



BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF SECRETARY

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INTRODUCTION:

The term ‘communication’ is derived from the Latin term ‘communis’ that means ‘common’. Whatever is common is shared by all.

George R. Terry defines “Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons”.

9.1 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

□ MEANING:

Business communication is the branch of general communication which is especially concerned with business activities. When communication takes place among business entities concerning business affairs or business related issues it is known as business communication.

□ DEFINITION:

Brennar defines “Business communication is the expression channeling, receiving and interchanging of ideas in commerce and industry”.

9.2 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION:

No organization can function satisfactorily or achieve its goals without effective communication that happens both internally and externally.

A INTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

Internal communication refers to the communication that takes place internally between various departments of an organization.

Internal communication is important because it supports the managerial functions.

B. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

External communication refers to the communication that takes place between business organizations and outsiders like banks, suppliers, creditors, Government, etc.

External communication connects an enterprise to the outside environment.

9.3 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION:

Methods of communication refer to the path, through which the message passes from one person to the other. Communication can be either verbal (oral), non-verbal and written.

A VERBAL (ORAL) COMMUNICATION:

In the process of communication, conveying a message in spoken form is known as verbal or oral communication. Oral communication takes place in different ways such as personal talks, interviews, speeches and talking on telephone etc.

B NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

Man does not communicate through words alone or only through writing, speaking and listening. There is another aspect of communication, that is, the non-verbal aspect. Non-verbal communication is defined as communication that involves neither written nor spoken words. Non-verbal communication takes place in different ways such as body language, facial expression, eye contact, silence, symbols, signs, gestures etc.

C WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

When exchange of information or ideas is in a written form rather than by spoken words, it is known as written communication. Written communication includes reports, letters, circulars etc. The choice of words should be made carefully in written communication and the words should be such as to convey a specific meaning and not confuse the reader with multiple meanings. As far as possible messages should be in short sentences so that the receiver has no difficulty in finding the true meaning of the message.

There are many situations when written communication is used. Many types of documents are prepared for official work. The layout for each document is decided by custom. Letters, memos, notices, circulars, reports, minutes are some of the common types of communication.

9.4 MERITS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

i) Accurate and precise:

Written communication is usually drafted with great care. Since written communication is open to verification and its authenticity can be easily challenged, the communicator has to be accurate and factual. Therefore, in written communication, there is an insistence on greater accuracy and precision.

ii) Re-read many times:

The receiver of a written communication can go over the message at any time again in the future. He can re-read till he thinks he has properly understood it.

iii) Permanent record:

Written communication becomes a permanent record of the organization and can prove very useful for future reference.

iv) Documentary evidence:

Written communication is acceptable as a legal document and as legal evidence also.

v) Wide access:

Written communication is the best channel of communication for conveying information to persons living at different places.

vi) No need for personal contact:

It is not necessary for both parties to be available at the time of communication. It is because under this form of communication, messages can be sent to the concerned person which can be read when the receiver gets spare time.

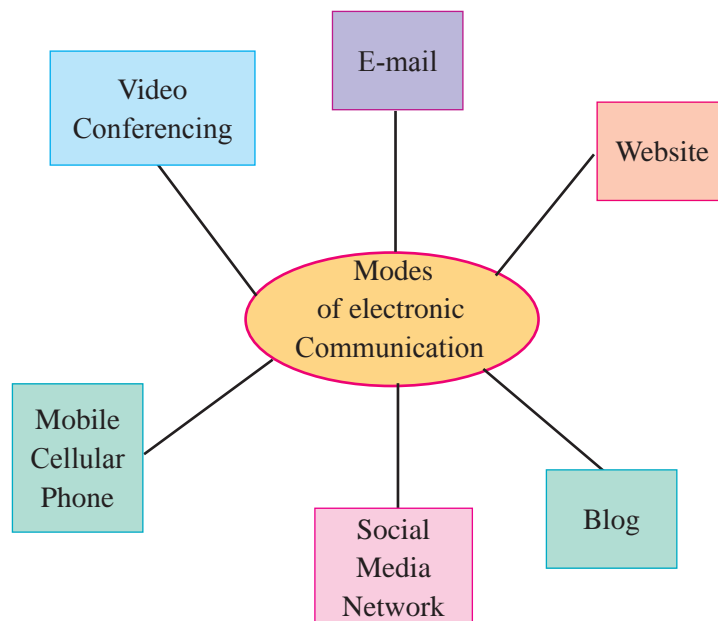
vii) Completeness:

