Business Communication

Table of Contents

Course Outcomes

The course on business communication helps to enhance communication skills crucial for effective corporate interactions. It covers written and verbal communication, presentation techniques, intercultural communication, fostering the ability to convey ideas clearly, and the use of digital platforms. The book comprises the following twelve chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction to Communication – This foundational chapter begins with the meaning of communication, then explains the process of communication. Further, it describes the principles of effective communication and the importance of communication for organisations.

Chapter 2: Introduction to Business Communication – This chapter discusses the basics of business communication. It also explains the barriers to business communication and the impact of ICT on business communication. The chapter extends to social media as an enabler of business communication.

Chapter 3: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication – This chapter explains the concepts of verbal communication or oral communication. Then it covers non-verbal communication and types of non-verbal communication. It concludes by developing good non-verbal communication skills.

Chapter 4: Listening and Speaking Skills – This chapter begins with the concept of listening skills. Then the chapter extends to the concept of speaking skills.

Chapter 5: Reading Skills – This chapter describes the concept of reading. It explores the different styles of reading. Further, it covers the concept of comprehension and precis.

Chapter 6: Business Correspondence – I – The chapter covers the concept of written communication. It also explains the concept of business letters and concludes by explaining the types of business letters.

Chapter 7: Business Correspondence – II – This chapter explains the concepts of notice, agenda, and minutes. Then it explores the concept of business proposals. Further, it explains the concept of summary writing and concludes by explaining the concept of emails.

Chapter 8: Presentation Skills – The chapter begins with the meaning of a presentation and how to design a presentation. Then it describes the concept of rehearsing before a presentation and delivering an effective presentation. It concludes by explaining the concept of grading team and individual presentations and the use of tables, charts, and graphs in presentations.

Chapter 9: Project Report Writing – This chapter discusses the concept of project report. Further, it explores the concept of preparing synopsis. Then it explains the contents of a project report.

Chapter 10: Communicating within a Group – This chapter describes the concept of meetings. It explores media management and its importance, and press release, press conference, and media interview. The chapter extends the concept of seminars and workshops.

Chapter 11: Communication using Electronic Media – This chapter begins with the concept of electronic media for communication. Further, it explains the concepts of e-mail, SMS, and WhatsApp. It concludes by explaining the concept of etiquettes.

Chapter 12: Effective use of Digital Media – The final chapter explores the concept of social media – a platform for communication. It introduces the concept of cross-cultural communication on social media. The chapter concludes by explaining the concept of troll.

CHAPTER

1

Introduction to Communication

Table of Contents

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Explain the concept of communication

❍ Describe the communication process

❍ Identify the effective principles of communication

❍ Describe why communication is significant for organisations

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is the foundation on which life has evolved on our planet. For plants and animals, communication may be instinctive, but humans have refined it to an art. Have you wondered why is it that with a DNA difference of only 1.2%, humans have evolved and chimps are, well, chimps? This is because humans have developed the forms of communication, which other species were not able to. That natural law of survival matters even today. Employees who have mastered communication skills are promoted to higher positions and get better pay checks. Good communication skills are essential to ensure that the right message is delivered to the right source at the right time through the right way.

Most of us communicate instinctively, but good communication is neither easy nor simple. If it were so easy, then why is it that so many people misunderstand/misinterpret a message, leading to conflicts, arguments, disputes and disagreements? Why do people get butterflies in stomach when asked to give a public speech? Why does a post on Twitter or Facebook invite backlash, only for the person posting it to claim that his message was misinterpreted?

This chapter introduces you to the concept of communication—its definitions, importance, objectives, process and principles. You will learn why communication is important for organisations.

1.2 MEANING OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a process of expressing and sending messages, ideas or thoughts between individuals verbally, non-verbally, electronically, or through gestures. This word has originated from the Latin word *'communis'* which means common. Therefore, communication only happens if there is a common understanding between individuals after they have exchanged the information.

Some popular definitions of communication are as follows:

❍ **Carl Rogers (1952):** *Real communication occurs…when we listen with understanding—to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the things he is talking about.*

❍ **Interpretation:** When you speak to someone, you express your thoughts to him/her, listen to what he/she has to say, and interpret the message accurately as intended by him/her.

○ **Elizabeth Tierney (1998):** *Communication is a process which begins when you have a message that you want to deliver to an audience. Your audience receives the message, reacts to it and then responds to your message. That response may lead you to react and give another message. This process may then go on and on.*

○ **Interpretation:** You (sender) speak to someone (receiver) when you need to deliver a message to him/her. The message can be any idea, a thought, or a feeling. It can be a simple 'Hello' to a friend or a presentation in a formal meeting. What is significant is that there is a sender and a receiver for the message.

○ **Julia T. Wood (2009):** *Communication is a systemic process in which people interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings.*

○ **Interpretation:** Let's understand this definition through its key words:

- **Systemic:** A system of interdependent parts that influence each other.

- **Process:** An ongoing, continuous series of actions taken to achieve a specific end.

- **Symbols:** Things that represent something else, such as language, non-verbal behaviours, art, and music.

- **Meanings:** Any act of communication that includes two key parts: the exact message and the relationship between the communicating parties.

○ **Joseph Devito (2009):** *Communication occurs when one or more persons send and receive messages that are distorted by noise, occur within a context, have some effect, and provide some opportunity for feedback.*

○ **Interpretation:** There are six essential elements in all forms of communication:

- **Source-Receiver:** Every communication act has a source (speaker) and a receiver (listener). Whenever you speak, write, signal, or smile, you send a message. When you listen, read, or smell something, you receive a message.

- **Message:** This may be a verbal or a non-verbal message.

- **Channel:** This is the medium of communication, which can be:

  ✓ **Vocal:** Speech

  ✓ **Visual:** Written text, pictures and gestures

  ✓ **Olfactory:** Smell

  ✓ **Tactile:** Touch

- **Noise:** Anything that restricts you from receiving a message, such as:

  ✓ A person not paying attention as you speak

  ✓ A person interpreting a message inaccurately

  ✓ A poor phone connection

- **Context:** The situation or the background in which communication occurs is called as context.

Good communicators are able to communicate the right message according to the context.

- ✓ **Physical context:** This refers to the actual setting where communication takes place. This can be the physical location, the time of day, the noise level, or the weather. For example, when you are in a sports stadium with a friend, you cheer, clap, and jump around to communicate your excitement. When you are in a classroom attending a lecture, you roll your eyes or smile to give reassurance.

- ✓ **Socio-psychological context:** The balance between an individual's emotional state and his/her personal relationships is called as socio-psychological context. For example, you are already in a bad mood when your boss asks you for a meeting. To maintain a professional relationship, you hide your mood and attend the meeting normally. After the meeting, a friend asks you to join him for a tea break. Since your relationship with your friend is more casual, you can open up to him.

- ✓ **Temporal context:** This refers to the expectations that the receiver has based on past experience. For example, you meet your friends every week in a coffee shop. Here, you have set up an expectation to meet them cheerfully. If suddenly you change your tune and arrive quietly to sit in a corner, you will only confuse your friends because they have come to expect another sort of communication from you.

- ✓ **Cultural context:** This refers to the values, behaviour and beliefs of the society. For example, the Middle Eastern people consider a potential business partner as a potential friend also. They prefer a small talk in a meeting to understand you on a personal, friendly level before discussing business.

- ● **Effect(s):** This refers to the influences or impacts of communication, which can be:

  - ✓ **Intellectual:** Change in thinking

  - ✓ **Affective:** Change in attitude

  - ✓ **Psychomotor:** Change in behaviour

1.2.1 | IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

To understand the importance of having a common understanding through communication, let's consider an example of miscommunication with hilarious results:

Memo from CEO to Manager:

"Today at 11 o'clock, there will be a total eclipse of sun. This is when the sun disappears behind the moon for two minutes. As this is something that cannot be seen everyday, time will be allowed for employees to view the eclipse in the parking lot. Staff should meet in the lot at ten to eleven, when I will deliver a short speech introducing the eclipse, and giving some background information. Safety goggles will be made available at a small cost."

Memo from Manager to Department Head:
"Today at ten to eleven, all staff should meet in the car parking. This will be followed by a total eclipse of the sun, which will appear for two minutes. For a moderate cost, this will be made safe with goggles. The CEO will deliver a short speech beforehand to give us all some information. This is not something that can be seen everyday."
Memo from Department Head to Floor Manager:
"The CEO will today deliver a short speech to make the sun disappear for two minutes in the form of an eclipse. This is something that cannot be seen everyday, so staff will meet in the car parking at ten or eleven. This will be safe if you pay a moderate cost."
Memo from Floor Manager to Supervisor:
"Ten or eleven staff members are to go to the car parking, where the CEO will eclipse the sun for two minutes. This doesn't happen everyday. It will be safe, and, as usual, it will cost you."
Memo from Supervisor to Staff:
Some staff will go to the car parking today to see the CEO disappear. It is a pity this doesn't happen everyday."

Source: *https://incommunicado101.wordpress.com/2011/09/25/humour-in-miscommunication/*

Communication is a fundamental and crucial aspect of human interaction, and its importance extends across various aspects of personal, professional, and societal domains. Some of the key reasons highlighting the importance of communication are as follows:

❍ **Building relationships:** Effective communication is fundamental for establishing and maintaining relationships. It fosters understanding, trust, and connection between individuals, forming the basis for healthy personal and professional connections.

❍ **Workplace productivity:** In a professional setting, communication is critical for coordinating tasks, setting expectations, and collaborating on projects. It ensures everyone is aligned, reducing errors, misunderstandings, and enhancing overall workplace efficiency.

❍ **Conflict resolution:** Communication is essential for resolving conflicts by facilitating understanding, empathy, and finding mutually acceptable solutions. Open and honest communication helps prevent misunderstandings from escalating into serious issues.

❍ **Innovation and creativity:** Communication fosters the exchange of ideas, stimulating innovation and creativity. Teams that communicate effectively are more likely to brainstorm creatively, solve problems collaboratively, and adapt to change.

❍ **Information sharing:** Communication is the primary means of sharing information. Whether in education, business, or daily life, effective communication ensures that an individual stay informed, make informed decisions, and adapt to new information.

1.2.2 | OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

According to Camp & Scatterwhite (2002), there are four main objectives of communication:

❍ **To inquire:** The first objective of communication is to find information. For example, immediately after joining a new company, Mohan tries to find out his tasks and responsibilities. He seeks a meeting with his manager who describes the company's mission, vision, strategy, and goals. His manager aligns the corporate goals with the team's goals that he expects Mohan to deliver. At the end of the meeting, Mohan and his manager have a common understanding of his goals and responsibilities.

