

## ASSIGNMENT 2

### { MCAC105 TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION }

#### Q 1: Explain the differences between business communication and interpersonal communication.

##### Personal vs Business Communication:

One of the largest differences between personal and business communication is that business communication usually is more formal and there is usually a much larger audience. People do not normally practice speaking before talking with a spouse, friends, or family, but they do, often practice speaking prior to conducting business with customers and business associates. For instance, it would not be unusual for a person to practice speaking before giving a presentation in a board room. Strong interpersonal communication skills provide a foundation for effective business communication. However, the two types of communication differ in everything from audience to challenges. To master business communication, you need to refine the communication skills you use every day so that it's relevant for a professional and often diverse audience.

Following are different factors on which we can compare interpersonal and business communications:

**1 Audience:** Interpersonal communication is usually one-on-one -- a conversation with a friend or family member, or a neighbor or coworker, for example. With business communication, your audience is usually much larger, and could include a few coworkers, all of your company's shareholders or even thousands of prospective customers. And it often includes people you've never met, and might never meet, such as employees at a different office or department.

**2 Structure:** Business communication is more formal and structured than interpersonal communication, and also more diverse, encompassing letters, brochures, press releases, company websites, social networking sites and podcasts. The style used for each varies greatly, so effective business communication requires understanding the sometimes subtle differences between the many types. Interpersonal communication can include letters or e-mails, but usually refers to phone calls or face-to-face conversations.

**3 Intention:** Interpersonal communication is usually more casual than business communication. While interpersonal communication is sometimes used to persuade, such as asking your boss for a raise, in general the goal is to share information. Business communication, however, has a more clearly defined goal.

**4 Challenges:** With interpersonal communication, you can't edit and revise your words. Business communication is often written, allowing time to find the most concise words and phrasing. However, with business communication, you face a challenge just getting and keeping the audience's attention. Your memo might compete with other business letters, websites, even magazines, and you can't always know what kind of response it received. With interpersonal communication, the person is often right there in front of you, so you have the benefit of body language, facial expression and tone of voice.

## **Ques 2: Write short note on the following:**

### **a) Effective listening**

Listening is a significant part of communication process. Communication cannot take place until and unless a message is heard and retained thoroughly and positively by the receivers/listeners. Listening is a dynamic process. **Listening means attentiveness and interest perceptible in the posture as well as expressions.**

**Effective listening** requires both deliberate efforts and a keen mind. Effective listeners appreciate flow of new ideas and information. Organizations that follow the principles of effective listening are always informed timely, updated with the changes and implementations, and are always out of crisis situation. Effective listening promotes organizational relationships, encourages product delivery and innovation, as well as helps organization to deal with the diversity in employees and customers it serves.

#### **Effective listening skills:**

- Discover your interests' field.
- Grasp and understand the matter/content.
- Remain calm. Do not loose your temper
- Be open to accept new ideas and information.
- Jot down and take a note of important points.
- Work upon listening. Analyze and evaluate the speech in spare time.
- Rephrase and summarize the speaker's ideas.
- Keep on asking questions.
- Avoid distractions.

### **b) Cultural barriers in communication:**

Culture shapes the way we think and behave. Cultural difference leads to difference in interest, knowledge, value, and tradition. Therefore, people of different cultures will experience these culture factors as a barrier to communicate with each other. Following are some ways to overcome cultural barriers:

#### **Ensure clear and polite communication**

Clear and polite communication reduces the chances of surprises, crises, and confrontation. Both employers and employees should take diversity and cultural difference into account while drafting communication material. This can include:

- using simple words
- using visual methods to communicate results
- avoiding slang words and phrases

#### **Employ diversity training**

Another way to overcome cultural barriers is to ensure there is an inclusion of people of different cultural backgrounds in the workplace. Diversity training can potentially foster inclusive work culture, encourage teamwork and leadership, create new opportunities, and thereby create a positive work culture. This training will help employees understand and embrace the cultural differences of their coworkers, and coworkers to embrace each other.

### Ques 3: Describe technical communication in detail. Also, discuss message structure.

**Technical communication** is a means to convey scientific, engineering, or other technical information. Individuals in a variety of contexts and with varied professional credentials engage in technical communication. Some individuals are designated as technical communicators or technical writers. These individuals use a set of methods to research, document, and present technical processes or products. Technical communicators may put the information they capture into paper documents, web pages, computer-based training digitally stored text, audio, video, and other media. The Society for Technical Communication defines the field as any form of communication that focuses on technical or specialized topics, communicates specifically by using technology or provides instructions on how to do something. More succinctly, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators defines technical communication as factual communication, usually about products and services. The European Association for Technical Communication briefly defines technical communication as "the process of defining, creating and delivering information products for the safe, efficient and effective use of products (technical systems, software, services)

When people refer to careers in the IT industry, they usually think of programmers, network engineers, hardware designers, graphic artists, web designers, quality assurance professionals, soon and so forth. They probably never think of the people who write the reference manuals and user guides that come with very single product they use. Why only the IT industry? Most of the products that we use in our day-to-day life, music system, VCD/DVD player, camera, mixer grinder, oven, electric cooker, etc. come with an instruction manual/booklet. Have you ever imagined having to use the gadgets without an instruction manual? Technical communication is a broad field and includes any form of communication that exhibits one or more of the following characteristics:

- (a) Communicating about technical or specialized topics, such as computer applications, mechanical tools, medical procedures, or environmental regulations.
- (b) Communicating by using technology, such as web pages, help files, or social media sites.
- (c) Providing instructions about how to do something regardless of how technical the task is or even if technology is used to create or distribute that communication.