Written messages are prepared with perfect knowledge of the things concerning the matter. So there is completeness in the message.

viii) Economical:

If the receiver of the message is at a far away place, then this method is economical as postal and courier charges are quite nominal. Now a days e-mail are more popular method of written communication.

9.5 MODES OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:



i) E-Mail:

E-mail is an electronic mail means sending messages using electronic devices through internet. It is possible to send electronic files through e-mail in the form of words, tables, pictures, graphs, sounds, videos and so on.

ii) Websites:

Website is a set of interconnected web pages located on a single web domain. These pages contain the information provided by owner of the website, which can be a person, a group or an organization. It is accessible through the internet or a private local area network. Each website has a unique internet address known as a 'Uniform Resource Locator (URL)'. Each website address starts with 'www'. (world wide web).

iii) Blog:

A business blog (b-blog) is a website for publishing, informal online articles that are either included in a company's internal communication system or posted on the internet for the public to read.

A business blog may also be referred to as a corporate blog or corporate web blog.

iv) Social media network:

Social media are online interactive groups created using advanced mobile and web-based technologies.

There are various social networking platforms that allow their users to exchange ideas or information.

From the business point of view it provides great opportunity to interact with the public and communicate about their products and services. It helps in developing loyalties and strong relationship with the audience and the consumers. There are different types of social media like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube etc. which are very popular these days.

v) Mobile / cellular phone:

Since past few years the usage of mobile phones has increased. Companies find it as yet another medium to advertise their product by call or by using a short message service (SMS) to reach the customers.

vi) Video conferencing:

Video conferencing means using computers to provide a video link between two or more people. This can be simple two-way personalized web-cam based communication. The participants are able to see and hear each other and also display visual data, models etc.

9.6 ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

Being able to communicate effectively is an essential skill. Whether it is in one's business life or personal relationship, effective communication is the key to our success.

i) Listening:

One of the most important aspect of effective communication is being a good listener. Effective communication requires active listening. Active listening involves hearing and understanding what a person is saying to you. Unless you understand clearly what a person is telling you, you cannot respond appropriately.

ii) Body language:

Body language is an important communication tool. Body language should help convey words. Other factors to be considered are things like the tone and pitch of voice, hand gestures and ensuring eye contact.

iii) Clear and concise:

Message should be conveyed by using as few words as possible, whether in person or via telephone or email. Message should be clear, concise and direct. Avoid using excessive words. Before speaking, give some thought to the message to be conveyed. This will prevent causing any confusion.

iv) Personable:

When communicating face to face with someone, use friendly tone and ask personal questions. This helps in creating a personal touch.

v) Confident:

For effective communication confidence is needed. Making eye contact, using a firm but friendly tone, are ways of showing confidence.

vi) Empathy:

Empathy is a skill of being able to understand and share the feelings of another person. Empathy can be shown with the use of appropriate words or action.

vii) Give and receive feedback:

Giving and receiving appropriate feedback is an essential communication skill. Feedback helps in improving the performance.

9.7 ROLE OF SECRETARY IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION:

It is the secretary who has to communicate under various circumstances with the Directors, officers, employees, outsiders, authorities etc. Secretary has to handle correspondence, draft notices, reports, minutes, etc.

9.7.1 BUSINESS LETTERS:

- **Meaning:**

The business letter is a type of written communication written by a Secretary. Good letter writing is important for maintaining the image of the business.

