

Soft Skills
Dr. Binod Mishra
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture - 03
Effective Communication Skills

In the previous modules, you have learnt about Soft Skills and its importance in life as well as in business. You have also come to know that communication skills is one of the main ingredients of soft skills. In the modules that follow we are going to discuss how communication skills can be effective.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:51)



Communication Skills

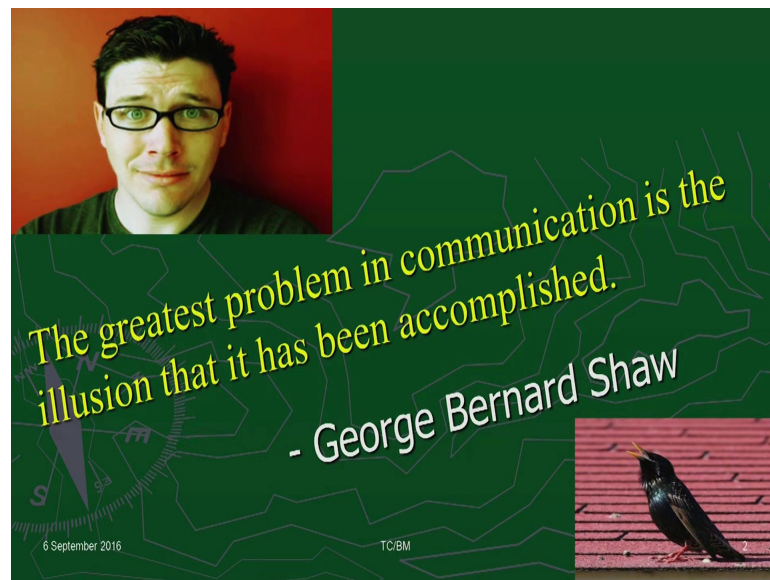
- Effective communication skills play a vital role in life as well as in business.
- To communicate is to express an idea, desire, or expectations

IIT ROORKEE | NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE | 3

As you all know, communication skills are vital both in life as well as in business.

But most of the time when we communicate, we often have an impression that we have been able to do well with communication and our messages has gone across.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:17)



But then what Bernard Shaw, a famous playwright says about communication is that ‘the greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished’. Dear friends when we talk about communication skills, all we need is whether the message that has been sent by the sender, been received properly or not.

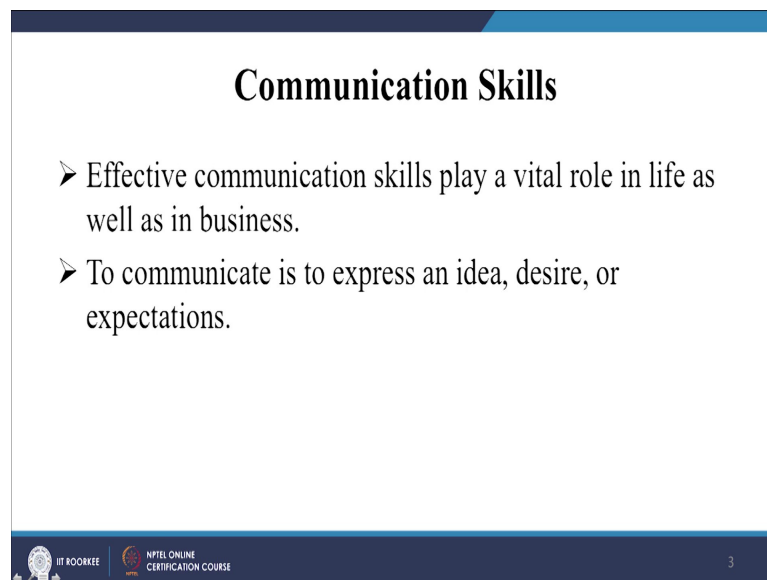
When we talk about effectiveness in terms of communication, let us try to understand how communication skills can be effective and useful. Communication skills are vital as I said earlier in every stage of life. It helps humans build relationships and business organizations also establish relationship through effective communication skills. To communicate, then, means to express an idea, desire or expectations. Communication is a Latin word and the word means, the Latin word is communicators or communicare which means to share. To share some information idea, experience or certain facts.

