Receivers:** The sender has to be clear about the feedback or response action he expects from a message. Feedback helps to ascertain that the message has been properly understood. In case of any misunderstanding, it should be rectified immediately. If the feedback is not clear or correct, it can be assumed that the message has not been clearly or properly understood by the receiver. It can also mean that the message was not correct, and hence it was not understood properly by the receiver. It can also indicate that the language used by the sender was not understood by the receiver. Such a situation can result in communication gap, i.e. the process of communication has broken down. Therefore, the sender should be aware of the receiver's knowledge level and requirement and also chose the media and time of communication judiciously. The sender should know the situation at the other end and expect response accordingly. It should be remembered that "communication is not a substitute for good management, but it is essential for good managements to operate effectively and efficiently".

## 1.7 TYPES AND SCOPE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

It is human nature to be communicating all the time. It could be by way of talking, writing, listening or reading. The volume of communication increases in geometrical progression as the organisation expands or when a manager moves up the corporate ladder. Most part of a manager's time goes in communicating, either in a structured, formal manner or in informal environments.

Basically, managers communicate with various stakeholders, some of whom are internal or within the organization and some outside the organization or external stakeholders. Each type of communication will have a different orientation depending on the purpose, the target audience and their background and the degree of formality required.

**Internal communication** can be with subordinates, colleagues at the same level or seniors.

**External communication** would be with existing customers, potential customers, supply chain both existing and potential, logistics people, job applicants, HR and training agencies, etc., involved with or supportive of the business activities, regulatory authorities, trade associations, the media and the public at large to maintain top-of-mind recall, maintain good public relations etc.

Business communication can be classified as follows depending on the purpose or approach:

### (a) Formal Communication

1. In any organisation there are set channel and procedures for exchange of information between the people at different levels. In a hierarchical organisation, the messages would flow from higher levels to lower levels and vice-versa. It would primarily comprise of orders/instructions and feedback/reports.
2. The message passes from the highest level to middle-management level, then to supervisory level and in the end to the workers. This ensures that the messages are known and understood by all concerned in the hierarchy and communicated in a manner appropriate to the level.

### Advantages

1. Formal communication allows flow of information in an orderly manner since it takes place as per the officially prescribed rules.
2. It covers all the sub-systems of the organisation and hence control is easy. Information collected from all the branches will be uniform. This uniformity helps in retrieval, review and analysis where required. Longitudinal studies, department-wise or region-wise analysis can be made. Comparisons can be made for taking strategic decision.
3. As the format is given, with some practice, employees will not take too much time to fill the details. Thus it saves time. Any additional qualitative information can be appended to the main report.

### Limitations

1. Formal communication inhibits free flow of information as message can pass only through laid down channels.

2. As a rigid format and schedule of reporting is set, it takes away a lot of employee time in conforming to the requirement, more so when employees are working under time pressure.
3. It is expensive as it is in written form and the files have to be maintained.
4. Distortion of information may occur if consolidation and reporting has to be made at several levels of authority.

**(b) Informal Communication (Grapevine)**

Man is a social animal and moves in groups. When two or more persons come together, they start talking on various subjects, thus creating networks. This network represents an informal or unofficial channel of communication. These channels are created and controlled by the employees and not the top management and is informal in nature. For instance, employees may sit together to enjoy a cup of coffee at the end of the day or after a crucial meeting. The discussions may veer around people, personalities as well as the happenings in the office during the day, with each one giving his point of view. This informal Communication is also termed as Grapevine communication. The need for Informal Communication arises from the desire to transmit information while remaining outside the formal structure. It ensues with or without the approval of the manager and can have both constructive as well as destructive effects on the enterprise. Hence, management should be vigilant and mobilize it effectively to transmit and receive information supplementary to formal communication.

Grapevine Communication becomes a routine when:

1. There is a feeling of uncertainty among the employees.
2. There is a lack of confidence with respect to work.
3. The managers display favouritism, due to which other workers get a feeling of insecurity.

**(c) Verbal or Oral Communication**

Verbal or oral communication is one of the most important types of communication. In this type, there is nothing in writing. The examples of verbal communication are numerous. Oral orders, face to face discussions, telephonic talk, lectures, interviews, counseling, public speeches with or without audio-visual aids etc. Oral messages can be conveyed by using the microphone/loud speakers, telephone, radio etc.)

Very often, more than one medium is required to make oral communication effective. Face to Face communication combines oral form with facial expressions, voice modulation, body language and universally accepted signs and symbols, gait, attire, proximity etc. For instance, a properly dressed person with pleasant expressions will be able to establish contact with others and gain their attention and trust with great ease. The impact of an oral message can be enhanced with the help of graphs, charts, pictures and models.

**(d) Visual Communication**

In visual communication, very elementary and simple ideas, orders, warnings etc. can be communicated. It can be effectively used only in combination with other media. The diagrammatic representation combines the written with the visual. Pie charts and pictograms also combine the two, because there is always a written indication of what is shown in them. Such forms are very useful in the presentation of statistical data.

Examples are information arranged in the form of charts, tables, graphs, maps, plans, pictograms, etc., prepared as posters, slides, film strips etc.

### **Merits of Visual Communication**

1. To overcome the difficulty in explaining in words. For instance, charts and graphs represent data more clearly than if they are recited orally.
2. To provide instant recall. It helps people remember the matter for a longer period. For instance, traffic signals, advertisement posters and hoardings.
3. To facilitate comparisons.
4. To create publicity material for important events and programmes.

### **(e) Downward Communication**

This is the most common type of communication in any organisation. It flows from the higher authorities to lower levels. People at the managerial level pass on their orders, directives or instructions about the various aspects of work. They lay down the procedures to be followed for achieving targets. They also communicate to inform about the latest developments through lectures and demonstrations, films etc. Above all, the management may find it necessary to provide incentive to the workers in the form of prizes, awards, appreciation letters etc. The managers can use any of the oral, written or audio-visual media suitable for the occasion.

Downward communication helps to establish a rapport between the higher authorities and the subordinates. However, the top management has to take care about how much information to provide to whom. They should prepare the message taking into consideration the sensitivities of the employees and not sound too authoritative or imposing. Yet they should be clear about the objectives and expectations, and sound firm. They should ensure that when the message percolates down the ladder, there is no distortion. Downward communication becomes effective if the people at the higher level keep themselves abreast of all the policies, activities and issues concerned with the units they control. In a decentralised organisation, downward communication is very essential to build cohesion and improve efficiency.

### **Upward Communication**

As against downward communication, upward communication is the flow of information from the lower level to the upper managerial level. Workers at various levels may have reports, ideas or suggestions, which they may want to give to their superiors. They may have feelings to express. These thoughts or feelings may be in the form of good suggestions about improvements in work procedure, methods, and policies. They may be about their own aspirations and expectations from the management. They may also be their grievances, requests or complaints. It is necessary that the top management does not suppress them, as that would lead to a disgruntled work force, which will not function to full capacity. On the other hand, such communication, based on practical experience of the employees, may be useful for the management.

In recent times as the work environment is changing rapidly, and more and more emphasis is being laid on knowledge management, managers deliberately encourage the subordinates to freely communicate with their bosses without hesitation. This is because the managers are now fully aware that this channel provides them crucial information and technical feedback which are essential for the progress of the organisation.

### (g) Horizontal (or Lateral) Communication

Horizontal or Lateral Communication refers to the flow of communication among the people at the same level of authority (peers). People at the same level of authority find it necessary to exchange thoughts or views amongst themselves. This communication takes the form of inter-personal dialogues, management meetings and conferences, inter-departmental correspondence, telephone or cell-phone conversations, emails, monitor sharing, Face book messages, tweets, blogs etc. Face to face conversation or on phone help to solve common problems quickly, creates an informal atmosphere, allows freedom of expression, clears doubts and becomes helpful to create teamwork. This type of communication helps to keep every department informed of the needs, activities and developments taking place in the other departments and builds up a feeling of co-operation and an atmosphere of coordination among all those responsible for achieving the targets of the organisation at large. These days, many managers within their own departments work from home or from long distances. They might not have met before, but are able to coordinate their work over the phone (telemeetings and teleconferences) and the Internet and even have Net meetings. They go to the brick and mortar office buildings only when there is a face-to-face meeting required. Class room teaching is supplemented by webinars for training programmes.

### (h) Diagonal (or Crosswise) Communication

This takes place when the people working at different levels involve themselves in communication with those working in departments other than those where they work. This type of communication helps elevate or boost the morale of the workers, develops co-ordination and speeds up the work of the organisation. However, at times, it can create problems in the maintenance of coherence among various departments. It may violate the unity of command or may create friction between departments. This drawback can, however, be well controlled if there is a proper understanding and co-operation among the different departmental heads.

## 1.8 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

A clear understanding of the principles of effective communication described in the previous section is useful for understanding all barriers to communication and take suitable measures to overcome them.

Communication barriers that exist in the workplace can distract, distort or restrict communication. Identifying workplace communication barriers is the first step in overcoming them and improving organisational communication. Recognising and understanding them help in improving the communication process. It is the responsibility of every individual in an organisation to take personal responsibility and ensure that he/she works in complete effectiveness with his or her co-workers. No matter how many barriers come in the way, a responsible employee will always know how to overcome them.

***"To effectively communicate, we must realise that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."***

**Anthony Robbins**

Communication is the key factor in the success of any organisation. It is the fabric of a company that helps employees succeed at their job, relate to the public and conduct business with customers and other businesses. Effective communication is an essential component of organisational success whether it is at the interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organisational, or external levels. Organisational communication involves formal and informal communications throughout the organisation and with the other organisations with which it works. Organisational communication is concerned with communication to employees, with employees and from employees and also with other stakeholders. When an organisation does not establish clear communication policies and define roles, and fails to provide communicating materials and systems or provide training for better communications, it is in effect creating several barriers to effective communication.

The discussions about barriers to communication indicate that the sender's thought, speech and action form three corners of a triangle. Invariably gaps in communication develop as the sender's thought, speech (oral, non-verbal or written) and action do not match with those of the receiver's, or in other words, when the size of the triangle becomes big. Thus, barriers to communication arise from the inherent process of sending / receiving of messages among humans. If the triangle is smaller in size, it means that there is no trust deficit in the individual, group or organisation.

*The ability to communicate in a variety of ways is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals. And it is the ability to communicate well that distinguishes one individual from another.*

Imperfections creep in from different levels of thinking of individuals which act as mental filters. As we have seen, these mental filters are influenced by the age, socio-cultural background, experience, wrong choice of words, media, channel, timing etc. Managers need to overcome these barriers so that they can function more effectively in the organisation and the organisation should recognise the need for this and provide all necessary policy, training and technology deployment to make managerial communication effective.

Barriers to effective communication within an organisation happen at the following three levels: Personal barriers, Group barriers and Organisational barriers.

**Communication capability** is a personal skill. The sender of the messages must use words and phrases that the receiver is familiar with, so that the latter can understand and respond to them. The sender therefore, has to develop this capability carefully and with diligence. In the absence of suitable choice of words, the message may not invoke the desired response from the receiver. Each area of specialisation requires a unique language format that is peculiar to that profession. For example, a manager who has to interact with a farmer to sell agricultural inputs or machinery should be in a position to understand issues like crops, cropping pattern, harvesting seasons, their working patterns, group dynamics etc., apart from their manner of greeting. Similarly, a scientist interacting within his/her community would use technical terms which are understood

by both the parties, but the same scientist, while interacting with lay persons, school children etc., would make the language simpler and easy to understand, with examples from day-to-day life situations.

**Within the organisation:** Business leaders have to orchestrate different kinds of employees, investors, consumers, suppliers etc. They have to handle people with different aspirations and requirements while achieving their goals. Within organisations, communication barriers at various levels can pose serious disruptions in this.

**Downward Communication:** Barriers within an organisation can arise in *downward communication* because of:

- (i) The attitude of the seniors. They may override the interests of the subordinates due to lack of awareness about them or because of personal biases or preferences. In such cases, messages will not flow freely between the superiors and subordinates, thus affecting the efficiency of the organisation,
- (ii) Inflexibility of the superiors if they prefer to conform to the organisation structure and the line of communication set forth in it,
- (iii) Feeling of insecurity. The superiors can then become defensive, and may view any upward communication as a challenge to their authority and importance. They may ignore any communication from the subordinates and even withhold necessary information thus jeopardizing work in the organisation,
- (iv) Lack of confidence in the subordinates and fear that the subordinates would misuse information may make the superiors maintain a distance from them,
- (v) The superiors may be hard pressed for time. They may be overburdened with work and consequently have no time to provide information downwards, upwards or horizontally,
- (vi) Lack of awareness regarding the critical importance and significance of maintaining a smooth flow of information in all directions within and outside of the organisation.

**Upward Communication:** Communication barriers can arise in *upward communication* as well, because of the following factors:

- (i) Unwillingness to communicate if the subordinate feels that giving a particular piece of information to the superiors may be embarrassing. He/she would then withhold it or delay the communication as much as possible or even modify it so as to protect his/her interests. This can mislead the superiors,
- (ii) Lack of proper incentive by way of appreciation may prevent the subordinates from participating in the communication process. It can have a snowballing effect in the organisation. Thus, suggestions from the subordinates with respect to product improvement, improvements to processes and systems can be ignored, thus affecting the growth of the organisation. In fact, the subordinates may have their finger on the pulse of the market and understand the competitive environment much better than the superiors who would be one step removed from them. New recruits in the field of finance may come with a better understanding of the latest practices. Hence, very often, upward communication can spell the success or failure of the organisation to capture growth opportunities.

**Interpersonal barriers to communication** can occur at the level of interaction within a group of employees, such as a department or team having members from different specialist functions. Such barriers occur under the following circumstances:

- (i) The group of receivers is a mix of seniors and juniors. Juniors tend not to express themselves in the presence of their seniors.
- (ii) The receiver has developed preconceived notions about the sender based on gender, looks or dress. It may also be that the sender has not been impressive while introducing the subject or initiating the discussion,
- (iii) At the outset, the credibility of the sender is low. The receiver will then ignore the message. The sender can overcome these obstacles by preparing the message in such a way that it is acceptable to the receiver,
- (iv) The sender may delay sending the message due to prior commitments or sheer lethargy. All attempts to rectify the situation may be ignored by the receiver,
- (v) The receivers also have the responsibility of listening to the speakers free from prejudice, positive temperament and commitment. If the receiver is preoccupied with something else and is concerned with other issues, he may fail to comprehend the message and register it in his mind. Thus, the receiver fails to react to the message.

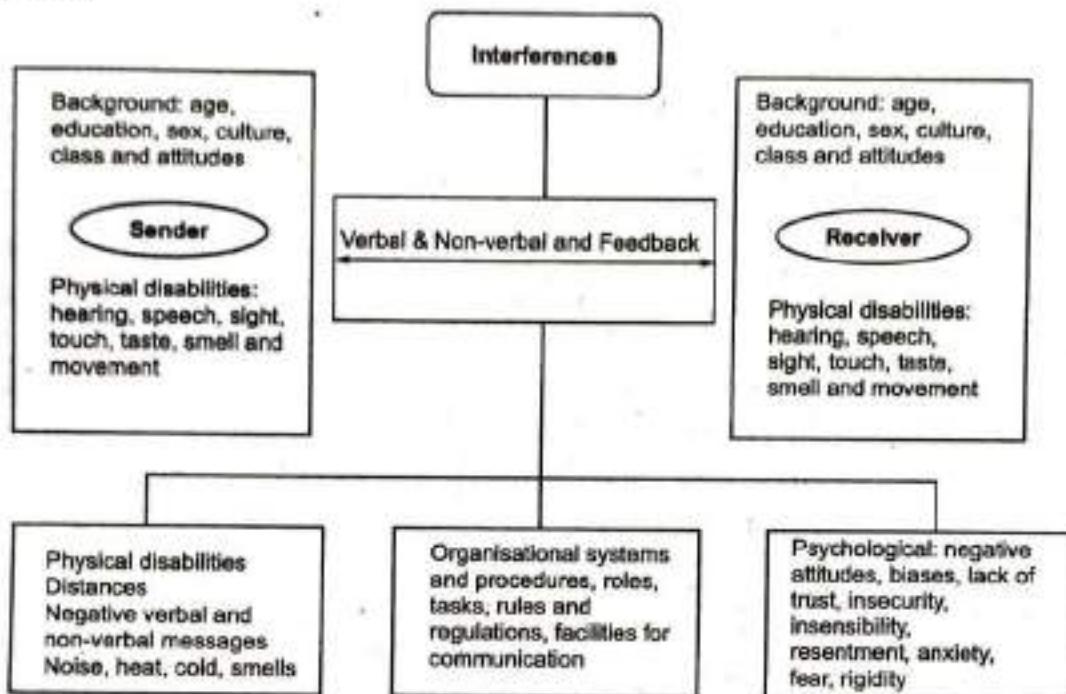
**Various levels or layers of communication:** A message that has to pass through several layers of organisation structure or many stages before it reaches the target may lose its accuracy. For oral messages, the distortion can happen at every stage of its transmission or relaying, with additions, deletions, analysis, prejudices etc., creeping in. Even written messages can be distorted because of differences in interpretation, meanings and translation. Secondly, messages may not be retained in the memory of the receivers. It applies more to oral messages, as in the case of written messages, the document would be available for later reference. However, even written messages fail to make an impact if there is lack of trust between the parties. This can be overcome if the messages are drafted properly, keeping in view the purpose of the message and the interest of the receiver.

***It is said that people remember 10 % of what they read 20 % of what they hear 30 % of what they see 50 % of what they see and hear 70 % of what they say 90 % of what they say as they perform the task.***

These are daunting challenges for any organisation. Communication is not always easy, smooth and effective. No matter how good the communication system in an organisation is, unfortunately barriers can and do often occur. They are always going to be there because humans are complex beings and in that lay the challenges to effective communication. By the time a message gets from a sender to a receiver, there are multitudes of potential sources of error. In a work setting, interactions involve people who often do not have years of experience communicating with each other. These interactions are further complicated by the complex relationships that exist at work. Attempts may be made to simplify the communication processes to a great extent in an organisation, but *barriers come up that can sabotage the message and render it ineffective by the time it gets to those who must act on it*. When the barriers come in the way, communication becomes difficult and frustrating. It is critical to understand and be

aware of the potential sources of communication barriers and constantly avoid them by making conscientious efforts to ensure minimal loss of meaning in the message communicated.

The following are a few of the most commonly-found barriers in communication in an organisation:



**Fig. 1.4**

1. **Encoding Barriers:** They include both perceptual barriers, emotional barriers, language barriers and cultural barriers.

(a) **Perceptual Barriers:** This could be the most common problem faced these days in organisations. It is very natural that there is a lot difference of opinion among people. This is because of difference in their perceptions arising out of the many socio-cultural influences working among them. Everyone sees and understands the world differently. A task may be given to a team of employees and each employee may pursue the objective very differently. For instance, a team leader may ask the team members to complete the task allotted by the end of the day. Some team members may accept this as the usual practice of a superior, but some others may perceive that the leader doesn't trust them to be good workers and the superior is always in the habit of issuing orders. They may perceive it as an affront. A third set of workers in that situation might perceive that the leader is taking care of their best interest.

The process of selecting and organizing symbols to represent a message requires skill and knowledge. It is ironic that skillful and effective communication among individuals in an organisation is essential to iron out these perceptual differences.

(b) **Emotional Barriers:** Another main barrier are emotions like fear and mistrust that inhibit effective communication. Such feelings prevent individuals from

communicating effectively with others in the organisation. An emotional individual may not be able to communicate well. The receiver on the other hand may be angry, hostile, resentful, joyful, or fearful. Such a person may be too preoccupied with emotions to receive the intended message. If you don't like someone, for example, you may have trouble "hearing" them. Communication can break down under the following circumstances:

- **Lack of Sensitivity to Receiver:** A breakdown in communication may result when a message is not to its receiver. Recognizing the receiver's needs, status, knowledge of the subject, language skills and emotional status assists the sender in preparing a successful message. For example if a customer is angry, it is natural for him to give vent to his feelings. The response from the receiver depends on how sensitive he/she is to the sender's frustrations.

**(c) Language and Cultural Barriers:** The world is made up of diverse cultures. Age, education, gender, social status, economic position, cultural background, temperament, health, beauty, popularity, religion, political belief, ethics, values, motives, assumptions, aspirations, rules/regulations, standards, priorities etc., can separate one person from another and create barriers in understanding and interpreting messages. These differences form the basis for attitudes and beliefs as they come from the personal environment, background and experience of the individual. As such, two people could get the same message but interpret it in two entirely different ways simply because their frames of reference and language differ.

Different languages, vocabulary, accent, dialect represents national/ regional barriers. Words having similar pronunciation may have multiple meanings, resulting in semantic gap. Badly expressed messages, unqualified assumptions and wrong interpretation are the most common language linked barriers. The use of difficult or inappropriate words/ poorly explained or misunderstood messages can result in confusion.

In an organisation, cultural barriers arise when individuals belonging to different religions, states or countries come together to work towards a common goal. It is the responsibility of the sender of the message to:

- Consider the cultural makeup of the intended audience.
- Seek to understand where the differences are and take those differences into account while framing the message either oral or written.
- Fashion the message to ensure that it says what he/she intended to say and is understood as such.

Language is a symbol used to describe what the encoder would want to express and communicate to the others. There could be differences in the language spoken by individuals or groups who send the message and those who receive it. The nature of language and the way it is used often lead to misunderstandings.

*In the English language, there are about 500 basic words that are used every day. These 500 words have over 10,000 different meanings. Because language is a symbolic representation of a phenomenon, there is ample room for interpretation and even distortion of the meaning. Here is an example: The Scandinavian company Electrolux had, in its advertisement campaign for its vacuum cleaner in Europe, claimed: "Nothing Sucks like an Electrolux" and used the same punch line for its advertisement in the USA without realising that the word "sucks" has a negative meaning in American slang. Needless to say, marketing of the product in the USA got a serious setback.*

Differences in language make it difficult for people to communicate freely and effectively. At the outset, the sender has to appreciate that such differences are there and make all efforts to overcome them. This is extremely important in today's global scenario. The best compliment we can pay to another person is by speaking and effectively communicating to them in their local language.

Many a times, even when the language spoken by the two parties to communication may be the same, but usage of certain words would differ. There is a myth that words transport meanings from the speaker to the listener in the same way that a truck carries goods from one location to another. On the other hand, words may not carry precisely the same meaning from the mind of the encoder to the mind of the decoder. Very often, this discrepancy may happen due to (a) lack of common experience, (b) confusion between the symbol and the symbolised object, and (c) overuse of abstractions,

(a) **Lack of common experience** between the sender and the receiver is probably the greatest single barrier to effective communication. Words, whether spoken or written, are merely stimuli used to trigger a response. The sender and the receiver should have some experience with the objects or concepts to which these words refer, so that they can associate the series of words with the message.

Lack of common experience creates individual barriers depending on an individual's perceptual and personal discomfort. Even when two persons have experienced the same event their mental perception may/may not be identical which acts as a barrier. This could be accentuated by differences in style, selective perception, halo effect, poor attention and retention, defensiveness, close mindedness, insufficient filtration are the individual or psychological barriers.

The sender and the receiver should be able to speak the same language and understand it in more or less similar manner. For instance, the superior has to send the instructions to the subordinates using a terminology understood by the latter. The words chosen should reflect the concern the sender has for the receiver's environment and mental make-up. Secondly, each discipline or area of study has terminology specific to covey a certain meaning and this should form the link between the sender and the receiver. In short, both the parties should share a common experience with respect to the language and terminology used.

(b) **Confusion between the Symbol and the Symbolized Object:** In all languages, there are words that mean different things to different people. This creates confusion between the symbol and the symbolised object results when a word gives a totally different meaning to the receiver. People often fail to understand

this. To communicate effectively, the sender should be aware of the background of the receiver and choose words which convey the most appropriate meaning to the receiver.

To avoid confusion, the sender of the message has to take the following care:

- Minimise the use of slang and idioms as well as symbols when delivering the message, as they may connote different meanings in different regions.
- Keep the language used in the message simple and as free as possible from jargons not understood by the receiver. The objective should be to achieve clarity of expression and not to display the linguistic ability of the sender.

(c) **Abstractions** are words that are general rather than specific. The sender should select such concrete words which help the receiver to relate to something specific that is being communicated. Words chosen should specify an idea that can be perceived or a thing that can be visualised. Abstract words, on the other hand, stand for ideas that cannot be directly experienced. They do not create exact mental images in the minds of the receivers. The danger of abstractions is that they will not evoke the same specific items of experience in the minds of the receivers that the sender intends. When such terms are used, they should be linked with specific experiences through examples and illustrations. Abstractions should be avoided in most cases, but there are times when abstractions are necessary and useful, especially while explaining some concepts. But here again, as far as possible the level of abstraction should be kept to a minimum by using concrete, specific terms.

- **Lack of Basic Language and Communication Skills:** The receiver is less likely to understand the message if the sender has trouble choosing the precise words needed and arranging those words in a grammatically-correct sentence. It does not matter whether that audience is of one or one million persons, good structure is essential if a communication is to be 'heard' amongst the various 'noises' of today's business environment. The receivers' past experience with the words and the things to which they refer determines how they respond to what the sender says. Hence *lack of common experience can create a major hurdle to effective communication.*
- **The use of the wrong medium to deliver the communication:** The sender may be strong in verbal communication and hence resort to it without considering the circumstances of the receiver. If the message is long and contains a lot of details, a written communication should be preferred, whereas, if the personal involvement of the receiver is important, a one-to-one meeting may be the right approach. In a technical presentation it would be more effective if the details are written and circulated among the participants and are referred to or explained in the speech. The medium chosen should also take into consideration any limitations or disabilities the receiver may have. Similarly, non-verbal communication should complement and not contradict the message.

- **Insufficient Knowledge of the Subject:** If the sender lacks specific information about something, the receiver will likely receive an unclear or mixed message. Lack of knowledge shows up in the form of lack of self-confidence.
- **Weak delivery:** In business communication, irrespective of the nature of the subject, whether it is a serious one or is lighthearted, a weak delivery fails to impress the audience. Even a shy and reticent person can make an effective communication if the preparation is sound, the information provided is very useful and the message is well structured. It is not the personality of the sender but the nature of delivery that is important.
- **Poor Structure of the Message:** If the message is not properly structured, and there is a lot of back and forth in the issues covered, it can frustrate and confuse the receiver. No matter what the subject is or where it is delivered, a message improperly designed fails to be effective. Structure is critical, because without an introduction, body and close, audiences will have a difficult time retaining, recalling and processing the information. These rules apply to any communication, ranging from e-mails to public presentations, and to audiences of any size.
- **Mixed up Messages:** A huge barrier to business communication is the ability of to confuse and alienate its audience. It occurs in two ways:
  1. Using terms and phrases that are 'jargon', the exact meaning of which is possibly recognised but probably not fully understood
  2. Trying to 'save time/paper' by including several different communication messages into one. For instance, the communication may suggest cost saving measures and in continuation, talk about new year gifts. A decision arrived at previously may be withheld and soon after, it is upheld due to some pressure.
- **Message Sent to Wrong Audience:** This can be a complete waste of time and money. It is necessary to choose the audience and the pick the medium that will best find them. There are two basic communication assumptions that can spell disaster for the success of an organisational communication, (a) that all members of the organisation have the same knowledge base as the sender and (b) that information will spread accurately and effectively on its own when it is communicated to a couple of important members. Managements must be proactive and thoughtful while choosing their audience. This can be achieved by giving employees written copies of job descriptions, employee handbooks and other critical company materials and organising strategically scheduled meetings between employees and leaders as well as between different departments.  
Meetings can go haywire if, just to get a large number at business meetings, those not concerned with the subject also get invited. Out of deference, they may sit through, but will emerge totally bored, feeling that so much of their productive time was wasted.

Similarly, the HR department of an organisation may get a huge brochure printed giving details of its new initiatives and distribute it to everyone in the organisation, whether it has any relevance or not.

In conferences, a speaker may, just to gain entry into a conference, give an exciting title to his presentation, but the content may be a total disappointment.

**Students should note the following carefully:**

*In the present day explosion of social media networks, it has become 'cool' or fashionable to post even work related issues on these sites. For instance, an employee may post socially objectionable material on Face Book or use it to take out his/her ire on his superior. The employee may not have used the exact names, but the fact remains that instead of discussing the issue at the office level, he/she has chosen to tell the entire world about his displeasure. The consequence would be a termination letter issued to him. Employees should know what to communicate and when and where to communicate it.*

*In many companies, while recruiting, the managers run through the applicants' habit regarding usage of social networks and the content posted therein. Any objectionable material posted can be an immediate basis for rejection of the applicant howsoever qualified he/she may be.*

- **Distracting Environment:** There can be nothing more frustrating than trying to send a message to a group of people who cannot 'hear' the person. The term 'hear' is used in a broad manner to cover a number of situations that can block the communication process such as:
  - The sender's voice is not strong enough,
  - Too many others are talking at the same time,
  - Traffic noise outside the venue,
  - The audience getting too many phone calls at the time of presentation or when the message is being read by them,
  - People walking in and out, refreshments being served etc., distracting both the sender and the receiver,
  - Incoming emails disturbing the reader while studying the on-line messages,
  - The room's air conditioning/heater is not working making the room atmosphere uncomfortable.

1. **Information Overload:** If the receiver gets a message with too much information or the amount of information given is so fast that it becomes difficult for the receiver to cope with it, he/she may tend to put up a barrier because of difficulty in interpreting that information comfortably. For instance, a sales person may want to inform the prospective buyers (receiver of the message) about a number of features of a product he/she is selling. Instead of overwhelming the buyer with all the features, it may be better for the sales person to focus on only a few most

important aspects and explain them clearly with demonstrations where necessary. This will reduce confusion and make the communication more effective and the salesperson may get the decision from the prospective buyer faster than otherwise.

2. **Physical Barriers:** Research shows that one of the key factors in building strong and integrated teams is proximity and approachability. Most offices have closed doors and cabins for those at higher levels while the rest get seating arrangements in large working areas. This may create both physical and mental barriers between the seniors and subordinates and inhibit free communication. Similarly, offices of the same organisation may be located in different buildings, in different parts of the country or the world, creating delays, loss of messages etc.

Likewise, poor or outdated equipment, frequent power outages, disruptions in transport and communication facilities, failure of management to introduce new communication technology etc., may also cause problems.

Staff shortages are another factor which frequently causes communication difficulties for an organisation.

3. **System design faults:** These refer to problems with the structures or systems in place in an organisation. The hierarchy must be well-defined and duties and responsibilities at each level should be properly communicated and understood at all levels. Examples of ineffective communication systems might include an organisational structure which is unclear and therefore makes it confusing to know who to communicate with. Other examples could be inefficient or inappropriate information systems. There could also be a lack of supervision or training, and a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities which can create uncertainties in the minds of the staff about what is expected of them.

4. **Interpersonal Barriers:** In an organisation, such barriers could exist at the level of both the superiors and the subordinates.

**At the superior's level, the barriers can arise due to:**

- (a) Lack of trust in the employees;
- (b) Lack of knowledge of non-verbal clues like facial expression, body language, gestures, postures, eye contact etc..
- (c) Different experiences;
- (d) Shortage of time for the employees;
- (e) No consideration for employee needs;
- (f) Wish to capture authority;
- (g) Fear of losing power of control; and
- (h) Informational overloading without understanding the comprehending capacity of the subordinates.

**At the subordinate's level they include:**

- (a) Lack of motivation,
- (b) Lack of co-operation and trust,
- (c) Fear of penalty and
- (d) Poor relationship with the superior.

- ✓ **5. Attitudinal barriers:** They arise out of problems with the staff in an organisation and could be a result of such factors as limitation in physical and mental ability, intelligence, understanding, pre-conceived notions, poor management, lack of consultation with the employees, personality conflicts which can result in people delaying or refusing to communicate, the personal attitudes of individual employees which may be due to lack of motivation or dissatisfaction at work etc. All these could be brought about by insufficient training to enable them to carry out particular tasks, or just resistance to change due to entrenched attitudes and ideas.

Attitudinal barriers can take the form of *assumptions* and *biases*.

**Biases** are shaped by the individual's experiences and their views about who they are. It is very natural to have biases, but while working in an organisation, it is necessary to ensure that they do not become an obstacle to effective communication. It is necessary to reach out to even those whose biases do not necessarily align with the sender's. For instance, in an organisation, people from two generations come together, each generation having its own world view and its own challenges. The sender of the message has to be sensitive to such differences. He/she has to take the following care:

- Acknowledge his/her own biases first.
- View the message from the view point of even those who are least likely to align with their views.
- Listen.
- Frame the message in such a way that everyone can relate to it.

**Assumptions** can sabotage and defeat the very purpose of communication. The sender may start with the assumption that he knows everything, because of his long experience with the organisation. In an oral communication, the sender may see heads nodding and assume that the audience has understood the message and agrees with the speaker. These may be misleading and the message may lose its effectiveness. In the words of Oscar Wilde: "*When you assume, you make an ass out of U and Me*". The sender has to do the following to prevent his/her assumptions from wrecking the communication process:

- Start with the consideration that his/her assumptions could be baseless or false.
- Discuss these assumptions with others to understand how true they are.
- Devoid of biases, anticipate questions and concerns that could be expressed by the receiver/s and encourage them to discuss them openly.

6. **Transmitting Barriers:** Social psychologists estimate that there is usually a 40-60% loss of meaning during the transmission of messages from the sender to the receiver. They also indicate that people in organisations typically spend over 75% of their time in interacting with others. This indicates the stupendous loss to the organisation. It can be said that at the root of a large number of organisational problems is poor communications. Disturbances that get in the way of message

transmission may be due to a variety of circumstances and are sometimes clubbed as "noise." Noise need not be limited to physical interruptions, but can have many connotations to mean disturbances while transmitting messages, such as:

- (a) **Physical Distractions:** A bad phone line or a noisy restaurant can disturb the receiver and block the communication. In written communication either by letter or e-mail, too many spelling and grammatical errors or is not properly formatted, this can distract the reader and instead of understanding the content, the reader may start counting the mistakes! The physical appearance of such a letter or E-mail is sloppy and unprofessional and so gets very poor response.
- (b) **Conflicting Messages:** The sender has to consider the purpose and goal of the message. If for example, the manager wants the subordinate to prepare and submit a report immediately, the receiver is confused whether the emphasis is on speed or accuracy, as to prepare an accurate report, correct information needs to be gathered, which may take some time. Instead, the manager could have set a reasonable time frame for the submission of the report. Similarly, the use of unfamiliar or irrelevant jargon, mixed messages etc., can result in perceptual difference and so may result in incomplete communication. Nonverbal signals can either enhance a prepared message or completely contradict it or distort its meaning. Eye contact, proper posture and clothes appropriate to the situation indicate that the message sender is interested, respectful, sincere and credible.
- (c) **Channel Barriers:** If the sender chooses an inappropriate channel of communication, communication may be disturbed. For instance, if a manager gives detailed instructions over the telephone, it may be frustrating for both the sender and the receiver. Sensitive issues like layoffs and terminations are best communicated face-to-face, while other situations like performance reviews and behavioural issues should be documented so they can be reviewed in the future. If the voice mail of call centres do not indicate by a beep when the person has to press the option button, the frustrated customer can direct his/her anger against the organisation in many other ways.