- **Definition:**

Robert Shurter defines business correspondence as - “business correspondence is a message that attempts to influence its recipient to make some action or attitude, desired by the sender”.

Thus, business letters are written with the objective of not only understanding the contents but also to take appropriate action or decision.

❑ Layout of a business letter:

Layout means proper arrangement of various parts of a letter. Layout of the business letter is also called the structural design of letter. It is an internal arrangement of matter in a proper way for creating good impression on reader.

LAYOUT OF BUSINESS LETTER

1) HEADING

NAME AND ADDRESS OF COMPANY

.....
.....
.....

CIN.

Telephone:

Email:

Fax:

Website :

3) Reference No.

2) Date:

4) Inside Address

To,
.....
.....
.....

5) Subject:

6) Salutation

7) BODY OF LETTER

A	INTRODUCTION
B	MAIN PARAGRAPH
C	CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

8) Complimentary Close

9) Signature

10) Enclosure

11) CC.:

- Letter writing is an art. The format of the letter should be visually appealing and correct. In present time different alignments are used. e.g. left alignment, right alignment.

a) **Layout contains the following parts -**

1) **Heading:**

Heading contains the name, address, telephone number, fax number, e - mail Id, website, CIN of the company etc. It is that part of business letter which introduces the sender to the receiver. Usually printed letter heads are used.

E.g. TATA MOTORS LTD.

17C, S.B. ROAD, MIDC

PUNE-411015

CIN - L28920MH1945PLC004520

Telephone- (022) 4756823 FAX-(022)4756824 E-mail-tatamotors@gmail.com
website-www.tatamotors.com

2) **Date:**

Date is written on the right hand side of the letter just below the heading. Date includes date, month and year on which letter is typed. Letters without date are incomplete. Date is very important as letter acts as a legal evidence.

Date is written in different ways:

E.g. British style - 1st April, 2019

American style - April 1st, 2019

3) **Reference Number:**

It is written on left hand side below the heading. Reference number is given to have quick reference to the matter concerned. Reference number is a number or word used by the letter writer. Every outgoing letter is given reference number.

E.g. 91/p/2019

91 - Serial no. of letter,

p- Purchase department, 2019- year.

4) **Inside address:**

It contains name and address of the receiver of the letter. It is written on the left hand side of the letter. For personal names Mr, Shri, Mrs, or Smt are used and for firms 'Messer' is used.

E.g. 1) Mrs. Pallavee Pathare
18 'A' Ganesh Complex,
M.G. Road,
Ratnagiri 415612

2) M/s Jagannath Trading Company,
Market Yard,
Sangli - 416436

5) **Subject:**

It is written in brief as 'Sub'. It shows the purpose of the letter. The Reader gets the idea of matter of the letter without reading the letter completely. It helps to send it to concerned section or department and quick filing is possible. Sometimes reference line is also written to give reference of advertisement, document etc.

E.g. Sub - Opening a Current Account

6) **Salutation:**

Salutation is a greeting from the writer to the reader. It creates favourable impression on the reader's mind. It appears on the left hand margin below the inside address.

E.g. Dear Sir/Madam

Or Respected Sir/Madam

7) **Body of the letter:**

It is the most important part of the business letter. It contains actual message for receiver of the letter. The message should be divided in paragraphs.

First Paragraph

It introduces the subject or matter. It should be brief but effective. It should create interest in the mind of the reader to go through the contents of the letter.

Main paragraph

It contains the main message of the letter. It is the heart of the letter. Simple language, clarity and correctness should be reflected in the message. Brevity is the soul of a letter.

Closing paragraph

It is the concluding paragraph. It should be written carefully so that the desired action be taken by the receiver of the letter.

8) **Complimentary close:**

This is concluding part of the letter. It is written below the body of letter on right hand side. It shows polite end of the letter. It should match the salutation.