When we communicate, we communicate some experience. Say for example, we can communicate through different ways, though communication can be considered effective only when it had met its desired goal. The goal of every communication is to convey some information, to convey some meaning. We can always say that there is no moment when there is no communication at all.

So, to communicate is to express an idea, desire, or satisfaction. We can have different sorts of ideas, we can also have different sorts of information. We can also have different sorts of expectations. Say for example, you may sometimes be happy and sad, sometimes

be bold, sometimes be frightened, sometimes be dejected all these are some sort of experiences. And these experiences you are going to convey through one way or the other. It is true that you may not use always words, but then, you can always express these through some non-words as we have said earlier.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:17)



Communication Skills

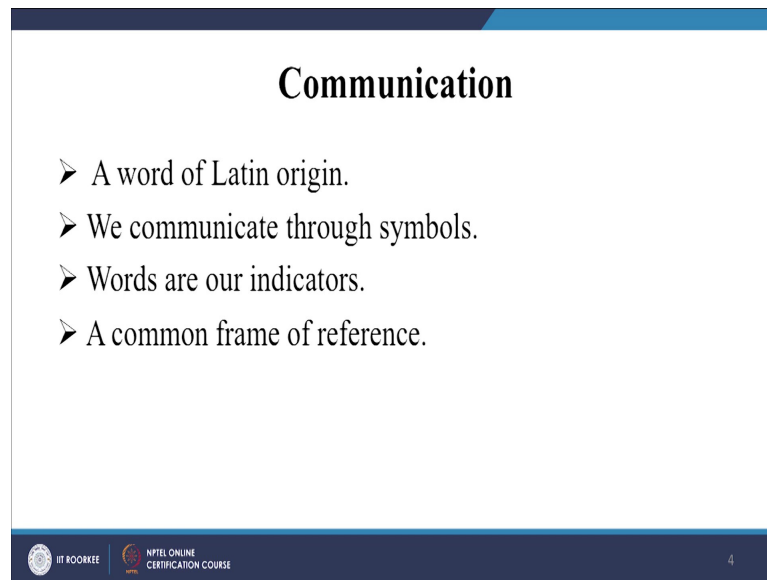
- Effective communication skills play a vital role in life as well as in business.
- To communicate is to express an idea, desire, or expectations.

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 3

Now, both men as well as animals communicate. Even a child communicates--- child also expresses a desire when the child is hungry the child cries. It is only the mother who knows what the child cries for. But there are times when the child may cry continuously and mother may not know. In certain cases, we have to consult a doctor and the doctor alone, after having a sort of symbols or having a sort of some nuances, having a sort of some activities of the action that the child displays can say that that the child is ill. We, as humans, communicate through words. Words are our indicators; we can communicate through symbols as well.



But then since we have words, human communication becomes complex at times, intricate at times.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:29)



Communication

- A word of Latin origin.
- We communicate through symbols.
- Words are our indicators.
- A common frame of reference.

 IIT ROORKEE  NPTEL ONLINE
CERTIFICATION COURSE 4

Say for example. You have read a very beautiful book or you have watched a very interesting movie. You are so thrilled that you want to share it and you decide to share it with one of your friends. While you are sharing it, you can find whether your friend is co-operating with you or not. You can see this either in terms of his reply through some sounds or sometimes through some words, but in the real impression that you gather is the reaction that is there on his face. And finally, you come to know that this communication or the information that you wanted to share has been successful.

Now, why did you choose your friend? Because your friend had the same sort of experience, had the same age and had the same knowledge, because for any effective communication success can be ensured based on the age, experience, tastes, likes and dislikes of our listener. Thus, in any communication there has to be a common frame of reference. It is this common frame of reference that can make a communication successful as well as effective. Thus, we can say---- communication is a process.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:59)

Communication as Process

- ✓ Sender has an idea.
- ✓ Sender encodes idea in message.
- ✓ Message travels over channel.
- ✓ Receiver decodes message.
- ✓ Feedback travels to sender.