❍ **To inform:** The objective of communication is to distribute information through different channels of communication. Armed with the information about the required goals, Mohan issues instructions to his team. He clarifies their goals, roles, and responsibilities. Then, he sets up face-to-face meeting with each team member to create their performance plan where he sets their individual goals, along with metrics and timelines. Here, note that the instructions will always flow from Mohan (top) to his team (bottom). The flow of information is one-way only. Therefore, it is the duty of Mohan (sender of information) to ensure that the message is delivered to his subordinates (receiver of information) on time and is clearly understood by them.

❍ **To persuade:** The purpose of communication is to influence the receiver and bring him/her round to your way of thinking. For example, Mohan's team is over-stretched. On top of that, they missed the previous quarter's targets. The morale is at an all-time low. Seeing how it might impact their productivity, Mohan empathises with their situation. He acknowledges their hard work in the previous quarter and explains that now the time is even more critical to deliver as a team. He acknowledges their ability to deliver as champions. In the end, he offers an incentive of extra bonus if the team delivers the targets before the deadline.

❍ **To develop goodwill:** The objective of communication is also to establish and maintain cordial relationships with people you are communicating. For instance, Mohan's team is motivated after his pep talk. Now Mohan has to ensure that the morale of the team remains high. There may be instances of conflicts. His responsibility would then be to nip them in the bud itself.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is necessary for communication?

   a. Common culture

   b. Common platform

   c. Common understanding

   d. Common language

2. Jaya is in a boardroom to meet her departmental head, who is Japanese. Just as everyone else, she gets up when he arrives and waits to be introduced. As the departmental head walks up to her and offers his hand in greeting, Jaya bows her head. This fumbled greeting creates a bit of awkwardness. Which context did Jaya not understand?

   a. Physical as Jaya forgot that she was in the boardroom and not a Japanese tea party.

   b. Socio-physical as Jaya should have noticed that he greeted everyone else with a handshake and would not have expected a bow from her.

   c. Temporal as Jaya had not met the departmental head before, so she did not know what to expect from him.

   d. Cultural as Jaya did not realise that Japanese do not bow in greeting.

1.3 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a cyclic process that involves at least two people: a sender and a receiver. Its purpose is achieved only if the receiver accurately decodes and interprets the message as intended by the sender. Figure 1 shows the process of communication:
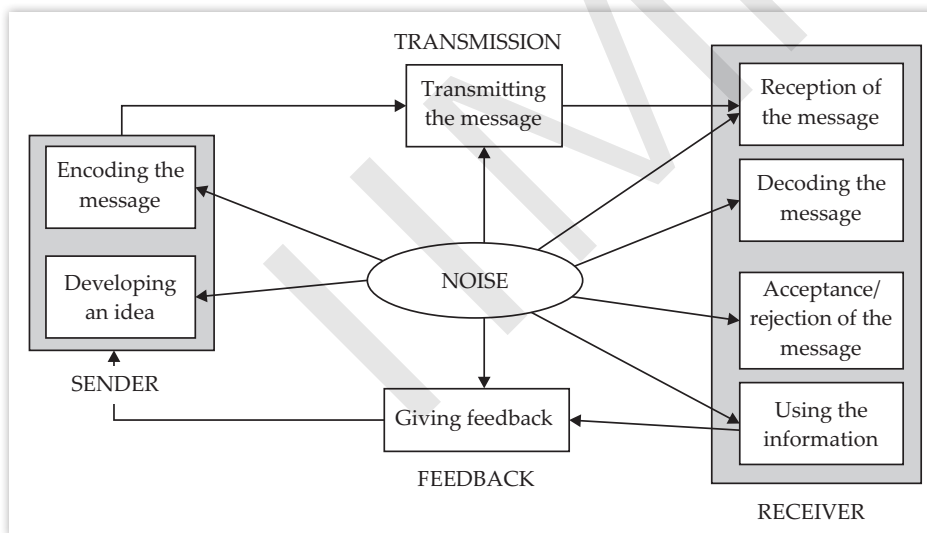
FIGURE 1: Process of Communication

There are five main elements in the communication process:

❍ **Sender:** The person who sends a message and initiates the process of communication is known as the sender. He generates an idea which he wants to convey to the receiver(s). He encodes the idea into a message in a way that can be easily understood by the receiver(s). **Encoding** is the process by which the sender converts his idea into a message. A **message** is a collection of specific words, symbols, signs, and/or gestures that conveys the intention of the sender. For a message to be successful, it should be accurately understood by the receiver, as intended by the sender. For example, to explain new process changes to your team, you create some slides and organise a meeting. The collocated team members join

you in a meeting room, while two remote team members join in via Skype. One remote team member is Chinese who does not understand English well. So, you translate in Chinese to help him understand.

○ **Transmission:** This is the process to transfer the sender's message to the receiver(s). The sender is connected to the receiver through a **channel** of communication. The channel must be correctly interpreted by the receiver(s). The choice of channel for transmission of a message depends on factors such as the kind of interpersonal relationship between the sender and the receiver and the urgency of the message being sent.

For example, you set up a face-to-face meeting with your collocated team members as well as a Skype meeting to connect with remote team members.

○ **Receiver:** The person who receives the message is the **receiver**. As soon as he gets the message, he tries to interpret it in the best possible manner. He does so by translating encoded words or symbols into ideas that can be understood. This process is called **decoding**. The process of communication is considered to be effective if it is interpreted properly by the receiver. For example, your meeting will be considered successful if your team members understand the new process changes just as you would like them to do.

○ **Feedback:** How will you ensure that your team has understood the changes in the process just as you wanted them to? Through feedback. After the receiver has received and interpreted the message, he/she generates a response to the message and this is known as the **feedback**. It can be an acknowledgement that the message has been received or a reply to the message. It is necessary to obtain the feedback of the receiver in order to ensure that the message has been received and understood by the receiver.

○ **Noise:** Sometimes, a message is not accurately transferred due to certain barriers in the communication process. These barriers are called **noise**. It can occur at the sender's end during transmission or at the receiver's end during reception. For example, poor bandwidth leading to frequent Skype disconnection during your meeting is an example of a noise.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. What is the correct order of steps in the communication process?

   a. Sender → Receiver → Channel → Encoding → Decoding → Message

   b. Sender → Encoding → Message → Channel → Receiver → Decoding

   c. Noise → Channel → Sender → Receiver → Encoding → Decoding

   d. Sender → Decoding → Channel → Message → Receiver → Encoding

4. What is the process to convert a thought into a message?

   a. Encoding

   b. Decoding

   c. Channel

   d. Noise

1.4 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

As you know, the communication process will be considered effective only if the sender and the receiver have a common understanding of the message. So, how can you ensure it? This can be done by keeping the principles of effective communication in mind while preparing a message. The principles of communication are known as 7 Cs of communication, as shown in Figure 2:
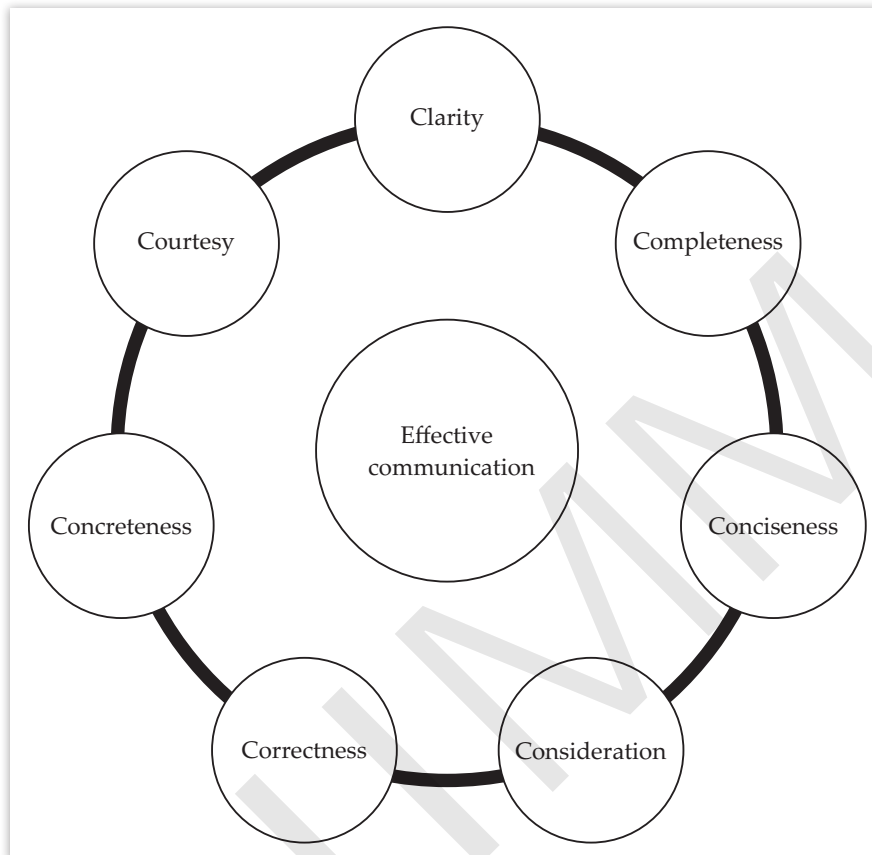
FIGURE 2: 7 Cs of Effective Communication

The 7 Cs of communication are explained as follows:

❍ **Clarity:** The message conveyed should be clear to the receiver. For this, the sender should have:

● **Clarity of thought:** Before sending a message, consider the following:

✓ What is the purpose of the message?

✓ To whom should it be conveyed?

✓ What is the most effective channel to convey it?

● **Clarity of expression:** The message should be expressed in a clear and simple language, which is well understood by the receiver. To do so:

✓ Make the objectives clear.

✓ Use simple words and short sentences.

✓ Avoid ambiguous phrases.

9

Table 1 illustrates a non-example and an example of Clarity:

TABLE 1: Clarity of Communication

Non-example	Example
Hi Priya, I would like to set up a meeting with you regarding yesterday's conversation. You covered some great topics, and I'd like to speak about them in detail. Please let me know when you would like to have this meeting. Regards, Charan	Hi Priya, I would like to set up a meeting with you regarding your presentation on email marketing yesterday. You covered some great topics. I would like to discuss how we can implement them on our current customers. Please let me know when you have the time so that we can discuss it in detail. Regards, Charan
Why non-example? Which conversation is Charan referring to here? What exactly does he want to discuss?	**Why example?** Gives a clear idea of the referred conversation and why a meeting is being sought.

Source: *https://www.stpaulsice.com/Students/Blog/7-C-s-of-Effective-Communication*

❍ **Completeness:** A message is said to be complete if it includes all the necessary information along with a call-to-action. The sender must consider the receiver's mindset while preparing the message.