E.g. Yours faithfully,

9) **Signature:**

It is a final part of the letter. The authorized person signs below the complimentary close. A letter without signature is incomplete and invalid. Below the signature, the name of the person and his or her designation is written. The person who signs, is responsible for the matter written in the letter.

E.g.

Sign

.....

Name -

(Designation)

10) **Enclosure:**

It includes documents, cheques etc. which are attached with the letter. It is shown by the word 'Encl' which is written on left hand side. If documents are more than one it should be numbered and attached serially. It helps the receiver to check the documents.

E.g.

Encl: 1) Copy of board resolution

2) Specimen signature of two directors

11) The Carbon Copy Notation (C.C.)

If the copy of the letter is to be sent to the other person at the same time, it is shown by two alphabets "C.C.". It is written below enclosures on the left hand side.

Additional information:

Some letters may also have the following additional information.

a) Postscript:

It is additional information written after the letter is completed. As far as possible postscript should be avoided. It creates bad impression on the receiver. If post script is used it should be initialed by the persons signing the letter.

b) The Identification Initials:

Initials of the Dictator and typist of the letter appear on the left bottom side of the letter. It helps to identify the dictator and typist of the particular letter on any later date.

b) ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER:

Good business letter is that which conveys maximum information in minimum words clearly and correctly. A business letter should possess following qualities to call it a good business letter :-

i) Clarity

Clarity is the soul of business letter. The message of the letter must be clear. Simple and common words are to be used. Technical, double meaning words and short forms should be avoided. The names and figures are important parts of letter. So they should be correct and clear.

ii) Conciseness

Letter should be in brief. Minimum words are to be used. Unnecessary and irrelevant information should be avoided. A brief letter saves the time of the reader and proves more effective.

iii) Completeness

A letter must give complete information to the reader. The letter should cover all possible facts and figures pertaining to the subject matter of the letter. An incomplete letter does not achieve the desired results.

iv) Courtesy

Courtesy means language of the letter must be polite and kind. A courteous letter gets a favourable response from the reader. Harsh, rude words, insulting remarks etc. should be avoided.

v) Correctness:

A business letter should be correct regarding information or message. Any mistake in figures or facts will create problem. There should not be any grammatical or spelling mistake.

vi) Coherence:

A letter should be written in a logical sequence. The message should be divided into different paragraphs. All paragraphs should be arranged logically or connected to each other.

vii) Consideration:

This is also called as use of 'You attitude'. The letter should be written from the reader's point of view. The writer should give due importance and consideration to the reader and consider the problems of the reader. The reader has to be motivated to act after reading the contents of the letter.

viii) Cheerfulness:

A business letter should be cheerful. A cheerful letter is positive and it shows a spirit of helpfulness. The letter writer should avoid negative words and sentences.

c) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE BUSINESS LETTER:

A business letter represents the organization. So it should be attractive. Now-a-days business letters are normally sent by E-mails. Therefore some points like paper quality, size, folding, envelope doesn't matter. But when letter is sent in physical form following points are to be kept in mind.

i) Paper:

The paper used for letter writing should be of a superior quality. The size of the paper should not be too large or too small. Generally white paper of A - 4 size is used.

ii) Typing :

Now-a-days handwritten letters are rarely used. Letters are usually computer printed. Typing should be done carefully without any mistakes. A printed letter is attractive and it creates a good impression.

iii) Margin:

Proper margin should be left on both sides of the paper. Margins give an attractive look to the letter. The usual margin is 1.5" on both sides and at top and at the bottom.

iv) Spacing :

Sufficient space should be provided between words, lines and between paragraphs. Spacing should be uniform. Spacing makes reading the letter easier.

v) Letterhead :

Letterhead includes name and address of the sender. Letterhead should be attractive and decent, as it creates first impression on the reader.

vi) Folding:

Letter is to be folded before inserting into an envelope. Minimum foldings should be made. The receiver should feel convenient to open folds. Too many folds spoil the contents of the letter. Generally two or three folds are made.

vii) Envelope:

Size of the envelope should not be very big or too small. Complete address of the receiver should be typed on the envelope. It should be the same as the inside address. Generally window envelopes are used. If a window envelope is used, the letter should be folded in such a way that the inside address appears below the window.