The following points can be considered while choosing the channel:

- The urgency of the message and the time taken to write, edit and produce the communication in the medium chosen.
- The percentage of the target audience likely to have access to the medium chosen.
- The percentage of target audience that would pay attention to the medium chosen.
- Complexity of the message and whether the receiver would comprehend it easily through auditory, tactile or visual (e.g reading or images) methods.
- Whether the expected feedback and action is urgent or not.

Organisations must consider carefully what communication channels to use in communicating various messages in given circumstances. The objective is to reduce confusion, increase clarity and ensure uniformed and actual delivery of the message to all employees concerned.

(d) **Long Communication Chain:** The longer the communication chain, the greater the chance for error, especially when it is verbal. If a message is passed through too many receivers, the message often becomes distorted, as each receiver could add some unnecessary details or ignore the core parts of the message while concentrating on other details.

7. **Decoding Barriers:** The communication cycle may break down at the receiving end for some of these reasons:

(a) **Lack of Interest:** If a message reaches a reader who is not interested in the message, the reader may not pay the required attention. He may read the message hurriedly or listen to the message carelessly. Thus, the receiver will not decode the message as expected by the sender. Hence, the sender has to make sure that the right person is addressed and his/her attention is drawn to the subject.

(b) **Lack of Knowledge:** If a receiver is unable to understand a message communication will break down. This may happen when the receiver has not been briefed about the subject, or is not adequately trained to receive the message. For instance, a technical note about certain features of a product should be sent to only those who are trained in that subject. While sending a message, the sender has to know who the receiver is. The sender should acquaint himself with the educational and training background of the receiver and his/her experience in that field.

(c) **Lack of Communication Skills of the Receiver:** Unless the receiver is in a position to understand the subject being addressed, his/her feedback will be ineffective. This depends on his/her listening and reading skills. Those who have weak reading and listening skills make ineffective receivers. On the other hand, those who have a good professional vocabulary and can concentrate on listening or reading, have less trouble interpreting good communication. Such an environment makes communication effective. Many people tune out for various reasons: they may be tired or bored. They may be preoccupied with something else. In some cases, they may be mentally rehearsing their response.

(d) **Emotional Distractions:** Emotions interfere with the creation and transmission of a message, disrupting its reception. It may be a particular dislike for the sender or it may be frustration and anger. For instance, a subordinate may be angry at not getting an overdue promotion, or the superior is unduly checking his work. He may be jealous at the attention someone else is getting. A message from the superior may not get the necessary attention. The subordinate may listen to the supervisor or even read the message, but not with the concentration required for effective response. The receiver may be preoccupied, or feels the pressure of time.

(e) **Physical Distractions:** A receiver of a communication should have adequately peaceful environment in order to concentrate on the message. If the receiver works in dimly lit area or an area with bright lights, loud noises, poor ventilation and excessively hot or cold work spaces, or is suffering from

physical ailments, such a receiver may have problems while listening to or reading a message. This results in communication breakdowns on a regular basis. The sender will have to find a more suitable way of sending the message. Using a separate conference room, or technological options like the computer intranet and Internet, quick messages on the cell phones etc., are options the supervisor will have to consider.

There may be other distractions like the cell phones of the receivers may be ringing or vibrating constantly, their internet connection may be slow, there may be distracting activities going on around the place.

- (f) **Organisational barriers:** These include poor organisational culture, climate, stringent rules, regulations, status, relationship, complexity, inadequate facilities and opportunities of growth and development etc., result in

<b>Types of Barrier</b>	<b>Impact on Communication</b>
<b>Language</b>	The communication message might not use vocabulary that is understood by the receiver – e.g. too much use of technical or financial jargon or wrong choice of words.
<b>Noise</b>	Various things interfere to prevent the message from reaching the receiver or being heard – e.g. poor connection, background noise, distractions, too many people speaking.
<b>Overload</b>	Too much information can slow down decision making.
<b>Emotion</b>	The emotional status and relationship between the sender and receiver of the communication might adversely affect communication. The message may be ignored or misinterpreted by the receiver.
<b>Gaps</b>	Too many intermediaries, such as too many layers in hierarchy through which message has to be passed, might prevent or distort the message.
<b>Inconsistency</b>	If people receive conflicting or inconsistent messages, then they may ignore or block them.

8. **Responding Barriers:** The communication cycle is complete and effective when the response or feedback is obtained as expected and within the specified time frame. It is broken if the feedback is not received or received late.

*When you know something, say what you know. When you don't know something, say that you don't know. That is knowledge.*

— Kung Fu Tzu (*Confucius*)

Responding barriers may occur for various reasons, such as:

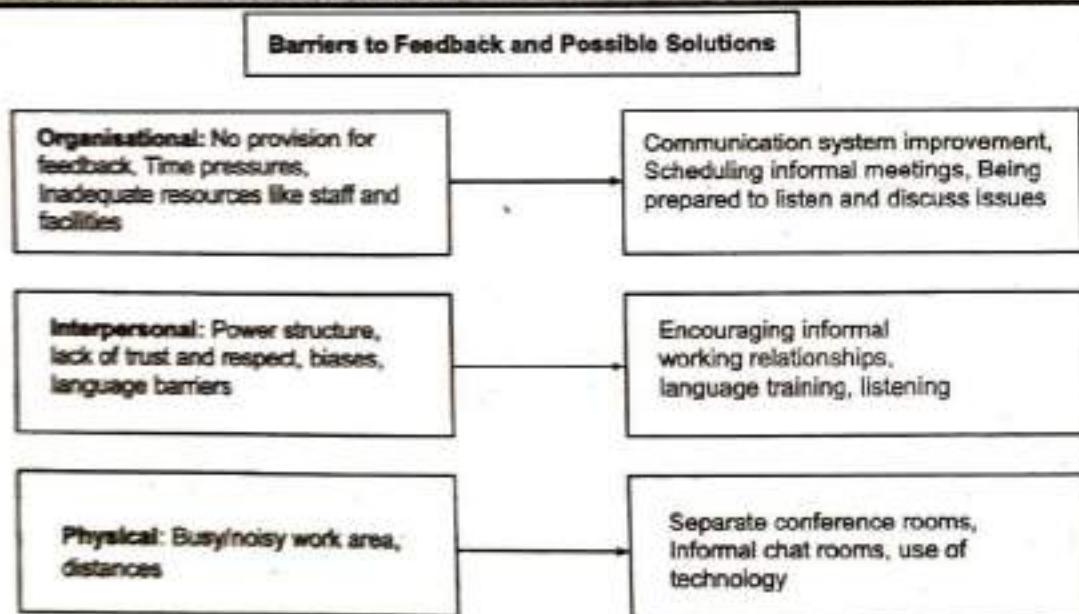
- **No Provision for Feedback:** Since communication is a two-way process, the sender must be aware of and use the proper means of getting a response from the receiver. For instance, proper feedback forms could be designed and used for further analysis. In oral messages, the sender has to make the presentations interesting and informative enough to catch the attention of the receivers. He/she may also permit interaction from the participants to encourage purposeful discussion on the subject. This will ensure that the participants have understood the matter. It is said that face-to-face oral communication is the best

type in this respect, as the receivers can send back both verbal and nonverbal feedback without delay. When two communicators are separated, it is the responsibility of the sender to facilitate meaningful feedback.

- **Delayed or Inadequate Feedback:** The response from the receiver may be delayed for various reasons and beat the purpose of the communication. It can be judgmental if the receiver fails to understand the purpose of the message and so does not give importance on all the points on which feedback is sought. For instance, the supervisor may be overbearing and gives instructions in long and wordy messages, without trying to find out if the receiver has comprehended the message. The receiver may pretend to understand the instructions just get out of the stressful meeting, but his feedback will not be as expected. Employee performance is stunted under such circumstances and the organisation suffers. Similar situations may arise while dealing with other agencies as well.
- **Ignoring the Feedback:** Organisations should use the feedback and act on it, otherwise, they convey the indication that the entire exercise of getting the feedback was of no consequence. When they disregard the information they receive, it can lead to complaints and mistrust and indifference. Companies that are not responsive to employee feedback are in effect stifling effective organisational communication. They risk losing employee loyalty, commitment, satisfaction and engagement.

Organisations that do not provide for an outlet for employees to voice their issues and concerns would face mounting grievances and a significant breakdown in communication. They must not just be concerned with top-down communication but also from lower level employees to upper management. Processes must be established so that employees can report grievances, cases of sexual, verbal or physical harassment, and also give useful suggestions for improvement.

## 1.9 OVERCOMING BARRIERS



**Fig. 1.5**

**Impediments to Effective Communication can be summed up as follows:**

- Inadequate information, explanations and verification,
- Language Barriers,
- Physical arrangements not conducive,
- Failures to establish on-going informal relationships,
- Differences in communication styles,
- Non-verbal cues and body language,
- Lack of respect for the receiver's sensitivities,

**Barriers to communication result in undesirable reaction and unfavourable response.**

- The communication exercise fails because the feedback is absent or falls short of expectation.
- Barriers to communication are caused by environmental, physical, semantic, attitudinal and varying perceptions of reality.

The barriers to effective business communication are many, but with care and attention the majority of them can be overcome. The fewer the barriers, the greater the chance that the communication will be heard and understood and the most desired response or action will take place.

**Care to be taken to Break the Barriers:**

- Organisations should implicitly and explicitly spell out their policies and philosophy with respect to communication.
- The messages must be meaningful and focused.
- Create an environment of trust by allowing all employees access to necessary resources, opportunities for self-expression and idea generation.
- The expectations of the communicating parties should be explicit.
- Minimum use of absolute words like 'never', 'always', 'forever' etc., which can block all further communication.
- The practice of attentive listening in the entire organisation.
- The message should be understood properly, and clarifications obtained if necessary before it is passed on to others.
- The channel of communication should be short.
- Special care is needed in choice of words.
- The background and circumstances of the receiver should be considered. The 'you' culture should be developed.
- Politeness can achieve a lot of goodwill and cooperation.
- Oral communication should be clear, well structured and easy to understand.
- All names should be properly pronounced.
- Body language should enhance verbal the message and not contradict it.
- The receiver of verbal communication should ask for clarifications or repetition if necessary.

- Written communication should be clear, well drafted and edited for correctness, clarity and proper structure.
- The organisation structure should be more dynamic, flexible, easy to understand and transparent.
- Communication channels should not be one way, top-down.
- Organisational culture should be aimed at congenial relationships.
- Proper feedback must be encouraged and information obtained must be acknowledged and be acted upon.

#### **Role of organisations in overcoming barriers to communication:**

*The organisation has to play the lead role in maintaining a communication environment through*

- (i) Organisational policies which underpin or support its strategy and facilitate its implementation.
- (ii) It should support smooth flow of information in all directions, at appropriate levels both external and internal.
- (iii) Organisational rules and regulations should be such that they facilitate effective communication at all levels. Care should be taken to ensure provision of proper channels of communication,
- (iv) Review of status and position of the employees, such that differences in the level of status of the functionaries do not restrict the flow of information,
- (v) Structure of the organization is also an important aspect. If the relationships are complicated and there are too many levels, messages can get delayed or distorted.
- (vi) The organization should support a good knowledge management system, so that employees are updated continuously and take constructive part in the communication process.
- (vii) The organization should provide for use of all media of communication. In the present-day digital world, an array of technologies is available. It can be seen that large corporations use appropriately made films for most of their internal and external communication. Even in high technology product systems, many of them use mobile applications (Apps) to communicate with their customers in real time and market their products. Students of this course should visit the websites of large corporations like Boeing, Exxon etc. to see the films available in public domain and learn from them.
- (viii) Organisational facilities, like well-maintained communication infrastructure, facilities like meeting rooms, conference halls, suggestion schemes, social, cultural and sport activities etc., contribute to better flow of information at both formal and informal levels.

Every member of the organisation must take specific steps to improve conditions and eliminate roadblocks to effective communication. The **American Management Association** has formulated the following commandments for effective communication:

- Clarifying ideas before communication,
- Knowing the purpose of communication,

- Understanding the physical and human environments of communication,
- Consulting others in planning communication,
- Contents and overtones of communication,
- Value of communication to the receiver,
- Follow up action congruent with communication,
- Good listening.

Organisations need to orchestrate and implement communication policies and systems that involve persons from many different levels, locations, disciplines and organisations. To help them function effectively as members of *long-term decision-making and problem-solving teams*, they need to communicate effectively and continuously. New strategies to promote growth and excellence in the organisation may involve expanded and new communication challenges. These may be associated with exploring new markets, new products, partnerships, collaborations, and knowledge management. The changing nature of organisational boundaries and strategies and the growing need to establish and manage diverse, geographically dispersed units, partnerships and collaborations, suggests intervention at three levels, viz., *development of understanding and improvement of communication skills, identification and deployment of communication technology and training to use it effectively*:

- Undertake continuous study of areas of communication deficits in interpersonal, organisational, and inter-organisational relationships and provide for skill enhancement.
- Identify, deploy and, perhaps, help develop more effective interpersonal, organisational, and inter-organisational communication systems and technologies.
- Improve the methodologies and skills associated with that to ensure their success. The fact that organisational communication is highly specialised, and may be scientific and technical in nature, presents additional communication challenges, particularly communicating effectively across disciplines.

#### **Summary list of barriers to effective communication:**

<b>(I) External /Mechanical Barriers</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Defect in Channel</li> <li>2. Noise</li> <li>3. Defect in Organisation and Communication System</li> </ol>	<b>(II) Psycho-Sociological Barriers</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Centred Attitude</li> <li>2. Status Block</li> <li>3. Group Identification</li> <li>4. Closed Mind</li> <li>5. Poor Communication Skills</li> <li>6. Snap Reactions</li> <li>7. State of Health</li> </ol>
<b>(III) Intrapersonal Barriers</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wrong Assumptions</li> <li>2. Different Background</li> <li>3. Attitude</li> <li>4. Closed Mind</li> <li>5. State of Health</li> <li>6. Wrong Interpretation</li> </ol>	<b>(IV) Semantic/Cultural Barriers</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Word/ text suggest multiple meanings. Jargon and Technical terms are not understood by all.</li> <li>2. The same thing may mean different things in different cultures.</li> </ol>

*contd....*

**(V) Interpersonal Barriers**

1. Poor Communication Skills
2. Emotional Outbursts
3. Snap Reaction.
4. Limited Vocabulary
5. Status Block
6. Cultural Barriers
7. Noise
8. Group / culture Identification

**(VI) Organizational Barriers**

1. Defect in Channel
2. Noise
3. Defect in Organization and Communication System
4. Status Block
5. Information Overload
6. Inappropriate Media
7. Negative Tendencies
8. Fear of Superiors
9. Many Transfer Stations

**Points to Remember**

- Communication is a process involving the sorting, selecting and sending of symbols in such a way, as to help the listener perceive and recreate in his own mind, the meaning contained in the mind of the communicator.
- **Objectives of Communication**
  - (a) Transfer of ideas
  - (b) For interacting with society
  - (c) For education and training
  - (d) To update oneself
  - (e) For entertainment
  - (f) To understand the world
- **Process of Communication**
  - (a) Information source or generation of idea
  - (b) Encoding
  - (c) Despatch and reception
  - (d) Decoding of the message
  - (e) Receivers response
  - (f) Feedback
- **Forms of Managerial Communication**
  - (a) Formal communication
  - (b) Informal communication
  - (c) Visual communication
  - (d) Upward communication
  - (e) Downward communication
  - (f) Horizontal communication
  - (g) Verbal communication
  - (h) Diagonal communication

- **Barriers of Effective Communication**
  - (a) Perceptual barriers
  - (b) Emotional barriers
  - (c) Language and cultural barriers

## Questions for Discussion

1. What is managerial communication? Explain its importance.
2. Explain the process of Communication with illustrations.
3. Explain the various forms of managerial communication.
4. What are the barriers to communication?
5. Explain interpersonal and organisational barriers to effective communication. How can they be overcome?
6. Write short notes on:
  - Objectives of managerial communication
  - Significance of informal communication in an organisation.
  - Mechanical barriers to communication.

## Previous Pune University Questions

**B.B.A.**

**April 2011**

1. Give importance of Communication. Explain principles of Good Communication.  
**Ans. Refer Article 1.1 and 41.6 of this chapter.**

**October 2011**

1. Define 'Communication'. Explain the Psychological Barriers to Communication.  
**Ans. Refer Article 1.1 and 1.8 of this chapter.**
2. "The Lack of Upward Communication can be Disastrous." Justify with examples. Explain Horizontal and Diagonal Communication.  
**Ans. Refer Article 1.7 (g) and (h) of this chapter.**

**October 2012**

1. What is Communication? Discuss various types of Communication Barriers.  
**Ans. Refer Article 1.1 and 1.7 of this chapter.**

**April 2013**

1. Define 'Communication'. Explain the process and importance of Communication.  
**Ans. Refer Article 1.1, 1.4 and 1.5 of this chapter.**
2. Write a short note on Communication Barriers.  
**Ans. Refer Article 1.8 of this chapter.**

**B.C.A.****April 2011**

1. What is Communication? Explain Process of Communication in detail.

**Ans. Refer Article 1.1 and 1.4 of this chapter.**

2. Write a short note on Barriers in Communication.

**Ans. Refer Article 1.8 of this chapter.**

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**October 2011**

1. What are the Barriers in Communication? How will you Overcome Barriers in Communication?

**Ans. Refer Article 1.8 of this chapter.**

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**October 2012**

1. Define 'Communication'. State the importance and process of Communication.

**Ans. Refer Article 1.1, 1.5 and 1.4 of this chapter.**

2. Write a short note on Communication Barriers.

**Ans. Refer Article 1.8 of this chapter.**

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**April 2013**

1. Define Communication. Write essentials of Good Communication.

**Ans. Refer Article 1.1 and 1.6 of this chapter.**

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**2...**

## **Methods and Types of Communication**

### **Learning Objectives...**

- To understand how to write effective messages and different types of communication
- Ability to write meaningful and effective messages

#### **2.2 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES**

##### **2.1.1 Introduction**

The success of any business depends upon sound relationships within the organisation and with other stakeholders and the public. Business Correspondence means exchange of letters, which is the best and cheapest means of communication. Correspondence constitutes an indispensable organ of business world. In modern days, trade and industries have expanded to national and international borders. Business activities are diversified. The businessman has to maintain contacts with the suppliers, the customers and the government in carrying out daily transactions. In other words, written communication is at the root of a successful commercial and industrial activity.

Speech came before writing. Humans like to see and hear the people they communicate with. However, verbal communication is not always the most effective method of communication. Many times, the message is not clearly understood because of other factors such as environmental distractions, body language, tone of voice and emotions. The message is lost because the audience is distracted by other factors. Even in staff meetings or training sessions the way in which it is delivered can cause misunderstanding or loss of interest in the message and so written communication is used as a back-up.

While discussing business communication, one should not ignore the role of non-verbal communication, which can support or disrupt the communication cycle. This includes eye contact, tone of voice, style, mannerisms, business attire etc., and managers have to pay special attention to all this in order to make his communication impactful and effective.

Writing is more unique and formal than speech. Written communication has great significance in today's business world. Effective writing involves careful planning of the ideas to be communicated, choice of right words, their organisation in correct order, in cohesive sentences, and in paragraphs. While speech is spontaneous and fast, writing is more valid and reliable than speech but it can cause delay and take time as feedback is not immediate.

### 2.1.2 Objectives of Written Communication

Written communications have a goal or are intended to achieve or "do" something. The goals may be to:

- ✓ • Inform
- Respond
- Request
- Report
- Develop goodwill

People move through the workforce in stages. Each stage has its own set of characteristics and requirements. This includes good written communication skills. A manager's communication skills indicate his/her level of professionalism. In a professional environment, the clearer the manager is in written and verbal communication, the more proficient he/she will seem. If a manager's letter is badly worded or his/her presentation is badly planned and disjoint, it might appear that the person has not taken the matter seriously, or lacks the skills required for his/her position. Such a manager is termed as unprofessional. The effectiveness of a manager is judged by his/her ability to get across his/her points or views clearly in as few words as possible. Such a manager will demonstrate the capabilities of a good communicator who knows his/her subject well.

### 2.1.3 Forms of Written Communication

Depending on whether the recipients are within the organization or outside stakeholders, written communication could internal or external in nature.

#### Internal Communication:

- Letters of appointment and related matters
- Letters to individual employees to communicate changes in their status or position in the organisation
- Memos and circulars
- Reports
- Bulletins
- Job descriptions
- Employee manuals
- Emails for specific meetings and other situations
- Instant messages

Examples of written communications generally used with outside clients or other businesses include:

- Email
- Internet websites
- Letters for customer contacts like cover letters, offer letters, addressing customer complaints etc.
- Proposals
- Brochures *(M Eitor Yordan)*
- Contracts
- Advertisements
- Press notes and news releases

#### 2.1.4 Classification of Business Writing:

- Cover Letters,
- Memo,
- Agenda, Notice and Minutes

Business writing can be of various types, such as cover letters to project proposals, reports etc, memos for communicating new information within the organization, and communication associated with meetings, such as meeting agenda, notice giving necessary information to participants and preparing Minutes of Meetings or summary of meeting proceedings after the meeting, to be circulated to concerned stakeholders. These have been elaborated on in appropriate sections.

Depending on the purpose and nature of the matter to be presented, business writing can be classified as follows:

##### 1 Instructional business writing:

As the name suggests, the purpose is to provide necessary information on the product or process, so as to help him/her complete a task either immediately or to provide some future reference. The writer has to clearly state the task step by step with appropriate and adequate information. The author should be aware of the knowledge base of the receiver, cultural and language issues etc. The writer has to keep it simple and easily understood by all without any need for back reference. Examples are: users' manuals, installation procedure etc.

- User manuals: Many products come with part lists and user manuals. They provide exact details and are extremely effective in creating a satisfactory experience for the customers. In many cases, technical details need to be provided. As such, some amount of technical writing would be involved.
- Product specifications: They are prepared both for the marketing and purchase of products as well as for quality assurance functions. Such a document would provide a detailed outline of the product or process being described.
- Memo: Organisations circulate memos or short notifications of new information intended to be shared within a large group. These documents may include direct instructions or provide reference point for further actions.

**2. For creating records: Reports:**

Businesses create a lot of information that need to be recorded as essential guidelines for immediate action or for future reference. These are in the form of reports. These could be to name a few, meeting reports, status reports, progress reports, work completion reports, marketing analysis and projections, reports on certain incidents, reports complying with rules, regulations, legal or contractual compliance reports etc. They are produced from time to time as required, either in-house or by external consulting agencies. These are accurate in nature, with facts and figures, presented in an orderly and logical manner. For some periodic requirements, such as in the case of routine jobs, standardized formats may be used. Reports are systematic in nature and complete with suggestions or recommendations where applicable. Organisations depend on these reports to ascertain facts and take necessary, informed decisions.

**3. Financial Documents:**

These are a part and parcel of any organization. These documents outline the financial status of a company during a specified period, and provide guidelines for the management to major decisions like expanding, mergers and acquisitions, downsizing etc. Tax compliance is one of the major activities of the financial department.

**4. Agenda and Proceedings or minutes of meetings:**

When important meetings are held within the organization or with outside stakeholders, they attain a formal nature and structure. The manager calling such meetings will have to prepare the agenda points very carefully, such that the objectives of the meeting are achieved. It should be circulated to all the invitees reasonably ahead of the meeting, so that the participants know what to expect and come prepared. The participants listen to the presentation and make their points. The manager has to ensure that the meeting procedure is recorded either in writing by a stenographer or electronically recorded. This is essential for preparing the minutes and also for future reference. A summary of all points discussed and decisions taken is prepared along with such details as the date and venue of the meeting, list of participants etc. This is known as the Minutes or Proceedings of a meeting. It is circulated to all those who were present as also to the seniors for information. This is an essential document as it indicates action to be taken and fixes responsibility for the same.

**5. Persuasive Writing:**

As the term suggests, persuasive writing could be for internal or external clients, with the purpose of asking for a particular decision or action.

For instance, a project proposal aims at convincing the advantages or benefits of a particular project to a potential client. These are generally associated with sales or marketing, fund raising, getting project approvals from government agencies and other funding agencies. The objectives of the proposed project are clearly spelt out with appropriate facts and figures and the methodology to be adopted and the timeline for completion. Proposals are written in clear and systematic manner with charts and graphs for easy understanding. The competency of the person or organization to undertake the project is well explained with references and brochures where applicable to convince the recipient. The benefits are elaborately described and the costs involved at various stages are methodically presented, so that the recipient takes a studied decision. It offers the best value scenario to the client. A lot of study of the project issues and the client parties is essential in order to prepare a comprehensive proposal.

**Sales literature in the form of letters, emails and social media posts** are written to a large number of existing and prospective customers attracting their attention to the product or service with price, deals and offers and contact details for placing orders. The target audience in this case could be specific recipients or the public at large.

Another form of persuasive writing is **Press Release**. It is a concise text written for journalists and media in order to present new information about the company or a specific project. Through the media the ultimate target readers would be the public at large.

#### 6. Transactional Business Writing:

These pertain to everyday transactions of the company, such as letters seeking or giving information, invoices, receipts etc. In many instances like invoices and receipts, standard formats may be made available, with specific information added by the writer. The Human Resource persons are required to issue letters informing appointments, raises, promotions, dismissals etc. They also fall in this category. Such letters give information on the official position, procedure involved etc. These letters can be sent as hard copies or by email.

### 2.1.5 Qualities and Difficulties in Written Communication

Written communication usually requires more thought and effort. Writing must be concise, informative and easy to read as both an informative and instructional tool. The importance of written communication in business is evident by the plethora of forms, manuals and materials that companies publish each day.

Written communication is a very important form of communication in this information and knowledge age. The form of written communication varies depending on the objective of communication and the profile of the receiver. With the proliferation of computers and availability of the Internet, and the spread of social media, there is increasing stress on written and visual communication. Management students today have to develop competency in appropriate writing skills, to convey the intended messages completely and precisely. Nothing should be left for assumptions. All relevant and possible questions should be addressed. Nothing should be left for assumptions. All relevant and possible questions should be addressed. Nothing should be left for assumptions. Specific facts and figures should be presented in an attractive manner, with proper highlights to draw attention to the core of the subject or issue being presented. All relevant and possible questions should be addressed.

This requires a lot of practice. Clarity of thought and expression in correct language is the hallmark of a good written communication. They should realise that what they write is representative of the company they work for. The recipients of the written communication look for information or instructions. Hence writing style is also important. It cannot be high sounding prose, nor can it be too brief to overlook crucial points. It should not antagonize or hurt the recipients' feelings. On the other hand, it should aim at gaining the goodwill of the readers. At the same time, it has to be courteous. It should take into consideration the interests of the receivers. Poor communication is considered unprofessional. It can damage the reputation of the individual and the company.

"Good communication should be complete, concise, clear, concrete, correct, considerate, and courteous." – Observations by Herta A. Murphy and Herbert W. Hildebrandt in Effective Business Communications.

Considering the expectations from business writing, one can understand the difficulties in forming proper communication approach and style. The difficulties are in deciding what is appropriate and relevant for the receiver. The next hurdle is in visualizing the exact requirements of the receivers and their possible reactions. In oral communication, there is instant feedback in words, tone and body language if the sender and the recipient are physically present at the interaction. On the other hand, in the case of written communication, (a) it takes a lot of time to prepare, edit and send. This is because a lot of specific information has to go into it. It has to be presented systematically, attractively and in an easy to read format. The reaction of the recipient and his/her sensitivities have to be kept in view all the time. In these days of globalization, the recipients can be in different parts of the world, with their own socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Sometimes, such time cushioning may not be available. (b) It is time-consuming if more than one person is involved in preparing a document. More time would be spent in coordination. (c) Thirdly, the feedback is not instantaneous. This can cause concern to the sender. If the time gap is too much, the sender will have to send gentle reminders without antagonizing the receiver.

Hence it is very essential for business managers to study the subject matter properly, and hone their writing skills by observation, reading and practice.

### 2.1.6 Advantages and Limitations of Written Communication

#### Advantages of Written Communication:

One major advantage of written communication is that it does not have to be delivered instantaneously. So instant, jerky interaction causing friction can be avoided. The writer takes his/her time to compose, edit, vet, rewrite if more new information is discovered, etc. to make the document relevant and create maximum impact.

Secondly, written communication creates a permanent record for evidence and future record at both the sender's and recipient's end.

Again, it gives more time for the recipients to read the document again and again, get reviews from concerned stakeholders and then respond. The recipient is not rushed into instant reaction and response.

Merits of written communication can be summed up as follows:

- Written communication can be well thought out and organised to convey the message in a more precise and explicit manner.
- It can be erased, revised, rewritten and edited any number of times before it is finally dispatched.
- It is effective as a standalone medium.
- It can be targeted to reach specific individuals or parties.
- Written communication helps in laying down apparent principles, policies and rules for running of an organisation.
- It can be stored and reproduced.
- It is a permanent record of communication. Thus, it is useful where record maintenance is required. It is accepted as evidence in the courts of law.
- It assists in proper delegation of responsibilities. While in the 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.

- Effective written communication develops and enhances an organisation's image.
- It can be cost effective, as it can be reproduced using appropriate technology and distributed to a large number of parties. With the Internet, it is faster and cheaper to communicate with a large number of parties and get feedback.

#### Limitations of Written Communication:

Though written communication has many advantages and is integral to management of organisations of all types and sizes, even the best communication environment can have certain limitations.

It should be noted just as in the case of the senders, the reader's reaction to a written communication can be coloured by his/her knowledge, biases, values etc. A written communication will fail to convince if the reader has had an earlier bad experience with that person or organisation or has developed a prejudice through hearsay. Just like oral communication, written communication can also encounter barriers.

- Written communication adds to the time and costs in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing, editing, refining and delivering letters and also storage of documents.
- Without the help of body language and vocal intonation to guide the reader, written communication is open to his/her interpretation, which can lead to huge misunderstandings. There is lack of personalization in letters, e-mails, text messages and instant messenger tools. This lack of personalisation means there is greater need to think carefully about how these messages will be perceived. Poor written or verbal communication can lead not only to a distortion of the facts, but also of the writer's thoughts and intentions.
- Perhaps the biggest problem with written communication is that once it is in the hands of the reader, it does not provide a second chance to make your point in a different way. Once the reader is lost, it is difficult to get them back. This is why you need to pick and choose your words carefully, and present your points in a style, manner and sequence that best suit the message you are sending and also the recipients.
- If the receivers of the written message are separated by distance, and if they need to clear their doubts, they will have to wait.
- Feedback is not immediate. The encoding and sending of message take time.
- Effective written communication requires great skills and competencies in language and vocabulary use. Poor writing skills and quality have a negative impact on organisation's reputation and can create confusion and even disputes.
- Too much paper work and e-mails burden is involved.

#### 2.1.7 Tools of Written Communication

Written communication can be dispatched by conventional post/courier or through electronic media like email and social media.

The conventional mode through post/courier is popularly termed as snail mail, as it takes a lot of time in transit. However, electronic media is instantaneous, but the response would depend on when the recipient receives the communication and peruses it.

### E-Mail Communications

As the world moves into knowledge and digital era, electronic mail has emerged as a very popular business communication tool. It conveys important corporate communications within and with outside stakeholders swiftly and easily, and promotes quick response. Hence it has become the backbone of communication for business organisations of all sizes and descriptions. Managements keep updated about the happenings within the organization in real time and hence, orient business decisions swiftly.

The advantages of email are that (a) there is no need for personal contacts and meetings which require a lot of coordination. (b) Saves time, as one mail can be sent to a number of recipients at the same time. (c) It is more cost-effective compared to individual phone calls. (d) It creates written record of the communication at both ends, which can be used as evidence in any court of law.

However, managers have to pay special attention to the basic rules of electronic communication when composing their letters. Considering this, several organisations issue strict guidelines for emails covering tone, content, and shape of emails, thus ensuring a high standard of professionalism across departments and levels. Special training programmes are conducted from time to time to ensure compliance at all levels.

## 2.2 ORAL COMMUNICATION: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

- Principles of effective oral communication
- Techniques of effective speech

 Media of Oral Communication: Face to face conversation, Teleconferences, Press Conferences, Demonstration, Radio recording, Dictaphone, Meetings, Demonstration and Dramatization, Public Address System, Grapevine, Group Discussions, Report

- Advantages and Limitations.

### 2.2.1 Introduction

*Everybody has interesting thoughts floating in their mind, however only a few are able to communicate them effectively, and bring about a resounding impact on their audience. Can this skill be acquired?*

Oral communication can be defined as a purposeful presentation - prepared, or delivered extempore, designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviours. It includes any type of interaction that makes use of spoken words, and it is a vital and integral part of the modern business world. **Herta A. Murphy** and **Herbert W. Hildebrandt** emphasised this in their book *Effective Business Communications*, when they said, "The ability to communicate effectively through speaking as well as in writing is highly valued, and demanded, in business. Knowing the content of the functional areas of business is important, but to give life to those ideas—in meetings or in solo presentations—demands an effective oral presentation." The types of oral communication commonly used within an organisation include staff meetings, personal discussions, presentations, telephone discourse, and informal conversation. Oral communication with those outside of the organisation might take the form of face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, speeches, teleconferences, or videoconferences.

Oral communication is the process of verbally transmitting information and ideas from one individual or group to another. It can be either formal or informal. Examples of informal oral communication include business communication, classroom lectures, speeches etc., where words are spoken either face-to-face or over the telephone. It also includes discussions that take place at business meetings. Such communication can be with or without visual aids like posters, charts, figures, models etc. To convey the message effectively, the manager has to organise his thoughts properly, prepare adequately, choose the most appropriate words and use visual aids and body language in a positive and effective manner.

With advances in technology, new forms of oral communication continue to develop which combine audio and video so that workers in distant locations can both see and speak with each other. These include video phones and video conferences, podcasts (audio clips that you can access on the Internet) and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) which allows callers to communicate over the Internet. Skype is an example of VoIP. The advantage of VoIP is that the parties communicating save on telephone charges. These new technologies permit a number of parties in different locations to come in and exchange information.

#### **Principles of Oral Communication:**

It has to be remembered that oral communication is the most used form of the communication process. In the context of formal business communication, in order to be effective and achieve its objectives, it has to have certain basic characteristics. It should serve the purpose and not lead to misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Hence, business managers will have to make sure to follow certain guidelines. The principles of oral communication are as follows: as follows:

- It has to be preplanned. The speaker has to set the objectives and prepare the points in an order of priority.
- The professional has to be clear and certain about the message to be communicate. He cannot be confused or lose focus.
- The message has to be brief and concise and at the same time complete. This requires a lot of planning, so that all relevant information is given in a logical order. A long and winding speech will kill the enthusiasm of the audience.
- The session should be well planned keeping in view the time available, so that there is adequate scope for feedback. It should begin on time and be according to the schedule.
- The speaker has to be well dressed for the occasion and should not appear shabby or unprofessional. He should arrive a little before time so that he is calm and composed and not rushed.
- The speaker should ensure that all the necessary equipments are in order and functioning properly. This includes lighting, ventilation, seating arrangements, space for movements etc.
- The language used should be simple and appropriate for the audience. This means that the speaker has to take adequate efforts to understand the audience properly in all respects, such as, socio-cultural nuances, knowledge base, their role in decision making etc. While addressing non-technical people, a grand speech with

high-sounding technical jargon will be a waste of time of both the giver and receiver of messages. The audience should be able to focus on the subject presented. Proper choice of words is very important.