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 5

All of us, while we are communicating we have certain roles sometimes you communicate as a sender or a source. When you are a sender you have an idea, you have an experience, you have a desire, you have some factual information.

So, as a sender what you do is, you actually try to formulate that idea. And for formulating that idea, what you do is you encode that idea in a message, but then before doing that you have to think about the background of the person or the destination, to which this idea will be received, may be the receiver. So, in every communication process, there is a sender and a receiver. So, the sender ideates the message and then he decides a channel also.

Nowadays, the channels are numerous, numberless and depending upon variety of opportunities and variety of need, you will select a channel that is most relevant to the passage of that message. So, when the message is transmitted through a channel, the message goes to the receiver. Of course, at times there may be because of certain impediments in the channel, because of certain obstruction the message that is received by the receiver may change or a may not be in the same state or because you also select some language or vocabulary. the nature of your communication may at times be easy or difficult.

So, when the message is received by the receiver, the receiver decodes the message. And finally, the sender who is waiting on the other side, he is actually waiting for the

feedback and it is only the feedback that can tell that communication process is complete. At times it so happens that you start the process and you are waiting for the completion of the process. Most of the times, when you send a message you are under the impression that it might have been received well.

But, on numerous occasions you do not get any response, but that does not mean the communication process is not complete, perhaps there might have been certain obstruction in the process and that is why the response has not come it would be better to understand it through a model.

So, when a sender sends a message sender has some sort of perception some sort of idea and it is the sender's responsibility. The sender---- he selects the channel, he selects the language, he selects the message, he formulates the message and then through the channel, he sends it to the receiver.

Now, it is for the receiver to extract the message. In order that the message be successful or the communication process be successful, what is of utmost importance is the co-operation between the sender and the receiver and this cooperation is based upon the background and also upon the experience. Say for example, when you are formulating a message your first task is to think for whom the message is being formulated. Say if you are trying to send a message to a Tamil knowing person, and you select a language that is Bengali, naturally there will be obstruction in the communication process.

At times, you send the message without knowing the background and then there is a failure. So, in order to have the message complete and not to have the communication process complete the language that you select has to be very carefully orchestrated or very carefully organized.

Moreover, when you are sharing an idea, sometimes you may have a perception and perceptions vary. Your perception may not be the same as that of the receiver. Most of us are under the impression that the way you react to your message, the same reaction may be from the receiver's side, but then the way you have selected the message depending upon your knowledge and the background information of the receiver, there might be some problems in the communication process.

So, we can say that the perception of one may not be the perception of others also. Sometimes, it is the environment that also works wonders. When you are sending a message you see to it that the environment is suitably decided. Say for example, you are trying to send a message through telephone and that also for a marketplace, naturally the noise will make an interference and the receiver on the other side will not be able to understand the message well.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:04)

Contd.

- ✓ Suitable environment
- ✓ Co-operation between two parties
- ✓ Medium
 - Oral and Written

There is no moment when we do not communicate.

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 8

Likewise, you can at times find when you are talking either to your friend or to some relative or to somebody else, you might often find that he might not be responding to you in the proper manner, even though he is listening. but then he may appear to be lost, in such a case the information that you pass on may not be effective. Moreover, it is the medium that also matters---- which medium you have chosen. Say for example, nowadays in a deluge of mediums, most of the people think email is the easiest, the fastest and the best medium. And he decides that he should send an email to one of his teachers who taught him and that specifically on the Teacher's day. Because your teacher had some day given you an email id, you send a message, but it is days and days, sometimes weeks that you do not get any response. One day you decide, you should try some other medium and you just give him a call and you find out that the message which you sent earlier, was not received because your teacher did not have an accessibility to email.

So, hence while you are sending a message, you have to be very particular about deciding the medium. Sometimes, you may also decide to send your message orally or sometimes to write your message. Say for example, if you are writing a message to somebody who is not well qualified and you have organized your message in a very complex way, the messages might not be interpreted properly.