9.7.2.NOTICE:

Notice gives precise information regarding an important event that is about to take place. With the help of the notice, information is conveyed publicly for others to know and follow.

According to Companies Act 2013, Notice is an advance intimation given by company informing the persons who are supposed to attend the meeting the day, date, time, place and business to be transacted at the meeting.

Secretary has to be particular about contents, agenda, period of notice, mode of delivery etc.

Secretary has to for certain reasons arrange for publishing public notice in the news papers e.g. Notice of Annual General Meeting, notice about shifting office of the company etc.

9.7.3.REPORTS:

A report is an organized statement of facts or opinion leading to some conclusions with or without some recommendations. It is a systematic presentation of facts, figures, conclusions about specific event or topic. A report may be prepared by an individual or by a committee.

Some reports are to be prepared as per the provisions of the Companies Act. e.g. Annual report. Some reports are to be prepared by the company as per the requirement of the company. e.g. report on possible site for setting up new branch.

Secretary must have skill of drafting reports. Secretary should be acquainted with contents and format of different types of reports.

9.7.4.MINUTES:

Minutes is defined as “written summary of the business transacted at the meeting”. It is a concise and accurate official record of the discussions and decisions at company meetings. It can be used for future reference. As Minutes is official record of meeting, it is necessary to draft minutes in proper format. Day, date, time, place, type of meeting, chairman of meeting, details about Directors/Members present are recorded. All resolutions must be recorded in the minutes.

As per the Companies Act minutes for different class of meetings should be prepared by the secretary within 15 days of a meeting.

Minutes are prepared by secretary, confirmed by members or directors, signed by a Chairman and counter signed by a secretary. It is always written in past tense and written in the minutes book.



Activity : How can a company use Twitter and Blogs to reach out to the outsiders.

SUMMARY

Communication- is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.

Business communication- is the expression channeling, receiving and interchanging of idea in commerce and industry.

❑ **Types of communication:**

- i) Internal communication
- ii) External communication

❑ **Methods of communication:**

- i) Verbal / Oral communication- process of conveying a message in spoken form.
- ii) Non-verbal Communication- process of communication by using body language, facial expressions, eye contact, silence, signs, symbols etc.
- iii) Written Communication- is an exchange of opinion, information or ideas in written form.

❑ **Modes of Electronic Communication**

- i) E-mail- is fastest mode of communication.
- ii) Website- is a set of interconnected web pages located on a single web domain.
- iii) Blog- it is also referred to as corporate blog or corporate web blog. It is a website for publishing articles or information online.
- iv) Social media network - Online interactive platform for exchange of ideas or information. e.g. Twitter, YouTube, Facebook etc.
 - a) Twitter- micro blogging website.
 - b) Facebook- popular social networking site.
 - c) YouTube-video sharing website.
- v) Mobile cellular phone.
- vi) Video conferencing.

Business letters : is a message that attempts to influence its recipient to take some action or attitude desired by the sender.

Notice : is an advance intimation given by company informing the day, date, time, place of the meeting and business to be transacted at the meeting.

Report : is usually an answer to question or a demand from some other person for information.

Minutes : is a written summary of the business transacted at the meeting.



EXERCISE

Q.1 A. Select the correct answer from the options given below and rewrite the statements.