- The presentation, either oral or with illustrations and demonstrations, should be attractive. The speaker should adopt a natural, pleasant tone, and show good disposition. Arrogance or impatience for any reason will put off the audience.
- While facing the audience, the speaker should adopt good body language techniques to enhance his presentation.
- The speaker should know that he has to maintain neutrality and not make hurtful comments with respect to age, gender, race or religion of the audience. He has to be sensitive to their feelings.
- The information or the message given should be realistic, and not obscure.
- The speaker should take care not to make mistakes, such as in the information content, grammar, pronunciation, spellings if visual media is used etc. The audience tend to get distracted if there are mistakes and lose focus.
- Any emotional display, positive or negative, should be avoided, as that will complicate the matter, cloud the thinking of the audience and lead to wrong interpretations.

The entire communication process can break down and the efforts will be futile if the above principles are not followed.

#### **Causes for Breakdown of Oral Communication:**

- ✓ 1. No proper understanding of the subject or Audience
- ✓ 2. Lack of Planning → ETV
- ✓ 3. Carelessness or Haste in Preparation
4. Sloppy Presentation, Inattentive to Details
5. Distractions due to bad attire and Poor Delivery
6. Lack of Courtesy and Sensitivity towards audience
7. Distractions in Environment
8. Inattentive Audience
9. Lack of Review
10. Wrong Interpretation

#### **Techniques of Effective Oral Communication:**

The business manager should prepare for his speech whether it is one-to-one, one-to-few or one-to-many. It is necessary whether it is face-to-face or on telephone or videoconference. The following are the suggested techniques he could keep in view:

- **Make sure to send invitations or meeting notice appropriately:** It is a good idea to select your audience if the opportunity is available. Send the invitation or meeting notice with information regarding date, time and venue.
- **Check the venue:** It should be conducive, with no outside noise, no afternoon sun coming into the eyes of the participants etc. We were once given a small room for a meeting in the local chamber of commerce and industry. It was near the AC vent and the noise was too much. We had to request for a change of room. Check that all audio, computer and projector etc. are working and properly located. Seating

arrangements should be such that there is minimum disturbance because of people walking in or going out. If some seats are to be reserved, make sure the sign boards say so. Make sure all stationery, supplies and handouts are ready and support staff are ready and in place.

- **Be professional:** Arrive early, relax, walk around, test all the equipment and make sure everything is in order. Be ready to greet your audience with grace and let them take their seats.
- **Organise your points in a logical sequence:** Take some time to ponder what you want to communicate and arrange them in a logical order, depending on how it will impact the audience. Make sure that you know which point to highlight more. A proper introduction, orderly communication and recapitulation to end will be easy to follow. Provide time for Q & A at the end if required. Time your communication by practicing. Sometimes, talking of points of lesser importance and going to the big idea may make a huge impact. Gauge your audience. Do not pack the speech with irrelevant things. It would be a good idea to make a checklist. It is alright to refer to it, rather than getting lost while remembering what to say next.
- **Your voice matters:** Be natural, pleasant and calm. Be polite. Be correct. Use proper body language. Observe the audience for their facial expressions, and adjust your style if you find them impatient, bored or yawning.
- **Pay attention to your grammar and pronunciation:** Any mistake by the speaker will catch immediate attention and divert him from the message that is being presented. Once you have lost the attention of the audience, you cannot get it back. This will lead to underestimating not only you but your point of view. The audience response will not be based on the message. In a globalized world, there are many variations in diction, accent and tone. It is not possible to match every one. But as long as you render your speech clearly and, in a manner that all the participants are able to understand, you will succeed.
- **Do not rush through your speech:** Speak slowly and confidently. The objective is to make the audience understand you. While making some interesting points, a slight pause may help you get audience response. Judge the mood of the audience.
- **Avoid irritating or distracting mannerisms:** These include shuffling and gesturing without reason, fidgeting, scratching the head, making unnecessary sounds like 'um', 'You know' etc. It makes you look less confident and it distracts the audience. Before the speech, it is a good idea practice it in front of a mirror and also record your speech and play it back to analyse and improve. If you are satisfied with yourself, you will sound more confident.
- **Plan your Visual Aids:** Visual aids are useful to make the presentation lively and impactful. Using a slide or PowerPoint presentation with the slides numbered will help you and the audience to refer back if needed. If you have to write on the white board, practice writing clearly and legibly.
- **Pay attention to your Body Language:** This is known as non-verbal communication or silent form of communication. Your body posture, eye contact, smile, pauses, hand movements etc. should communicate a positive message to



supplement your speech. Avoid signs and gestures that can be controversial. There are a number of soft skill development courses available. They may be expensive, but a worthwhile investment for those who aspire to progress in the corporate ladder.

- **Listen to the audience:** If anyone in the audience wants to make comments, allow time after you have closed the speech. Listen carefully. Sometimes, you may come across people from many countries with different accent. It is important to listen carefully so that you understand. You can then respond properly. It is alright to politely request the person to repeat the question, rather than reply without understanding.
- **Relaxing techniques help:** Always, simple breathing exercises help you to stay calm and composed. Look around for a course that suits your schedule. It will transform your nervous energy into positive energy and prepares you to face the audience. Watch videos of great speakers and analyse what makes them great. Remember, the objective of the audience is to understand what you are saying not to criticize you. That should build your confidence.

#### **REMEMBER: PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. THE MAGIC WORD IS "PRACTICE."**

- **Media of Oral Communication:** Face to face conversation, Teleconferences, Press Conferences, Demonstration, Radio recording, Dictaphone, Meetings, Demonstration and Dramatization, Public Address System, Grapevine, Group Discussions, Report

The term media or channel of oral communication refers to the ways in which the sender and the receiver interact using voice or spoken words. They include both non-mechanical and mechanical channels.

The non-mechanical media of oral communication are face to face communication, which could be one-to-one, one-to-a few, or one-to-many. The mechanical channels are those where some sort of instrument or signal systems are used, like the telephone, (either fixed location or mobile), social media or mass media like the radio, TV.

#### **Non-mechanical channels**

1. **Conversation:** This is generally informal in nature, where in an organization, colleagues gather and discuss issues concerning the organization or business. The participants are comfortable enough to exchange their views freely and without any reservations. For instance, the topic may be office timings, parking issues, etc., which are of general interest. There could be some sort of agreement, but without any formal decision-making process.
2. **Interview:** As the term suggests, it suggests a meeting between two or more persons for the purpose of knowing each other or understanding the point of view of each other. For instance, there are the job interviews, interview of famous or important personalities on specific topics for media of mass communication like the press, radio and TV. Interviews could be for eliciting interviews from various stakeholders as in the case of marketing research and socio-economic research. The interview can be conducted by one person or a panel. They could be direct questioning, or guided interview with leading questions for the person to elaborate on. For both types of interview intended for mass consumption, a questionnaire or a checklist could be



used as tools. In the case of marketing research and socioeconomic studies, as the number of contacts would be large, data entry and statistical analysis is required and the interpretation of the results forms the base for major policy decisions, uniformity in questions is crucial. They have to be logically ordered and in appropriate language. Hence structured questionnaires are used with or without open-ended questions. Preparation of these questionnaires itself becomes a major exercise. Just to give an illustration, for a major UNDP and Government of India project, the author was invited to be part of a team to prepare the questionnaire sets. The sessions went on for two weeks, with testing at various stages. The finished questionnaire was of sixty pages for primary household survey and another for specific groups like rural and tribal population, pregnant women etc. The massive survey covered over 50,000 households in Maharashtra and 35,000 in Gujarat. Similar numbers were covered in other parts of the country.

3. **One-to-one meetings:** The manager can have half-yearly or annual review or counseling meetings. Apart from this, there can be meetings with individual staff members for appraisals, warnings or issue of show-cause notices, during emergency situations, etc.
4. **Speech:** Speech is one-to-many communication and refers to what the speaker says in front of an audience. Thus, it is totally audience-centric. In businesses, it could be a speech at any technical or other gathering like a conference or a workshop. It could also be an opening speech at a meeting, presentation, debate or discussion. It could be a labour leader addressing fellow workers. A teacher, trainer or a professor delivering a lecture is also addressing a gathering. There will be many occasions during the career of a business manager when he will be called upon to deliver a speech. He has to understand all the principles of oral communication, practice the techniques most important for the occasion and make his point of view understood by the audience.
5. **Group discussions:** This form of communication is very popular among recruiters. It gives them the opportunity to test a number of applicants at one time on various aspects like organized thinking, clarity of expression, courtesy and leadership qualities. In organisations, managements arrange group discussions to bring together all stakeholders from various departments concerned to consider a subject or a project from all angles. As it brings together experts and decision-makers together on one platform, it saves on time and expenditure. Similarly, in research projects, panel discussions are held, wherein experts are invited to give their opinions. Generally, checklists are prepared for this purpose with all points arranged in an order.
6. **Formal training courses:** Here, the trainer and the trainees come together for a specific duration of time. It could be a technical training programme in industries or executive development programmes for managers. Though it has a formal setup in terms of hierarchy, over days, the ambience can become more informal, where a lot of interaction takes place at all levels.
7. **Meetings:** These are more like formal group discussions. The subject for discussion is set, invitees are carefully selected, the agenda is prepared and circulated and the proceedings are recorded. These meetings may be periodic staff or committee meetings to review status. They may be to discuss details of a new project. They may

be means to communicate new information. The manager responsible maintains records of these meetings for listing out actions to be taken and persons responsible for them. Thus, they become major tools to deliberate and delegate. These Minutes are recorded for future reference.

8. **Special ceremonies and occasions:** Sometimes the business manager is called upon to organize and conduct special open sessions like an obituary or an award giving celebration. He will have to orient his thoughts and deliberations to suit the occasion.
9. **Conferences:** In a conference, the speaker addresses many assembled at an extremely formal gathering with the objective of addressing a particular subject. The speaker can have audio-visual tools to help him communicate his point of view effectively. Conferences are planned months or even a year in advance, so that the participants can make arrangements for their travel. Each speaker will have a time slot either in the main venue or in specific or technical group sessions. In these days of globalization, major conferences attract a lot of international participation. The speakers and the audience register for the event. Planning a conference calls for a lot of team effort. A number of committees are formed to ensure that all arrangements are in order. Such an activity can totally disrupt the normal functioning of the host organization.
10. **Informal communication:** In a successful business, many an exchange of ideas can take place in an informal setting. It could be at tea time or lunch table, during inspection of the building or office, sports events etc.

#### **Mechanical channels:**

1. **Telephone:** A telephone system converts voice and other sound signals into a form that facilitates transmission immediately to remote locations. It plays a vital role in maintaining contact with people all across the globe and get real time responses. Here, the speakers are not in conversation face-to-face. Just as in the case of any oral communication, the business manager has to plan the conversation and follow the basic principles of oral communication, like courtesy, pleasant voice and tone, brevity, clarity, complete attention to the receiver, etc. It may be followed by letter or email to confirm the points discussed and decisions taken for record.
2. **Teleconference:** It is a meeting through phone, but using the facility of connecting a number of persons. It does not matter where or in which part of the globe the participants are. However, time zones are respected while setting up a teleconference. These are pre-planned to make sure the intended participants are available at the time with all necessary information or questions to ask. The manager who seeks the meeting is the convener. He welcomes the participants, states the purpose and sets the scope of discussions. The purpose could be anything, like marketing activities, technical guidelines, company policies etc. These telephone meetings are recorded for action and future reference. Most multinational organisations with operating facilities in different countries depend on this to a great extent.
3. **Radio:** This is a one-way communication of one person or a group to the listening public. There is no scope for immediate feedback from the public. Only those audience present in the studio on invitation can ask relevant questions. Radio programmes are of various formats like speeches, interviews, group discussions, talks

by select panels etc. The advantage is that it is a less expensive way of communicating with the public than the TV. Recent technological developments permit audience in studios in different locations to be linked. The programmes can be broadcast repeatedly if the material is significant. In times of emergency, the authorities can also send warnings, such as cyclones, floods, etc. The disadvantage is that there is no physical face-to-face communication and so body language is not of importance.

4. **Television:** This medium has become an essential part of the daily life of people all over the world, and in the last 10-15 years, it has spread to the remotest corners of India. It is a one-way communication of news, views and programmes. It permits a lot of dramatization, animation and story-telling. There are various channels specific to their interest like entertainment, news, sports, movies, science, religion, history, culture, etc. Some news channels have become interactive when audience can call in and present their views. The line between TV and mobile phones has become blurred and people can watch TV channels on their mobile phones. The TV sets have become digital and smart, so that the hardware can be used to access the Internet as well. With the advent of 5<sup>th</sup> Generation (5G) of mobile technology, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, technological developments in this field bring together all electronic things and systems and disrupt the way people and organisations work. Students are advised to keep abreast of these developments continuous updating of their knowledge base.
5. **Video conference:** Video conference is like teleconferencing, except that the participants sitting in different locations come together face-to-face on the screen, as if they are physically present. This is possible due to developments in video camera technology. Here again, as the participants can see each other, the speakers have to be careful about their facial expressions and hand gestures apart from their tone of voice and clarity of speech.
6. **Demonstration** is a process of showing how something works for instance in a laboratory or a teleshopping show. This can be combined with words for greater effect. Surgeons demonstrate medical procedures either in the operation theatre or through a video-conference. Demonstration can also be used to show feelings, such as a hug to show appreciation or love, and a push or a jab to show extreme displeasure. Demonstration also includes public expression of an opinion by holding meetings and processions and displaying placards. The larger the gathering, the more powerful would be the speaker. Thus it becomes a show of strength for a trade union or a political party or a public campaign. Demonstration is thus a very effective method of non-verbal expression to convey meaning and can be used and dramatised as a means of emphasis on the subject under consideration.
7. **Dramatization:** The term Drama means visualizing and acting out scenes to enhance and give more depth to the message communicated. The participants assume or take on the role of the characters in the scenes and enact the scenes. They tell the intended story or communicate the message. They show the behavior of the characters. Both the players and the viewers can identify themselves with the feelings of the characters and become more sensitive towards them. Thus, through the performance of activities in situations that simulate real life, the message is communicated very effectively.

effectively and impactfully. Traditional drama styles like scripting and improvisation are used for role playing and storytelling. Not much importance is given to costumes. These sessions can be made interactive. Discussions after the performance can not only highlight the performance of the players but also assess the insights and reactions of the audience towards the issues that are being represented. This will help the trainers to analyse them and put things in the right perspective.

## 2.2.2 Advantages of Oral Communication

There are many situations where parties choose oral over written communication. The advantages are:

- Oral communication is more personal and less formal than written communication.
- Saves time: If time is limited and a business matter requires quick decision, a face-to-face or telephone conversation would be appropriate.
- Flexibility: In oral communication, as the parties can discuss different aspects of an issue and make decisions more quickly.
- Conflict management: Oral communication can be especially effective in addressing conflicts or problems. Situations of disagreements or misunderstandings can best be addressed by talking things over.
- Oral communication helps in promoting employee morale and maintaining an energetic and enthusiastic team.

## 2.2.3 Disadvantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication has certain disadvantages:

- Does not create a record or document. A lot of business transactions require some type of written record.
- Oral communication tends to be brief and cannot contain a lot of technical information.
- Oral communication may create misunderstandings as the receiver may interpret the accompanying silent language in his own way other than what the sender has intended.

Hence, the sender has to think carefully considering the entire communication environment, viz., the subject matter, urgency and the approach and attitude of the receiver and choose the most suitable method of communication.

## 2.2.4 Silent Communication - Non-verbal Communication, Advantages and Disadvantages

***Words alone are, in many cases, not adequate to express our feelings and reactions.***

'Non-verbal Communication' refers to the process of 'Communication by means of elements and behaviours that are not coded into words'. It is the process of sending and receiving wordless messages through gestures and touch, by body language or posture, by facial expression and eye contact as well as through objects or artifacts. Oral communication also has non-verbal elements known as paralanguage, which includes voice quality, rate, pitch, volume, style, emphasis etc. These are perceived by the receiver.

Even written communication has some aspects which add to the meaning of the words. However, the study of silent communication is generally with respect to face-to-face interaction.

Silent communication is a medium of communication, which adds another dimension to the spoken word and so it is also known as 'Communication by Implication'. Non-verbal messages express true feelings in a more accurate manner than the spoken or written language. Non-verbal Communication is a very powerful means of communicating and hence, it is important to study this as a separate topic. Most people believe that the manner in which you say something is more important than what you say.

The significance of non-verbal communication can be seen from the fact that the content of a message is composed of:

- 55% from the visual component
- 38% from the auditory component
- 7% from language

When people communicate, listeners gain information about the speaker's attitudes towards them from visual, tonal, and verbal cues. Similarly, the listeners can send their feedback using these cues. Much depends upon a number of other factors, such as context of the communication, and how well the communicators know each other. It also depends on the cultural background of the communicators.

Scientific research on nonverbal communication and behavior began with the 1872 publication of Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Since then, there has been an abundance of research on the types, expressions and effects of unspoken communication behaviour.

Edward T. Hall's (1959) influential book *The Silent Language* placed a heavy emphasis on cultural nuances of nonverbal communication. Hall is generally acknowledged to be the founder of this field of communication studies. The book studies the previously hidden dimensions of human communication, particularly proxemics (how space affects communication) and chronemics (how time affects communication).

In the mid 1960s, Paul Ekman studied emotions and discovered six facial expressions that almost everyone recognises world-wide: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise. Although they were controversial at first, they are now widely accepted. Paul Ekman (born February 15, 1934) one of the 100 most eminent psychologists of the twentieth century is a pioneer in the study of emotions and their relation to facial expressions.

### **Significance of Silent Communication**

Stated briefly, the manner in which a message is expressed may carry more significance and weight than what is said, i.e., the words themselves. Depending on the situation, the speaker can reinforce his message with a smile or a frown, raise his/her voice, or keep it pleasant, gentle, and easy. In short, depending on the context, the communicating parties can frame the message in such a way as to convey the entire meaning. These signals are often so subtle and involuntary that the communicator is not consciously aware of them.

- In recent management literature, nonverbal communication has received much attention especially in the areas of business meetings, negotiations, business presentations, sales and marketing, and also in the area of social skills. It is extremely important in general communication as well. It is estimated that less than ten percent of interpersonal communication involves words. The remaining 90 percent is made up of message carriers, such as voice tone, sounds and a variety of devices such as kinetics (movement), haptics (touch), oculistics (eye-contact), proxemics (space) and chronemics (time) as well as posture, and sound symbols. Even silence can communicate some feeling. In many cases, the communicator may use groups of behaviors to mean the same emotion or feeling, such as combining a frown with crossed arms and unblinking eye gaze to indicate disapproval.
- For managers, working in this flat world, where businesses operate from various locations and interfacing with different cultures, the need to understand non-verbal cues gains further importance because of the major differences in the usage and interpretation of these forms based on cultural nuances. Body language, expression, personal space and other nonverbal tools are an integral part of the communication process, irrespective of whether the person giving such messages is the speaker or the receiver.
- Nonverbal communication occurs not only between people, but also *internally*. People grimace, stand in certain postures, and show other behavioural stances in order to reinforce to themselves certain positions, attitudes, and implicit beliefs. Unconsciously, they suggest to themselves the role they choose to play, such as being submissive or dominant, trusting or wary, controlled or spontaneous.

Research has identified several different types of nonverbal communication. The following is a relatively simple classification of non-verbal cues in communication:

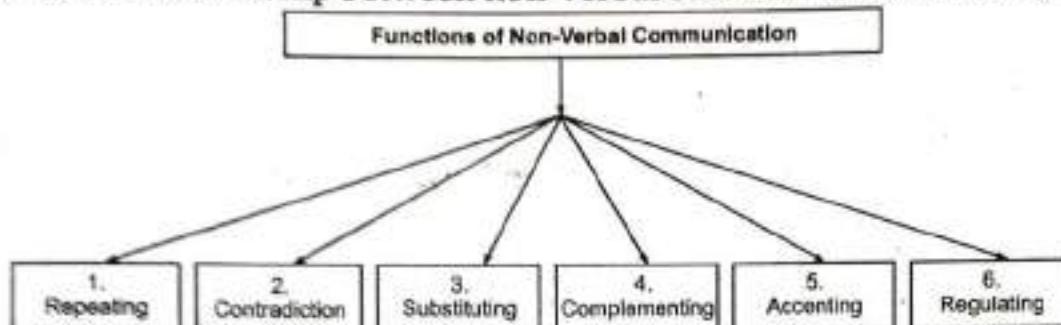
<b>Kinesics:</b>	Body motions, such as shrugs, eye movement, foot-tapping, drumming fingers etc.
<b>Proxemics:</b>	Spatial separation (in relation both the social and physical environment)
<b>Haptics:</b>	Touch
<b>Oculistics:</b>	Eye contact
<b>Chronemics:</b>	Use of time, punctuality, waiting, pausing
<b>Olfactics:</b>	Smell
<b>Vocalics:</b>	Tone of voice, timbre, volume, speed
<b>Sound Symbols:</b>	Mumbling and making sounds such as: grunting, mmm, er, ah, uh-huh,
<b>Silence:</b>	Absence of sound (muteness, stillness, secrecy)
<b>Adornment:</b>	Clothing, jewelry, hairstyle
<b>Posture:</b>	Position of the body (characteristic or assumed)
<b>Locomotion:</b>	Walking, running, staggering, limping, sudden and jerky movements
<b>Expression:</b>	frowns, grimaces, smirks, smiles, pouting, tears in eyes

## 2.2.5 Functions of Non-verbal Communication

To be able to understand how people use non-verbal communication, it is necessary for managers to realise their functions and the significant role they play in conveying the meaning. Only then can they understand messages in complete and within the overall context. Nonverbal communication in general performs three basic functions, viz.,

- Managing identity,
- Defining relationships, and
- Conveying attitudes and feelings (but not ideas).

There is a close relationship between non-verbal cues and the words they accompany.



**Fig. 2.1: Functions of Non-verbal Communication**

1. **Repeating:** Nonverbal cues are used to reinstate the meaning conveyed in words.
2. **Contradiction:** When the sender contradicts his words by using nonverbal means.
3. **Substituting:** Nonverbal cues serve as substitutes for spoken words or messages, such as signs to denote peace, victory, hostility (clenched fist), submissiveness (stooped position), depression (bowed head), etc.
4. **Complementing:** Non-verbal cues help complete a message. *Baird* states that the phrase "I love you", spoken sincerely is usually accompanied by physical cues that demonstrate the feeling behind the message. When something is said in anger, the feeling is shown not only in the spoken message, but also by way of clenched fists, flashing eyes and strained voice.
5. **Accenting:** To accentuate the verbal message or give it more force, like increasing the volume or pitch of the voice while asking someone to leave the place.
6. **Regulating:** Controlling the flow of communication is another important function. A forward lean, a nod, a vocal inflection, pointing to the next speaker or a change in eye behaviour can indicate to the other person that his/her turn is over.

To Sum up: *Ray Birdwhistell* estimates that in face-to-face interaction the words spoken account for less than 35 percent of the total meaning produced while the remaining 65 per cent is obtained from non-verbal cues. The sender or speaker transmits messages through appearance, gestures, postures, facial expression, vocal characteristics and words expressed. However, it should be remembered that the interpretation of these symbols can differ even within the same cultural setting.

Form	Main Function (in some cultures)
<b>Nod (Yes)</b>	Repeating
<b>Shrug (I don't know or I don't care)</b>	Substituting
<b>Scratch head, perplexed look</b>	Substituting or Complementing
<b>Tone of voice</b>	Emphasis, accentuation
<b>Hand raised</b>	Regulating, warning
<b>Head shake</b>	Contradicting
<b>Eye movements</b>	Deceiving or loss of interest
<b>Staring</b>	Dominating
<b>Looking down or away</b>	Submitting
<b>Raised fist</b>	Aggression
<b>Hand-shake</b>	Socialising
<b>Touching, kissing</b>	Friendship, Arousal
<b>Over-adornment</b>	Boasting

## 2.2.6 Need to Understand Non-verbal Means of Communication

People react to the unspoken, as much (if not more) to how something is said and try to find out the explicit meaning of the words. Failure to identify and understand them can lead to misunderstandings. Hence, to be effective communicators, it is very necessary for managers to learn about how the human body and actions can send signals, either voluntary or intentional, from reading and through training programmes, and also about the effects of different methods of nonverbal communication. The following figure shows the elements of body language.

The same gestures can be misinterpreted due to cultural differences. Look at these examples:

- Making a circle of index finger and thumb generally means 'everything is fine', 'perfect'. However, in France, it means 'worthless'; in Japan, it means 'money'; in Germany it signifies rudeness; and in Malta and Brazil it is an obscene sign.
- 'Thumbs up' generally means 'all OK'; but in Australia, it is rude; and in Japan, it indicates number five.
- Palm facing, all fingers open in general means 'stop'; in Turkey, it says 'you get nothing from me', and in W. Africa, it indicates 'you have five fathers!'

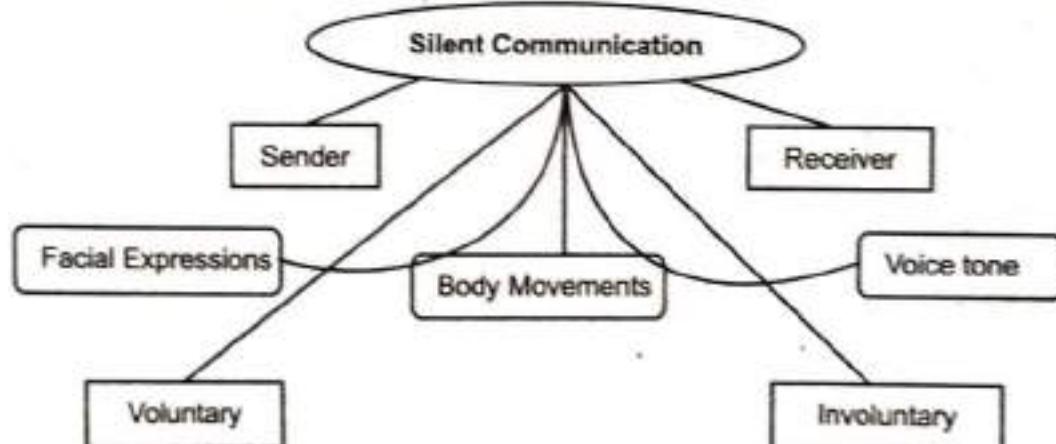


Fig. 2.2: Elements of Body Language

Note: It can be in agreement with or contradict spoken words.

### 2.2.7 Advantages of Silent Communication

- It would be possible to communicate with someone who is hard of hearing.
- In places where it is necessary to maintain silence such as in a meeting or in a hospital, silent communication helps.
- It would be possible to communicate without being heard by others.
- It is possible to communicate with someone who is out of hearing range, but can see the sender.
- It is helpful in communicating with someone who does not understand the sender's language.
- It can be understood instantly and instant response can also be obtained. It makes conversation short and brief, as actions speak louder than words.
- It helps in clarifying verbal communication.

### 2.2.8 Disadvantages of Silent Communication

- Conversation with only silent conversation becomes very brief and it is not to communicate details.
- It may communicate small ideas. Detailed discussions are not possible.
- The receiver has to observe the changes of expression, body language, adornments, space etc., carefully or the meaning is lost.
- The receiver may not understand, requiring repetition of the message.
- It cannot be used as a public tool for communication. It cannot be used everywhere.
- It may fail to create an impression on the listeners.
- It cannot be preserved and recorded for further use.
- Involuntary body language due to force of habit may be misunderstood by the others. A person may have natural stooping shoulders, which may be understood by the others as weakness. Involuntary tapping on the table may be mistaken for nervousness.
- It may overemphasise the spoken word and create misunderstandings. Hence it has to be used very carefully.
- Non-verbal communication may be multi-channel. For instance, while observing the facial expression, one may disregard body movements. (*see box below*)
- The signs and symbols are not universal in all cultures. They may be misunderstood. Care has to be taken to understand the nuances of cultural background of the receiver. For instance, eye contact is expected in some cultures while it is regarded as impudence or arrogance in others. Cultural expectations should be understood and respected.

Generally, poker players do not show their expressions on their face and so 'poker face' has become a generic term indicating a blank face. Recent research shows that these players indicate their level of either confidence or hopelessness or anxiety in many other ways like how they pick up the tokens and place them as stakes, how they change their stance etc. Such insights can help players to assess their own potential better. Similarly, managers have to observe the behaviour pattern of people with whom they are interacting in totality.

## 2.2.9 Need for Training in Non-verbal Communication

Though nonverbal communication methods are very useful, managers should understand the problems associated with them as well, as that will help them use these cues or interpret them more carefully and effectively.

- Possibility of misinterpretation:** People belonging to different cultural backgrounds send out different nonverbal signals. They are, therefore, liable to be misinterpreted. One has, therefore, to be very careful in their use and understanding.
- Requires extra care in getting the right message:** Facial expressions, gestures, postures etc. become ineffective if the listener is inattentive. The listener has to be watchful of these cues while listening.
- Ineffective in large gatherings:** Use of body language is generally not every effective in large gatherings. However, the speaker can convey confidence or lack of it in many ways and the audience can also send silent messages of boredom or fatigue by yawning, getting distracted etc. It is more effective in face-to-face situation or in small groups.
- It cannot be wholly relied on:** Since it is non-verbal communication, it is not prudent to rely solely on them. Words, written or spoken, by themselves, can be taken seriously, but care should be taken while relying on nonverbal cues.

The field of nonverbal communications has grown rapidly over the last few decades, and it has applications in business, media, international relations, education, and indeed any field which significantly involves interpersonal and group dynamics. These nonverbal actions offer clues to the underlying defenses, attitudes, biases, mixed feelings, and disowned intentions. Hence, the need for training in non-verbal communication can never be overemphasised. Those sending the messages may learn to understand themselves better while learning to be more cautious about their manner of speaking or delivering. For the receivers of the message, such a training programme will help in understanding and modifying their own intuitive responses. People, especially those who work with or help other people, such as managers, teachers, community workers etc. should read about nonverbal communications. This will add a deeper level of understanding about this dimension of human behaviour to the intellectual knowledge they already possess.

There are two questions still lingering about the use of nonverbal communication:

- Whether it is possible to be perfect in understanding non-verbal cues, and
- The amount of context needed to interpret them.

For instance, when a person is talking about an excellent project and the receiver has a frown on his/her face, it may mean many things, such as (a) the latter is preoccupied, or (b) he/she cannot comprehend the message or (c) he/she is angry that the idea has not originated from his side, or (d) that he is pressed for time.

This shows that it is necessary to know the entire context before attaching any meaning to a non-verbal cue and arrive at conclusions. Many people have the habit of attaching labels, such as 'person X is always rude'; or 'person Y has a superiority attitude' based on one or two experiences without knowing the persons or the reasons behind such behaviour. Putting such labels will make the sender either withhold some information or modify the data or even avoid communicating.

## 2.2.10 Limitations

There are limitations to training in this field and these should be understood.

- (a) It is often assumed that nonverbal communication is a transferable skill, i.e., it can be taught. However, like speech, it has both form and function, and so nonverbal communication is difficult to teach.
- (b) Secondly, that it is not always easy to translate or interpret it directly resulting in communication breakdowns and misunderstandings, especially in the case of intercultural communication.  
As has already been stated, there are differences in use and interpretation of non-verbal cues according to age, background and socio-cultural factors. There are some universal languages, like a simple smile without any undertone, laughter etc.
- (c) By and large, nonverbal communication tends to be relatively ambiguous and open to interpretation. Its impact often depends on the nature of the 'listener', particularly when it is unclear whether the messages conveyed through these are deliberate or unconscious.
- (d) Nonverbal communication cannot be separated from verbal communication. The verbal part and the total environment provide the context for non-verbal communication and so, it needs to be taught and practised according to the circumstances, in the right contexts, and with plenty of cultural input and awareness.

Given its importance, there is a singular lack of material for the teacher which focuses on this aspect of communication. One way of mastering this type of communication is simply learning the information from books and other resource material, understanding the various categories of nonverbal communication and getting oriented to the entire subject. However, when this learning is combined with demonstrations and analysis, i.e., getting the "feel" of it, by "doing" these behaviours, varying them and analysing them, it would give the managers a better insight. The keys to learning these communication methods is keen observation and being sensitive to the entire context of the communication process.

Researchers have developed a few training techniques, mostly based on psychodrama or role playing (simulation method), with some preliminary briefings, lectures, readings of others' experiences, studying and analysing pictures, video clippings without and with sound etc., for analysing and interpreting nonverbal communication. These techniques consist of activities such as enactment, role reversal, doubling, mirror effect, replay, variations etc. They offer a variety of experiential understanding of various viewpoints and help in gaining sensitivity. The lessons learnt can be practised in training sessions and in real life situations.

As these techniques require exploring problems in an experiential manner, trainees learn to work in groups. As they contain an element of novelty, playfulness, exaggeration and artistic challenge in enacting scenes, it would be easy to get the trainees to be thoroughly involved in the exercises. Such enactments can help people connect their own behaviors with the underlying attitudes, which could be related to what others expect of them, fantasies that criticism will be catastrophically destructive, or a dream for a magical rescue. Re-playing these scenes with various alternative elements may help re-align those underlying attitudes.

## 2.3 BODY LANGUAGE

Body language is a term used to describe a whole set of nonverbal means of communication, such as body posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements. Human beings possess this unique mental and physical capability to send as well receive such signals and also interpret and respond to them almost entirely subconsciously. They can 'read' others' body language and even mirror them to put the other person at ease. In the 1990s Paul Ekman expanded his list of basic emotions like sorrow, happiness and anger and included a range of positive and negative emotions such as:

1. Amusement
2. Contempt
3. Contentment
4. Embarrassment
5. Excitement
6. Guilt
7. Pride in achievement
8. Relief
9. Satisfaction
10. Sensory pleasure
11. Shame

### 1. Facial Expressions

Of all the types of nonverbal communication, this may be one of the most noticeable. Sometimes, fleeting, involuntary expressions appear on the face which a person is not intending to communicate or even aware of. *People examine each others' faces as they talk, trying to get some information to confirm that the meaning is received in the manner in which it is delivered.* The human face is more highly developed as an organ of expression than any other animal.

