Module 12 – Soft Skills

Developing written, verbal, non-verbal, and technical communication skills

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Effective Communication

Definition:
Effective communication is the ability to convey information to another person or group clearly, accurately, and efficiently, ensuring that the message is understood as intended.

Key Features of Effective Communication:

- **Clarity:** The message should be easy to understand, free from jargon or ambiguity.

- **Conciseness:** Avoid unnecessary words or details; focus on the core message.

- **Active Listening:** Listening with full attention to understand the speaker's message.

Effective Communication

- **Feedback Mechanism:** Encouraging questions, clarifications, or responses to ensure understanding.

- **Appropriate Tone and Style:** Choosing words and tone that suit the audience and context.

- **Non-verbal Cues:** Maintaining appropriate body language, eye contact, gestures, and posture.

- **Empathy and Respect:** Understanding the emotional tone and showing respect to the receiver.

- **Importance:**
  Effective communication reduces misunderstandings, builds relationships, improves teamwork, and enhances productivity in both academic and workplace settings.

Communication Skills & Call Handling Skills

Overview:

In customer service and professional settings, especially in BPOs or front-desk roles, communication often occurs over the phone. Hence, mastering call handling is essential.

Call Handling Best Practices:

- **Professional Greeting:** Begin with a polite, standardized greeting and introduce yourself.

- **Understanding the Query:** Listen actively to understand the purpose of the call.

- **Tone of Voice:** Maintain a calm, friendly, and professional tone throughout the conversation.

Communication Skills & Call Handling Skills

- **Handling Difficult Situations:** Deal with complaints empathetically, remain calm, and offer solutions.

- **Note-Taking:** Record important details during the call for future reference or action.

- **Closure and Follow-Up:** End the call positively and ensure follow-up if required.

Example Phrase:

"Thank you for calling. My name is Riya. How may I assist you today?"

Listening Skills

Types of Listening:

- **Passive Listening:** Hearing without reacting or processing the message.

- **Active Listening:** Engaging fully with the speaker by nodding, paraphrasing, and asking questions.

- **Critical Listening:** Evaluating the message to form judgments and opinions.

- **Empathetic Listening:** Understanding the speaker's feelings and emotions.

- **Discriminative Listening:** Identifying differences in tone, sound, and cues.

Listening Skills

Tips for Effective Listening:

- Maintain eye contact (in face-to-face conversations)

- Don't interrupt the speaker

- Use gestures to show attentiveness (nodding, facial expressions)

- Summarize or paraphrase to confirm understanding

Academic Listening

Academic listening involves focusing on educational content such as lectures, presentations, or announcements.

Listening to Lectures:

- Identify main themes and supporting arguments

- Take structured notes

- Recognize verbal signals (e.g., "firstly," "in conclusion")

Listening to Talks and Presentations:

- Follow the logical flow (introduction, body, conclusion)

- Capture key facts, dates, and examples

Academic Listening

Listening to Announcements:

- Be alert to important information such as changes in schedule or deadlines

- Pay attention to names, dates, and instructions

Techniques:

- Practice note-taking using symbols and abbreviations

- Anticipate topics and prepare mentally

- Revisit audio recordings (if permitted) for better comprehension

Corporate Culture

Definition:
Corporate culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, customs, and behaviors that determine how a company's employees and management interact.

Components:

- **Values and Ethics:** What the organization stands for (e.g., integrity, innovation)

- **Workplace Etiquette:** Dress code, communication protocols, meeting behaviors

- **Hierarchy and Structure:** Understanding reporting lines and formal channels

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Being respectful of diversity in multicultural workplaces

Corporate Culture

Why It Matters:

- Adapting to the company culture boosts team performance

- Enhances job satisfaction and employee retention

- Helps new employees integrate smoothly

Behavioral Skills

Definition:
Behavioral skills are soft interpersonal traits that determine how effectively individuals interact, work, and perform in a team or organization.

Important Behavioral Skills:

- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Working well with others towards a common goal

- **Problem Solving:** Thinking critically to find solutions

- **Time Management:** Prioritizing tasks and meeting deadlines

- **Emotional Intelligence:** Managing emotions and understanding others

- **Adaptability:** Being open to change and new ideas

Behavioral Skills

- **Conflict Resolution:** Handling disagreements maturely and constructively

- **Leadership:** Taking initiative and inspiring others

- **Real-World Impact:**
Employers often value behavioral skills as much as technical qualifications because they directly affect productivity, morale, and work environment.

Vocabulary Development

Why Vocabulary Matters:
A rich vocabulary enhances your ability to express thoughts clearly, improves reading comprehension, and supports academic and professional writing.

Strategies to Build Vocabulary:

- **Read Regularly:** Books, articles, and newspapers introduce you to new words.

- **Use Flashcards or Apps:** Tools like Anki and Quizlet can help with memorization.

- **Learn Root Words:** Understanding Latin or Greek roots helps guess meanings.

- **Use New Words Actively:** Practice in writing and speaking.

- **Keep a Vocabulary Journal:** Record new words, meanings, usage examples, and synonyms.

Pronunciation

Importance of Pronunciation:
Clear pronunciation makes communication effective and prevents misunderstandings.

Techniques to Improve:

- **Practice Phonetics:** Understand vowel and consonant sounds

- **Minimal Pairs:** Practice similar-sounding words (e.g., "ship" vs. "sheep")

- **Record Yourself:** Compare with native pronunciation

- **Use Online Tools:** Forvo, YouGlish, Google Translate's voice feature

- **Work on Intonation and Stress:** Correct rhythm and emphasis can change meanings

Reading Skills

Types of Reading Techniques:

- **Skimming:** Reading quickly to understand the gist

- **Scanning:** Looking for specific information (e.g., dates, names)

- **Intensive Reading:** Reading for full comprehension and detail

- **Extensive Reading:** Reading longer texts for fluency and enjoyment

Tips:

- Preview the content before reading

- Ask questions before and during reading

Reading Skills

- Identify the main idea and supporting points

- Highlight or underline key concepts

- Practice summarizing paragraphs

Listening and Speaking

Integrated Communication Skills:

- **Conversational Fluency:** Being able to sustain a conversation naturally

- **Public Speaking:** Expressing ideas clearly to an audience

- **Group Discussions:** Listening, contributing, and respecting diverse opinions

- **Role-Playing:** Practicing workplace or social interactions

- **Debates and Extempore:** Helps build confidence and spontaneity

Tips:

- Engage in English conversations daily

- Watch and mimic English news anchors or TED speakers

- Participate in language clubs and discussion forums

Writing Skills

Key Writing Competencies:

- **Structured Writing:** Paragraphs should have a clear topic and logical flow

- **Formal vs Informal Writing:** Use appropriate language based on context

- **Professional Writing:** Includes email writing, memos, and reports

- **Grammar and Syntax:** Ensure correct usage of tenses, punctuation, and sentence formation

Writing Skills

- **Proofreading:** Check for spelling, grammar, and coherence before submitting

- **Impact Writing:** Use powerful vocabulary and concise structure to convey your message

Common Formats:

- Resume and Cover Letters

- Reports and Proposals

- Emails and Notices

- Social Media Posts (for branding or promotion)

Conclusion: The Importance of Soft Skills

- In today's competitive world, **technical knowledge alone is not enough**. Employers look for individuals who can **communicate effectively, adapt to change, solve problems, and collaborate with others**. Mastering soft skills not only improves employability but also ensures **personal and professional success**.

- By practicing the skills covered in this module communication, listening, vocabulary, pronunciation, and behavioral traits you build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and workplace excellence.

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Thank You