Table 2 illustrates a non-example and an example of Completeness:

TABLE 2: Completeness of Communication

Non-example	Example
Dear all, Please make sure to carry all the items tomorrow for the meeting. Regards, Rohit	Dear all, Just a reminder that we have a meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. tomorrow to discuss the XYZ event. Please make sure that you get all the event props that need to be presented to the client. Regards, Rohit
Why non-example? The message does not indicate what items, which meeting, and at what time.	**Why example?** The message provides complete information about the meeting.

Source: *https://www.stpaulsice.com/Students/Blog/7-C-s-of-Effective-Communication*

○ **Conciseness:** A short, precise, and concise message saves the time of both the sender and the receiver. It is also more appealing to the receiver. To make the message concise:

● Avoid repeating the same point.

● Avoid using excessive words or sentences.

● Do not use unnecessary words or phrases, such as 'you see', 'I think', etc.

Table 3 illustrates a non-example and an example of Conciseness:

TABLE **3:** Conciseness of Communication

Non-example	Example
Hi Ben,	Hi Ben,
I wanted to discuss the video-editing ideas we sort of planned out the other day. Don't you think it would make a lot of sense to also add additional elements to the videos? I mean, I think that would sort of improve the quality of the videos as well as have a stronger impact on the client's message. For instance, we could add a dissolve transition on each movie, which would then give it a seamless flow. This would then make the video cleaner and more appealing in the minds of the people. The impact would just be a lot greater. This makes a lot more sense according to me.	Let's meet to discuss the video-editing ideas we planned out yesterday. It would be better to add additional elements to the videos to make the client's message more appealing and impactful.
	A dissolve transition would give a seamless flow to each movie and make it cleaner and more appealing.
What do you think?	What do you think?
Regards,	Regards,
Amit	Amit
Why non-example?	**Why example?**
This message is full of filler words. There is a lot of repetition and it is quite long.	The message is brief and to the point.

Source: *https://www.stpaulsice.com/Students/Blog/7-C-s-of-Effective-Communication*

○ **Consideration:** The message must be prepared while considering the receiver's requirement, perspective, problem, background, mindset and emotion. Some tips to follow are:

● Message must be focused on 'you' instead of 'I' or 'we'.

● Focus on what is possible instead of what is not.

● Emphasise on positive words.

Table 4 illustrates a non-example and an example of Consideration:

TABLE 4: Consideration of Communication

Non-example	Example
Dear Mrs. Sharma, I'm sorry that we are presently out of stock of Natalie Blue handbags and will be unable to process your order at this time. An order has been placed with the manufacturer in the colour you want. We will receive shipment after 10 days. I trust this delay will not inconvenience you. Your sincerely, Kamya Gupta	Dear Mrs. Sharma, Thank you for placing your order of a Natalie Blue handbag with us. The colour you chose proved to be very popular, and we quickly sold all we had in stock. However, we've placed a rush order for more and are promised delivery within 10 days. Your bag will be shipped the same day our new supply arrives. We deeply regret the inconvenience caused to you. Your sincerely, Kamya Gupta
Why non-example? This message focuses on 'we' instead of 'you'.	**Why example?** This message focuses on the concern of the receiver.

Source: *http://www.zeepedia.com/read.php?consideration_completeness_business_communication&b=72&c=11*

○ **Correctness:** The message should be grammatically and factually correct. It should be well-timed and use proper language and format. Some tips to follow are:

● Always proofread your work before presenting it.

● Use correct facts and figures.

● Use the right level of language.

● Time it properly.

Table 5 illustrates a non-example and an example of Correctness:

TABLE 5: Correctness of Communication

Non-example	Example
Hi Smita, It was nice meeting you last weak. I had a good time. I'm sure we will be able to do some great work on this project. Let me know weather you need any supplies from the company and I'll get it delivered as soon as possible. Thanks again, speak to you soon! Dinesh	Hi Smita, It was nice meeting you last week. I had a good time. I'm sure we will be able to do some great work on this project. Let me know whether you need any supplies from the company and I'll get it delivered as soon as possible. Thanks again, speak to you soon! Dinesh
Why non-example? There are two errors in this message. Were you able to pick them up?	**Why example?** The message is now spell-checked.

Source: *https://www.stpaulsice.com/Students/Blog/7-C-s-of-Effective-Communication*

○ **Concreteness:** The message should not be vague or general. It should be clear, specific, exact and appropriate. Some tips to follow are:

● Have total clarity of thoughts and ideas.

● Use exact and appropriate words.

● Support words with relevant facts and figures.

Table 6 illustrates a non-example and an example of Concreteness:

TABLE 6: Concreteness of Communication

Non-example	Example
Save time with the Indicator Master everyday.	Have you ever been late for a meeting just because you did not know the train schedule? Do you have waiting for a bus because you don't know its timings? Then, download the Indicator Master app. It will give you all the train and bus schedules so that you can avoid delays and save time!
Why non-example?	**Why example?**
This tag-line does not tell anything about the product. It offers no appealing value to attract the user.	The message is now clear and appealing.

Source: *https://www.stpaulsice.com/Students/Blog/7-C-s-of-Effective-Communication*

○ **Courtesy:** The message should consider the perspective and feelings of the receiver. It should be respectful to the receiver. Some tips to follow are:

● Be polite and tactful.

● Make use of language and terms which are respectful towards the receiver.

Table 7 illustrates a non-example and an example of Courtesy:

TABLE 7: Courtesy of Communication

Non-example	Example
Dear Sanjay, I have noticed that there are always delays in the orders. You need to focus on the orders department as a priority. Please get all the orders cleared ASAP! Regards, Gautam	Dear Sanjay, I have noticed that there are orders pending which need to be cleared on priority. I would appreciate it if you could focus on getting these cleared so that we can avoid delays to the customers. Thanks a lot, and please let me know if you have any questions regarding the same. Regrads, Gautam
Why non-example?	**Why example?**
What would be your reaction if you receive this message? Most likely, you will be angry.	The message is now conveyed in a positive way, which is likely to invoke a positive response from the receiver.

Source: *https://www.stpaulsice.com/Students/Blog/7-C-s-of-Effective-Communication*

13

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. What is not a principle of effective communication?

    a. Clarity   b. Courtesy

    c. Concreteness   d. Characterisation

6. Which sentence below is concise?

    a. Such moments of joy are far and few between.

    b. Your admission payment has been received.

    c. The receipt that is attached documents your purchase.

    d. We hereby wish to inform you that the company is pleased with the service you have provided.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION FOR ORGANISATIONS

Good communication influences every aspect of business. Some importance of communication in an organisation are:

○ **Source of information:** Communication enables all the members of an organisation to make decisions. It enables them to identify and evaluate possible courses of action.

○ **Motivational tool:** Communication enables employees to know and clarify their tasks, responsibilities, processes, procedures and improvement areas. This motivates them to do well in their jobs.

○ **Attitude-changer:** Communication provides feedback to employees, which induces them to change their attitude.

○ **Socialisation:** Communication is the glue that binds individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, countries and classes to come together in an organisational setup and work for a shared set of goals.

○ **Control:** Communication helps to control the behaviour of organisational members. An organisation is a hierarchical structure where employees need to follow instructions and comply with policies.

Managers need to be good communicators to effectively perform the basic functions of management, which are:

○ **Planning:** Managers communicate to develop and implement effective plans.

○ **Organising:** To organise their teams and tasks, managers have to effectively communicate the objectives and action plans to their subordinates.

○ **Leading:** To be effective leaders, managers have to share their vision to inspire their teams and motivate them to perform.

○ **Controlling:** Without communication, there cannot be any organisational control. Managers need to regularly monitor the performance through coaching, guidance, support, and discipline.

Managers who are good communicators not only deliver and receive messages appropriately, but are also well-equipped to identify the barriers to communication, determine their sources, and take steps to address them. Therefore, the main responsibility of a manager is to keep the organisation engine well-oiled by developing and maintaining an effective and efficient communication system.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

7. Communication is important for an organisation because:

   a. It changes the attitude of employees.

   b. It provides selective information to different staff members.

   c. It lowers the morale of low performers.

   d. It de-controls all the organisational functions.

8. Which managerial functions depend on communication?

   a. Plan, prepare, control, correct

   b. Prepare, schedule, budget, perform

   c. Plan, organise, lead, control

   d. Direct, discipline, lead, control

ACTIVITY

Assume that you work in an organisation where the communication is done primarily by means of e-mail. You are the HR Manager and you want the team members to interact more. Suggest what kind of changes you can recommend with respect to communication.

1.6 SUMMARY

○ Communication is a process of expressing and sending messages, ideas, or thoughts between individuals verbally, non-verbally, electronically or through gestures. It only happens if there is a common understanding between the sender and the receiver of the message.

○ The four main objectives of communication are to inquire, inform, persuade, and develop goodwill.

○ The five main elements in the communication process are sender, transmission, receiver, feedback, and noise.

○ The principles of effective communication are clarity, completeness, conciseness, consideration, correctness, concreteness, and courtesy.

○ Managers need to be good communicators to plan, organise, lead, and control effectively in organisations.

1.7 KEY WORDS

❍ **Coherence:** A principle of effective communication that is also commonly listed in 7 Cs, which indicates that the message should be logical and convey the relevant idea of the topic.

❍ **Communication:** It is a process of expressing and sending messages, ideas or thoughts between individuals verbally, non-verbally, electronically or through gestures.

❍ **Process:** It is an ongoing, continuous series of actions taken to achieve a specific end.

1.8 CASE STUDY: A 3X3 FEEDBACK MODEL

Giving and receiving feedback is an essential aspect of professional communication, but it is often the most challenging skill to acquire and master. This case study proposes a 3x3 feedback model, which includes the three components of face-to-face feedback (sender, message, and receiver).