For instance, *Smiling* is one facial expression that is likely to put other people at ease and make them feel accepted and comfortable. A smile can add happiness and comfort to the conversation. It is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. The person who maintains a smiling face while talking or delivering a speech will be received warmly by the audience. Such a countenance is indicative of a likable person, pleasant, friendly, warm and approachable. People will react to that person more favourably. It is said that a smile is a universal language. But let us not forget, a person can have a sarcastic smile while talking to someone. A smile with a smirk or grimace can indicate quite the opposite of a pleasant conversation. Scowling, lip chewing, and raising eyebrows can all signal different meanings. A person can express a number of negative feelings such as unhappiness, frustration, anger etc., through facial expressions. So it is important to be aware of how the face looks during a conversation. This is true of both the sender and the receiver.

Here are just a few types of feelings that a human face can express:

- (a) Pensive
- (b) Warning
- (c) Startled

- (d) Amused
- (e) Pouting
- (f) Confused
- (g) Sad
- (h) Anxious
- (i) Sleepy
- (j) Barely tolerant
- (k) Attracted
- (l) Intoxicated

## 2. Eye Contact

It is an essential tool in nonverbal communication as it **makes the other person feel heard, respected, and important**. It helps to open and regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in the other person/persons and increases the speaker's interest, concern, warmth and credibility. Making good, consistent eye contact can elevate a person's status as a great conversationalist. However, it can make the other person feel uncomfortable if it goes on for too long. Modern American business culture values a fair degree of eye contact in interpersonal relations, and looking away is considered as avoidance or even deviousness. In some cultures, it is not appreciated if children look at their elders' face, as it can signify rudeness. For some it may feel too intimate, for others it may feel challenging. When cultures interact, this inhibition of gaze may be misinterpreted as "passive aggressive" or worse.

## 3. Gestures

Gestures are another type of nonverbal communication. They can add warmth and personality to a conversation. Hand gesture, nodding appropriately etc., can be an easy way to show that the listener is understanding, and connecting with the speaker. Failing to use gestures while speaking may make the person appear boring and stiff and this perception can hinder the communication process. A lively and animated speaking style captures the listener's attention, makes the conversation more interesting, and facilitates understanding.

There are many kinds of gestures:

- (a) Clenching fist
- (b) Biting fingernails
- (c) Rubbing chin
- (d) Raising eyebrows
- (e) Scratching head
- (f) Hands behind head
- (g) Sticking out tongue
- (h) Shaking a finger
- (i) Tugging at hair
- (j) Smoothing hair
- (k) Pursing lips
- (l) Looking away
- (m) Rubbing nose

- (n) Tugging earlobe
- (o) Pointing
- (p) Squirming
- (q) Folding arms
- (r) Narrowing eyes
- (s) Hands on hips
- (t) Rocking
- (u) Waving

These, too, have many different meanings in different cultures, and what may be friendly in one country or region can be an insult in another (Morris et al, 1979, Maginnis, 1958).

Body language could be involuntary or 'accidental' body language covering all the different types of movements, postures and facial expressions. It could be intentional warm body language, such as empathic movements and touch, postures and facial expressions or intentional abusive body language, such as violent/abusive movements and touch, postures and facial expressions.

#### 4. Posture and Body Orientation

The way a person walks, talks, stands, and sits sends numerous messages to others. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates to the listeners that the person is approachable, receptive and friendly. Interpersonal closeness results when the sender and the listener face each other. Not facing the listener while or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided as it communicates disinterest, or even dishonesty. Posture is always easy to understand.

A comfortable and confident person will stand or sit in a relaxed manner, and will have fluid smooth movements. Such a person will face the conversation partner to indicate confidence and engaging conversation skills.

##### 2.3.1 Proximity

Personal space and interpersonal distance, i.e., physical distance between the communicating partners signals their level of intimacy and comfort. If an unknown person stands too close or touches too often, it will make the other person feel uncomfortable. Sitting on the table in the office, standing too close to the superiors etc., may not be appreciated. There are unspoken and invisible rules governing personal distance. People stand too near when they are more intimate. When they are not so close, they should be at a distance.

Edward T. Hall is most associated with proxemics, the study of the human use of space within the context of culture. In *The Hidden Dimension* (1966), he argued that human sensory apparatus is the source of all perceptions of space, and these perceptions operate at the subconscious level and are moulded and patterned by culture. These perceptions can impede communication and understanding in cross-cultural settings. He analysed both the personal spaces that people create around their bodies as well as the macro-level sensibilities that shape cultural expectations about the organisation of streets, neighbourhoods and cities.

Edward Hall's theory of proxemics suggests that people will maintain differing degrees of personal distance depending on the social setting and their cultural backgrounds.

Hall's most famous innovation has to do with the definition of the informal or personal spaces that surround individuals:

- **Intimate space** - the closest "bubble" of space surrounding a person. Only the closest persons can reach this level.
- **Social and consultative spaces** - the spaces in which people feel comfortable conducting routine social interactions with acquaintances as well as strangers.
- **Public space** - the area of space beyond which people will perceive interactions as impersonal and relatively anonymous.

Hall describes the handling of space during conversations: "A U.S. male...stands 18 to 20 inches away when talking face to face to a man he does not know very well; talking to a woman under similar circumstances, he increases the distance about four inches. A distance of only 8 to 13 inches between males is considered...very aggressive. Yet in many parts of Latin America and the Middle East, distances which are almost sexual in connotation are the only ones at which people can talk comfortably." Hall (1955) concluded: "If you are a Latin American, talking to a North American at the distance he insists on maintaining is like trying to talk across a room."

Hall argues that cultural expectations determine these spaces. Americans traveling to Europe would tend to back away instinctively, as the distance maintained there almost half of what Americans do.

Every culture has similar internalised expectations about how fixed and semi-fixed features, such as furniture, buildings and cities should be organised. United States cities, for instance, are customarily set out along a network, a preference inherited from the British, but in France and Spain a star pattern is preferred.

In general, distances differ according to culture and the closeness or otherwise of a relationship, such as friends, co-workers, sales people etc. and very often, this is expressed intuitively. Again it depends on the place of interaction, such as public places like parks, restaurants, or on the street and in private homes. It also depends on the gender of the communicating parties. It is necessary to study the cultural norms and look for signals of discomfort caused by invading the other person's space. It is necessary to be aware of the other persons' body language as well as their attitude and respond accordingly. It is always correct to maintain a dignified distance from the receivers.

### 2.3.2 Touch

The manner in which a person touches another communicates a great deal of information. Touch could take a variety of forms, indicating different meanings, such as a gentle grip or a firm one, holding the other person on the back of the upper arm, on the shoulder, or in the middle of the back. It could be a push or a tug. It could be a pat, a rub, or a grab. Each of these indicates different areas of personal intimacy, and this again can be gender- and age-specific. Many adolescents resent any touching that indicates a patronising stance or undue familiarity. Even the angle of one's holding another's hand might suggest a hurrying or coercive implicit attitude, or a respectful, gentle, permission-giving approach (Smith, Clance & Imes, 1998, Jones, 1994).

### 2.3.3 Locomotion

Physical expressions like waving, pointing, touching and slouching are all forms of nonverbal communication. This branch of study which covers body movement and expression is known as **kinesics**. These movements make communication much easier as they can be used to emphasise a point, or repeat one.

#### Examples:

- The classic example is *crossing of hands across the chest* to communicate that the person is angry or displeased, is through, and does not want to hear any more, thus putting an unconscious barrier between the communicating parties. If the person is also leaning away from the speaker, it could communicate opposition and if it is accompanied by frown or a harsh expression, it could be outright hostility.
- Eye contact can be interpreted in many ways depending on how it is done. Consistent eye contact may mean that the person has warm feelings and is thinking positively of what the speaker is saying. Interestingly, if the other person does not trust the speaker, his eyes will not wander and stay focused on him/her. On the contrary, lack of eye contact may indicate negative feelings for the other person. If the receiver has arms crossed across the chest while making eye contact, he may be signaling impatience and may want to talk about something that is bothering him/her. The act of fiddling while making eye contact may indicate that the person is distracted. Looking at the other person by moving from one eye to another eye and then at the forehead may signify an authoritarian posture, while if the focus shifts to the nose, the conversation is between equals. A simple explanation for lack of eye contact could be that the person has anxiety disorder and has problems focusing on the other person.
- Touching the ear or scratching the chin can indicate disbelief. It can also be seen if the person has averted the gaze.
- A tilted head may simply mean neck problem, but as part of nonverbal communication, it means loss of interest in what is being said. The person may engage the speaker in eye contact, but that does not mean anything.

The style of physical movement in space also communicates a great deal, as well as affecting the feelings of the person doing the moving (Morris, 1977). There could be a number of movements, such as:

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| (a) Slither | (b) Stroll     |
| (c) Jog     | (d) Jump       |
| (e) Swing   | (f) Crawl      |
| (g) Shuffle | (h) Spring     |
| (i) hop     | (j) Acrobatics |
| (k) Totter  | (l) hurry      |
| (m) Tiptoe  | (n) skip       |
| (o) Swim    | (p) Walk       |
| (q) run     | (r) March      |
| (s) Climb   | (t) Slink      |

The pace or the manner in which an action is done can also indicate the mood of the person.

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| (a) Jerky    | (b) Graceful   |
| (c) Shaky    | (d) Pressured  |
| (e) Fatigued | (f) Deliberate |
| (g) Nervous  | (h) Tense      |
| (i) Furtive  | (j) Gradual    |
| (k) Easy     | (l) Clumsy     |

A related variable to the pace aspect is the time it takes to react to a stimulus, called "latency of response." People can be slower or faster "on the uptake" than others while reacting to questions, or while interacting in conversations. Slow response may indicate that the person is organising his/her thought and is planning a response. It may also mean a superiority attitude almost saying. "How could you put this question to me?"

#### **2.3.4 Objective Language, Adornment and Artifacts**

Objective language is non-verbal message communicated through appearance. As a medium of non-verbal communication, it includes arrangement and display of material things. This method may include intentional or unintentional communication through material things like clothing, make-up, ornaments and other accessories, books, buildings, room furniture, interior decorations etc. These offer signals relating to the context, such as formal and informal settings. Dress and decoration communicate a great deal about the speaker's rank, status, personality, feelings, emotions, attitudes, opinions etc. What they reveal is something special about the person. For instance, dress of army men differs from civilians. The Service-regiment-seniority-specific uniform instantaneously communicates the rank of the person in the Defence Services. Religious leaders, political leaders, lawyers, judges, doctors, nurses, sports persons, porters, security persons and other workers have their own way of dressing, which identifies them distinctly. Dress by people of different countries varies. What is formal office wear by women in India may be considered informal and dressy in the western countries.

The way in which people carry cigarettes, pipes, canes or glasses also suggests different semiotic meanings. (Semiotics is the science of the emotional or psychological impact of signs, appearances and of how things look. This understanding is gaining a lot of importance, especially in audio-visual communication including advertisements, where a lot has to be communicated very effectively in a very short time.)

#### **2.3.5 Context or Environment - Spatial Language**

It is relating to the place or environment in which the actual process of communication takes place. It may be physical or psychological. The necessary requirements of environment are lighting, colour, ventilation, temperature, seating arrangement, display boards, public address system, audio-visual equipment etc., which would help a lot to attract and make listeners more attentive. While this category is not actually a mode of non-verbal communication, the setting up of a room or how one places oneself in that room is a powerfully suggestive action. Where one sits in the group in relation to the others is often useful in understanding that person's status or attitude. Group leaders as well as the participants need to study the way the room is organised, the

seating and other arrangements and the manner in which it can affect communication. The variables to be considered in a group setting like a meeting, workshop, consultation or conference are:

- Size of the room
- Colors of the walls, floor, furniture, background etc.
- The source, amount, and direction of light,
- Color of the lighting.
- Obvious props such as the podium, display blackboard, cameras etc.
- The number of people present and seating arrangements,
- The numbers and ratios of high-status and low status people,
- The positioning of the various people in the space,
- Environmental sounds, smells, and temperature

### 2.3.6 Psychological Responses

Psychological responses are involuntary, and cannot be practiced voluntarily. Yet it would be useful for communicating partners to be aware of these subtle signs of emotion, so that efforts could be made to suppress them and make the communication process effective. Understanding these signs also helps in reviewing the message in all its aspects like timing, delivery etc. Some of the physiological responses include:

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) Shaking             | (b) Sweating          |
| (c) Blushing            | (d) Blinking          |
| (e) Flaring of nostrils | (f) Becoming pale     |
| (g) Moisture in eyes    | (h) Swallowing        |
| (i) Trembling chin      | (j) Cold clammy skin  |
| (k) Flushing            | (l) Breathing heavily |

### 2.3.7 Silence

The question often arises whether silence is a mode of a communication or not. The answer is that one can communicate silently. Silence sometimes speaks louder than words. For instance, a speaker can stop his speech and remain silent if the audience is getting distracted. This works better than if the speaker appeals to the audience to pay attention. (Of course, silence on the part of the Speaker in a legislative body in India cannot have the same effect! The Speaker has to stand up to signal an unruly set of legislators to calm down and sit.) Silence, combined with an angry look can indicate admonition. Silence could also be in response to sudden shock, excitement, extreme grief etc. In a feedback situation, a written message may be ignored (silence) to indicate that the message had no value to the receiver. The practice of silence is usually taken as assent or approval in a number of personal, business and social transactions, depending on the issue, the participants and the culture they belong to. However, in the law of contract, silence, i.e., failure to respond to an offer is not proof that the offer has been accepted.

### 2.3.8 Paralinguistics

Sounds are the basis for paralanguage. Paralanguages include tone of voice, power or emphasis, pitch, rhythm, volume, pause or break in sentence, speed or delivery, loudness or softness etc. Speakers can use such nonverbal signals for effective communication.

A manager has to learn to vary his/her voice according to the context. For instance, a person who speaks in a monotone voice does not command respect, as the listeners may perceive his/her as dull. A person who has a lively voice can catch the attention of the listeners and ensure that he/she is heard. On the other hand, a person may alter his/her voice quality to indicate something different than the words used in the communication. Then, the paralinguistics become most noticeable. The power of the voice tone over the meaning communicated can never be underestimated.

Paralanguage can be divided into four parts:

1. **Voice Qualities, which are in-born:** Including such factors as pitch, resonance, volume, rate, and rhythm.
2. **Vocal Characterisers:** Embracing laughter, coughing, throat clearing and sighing.
3. **Vocal Qualifiers:** Referring to variations in pitch, modulation and volume.
4. **Vocal Segregates:** Including the silent sound such as 'ahs' and 'ers' and pauses. These clues do much to influence meaning".

The lesson to be drawn by managers and students of communication studies is clear: Though they have some voice qualities which are in-born, they have to exert some control over the tone and pitch while communicating in the office. Using too many segregates can give the impression that the speaker is not confident about the content and also about how to deliver it. Secondly, they should try to keep the words spoken and the paralinguistics in sync or in agreement with each other. This will help keep the messages clear, understandable, and less likely to be misinterpreted.

#### Dialect

Related to paralinguistics is a semi-linguistic element, viz., dialect, with all its tonal variations along with difference in grammar and usage. This has deep cultural undertones, suggesting class, age, sophistication, etc., and the resultant prejudices. It affects understanding people from different backgrounds, generations and cultures. For instance, managers seeking to work in rural areas in India should not start with belittling them for their appearance, habits, dialect and style of talking. What matters most is the content of the message and how effectively it can be communicated. Managers should understand, accept and respect these nuances and not develop biases based on language and diction.

### 2.3.9 Sign Language

In the place of spoken words, numbers or punctuations marks when marks or symbols such as gestures are used, it is known as sign language. For instance, deaf, mute people communicate by making signs with their fingers. These signs are accepted and recognised and standardized. They are trained for this, as also their family members, teachers and care givers. Apart from this set of differently abled persons, under certain circumstances, sign language is used even by those who can speak, such as the sign used by hitch hikers, Morse code, traffic signals, outdoor advertisement hoardings etc.

### 2.3.10 Action Language

It is a language of movements. Action in a particular situation and context can be interpreted to give a meaning. By action, one may knowingly or unknowingly be communicating with others. For instance, anger is generally demonstrated by throwing things around, happiness with clapping etc.



Fig. 2.3: Forms or Media of Non-verbal Communication

### 2.3.11 Inaction

Inaction also is one of the non-verbal media of communication. For instance, a manager seeks cooperation from peers from other departments. Such requests may go unheeded to indicate a number of things – the person who has initiated the request is not important, he/she is a threat to the respondent's position in the organisation, the respondent has some old grudge to make up for, or simply that the respondent did not understand the importance. A market research executive may need the statistician's help in analysing the sales figures, but the latter may take no action, for whatever reason he/she has. Such lack of communication may affect the effectiveness of the organisation.

### 2.3.12 Time

Use of time, also known as chronemics, is an important non-verbal method of communication. *Edward T. Hall* is the first scholar who has investigated this dimension of interpersonal communication and group activities in an organisation.

Punctuality or delay speaks pleasant or unpleasant feelings and attitudes. Tardiness is considered an insult in some cultures. Late arrival for a meeting conveys something about the person – his/her time management skills including respect for others' time, his/her interest in the topic or project, and the importance attached to it. It may simply mean that the person was stuck in some unforeseen traffic jam or there was some compelling reason. A person who is habitually late for office or at meetings gets noticed and that may be the cause of his/her downfall. That is why, a lot of emphasis is given to proper planning and scheduling of activities. Arriving at an appointed place on or before time and completing given tasks well within the schedule clearly indicates that person's

sincerity and his/her attitude to work. Similarly, all written communication should also be completed keeping the time factor in mind. If a meeting notice goes weeks before the scheduled event, the persons receiving it may forget it and if it is sent too close to the scheduled event, the person may not have adequate time to prepare for it, or may not factor it into his/her busy schedule. The managers have to judge when to send these notices or information and when to make follow-up calls.

### Points To Remember

- Oral communication is defined as a purposeful presentation - prepared or delivered extempore, designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding or to promote change in the listener's attitudes, values, beliefs or behaviours.
- Written communication has goals as:
  - (a) Inform (b) Respond (c) Report (d) Develop goodwill
- Non-verbal communication refers to the process of communication by means of elements and behaviours that are not coded into words.
- Body language is a non-verbal means of communication through body posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements.
- Paralinguistics is the study of tone of voice, power or emphasis, pitch, rhythm, volume, pause or break in sentence, speed or delivery, loudness or softness etc.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Explain the term 'silent communication'. Give examples and explain its significance.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of any two forms of silent communication.
3. What are the advantages of oral communication?
4. Explain the significance of written communication in an organisation. What are its advantages and disadvantages?

### Previous Pune University Questions

**B.B.A.**

**April 2011**

1. State types of Communications. Explain merits and demerits of Oral and Written Communication.

**Ans. Refer Article 2.1, 2.2 of this chapter.**

**October 2011**

1. "Pen is mightier than Sword". Explain this statement, elaborating the strengths of Written Communication.

**Ans. Refer Article 2.1 of this chapter.**

2. Write short notes on Non-verbal Communication.

**Ans. Refer Article 2.2.4 of this chapter.**

**October 2012**

1. "Body Language is very important for Communicating anything orally". Discuss.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.3 of this chapter.
2. Write short note on Advantages of Written Communication.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.1.6 of this chapter.

**April 2013**

1. What do you mean by Written Communication? State and explain merits and limitations of Written Communication.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.1 and 2.1.6 of this chapter.

**B.C.A.****April 2011**

1. Explain types of Communication in detail.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 of this chapter.

**October 2011**

1. What is Oral Communication? Explain the Media of Oral Communication.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.2 of this chapter.

**October 2012**

1. What is Oral Communication? Explain Principles of Effective Oral Communication.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.2 of this chapter.
2. What is Written Communication? State and explain merits and limitations of Written Communication.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.1 and 2.2.6 of this chapter.

**April 2013**

1. Define Oral Communication. Explain Media of Oral Communication.  
Ans. Refer Article 2.2 of this chapter.



# 3...

## Business Correspondence

### Learning Objectives...

- To understand how to make effective Business Correspondence
- Ability to write precise business letters and understanding about business correspondence

#### 3.1 CONCEPT

The success of any business depends upon sound relationships within the organisation and with other stakeholders and the public. Business Correspondence means exchange of letters or written communication, which is the best and cheapest means of communication. Correspondence constitutes an indispensable organ of the business world. In modern days, trade and industries have expanded to national and international borders. Business activities are diversified. The businessman has to maintain contacts with the suppliers, the customers and the government in carrying out daily transactions. In other words, written communication is at the root of a successful commercial and industrial activity.

Speech came before writing. Humans like to see and hear the people they communicate with. However, verbal communication is not always the most effective method of communication. Many times the message is not clearly understood because of other factors such as environmental distractions, body language, tone of voice and emotions. The message is lost because the audience is distracted by the other factors. Even in staff meetings or training sessions the way in which it is delivered can cause a misunderstanding or loss of interest in the message and so written communication is used as a back-up.

Writing is more unique and formal than speech. Written communication involved in business communication has great significance in today's business world. Effective writing involves careful planning of the ideas to be communicated, choice of right words, their organisation in correct order, in cohesive sentences, and in paragraphs. While speech is spontaneous and fast, writing is more valid and reliable than speech but it can cause delay and take time as feedback is not immediate.

### 3.2 NEED AND FUNCTIONS OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

The need for written communication and business correspondence arises because of the need to achieve or "do" something, such as to:

- Inform
- Respond
- Request
- Report
- Develop goodwill

**Significance of written communication / business correspondence in a manager's work life:**

People move through the workforce in stages. Each stage or position of employment has its own set of characteristics and requirements. This includes good written communication skills. A manager's communication skills indicate his/her level of professionalism and leadership qualities. In a professional environment, the clearer the manager is in written and verbal communication, the more proficient he/she will seem. If a manager's letter is badly worded or his/her presentation is badly planned and disjointed, then the person has not taken the matter seriously, or lacks the skills required for his/her position. Such a manager is termed as unprofessional. The effectiveness of a manager is judged by his/her ability to get across his/her points or views clearly in as few words as possible. Such a manager will demonstrate the capabilities of a good communicator who knows his/her subject well.

Written communication usually requires more thought and effort. Writing must have a goal. It must be concise, informative and easy to read as both an informative and instructional tool. The importance of written communication in business is evident by the plethora of forms, manuals and materials that companies publish each day.

It should be noted, however, that the reader's reaction to a written communication can be coloured by his/her knowledge, biases, values etc. A written communication will fail to convince if the reader has had an earlier bad experience with that person or organisation or has developed a prejudice through hearsay. Just like oral communication, written communication can also encounter barriers. The manager has to be aware of this and develop appropriate skills.

#### Advantages of Written Communication

- Written communication can be well thought out and organised to convey the message in a more precise and explicit manner. The writer can take time to formulate the document appropriately.
- It can be erased, revised, rewritten and edited before it is dispatched.
- It is effective as a standalone medium.
- It can be targeted to reach specific individuals or parties.
- Written communication helps in laying down apparent principles, policies and rules for the running of an organisation.
- It can be stored and reproduced.
- It is a permanent record of communication. Thus, it is useful where record maintenance is required. It is accepted as evidence in the courts of law.
- It assists in proper delegation of responsibilities. While in the 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.

- Effective written communication develops and enhances an organisation's image.
- It can be cost effective, as it can be reproduced using appropriate technology and distributed to a large number of parties. With the Internet, it is faster and cheaper to communicate with a large number of parties and get feedback.

### Disadvantages of Written Communication

- Written communication adds to the time and costs in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing and delivering letters.
- Without the help of body language and vocal intonation to guide the reader, written communication is open to his/her interpretation, which can lead to huge misunderstandings. There is lack of personalisation in letters, emails, text messages and instant messenger tools. This lack of personalisation means there is greater need to think carefully about how these messages will be perceived. Poorly written or verbal communication can lead not only to a distortion of the facts, but also of the writer's thoughts and intentions.
- Perhaps the biggest problem with written communication is that once it is in the hands of the reader, it does not provide a second chance to make your point in a different way. Once the reader is lost, it is difficult to get him back. This is why you need to pick and choose your words carefully, and present your points in a style, manner and sequence that best suit the message you are sending.
- If the receivers of the written message are separated by distance, and if they need to clear their doubts, they will have to wait.
- Feedback is not immediate. The encoding and sending of a message takes time.
- Effective written communication requires great skills and competencies in language and vocabulary use. Poor writing skills and quality have a negative impact on an organisation's reputation and can create confusion and even disputes.
- Too much paper work and e-mails create a burden.

### 3.3 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

Whatever the type, the manager has to take care of the needs of the recipient, content, presentation style, and statement of purpose. The writer should be courteous, engage the attention of the reader and motivate him/her to comply with the request for response/action if any.

Some important types of business letters are:

- (a) Letters of enquiry
- (b) Placing an order
- (c) Complaint letters and Follow-up
- (d) Sales letter
- (e) Circulars,
- (f) Application for employment with Resume,
- (g) Notices,
- (h) Agenda,
- (i) Memo,
- (j) Email

The different forms of written communication and business correspondence and their methods of delivery are described below. Each form has a use and, in some cases, a phraseology of its own. Only black or blue ink will be used in communication. A small margin of about one inch will be left on all sides (left, right, top and bottom) of each page of communication to ensure filing and better preservation of records as at times the paper gets torn from the edges, making reading of the documents difficult.

1. **Letter:** This form is used for corresponding with individuals, various authorities, organisations and the public. A letter begins with an appropriate salutation. A letter can be informal, formal or in government parlance, semi formal or 'semi official.'
2. **Office Memorandum:** This form is generally used for corresponding with other departments or in calling for information from or conveying information to its employees. It is written in the third person and bears no salutation or supersession except the name and designation of the officer signing it.
3. **Circular:** This form is used when an important and urgent piece of information or decision taken internally has to be circulated within a department for information and compliance by a large number of employees.
4. **Inter-departmental note:** This form is generally employed for obtaining the advice, views, concurrence or comments of other departments on a proposal or in seeking clarification of the existing rules, instructions etc. It may also be used by a department when consulting its attached and subordinate offices and vice versa.
5. **Office order:** This form is normally used for issuing instructions meant for internal administration, e.g., grant of regular leave, distribution of work among officers and sections, instructions, financial sanctions, disciplinary actions, appointments and transfers etc.
6. **Notification:** This form is mostly used in notifying the promulgation or declaration of statutory rules and orders. The government notifications of certain types are contained in publications in the Gazette of India.
7. **Report:** This is a detailed document describing an event, the current status of a project, marketing information etc. This is a time consuming activity and requires a lot of planning, so as to include all necessary information in a logical manner. For instance, a marketing survey report will contain information about market expectations, market size and shares of competitors, qualitative information regarding the activities, strategy and future plans of the competitors, government policy implications and the future outlook for the client party. The report will also give specific recommendations based on the study.
8. **Resolutions:** These are policy decisions taken at company level meetings and are recorded as 'resolutions'. These are communicated to the shareholders and the executing authorities who base their actions on these resolutions. In the functioning of the government, important matters of policy, e.g., the industrial licensing policy, appointment of committees or commissions of enquiry etc., are passed as resolutions by the concerned legislature or at cabinet meetings. These are published in the Gazette of India.

9. **Press Communiqué/Note:** The purpose of this is to give wide publicity to any matter of significance to the issuing organisation and the public. A press communiqué is more formal in nature than a press note and is expected to be reproduced in exact words by the press. A press note, on the other hand, is intended to serve as a hand-out to the press. It contains information which may be edited, compressed or enlarged by the media according to the importance that is attached to the matter.
10. **Endorsement or expression of support:** This form is used when a paper has to be returned in original to the sender, or the paper in original or its copy is sent to another department or office, along with approval, for information or for action. It is also used when a copy of a communication is forwarded to other parties.
11. **Advertisement:** This form is used for communicating with the general public to create awareness and may take the form of audio-visual or written communication.

## 3.4 COMPONENTS AND LAYOUT OF A BUSINESS LETTER

### Key Points

More than ever, it is important to know how to communicate your points professionally. Identify your audience before you start creating your document. Create an outline to help organise your thoughts and determine how much information you want to include. Learning grammatical and stylistic techniques will help you write more clearly; and be sure to proof the final document. Like most things, 'practice makes perfect!'

### 3.4.1 Advantages of Business Letters

1. **Permanent Record:** A business letter serves as a permanent record which can be referred to when needed. It is not possible to remember all the transactions and happenings of the day. Hence, it is essential to maintain a written record which the letter writing facilitates. Written record can also be produced in the Court of Law as evidence. Thus, business correspondence facilitates the smooth running of business and serves as evidence in case of disputes or matters of disagreements.
2. **Promotion or Business:** In an organisation, letters are written for facilitating production, administration and distribution. After review of inventory position, the purchase department writes to the vendors with a copy to the quality, finance and production departments. Similarly, after inspection, the quality control department writes to the vendors with a copy to all concerned. When a new product is to be introduced in the market, a sales letter is written, to make a sales appeal which results in developing a favourable patronage for the company. The list of situations in an organisation requiring business letters is very long. All activities performed through letters result in promoting business. A letter conveys the message in a personal manner and it helps to establish contacts.
3. **Creates Goodwill:** A good letter can open up new channels of business, get better results from the customers, reduce bad debts etc. This can be done by writing letters in a courteous tone and language, which can enhance the reputation of the organisation and its products/services.

- 4. Useful in finding out the Creditworthiness of a Customer or vendor:** In order to promote business, the manager has to place orders from vendors and also deal with customers. It becomes essential for the manager to assess the credibility of the agencies with which the organisation is dealing. The annual reports of these outside agencies and a list of customers served add to the understanding of their standing in the market. The manager should write to the prospective vendors/customers requesting for all the necessary back-up information.
- 5. Collection of Overdues:** Good business letters help in collecting the overdue payments. The initial contract specifies the credit period and mode of payment. If reminders have to be sent after the expiry of the credit period, it would be in the long term interest of the organisation to do so in a polite but firm manner without hurting the ego of the customer.
- 6. Legal Evidence:** Business letters have a legal importance in the Court of Law. If a dispute arises between the parties, the Court can decide the matter on the basis of the terms and conditions contained in the business letters. As proof of receipt and despatch, companies maintain In and Out registers. They can also be used as legal evidence.

Every letter reflects the personality of the sender and the organisation he/she represents. Every outgoing letter carries a message which helps to build the reputation of the firm. The reader should feel that he is talking directly to the other person. Hence, business letters have to be warm, friendly and lively. The reader should be able to see the face and personality of the letter writer.

A good business letter helps in removing misunderstandings. A good letter writer should be able to convert bitterness into a smile. The letter writer should explain his case and present the acts in a frank manner. The point of view of the reader should be considered while writing business letters.

*Thus, every letter should have a personality and be a messenger of goodwill. It should act as a silent ambassador of the company, whether the intention of the writer is just to gather information from or to do business with.*

### **3.4.2 Essential Qualities of a Good Business Letter**

The success of a good business letter depends upon effective communication of the message and the motivation it provides to the reader to take the expected course of action. These letters must be drafted very carefully. In order to make the letter effective the writer should have certain basic logical thinking and a good command over the language, knowledge of certain standard technical terms, knowledge about the character and position of the recipient etc. The following are essentials of a good business letter.

- 1. Completeness:** A business letter should be complete in all respects. It should contain all the information required by the receiver, so as to avoid the irritations associated with back and forth communication, misunderstandings and delays. The letter should have the necessary references to the numbers and dates of earlier letters on the subject, so that the meaning becomes absolutely clear. All

important and relevant matter should be covered. Incomplete letters do not produce the desired results. A business letter should be comprehensive and should cover all the aspects of the subject matter.

2. **Clarity:** Every letter should clearly convey the message. Nothing should be left for assumptions and imagination of the reader. The writer should take into account the level of understanding of the reader as well as his/her limitations. This helps in bringing out clarity in the letter. To achieve clarity, the words and sentences should be arranged to convey the exact meaning. Words and phrases should be chosen carefully and used in the exact sense. Long complex sentences should be avoided. The writer should have clarity of thought and expressions.
3. **Accuracy:** The statements in a business letter should be accurate. It is fundamental to an effective business letter. It should be free from vague and indefinite statements. The writer should know the language well and use the words that can effectively create a concrete picture about the subject matter in the mind of the reader. Clarity should find expression in the following aspects of a good business letter:
  - (a) Proper appearance of the letter
  - (b) Correct facts and figures.
  - (c) Appropriate language used in the letter.

The message given in a letter should be correct. The documents like bill of exchange, invoices, statement of accounts should be carefully prepared and checked. Legal action may be taken against the company if wrong information or facts are conveyed and damages may be claimed.

4. **Brevity or Conciseness:** Brevity is the soul of business correspondence. A business letter should be concise. The content should be communicated using the least possible number of words. A businessman's time is precious and he/she cannot waste it in trying to consume unnecessary and irrelevant statements. Every sentence should exactly convey the meaning that you wish to convey. All the words which are essential to convey the meaning should be used and superfluous and unnecessary words should be avoided.
5. **Courtesy:** Courtesy means politeness on the part of the writer towards the reader. It is a sincere attempt to be polite and effective. The general tone of the letter should be pleasant unless it is intended as a strict warning. Courtesy is absolutely essential to *maintain good business relations*. Failure to reply to a letter is considered as an act of rudeness. A polite and courteous letter rarely fails to receive a reply. **Curt and rude letters have no place in the business world.**

A calm, reasonable letter that presents all the facts politely and courteously will get better results and can win over even an offended customer. One should be very tactful while writing letters. Some examples are:

- (i) Instead of saying, "You are wrong", a **tactful businessman** will say "*We are afraid that what you have stated does not conform to the fact as understood by us.*"
- (ii) Instead of saying, "You have failed to pay our bill for six months", a **tactful businessman** will say, "*Perhaps due to an oversight our bill has remained unpaid.*"
- (iii) Instead of saying, "We shall file a suit against you", a **tactful businessman** will say, "*We have been compelled to handover the matter to our legal advisor for suitable action.*"

6. **Sincerity:** A business letter should convey sincerity. The manager should be sincere in giving information and making a statement of facts. He should desist from making false claims or providing deceptive information. A letter should show that the writer has genuine interest in the reader and means what he/she has written. It will help prevent misunderstandings and create healthy relations between the parties.
7. **Simplicity:** A business letter should be simple, clear and easily understood. The use of high sounding words and phrases should be avoided. The following points should be noted for making a business letter simple:
  - (i) Make proper use of clear, simple and easily understandable language.
  - (ii) Use short words, short sentences and short paragraphs.
  - (iii) Write in a natural manner. The extent of formality depends on the status of the person in the organisation and the receiver.
  - (iv) Write to convey a clear message. Avoid ambiguity.
8. **Style:** The words used in a business letter express the writer's personality and gives the letter what is called its style. Style is determined by the background, training, and experience of the writer. The style of a writer is reflected in the clarity and conciseness of the writing, its content and its appropriateness, salutation and language used, and the way it is organised. For instance, some managers develop the habit of writing most parts of the letter in capital letters, assuming that it emphasises the argument being made. This can be very annoying. This feature should be used very sparingly to make a point. Similarly, unnecessary use of quote marks can confuse the reader. For instance, if a shoe manufacturer puts the word 'shoes' within quotes in his promotion letter, the reader would be confused whether the businessman is really selling shoes, or something he refers to as shoes.