### Message structure:

Marketing communications usually consist of a number of message points that the communicator wants to get across. An important aspect of message strategy is knowing the best way to communicate these points and overcome any opposing viewpoints audience members may hold. Extensive research has been conducted on how the structure of a persuasive message can influence its effectiveness, including order of presentation, conclusion drawing, message sidedness, refutation, and verbal versus visual message characteristics. One study developed a list of messages elements designed to appeal to three personality types:

- **Righteous buyer:** who looks to recommendations from the independent sources such as consumer report?
- **Social buyer:** who relies on the recommendations of friends on celebrity endorsements and testimonials?
- **Pragmatic buyer:** who looks for the best value for the money, though not necessarily the least expensive?

## Ques 4: What are the distinctive features of speech as compared to writing?

When we talk about 'language', sometimes we mean speech (spoken language), sometimes writing (written language). How are they different? Of course, speech is spoken and heard, while writing is written and read. But there are many other differences:

**Age:** Speech goes back to human beginnings, perhaps a million years ago. Writing is relatively recent, however; it was first invented by the Sumerians, in Mesopotamia, around 3200 B.C. Since then, the idea of writing has spread around the world and different writing systems have evolved in different parts of the world

**Universality:** Humans everywhere can speak. But before the Sumerian invention, people were non literate. Even now there are many non literate groups (e.g. in New Guinea), and many non literate people in officially literate societies.

**Acquisition:** People everywhere start speaking during the first two years of life; many of the abilities involved are probably inborn rather than learned. Learning to write typically builds on learning to speak.

**Levels of Structure:** Speech consists of two types of basic units: 'Phonemes' or units of sound, which are themselves meaningless, are combined into 'morphemes', which are meaningful units; so the phonemes /b/, /i/, /t/ form the word 'bit'. Alphabetic scripts work the same way. In a different type of script, the syllabary, the basic unit, corresponds to a spoken syllable; Japanese and Cherokee use this system. In logographic script, e.g. Chinese, each character corresponds to an entire morpheme (usually a word). (For further information on scripts, see Daniels and Bright 1996.)

**Interdependence.** Most literate people can convey the same messages in either speech or writing, but speech typically conveys more explicit information than writing. Hebrew and Arabic scripts indicate consonants but often omit symbols for vowels. In Chinese, the symbols that correspond to words may give no indication of pronunciation, or only partial cues. The spoken and written forms of a given language tend to correspond on one or more levels and may influence each other—as when 'through' is spelled 'thru'. Conversely, in spelling pronunciation, people may come to pronounce the 't' in 'often' even though historically it had been lost. Some formal literary styles, like Classical Chinese, acquire a life of their own in written form and have little direct relationship to speech.

**Formality:** Communication may be formal or casual. In literate societies, writing may be associated with formal style and speech, with casual style. In formal circumstances (oratory, sermons), a person may 'talk like a book', adapting written style for use in speech. Formal and informal styles may be very distinct, e.g. in Arabic, and can virtually be different languages.

**Change:** Spoken language, everywhere and always, undergoes continual change of which speakers may be relatively unaware. Written language, because of its permanence and standardization, shows slower and less sweeping changes; the spelling of English has changed much less than its pronunciation since Chaucer's time. This in turn is linked to the factors of formality and prestige.

## **Ques 5: Which are the domains in which downward communication is used effectively? What are its limitation?**

**Downward communication** occurs when information and messages flow down through an organization's formal chain of command or hierarchical structure. In other words, messages and orders start at the upper levels of the organizational hierarchy and move down toward the bottom levels. Responses to downward communications move up along the same path.

**Downward communication provides certain advantages to an organization:**

### **Organizational discipline**

Downward communication follows the organization's hierarchy, meaning that organizational discipline and member compliance is much easier to maintain.

### **Efficiency**

Downward communication offers efficiencies because instructions and information come from the sources in power that are able to coordinate activities from the top of the organization. Employees receive feedback from the supervisors who manage them.

### **Effective communication of goals**

Upper management can easily communicate goals and assign responsibilities regarding achieving those goals.

### **Ease of delegation**

Delegation is much easier if the delegation comes directly from the vertical communication structure representing the chain of command.

**Downward communication is not without disadvantages, including the following:**

### **Distortion**

Ever played the grapevine game? Downward communications can become distorted as it proceeds through multiple levels of the organization.

### **Slow feedback**

It takes time for messages to go down the organization and then up the organization and then back down again. This means that feedback can be slow, resulting in problems, especially in a dynamic environment.

### **Limitations of Downward Communication:**

- Time-consuming
- Distortion of information
- Lack of explanation
- Deterioration of relationship
- Lack of feedback
- Creation of frustration
- Different priorities