Overview of 3x3 Model

The feedback model is called 3x3 because it includes the three interacting components in the face-to-face feedback, as shown in the following figure:

Sender
- Use appropriate words, tone, and body language
- Check for understanding to ensure proper interpretation
- Observe the receiver and be empathetic

Message
- Objective and non-judgemental
- Provide sufficient detail
- Make clear suggestions for improvement

Receiver
- Remain open and listening
- Acknowledge that you have heard and are listening
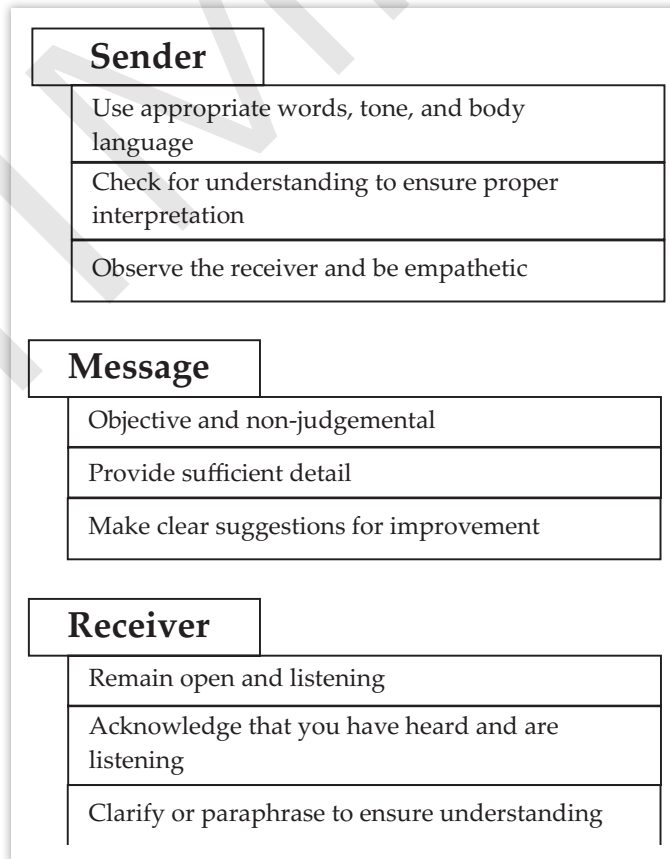- Clarify or paraphrase to ensure understanding

FIGURE: 3x3 Feedback Model

Each component must consider certain key points, which are as follows:

❍ **Sender:** Instead of just delivering a feedback, the sender must ensure that it is properly received by the receiver. If a receiver is not ready or engaged for the feedback, then the feedback will have no effect on him/her, irrespective of how well-crafted and clear it is. Therefore, the sender must use appropriate words, body language and tone. He must observe the receiver and be empathetic while giving the feedback.

❍ **Message:** The feedback should be clear and concise. It must be objective and non-judgemental. It should have adequate details to explain the effects of the issue/error and contain clear suggestions for improvement.

❍ **Receiver:** Being defensive is the typical immediate reaction of the person receiving a feedback. Effective listening is essential to receive feedback. The receiver must remain open to the sender's perspective, acknowledge that he/she is listening, and clarify or paraphrase to ensure understanding.

Implementation Method

The 3x3 feedback model is introduced through an interactive online video, which emphasises the significance of audience, context and purpose in communication. It introduces the following three types of feedback along with their basic purpose:

❍ **Appreciation:** Acknowledge thank or give credit to someone.

❍ **Coaching:** Help someone improve.

❍ **Evaluation:** Score a performance against expectations.

The case study focuses on the coaching feedback. The video also revisits the 7 Cs framework and focuses on Clear, Concise and Courteous (particularly applicable in the face-to-face feedback). The 3x3 feedback model is practised through an interactive role play.

Application of the Feedback Model

Ten teams (6 students per team) participated in a project design competition and a poster session. From each team, two members presented their poster. In addition, other members provided face-to-face feedback to other teams. To provide feedback, students consulted a poster and crafted their feedback as per the 3x3 model. They wrote comments on sticky notes. When ready, the students provided face-to-face feedback to each poster team. Then, the feedback note was pasted on the relevant area of the poster. Each student received two sticky notes. Post-feedback round, the teams reflected on the received feedbacks and ranked them from most to least useful. For the two most useful pieces of feedback, they commented as follows:

1. How will you summarise the feedback received?

2. Why is the feedback helpful, and how can it help improve your future work?

3. Were there any specific actions of the sender during delivery that made the feedback more effective?

Results

Each team submitted responses for 2 most useful pieces of feedback they received, using an online survey.

The following table displays the results:

i. Why was the feedback helpful?	ii. What the sender did to make the feedback effective?	
Sender		
	Words, tone, body language	35%
	Check understanding	22%
	Observe and be empathetic	18%
Message		
5%	Objective observations	17%
15%	Specific details	21%
21%	Suggestions to improve	25%
7 Cs		
4%	Clear	38%
2%	Concise	15%
2%	Courteous	31%
2%	Concrete, Correct, Coherent or Complete	14%
9%	**Praise or compliment**	29%
40%	**Non-descriptive**	3%
21%	**Project-specific**	2%
Total responses: 261		

CONCLUSION

Feedback is most helpful when it:

❍ Is courteously delivered with appropriate tone and body language.

❍ Is checked for proper understanding by the receiver.

❍ Includes clear suggestions for improvement.

❍ Includes praise for things done well.

Source: *https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/PCEEA/article/view/10194*

QUESTIONS

1. What are the components and key points of the 3x3 feedback model?

   (**Hint:** Sender, message, and receiver)

2. Which principle(s) of effective communication is/are most effective in the feedback process? Explain why.

   (**Hint:** Clarity and Courtesy are most effective)

1.9 EXERCISE

1. What do you mean by communication?

2. What are the six essential elements in communication?

3. Why is communication important? What are the objectives of communication?

4. What is the process of communication? Explain the role of each element in the communication process.

5. What are the principles of effective communication?

6. Why do managers need to be effective communicators?

1.10 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Meaning of Communication	1.	c. Common understanding
	2.	b. Socio-physical as Jaya should have noticed that he greeted everyone else with a handshake and would not have expected a bow from her.
Process of Communication	3.	b. Sender → Encoding → Message → Channel → Receiver → Decoding
	4.	a. Encoding
Principles of Effective Communication	5.	d. Characterisation
	6.	b. Your admission payment has been received.
Importance of Communication for Organisations	7.	a. It changes the attitude of employees.
	8.	c. Plan, organise, lead, control

1.11 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

○ Means, T., & Hathaway, V. (2019). *Business Communication*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, Inc.

○ Gopala Krishna, C., & Ramakrishnan, L. (2009). *Business Communication*. Mumbai: Himalaya Pub. House.

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○ Miscommunication causes confusion. (2019). Retrieved from https://imconfident. wordpress.com/2013/02/22/miscommunication-causes-confusion/

○ 5 Main Processes of Communication (With Diagram). (2019). Retrieved from http://www.businessmanagementideas.com/communication/processes/5-main-processes-of-communication-with-diagram/3084

CHAPTER

2

Introduction to Business Communication

Table of Contents

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Describe an overview of business communication

❍ Differentiate between internal and external communication

❍ Distinguish between formal and informal communication

❍ Differentiate between verbal and non-verbal communication

❍ Distinguish between written and visual communication

❍ Identify the barriers to business communication and the ways to overcome them

❍ Discuss the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on business communication

❍ Explain the role of social media as an enabler of business communication

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you have studied about the fundamental concepts of communication including its meaning, importance and objectives. The chapter also explained the process of communication, principles of effective communication, and the importance of communication for organisations.

Business communication is of two types – internal business communication and external business communication. Internal business communication occurs among the employees of the same organisation while external business communication occurs among different organisations, their employees, and other external stakeholders, such as suppliers, distributors, customers, shareholders and government institutions. It covers all the promotional and marketing activities. It is an art and managers need to be expert communicators. However, business communication is easier said than done.

Due to the innate pressure of meeting deadlines, managers often do not have the time to listen to the needs, wants, and frustrations of their subordinates. With the increased use of email, texting, voice mail, instant messaging, and social media, it has become easier now to hide behind technology to communicate. Although business communication has become faster, cheaper, and easier due to technological advancements, it does not replace the efficacy of face-to-face meetings when emotions need to be conveyed.

This chapter provides an overview of business communication including different forms of communication, barriers to communication, and their solutions. You will also learn about the impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the role of social media on business communication.

2.2 BASICS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Business is essential for performing basic managerial functions of planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling.

According to **W.H. Meaning**, *the exchange of ideas, news, and views in connection with the business among the related parties is called business communication.*

According to **Professor J. Haste**, *communication occurred between two or more businessmen for organising and administering business efficiently is called business communication.*

Business communication involves continuous exchange of information within and outside an organisation. Feedback is the essence of the communication process. Multi-faceted, multinational organisations today are like thousand-armed dragons. The higher the complexity of an organisation, the greater the difficulty exists in managing it. Communication is the only tool that an organisation has to ensure that it directs and controls its functions. It helps the top management issue instructions and oversee management. Communication enables employees to provide feedback to their managers.

Effective business communication is essential for the success and growth of any organisation. Its aim is to ensure that people within and outside an organisation understand the rules, policies, and procedures of an organisation accurately. There are various channels of business communication, such as meetings, memos, phone calls, video conferences, emails, etc.

As you already know, communication is a cyclic process. Figure 1 illustrates the process of business communication in an organisation:
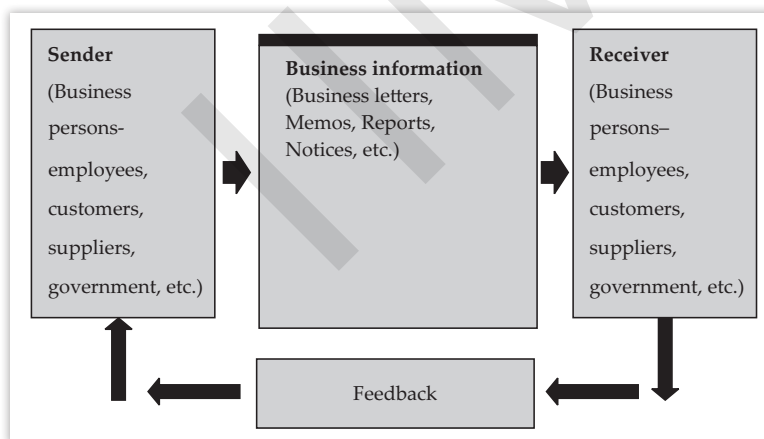
FIGURE 1: Business Communication Process

Source: *http://christopherhouse.blogspot.in/2012/08/meaning-ofbusiness-communication.html*

In the business communication process, the business-related information is exchanged between manufacturers, customers, distributors, suppliers, managers, employees, competitors, agencies, and business partners through various channels, such as business letters, phone calls, public forums, in person, reports, emails, and memos.

2.2.1 | FUNCTIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

There are three primary functions of business communication in an organisation, which are follows:

○ **Clarifying expectations to employees:** In every organisation, managers are responsible for informing their subordinates what they are expected to do. They must inform them of their goals, objectives, strategies, policies, procedures, rules, deadlines, tools and techniques. It is the basic information that an employee needs to perform. Unclear goals and ambiguous expectations lead to confusion, chaos, and conflicts. Thus, the role of business communication is important to provide the right information to employees.

○ **Ensuring a cordial and productive working environment:** In addition to informing employees of their objectives, managers are responsible for organising, managing, and directing them as they perform their jobs. This requires providing adequate support, counselling, and suggestions to employees as and when they need them. Managers have to ensure that employees' concerns are heard and resolved before they grow into full-fledged conflicts.