- 1) Business communication is concerned with activities.
a) economic b) business c) social
- 2) Written communication is a record.
a) permanent b) temporary c) unauthorised
- 3) E-mail is mode of communication.
a) fastest b) slowest c) costliest
- 4) A unique internet address of website is known as.....
a) World Wide Web b) Uniform Resource Locator c) . com
- 5) is an organised statement of facts.
a) Report b) Notice c) Heading
- 6) There should be proper between words, lines and between paragraphs.
a) margin b) typing c) spacing
- 7) refers to use of minimum words.
a) Courtesy b) Conciseness c) Correctness
- 8) A letter without is invalid.
a) You attitude b) signature c) clarity

B. Match the pairs:

Group 'A'		Group 'B'	
a)	Twitter	1)	Hearing and understanding
b)	Consideration	2)	Personable
c)	Active listening	3)	Harsh, rude words
d)	Body language	4)	Social Media
e)	Courtesy	5)	Non-verbal communication
		6)	Blog
		7)	'You' attitude
		8)	Empathy
		9)	SMS
		10)	Politeness

C. Write a word or a term or a phrase which can substitute each of the following statements.

- 1) Process of communication, conveying a message in spoken form.
- 2) A set of interconnected web pages located on a single web domain.
- 3) Part of a business letter which introduces the sender to the receiver.

- 4) Written summary of the business transacted at the meeting.
- 5) Part of a letter which contains the name and address of the sender.
- 6) Audio-Visual means of electronic communication.

D. State whether the following statements are True or False.

- 1) Notice is a written summary of business transacted at a meeting.
- 2) Written communication provides permanent record.
- 3) Active listening is essential for effective communication.
- 4) Inside address gives the name and address of the sender.
- 5) A letter without date is incomplete and invalid.
- 6) Reference number shows the purpose of the letter.
- 7) Coherence refers to logical arrangement of contents of a letter.
- 8) A letter should have minimum folds.

E) Find the odd one.

- 1) Paper, Margin, typing, courtesy.
- 2) Clarity, courtesy, spacing, correctness
- 3) Date, Inside Address, Conciseness, Subject.

F) Complete the sentences.

- 1) When communication is done through Reports, Letters, Circulars etc it is called as
- 2) Proper arrangement of different parts of business letter is called as
- 3) The part of letter which contains the name and address of the receiver of the letter is called as

G) Select the correct option from the bracket.

Group 'A'	Group 'B'
1) You Attitude	-----
2) Conciseness	-----
3) -----	Complete information
4) -----	Polite language

(Minimum words, Completeness, Courtesy, Consideration)

H) Answer in one sentence.

- 1) Name the type of communication in which words are not used.
- 2) Name the type of communication in which communication is done in spoken form.
- 3) Name the type of communication which can be re read.

I) Correct the underlined word and rewrite the following sentences.

- 1) Consideration means the letter should be in logical sequence.
- 2) Completeness means use of minimum words.
- 3) Complimentary close contains greetings to the reader of the letter.

J) Arrange in proper order.

- 1) a) Heading
b) Complimentary close
c) Subject
- 2) a) Enclosure
b) Body of letter
c) Date

Q.2 Explain the following terms/concepts.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Communication | 2) Business communication |
| 3) Written Communication | 4) Business correspondence |
| 5) Report | 6) Minutes |

Q.3 Study the following case/situation and express your opinion.

- 1) Mr. Rahul is the secretary who has been asked by the Managing Director to inform a director about a decision taken in a board meeting in which he was absent.

Which aspect of essentials of a good business letter he follows:

- a) When he is giving the required information in a very short and brief manner
- b) When he is using courteous words so as to be polite
- c) When he is giving the entire information about the meeting in a proper manner
(Clarity, conciseness, coherence, courtesy, completeness, correctness)

Q. 4 Answer in brief.

- 1) Explain any four essentials of effective communication.
- 2) State any four essentials of a good business letter.

Q.5 Justify the following statements.

- 1) Written communication is very useful to the organization.
- 2) Social media network is very useful to the business.
- 3) Listening is the most important aspect of effective communication.

Q.6 Answer the following questions.

- 1) State the merits of written communication.
- 2) Explain different parts of a business letter.