One mistake often seen is closing the letter with the statement 'With regards'. When letter is addressed to a company and it opens with Sir/Madam, a personalised ending like this is incongruous. 'Warm regards' should be strictly reserved for persons the writer holds in respect. In that case, the letter opens with a personalised salutation or greeting. The closing should be appropriate considering the nature of the letter, whether it is a friendly one or a formal one.

the following is an indicative list of expressions that should be avoided:

Wrong Usage	Better Way to Express
1. We beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter OR We beg to differ	1. We have received your letter OR Our views are different in this respect. (DO NOT BEG)
2. In due course of time	2. Gradually
3. At your earliest convenience	3. As quickly as possible
4. Thanking you in anticipation	4. (Should be followed by 'We remain yours sincerely')
5. With your kind permission	5. With your permission. (Why 'kind'?)
6. Your favour (letter) duly to hand	6. We have received your letter.
7. Attached herewith please find...	7. We attach the following documents
8. Contents duly noted...	8. We note the contents

#### Some more Wrong Usages:

- He made an interesting speech (delivered)
- The male members of my family are well employed (men)
- My leg is paining (I am feeling pain in my leg)
- See the word in the dictionary (look for)
- He never hears my advice (listens to)
- It is bad habit to speak lies (tell)
- I'll spend my remaining life in Pune (rest of my)
- This water is good for drinking (good to drink)
- You should return before two hours (within)
- It is exact five in my watch (by)
- I will dine with them on next Sunday (Sunday next)
- Due to illness I cannot come (owing)
- His illness is owing to street food consumption (due)

### 3.4.3 Physical Appearance and Layout of a Business Letter

The physical appearance of a letter should be attractive, impressive and pleasant, such that the reader should want to read and consider the message contained in it. A person who can produce attractive letters is considered as an asset to the organisation.

Care to be taken to make business letters attractive:

 **Quality of Paper used:** A business letter exhibits the personality and the culture of the organisation. Naturally, paper of standard quality should be used. It should be appropriate to the type and nature of the business and the stature of the organisation. It should be suitable for typing or printing. Cheap paper creates a poor opinion of the writer and his/her organisation. A simple letter head makes a good impression. It should be attractively designed. Within an organisation, papers of different colours may be used to identify letters originating from different departments or to prepare copies that go into the files of relevant departments. For instance, copy of the production department notices can be in

yellow for its own file, pink for the finance department file, blue for purchase department file etc. A similar colour code can be followed by all departments, so that it becomes easy to identify the file from which a document has been sourced.

**2. The sizes of the paper used for business correspondence differs from country to country.**

**In U.K.:**

- 8" × 10" (Standard Size)
- 5" × 8" (For short communications)

**In the U.S.A.:**

- 8.5 × 11" (Standard A 4 size)
- 5.5 × 8.5

**In India**, generally the standard A 4 size is used.

**3. Typing:** Just as writing letters by hand are outmoded, typing them has also become outdated. Ordinary typewriters gave way to electronic typewriters and now computers are used extensively. However, the basic format of the key board has remained the same, though unlimited variations of font style and size are available. Similarly, variations can be made in the margin space, space between lines, indent, lay out etc. The use of carbon paper for making copies has become obsolete. Multiple copies of a letter can be obtained by running the printer so many times or by taking photocopies. The letters can be stored as files in relevant folders and can be retrieved whenever required.

**4. Paragraphs:** A long letter should be divided into short paragraphs. Every new idea should be written in a new paragraph. Spacing between paragraphs should be adequate to differentiate them.

**5. Address:** The name of the city and pin code number should be typed in block letters. In the case of mass circulation, printed stickers of addresses may be used.

**6. Folding:** Letters should be folded carefully such that they fit in the envelope comfortably. There should be minimum number of folds to a letter. If window envelopes are used, the inside address should fit into the transparent window area.

**7. Envelope:** The envelope also creates an impression upon the receivers. The envelope should be thick, attractive and impressive. The size, quality and colour of the envelope should be commensurate with that of the paper of the letter. The quality of the envelope reflects the stature of the writer and his organisation.

### 3.4.4 Components of a Business Letter

Business letters must be faultless in appearance, matter, style and tone. Otherwise they will fail to create a favourable impression. Generally, companies adopt a particular type of layout and standardise its use throughout the organisation. This style becomes symbolic of the company's personality. A lot of deliberations go into finalising a standard letter format. Aspects like clarity, space utilisation, style etc. are considered in this exercise. Some organisations allow each of its departments to adopt its own style.

A letter generally consists of several parts depending on how formal or informal it is and the nature of business to be communicated. The structural parts of a letter may be divided into two parts, viz., essential and optional features.

(a) Essential	(b) Optional, depending on the situation
Heading	Reference line
Date	Attention line
Inside address	Subject line
Salutation	Enclosures
Body of the letter	Identification initials
Complimentary Close	Post script
Signature	Extra Copies

### 1. The Heading

The letterhead carries the name, address and monogram of the company, its contact details and its web address. Some organisations may opt to give details of branches, but this may consume too much space. On the other hand, the web page would have links to all its branches and other information that the organisation would want to communicate to the readers.

### 2. Date

The business letter must contain the date on which it is written. The date of dispatch may be different, depending on when the dispatch section completes the process. Date of writing is essential for reference to the reader. Letters without a date do not carry any legal significance. Generally, the date is written on the right hand side of the letter, though, as a matter of style, some may prefer to left-align it. There are various methods of writing dates, such as:

- 1. 30th March 2012 OR dd/mm/yyyy (British style)
- 2. March 30, 2012 OR mm/dd/yyyy (American style)

In India, we have been following the British style. However, with globalisation, some organisations with business dealings with American companies follow the American style.

### 3. The Inside Address

The inside address consists of the name and address of the party to whom the letter is addressed. It is usually given in the letterhead. If it is not given or the letter is written on a blank page, the address can be typed in the top right- or left-hand corner of the letter. It is generally completed in three lines. The inside address is useful for future reference.

(i) **Position on the page:** The inside address is generally aligned to the left margin. It is typed using single space. There could be a lot of discussion whether the entire postal address of the recipient should be typed at all, as it takes up too much space and typing work. The argument is the recipient knows his own address. In government correspondence, the inside name and address is often placed in the lower left hand position of the first letter.

(ii) **Punctuation:** Usually, a comma is placed at the end of each line except the last, which ends with a full stop. This is called "closed punctuation". However, this comma is optional. The argument for removing it is that the typist has to hit so many more keys.

The format of the inside address varies according whether you know the person you want to address, or the specific position or department or whether it is addressed to the company.

- (a) The inside address begins with the name of the company if it goes to the company.
- (b) However if you know the name of the person you are writing to, you can begin with his / her name. Courtesy titles are used before these names, such as: Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Messrs, Dr, Prof., Capt., Maj., Col., Gen. Etc. These abbreviations may or may not have a full stop at the end. Whatever the system, uniformity and consistency must be followed in all correspondence.
- (c) If you do not know the name of a person and the letter has to reach a position or a department, the address begins with a job title or a department name, such as, The Sales Manager, The Accounts Department etc.

The items that follow in the inside address are:

- Name of the house or building
- Number of the building and the name of the street
- Name of the town and the pincode
- Name of the country if the letter goes to some other country.

#### **4. Reference**

In a large organisation, where innumerable letters are sent out every day, it is essential to give a reference number to each letter. Generally, reference number contains the initials of the department, serial number and the year. It helps in tracing the letter.

#### **5. Attention Line**

This is to draw the attention of a particular person in the recipient organisation and ensuring that the document reaches that person's desk. It, generally, appears on the right hand side of the letter and underlined. However, the problem with this is that if the person is on a long leave of absence or has left the organisation, it may remain unattended.

#### **6. The Salutation**

The salutation is the greeting from the writer. The salutation should be typed two or three spaces below the inside address. The form of salutation depends upon the personal relations between the writer and the addressee.

The salutations are as follows:

- Dear Sir – to a man whose name you do not know,
- Dear Sirs / Gentlemen – to a company,
- Dear Madam – to a woman whose name you do not know,
- Dear Sir or Madam – to a person whose name and gender you do not know,
- Dear Mr ..... – to a person whose name you know, but you do not know the person very well,
- Dear ..... – to a person you know well.

The British prefer a comma after the salutation, such as: Dear Mrs Jones, but the Americans prefer a colon: , such as: Dear Sir:

The following points should be noted while typing the salutation:

- It should be typed two or three spaces below the inside address.
- Use a comma after the salutation. (This is optional)
- The salutation and the complimentary close should agree.
- In the case of departmental letters, office memoranda, salutations are not used.
- 'Gentleman' is the proper form of salutation while addressing a post box or a newspaper number.
- When a circular is issued, the salutation should be 'Dear Readers' or 'Dear customers' or 'Gentlemen'.

## 7. The Subject Line

The subject in the letter should be written in brief, after the salutation. The subject line is generally placed between the salutation and the first paragraph of the letter. The purpose of the subject line is to indicate the main theme of the letter.

## 8. The Body of the Letter

The body is the most important part of the letter. It contains the message that is being communicated. The purpose of writing a letter is fulfilled through this part of the letter. Usually, the body of the letter is divided into three parts:

- The Opening Paragraph:** Here the writer is trying to draw the attention of the reader to the subject. It should be brief and give reference to the letter received from the addressee if any. The opening paragraph must arouse the reader's interest.
- The Main Paragraph:** In this part, the subject is discussed in detail. The entire subject may be discussed in one paragraph or if different aspects are being addressed, it may be divided into 2-3 paragraphs. The paragraphs could be numbered or bullet points can be used. Avoid writing on too many issues in a single letter. "One subject, one letter" should be the guiding principle of business correspondence. Make the contents of the letter as clear as possible. The message should be communicated in an interesting and courteous manner. It should be kept brief, simple and to the point.
- The Closing Paragraph:** This is the concluding part of the letter. The writer should convey very clearly his expectations by way of response or action. The writer should close the letter by thanking the recipient for his attention, and if necessary, assuring him of continued support.

## 9. The Complimentary Close

The complimentary close is a kind of courteous leave-taking, or farewell in a business letter. It is written after the letter is completed. There must be an agreement between the salutation and the complimentary close. A comma should follow the complimentary close.

### Example : Salutation

Respected Sir  
Dear Sir / Madam  
Dear Gentleman  
Dear Shri  
My Dear

### Complimentary Close

Yours Respectfully,  
Yours faithfully,  
Yours truly,  
Yours Sincerely,  
Yours truly

Abbreviations such as "Yrs ffly" or "Yrs try" should not be used in the complimentary close.

## 10. The Signature

The signature comes below the complimentary close. It should be written by hand and should be legible. Sufficient space should be left below the complimentary close for the signature. Below the signature, name should be typed within brackets. Below this the official position of a person signing the letter.

The signature should not be stamped or typed. In the case of a circular letter, the signature can be printed.

## 11. Additional Points

- (d) **Enclosures:** Very often, for the purpose of satisfying the intention of a letter, certain documents like receipts, cheques, documents to title to goods, sales literature, price lists, testimonials etc., are sent with the main letter. These enclosures must be specifically mentioned in the main letter at the left hand bottom corner. The enclosures must be checked, before the letter is sent. The abbreviation "Encl" is used for indicating enclosures.
- (e) **Initials of the person dictating the Letter and the Typist:** These should be in capital letters, typed on the left hand corner at the bottom of the letter.
- (f) **Post Script:** This is an addition of a small message to the letter. Generally, it is not advisable to write a post script. It may indicate that the letter writer was not careful in drafting the original letter. Generally, as letters are typed on computers, editing is easy and so even the latest piece of information can be incorporated in the body of the letter. However, in exceptional cases, when an urgent telephonic message is received and it has to be acknowledged in the letter, and the letter has to be dispatched immediately, a post script may be added. The post script should be very brief and should be written two spaces below the Identification Mark on the Margin. No complimentary close is required. After writing the postscript, the letter should be signed again.
- (g) **Notations:** Notations indicate the nature of the correspondence, such as 'Personal', 'Private', 'Urgent' 'Confidential' etc. The notations should be typed at the top and underlined.

### 3.4.5 Layout of the Letter

There is no standard layout or form for a business letter. The general layout of the letter is a matter of individual choice or taste. In order to have uniformity, some organisations prescribe a standardised layout or form to be used by all the departments.

Normally, the following forms are used in business letters:

1. **Indented Form:** The indented form is the oldest, traditional form. The date and the complimentary close are typed flush with the right margin, while the inside address, body and the salutation are left aligned. The first line of each paragraph is indented five spaces from the left margin. Each line of the signature is indented three spaces from the beginning of the complimentary close.
2. **Full Block Form:** The main feature of the full block is that all the structural parts of the letter are left aligned. There are no indentations. The main advantage of the full-block style is speed. This form is simple and very useful when there are many letters to be typed.

3. **Semi-Block Form:** All structural parts of the letter are left aligned, but the first line of each paragraph is indented five or ten spaces. All lines of the typed signature are aligned with the complimentary close. The date is typed in the conventional position.
4. **Hanging Paragraph Form:** This form is rarely used. When novelty and visual effect is required to be created, then this form of letter is used. This form is the opposite of the indented form. The first line of each paragraph is flushed with the left-hand margin, but all other lines are indented five spaces in the hanging paragraph. Block form is used for the inside address and the signature lines. It takes a longer time to write a letter in this form.
5. **Official Form:** The inside address is placed below the signature, flush with the left-hand margin, instead of before the salutation. The identification lines and the enclosure notations, if any, are typed two spaced below the last line of the address.
6. **Simplified Form:** In the simplified form, the salutation and complimentary close are left out. "Copy to" before the names of persons to whom copies of the letter are to be sent is also removed. All structural parts of the letter are left oriented. The subject line is placed between the address and the body of the letter. This form is very common.

### 3.4.6 Media for Dispatch of Written Communication / Business Correspondence

Written communication or Business Correspondence can be sent by the following media:

- **Telegram:** This form was being used for communicating with out-station parties in matters demanding prompt attention. However, this form is no more available as more technology enabled services are available for quick communication. The text of the telegram had to be as brief as possible.
- **Fax facility:** In urgent and important matters (including legal and financial messages), managers may use fax facilities to send messages, wherever available.
- **Registered Post, Speed Post:** This method of delivery is used in sending written communication when receipt of despatch is required. With the advent of IT enabled services, movement of the document till it reaches the addressee can be tracked on line.
- **E-mail:** This is a paperless form of communication to be used by managers having computer facilities supported by internet or intranet connectivity and can be widely used for subjects where legal or financial implications are not involved.
- **Various media of mass communication**, such as press, hoardings, audio-visual communication, Internet based publicity.

## 3.5 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

### 3.5.1 Letter of Enquiry

Letters of enquiry describe what the writer wants and why. The enquiry may be about some specific service, products, components etc.

After the usual format of a business letter opening, the first paragraph should tell the reader what the sender requires.

In the second paragraph give the reason why you are contacting that organisation. It could be in the vendor list of the organisation, an advertisement or on recommendation. Follow this by giving further details of your enquiry. This would include product specifications, quality expectations, last date for response, person whom the recipient should contact etc. If the request is unusual, the writer will have to convince the recipient with strong reasons.

The last paragraph will be used for a polite thanks. Here you can suggest that the reader can contact you for further details etc.

#### **Example of a Letter of Enquiry**

**Deccan Engineering Company**  
64, Main Street  
Kolkata

20 May 2019

Technology, Systems & Services Ltd.  
48, Anna Salai  
Chennai

**Attn: Mr. Selvam, Manager, Marketing**

Dear Sirs,

**Sub: Enquiry for Enhanced Supply and Just in Time Delivery of Components.**

As you are aware, we have been using the components supplied by your company for the last ten years. We are very much satisfied with the quality of your products and the after-sale service offered by you.

We are in the process of scaling up our operations because of which our requirement is expected to increase by over 100%. Our requirement with respect to delivery period is also being revamped. As a cost reduction strategy, we have introduced a 'zero inventory' system, which would mean that your deliveries will have to reach us within one week of placing of the order, which would take care of the loading, transportation and delivery time.

We would like to know whether your company will be able to (a) increase your production to meet our requirements, and (b) supply the components of the required quantity at a week's notice. In this respect, you may want to consult your logistics company before giving us the commitment.

We request you to give us your response within three weeks of receiving this letter.

We look forward to hearing from you in this respect.

Thanking you,  
Yours faithfully

.....  
(.....)

Section Officer, Purchase Dept.

### 3.5.2 Placing an Order

An order letter is a contract for purchasing a product or a service. Orders are considered one of the simplest types of direct request. The objective of an order is not to excite the reader's interest. It is a simple statement of the writer's needs clearly and directly.

Many companies use special forms for ordering merchandise or service. They have standard 'order forms', either prepared by them or provided by the vendor. These forms have blank spaces to cover all the necessary details regarding the order number, product or service specifications, packaging, quantity, rate, date of delivery etc. The advantage of pre-designed order forms is that they enable a company to maintain a record of the orders according to order numbers and so carefully file and analyse all costs of purchase made during a financial year.

However, a manager should know how to write an order letter for situations when such forms are not available and so an order must be put into a letter format.

The cardinal rule for an order letter is that you must be sure to include complete and accurate information because incomplete orders result in a lot of enquiries from the receiving party and hence delayed deliveries. Inaccurate facts result in the receipt of wrong merchandise.

#### Tips for writing a good order letter

- 1. Give the Information in a Clear Format:** To make your letter easy to read, do either of the following:
  - Write a separate, single-spaced paragraph for each item. Between paragraphs, allow double spacing.
  - Arrange your order in a tabular form similar to an order sheet. This is useful when several sets of numbers, items, and prices are given.
- 2. Write Orders, not Just Hints: Be specific. Do not show just interest:** An order letter is a legal document indicating the "offer to buy" portion of a contract. The "acceptance" portion of the contract is completed when the seller sends the acceptance letter and/or dispatches the material as agreed. Do not be vague, by saying that you are interested in buying... or, you would like to buy..... Be specific and direct.
- 3. Give a Complete Details for Each Item:** Be clear about the following aspects of the order:
  - Name of the product
  - Quantity ordered
  - Catalogue, model or stock number

- Description of the product as appropriate, such as (1) colour (2) size (3) material, (4) grade or quality, (5) pattern, (6) finish, and (7) packing, (8) any other details
- Unit price and discount if applicable
- Sales Tax, Service Tax, Credit Card charges, and other charges and duties, insurance and shipping charges if any
- Total price for the quantity ordered
- Date of delivery and possible penalty if this is not followed
- Documents required for meeting financial and regulatory authorities and where they should be dispatched
- Any other information, including the source of information about the company or the product.

4. **Payment Terms and Procedure:** This includes payment terms such as credit period, initial payments and installments if any, and mode of payment, such as credit card, online payment or physical movement of cheques. If it is credit card, give the name of the person in whose name it is issued, credit card number and its expiry date.
5. **Time and Place of Delivery of the Merchandise:** Give the shipping address. If you need the order by a certain date, and the time period during the day, be sure to include the specifics in your order letter. If you want the shipment urgently and are willing to pay for it, mention the details. Mention the method of shipment you prefer. If all these details are missing in the letter, the seller will choose the shipping method and will send the merchandise when it is convenient for him.
6. **Good practice:** Always be specific and use language appropriate to communicate direct statement of the request in a polite manner, such as "please send the items mentioned below", not "I need..." or, "I want..." This is rude and legally not correct. Give all details of the consignment you are ordering. Use a format which will help in easy calculation of total amounts. Double check the details given to make sure that it is complete in all respects.
7. **Justification, Explanation, and Details:** For complex orders, provide a general explanation of how the material ordered will be used, and provide all specifications regarding order quantity, price, and all information according to the above list.
8. **Courteous Close with Request for Specific Action:** While closing, give a brief summary of the desired action. Explain why it is important. If applicable, mention the benefit of complying with the order by way of repeat orders and a long period of mutually beneficial association. Close on a cordial note.

**Example of Order Letter**

**Center for Socio-economic Research and Development**  
**Pune 411001**

May 21, 2019

Realtech Suppliers Pvt. Ltd.  
Whitefield Commercial Center  
Bengaluru 560007

Ref: 00345/5/13

Dear Sirs,

We thank you for your letter of March 23, 2019, along with your catalogue of computer hardware. Please send us the following items by TCPS Land Cargo Services:

- i. Hard Disk (60 GB): 6 Nos.
- ii. Ram (256 MB): 6 Nos.

We accept the price quoted by you. Please make sure that the consignment is packed in strong cases to withstand the shipping process. Please send the book receipt with other documents through our bank, as you will receive the payment directly from them.

As you are aware, we expect that all the voluminous research data will start flowing in from mid-June 2019 and thereafter, the data entry and analysis will begin. We are committed to complete this prestigious project by this year end. We request you to appreciate this urgency and send us the above items on or before June 10, 2019.

Thanking you,  
Yours faithfully,

.....  
(.....)  
Project Director

### **3.5.3 Complaint Letters and Follow-up**

Letters of complaint are written by both private consumers as well as business-to-business customers who are not satisfied with a product or service and seek positive outcomes from writing these letters. Complaints may also be registered by phone or email, although letters remain generally the most reliable and effective way to complain, especially for serious complaints. Many suppliers and organisations actually welcome complaints as opportunities to improve. They operate customer help desks to hear from them about their problems. The quality of answers provided by the help desk operators is also monitored by recording the conversations.

Effective complaint letters (and any other way of complaining) should be:

- **Concise**, as such letters can be understood quickly.
- **Authoritative**, as such letters will command better credibility and respect and hence will be taken seriously.

- **Factual:** The letter should contain all the relevant facts pertaining to the complaint. It could be pertaining to quality of the product or service delivered, as against what was ordered, order quantity, delivery date, etc. This statement should justify demand for corrective action by the supplier.
- **Constructive:** The letter should suggest and also encourage positive action, such as rework, replacement of the product, apology for delay and commitment to future prompt delivery etc.
- **Friendly:** The entire letter should be written to show that the writer is considerate. The writer could even offer to help the vendor. He should close the letter in a courteous manner. This will motivate the vendor to take up the matter on a priority basis and settle the issue to the satisfaction of the writer.

In short, the writer should be brief, to the point and considerate and his approach should highlight on cooperation, relationships and constructive problem-solving.

#### **Example of a Complaint Letter**

**Global Imprint**  
**D.N. Road, Mumbai**

13 May, 2019

ABCD Polyesters Ltd.  
Graphic Art Films Dept.  
Andheri West  
Mumbai

Dear Sirs,

As you know, to meet the rush for advertisements this IPL season, we had placed order vide our order form No. ...., date ...., 20 tonnes of graphic art film to be delivered at our company on or before 15 April 2019. We had specified our quality expectations in our order form.

However, our production team finds that the quality of the film supplied by you is not up to the specifications given by us and accepted by you in your letter dated 30 March 2019. We pointed this matter to your representative when he visited us on 2 April 2019. He accepted the fact that the quality issue was genuine, but expressed that your organisation would not be in a position to supply the required quantity at such short notice. It became imperative for us to import the required quantity from Seoul on an urgent basis. This created a lot of disturbance in our production schedules.

We enclose a still picture for a soft drink exposed with your product. A similar picture worked with the imported film is also enclosed for comparison. You can identify your product from the markings on the bottom edge.

You have been our trusted supplier for over two decades. Hence, we would not ask for a refund of the money paid by us. Instead, we will accept product replacement. However, since the IPL season is coming to a close, we will accept replacement in two installments to coincide with the advertisement season of Diwali/ Pooja, and Christmas and New Year respectively.

Please indicate the procedure for return of the product.

We look forward to a long and meaningful association with your organisation.

Yours faithfully,

.....  
.....)

Director

Global Imprint

#### Tips for Writing an Effective Complaint Letter

1. **Concise letters catch attention:** The purpose of a complaint letter is that it is read, the reader understands the facts clearly and knows what action is expected of him. In general, the only letters that are read fully and understood are those which are concise, clear and compact. Lengthy letters that ramble or are vague will not be read properly. So, to be read, make your letter concise. Make sure that you state the main point in less than five seconds. Your complaint letter may subsequently take a few more seconds to explain the situation, but first the main point must be understood in a few seconds.
2. **Structure of the letter:** The purpose of a complaint letter is to persuade the reader to take action. Remember the acronym AIDA - Attention, Interest, Desire, Action. This is the fundamental process of persuasion and applies to letters of complaints too. Structure your letter to include the following:
  - **A heading:** Which identifies the name of product, service, person, location, with code or reference number if applicable and the issue being raised.
  - Statement of facts in simple terms with relevant details indicating what was promised and what was delivered. If there is insufficient justification, the recipient organisation will not commit the investment needed to solve the problem. Hence, make sure you state all relevant facts in an orderly manner. Do not make it sound frivolous.
  - **Action expected:** State the action you expect - a positive request for the reader to react to.
  - **Soften and be Constructive:** As a closing point, mention the reputation of the organisation and previous record of satisfactory association. Even if you are very angry, make a positive, complimentary closing, as the objective is to make the respondent take positive action and resolution of the issue and not get into a long, bitter battle with him. Constructive letters and suggestions make complaints easier to resolve. Threatening people generally does not produce good results.

- A friendly complimentary approach encourages the other person to reciprocate. He will want to return your faith, build the relationship, and keep you as a loyal customer. People like those who are helpful, nice and friendly, they would not find it easy to help those who are nasty and attacking. This is perhaps the most important rule of all when complaining. Be kind to people and they will be kind to you. Ask for their help and they will help you.
- **Try to see things from the recipient's point of view.** The person reading your letter is just like you, who wants to do a good job, be happy, to get through the day without being upset. The error must have occurred inadvertently or due to oversight by someone else, but definitely unintentionally. Hence, showing your anger at him will serve no good. Respect the worth and motives of your reader and make him your friend. You will see the result.
- The customer service staff will be dealing with a whole lot of negative and critical statements all the time. This can be very depressing. Be different, positive and constructive. If the situation is complex and involves a lot of expenditure, be as flexible as you can to find a way forward, rather than terminate the relationship. Suppliers in general work harder for people who are understanding, stay loyal and are prepared to work through difficult situations.
- **An authoritative stance:** This does not mean that your tone should be intimidating or warning. But an authoritative tone which makes the recipient respect you is especially important for serious complaints or one with significant financial implications. A well-thought out professional presentation, good grammar and spelling, clarity and firmness in tone while putting forth your expectations are the characteristics of an authoritative letter of complaint. These help to establish your credibility. The reader will believe that you have a valid point. Blame game does not result in results.
- The use of **humour** often works wonders if your letter is addressed to a senior person. Senior persons dealing with complaints tend to react on a personal level, rather than at procedural levels. Hence, a good natured humour draws their attention immediately and helps in dissipating the conflict. It creates a friendly, intelligent and cooperative impression.
- **The look of the letter should indicate professionalism:** If you have one, use a letterhead. Otherwise, as in any business letter, type your address, communication details, date, address of the recipient etc., correctly, tidily, with proper line spacing, indents etc.
- If the letter has been **copied** to someone else, mention the details.
- If you have attached other pages giving further details, photocopies of documents, product being returned etc., state so at the foot of the letter by using the abbreviation 'enc.'
- **While returning a faulty product,** check all the facts properly and understand the terms and conditions of sale as well as the return policy of the supplier. Make sure you are within the specified policy limits. For certain consumer complaints it is helpful to return the packaging, as it contains all the production records. If in doubt, talk to the customer services department to find out what they actually need you to return.

3. **Follow-up:** Generally, the recipient of a complaint letter will acknowledge the complaint and thank the writer for bringing up the matter. While assuring the writer that he is a valued customer, he would take appropriate action, which will be (a) understand the quality issues raised and the circumstances that led to the supply of an inferior quality product or service and take corrective action, (b) ignore the complaint if it is trivial and the customer is not of great consequence, (c) Contend or dispute the position taken by the customer in the complaint letter.

All this may take some time. The writer will wait for a reasonable period of time before sending a follow-up letter referring to the complaint letter. He will reiterate the issue raised in the complaint letter and then set a time limit for corrective action. This step will be taken only if the writer/customer is certain that he can take the dispute to a higher level.

### 3.5.4 Sales Letters

A **sales letter** is a **direct mail** sent to a number of potential customers aimed at persuading them to purchase a particular product or service being offered. There is no sales person involved in the convincing process. Sales letters are ubiquitous. The corporate world, the medium and small production and service organisations as well as non-government organisations write sales letters to inform and attract prospective customers, donors etc.

These letters are sent to more than one person, and hence they are formal and impersonal in nature. An effective sales letter will have a very brief opening segment. As the readers can identify a sales letter as a form of advertisement, the writer should move quickly to the sales pitch. As a persuasive strategy, the writer can include an offer to encourage a buying decision, such as an introductory price discount lasting two weeks and so on. Or he may raise a "pain point" or a problem situation that the prospects are facing and introduce a product or service that will take away the problem by providing a solution to their satisfaction.

Sales letters are distinct from other direct mail techniques, such as leaflets and catalogues, as these letters typically sell a single product, service or product line. They tend to be mainly textual as opposed to graphics-based catalogues. A sales letter is often, but not exclusively, the last stage of the sales process before the customer places an order. As such, it is designed to ensure that the **prospect** has decided to become a **customer**.

It is an integral part of **internet marketing** today. Sent in this format, it is much shorter than a normal sales letter. Typically these letters are unsolicited, i.e., they are sent as email even without a request for it from the readers. They are also delivered on the organisation's webpage. Unsolicited sales emails are known as **spam** or junk mail and are deleted by the reader unless there is some very attractive offer.

**Characteristics of an Effective Sales Letter:** The components of an efficient/effective sales letter are designed to achieve the following:

1. Getting the reader's attention.
2. Creating interest and building a strong desire for the product or service.
3. Offering convincing proof regarding the product or service covered in the letter.
4. Persuading the reader to take a buying decision.

As these letters aim at getting the direct response of the readers, their recall and outcome can be tested on an ongoing basis. For this purpose, a few versions of the letter can be prepared for comparison to determine which version performs best in terms of converting readers to customers. They can also be split-tested, i.e., each segment can be tested so that the entire letter emerges out of this. The copywriter can determine which headline, body text or graphic design gives the best results, and thus, he can build the letter incrementally. Sales letters on the Internet can be subjected to additional tests such as the open rate of emails, click through from opening to check out, bounce rate etc.

The AIDA formula that applies to any letter aimed at persuading the reader to take action applies to sales letters as well:

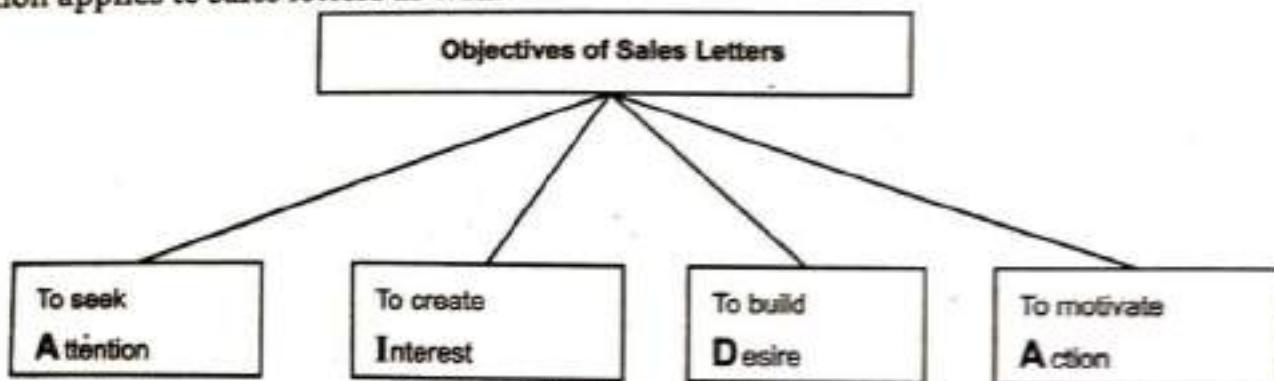


Fig. 3.1: Objectives of Sales Letters

- **Attention:** **Headline:** Seeking attention comes first. Users want quick and easy things at lower prices. By highlighting this in an attractive and impressive manner, the writer hopes to grab the attention of the prospects instantaneously. This segment should be so impressive that the reader would want to read on and know more about the offer. It goes without saying that a lot of thought should go into preparing this. As it is the first thing the reader would notice, it should scream to the reader that the rest of the copy is interesting. So, make sure to make the headline strong.
- **Interest:** Attracting the reader with a strong headline is just the beginning. The rest of the copy should be such that the readers' interest is sustained. The effort of the writer is to hold the interest of the readers. He can do this by providing interesting and relevant facts, and offering a solution to the problem. For instance, as a statement of the problem, the sales letter of a water purifier manufacturer could include facts about water borne diseases and the disease load in various regions, or mention about the fuel cost of boiling water. It can then announce how the company's product can solve this issue and either contribute to better health and/at reduced cost. It can also announce how many units the company has sold so far, to build credibility.
- **Desire:** Once the curiosity and interest of the reader is aroused, the writer should move towards developing the desire of the readers to buy the product or service. This can be done by talking about the benefits of the product or service by giving actual examples. Talk about great after-sale service. People get influenced by the benefits of products and not their features. Of what use are great features if the products the consumers buy do not make their life easy?

- **Action:** This is of utmost importance to the marketing team. The entire efficacy of the sales letter rests on this. It should convert the interested readers into actual consumers, who would part with money to purchase the product or service being covered in the letter. The organisation can create that urgency to buy by giving specific benefits, such as a discount coupon for a limited period.

### Components of a Sales Letter

The sales letter is split into several key sections and sub-sections within these.

1. **Headline:** The headline is the most prominent text on the sales letter, designed to attract the attention of the readers. It is the first item the reader sees and focuses on.
2. **Body copy:** This section is typically quite long, as it has the twin function of informing the readers and creating and sustaining their interest. Typically, it can run into 4, 8 or even 16 pages depending on the amount of information it carries. However, it is better to keep it as short as possible. This section will contain information about the problem the product or service aims to solve, features of the product or service, its various uses if any, as well as testimonials from existing customers who are happy with the product or service. It can also contain pictures of the product in use from various angles. For instance, a sales letter for a vacuum cleaner can have pictures of the product in its various uses such as carpet cleaning, cleaning of the curtains and furniture, blowing dust off window panes etc. Sales letters on the internet can include an audio or video presentation on the product, its features and uses, as well as testimonials.
3. **Call to action:** The final section of a sales letter is a call to action on the part of the readers. Converting the readers or the potential customers into actual customers is the end and aim of this exercise of preparing and distributing sales letters. Typically, this action should be an outcome of the sales letter without any prompting or intervention by the sales persons. To gauge the efficacy of advertisements and sales literature, many companies ask the new customers about the source of information regarding the product or service.

### Tips for Writing an Effective Sales Letter

1. **Know your customer:** This is the most important aspect of a good sales letter, but it is often ignored. The customer is the most important element. Know your customer by proper research. If you can imagine yourself as the reader of your letter, you can design it the way the customer would want to know, and not what you want to say. Use the opportunity and remember that the customer's main concern is fulfilling his or her needs and desires, not increasing your sales.
2. **Organise your letter:** Sales letters need a strong introduction, a convincing body and a persuasive conclusion. Tell them why you are sending the letter. Include your "sales pitch," in the body and say why your offer is irresistible. Conclude by creating a strong urgency to act. Check the information you are going to include. For instance, in B-to-B communication, if you are sending the letters to the top management, avoid leaflets and brochures. It is the job of the middle management to look at the details.