○ **Managing change and reducing risks:** Change in external environment cannot be predicted and controlled, but it is inevitable. Whenever an organisation reorganises to prepare for change, it is natural to expect resistance from employees. Therefore, managers have the critical and sensitive task of removing change resistance in employees and making them more flexible. Apart from change management, business communication plays a vital role in managing risks. Risks are part of an organisational process. There can be good risks (opportunities) or bad risks (threats). Managers must identify the types of risks that may impact their processes, must plan for them in advance, and communicate the risk management plans they have formulated to their teams.

2.2.2 | FORMS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Business communication can happen at any level within an organisation. Team interactions, conferences, meetings or one-to-one interactions with managers/supervisors, issuing instructions to employees, performance management planning and review, interviews, presentations, conference calls, etc., are some examples of business communication.

Let's consider some major forms of business communication.

Internal and External Communication

Your manager asks you to share some ideas about a business proposal with a new client. He calls for a meeting where people from different departments get together to share their viewpoints. Once the business proposal is finalised, your manager asks you to accompany him to the meeting with the customer. Observe the different types of communication happening here. When your manager asks you for ideas in a one-to-one discussion, how will you communicate them to him? Will it be just like how you will communicate in front of other representatives in a formal meeting? When you meet the customer and he has some questions about the proposal, how will you resolve them? Will it be just as you communicate with your manager? No,

because if your manager is on the same platform as you and you both represent your company to an external customer, the communication style needs to be more formal and aligned. External communications demand a polished and professional approach, distinct from the internal discussions with your manager. Thus, internal and external communications are different forms of business communication.

Internal communication is the exchange of information within an organisation, i.e., between its various departments, functions, employees, and managers, to accomplish common goals. Business activities are performed on the basis of internal communication. It is a frequent form of communication in an organisation where there is no significant difference between the sender and the receiver of information. However, its coverage is limited within the organisation only.

There are four types of internal communication:

❍ **Downward communication:** This communication travels from the top levels (managers) of an organisation to the lower levels (subordinates). Managers issue work instructions to subordinates to achieve corporate targets. Employees need this information to perform their jobs and meet the expectations of their superiors. It is used to:

● Issue job instructions and orders from managers to their teams.

● Clarify objectives to employees.

● Communicate the organisation's vision, mission, and strategy to employees.

● Provide feedback to employees.

● Suggest areas of development to employees.

Examples of downward communication include job instructions, performance management plan, emails to employees, team meetings, circulars, etc.

❍ **Upward communication:** The communication that travels from the bottom to the top of an organisation is called upward communication. It is used to:

● Transmit employees' feedback to managers.

● Empower the employees so that they can proactively participate in the decision-making process.

● Enable employees to share their ideas and grievances to top levels.

Thus, upward communication enables managers to ascertain the employee satisfaction levels and take suitable actions for improvement. Examples of upward communication include suggestion boxes, grievance redressal systems, employee satisfaction survey, employee-manager discussions, 360-degree performance reports, etc.

❍ **Lateral/Horizontal communication:** The internal communication that is exchanged between employees working at the same level in an organisation is called lateral or horizontal communication. Examples include peer exchange of ideas, interaction between departmental heads, etc. This communication facilitates the coordination of tasks among different teams, helps to solve organisational issues, and resolves inter-functional or intra-functional conflicts.

○ **Diagonal communication:** The exchange of information between individuals in different levels of an organisation is called diagonal communication. For example, you are called in by a training manager as a subject matter expert for a new operation. Another example can be that the head of the marketing department meets with a software developer to understand a new programme.

External communication is the exchange of information and sharing of ideas between an organisation's parties with external entities, such as suppliers, distributors, vendors, banks and financial institutions. For example, a meeting between the Managing Director of a company and a bank manager for the financial capital is an external communication.

The purpose of external communication is to improve the performance of organisation and raise its goodwill and image. It occurs less frequently than internal communication, but covers a wide range of receivers. The distance between the sender and the receiver(s) is also quite large.

Formal and Informal Communication

Naima is the head of marketing, while Vishal is the head of production. They frequently clash over sales meetings. Naima wants the production department to speed up, while Vishal wants to reduce the pressure on his team. One day, they bump into each other at a coffee shop. Over other things, they discuss their work concerns and gain a new perspective on each other's problem areas.

In an organisation, the formal and informal exchange of information is quite distinct. However, sometimes their demarcation lines are blurred when it comes to meeting the organisational objectives.

○ **Formal communication** is a formal exchange of information where certain rules and policies are followed by the sender and the receiver. This type of communication is direct and precise. It usually involves predefined channels, which can travel upward and downward. This type of communication is usually conveyed by the top management to lower levels to communicate rules, procedures, and policies. It is mainly used to fulfil organisational goals, increase efficiency, and maintain discipline. Since this type of communication usually requires documentation and predefined channels, it travels slowly. Examples include interviews and sharing of organisational policies.

○ **Informal communication** is more relational than formal communication. It is not backed by any predefined channels. Informal communication can occur between anywhere within an organisation. It is very useful to establish and maintain cordial relationships between employees and managers. It is also faster than formal communication. It also enables employees to give feedback to their managers. Usually, the informal communication may start from the point where the formal discussions end. For example, managers often suggest conflicting parties to resolve their differences informally in order to avoid large-scale disputes, which may require a formal process of resolution.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

In a one-to-one meeting with each team member, a manager clarifies his/her goals and objectives for a specified period. Post meeting, the manager prepares a performance management plan and sends it to his team members.

❍ **Verbal communication:** This type of communication involves the use of words, sounds, and languages. It is also known as oral communication. Forms of verbal communication include speech, presentations, discussions, meetings, and public speech. It is useful in temporary exchanges where a direct interaction is required. For example, if a person is not responding to an email, then the quickest and surest way of getting him to respond is to pick up the phone and talk to him or walk up to his workstation. It also helps build a rapport and trust. Table 1 lists its benefits and drawbacks:

TABLE 1: Benefits and Drawbacks of Verbal Communication

Benefits	Drawbacks
High level of understanding and transparency	Cannot be the sole communication for business
Flexibility	Less authentic than written communication
Spontaneous feedback	Time-consuming (long speeches) and may be unproductive
Time-, cost-, and effort-saving	Difficult to maintain
Ideal for problem and conflict resolution	Open to misinterpretation
Essential for teamwork and synergy	Requires that the listener is quite attentive and has good listening power
Morale boosting	Less frequently used in legal records, except in investigations
Best for private and confidential exchange of information	

❍ **Non-verbal communication:** Sometimes what we say is less important than how we say it. Non-verbal communication is the exchange of feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through signs, symbols, tone, smell, touch, and body movements. For example, you are sitting with your arms crossed as your manager gives feedback. So far, you have not yet said a word. However, the manager understands that you are not open to feedback. Another example is if your gaze is fixed at the screen at the time of delivering a presentation, the audience will easily guess that you are nervous.

Written and Visual Communication

Written communication is a significant form of business communication, which is frequently used in formal and informal exchanges. It includes emails, articles, letters, reports, and memos. Table 2 lists the benefits and drawbacks of written communication:

TABLE 2: Benefits and Drawbacks of Written Communication

Benefits	Drawbacks
Helps establish rules and policies of the organisation	Expensive in terms of stationery and manpower costs

Benefits	Drawbacks
Permanent record-keeping	Delayed response
Proper delegation of responsibilities and clear instructions	Time-consuming
More precise and specific	Requires great skills and competencies in language use
Improves the company's image through promotional materials	Cumbersome paperwork and email trails
Ready records and references	
Required for legal defences	

The exchange of information through the use of photographs, signs, logos, codes, symbols, and design is called **visual communication**. Examples include brand logo and design. The most crucial benefit of visual communication is that it draws immediate attention, and is therefore mostly used for branding and promotion.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. The release of company's annual report is a type of _____.

2. What is the benefit of verbal communication?

    a. Permanent record-keeping

    b. Proper laying down of rules

    c. Easy to maintain

    d. Spontaneous feedback

2.3 BARRIERS TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

As you already know, the communication process is initiated by a sender who encodes the message and transmits it through a channel to the receiver who decodes the message. Communication is said to be successful if the receiver correctly interprets the message. If anything prevents the message from being interpreted accurately, then the communication process fails. Efficient managers are able to detect these barriers to business communication and address them on time. There are three main categories of barriers, as illustrated in Figure 2:
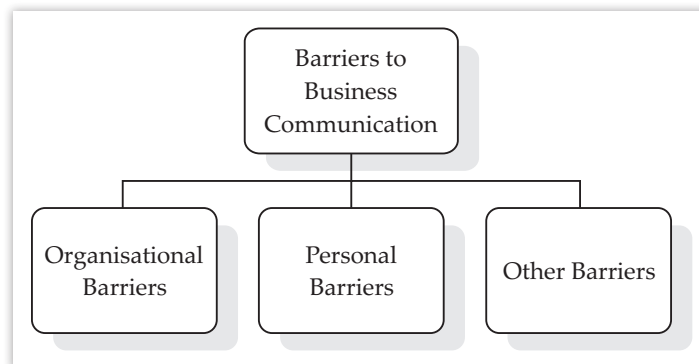

FIGURE 2: Barriers to Business Communication

○ **Organisational barriers:** The barriers that originate within an organisation are called organisational barriers. These include:

- **Unfavourable environment:** If communication takes place in an environment full of suspicion and mistrust, then even the most tactful and well-prepared message will be misinterpreted.

- **Complex communication policies:** If the communication policies are complicated and under layers of red tape, then a majority of employees will not understand them.

- **Complexity in organisational structure:** The more the levels of authority in an organisation, the more the chances of communication being delayed or destroyed.

- **Lack of open-door policy:** If the management is closed and unapproachable, then employees will find it difficult and intimidating to give open and honest feedback.

- **Sexual harassment at workplace:** If employees find it uncomfortable to report harassment issues in an organisation, it will generate a toxic and unproductive environment. Most organisations are opening up to this menace due to public litigation fears and loss of goodwill. However, much more still needs to be done so that employees feel comfortable and safe to report these issues.

- **Glass ceiling:** Glass ceiling is an indicative term which means a barrier which hinders the professional growth and advancement of people especially the minorities and women.

○ **Personal barriers:** These barriers are created by an individual (sender or receiver). They include:

- **Perception:** How an individual interprets the world around him is called perception. Different individuals interpret the same message in different manner. For example, you are on leave for a month due to personal reasons. Your manager may want to replace you as his team's productivity is down. However, knowing that you are on leave due to your ailing child, the HR manager feels sympathetic towards you and is in a dilemma on whether to retain you or not.

- **Language barrier:** Differences in language may also lead to communication problems as the same word may mean different things to different individuals.

- **Lack of subject knowledge:** If the sender lacks knowledge about a subject, he may not be able to convey the message properly. The receiver would then misunderstand the message.