So, you should always think that there is no moment as I said when we are not communicating. Hence, when we are sending messages, we have to ensure the background of the receiver as well as the environment because the environment plays a vital role in communication.

Now, on most of the occasions while you decide the medium of your communication; you are also to see that when you formulate the message, before formulating the message you have ensured the background of your receiver. So, see to it that while you are formulating, the message is clear and it is clarity that is very important. So, if the message is clear, naturally, it would be extracted well by the receiver.

Next to that, when you decide the channel as I said you decide a channel in which the receiver might be very much interested or the receiver might be accustomed to, otherwise the communication so desired and so carefully planned may receive a failure. And then, the language even if as I said you cannot send a message in Marathi to a Tamil or in Tamil to a Marathi or vice versa.

Because, the words that you use may not be understood by the other party. Sometimes it so happens even when there is a common frame of reference. Even when there is a homophily, I mean the common experiences the words that you use might not be of the other parties understanding. Hence, when you are selecting the language even though the language is English and the person to whom you are sending the message is also eloquent in English, the word that you have chosen, if the word is difficult, naturally people will not appreciate because nobody sits every now and then with a thesaurus or a dictionary.

So, while selecting words you have to be very particular. Hence, while using words choosing words, you have to be particular. Be clear, use a language that is to be understood by both the people. And then also see that the message that you are transmitting, either through written or through oral has to be complete.

When I say complete, what I mean is sometimes when people speak orally, what they do is they speak half sentence. Of course, the receiver, for receiver unless and until he is accustomed to or acquainted with the context, he may not be able to. Sometimes it poses a great difficulty when it is a written communication, because in oral communication you may seek clarification, but in written it is not possible. Hence, while choosing your messages, while formulating your message, see to it that the idea, the message the experience the fact that you have transmitted is complete.

Moreover, also see to it that in order to make it clear, do not be too long, do not use sentences which are too longer, you know conciseness is the hallmark of communication. Be concise, use small sentences, but be specific. That is what is the intention of an effective communication. Again, you have also to see that correctness also plays a vital role in any communication. Say you are writing in English and your sentences are ungrammatical that also shows your background. Moreover, the reaction from the other side may not be that favourable.

In addition to this, you also need to see that you have employed a sort of courtesy in your communication. Of course, we have to communicate at different levels with different people, sometimes at higher positions, people sometimes elder in age. So, in such situations it is always better to use courtesy. Have consideration for your receivers because you know, sometimes you may be very rigid and you may not be in a position to use a word that may exactly denote or that may exactly express the desired meaning in such a situation unless and until you are courteous. Being courteous means you also should have a sympathy for your receiver in order to make communication effective it is of paramount significance that the receivers background and knowledge has to be taken into consideration.

Here it is also of utmost importance that these 7 Cs which one author quotes, have to be taken into consideration, while we are going to communicate effectively. These are Candidness. By candidness I mean when you are communicating most of the time you will find some people say this is my honest opinion, what I frankly say is. You see integrity and fairness these are very important when you are communicating. We are living in an age where a single word or a single utterance may at times create problem.

The problems become more because as all of you who are listening to this lecture in some way or the other are aiming at becoming either professional. Or if you are a professional you are trying to excel in terms of your capability. Now you are working in an organization or you are going to work in an organization. Organizational communication as you will, all admit, is totally different from the communications that we make which we can call casual.

For example, it is always better to understand the difference here between a general-purpose communication and organizational communication. The general-purpose communication is between your friends, your relatives where you do not have much control over words sometimes, you become very casual. Sometimes you use words which may be of different connotation and there may be some sort of explanation also your friend may say, but when you are using and using communication in organization, you have to be very specific. Because organizations today are the platform where people of different tastes, faiths, religions, beliefs, likes, dislikes they gather.