3. **Appearance of a sales letter:** The graphic design of a sales letter is an important aspect of building the brand image of the product or service. The font, layout, line spacing, paragraph formatting, images, etc. all have an effect on the efficacy of the letter.
4. **Make it easy to read:** You do not want your readers to throw away your letter without reading it.
  - For better effect, cover a single specific proposition, which is credible and believable.
  - Though these are formal letters, write in a conversational style, just as you would normally speak.
  - Avoid being clever or funny. They may feel insulted. Avoid posing puzzles. People cannot be bothered to waste their time.
  - Use short sentences. They are easier to read and understand. The chances of your making mistakes are reduced.
  - Write in second person: '*you, yours*' etc. For instance '*The product will save your time and effort.*' Avoid first person statements.
  - Compose short paragraphs. The norm is to cover one point in each paragraph. It is easier for the readers. Check the flow of ideas. It should be smooth.
  - Take your time. Edit and then re-edit your letter. Make sure there are no repeats. Check the spellings and grammar. A bad copy destroys the credibility of the organisation.
  - Use a font size that is easy to read.
5. **Aim to capture your reader's attention:** Your headlines should tell the readers something they want to know in a bold way that grabs their attention. The headlines can be of up to three or four sentences depending on the important information you want to present. Always make the headline compelling for the readers. They should want to read the rest of the story.
6. **Get your readers interested:** The readers should feel engaged. The copy should be interesting and lively. Write in an active voice. Pay attention to how you compose the various sentences and paragraphs. To highlight some facts, use arrow marks in a different colour, draw circles on key words, break the monotony by adding a few handwritten sentences etc.
7. **Create the desire:** The reader may want to know, "Why should I buy this? What is there in it for me?" Your copy must give forceful answers to these questions by highlighting the benefits of the product or service being offered. Talk about your intended customers and their interest and not your own business. Remember that readers keep getting such mails. Your letters should stand out.
8. **Forceful action stage:** Tell the readers what to do next and the urgency of it - depending on what you want, give your telephone number, or ask them to visit your office. Give accurate directions to your office and inform them of your working hours. It's also important to urge your readers to take action right away.
9. **Enlist the support of the support staff of top management** if you intend to approach them with the letter. If the secretary to the CEO knows that you are sending the letter, it will be easy for you to follow-up.

### 3.5.5 Circulars

A circular is a form of business communication aimed at mass distribution to a large number of people at one time. It is a communication meant to notify or convey to all the customers, business friends, shareholders and employees, certain fundamental changes or important information. A circular is a letter which contains common information about the business which is printed or photocopied in sufficient number of copies and sent to all the concerned parties.

They are used for giving relevant information to people within the organisation or for communication from the organisation to outside stakeholders. With the advent of computers and photocopying, they can be prepared only once, copies of which can be made for wider circulation. Each of these copies can look like the original. With modern technology, it would be possible to personalise them as well.

The audience for a circular can be widespread and the number depends on whom the writer intends to contact. Occasions when circulars are issued can be many. Some examples are:

- (a) Establishment of a new business.
- (b) Starting a new department.
- (c) Business expansion, acquisition of new business, new collaboration etc.
- (d) Downsizing, break-up in partnerships/collaborations etc.
- (e) Change in business location.
- (f) Starting of new branches of business.
- (g) Admission of a new partner into the business.
- (h) Announcing price changes.
- (i) Clearance sale.
- (j) Sale of a business

Circulars used for advertising and making public statements can be in the form of posters, leaflets or handouts that make people aware of a particular subject.

#### Example of a Circular → UF24709

##### Giving Information about the New Price List to Franchisees

May 20, 2019

Sir/Madam,

We call your attention to the new price list of our product range, which we enclose. We are happy to announce that we have reduced the prices of some of our key products by 10% flat. This has been possible because of the strategic shift we have introduced in our inventory policy and also because of better logistic management. We have upgraded our capsule filling machine recently. This will help us scale up our production, thus ensuring seamless supply of these drugs in the coming years. This will help us service the market better.

We would also like to draw your attention to the technical specifications of items 4 to 7, where we have retained the old price, but there is vast improvement in the quality standards. We would welcome reactions from your customers regarding these products.

In view of the price reduction mentioned above, we have retained the credit period and payment terms as before.

You are welcome to visit our facility to understand firsthand the improvements we have brought in. That will give you an opportunity to interact with our marketing team.

Please study our new price list and contact us if you have any questions. Your orders shall always receive best attention from us.

Yours faithfully,  
ABXY Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

### 3.5.6 Job Application with Bio-Data or Résumé

The first official communication related to your career is the job application. Since it starts your professional life, sufficient care has to be taken to prepare and draft the application. Until recently, the conventional method of drafting a job application was simple and straight. It was in the form of a letter addressed to the employer explaining or giving personal details such as name, address, qualifications, experience (if any) and references. This information used to be general and was presented in a single page. However, the current trend is to make it into two parts, viz., the covering letter and résumé or a more detailed CV as an attachment.

**Difference between Résumé and CV:** In the United Kingdom, a CV is short (usually a maximum of 2 sides of A4 paper), and therefore contains only a summary of the job seeker's employment history, qualifications and some personal information. It is often updated to change the emphasis of the information according to the particular position for which the job seeker is applying. Key words may be highlighted to attract the attention of the potential employers. A CV can also be extended to include an extra page for publications if these are important for the job.

In the United States and Canada, a CV is used in academic circles and medical careers and is far more comprehensive than a résumé, which is used for most other recruitments. A CV elaborates on education to a greater degree than a résumé and is expected to include a comprehensive listing of professional history including every term of employment, academic credential, publication, contribution or significant achievement. In certain professions, it may even include samples of the person's work and may run into many pages.

Some companies standardise the information they would like to receive by producing their own application form. They may or may not ask for a separate CV to be attached.

*It is reported that some employers spend as little as 45 seconds skimming a résumé before branding it "not of interest", "maybe" or "of interest".*

#### The Forwarding Letter

Your covering or forwarding letter makes a lot of difference between your application being noticed and considered or discarded. It should be in a simple form addressed to the prospective employer. It contains your name, date, address to whom it is to be sent, the

job you are seeking, the source through which the vacancy is known to you and a sentence indicating that the résumé is enclosed. The covering letter should not be a dull or lifeless note. On the contrary, a well-drafted covering letter reflects the personality of the writer, his attention to detail, communication skills and enthusiasm. Coupled with the résumé it helps the prospective employer to decide whether to invite the applicant for an interview or not.

Your cover letters should follow the basic format of a typical business letter and should address three general issues including why you are writing, what you have to offer and how you will follow up.

It will include a contact section, a salutation, a statement on why you are qualified for the job, an appropriate closing, and your signature.

A cover letter typically accompanies each resume you send out. Your cover letter may make the difference between obtaining a job interview and having your resume ignored, so it makes good sense to devote necessary time and effort to writing effective cover letters. Perfection matters when writing cover letters. Every cover letter you write should be customised for the job you are applying for, clear and concise, grammatically correct, and error-free. Make sure you do not send a standardised covering letter to all employers.

When you are sending an email cover letter, follow the employer's instructions on how to submit your cover letter and resume. Make sure that your email cover letters are written as well as any other correspondence you send, with appropriate opening, body and closing segments.

#### Tips for writing a good covering letter:

- (i) Use a good quality paper for the application.
- (ii) Type the letter neatly and properly unless a handwritten application is specifically asked for.
- (iii) The name and the address of the employer should be written carefully.
- (iv) Express desire to be considered for the position.
- (v) Mention the source of information regarding the vacancy, like an advertisement – press, online, former employer etc.
- (vi) Use an active and positive tone.
- (vii) Express enthusiasm and optimism towards receiving a favourable reply from the employer and an opportunity to discuss more details in an interview.
- (viii) Mention that the résumé and other documents, if any, are enclosed;
- (ix) It should be a formal letter.

**Bio-data or résumé:** The second part is the Bio-data or résumé presented in a table form covering different aspects of your personal details. It is also referred to as C.V. i.e. 'Curriculum Vitae'. This is the most important document in the process of a job application as it provides an overview of your education, experience and other qualifications. Hence, this has to be prepared with utmost care. It should emphasise the details to show your suitability for the job you are applying for. Tabulation ensures disciplined and orderly presentation and allows no omissions. In general, the

information to be included in the Bio-data is classified into the following five broad categories:

1. Personal details.
2. Educational Qualifications.
3. Extra curricular activities.
4. Experiences of work.
5. References.

#### **1. Personal details**

This should generally cover the items given below :

- (a) Name in full. Preferably in block letters, in the order of first name, middle name and surname. If specifically demanded, surname may be written first followed by first name and middle name.
- (b) Contact details,
- (c) Date of birth (In many companies which follow the policy of Equal opportunities, this is not required.)
- (d) Marital Status (married or unmarried)
- (e) Mother tongue (Peculiar to India, where there are many languages)
- (f) Other languages known
- (g) If applying for a job outside the country, include the following details :
  - (i) Nationality
  - (ii) Passport number
  - (iii) Period of validity of the passport
  - (iv) Knowledge, skill level and academic achievement in other languages

#### **2. Educational Qualifications**

- (i) A complete record of academic qualifications with ranking positions beginning with matriculation, giving details of institutions attended, universities from which diploma/degree obtained etc. The current trend is to begin with details of the highest level of education and projects undertaken.
- (ii) Additional courses, trainings.
- (iii) Awards, scholarships etc.

#### **3. Extra Curricular Activities**

They may be relating to sports, drama, study circles, workshops, seminars etc. and prizes, awards, distinctions etc., achieved in those fields. These achievements add to your personality aspects such as teamwork skills, inter-personal skills, organisational skills etc. Note that companies appreciate team based activities more than individualised hobbies.

#### **4. Work Experience**

- (i) Current employment status and job description if applicable.
- (ii) Previous employment stating the name of the companies and periods of employment and job description.
- (iv) Significant achievements, if any.
- (v) Any voluntary work done, for any social, cultural, charitable organisation, short period work during vacation etc. This is important especially for fresh entrants to a job situation.

### Useful tips for writing about work experience

- (a) Use action words, such as developed, organised, executed, spearheaded etc.
- (b) Do not mention routine work details. Aspects like working in a team, quality service, leadership role etc. catch the attention of the reader.
- (c) Try to relate the skills to the job you are applying for. A finance job experience involves numeracy, analytical skills, problem solving skills etc. Focus on persuading and negotiating skills if applying for a job in the marketing department etc.

### 5. Interests and Hobbies

This segment should be short, and to the point. Show a range of interests. Bullets can be used to separate interests. Avoid writing about passive, solitary hobbies like reading, listening to music etc. Hobbies which are out of the ordinary make you stand out. Any interest related to the job could help. Being the captain of a sports team or the leader of a biking group helps in demonstrating leadership qualities. Any activity with opportunities for demonstrating employability skills, such as organising, team work etc. will add to your acceptability.

### 6. References

Generally, two references are expected. One should be from the academic field, like a teacher, a guide, or a respectable individual in the society who knows you. The second should be a former employer in the case of those with work experience. Name, title, address and telephone number should be given indicating your relationship with them. It is necessary to obtain permission from these people to include their names as references.

#### 3.5.7 Notices

A notice is a formal means of communication. The purpose of a notice is to announce or display information to a specific group of people. Notices concerning the public are generally pinned up on specific display boards in public places. In business organisations, notices are sent to the concerned persons in printed form or by email. For instance, a group of software engineers wish to start a training institute for the benefit of those who want to develop their career in this line. They will get the information printed in the form of leaflets and distribute them to the public in various ways. Notices issued by the government and large organisations, universities, educational institutions, clubs and so on appear in newspapers.

Notices can be sent to a small group or to the entire organisation. For example, a notice may be issued to make all the employees aware of what the company will be doing in the next year. It could also aim at a smaller group, like a particular department to inform them of news that is only relevant to them.

In an organisation, managers convene a number of meetings, such as review meetings, brainstorming sessions, discussion regarding introduction of a new product etc. All formal meetings require a notice, so that the participants can adjust their schedules to attend and also come prepared. A meeting notice is a written communication of the date, time place and the business to be transacted at a particular meeting. It is sent to all persons who are entitled to get it. Sending a notice is the first step in convening a meeting. It is the formal intimation to the members who are eligible to attend and take part in the proceedings.

For a manager, the essence of serving notices is to pass on information within an organisation. Notices are drafted in a concise manner so that the reader need not spend a lot of time reading it. The reader should get to know the content by a glance. If a lot more details have to be communicated, circulars, emails, newsletters etc. may be used. In short, notices may be defined as the medium of passing information (usually written or typed) in a brief manner so as to keep the target audience abreast of certain issues.

### **Characteristics of Notices**

This form of communication is very efficient as it reaches a large target audience at the same time. This wide reach puts a heavy responsibility on the person who is writing it, as it is literally impossible to rectify any mistakes in the script or recall a notice. By the time it is noticed, the communication will already have reached the target group. The damage will be huge by way of credibility of the organisation if there is any mistake in the notice.

The characteristics of a well-written notice are:

- It must be clear. There should be no ambiguity in the meaning conveyed.
- It must inform the readers about the 5 Ws of a notice, viz.,
  - What is going to happen, (that is, the event such as a meeting, job notifications, new project, change in rules etc.)
  - Where it will take place
  - When it will take place (that is, the date and time)
  - Who are the target audience
  - Whom to contact or apply to (that is, the issuing authority)
- Only the most important points should be written.
- A.O.D. or Any Other Detail should only be included when and where required.
- The sentences should be short and grammatically correct. They should be in passive voice as far as possible.
- The notice should be presented within a box.
- The word limit for a notice is 40–50 words (only the words in the body of the notice are counted).
- A notice must be catchy and appealing – it should attract the reader's attention at once. Use of appropriate graphics, colours, attractive layout etc., will make the notice stand out.
- The visual appeal of the notice should be enhanced by using bold letters, catchy slogans, striking words and phrases, etc.
- Standard abbreviations are allowed.

### **Format:**

The general format for a notice is as follows:

- Name of the organisation issuing the notice
- The word 'notice' as title
- A heading to introduce the subject of the notice
- Date of the notice
- Body of the notice
- The writer's signature, name (in block letters) and designation

**Example of a Company Notice**

**Administrative Department  
GENERAL NOTICE TO ALL EMPLOYEES**

20 May 2019

**New Parking Area**

Our Company has acquired the plot of land adjoining our office and has converted it into a parking lot with immediate effect. There is a security guard and the lot is well lit for the convenience of the users. The gate at the far end will lead them directly to the office door. The entire walkway is covered from above to protect them from sun and rain. Please note that a total of 50 cars can be parked there. The facility is open from 7 am to 7 pm. Employees should park their cars and two-wheelers there. The existing parking area in front of our office is earmarked only for the President, CEO, CFO and also for visitors.

.....  
**Senior Manager**

**Example of a Meeting Notice**

**ABPS International School, Viman Nagar**

**Pune 411360**

**NOTICE TO SCIENCE CLUB MEMBERS**

15 May 2019

**Year-end meeting of Science Club**

The end of the year meeting of the Club members will be held on 30 May 2019 to take stock of the activities organised by the Club during the academic year. The announcement of the best science project will also be made at this meeting. The meeting will be held at 16.30 hrs., in Class Room 15 of the main building. All office bearers and members of the Club are requested to be present.

.....  
**Vikrant Sharma  
Secretary**

**3.5.8 Agenda**

An organised meeting, whether regular or not, will be effective if the topics to be discussed are organised in a pre-determined manner, the overall time for the meeting and time allocated to each topic/speaker is indicated along with their topic of presentation. In short, each and every business meeting needs a well written agenda. Thus, a meeting agenda is the list of items that participants hope to accomplish at a meeting. The agenda should be distributed to participants several days in advance of a meeting, so that they have the opportunity to prepare for the meeting.

**Significance of the Agenda**

An agenda is the statement of the business, including supporting documentation, for consideration/ noting at the meeting. The procedure for preparing the agenda for a meeting varies according to the level at which it is held. If it is a review meeting or a

regular departmental meeting, the concerned manager drafts the agenda with the help of the support staff. At the board level, however, the secretary of the organisation drafts the agenda and the chairperson either suggests amendments or approves it. Once the agenda is finalised, it is circulated to the members and other interested parties.

Without a written agenda, business meetings tend to be chaotic, run longer and deviate from the main objective. On the other hand, preparing an agenda will help you structure the meeting, focus it on the most important problems, and identify its desired outcomes. Besides, all participants of the meeting will be equally aware of the issues that will be taken up for discussion.

The creation and timely circulation of an agenda gives the participants an opportunity to prepare for the meeting. It also enables them to give the Chairman feedback about the subject and topics of the meeting and to suggest changes to the agenda if necessary. Deviation from the agenda often makes it difficult for the moderator to manage the meeting. It results in digression and loss of focus. The outcome will not be satisfactory, making follow-up activity difficult. It will be difficult to match the agreed objectives to the outcomes and so hinder the subsequent monitoring of the actions according to the decisions taken. Such a chaotic meeting is a waste of time and expenditure.

Hence, having no written agenda can never be an option for organising a professional meeting. The manager may consider himself to be very sharp, organised and have an excellent memory. Yet it is necessary to write down the meeting plan for two reasons: (a) Important items may be forgotten, and (b) The participants need prior information so that they can organise their own material and time.

### **Contents of an Agenda**

The following items should appear on a typical meeting agenda:

- Purpose or subject matter. Basically, an objective has an active component, and chalks out what needs to be done or decided during the meeting.
- Date and start and end time of the meeting.
- Venue.
- Names of the participants, and their position.
- The items for discussion and action to be taken to accomplish the purpose of the meeting.
- Anticipated for each item, and time allotted for breaks, questions and answers session etc.
- Preparation required for the meeting, such as review of any documentation circulated, data, minutes of the previous meetings etc.
- Facilities available at the venue such as flip charts, overhead projector, voice recording, video recording, arrangements for recording the minutes etc.
- Any special requests such as keeping cell phones on silent mode etc.
- Any refreshments that will be served and timing.

### **Tips for Preparing a Meeting Agenda**

- Meetings without firm direction are unlikely to be constructive, and do not lead to tangible or effective results. In addition, meeting participants may become disengaged if a meeting moves away from the relevant topics, setting a poor

precedent for future meetings and possibly discouraging future attendance. This will affect the credibility of the manager as a leader. If your job description requires that you have to organise meetings frequently, prepare an agenda template, in to which you can feed the details of each meeting.

"Begin with the end in mind." Stephen Covey in the book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. The purpose of the meeting will determine the meeting focus, the meeting agenda, and the meeting participants.

- Determine the goals of the meeting and mention it clearly in the agenda. Discuss this with a few key participants and finalise.
- Determine the date, time and venue for the meeting. Make sure the venue is available and that all necessary facilities are available there.
- Prepare a cover sheet giving the main idea, date, time, venue, the names and contact details of the organisers and the date before which confirmation of participation should be received. Where necessary, give details of the registration procedure, directions to reach the venue, transportation and other arrangements.
- Determine the list of participants or subject specialists you would like to have at the meeting and send letters of invitation to them with details of the meeting.
- Inviting the right participants will enhance the chances of successful deliberations. Do this by asking yourself some useful questions:
  - Who needs to know the information you are distributing?
  - Who has the experience or expertise to share with the group and provide the right information to guide decision making and contribute to the success of the meeting?
  - Who must provide permission or resources to accomplish the meeting outcome?
  - Who must support the meeting outcome and also the implementation of any solutions or tasks that emerge from the meeting?
  - Who might oppose the implementation of any outcome, solutions or direction? Should you invite them? Or can you plan a strategy to deal with them?
- Identify agenda items for the meeting. Make sure the schedule is full of activities. This is more so in workshops, consultations and conferences running into a number of days.
- Within the overall objectives of the meeting, either determine the topics and sub-topics in consultation with subject specialists invited for the meeting or ask them to suggest. This will help you prepare a list of topics or agenda items to discuss. Ask them to indicate the amount of time to be allotted to each segment. All this will require a lot of time and continuous interaction with them. Follow-up.
- Determine if you need help from other staff in planning the meeting. Identify them and have a meeting to discuss the details.
- Once these topics are identified and priorities fixed, give numbers to each of them in the order in which they will be taken up. Usually, this exercise is done about a month before the meeting so that everyone is able to prepare the issues they would like to discuss during the meeting.

- Organise the agenda considering the priority items or those requiring lengthy presentation and discussions. Put them at the top. Exclude those agenda items that aren't aimed to achieve the stated objective of the meeting.
- When allocating time on each of the agenda items, remember that time is needed not only to present a certain issue, but also to discuss it. Therefore, take the discussion time into account when planning your duration expectations.
- Assign presenters for each agenda item. Not all of the agenda items should be presented solely by you. It is better to involve more people in active participation. Assign the persons who will be responsible for taking the minutes.
- Make sure you include people who can contribute meaningfully. Do not include anyone who is not associated with the subject unless it is desired by the top management. Sometimes, the top management may want an under-study to observe and learn.
- Prepare all attachments or reading material that you would like to enclose with the agenda. It may be minutes of the previous meeting to be confirmed or any information pertaining to the subject to be discussed.
- Give advance directions to the participants. Prior to dispatching the agenda, request the speakers to hand in any paper or documents with appropriate references that they would like to attach to the agenda, so that they can be distributed in time.
- Check the agenda for mistakes, as well as for points you may have missed.
- Distribute the agenda well in advance, at least two weeks before the meeting, so that the participants can schedule them.
- Place agenda copies at the table of each speaker. Conform to the agenda at the meeting.
- At the end of the meeting, the moderator should sum up the discussions and the decisions taken according to the agenda points. This becomes a reference for future meetings on the subject.

Writing an agenda for a programme, especially for a multi-day programme, is sometimes challenging as it has to give all necessary details but in a brief manner. A manager has to take all care to plan the events, draft the agenda, consult with others where necessary and finalise it in time, such that it is possible to circulate it to the participants and invitees and get their response ahead of making all the ground level arrangements at the venue.

#### Example of a Business Agenda

**Date:** 17 July 2019

**Time:** 11 am to 1.30 pm

**Location:** Conference Room of Marketing Department, Head Office

**Attendees:** Mr. Anil Gupta, Ms. S. Joshi, .....

**Objective:** Develop strategy to introduce the new cell phone application developed by the company. Participants are expected to come prepared to discuss the scope for the product in their regions and the support they require. A brief description of the product has already been sent to them.

**Arrangements:** PC and LCD projector.

**Schedule:**

11.00 to 11.25: Mr. Gupta, Marketing Director to elaborate on the new application and its application areas.

11.25 to 11.40: West Zone

11.40 to 12.00: South Zone

12.00 to 12.20: North Zone

12.20 to 12.40: East Zone

12.40 to 01.00: Questions and answers

01.00 to 01.30: Response from marketing team, Summing up of major recommendations and actions with specific dates.

**Responsibilities**

Recording the Minutes: .....

Note taking: .....

Moderator: .....

Contact Person: .....

Contact Details:

The meeting will be followed by lunch served at the same venue.

### 3.5.9 Memorandum

Compared to a circular or a notice, a memorandum is usually less public, has a smaller audience and is usually more exclusive. It is often used as a way of reminding someone of something that needs to be done, or to pass on a proposal or idea of some kind. It is most commonly typed or even hand written.

The literal meaning of the word memorandum is 'a note to assist the memory'. The term 'Memo' is derived from the Latin word 'memorare' meaning 'to mention' or 'to tell'. It is a short form of the word memorandum and its plural form is 'memoranda'. A memo is generally used for internal communication. Whenever an officer or a company executive wishes to issue certain directives or instructions to his staff, he writes a memo and sends it to the concerned persons.

A memo has to be very brief and to the point. It is written directly in a less formal style.

**Contents:** Since it moves from one department or employee to another, it must contain the following:

- Words like 'from' and 'To', to indicate where it has come and to whom it is addressed.
- Heading,
- Body and
- Signature.

There is no need for a salutation (Dear ...) nor a complimentary close (Yours ...).

**Significance:** It is the most convenient and inexpensive device for communication within the organisation. A memo can be used for the following purposes:

1. To seek or give suggestions.
2. To communicate policy changes.
3. To issue instructions to the staff.
4. To request for help or information.
5. To confirm a decision that was arrived at over the telephone.

Sometimes, it becomes necessary to instruct subordinates to refrain from certain undesirable habits. The most common among them is being late, spitting in the office premises etc. Such an attitude disturbs office discipline. Under such circumstances, an office chooses to issue a memo, which is a sort of mild warning, which also sets an example for other subordinates.

There is also a category of memo, known specifically as 'warning memo'. It is generally served to subordinates whose work is unsatisfactory or against the rules and regulations of the company. In spite of several oral instructions, they have not shown improvement in their attitude or behaviour. A warning memo is not a threat of removal from service. However, it categorically states that better behaviour is expected from the concerned employee. Failure to show improvement may result in holding up of incentive, increment, promotion etc.

While issuing a warning memo, the manager has to make sure that there is enough documentary evidence to show the errant behaviour of the recipient. The evidence could be by way of attendance register, leave register, work/performance record/reports etc. Issuing warning memos based on vague charges may lead to conflict, which the unions can escalate.

### **3.5.10 Email Etiquette OR Netiquette**

**Netiquette**, short for "Network Etiquette" or Internet etiquette", is a subject for study as part of business writing, because the Net has taken the place of sending paper copies by post, fax etc. It is faster and very convenient for organisations as today the Internet is ubiquitous. Netiquette is the etiquette of cyberspace. Etiquette means "the forms required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be required in social or official life." In other words, Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Netiquette has a dual purpose, to help net newbies minimise their mistakes, and to help experienced cyberspace travellers guide the newbies. It realises that most people would rather make friends than enemies, and if a few basic rules are followed, the Net users can make many more friends than enemies. With social networking becoming more and more popular, etiquettes are being compiled for other portals. 'Twitter-quette' is one example.

Computer networks bring people together who would otherwise never meet. However, this medium is impersonal and so, the correspondence becomes less personal. It is said that humans exchanging email are often like those behind the wheel of a car. They curse the other drivers, make obscene gestures, and generally behave rudely. Such behaviour is hardly seen at home or at work, where people meet and talk. Since there is a machine in

between, they think they can be at their worst. The purpose of Netiquette is to convey to users that such behaviour is not acceptable. The network should be used in a positive and constructive manner to express oneself freely, access a world of information, enrich themselves and explore strange new worlds without stepping on the toes of others.

The e-mail has replaced many functions of the business letter. Here are some tips on writing effective e-mail. Email has made a number of major changes in the way business functions. One of the biggest advantages in business is the convenience it provides. It is easy and costs nothing to send a mail to many in the company. Even in education, cyberspace has the potential to be a tremendous resource for students and teachers at all levels.

**Netiquette** is described as a set of social conventions that facilitate interaction over networks, ranging from Usenet and mailing lists to blogs and forums. These rules were described in IETF RFC 1855 document. (The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), which develops and promotes Internet Standards.)

The USENET netiquette highlights using simple electronic signatures, and avoiding multi-posting, cross-posting, off-topic posting, hijacking a discussion thread, and other techniques used to minimise the effort required to read a post or a thread. Similarly, some Usenet guidelines call for use of unabbreviated English, unlike the instant messaging protocols like SMS.

Companies like IBM post their own netiquette guidelines for their employees highlighting the basic need for professionalism, amiable work environment, and protecting the company's intellectual property. Some companies limit the use of the Net in their offices, as accessing the Net and communicating on the social networking sites becomes addictive.

Like many Internet Phenomena, the concept of netiquette and its application keep changing, and vary from community to community. However, the basic Do's and Don'ts should be understood and followed.

It is often possible to contact powerful people directly, because many executives read their own email, rather than having it screened like their paper mail and phone calls.

*"I am the only person who reads my email so no one has to worry about embarrassing themselves or going around people when they send a message."* ... Bill Gates

There are some managers who do not know how to cope with email facility and are perpetually "email overloaded", while others may be so accustomed to it that they become "snail-mail ignorers", i.e., they forget or do not bother to read their paper mail.

#### Tips for email etiquette

In addition to the netiquette for exchange of mails among family and friends, there are a few additional conventions for email at work, which are distinct. Please note that all the tips given above apply here as well. Here are some tips:

1. **Do not get too informal:** The tendency when it comes to e-mail is to write less formally. Remember that you are still writing a business letter, except that the mode of conveying it is technology based.
2. Though professional email can still be informal, a lot of the humour and wit that is appropriate in a discussion group is out of place at work.

3. Do not discuss personal problems or company politics or criticise a colleague or boss on email or social networking groups. You never know where it lands and may create problems for you.
4. Email etiquette forbids spreading of misinformation, personal or confidential information, or any statement that is needlessly damaging to the organisation and to others.
5. When you introduce yourself via email, you are not only making a first impression, but also leaving a written record. So use caution, especially when dealing with powerful people. Make sure that they do not mind receiving an email.
6. In order to ensure that people know who you are, include a line or two at the end of your message with contact information. You can save a ".sig" or a "signature" file and add it to the end of your messages. It takes the place of your business card. It should not exceed 4 lines. Generally, signature files are not used in work email within the organisation. It is used only when the email is sent to external recipients.

Keep the mail messages short. Do not exceed 100 words per mail, and 65 characters per line. But if the message is a lengthy one, prepare the reader by including the word "Long" in the subject header. Lengthier files can be sent as attachments. A good rule of thumb would be not to send a file larger than 50 kilobytes.

Remember that many people pay for connectivity by the minute, and the longer your message is, the more they pay. They would not appreciate lengthy mails.

Be careful when addressing mail. Know to whom you are sending the mail. Unsolicited mail costs the receiver as well.

7. Format: Use the format provided by the software properly. The 'To' is for the individuals the letter is directed to. 'cc' segment is for those you want to have a copy and 'bcc' refers to those you want to send a copy but you do not want people to know that they are in. Fill in the subject line. The recipient will know the subject and accordingly open it immediately or keep it for later. It will also help him recall and bunch all mails pertaining to a subject. Begin the e-mail with a normal salutation.
8. Contents: As with the business letter, keep it brief. All the business letter essentials apply to the e-mail as well.
9. Links: If you are referring to a web site, provide the link.
10. Follow the ABCs of communication: Accuracy, Brevity, Clarity and Courtesy.
11. Remember, mails on the 'Net can be archived. It is easier to revert to electronic mails than to hard copies stored in files and stacked away out of reach. In short, take care what you send on the 'Net'!
12. While forwarding or re-posting an official message, do not change the wording. You may shorten the message and quote only relevant parts, but be sure you give proper reference.

13. **Be tactful:** "Flaming" is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion with full flow of emotion. It gets immediate attention. It is a long-standing network tradition and can be a lot of fun for the writer and the reader. Netiquette does not forbid it, but does not appreciate its perpetuation, like a series of angry letters, most of them from two or three people directed towards each other, that can dominate the tone and destroy the camaraderie of a discussion group. They monopolise the bandwidth. It is unfair to the other members of the group.
14. Common rules for e-mail and USENET such as avoiding flame wars and spam are constant across most mediums and communities. (**Flaming**, also known as **bashing**, is hostile and an insulting interaction between Internet users)
15. **Be conservative** in what you send and liberal in what you receive. You should not send 'heated' messages even if you are provoked, not even in response to 'flames'. Wait overnight to send emotional responses to messages. If you still feel strongly, use FLAME ON/FLAME OFF to indicate your mood.
16. **Try to avoid sarcasm:** It may be misunderstood and remembered. Be careful with slang or local acronyms.
17. **Use mixed case:** ALL UPPER CASE LOOKS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. Instead use symbols like \* for emphasis and underscores for underlining.
18. If you send encoded messages make sure the recipient can decode them.
19. Unless you are using a protective firewall, you should assume that mail on the Internet is not secure. Your email address can be subject to hacking. Never put in a mail message anything you would not put on a postcard.
20. Do not open unsolicited mail or mails from unknown persons or respond to a request for personal information. Do not respond to unsolicited mail asking for information. It is unsafe.
21. Check all your *mail subjects* before responding to a message and respond to only those, which are directed to you. Make sure you respond to mails where you are the primary recipient and not cc'd.
22. Watch 'cc's when replying. If it is meant as a 2-way communication, do not include others.
23. **Do not use emoticons:** There are two reasons for avoiding these. (1) While many net-savvy users are familiar with it, there are still a lot of people who do not understand the abbreviations and symbols used in emails. (2) You are writing a business letter and emoticons have no place in it. However, if the situation warrants, use smileys to indicate your tone of voice, but use them sparingly, and make sure the recipient knows what the character position stands for.
24. **Do not use Acronyms:** The acronyms may be misunderstood and result in a war of words.
25. It should be remembered that one's posts can easily be made public. It can have disastrous consequences. Users generally take the privacy of their posts for granted. Even one-on-one communications, such as private messages on chat forums and direct SMSs, may be breached.

26. Emails can be forwarded easily and messages can spread faster than one can imagine, resulting in grave situations.

This is a true story of a company CEO who misjudged the situation. He observed for several days that the car parking lot was fairly empty at the beginning of the work day and even before the closing hours. The indignant CEO sent a group e-mail to all managers to enforce discipline among their subordinates or they would be sacked. The recipients forwarded this to hundreds of other employees with a warning. This leaked to the media and the public. This resulted in a catastrophic drop in the company's stock price by the end of the day.

27. Emails can be stored and retrieved easily. When you communicate through cyberspace via email or on discussion groups, your words are written and stored in such a way that you have no control over them. In other words, if your mail has not been worded carefully and has hurt someone's feelings, there is a good chance they can create problems for you.
28. Beyond matters of basic courtesy and privacy, e-mail syntax allows for two different types of recipients, such as the main recipient and the CCs. The primary recipient defined can be expected to respond. If you are a 'CC' recipient, you are not expected to respond. You have received the mail for information only.
29. It is advisable to use the traditional mailing list than CCs, as it can be misused. The "reply to all" facility quickly expands the number of responses manifold. In extreme cases, if the number runs into millions, it can bring down the mail server. In cases like this, rules of netiquette require efficient sharing of resources.
30. Another rule for online behaviour is to adhere to the same standards of behaviour online that you follow in real life. In real life, most people are fairly law-abiding, either by disposition or because they are afraid of getting into trouble. In cyberspace, the chances of getting caught may seem slim and so people may think that a lower standard of ethics or personal behavior is acceptable in cyberspace. This is a wrong notion.
31. The writer should realise that the receiver of an email or a message is also a human being with his/her own sensitivities. When you communicate electronically, all you see is a computer screen. You do not have the opportunity to use facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice to communicate your meaning. Whether it is an email exchange or a response to a discussion group posting, it is easy for the respondents to misinterpret your meaning. All the writer has is words, and they should be used judiciously and caringly. Every time they write a mail, the users should ask themselves: "*Would I say this to the person's face?*" Be pleasant and polite. Do not use offensive language or 'flame'.
32. *Breaking the law is bad Netiquette.* If something is illegal in real life, chances are it is also bad Netiquette.
33. While writing mails, mistakes like spelling errors or even flame may creep in. The writer may have asked an irritating or even a stupid question. Netiquette requires that the recipient may overlook the mistakes and not criticise the writer. If it is a minor error, it should be ignored. Even if you feel strongly about it, think twice before reacting. If you need to, then point out the mistake politely, in a private

email, and not in public online form. No one has the license to correct everyone else. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Arrogance and self-righteousness will make the dispute go out of hand. To avoid conflicts arising out of mistakes, companies can develop their own codified internal manuals of style to set an acceptable limit for user behavior.