- **Stereotyping:** Individuals might categorise certain people into a single class based on a common trait. This type of stereotyping breeds prejudice and affects the objectivity of interpreting a message.

- **Halo effect:** This is also another form of bias where an individual regards a person highly due to a single personality trait. For example, a manager might consider an extrovert member of his team to be also intelligent, sincere, and hardworking.

- **Fear of authority:** Most employees are not comfortable in exchanging their views openly with their superiors due to fear of backlash or bad performance rating. This prevents managers from getting accurate feedback.

- **Poor communication skills:** If a person lacks in communication skills and does not try to improve them, then he will fail in communicating the accurate message both as a sender and a receiver. For instance, improper use of grammar makes it difficult for the reader to understand the message.

- **Information overload:** Managers are usually overloaded with information. Thus, they are likely to misinterpret, forget, or overlook a message.

- **Inattention:** Lack of attention leads to poor absorption of a message. For example, a manager is absorbed in paperwork when his subordinate comes to explain an issue.

- **Emotions:** The emotional state at the time of communication often affects its outcome. For example, if the conveyor is in a bad mood during communication, the receiver might think the message is not good.

- **Poor retention:** The human mind can retain only a limited amount of information at a time. If an individual is not interested or not paying attention to information, then it leads to communication breakdown.

- **Stress:** A person under severe stress may find it difficult to understand the message properly.

○ **Other barriers:** In addition to the above barriers, following factors may block the communication process:

- **Physical barriers:** They include large work spaces that are physically separated from others, background noise, etc.

- **Use of jargon:** Use of technical or complex words in a message may not be understandable to a large number of people.

- **Distance:** The more the distance between the sender and the receiver, the more likelihood that the message will be misinterpreted.

- **Lack of response:** Sometimes, you prepare a great email, carefully proofread it, and send it, only to find no response from the other end. Lack of response or inappropriate response is a common problem in business communication.

- **Time pressure:** The pressure to deliver outcomes within deadlines may adversely impact communication. In a hurry to meet schedules, the formal channels of communication are reduced or messages are incompletely delivered.

2.3.1 | OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Some ways to overcome barriers to business communication are given as follows:

○ Remove differences in perception

○ Remove physical barriers

○ Use simple language and clear words

○ Avoid technical jargons

○ Reduce and remove noise levels

○ Listen attentively and actively

○ Verify whether the receiver has interpreted the message as desired

○ Use appropriate body language during communication

○ Design a simple organisational structure

○ Develop simple communication policies

○ Avoid information overload by prioritising work

○ Give constructive feedback

○ Prepare and keep a flexible schedule in meeting the targets

○ Clarify the purpose of communication

○ Set and use an appropriate channel of communication

○ Train employees on effective communication skills

○ Counsel employees to remove their fear of superiors

○ Set up policies of prevention against sexual harassment

○ Foster cultural inclusivity and diversity

○ Practice fair and transparent organisational policies

○ Keep 'open-door policy' in top levels

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. What is detrimental to the communication process?

   a. Flat organisational structure

   b. Glass ceiling

   c. Objectivity in performance review

   d. Lack of fear of authority

4. In an interview, the interviewer tests the interviewee's command over the written and spoken language. Once the person is hired, he is taken through a proper induction programme to make sure that the company's policies are clear to him. Proper trainings, including voice and accent trainings, are also conducted. All this effort is done to remove which barrier to business communication?

   a. Difference in perception

   b. Stress

   c. Noise level

   d. Inattention

2.4 IMPACT OF ICT ON BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Gone are the days when business communication consisted of formal emails, meetings with managers and attending one or two conferences by the top management. Today's technological advances have evolved business communication into a whole new level where employees are always connected. They can participate in video conferences through their smart phones, chat with peers on social media, and manage tasks via automated tools. Although these technological developments have improved workflow efficiency and transparency, they have also raised some concerns on the quality of business relationships and productivity.

❍ **Email (r)evolution:** Email has evolved from simply being a method of sending and receiving written messages to a means of workflow management. Now, you can flag priority messages and set tasks for follow-up, trigger alerts for critical messages, and send automated responses when out of office, and you can do all this through your mobile phone, without even logging on to your laptop.

❍ **Workflow management systems:** Workflow management systems for managing projects or salesforce have increased collaboration among employees. Now, a team of salespeople no longer needs to sit in the same building or in a lengthy meeting to share ideas or chase deals. From any part of the globe, they will have a clear idea about the assigned tasks, documents, appointments, and progress by simply logging into an online workflow management system.

❍ **Automation:** Companies across the world are jumping on to the automation bandwagon to cut costs and boost efficiency. With automated voice response systems, they can provide customer service while ensuring that their employees are focused on other core tasks. The automated system handles the call and directs the caller to the appropriate person in the organisation or retrieves data as requested by the caller. There are 'bots' on websites and apps to deal with online requests for information through live chats.

❍ **Artificial intelligence:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems enable companies to forecast and influence future sales based on customer preferences. They can assist marketing teams in tracking consumer trends and adapting promotional efforts. For instance, on Netflix, you will see suggestions on additional shows based on the history of shows you've watched so far.

❍ **Remote collaboration:** The freelance industry has grown substantially due to technological advancements. Due to cost pressures and lack of adequate skills, companies today post their requirements online. Freelancers are hired to collaborate with organisational managers and employees through project management platforms. With the increased use of video conferencing tools like Skype, now connecting with a 'live' person is just a matter of minutes. Companies not only save time and effort, but are also able to utilise the talented pool of resources wisely.

❍ **Near-constant access:** It is now easier to reach out to anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world. Employees, and particularly, managers, are expected to be accessible

and reply to emails even when they are on leave. Although this is an advantage during unexpected emergencies, it has also restricted the ability of individuals to relax during vacations. This may prolong their stress and restrict their ability to manage effectively.

❍ **More access to information:** Thanks to Google and Wikipedia, employees today have more access to information than ever before. If an individual comes across an unfamiliar term, he/she just types a search query on Google and will have an instant access to thousands of sources of information, including Wiki pages, news articles, videos, and online training courses, on the subject. With Google's Translate feature, two individuals from different languages and countries can collaborate without a dedicated translation team. This capability has substantially reduced the impact of language barriers to business communication.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. With the advent of modern technology, emails have become redundant. (True/False)

6. France has made a labour law against which of the following practices in business communication?

   a. Use of 'bots' in automated chats

   b. Answering work emails during non-work hours

   c. Rise of freelancers

   d. Artificial intelligence

2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ENABLER OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

When social media arrived, businesses adopted it to stay closer to customers in real time. However, today it has become such a vital tool for businesses that no company can afford to ignore it. Some ways by which social media has enabled business communication are:

❍ **Developing customer connections:** Instead of pushing products or services, businesses are focusing on being more connected to customers, aligning them to their brand, and engaging them with innovative content.

❍ **Increasing brand awareness:** Social media platforms have become a natural place to target new and potential customers. About 60% of Instagram users claim that they learn about new products on the platform.

❍ **Running campaigns:** Social media has made it faster to market promotional campaigns and get instant response from customers.

❍ **Developing brand awareness:** Social media has become an effective tool to humanise/publicise a brand. This helps to establish customers' trust and faith in the brand.

○ **Visualisation:** Businesses can connect with their customers on social media platforms to provide better visualisation of their products or services. This enables customers to make quicker decisions on whether to buy a product or service.

○ **Near-constant access:** Now, businesses have to respond to customers 24/7 throughout the year. Customers are confident that social media platforms provide them the flexibility to get immediate responses anytime.

○ **Source content:** Businesses can source content for new ideas directly from customers. They can also use social media tools to generate excitement about a new launch.

Table 3 lists the roles of different social media tools on business communication:

TABLE 3: Roles of Social Media Tools on Business Communication

LinkedIn	Facebook	Twitter	Pinterest	Skype	YouTube
Connectivity to customers and prospects	Brand exposure	Customer reach or feedback	Finding new ideas	Reduced costs of business calls	Video content for branding
Recruitment of new hires	Free marketing platform		Personalised media platform	Reduced travelling costs	Immediate promotion to a large audience
Market research	Online discussions to get valuable inputs	Branding and visibility		Staying in touch with online and remote workers	Easy and inexpensive content production
Testimonials/reviews	Connectivity with customers	Humanising the brand			

Source: *https://www.slideshare.net/tahirmanzar/role-of-social-media-in-business-communication-41775855*

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

7. Which of the following cannot be considered as an enabling effect of social media tools on business communication?

    a. Increasing brand awareness

    b. Increased customer connectivity

    c. Sourcing of content

    d. Increased distraction at work

8. Which social media tool can be used for internal business communication?

    a. LinkedIn

    b. YouTube

    c. Facebook

    d. Skype

Suppose you are the communications manager of an organisation. Which social media tools would you include in your internal business communication strategy and why? Present your ideas to a group.

2.6   SUMMARY

○   Business communication involves the continuous exchange of information within and outside an organisation.

○   In the business communication process, the business-related information is exchanged between manufacturers, customers, distributors, suppliers, managers, employees, competitors, agencies, and business partners through various channels, such as business letters, phone calls, public forums, in person, reports, emails, and memos.

○   Internal communication is the exchange of information within an organisation, i.e., between its various departments and functions, between employees and managers, between managers, and between employees to accomplish common goals.

○   External communication is the exchange of information and sharing of ideas between an organisation's parties with external entities, such as suppliers, distributors, vendors, banks, and financial institutions.

○   Formal communication is a formal exchange of information where certain rules and policies are followed by the sender and the receiver.

○   Informal communication is more relational than formal communication. It is not backed by any predefined channels.

○   Workflow management systems for managing projects or sales force have increased collaboration among employees.

○   Businesses can connect with their customers on social media platforms to provide better visualisation of their products or services. This enables customers to make quicker decisions on whether to buy a product or service.

2.7   KEY WORDS

○   **Active listening:** An act of hearing a message with proper understanding.

○   **ICT:** Information and communication technologies are used to communicate, create, distribute, store, and manage information.

○   **Halo effect:** A cognitive bias where a person is biased towards a certain person due to one attractive trait.

| 2.8 | CASE STUDY: CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA |

The given case was conducted to find out how the social media is used by communication professionals for corporate communication. The major objectives of the study included:

❍ Determining which social media sites were used by companies for corporate communication on frequent basis.

❍ Identifying how social media is used in corporate communication by the organisations.

❍ Identifying the types of messages shared on social media sites by organisations.

❍ Verifying whether companies respond to criticism on social media.