And there are various positions also. You never know which word of yours or which utterance of yours is going to create a sort of bad impression and moreover it also creates a bad blood at times. Because you are working in an organization as a team, all the employees of the organization even though their roles are different, but all of them are working for a specific purpose and when the purpose becomes specific, we have to see that you do not speak something that goes against some belief or against some faith, In organizations as in teams we always say that you should always think of the collective responsibility.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:03)

Communication in Organizations

- ❖ Variety of individuals having various roles to play
- ❖ Work as a team
- ❖ Specific goal

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 10

Now, it is a paramount importance here to understand what sort of communication takes place in an organization. Communication in the organization, of course, is the same as between humans, but then you will see that there are people at different positions and organizational communication can be both internal as well as external. When it is an internal communication, it is within the organization and with employees. Say for example, you are actually working as I said for a specific goal and for that you need to communicate and when you communicate, sometimes you may use formal channels, sometimes you may also use informal channels. You will find that most of the organizations--- they have some intra communication. Communication within and there sometimes you may go, at times it so happens that people can go to each other and seek clarifications or seek the opinions.

But there are some formal communication situations where you call a meeting, where you are talking about a program, where you are also talking about some company policies and all. But these are all internal communication. But remember when you are having an internal communication, you also need to see that you can bifurcate, though at times it may not be because there may be an overlapping.

But then the communication that flows internally, may be upward. For example, a new policy has been announced and a new measure has been taken. There has been a salary hike, there has been a DA hike. So, communication flow in an organization, in terms of

internal ones are either upward, downward or horizontal. We may also say that communication flow in such a situation can either be vertical or it can be horizontal. But sometimes it can be across the department also. Sometimes it can also be diagonal. People sometimes people of the same status, people at the same post may also talk to each other and also are discuss certain plans and policies but then what is of danger nowadays in organization is some sort of informal communication. Dear friends! Formal communications are often to the point and specific. Hence employees often look for an informal channel which we can call Grapevine.

Now, such a communication most of the time, you will find unauthentic pieces of news coming through grapevine. Sometimes, though most of the times it may not be negative because you know many managers, many executives they often make extra effort and go miles to see that they can gather some information through the grapevine which they can use for their specific words, but very intelligently. But then, grapevine often becomes a rumour mill and on majority of occasions the information that you take from grapevine may be in adequate also sometimes people also misquote, there also may be a forewarning to the management through grapevine, but then we cannot say that the grapevine is always negative.

Then, we have a sort of external communication. An external communication is to establish and create a relationship with clients, customers, government agencies and then public also. Because-- suppose you are going to launch a new product, you are to promote that product. So, for that you can also use external communication through external communication, you are actually making the customers aware you are making the outside world aware what your organization is doing.

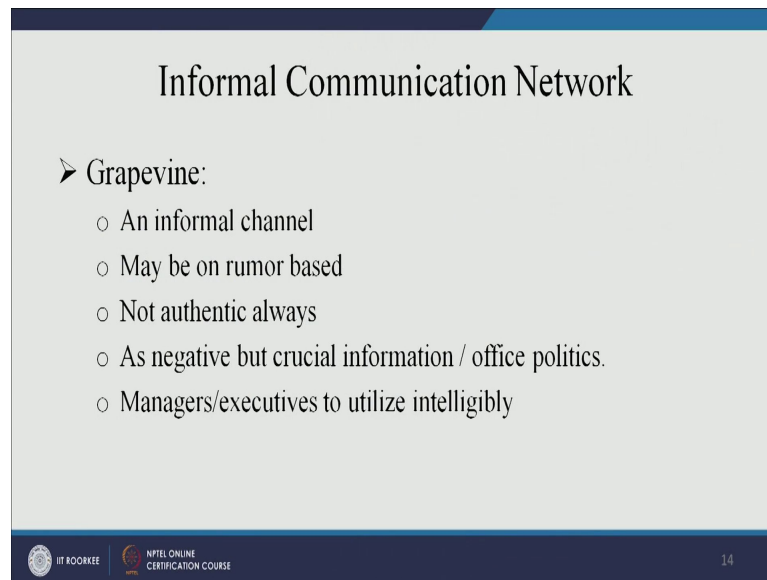
And sometimes, also through your website, people may come to know about your products, people may also come to know about your policies, people may also come to know about the new majors that your organization is going to take but remember that while you are doing that you should always be careful that you are going to promote a positive image of your organization.