34. Respect other people's time and bandwidth. When you send email or post to a discussion group, you are taking up their time. Make sure that the time they spend reading your posting is not wasted. Bandwidth is the information-carrying capacity of the wires and channels that connect everyone in cyberspace. There is a limit to its data carrying capacity at any given moment. People pay for this.
35. People access the Net at their convenience. Do not expect instant responses to all your questions or your arguments. It should be worth the trouble.
36. People as a matter of habit, CC mails to people whether it is necessary or not. This is rude, as they will be wasting their time reading unwanted mail. Ask yourself whether they really need to know. If the answer is no, do not waste their time.
37. Most discussion group readers are already spending too much time sitting at the computer. They will have other matters to attend to.
38. Make yourself look good online. You will be judged by the quality of your writing. Spelling and grammar do count. Pay attention to the content of your writing. Check your facts. Bad information spreads like wildfire on the net and may come back to you in a totally distorted manner. You are responsible for what you post and not for what anyone else does with it.
39. Make sure your notes are clear and logical. It is perfectly possible to write a paragraph that contains no errors in grammar or spelling, but still makes no sense whatsoever if unwanted irrelevant words are used. Keep it simple.
40. Whether your mail is for giving information or in response to a question, try to include all the necessary information without digressing or being incoherent. It is a good practice to edit your email and make it perfect before sending it. It makes you look good and the reader will also appreciate it. It is not a good idea to send supplementary emails for the same purpose to indicate corrections.
41. Swear words are not nice. If you feel that cursing in some form is required, it is preferable to use amusing, tactful substitutes for harsh words or the classic asterisk filler, like s\*\*\*. The meanings of these are known to all. This playfulness is somehow appropriate to the net, and you avoid offending the reader needlessly.
42. Check your mail 'inbox' preferably three or four times a day, but at least twice a day. You should always check your mail in the morning when you come in to the office and in mid-afternoon, or an hour or two before you leave.
43. It is bad manners to constantly watch the computer or cell phone screen while talking to someone. It is disrespectful and non-productive.
44. If you are really too busy to check your mail that often, or if you are going to be out for more than a day, consider delegating the task by putting a temporary password. Some systems also allow you to set up a limited-access password for the

person screening your mail. Another way to handle the situation is installing an "answermail" facility. The message tells your correspondent how long you will be gone and whom to contact if the information is urgent.

45. If you think the importance of a message justifies it, immediately reply briefly to an e-mail message to let the sender know you have received it, even if you will send a longer reply later.
46. If you come across someone who claims to be too busy to answer emails, the option is either not to send emails to that person, or have the return receipt feature on the system. If it is important, follow-up on phone. In extreme cases, send a follow-up email and copy it to your superior even if it is going to make you unpopular with that person. But then your boss may view it as your incapability to work with that person, and form a negative impression about you. So, this step should be adopted with caution.
47. If people with whom you communicate are located across the globe, it takes time for the message to reach the recipient and for him/her to respond. Do not send reminders unnecessarily.
48. One way of using the Net is to enrich our knowledge. When in doubt about anything, one can ask questions online. Many persons may give intelligent answers. When you post a question to a discussion group that you do not visit often, it is customary to request replies by email instead of to the group. When you get all those responses, post the summary to the discussion group. That way, everyone benefits from the experts who took the time to write to you. Similarly, if you have researched a topic that you think would be of interest to others, post it. Sharing your knowledge is fun. It makes the world a better place.
49. Respect other people's privacy. Do not read other's emails. Even the system administrator has that power to read, but uses discretion.
50. If there is a request for someone else's email address, take that person's permission and give it, along with work phone number if it is available.
51. Do not send an email notification that you have sent a document by post or any other medium. This is rude as it assumes that the intended recipient does not check his/her snail mail regularly, unless you know for sure that the recipient ignores paper work or the document being sent by post or courier. If the document is urgent, market it so and send it. A text message confirming sending of email may help.
52. Many companies impose restrictions on the usage pattern of the Internet in the same way as they limit personal use of office telephone.
53. Some companies do not make it easy for their employees to send mails to everyone in the organisation. Employees may be designated for specific periods to screen every message that is sent out to all employees. Other companies have mail areas called "Junk Mail" or "Fourth Class Mail" that employees can use for classified ads, requests for general information etc. Such mail is separated from normal person-to-person mail, so that busy people are not bothered by it. If your company offers this benefit, use it, but follow the organisation's rules and check everything twice before you send it out.

54. Delete old and unwanted mail regularly. In most companies, mails are retained on the employee's computer only for a limited period. The main server of the organisation retains them. If there are important emails, save them in hard copy or on your own workstation. Make a list of situations where problems have arisen due to lost emails, and request the management to allow for additional storage facility.

The list is long. Net users should remember these tips and develop appropriate cyber world habits.

#### Significance of Internet access in India

We in India have taken to the Net in a big way, and the number of converts to this is increasing by the day. Obviously, it is cheaper and faster than postal communication. For some, it is a status symbol, to indicate that they are keeping pace with this communication marvel! For some, it is an addiction, especially posting, tweeting, playing games etc. For many, it is convenient to do all bank transactions, pay bills, buy products, stay connected with their friends and relatives through email and social networking portals and also find some entertainment. For many business managers, it is an essential facility, especially in these days of quick correspondence, telecommuting, and groupware, to share computer screens and work together. Whatever it is, the Net is here to stay and expand into all aspects of our personal and business world.

According to a survey conducted by JuxtConsult, an online research solutions consultancy, urban areas of India are home to over 30 million Internet users. Of these Web users, about 20 million users access the Web daily, and this is a significant number. Again, home usage accounts for 59 percent! Broadband reaches 77 percent of home Internet in urban India, and 74 percent of office-based Internet users. With the development of mobile communication technology of 3G (third Generation level), it is now possible to access the Net even on cell phones, as the Developed World moves to the 4G era, which helps in faster data transfer, both through audio and visual communication. With cloud computing, optimisation of the networking facility round the world is being attempted.

Statistics like these generate a lot of interest. One way of looking at it would be to remark that the country has arrived on the map of 'Net users'. However, it should be remembered that the initial users of the Net were technically minded, and understood the nature of the medium and the protocols. Today, there are many who are new to the environment and are unaware of the etiquette. They should understand to behave properly on the Net and learn how one should 'Post' or 'Send'.

#### Points to Remember

- **Types of written correspondence:**
  - (a) Letter
  - (b) Office memorandum
  - (c) Circular
  - (d) Interdependent note
  - (e) Office order
  - (f) Notification

- (g) Report
- (h) Resolution
- (i) Press note
- (j) Endorsement
- (k) Advertisement
- **Functions of written communication:**
  - (a) Inform
  - (b) Respond
  - (c) Request
  - (d) Report
  - (e) Develop goodwill
- **Essentials of a good business letter:**
  - (a) Completeness
  - (b) Clarity
  - (c) Accuracy
  - (d) Brevity or Conciseness
  - (e) Courtesy
  - (f) Sincerity
  - (g) Simplicity
  - (h) Style
- **Different types of business correspondence:**
  - (a) Letter of enquiry
  - (b) Order letters
  - (c) Complaint letters
  - (d) Sales letters
  - (e) Circulars
  - (f) CV or Résumé
  - (g) Agenda
  - (h) Notices
  - (i) Memorandum

### Questions for Discussion

1. Explain the importance of Business Letters.
2. State the Essential Qualities of a Good Business Letter.
3. Explain the Physical Appearance of a Good Business Letter.
4. What is Job Application Letter? State its contents.
5. State the Methods of Collecting Overdue Accounts.
6. What do you mean by Memos?
7. What is Minutes? State its contents? Explain the statutory provisions regarding Minutes.

8. Write short notes on :
- Letter of Enquiry
  - Sales Letter
  - Agency Correspondence
  - Quotation
  - Covering Letter
  - Interview Letter
  - Collection Letter
  - Acknowledgement Executions
  - Circulars and Notices

## Previous Pune University Questions

**B.B.A.**

**April 2011**

- What is a Memo? As the Managing Director of a Company, write a memo to the sectional heads, announcing appointment of a person as General Manager from outside the organisation. Keep in mind the fact that some of the sectional heads having long experience in the company were aspirants for this post.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.5.9 of this chapter.**

- "Résumé is the replica of oneself". Discuss. Draft an application letter along with a résumé for the post of Marketing Manager in Vishal Holidays Ltd.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.5.6 of this chapter.**

- "Replies to complaint letters must be sent promptly". Explain this statement.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.5.3 of this chapter.**

**October 2011**

- "Every Business Letter, in principle, is a Sales Letter." Explain this statement. Draft a Sales Letter appealing to the middle class people for the recently manufactured Novel Mobile Phone.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.5.4 of this chapter.**

- "A Successful Job Application is the first step to one's career." Elaborate this statement. Draft a job application along with résumé to a MNC in India for the post of Sales Manager which requires Management Graduates with three years sales experience.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.5.6 of this chapter.**

- "Replies to enquiry must be sent to top priority." Elaborate this statement on behalf of Venus Traders, Pune. Draft an Enquiry Letter to Sarang Note Books, Mumbai enquiring about the terms and conditions.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.5.1 of this chapter.**

**October 2012**

- Draft and explain in brief various components of a Business Letter Layout.

**Ans. Refer Article 3.4 of this chapter.**

2. As a Sales Manager, draft a Sales Letter to promote the Sale of a new Cell Phone.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.5.4 of this chapter.**
3. Write Job Application for the Post of Executive Officer in response to the advertisement which was published in "Times of India" dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2012.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.5.6 of this chapter.**
- 

**April 2013**

1. What is a Business Letter? Explain structure or layout of Business Letter.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.4, 3.4.4 and 3.4.5 of this chapter.**
2. Write Job Application to the Administrative Officer, Garware-wall Ropes Limited, Chinchwad, Pune in response to an advertisement in daily 'Sakal' for the post of an Accountant.
  3. Write Complaint Letter to Elpro Engineering Company, Green Park Road, Mumbai about receipt of wrong goods.
  4. Write a short note on Enquiry Letter.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.5.1 of this chapter.**
- 

**B.C.A.****April 2011**

1. What is a Business Letter? Explain the Layout of Business Letter.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.4, 3.4.4 and 3.4.5 of this chapter.**
- 

**October 2012**

1. What is Business Letters? Explain the essentials of effective correspondence of Business Letters.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.4, 3.4.4 and 3.4.5 of this chapter.**
2. Write short notes on:
    - (a) Layout of Business Letters
- Ans. Refer Article 3.4.3 of this chapter.**
- (b) Circular Letters
- Ans. Refer Article 3.5.5 of this chapter.**
- 

**April 2013**

1. What do you mean by Business Letters? Explain layout of Business Letters.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.4 and 3.4.5 of this chapter.**
2. Draft a circular letter announcing the establishment of a new branch of HDFC Finance Ltd., Mumbai.
- Ans. Refer Article 3.5.5 of this chapter.**
- 



# 4...

## Analysis of Different Media of Communication

### Learning Objectives...

- To study the various media of communication used in industry today
- To understand advantages and disadvantages of the various modes of communication

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The development of technology has considerably improved our lifestyles. Its impact is felt on each and every aspect of life, including communication techniques. From the symbols of long time ago to the latest classy computers and mobile phones, communication systems, modes and styles have changed a lot. Each century has seen a new addition to the ever-growing list of means of communication. The invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in the year 1875 was the first technological invention that had a massive impact on communication among humans. Other subsequent inventions like that of the computer, the Internet, cell phones with newer applications like 2G, 3G, 4G and now even 5G (generation) services have further eased and changed the communication process.

Every new development comes with both positive and negative influences, and this applies to the impact of technology on the communication process as well. Technological elements like telephones, cell phones, emails etc., have become the most popular means of communication. In fact, mobile phones and the Internet are literally the basic necessities these days. There is a lot of convergence in these devices. In fact, there is a lot of discussion going on about the future of the personal computer, as the cell phone is getting integrated into the computer world.

The social networking sites are a world in themselves, like a virtual world! In businesses as well, all these have made the process of communication quick and easy. Emails, teleconferencing, video conferencing, networking sites, etc. are among the favourite tools.

In businesses, there has been a movement away from face-to-face meetings and communication. Instead, people and businesses use video conferencing. (in-corporates chat and presentation conferencing facilities) and virtual conferencing (Second Life).

These are effective globalisation forces. It is estimated that in 2010, around 30% of the world's population was online, and by 2016, around 15 billion devices will be networked, which is twice the world population. The amount of information available on the Net is also increasing exponentially. Global monthly information flows are expected to exceed 10 exabytes (1 followed by 19 zeros!) by 2016. According to a McKinsey report, the impact of the Net on India's GDP is likely to touch Rs. 5 lakh crore by 2015. By that year, the number of Internet users will touch half a billion. That is the power of the Net.

## 4.2 TELEX

The **telex** network is a dial-up switched network of teleprinters for the transmission and delivery of printed messages between subscribers. It is similar to a telephone network, for sending text-based messages. This system provided the first common medium for international record communications using standard signaling techniques and operating criteria as specified by the International Telecommunications Union. The telex message was transmitted through a paper tape to a master computer along with the destination address.

Started in Germany as a research and development programme in 1926, it became an operational teleprinter service in 1933. It is the forerunner of the modern texting on cell phones and email communication. Like email, telex users could send the same text message to many destinations around the world at the same time. It was also possible to connect in "real time", where the sender and the recipient could both type on their respective keyboards. These characters would be immediately printed on the distant machine. Telex was also the rudimentary but functional forerunner to Electronic Data Interchange used by IT systems.

As late as the early 1990s, the telex system operated by the Royal Dutch Shell permitted the exchange of messages between a number of recipient systems. In addition to permitting email to be sent to telex addresses, formal coding conventions adopted in the composition of telex messages enabled automatic routing of telexes to email recipients.

However, with the advent of the computer and Internet service and the cell phone which can transmit textual data as well as visuals to many destinations at the same time, telex as a mode of communication has become outmoded. However, many of the short forms that we see in texting today originated in the telex period.

### Advantages of Telex

Though telex is often dismissed as an outmoded system, it still has certain advantages over email and texting. Though both have end-to-end connections in real time, the biggest advantages of telex are:

- 1. Speed of Transmission:** It is a quick mode of transmission.
- 2. Real-time connectivity:** It was also possible to connect in "real time", where the sender and the recipient could both type on their respective keyboards. These characters would be immediately printed on the distant machine.
- 3. Verification of Identity:** The identity of the originating and destination machines could be verified, thus it was authentic.
- 4. Certainty of Receipt of Message:** The 'answer back' facility confirms the establishment of connection with the called terminal along with its identity. At

the beginning of the message, the sender would transmit a WRU (Who aRe yoU) code, and the recipient machine would automatically initiate a response giving its identification code. The WRU code would also be sent at the end of the message, so a correct response would confirm that the connection had remained unbroken during the message transmission. This imparted a high degree of certainty that the message has reached the machine at the receiving end. As against this, text message on cell phone is sent hoping that it reaches its destination and is not lost in thin air. Hence, it is very beneficial in communicating crucial time-sensitive financial and other information.

5. Ordinary people could read the output.
6. **Document Creation:** As against the voice message on the phone, telex created a documentary record for future use.
7. The sender and recipient need not be present at the machine to receive the message. The sender could prepare the message off-line, using paper tape. It could then be dispatched by the operator and the message would be received in minimum time.
8. **Ease of Billing:** Billing was for the connected duration. So people could save by minimising the connection time.

**Disadvantages:**

1. The hardware and the network system are very expensive and also it requires special phone connections.
2. The very handy, multiple application computer and cellular phones are much cheaper and as the usage has been increasing, they are becoming more affordable.
3. Hence telex has almost disappeared except in third world countries, displaced by fax machines, email and cellular phones.

### 4.3 TELEGRAM

A telegram is a communication sent over a telegraph. Before the widespread use of telephones and the Internet for communication, telegrams were the best way to convey urgent and important information. However, today, telegrams are quite rare in most parts of the world.

Telegraphy involves the transmission of messages through electrical signals. They are entered with a telegraph key on the sender's end of the line. At the receiving end, they are read with a corresponding key, or with the use of headphones which can be worn by the operator. The system used Morse code, which is an alphabet consisting of series of dots and dashes for transmitting messages. Telegrams usually contain short messages, written completely in capitals and they look like they have been written on an old typewriter. The form varies from country to country and also from one office to another within a country. The form generally has the telegram office's logo on it, as well as a date and the address of the sender or recipient.

The sender of the message goes to the telegraph office with the message as they wish it to be transmitted. As the transmission is time consuming, senders tend to make the

message very brief, with heavy usage of abbreviations and skipped words, rather than writing out full messages. Punctuation must also be written down on the telegram form used for sending the message. For instance, at the end of each sentence 'STOP' is written. The telegraph operator transmits the message to the telegraph office closest to the recipient. At the receiving end, the receiving operator writes the message out so that it can be read by the recipient. Many telegram offices offered door step delivery of the message, as the recipient would not be aware that a telegram has been received on his behalf at the office and there was no other means of informing him.

The introduction of telegram as a mode of communication goes back to the 1800s. Originally, telegraphic messages could only be sent over wires. Wireless telegraphy was introduced in 1895, which made communication even easier.

#### **Advantages of Telegram**

1. It was traditionally used to convey very critical messages. It was faster than the ordinary post and so emergency messages could be communicated very quickly to far off places. Historically, telegrams were used for critical information and hence, the arrival of a telegram could signal an emergency. During war time, many militaries used telegrams to notify families of deaths or wounds that happened to those who participated in the combat. Hence the telegraph delivery person was a dreaded figure in wartime.
2. A record of the message was available for future reference.

#### **Disadvantages of Telegram**

1. As the messages are very brief, the recipient in most cases would be unaware of the entire circumstances under which the message was sent. This would be disturbing and confusing for the recipient. For instant if a person received a telegram which just announced that the grandfather was serious, the recipient would not know how to interpret it regarding the condition of the person.
2. Telegraphy was a very crude method of communication, as it used a coded system of alphabets to communicate with each other. It depended on the operator to encode and decode the message.
3. It is more expensive than ordinary post.

In India, the telegram services were offered by the Indian Postal Service. It has now been a part of the services of BSNL. Sending, receiving and delivery of telegram messages are the responsibility of this organisation. But they cannot be called telegrams anymore, as BSNL often sends the messages through courier. This means that the recipient gets the telegram only the next day. The idea of sending a telegram is to hand over an emergency message without delay is totally lost.

Till recently, i.e., till the advent of speed post by the Department of Post with tracking facility, email and also cellular phones with assured connectivity to remotest parts of the country, telegram was the most used mode for conveying critical messages. Yet, this mode still survives in India, though the number of telegrams booked in a day in any telegraph office has dwindled drastically. Generally this service is used more during the Ganesh festival in Maharashtra and also during Pooja festival in W. Bengal etc. It is also used for conveying greetings for marriages, birthdays, congratulatory messages etc. Another reason why this still continues is because business houses and individual

businessmen, both central and state government agencies and banks make use of this mode on a regular basis as these are accepted by the courts as evidence. Especially, for banks, telegrams to inform debtors about their outstanding loans are the only proof that can be accepted in a court of law.

Though the revenue from this is insignificant, the government does not want to close this, as it is considered as a service to the people. However, the rates have gone up. Telegraph services are now being closed in India from the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

With effect from July 15 2013, BSNL will discontinue its 158 year old telegraph services and stop accepting telegrams, as it is not economically feasible any more. With that, curtains will be drawn on the 'always important, but often feared' telegram service, a service, which was started in 1850, and opened for the public in 1855. In spite of the faster modes of communication, such as the telephone and the Internet, telegram remained the most secure and confidential means of sending messages.

#### 4.4 FAX (SHORT FOR FACSIMILE)

Facsimile means an exact copy. As such it is a medium for transmission of text and visual messages over long distances almost instantaneously. **Fax** is also called **telecopying or telefax**. It is the telephonic transmission of scanned printed material (both text and images), normally to the receiving telephone number. The original document is scanned with a **fax machine**, which processes the contents either text or images or both as a single fixed graphic image. It then converts it into a bitmap and then transmits it through the telephone system. The receiving fax machine, which is connected to a printer or any other output device, reconverts the coded image and prints a paper copy.

The practical models of fax machines date back to the 1920s and were initially used by newspapers to send news pictures and weather maps very fast. Newspapers with multiple location editions even composed the newspaper at one location and sent it by fax to the other locations for printing.

Since the fax machine uses separate transmission channels and different technology than other means of transmitting images, they have certain inherent advantages and disadvantages. Even in these days of email with attachments, some organisations still use fax machines for legal documents and when no Internet connection is available.

##### Advantages of Fax Machines

The Internet, and subsequently the e-mail has replaced the fax machine to a great extent. Yet, many corporations and individuals all over the world use this mode of communication effectively. The reasons are:

- Obtaining Hard Copies:** In many instances, a hard copy of a document becomes essential. The email can be used for sending a document as an attachment, but the receiver will still have to print it to obtain a hard copy.
- Speed of Delivery:** Faxes can be sent to recipients all over the world. This method is useful when access to email or file share is not available.
- Data safety:** Data sent by fax is comparatively safer, if it reaches the intended receiver. This can be achieved by informing the receiver ahead that it is being sent. On the other hand, documents sent by email, if not properly encrypted and protected, can be hacked and stolen easily.

4. **Cheaper:** The prices of fax machines have dropped significantly.
5. **Multi-functional machines:** Many models of fax machines can perform a number of functions such as fax, print, scan etc.
6. **Faxes machines are easy to install and operate:** It is easy to setup a fax machine and connect it to a phone line. The operating instructions are clearly mentioned at appropriate places in the machine, thus making its usage very simple. In a business environment, anyone can install a fax machine, but setting up an email alternative with a computer, an Internet connection and access, a scanner etc. usually requires technical help.
7. **Fax machines can be connected to a computer:** This makes it easy for the manager to store the fax messages sent on the computer and also edit them if necessary.
8. **Improves operational efficiency of managers:** With a fax machine, documents can be sent from one building to another or one department to another quickly and without relying on messenger or courier services. Exchange of views and information becomes faster and cheaper. It promotes team building and improves efficiency.
9. **Proof of sending:** Fax machines provide the senders with a receipt after the document has completed the fax process. Hence the user has evidence of having sent the entire document. In an email, the sender may forget to send the attachment or it may not get picked up completely. This results in a lot of back and forth of communication and waste of time. This is particularly useful in industries where rapid receipt of documents along with evidence of dispatch is crucial. The sender can substantiate his claims that he has completed his part of the deal.
10. **Acceptability:** In some countries, electronic signatures on contracts by email are not recognised by law but faxed contracts with copies of signatures are accepted.

The development of scan-and-send technology through email systems (fax messages sent through email) may have reduced the usefulness of fax machines to a certain extent, for the above reasons, they still remain popular means for transferring paper documents from one location to another.

#### Disadvantages

1. **Limited to paper documents:** Fax machines can send only paper documents, while an email can send voice files, video clips, links and high-resolution photographs.
2. **Low speed:** Fax transmission speeds and output quality are very low as compared to email.
3. **Cost ineffective:** For fax machines, even after paying for the telephone service, some of the calls, especially the long distance ones, can cost a lot. This is more so if lengthy documents requiring long transmission time are to be sent to multiple destinations. Since a fax transmission is actually a telephone call, long distance charges can mount up. On the other hand, with the Internet, once the monthly Internet service fees are paid, emails become free. Any number of attachments can be sent to a number of recipients all over the world, without any additional cost.

4. **Technology failure:** Just like all technology, fax machines can fail. Paper jam and other mechanical failures can happen. If a company depends too heavily upon the fax machine and the machine fails to operate, the normal activities of the organisation will suffer.
5. **Security challenges:** The documents transmitted via fax may not be as safe and secure. Information can be stolen from old fax machines or even discarded printing cartridges.
6. **Need a separate space and telephone line.**
7. **Needs power/electricity:** If power supply is intermittent, the organisation will not be able to send or receive fax messages. This however is true for all machines that work on electricity.
8. **Requires paper for receiving and sending faxes.** The earlier versions of fax machines required thermal paper. The print quality on this type of paper was poor and would fade out and so they were not useful as storage of data for a longer period. However, the newer versions work with plain paper.
9. Fax machine have to be kept on always to receive faxes. If the machine is switched off, the faxes are lost.
10. **Storage and archival of these printed copies:** Storage of printed copies of faxes requires a good amount of office space. Again, aging of papers could lead to difficulties in managing records.

The trend has now shifted to online fax service. This eliminates all of the above disadvantages. It is cost effective. It does not require a dedicated phone line and hence full access to this facility is available almost any time. Hence, although businesses usually maintain some kind of fax capability, this mode of data transfer has faced increasing competition from the Internet-based alternatives.

In many large organisations, to reduce cost of printing, stand alone fax machines have been replaced by fax servers and other computerised systems capable of receiving and storing incoming faxes electronically, and then routing them to users on paper or via an email.

However in small organisations and home environments, fax machines are not very much in use. Email and electronic fax have replaced them to a great extent.

#### 4.5 VOICEMAIL

Voice-mail (also known as voicemail, voice message or voice bank), is a computer based telecommunication system. It allows the users and subscribers to:

- Exchange personal voice messages;
- Select and deliver voice information; and
- Process transactions relating to individuals, organisations, products and services, using an ordinary telephone.

The term is used more broadly to denote any system of conveying a stored telecommunication voice message, including using an answering machine. Most cell phone (mobile phone) services offer voice-mail as a basic feature. Many corporate PBX systems include versatile internal voice-messaging services. When the voicemail is set up, a telephone caller will get a voicemail response to an unanswered phone, so that a brief message can be left for information to the recipient.

Voicemail systems began as a replacement for earlier analog answering machines, which had many limitations. As voicemail is in the digital format and provides facility for storage of messages, many new features were added to it over time. Voicemail systems can now be used to route calls and messages to the proper recipient or connect telephones to other technologies, such as email, help desks etc.

**Voicemail Greeting:** A voicemail greeting is a statement of who you are and a brief instruction regarding what the caller should do at the end of the message. It should not be too short and abrupt as it will sound incomplete and rude and so send a negative message to the callers. A long, drawn-out greeting will frustrate them as they are spending too much time getting to know what it is about.

A personal voicemail greeting is informal and creative. It generally reflects the personality of the receiver. For example, the opening can be a 'Hello', 'Hi' or 'Jai Sri Ram' etc. according to the person's choice. During Christmas time, the voicemail greeting can sound like a Santa. Thus it is more personalised.

**Organisational Voicemail:** As against personal voicemail, an organisational voicemail message is very formal. A properly composed voicemail greeting, rendered in a pleasant voice, can leave your callers with a positive image of yourself or your company. In an organisation, the callers are mostly for business purposes and hence would be pressed for time. Hence, as a rule, the message should be limited to 20 – 25 seconds.

The greeting and message should be set up in a very formal and professional manner that conveys who the person is and what the company stands for. Most large companies follow a protocol with respect to these greetings and they are uniform for all the telephones in the organisation.

### **Voicemail Greeting Options for Organisations**

Depending upon the telephone system operating in the organisation, there may be different options that an employee is allowed to compose. These include:

- **General Voicemail Greeting:** The general voicemail greeting is used as the default voicemail greeting if no other greeting type is set.
- **Internal Voicemail Greeting:** This is used to greet callers from within the company.
- **External Voicemail Greeting:** This greeting will be played for outside callers. The telephone system's automated attendant will play the same general company greeting.
- **Temporary or "Out of Office" Voicemail Greeting:** The temporary or out of office voicemail greeting is set for individual employees or for the entire department for a particular period of time. For example, when there is a departmental meeting attended by all the staff members, this voicemail will be activated. Similarly, before or after office hours, or on holidays, such a voicemail can be activated. The voicemail messages can have starting and ending time specified, so that the normal telephone system is turned on automatically.
- **'On the Phone' or 'Busy' Voicemail Greeting:** This greeting is used to inform callers that either individual receiver or all extensions in the department pool are busy with other callers.

## Contents of a Voicemail

- Person's or department name,
- Statement that the receiver cannot take their call,
- Invitation to leave a message,
- When the caller can expect a return call,
- Additional options that are available,
- Website address if it can provide meaningful information.

Voicemail has become a standard part of every business class telephone system and knowing how to leave a professional voicemail phone message will reflect positively upon the company. Every employee that uses the phone as part of their job should know how to leave a professional phone message.

## Advantages of Voicemail

Individuals and businesses have come to rely on telephone voicemail systems to answer their calls if they are unable to do so. In some cases, this is done as a matter of convenience, while in other cases voicemail systems are used as a way to screen out unwanted calls. Thus, Voicemail, like other communications technologies, can either help improve productivity or become a source of inefficiency for a business depending on how it is used. Voicemail offers advantages and disadvantages for both the caller and the party at the other end of the line.

A well-implemented voicemail system will respect the caller's time by providing with an early option to leave a message, rather than wait on hold or be forced to navigate the system through various options.

1. **Practical Features:** Having voice mail available can help make life easier with its many features and settings that one can arrange to fit one's lifestyle. Incoming calls can be redirected to a voice mail inbox if a phone call cannot be attended to at the moment. Easy management of voice mail can be done with various aspects such as unlimited storage for voice messages and easy retrieval of former messages without erasing newer ones. It also allows creation of group lists for ease of sending and forwarding to multiple recipients.
2. **Simplicity and Time:** Having voice mail does not require any additional equipment as compared to using answering machines, which were one of the predecessors to voice mail. It also can save businesses money, allowing them to avoid paying numerous employees to answer phone calls. It also saves time and effort compared to using alternative methods of message communication, such as email and text.
3. **Less Phone Tag:** If the receiving party is unavailable to take the call, he can, by using the voice mail, direct the caller to leave a brief message stating the purpose of his call and a number where he can be reached. This will ensure a return call and reduce *phone tag*, a situation where the callers go back and forth in a vain attempt to reach each other.
4. **Cost Savings:** Voicemail can replace the receptionist and thus, the organisation can manage without this addition to the cost. Rather than having to employ people to answer phone calls, the phone system can instruct the caller to leave a message or it can route the caller to the desired extension.

5. **Can call any time and from anywhere:** The callers can make their calls from anywhere and at any time of the day irrespective of time zones and leave their messages. This is helpful when callers do not necessarily need to speak to each other but just want to exchange information. This gives customers and business partners the assurance that the recipients are always approachable.
6. **Convenience and Accessibility:** For the recipient, the main advantage of voice mail is that it can be accessed anytime, almost anywhere, and at his own convenience. As long as he has access to a touch-tone phone, voice mail messages can be retrieved, replayed and replied to. Aside from this, a single voice message can be sent to numerous recipients, thus saving time and increasing efficiency.
7. **Personal:** Instant messaging and email may be cheap and efficient, but they lack the feel of listening to a human voice when striving to establish strong relationships or business connections. Moreover, voice mail is delivered immediately as compared to email and provides a higher chance of building valuable relationships, especially when business is involved.

Thus as people's life style becomes more and more hectic, technology improves to deliver better modes of communication. Business owners typically benefit, particularly in building excellent means of communication that result in successful business transactions and develop strong relationships with clientele and business partners.

#### Disadvantages of Voicemail

1. **Impersonal:** Voicemail is impersonal, as the caller is dealing with the message service and not a human being. This happens with customers who are dissatisfied with some service issues and is trying to call the company to get redress. This frustration is especially great if the problem is urgent in nature. Companies that use voicemail to take calls need to be sure that the caller receives a prompt return call.
2. **Difficult to Navigate:** Some business voicemail systems are difficult and time-consuming to navigate. Callers must wade through a cumbersome phone tree to get to the proper extension or customer service executive. The service will take the caller through numerous options, calls are put on hold, and by the time the caller gets to talk to someone, it would be almost 30 to 45 minutes. During this period he would be endlessly listening to unwanted information about the company. The process can become even more annoying when the caller finally reaches the right party, only to get a voicemail message saying they are unable to take the call.
3. **Personal Hassle:** Some people leave their voicemail messages unchecked. They may prefer to send and receive text messages. Voice mail requires calling your inbox and entering your password to get the messages.
4. **Business Hassle:** Business voice mail systems can be very frustrating compared to personal voicemail on cell phones. These systems are usually far more complex than personal voice mail systems on cell phones. An automated service or recording guides callers through a menu that requires them to press different buttons on their phone. People may become confused by the options, or the options may not include the voice mail inbox they were trying to reach.

5. **Slow:** If the call receiver has kept the phone on silent or vibrate mode, he will not know that he has received a message. The urgency of a message is lost. This happens when the recipient is in a movie theater. He will have to make a call to get his message and it would not be discreet to do so.
6. **Easily Ignored:** The recipient may ignore a voice mail message, but not a live phone call, text or email.
7. **Copy not available:** Email and text messages provide the sender with a copy that can serve as proof for the sender. Recording of sent voicemail messages is complicated. Hence, recipient can easily deny having received the message if he is purposely ignoring you or trying to get out of a commitment.

## 4.6 TELECONFERENCING

Teleconferencing is conducting group discussions using the telephone. A telephone conference-call operator can arrange this setup among any three or more users. Users do not need any special equipment beyond a standard telephone. Teleconferencing is an inexpensive way to hold a long distance meeting and is often used in businesses, which work from multiple locations or when the employees enjoy the benefit of working from their own homes.

Teleconferencing can bring people together virtually 'under one roof' even though they are separated by hundreds of miles. It was first introduced in the 1960s with AT&T's (American Telephone and Telegraph) Picturephone. At that time, however, it was a novelty and the need for it was not really felt, as travel costs were reasonable and consumers were unwilling to pay the monthly service charge for using the picturephone. But things have changed over the years.

### Advantages of Teleconferencing

1. Compared to email, this is on the spot and most convenient means of exchange of views, data and communication of status and progress reports.
2. Reduces the cost of group meetings, while ensuring close coordination among team members. The saving is by way of traveling costs and the arrangements to be made at the meeting sites. Many companies discourage meetings at bricks and mortar facilities and cut down on them by encouraging them to hold virtual meetings on the phone. They all come together only if a one-on-one meeting is essential.
3. The manager has more time to attend to his day-to-day work, as his travel time is much reduced.
4. Conferences can be scheduled minutes or hours ahead of time instead days or weeks, as traveling time and logistics are not relevant any more. With the help of online teleconferencing services, it is possible for the caller to log in, set the date and time for the conference, and retrieve a phone number and personal identification number, or PIN, to distribute to your call participants almost instantly. Call participants also have a lot of flexibility.
5. Callers can leave and come back to the discussion whenever desired.
6. Communication between the company office and field staffs is maximised. Hence decisions can be taken faster. This is more so when companies operate from different parts of the world and need directions from the company management, or need to communicate urgent messages in an assured manner.