Methodology

The researchers prepared a close-ended questionnaire with the above research questions. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 125 corporate communication professionals in a face-to-face manner. It was conducted in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Out of 125, only 84 filled-in the questionnaires and they were considered for research. Thereafter, only 20 professionals were randomly chosen for interviews. The results of the questionnaire analysis were interpreted by using the percentage analysis method as shown in the following charts:

1. **Frequently used social media sites for corporate communication**
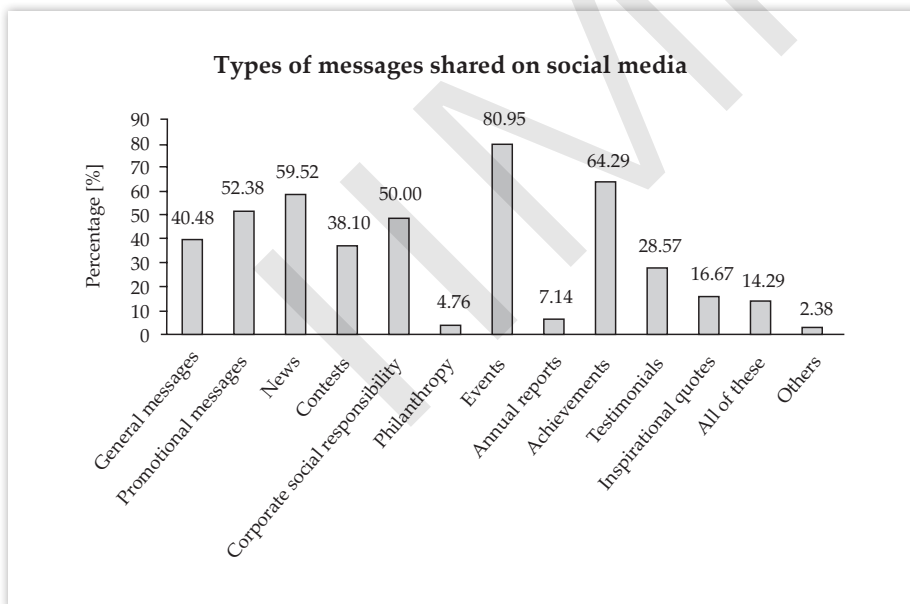

Frequently used social media sites

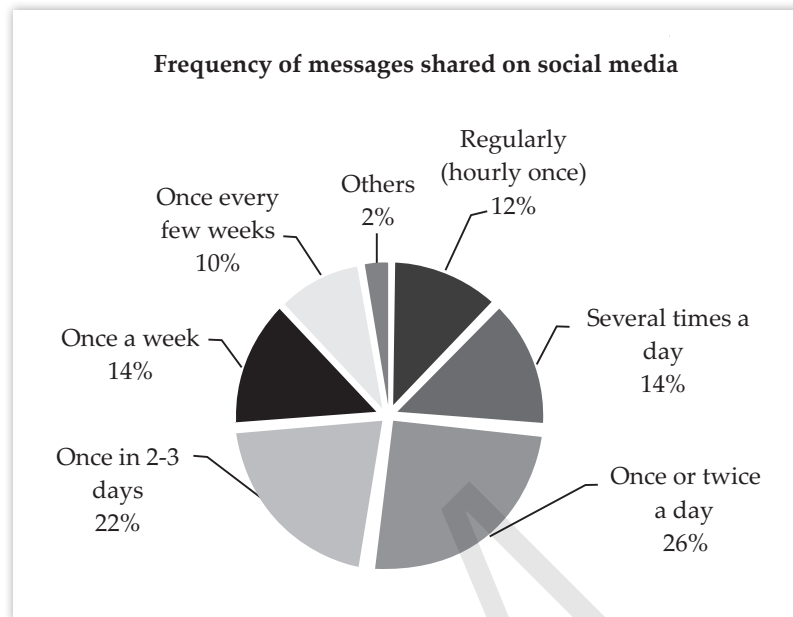2. **Popular uses of social media for corporate communication**
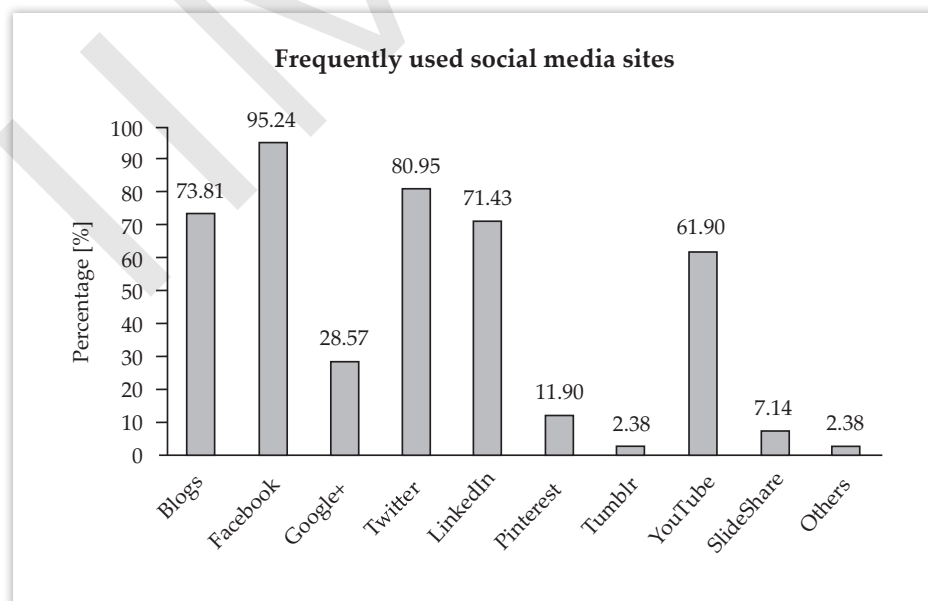
Popular uses of social media for corporate communication

3. **Types of messages shared on social media**
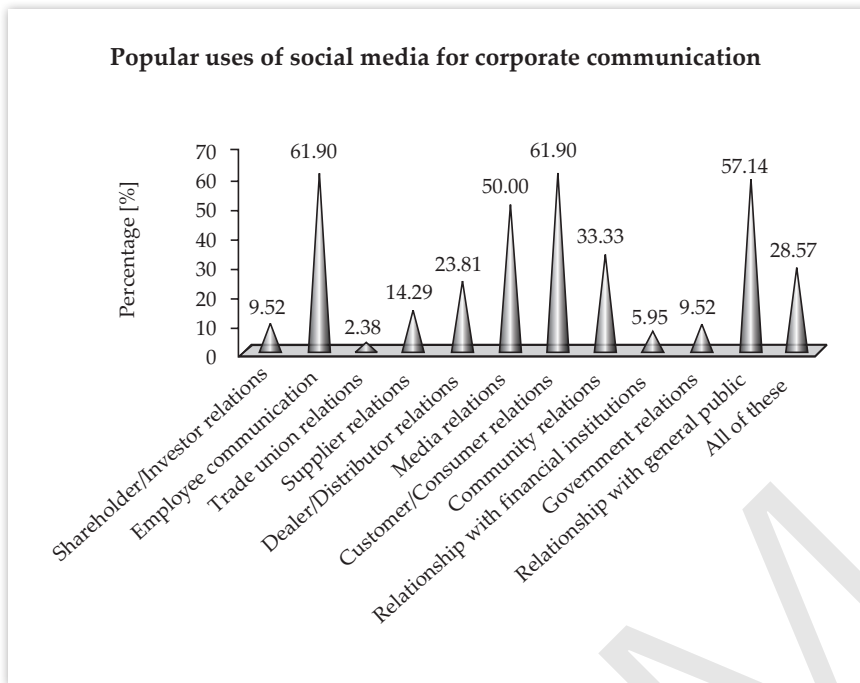
Types of messages shared on social media

4. **Frequency of messages shared on social media for corporate communication**

Frequency of messages shared on social media

5. **Response to criticism on social media**

A majority of respondents agreed that their company responded to criticisms on social media. 38.1% of these respondents claimed that their company responded to criticism by justifying their policy. 28.57% stated that their company clarified the stand. 29.76% said that their company rectified the policy.

The results of the research were as follows:

❍ For corporate communications, organisations most frequently used Facebook (95.24%), followed by Twitter (80.95%) and LinkedIn (73.81%).

❍ Organisations use social media majorly for employee communication and customer/consumer relations (61.9% each). A few other uses of social media are to maintain or establish relationship with general public (57.14%) and media (50%).

❍ Most posted messages on social media are organisational events (80.95%) achievements (64.29%), news (59.52%), promotional messages (52.38%), and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (50%).

❍ A good number of the corporate communications professionals (26.19%) usually post at least once or twice a day.

❍ Most of the organisations are quick at replying to (57.14%) criticisms on social media.

Conclusion

A vast majority of organisations use social media for corporate communication including employee communication, customer/consumer relations, relationship with general public, and media relations. In future, social media will be increasingly and more effectively used for other aspects of corporate communication, including developing and fostering relations with trade unions, suppliers, communities, shareholders, and governments.

With social media tools, companies can take immediate steps to dissolve negative publicity and respond to criticism positively.

Source: *http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4(8)/I0481059066.pdf*

QUESTIONS

1. Which social media tool is most popular for corporate communication? Explain your point of view why it is so.

   (**Hint:** Facebook with 95.24% of respondents.)

2. Which are the most posted messages on social media? What are the benefits of posting these messages on social media to the company?

   (**Hint:** Organisational events are the most posted messages on social media. These messages are used to increase brand awareness and humanise/publicise the brand to customers.)

2.9 EXERCISE

1. What is the significance of business communication?

2. Differentiate between the following forms of communication:

   a. Internal vs. External   b. Formal vs. Informal

   c. Verbal vs. Non-verbal   d. Written vs. Visual

3. What are the barriers to communication? What steps can you take to overcome them?

4. What is the impact of ICT on business communication?

5. How has social media enabled business communication?

2.10 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Basics of Business Communication	1.	Written and external communication
	2.	d. Spontaneous feedback
Barriers to Business Communication	3.	b. Glass ceiling
	4.	a. Difference in perception
Impact of ICT on Business Communication	5.	False
	6.	b. Answering work emails during non-work hours
Social Media as an Enabler of Business Communication	7.	d. Increased distraction at work
	8.	d. Skype

2.11 | SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍ Gopala Krishna, C., & Ramakrishnan, L. (2009). *Business Communication*. Mumbai: Himalaya Pub. House.

❍ Guffey, M., & Loewy, D. *Essentials of Business Communication*.

E-REFERENCES

❍ Communication, T. (2019). Differences between Internal and External Communication. Retrieved from https://thebusinesscommunication.com/differences-between-internal-and-external-communication/.