You will find,at times, employees may be disgruntled, they may be dissatisfied, but remember when you are in an organization you actually become a representative and you are symbolizing that organization hence you should try your level best to promote a

creative image a positive image so that the outside world may have a proper reputation of the organization that you are working in.

As we have said please try to keep yourself away from grapevine, you can be a part of it.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:03)



The slide is titled "Informal Communication Network". It features a bulleted list under the heading "➤ Grapevine:". The list includes five points: "An informal channel", "May be on rumor based", "Not authentic always", "As negative but crucial information / office politics.", and "Managers/executives to utilize intelligibly". At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for "IIT ROORKEE" and "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE", along with the slide number "14".

Informal Communication Network

➤ Grapevine:

- An informal channel
- May be on rumor based
- Not authentic always
- As negative but crucial information / office politics.
- Managers/executives to utilize intelligibly

IIT ROORKEE NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE 14

Because this in many organizations is considered as a relaxation period, as a relaxation time. But sometimes when the grapevine becomes very strong, there appears to be some amount of factionalism----- there appears to be some amount of political vendetta being meted out.

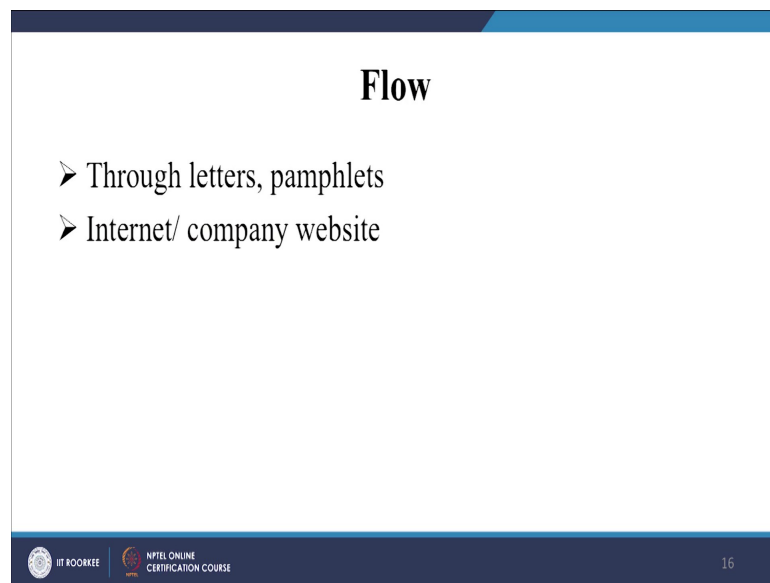
Hence, you should try your level best to see that communication received through grapevine can be taken very carefully. And, if it is going to be used please see that you are using it not to discard, not to bring disreputation, not to create a sort of bad image for the organization. When you are working in an organization, you will find that information flows through letters, pamphlets, internet, and company website.

Now, since we started with the fact that in order to survive in today's world, you have to communicate effectively. And, effective communication is helpful not only to you as an individual because you will find that the people who are most often promoted are the ones who have got effective communication skills. There are different ways---- there are different opportunities, you will get when you will have a chance to communicate at different levels and see that you maintain a precision, you maintain a sort of economy of

words, you also maintain a sort of tolerance, you also maintain a sort of equilibrium, when you are communicating outside.

Dear friends! Communication has come to create a positive image. And communication can be used for various purposes, but remember it is your communication that symbolizes your personality and it is through the ladders of communication that you can be successful.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:01)



Thus, we have learnt the importance of effective communications in this module. And you will find that communication if used effectively, can help your tasks become easier and you can climb the ladders of success not only in your life, but in your organization. Communication is a sort of expression and when you are in organization, see to it that you are with the flow and not against the flow. It is communication that reveals your personality, it is communication that reveals your knowledge, it is communication that makes you a person to be remembered always.

Thank you very much.