7. It is particularly satisfactory for simple problem solving, information exchange, and procedural tasks.
8. Meetings can be held irrespective of severe climatic situations that may prevent movement of people, as long as telephone connectivity is intact.
9. Meetings on phone tend to be shorter, as the participants would be more prepared. They tend to focus on what they want to communicate and address it immediately.
10. Review meetings and follow-up to earlier meetings can be done more effectively, with relative ease and little expense.
11. Group members participate more equally in well-moderated teleconferences than in an FTF (Face to Face) meeting.
12. Meetings are more flexible as participants can join in whenever it is necessary. This just-in-need participation saves a lot of their time.
13. It enables greater communication and coordination between branches and worksites, and helps key stakeholders to be in touch with each other closely.
14. Even people, including outside guest speakers, who would not normally attend meetings at a distant location can participate.
15. People who are temporarily disabled or have baby or elder care responsibilities can easily continue to work, stay in touch with their team members and contribute in a productive manner.
16. Teleconferencing allows people to participate in regional, national or even worldwide meetings without actually leaving their local office.
17. Teleconferencing can provide proof of who participated in the call. The entire conference can be recorded. So if there are any disputes or questions about the terms of a verbal agreement that was made over the phone, a participant can refer to the recording or transcript of the call. The transcript can be sent to all the participants by email as well. This will help your clients, colleagues and workers to be more efficient.
18. The recording of the entire conference proceedings can be replayed for better understanding. For instance, if the status of a project is being discussed, an employee can replay the call to be clear about his role in the project.

#### **Disadvantages of Teleconferencing**

1. The possibility of technical failure while trying to establish a conference or even during a conference can prove disruptive, especially if the exchange of information is crucial.
2. Complex interpersonal communications, such as negotiations or bargaining require face-to-face meetings so that the entire communication process, including silent communication, can be observed.
3. It is impersonal and hence may not be easy to create an atmosphere of group rapport. In many companies, the group members working from different locations would not have met even once. In many occasions, miscommunications can result. Teleconferencing can only facilitate linking of people, but it does not alter the complexity of group dynamics. The disconnect among the group may increase over time.

4. The participants may not be good at communicating in a group on phone. They may lack such communication skills. They may not be familiar with the equipment, the medium itself, and meeting skills.
5. There may be disturbances due to outside noise.
6. There may be problems with determining the order in which participants would speak and also in motivating the newcomers or the shy people to participate. Hence it can be difficult to moderate such a meeting.
7. It does not foster group relationships. It remains mostly professional, work-related and hence has limitations in fostering mutual understanding.
8. It does not facilitate transfer of visual data.
9. To overcome these problems, companies and participants can take the following measures: Users should carefully evaluate their meeting needs and goals to determine if teleconferencing is appropriate.
10. Users should also assess their audience. For example, consider the size of the group, their level of experience with teleconferencing, and the extent of their familiarity with each other.
11. Companies can evaluate the outcomes of these meetings and try to bridge the gap between teleconferencing and face-to-face meetings by providing opportunities for the employees and other stakeholders to meet in informal gatherings.
12. Where necessary, companies should make arrangements for videoconferencing for transfer of visual data.

Teleconferencing represents a unique alternative to the traditional FTF (Face-to-Face) meeting. Most of the time, it is an appropriate substitute. Every meeting is unique, with different goals, objectives, and purpose. Teleconferencing cannot satisfy the individual needs of each and every type of meeting. Teleconferencing and FTF meetings involve different patterns of interaction and social codes of behaviour. A successful organisation strikes a balance between increased productivity and promoting group rapport.

The other technology options for organising virtual meetings involving visual data transfer are videoconferencing and computer conferencing.

#### 4.7 VIDEOCONFERENCING

Videoconferencing means using computers to provide a video-link between two or more people. This can be a simple two-way personalised web cam based communication or it could be serious discussions and negotiations. Instead of just talking to someone by telephone, the participants are able to see each other and also display visual data, models etc.

The equipment needed for a videoconference are:

- A computer and a web cam at both ends. The cameras come with various features and capabilities. Many of them have sound recognition features that permit them to change their direction automatically to focus on the speaker. They come with various depths and sweeps depending on the size of the room.
- A microphone and speakers. Most computers and webcams have these features.
- Broadband Internet access
- Video conferencing software
- A sound-proof studio for professional videoconferencing.

### Advantages of Videoconferencing

1. **Reduces travel cost:** Managers often have to travel to meet business partners, attend organisational level meetings as also client meetings. Video conferencing delivers face to face communication without the participants leaving their workspace. Due to this, there is substantial reduction in travel costs.
2. **Flexible:** Meetings can be called instantly, world-wide with little notice. Hence, a lot of coordination between branch offices and the company home office can be achieved.
3. **Convenient:** Even those who are physically unable to travel can take part in the meetings. Even under the most severe weather conditions, these meetings can take place provided the power and Internet connections are not disrupted.
4. Those who are reluctant to travel due to various reasons, especially subject experts, can be included in the meetings. Hence, they become more productive.
5. **Improves efficiency:** As the managers reduce the time they spend on travel, they can utilise this free time more productively.
6. **Permits face-to-face interaction:** The possibility of face to face communication and being able to share data at the same time increases productivity. Participants are able to see the facial expressions of each other and respond accordingly.
7. **Sharing of visual data:** Video conferencing solutions allow users to share presentations, data, and other media during a video conference.
8. **Delivers a tangible return on investment:** As it saves time, eliminates travel costs and increases productivity, it enables the organisation to register a significant and measurable return on investment.

### Disadvantages of Videoconferencing

1. It is very expensive compared to teleconferencing and email, as it requires expensive equipment and a sound-proof studio. Technology keeps changing and newer and better versions of cameras and projecting equipment may make equipment obsolete. Maintenance of these equipments is also expensive. Hence, small and medium organisations would not be able to afford them.
2. The audio quality may not be good if the microphone is away from the speaker. This becomes a problem in question-answer sessions. Hence high quality equipment will have to be installed, which would also be expensive.
3. There may be disruptions because of failure of the equipment or break in connectivity.
4. The number of points connected would be limited.
5. The number of participants in a group may also be limited. Hence it is not suited for group meetings.
6. May not be very productive when discussions across the table are necessary.
7. It takes away the personal aspect of a meeting. Since the parties are in their own settings, they would be influenced by them and may fail to understand and respect the stand of the other party effectively and also retain the information.
8. It would be inconvenient for people in different time zones to be in a similar state of preparedness. For instance, the time difference between India and America.

around 12 hours. For a person in India, after a hectic day at work, to respond at around midnight to answer questions raised by people fresh and ready in America may not be easy.

9. For review of confidential documents and signing them, a face-to-face meeting would be essential.

To overcome this, there are many convention centres which offer this facility for specific durations on hourly charges.

## 4.8 INTERNET

The Oxford dictionary definition of the **Internet** is "*an arrangement of connected computers, which lets the computer users all over the globe exchange data.*" It is an entertainment and learning tool that may be utilised in a number of modes to increase the ability of a user to collect and share information. With the passage of time, the Internet has become the most effective business tool in the contemporary world. It can be described as a global meeting place where people from every corner of the world can come simultaneously.

Though research was going on from the 1950s, it was in the early 1980s that the Internet Protocol Suite was standardised and the service was made available initially for research and educational organisations. It was in 1995 that Internet was commercialized. Since then, there has been an exponential growth in the number of 'Net users. It has had a revolutionary impact on culture and commerce, including the rise of near-instant communication by electronic mail (email), instant messaging, Voice over Internet Protocol "phone calls", two-way interactive video calls, and the World Wide Web (WWW) with its discussion fora, blogs, social networking, online shopping sites etc.

The Internet's influence over the global communication situation was almost instant. Whereas in 1993 it communicated only 1% of the information flowing through two-way telecommunication networks, by 2000, it had touched 51% by 2000, and more than 97% by 2007. Today the growth of the Internet is driven by the flow of online information, commerce, entertainment, and social networking.

It is estimated that around 33% of the world population has accessibility to the Internet.

### Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet :

The advantages and disadvantages of the Internet are discussed below according to its application areas:

#### 1. Availability of Knowledge

**Advantages:** Over the last decade, the Internet has become an ocean of knowledge and is ever growing. It has definitions, descriptions and history of almost everything. It has information of almost all important personalities and answer to any and every question that one can think of. There is a huge amount of information available on the internet for just about every subject known to man, ranging from government law and services, trade fairs and conferences, market information, new ideas and technical support.

All this is available not in just text form, but in the form of PP presentations and videos as well. A variety of information sources can be accessed just sitting in front of a

computer and having 'Net connectivity. With this, learning has become interesting and extremely convenient. As the user need not disclose his identity, he can ask the most embarrassing questions and seek answers.

For those who want to share their knowledge, content published on the World Wide Web is immediately available to a global audience of users in more than 190 countries. This makes the World Wide Web a very cost-effective medium to publish information.

The 'search engines' on the Internet can help the users find data on any subject that they need.

**Disadvantages:** People can ask for information whenever they are in doubt. However, the answers may be given by unqualified persons with limited knowledge about the subject. This may be misleading and even confusing if contradictory data are given.

Secondly, just as it is possible to put all this knowledge to good use, some perverse uses are also possible. For instance, there are web sites which give information on how to make bombs. People even learn how to hack websites from the internet.

## 2. Communication

**Advantages:** One of the most important aspects of the Internet is that it makes communication fast, safe, convenient and very economical.

Email is now an essential communication tool in business. It is also excellent for keeping in touch with family and friends. The advantages to email is that it is free (no charge per use) when compared to telephone, fax and postal services.

Centralised financial services, Internet banking, advertisements marketing, online commerce etc. make life much easier for those who have access to the 'Net. Government agencies, universities and educational institutions etc. use this to maintain the information flow. 'Net supports chat and video chat facilities from anywhere in the world to anywhere. This has resulted in a lot of business outsourcing, establishment of multi-location businesses, and ensuring efficiency in their management.

Various announcements can be distributed to millions of users in a timely manner. Because there is virtually no time lag, the Web is an ideal medium to publicise announcements. As more people discover the advantages of the Web and get connected to the Internet, the Web will become the medium of choice for many organisations and individuals to publicise various announcements. For instance, universities can use it for announcing new courses, admission procedures, examination schedule and even results.

**Disadvantages:** In the world of 'Net enabled communication, people are deprived of face-to-face contact with their acquaintances and business partners. Such dependence on the 'Net denies them the opportunity to meet and interact with people of varied interests and develop their personalities as individuals.

## 3. Convenience

**Advantages:** The 'Net permits us to do a lot of work sitting in one place. One can make online, all travel arrangements, shop, pay bills, find jobs and even find life partners etc. This saves people a lot of travel time and cost involved. This could be put to use more effectively elsewhere.

**Disadvantages:** As people spend a lot of time sitting in front of their computers, they are not physically active. Unless they make conscious effort to exercise and maintain, they can develop life style issues like obesity, diabetes etc.

#### 4. Makes the World Smaller

**Advantages:** As data transfer and communication through the 'Net becomes more and more convenient, instantaneous and economical, distances do not matter anymore. Not just files, folders, multimedia messages, and even money can be transferred over long distances. Individuals migrate to other regions and countries for better opportunities. Organisations have developed global footprints. Coordination of work from all the off-shore facilities has become extremely comfortable.

**Disadvantages:** There are many issues with security of data. Virus, malware, spyware etc. can enter the computers through the 'Net and create problems for the users.

#### 5. Social Network

**Advantages:** Networking on the 'Net to form virtual relationships and communities helps people stay connected. They can greet, chat, pass comments, share information and pictures, give opinions etc. They can share their feelings and work like support groups. This gives people a sense of belonging.

**Disadvantages:** People tend to spend a lot of time, which they could use for more productive purposes. Secondly, it can lead to a lot of false relationships leading to depression and even suicidal tendencies. Especially when children get into these networks, they can be exposed to unwanted and unhealthy sites leading them astray.

#### 6. Environment Friendly

**Advantages:** As more and more newspaper, magazines and books are available on electronic format, obtaining them is easy. As all transactions are also in virtual format apart from the publications themselves, it is environment friendly, as paper requires soft wood and printing can add to pollution. Almost all companies have opted for 'green option', according to which, all their communication including their annual reports are on email.

**Disadvantages:** This increases energy consumption and to some extent, offsets the above advantage.

#### 7. Services

**Advantages:** Many services are now provided on the internet such as online banking, job seeking and applications, and hotel reservations. Some of these services are not available off-line or cost more.

#### 8. Commerce

**Advantages:** The internet is a very effective way to buy and sell products all over the world.

**For the business:** The Internet has enabled thousands to work online and earn. They include text creation, web designing, animation, data entry, translation, transcription and other services. Quite a lot of this could be outsourced from other countries.

A business person does not need huge resources to start operating. It is relatively inexpensive to publish information on the Internet compared to the traditional methods. Hence various organisations and individuals can now distribute information to millions of users at one stroke.

They can use the multimedia capabilities of the World Wide Web to make available not only various product specification sheets but also present their catalogues with audio

files, images, and even video clips of the products in action. This allows customers to study the products in as much detail as they desire, compare the prices and arrive at purchase decisions.

In the traditional methods, identifying the target audience, putting together a product catalogue, publishing it and distributing it widely and keeping them updated can be very costly in terms of time and money.

Businesses can also use Web site to provide technical support to users. Various technical support literature can be immediately modified in light of new findings and developments. This can be accomplished without having to distribute changes to all users affected by any changes using the traditional media of information distribution, which are often quite costly and time consuming.

They can create online discussion forums by using applications such as WebBoard.

They can obtain customer feedback as the 'Net is interactive. As the feedback submitted by customers can be read immediately, it's possible to respond to their concerns in a timely manner, increasing customer satisfaction and quality of customer service.

They can easily integrate the Internet information systems used by them with their own internal information systems managed with office productivity applications for maximum efficiency in data analysis, communication and storage.

**For the Consumers:** From the consumer's perspective as well as, as the service is available any time (24/7 as it is said), a provider's business can be accessed at any time and from any time zone. The fact that the Internet is operational at all times makes it the most efficient business machine to date.

The business web site provides all the required information guides the customers right up to payment and delivery options and even product return or replacement procedure. This makes life more convenient, especially for those who have a busy work schedule, the elderly, the disabled etc.

**Disadvantages:** Personal information such as the users' name, address, etc. can be accessed by other people. Credit card details can be stolen, which is like giving someone a blank check.

This encourages spamming, i.e., sending unsolicited e-mails in bulk, which serve no purpose and unnecessarily clog up the entire system.

The only disadvantage in business outsourcing to low wage economies is that it can create unemployment in certain developed countries to that extent and in the receiving countries, such jobs command a slightly higher wage advantage, thus creating an imbalance.

## 9. Entertainment

**Advantages:** This is one area where the Internet is used heavily. This includes movies, songs, games etc. One can download innumerable, games, music, videos, movies, and a host of other entertainment software from the Internet, most of which are free. People can even play with virtual opponents living in some other part of the world.

**Disadvantages:** Children and adults who get used to this will spend a lot of time sitting in one place indoors. They do not get an opportunity to interact with their peers. This can distort their personalities. Secondly, Internet has made piracy of movies and songs easy.

Such illegal activities are frustrating for all Internet users, and so instead of just ignoring it, we should make an effort to try and stop these activities so that using the Internet can become that much safer. That said, the advantages of the Internet far outweigh the disadvantages, and millions of people each day benefit from using the Internet for work and for pleasure.

#### 10. Online Surveys

Traditional methods of performing surveys are often relatively slow and expensive compared as it meant preparing a list of contacts, traveling to meet them or sending them the questionnaires by post, hoping for a reply. Once the data is available, it needs to be analysed to arrive at solutions. The success of such an expensive survey is not always guaranteed. On the other hand online surveys conducted on the Internet are a more viable option. Their responses could be automated and updated into the database. This database can then be used to keep a pulse on various opinions and needs of the customers.

Once the customers sign in, it would be convenient to contact them online to obtain feedback.

#### 11. Data Storage

**Advantages:** The Internet creates virtual storage for a lot of data, including text, music, pictures, videos etc. People can store a lot of their valuable memories in this manner. The advantage is that unlike hard copies or film copies, they do not require physical storage space and are not subject to wear and tear. They can also be stored separately and safely on external hard drives. Even in businesses, government offices, educational institutions, film archives etc., data digitization is being taken up in a massive scale to take advantage of this. It is very easy to retrieve the data stored in this manner.

**Disadvantages:** Secrecy and safety from hackers are the main issues facing these organisations.

### 4.9 COMMUNICATION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media are online interactive groups created using advanced mobile and web-based technologies. These groups have introduced substantial changes in the way organisations, communities and individuals communicate among themselves.

The advent of the Internet has paved the way for many interesting ways in which people use its networking capability to keep in touch with each other and exchange information. The members in these groups create, share, and exchange user generated content such as information and ideas. They thus form virtual communities and networks. People of all ages and educational levels sign up to these groups.

Social media technologies include blogs, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music sharing, crowdsourcing and voiceoverIP etc. They function in many different forms such as magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. In effect, it can be described as a blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value. Social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter provide a constant source of alternative news for the users.

For e-commerce, social media has provided an open space where people are free to exchange ideas on companies, brands and products. This enriches the knowledge companies have about customer expectations and reactions.

When social media is used in combination with mobile devices it is called mobile social media.

### Key Principles of Social Media

1. Social media is about building relationships. It is not just a broadcast channel.
2. The dialogue should be based on Authenticity and Honesty.
3. It not only provides an opportunity for an individual or a company to hear others' opinion about them but also gives them an opportunity to respond. Thus, it is a two-way interactive communication, which helps people to learn and improve.
4. Thus, social media is about being informed, staying relevant and remaining engaged with the audience. That is how the participants can benefit from this media.

### Importance of Social Media Communication :

1. **Brings people together:** Social media facilitates open communication. This enhances knowledge base by facilitating information discovery and sharing. The participants can meet their friends and find new people from all over the world. It allows people from different geographical location to find people with common interests, express and share their views. They can discuss a single issue or promote global ideas or products. This is very relevant for promoting global products or issue based campaigns.
2. Social networking sites are used by individuals for their personal networking. They upload their views and also their latest pictures and try to get likes and comments. By using social network sites they make their own circles. They can track long lost friends and can make a connection with them, which would be impossible otherwise.
3. **Breadth of knowledge:** People develop a broader perspective as they are exposed to a variety of view points on a number of issues. For students, it is a very useful tool for broadening their horizon, as they get to know the happenings in various fields across the globe. Social media provides tools to help students to work together to create their own meaning to various issues in different work environments and social contexts.
4. **Technological literacy:** All social media relies on advanced information and communication technologies. This encourages people to develop technological literacy and stay connected and become a valuable contributor.
5. **Opportunity to widen business:** It allows employees to discuss and share ideas, ask questions, post news and share links. It minimises the use of the traditional media of advertising and improves business reputation. It helps build and develop a more competent and reliable business.
6. **Very beneficial for e-commerce:** Social media can attract attention to the business site, products or services. It helps in developing loyalties and strong relationships with the audience and the consumers.

It provides great opportunity to interact with the public and communicate about their products and services. They are less expensive compared to traditional ad media like films and television. The quality of the presentations is excellent. Through blog posts, it is possible to reach large audiences at minimum costs. They can create long term relationships with customers by offering loyalty programmes and rewards etc. They get useful feedbacks.

7. It is useful for social mobilisation, as communication is done more privately than in real life and the response time is very short. Words spread on social media sites very fast. For instance, the Egyptian revolution in 2011 got momentum because people used Facebook to gather meetings, protest actions etc. Similarly, during the many people's movements in India during the last couple of years, FB had a big role to play in gathering people at meetings in many parts of the country. NGOs, activists and even political parties have twitter accounts and blogs to stay connected.

#### **Advantages**

1. Communication process is instant. People can communicate in real time, unlike postal service, email or even the telephone.
2. It can be in any format, such as text, voice, pictures and video.
3. Excellent quality of data transfer.
4. It can be initiated at any time from the convenience of home or office.
5. Immediacy – Content can be posted very easily and immediate response can be obtained.
6. Reach: People can stay connected irrespective of which part of the world they are. For e-commerce, both industrial and social media technologies provide scale and are capable of reaching a global audience. However, in the case of industrial media like films and TV, typically, all activities like organisation, production and dissemination are centralised, whereas in social media, they are more flexible, decentralized, less hierarchical, easy to introduce, withdraw, modify etc.
7. It is accessible to anyone, individuals and organisations to publish or access information. As against this, press, film and TV is one way communication. The means of production for these media are typically owned by government or corporate sector. On the other hand, social media tools are available to the public as well at little or no cost.
8. Usability: To prepare content on traditional media requires time, specialised skill and training. On the other hand, most social media production requires only modest skills. In fact, anyone with a computer and 'Net access can acquire social media production skills.
9. Content development on social media is relatively inexpensive whereas, print, films and TV advertisements require significant time and resources to publish information as in most cases the content goes through many revisions before being published.
10. As it is free except for the Internet charges, there is no limit to the number of times in a day that they access it.

- 11. Permanence:** Content in industrial media like press, TV and films, once created, cannot be altered. For instance, once an article is published in print media, it cannot be changed. On the other hand, content on social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing. The parties to the communication can maintain record of all their incoming and outgoing messages.
- 12. As it is open for anybody without any restrictions, it has made the Internet more democratic in nature.**

#### Criticism:

1. Users tend to get hooked to it and so do not find time to interact with others. They tend to get isolated from the society. Their health will suffer if they do not exercise.
2. When children get access, they get unlimited exposure to alcohol, tobacco and sexual abuse. As they lack maturity, they fail to differentiate between good content and the harmful ones. They would tend to consider it 'cool' to indulge in these habits.
3. The service is exclusive, in the sense that it is not possible to import information from one site to another.
4. Reliability and credibility of information posted on these sites may be questionable.
5. As it is very personal in nature and there is no monitoring of the communication process, it has given rise to unhealthy tendencies like cyber bullying.
6. A wrong online brand strategy could put the business at a viral disadvantage and may even damage its reputation. An offline mistake does not spread as fast as a mistake made in front of hundreds or thousands of the online audience.
7. Social media can have a negative influence on worker productivity. Employees may waste valuable time at work using social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

#### 4.10 E-MAILS

**E-Mail (Meaning):** Electronic Mail (E-Mail) is more than just inter-personal messaging. Most of the companies are taking advantage of E-mail 'applications to enhance the way they do business.

- Electronic mail (e-mail) is of value on both the corporate and the personal spheres. It's cheaper and faster than posting a letter and less intrusive than a phone call (no time zone problems) with none. One need not invest in expensive hardware/dedicated links - all one requires is a PC, a modern a telephone line to make E-mail operational in the office.
- E-mail is the method of communicating electronically with other users in the network. Various commercial e-mail servers support internet mails.
- Electronic mail is a simple tool for sending and receiving brief text messages between individual or among a larger audience.
- E-mail is the most widely used application on the Internet.

**Advantages of E-Mail :**

- (a) **Saving of Time** : The speedy transmission of the message leads to saving of time.
- (b) **Reduced Cost** : It also reduces the cost of postage by using file transfer facilities of E-mail to send graphics, any financial data to the branches.
- (c) **Accuracy** : The message does not get tampered by anybody if sent by e-mail, so accuracy is maintained.
- (d) **Speed** : E-mail is very fast mean of communication. It has got tremendous speed. Sitting in India, if we E-mailed the message to the person sitting in America, it will reach him within minutes.
- (e) **File Transfers** : Apart from text, we can send sounds, images, graphics even we can send computer software through E-mail. This is called file transfer.

**Disadvantages of E-Mail :**

- (a) If you want to E-mail somebody, that recipient should have his / her E-mail account.
- (b) You cannot send any physical things like file, floppy or books.

**Points To Remember**

- **Telex**: It is a dial-up network of teleprinters for the transmissions and delivery of the printed messages between subscribers.
- **Telegram**: It is a communication sent over a telegraph. This method has now closed down in India.
- **Fax (facsimile)**: It means an exact copy. It is a medium for transmission of text and visual messages over long distances almost instantaneously.
- **Voicemail**: It is a computer based communication system. It allows users to exchange personal voice messages.
- **Teleconferencing**: It is conducting group discussions using the telephones.
- **Videoconferencing**: It means using computers to provide a video link between two or more people.
- **Social medias**: Social media are online interactive groups created using advanced mobile and web-based technologies.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of voicemail.
2. How do dictation machines help in business communication?
3. What care should a manager take while using videoconferencing? What are its advantages?
4. What is the significance of social media in business communication?
5. How can a manager use the Internet for effective business communication?
6. Write short notes on:
  - (a) Fax, (b) Social media, (c) Teleconference, (d) Internet

## Previous Pune University Questions

**B.B.A.**

**October 2011**

1. Write a short note on Teleconference.

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.6 of this chapter.

**October 2012**

1. Write short notes on:

(a) Fax

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.4 of this chapter.

(b) Teleconferencing

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.6 of this chapter.

**B.C.A.**

**October 2011**

1. Write short notes on:

(a) Internet

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.8 of this chapter.

(b) Videoconferencing

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.7 of this chapter.

**October 2012**

1. Write short notes on:

(a) Internet

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.8 of this chapter.

(b) Videoconferencing

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.7 of this chapter.

**April 2013**

1. Write short notes on:

(a) Fax

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.4 of this chapter.

(b) Videoconferencing

**Ans.** Refer Article 4.7 of this chapter.

# **APPENDIX**

## **SOFT SKILLS**

The students of today have to pay attention to their hard skills and also soft skills that qualify their personality and enhance job opportunities.

Hard skills are their core competencies acquired in their chosen fields like science, mathematics, engineering, commerce, humanities, art etc. They are tangible and evaluated and certified by universities or other institutes. They are essential to perform their assigned roles in their job situations.

However, hard skills are by themselves not entirely adequate for effective functioning of individual employees and teams. This is more so in the service-oriented economy where people from various parts of the country and the globe have to pool their knowledge and talent together to work as cohesive groups. Team work, group cohesion, personal conduct in various situations etc. are gaining huge relevance. It should be noted that no individual can sit in isolation and perform all his activities in an organization. Interaction with other stakeholders within and outside is important. In a highly competitive global environment, individuals have to accept responsibilities and deliver under various pressures. Hence, employers today look for more than their academic achievements. Recruiters and human resource teams judge applicants according to many personality traits and communication skills while hiring or in the promotion process. All these skills together make up what is termed as soft skills.

### **History:**

Quite surprisingly, the history of the term soft skills can be traced to the US army. Way back in 1968 the U.S. Army officially introduced a training doctrine known as "Systems Engineering of Training" that covered "job related skills involving actions affecting primarily people and paper, e.g., inspecting troops, supervising office personnel, conducting studies, preparing maintenance reports, preparing efficiency reports, designing bridge structures." The US Army training manual of 1972 identified the formal usage of the term "soft skills". The tentative definition given was "Soft skills are important job-related skills that involve little or no interaction with machines and whose application on the job is quite generalized." Subsequently, psychologists and industrial trainers have discussed this subject extensively.

Today soft skills are a major differentiator between applicants for jobs to determine their employability. According to a study by Harvard University, 80% of an employee's achievements are determined by soft skills, his attitude, group skills and trainability. They complement hard skills in a big way. This shows the importance of how a person conducts himself in the organization as compared to how much he knows. It is not surprising that in many organisations, recruiters spend a lot of time with the applicants and interns to pick up high achievers.

### **Concept:**

Soft skills are generally described as the individual's personal attributes that enable him/her to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people in the organization and outside. The dictionary meaning of soft skills is the "desirable qualities for certain

forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge; they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude." Experts believe that in order to improve employability, soft skills training should start even when the children are in school, so that the traits are ingrained in them as they progress and enter the job market.

### **Soft Skills Explained:**

Soft skills are referred to as professional skills and are personality-driven and are more to do with the general nature and disposition of an individual. The term is also referred to as transferable skills as they are not specialized or rooted in any specific vocation or professional skill.

Soft skills is a combination of a number of productive qualities of an individual that determine his relationships in the organization and the society. They can be grouped under three functional aspects, such as personal career perception and qualities, people skills, and social skills. These can be elaborated as:

1. Employers look for pleasant and friendly persons, with a lot of common sense and good humour, warmth and patience. Such people can defuse any stressful situation and conduct business in a very cordial manner. **Personal disposition and inter-personal skills** thus is a very important ingredient for the success of a manager.
2. Employees have to take pride in their job and in the organization they work for and strive to maintain the credibility of the organization in the market without any conflict of interests. They should be honest, have high morals, have deeply ingrained personal values. They should do what is right, both within the organization and in personal life. With it comes dignity and stature. Without deep-rooted **work ethics**, such as honesty and integrity, employees cannot bond and work for the good of the group they work in and the organization they are associated with. This is an individual trait and becomes evident in the demeanor of the individuals. Once employed, they should have a proper understanding of the organization, its mission and vision and its standing in the market and with the public. They should know what is expected of them and what the organization offers as perquisites and benefits, the rules and regulations of the organization etc., and should work closely with their superiors and the human resources personnel in this respect. In short, it is commitment to the job, team and the organization. Many organisations conduct detailed induction programmes to orient their new recruits.
3. Employees have to develop a **positive and flexible attitude** towards their entire work and life situations. An employee with a lot of self-motivation, optimism, enthusiasm and pleasant disposition can create a positive environment. A perpetual negative stance at all stages would isolate the employee and hamper teamwork and progress. A disgruntled employee with negative feelings can destroy the work environment whereas a positive attitude helps in building good teamwork and promote a problem-solving environment.
4. Employers look for **adaptability**, willingness to change according to the situation, and ability to absorb new learning and training. As the economy and

industry norms change, the employees should be able to see the change and accept it, and should be able to adjust to it and move forward.

5. **Good communication skills** are the hallmark of a successful business manager. He has to be comfortable in written, oral and non-verbal communication and use these skills to build effective relationships all around. He should be aware of the principles of communication and adopt techniques that enhance his communicating abilities. Able communicators have the ability to adjust their tone and style according to the situation, comprehend instructions properly to act on them efficiently. They are able to explain complex issues to seniors, colleagues and subordinates and clients. They should be able to delegate jobs clearly and effectively. Good leadership demands effective communication skills.
6. A successful business manager knows the importance of his own time and that of others. **Time management skills** mean that he is prompt, punctual and plans his work and his communication with others. His presentations are accurate with facts and figures, so that there is no unnecessary back and forth communication. His meetings are well planned. His instructions to his juniors are precise and clear.
7. Working in an organization would require strong **problem-solving skills**. It is more about the mindset. The manager should know what it takes to address a critical situation. Today technological developments taking place all around make work environments extremely disruptive. With that, expectations from customers can change very swiftly and competition can emerge locally and globally. There could be problems due to attrition of good, competent employees. Emergency situations can emerge from any area. It is not possible to list out the problems that may face a business manager. He has to have the personal strength, be creative, develop a flexible attitude and be able to coordinate with others to deal with such situations.
8. **Leadership qualities and Negotiating skills** are integral for the success of an individual in the organization. The employee should be clear in his thoughts and expression and confident enough to convince the others. In fact, this can be considered as the core skill which draws from all types of personal and social skills.
9. As has been highlighted earlier, employees in organisations work in teams. A good **team worker** is courteous, caring, patient, cooperative and capable of building relationships. He works for the success of the agreed common goal of the team. He is observant, and is sensitive to people and their feelings. He should encourage a good performance by others and be tactful in pointing out deficiencies in the performance of his colleagues and subordinates. No matter what the differences are, he should not lose his cool. He should be able to turn arguments into constructive discussions for arriving at well-informed decisions.
10. An effective business manager is a picture of **self-confidence** in all his dealings. For this, he updates his knowledge base in his core domain, understands the requirements and offers convincing solutions. He has to be **emphatic and abrasive**. Being decisive does not mean being reckless in

decision making or being arrogant that whatever he says should be accepted by all. He should develop the ability to put things in the right perspective. He has to weigh all options, listen to people in the team, assess all relevant information and anticipate the consequences, good and bad. He has to give clear and thoughtful consideration to all impediments that may crop up.

11. He will have to **work under pressure** if called upon. The pressures may be many, and from various directions, internal or external. It may be deadlines or unexpected disruptions. For this, he requires to have tremendous **conflict solving capabilities**.
12. The employee should be **professional** to the core, in knowledge, demeanor and outfit. An employee in a shabby outfit can hardly get any positive response. An appropriately dressed and groomed person with a happy face and movements will have immediate positive response. He will have won half the battle at that point. The rest will depend on his overall presentation skills.
13. While working in an organization, a business manager will have to deal with all types of people, some supportive and some not so. He will have to **face both appreciation and criticism**. Criticism is not easy to accept, especially if it is not fair. He has to develop the ability to accept it with grace and learn from it. That is a very sure way of learning and improving his performance and gaining strength.
14. The employee should be willing to **take responsibility and be accountable** for what he says and does. His supervisor should be able to rely on him and his ability to get the job done. That means that he should be aware of his own strengths and weaknesses, know when or when not to take on any responsibility, and be resourceful to garner for all help. Once he has accepted a responsibility or a challenge, he has to be prepared to work hard to complete the given task.

### **Need for Soft Skills:**

From the above discussion, it is clear that soft skills differentiate between an ideal employee from an adequately qualified one. In most organisations that compete in the market, the recruitment criteria do not stop at technical qualifications and competence. On the other hand, they look for people with leadership qualities and that is, people with pleasant personality and key soft skills. For example, a sales person may have all the technical information about the product and knowledge about the market. He might have done extensive marketing research and arrived at very logical conclusions. But if he cannot close the deal, all that will be of little use. To add to and retain client base, a sales person in such a situation would succeed if he had the personal charisma and the ability to convince the other person effectively. Soft skills are useful even when trying to convince internal stakeholders. For instance, a business manager who wants to convince the management about a new project or expansion of his team will have to put together all the facts and also approach the seniors and gain their confidence.

Soft skills are about how a manager works with people and hard skills are useful when he works in isolation, that is when he is studying the facts and parameters of a project or is studying the financial statements of the organization. The moment he emerges from isolation and seeks clarifications or has to implement something, he has to

work with others. A workplace is one where people constantly interact with others for various reasons. To create a productive and healthy work environment, the management depends to a great extent on the soft skills of its employees. Relationships have to be built and encouraged such that there is exchange of views and any occasional conflicts have to be resolved.

Managers should remember that the objective of the management is not to criticize or fail an employee, but to build effective teams.

Many soft skills training programmes are available for students. Many companies organize such training programmes through workshops, camps, even music and art classes, nature trails, adventure camps etc. These help managers learn how to work in teams, ask for help or guidance if required, and thus bond as effective teams. The managements may also use them to identify those who can be targeted for promotions.

Students should take every opportunity to hone these skills and point them out in the CV as appropriately and subtly as possible, giving examples of their experiences in group situations like while working on projects or during internship. It is easy to show hard skills, but in this important area, they should take guidance from experts.



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