❍ Solutions, A. (2019). The Impact of Technology on Business Communications - Miramichi, Bathurst, Rogersville | Adaptive Office Solutions. Retrieved from http://www.adaptiveoffice.ca/2017/11/impact-technology-business-communications/.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍   Describe the concept of verbal communication or oral communication

❍   Demonstrate how the communication occurs without words

❍   Identify the significance of body language and gestures

❍   Discuss various types of non-verbal communication

❍   Explain the prerequisites of good non-verbal communication

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3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you have studied about the relevance of business communication and its various forms, such as internal and external communication, formal and informal communication, and written and visual communication. You have also studied the barriers to business communication and the impact of ICT on business communication. Social media as an enabler of business communication has also been described in the chapter.

The word 'verbal' means words or speech. Verbal communication occurs through the use of oral words and not written words, whereas non-verbal communication refers to all communication that is free from written or spoken words and occurs without the use of any words. This speechless message can either be sent through the medium of gestures, body movements, tone of voice, facial expressions, colour, space or time, etc.

The evolution of the words as language was the need of human beings, which are used to communicate information and emotions in a well-structured manner. Still, on many occasions, people use non-verbal gestures to express feelings by shouting, smiling, frowning, patting, or other such speechless cues.

Many a time people conjoin their words with different gestures, tones, and facial expressions to convey a much deeper meaning. The complete meaning of the message is conveyed through the combination of the verbal and non-verbal messages together. There is always something expressed and something implied within every message that is communicated. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the spoken words along with the unspoken ones.

In this chapter, you will study about the concept of verbal and non-verbal communication and advantages and limitations of verbal or oral communication. The chapter will also describe the types of non-verbal communication. The development of good non-verbal communication skills is also discussed in this chapter at the end.

3.2 | VERBAL COMMUNICATION OR ORAL COMMUNICATION

An oral communication is defined as a communication between individuals, which occurs verbally, it is also known as verbal communication. Similar to other forms of communication, oral communication possesses the same agenda of expressing and transmitting thoughts, ideas, beliefs, or opinions among people. Verbal as well as non-verbal messages are used by individuals in oral communication to produce meaningful information. The prime agenda of oral communication is to entertain, persuade, inform, or motivate. The attention of people can be easily gained through oral communication as compared to other type of communication. Also, it is more effective in retaining their interests while communicating. Oral communication can be formal as well as informal.

Presentations, meetings, speeches, workshops, classroom lectures, one-on-one briefing, etc., are a form of formal oral communication. Oral communication is unidirectional and can flow either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. The message is communicated precisely, and the common purpose is persuade, inform or to motivate.

Dinner table conversations, casual phone calls, etc., are a form of informal oral communication. Informal oral communication is multi-directional and can flow in every possible direction that exists. They do not have a proper agenda, and, thus, are not always authentic.

Oral communication requires an expressive and effective speaking skill, along with an effective listening skill. Oral communication has certain merits as compared to other type of communication, though it has several drawbacks too. Let us discuss the advantages and limitations of oral communication in the following sections.

3.2.1 | ADVANTAGES OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

The advantages of oral communication are presented in Figure 1:

Saves paper

Saves time

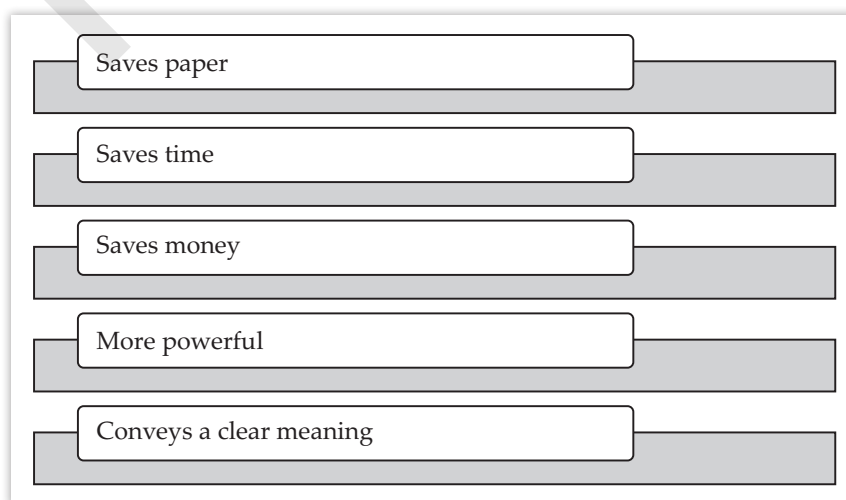Saves money

More powerful

Conveys a clear meaning

FIGURE 1: Advantages of Oral Communication

Let us now briefly discuss the advantages of oral communication as follows:

❍ **Saves paper:** With limited non-renewable resources, saving paper has become a significant issue in the present scenario. As the oral communication is a paperless form of communication, it adds a great advantage to the environment.

❍ **Saves time:** An oral communication uses verbal and non-verbal forms of communication and does not require time for writing out a message and then transmitting it. Thus, a significant amount of time is saved, and the message is conveyed instantly.

❍ **Saves money:** Time is money, and the money saved can be used in more fruitful and profitable areas by the organisation. It also helps in reducing paper and documentation costs to a huge extent.

❍ **More powerful:** Oral communication proves to be effective while persuading people, and, thus, considered as a powerful tool. A much stronger relationship can be built as well as maintained while communicating orally with customers, suppliers, colleagues and other people working in the organisation. Also, a better personal relationship is developed in oral communication as it adds an individual touch while communicating.

❍ **Conveys a clear meaning:** The message can be communicated more effectively through voice modulation, which includes loudness of voice, tone, and pitch. In oral communication, the possibility of misinterpretation or miscommunication is reduced as there is instant feedback and reaction. Thus, it assists individuals to reach a conclusion more quickly and proficiently in an organisation.

3.2.2 | LIMITATIONS OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

Along with advantages, oral communication has a few limitations too, which are discussed briefly as follows:

❍ **Not for lengthy messages:** Oral communication which is lengthy may lead to the loss of interest of the listeners. boring situation. Also, there may be a possibility that the listener may skip on important points due to long oral messages. Further, it is quite difficult for the listener to memorise all those things which are said by the speaker.

❍ **No legal validity:** An oral message is not considered as a valid legal evidence unless it has been recorded properly.

❍ **May create misunderstanding:** If the words and thoughts are not organised or summarised properly by the speaker, it may lead to miscommunication. However, the misunderstanding can be clarified later on in oral communication as well, but still, considerable time is lost in the course. But, sometimes, this can even cause a devastating situation in a business. Therefore, a speaker should be cautious while speaking because the words, once spoken, cannot be reversed.

❍ **Constrained by various barriers:** In the communication process, understanding the words are as important as the delivery of the words. However, in oral

communication, correct interpretation of words might be an issue in a few cases due to various oral communication barriers, such as accent, language, noise, etc.

3.2.3 | TWO-SIDED ORAL COMMUNICATION

There are two main participants in oral communication – the speaker and the recipient. When the flow of information is unidirectional and flows only from the sender to the receiver, with no room for feedback to the sender, is known as one-sided oral communication.

On the other hand, when there is a provision for sending feedback to the sender, by the receiver, it is known as two-sided oral communication. In a two-sided oral communication, the listener, upon receiving the message from the speaker provides a feedback to the listener. There should be a provision for proper feedback so that the listener is able to acknowledge the speaker and criticism on whatever the speaker has delivered. Similarly, the speaker should be allowed to acknowledge the listener and also expresses freely without disruption. It is necessary that the speaker should possess patience and an appreciative orientation towards the criticism of the audience. Also, being an effective listener is an important characteristic of a good speaker which can be developed through the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of oral communication. Oral communication is a form of negotiation in which the sender and the receiver at first listen to each other, and, thereafter, respond to each other after gathering information.

The 'dos' and 'don'ts' of oral communication are as shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1: Dos and Don'ts of Two-Sided Oral Communication

Dos	Don'ts
Be patient	Impatient to talk
Do not interrupt	Interrupt
Make eye contact	Look away
Show interest	Lack of interest
Be attentive	Poor concentration
Give constructive criticism	Unnecessary criticism

Two-sided oral communication proves to be helpful in cases where the instant feedback is required to recover the situation, such as the situation of conflict. The two-sided oral communication may either be done horizontally or vertically in an organisation.

❍ **Vertical two-sided oral communication:** The exchange of information between individuals, a subordinate and a superior in an organisation are known as vertical two-sided oral communication.

❍ **Horizontal two-sided oral communication:** The exchange of information between individuals having an equal position or the same rank in an organisation are known as horizontal two-sided oral communication.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following is not an advantage of oral communication?

   a. Saves paper
   b. Saves time
   c. More powerful
   d. Lengthy messages

2. When there is no provision of feedback during oral communication, it is known as _____.

3.3 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

According to **Samovar et al.** *non-verbal communication involves those non-verbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source (speaker) and his/her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver (listener).*

When the information is transmitted from one individual to others without using any words, neither verbally nor written, is defined as non-verbal communication. The concept of non-verbal communication can be better explained by understanding the difference between vocal and verbal facets of communication.

In both verbal and non-verbal communications, the vocal and non-vocal elements are present. For example, the use of oral words like 'Give me a pen' is a vocal element of verbal communication, whereas non-verbal communication does not include oral words, but various sounds as its vocal elements like speaking short non-lexical sounds, volume, pitch, and rate.

On the other hand, unspoken symbols are the non-vocal elements of verbal communication through which messages are sent. For example, writing along with sign language is considered as non-vocal verbal communication, whereas body language, such as eye contact, facial expression, gesture, etc., are non-vocal elements of non-verbal communication. The relationship between verbal, non-verbal, vocal and non-vocal elements of communication is shown in Table 2:

TABLE 2: Relationship between Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

	Verbal Communication	Non-verbal Communication
Vocal	Words that are spoken	Paralanguage, such as speaking rate, volume, and pitch
Non-vocal	Sign language and writing	Body language, such as eye contact, facial, expressions and gestures

Source: *Adapted from Owen Hargie, Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory and Practice (London: Routledge, 2011), 45.*

The evolutionary history of non-verbal communication differs from that of a verbal communication. The main base on which verbal communication is based is culture, whereas the prime base for non-verbal communication are physical aspects. The concept of non-verbal communication can be better understood by discussing its characteristics, which are discussed in the next section.

3.3.1 | CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The primary reason for the development of non-verbal communication was the necessity of living kind which helped them survive through communicating their desires, emotions, and fear among each other in an effective manner. This is one of the main reasons for the similarity of non-verbal communication among various cultures, such as similar facial expressions for anger, fear, disgust, and happiness.

Some of the non-verbal communication abilities, such as the smelling sense of a human being became less effective when survival became a lesser motivation for mankind. However, it gave rise to verbal complexity along with other abilities, such as paralanguage.

The sense of oral words can be added, replaced, contradicted, or even regulated by non-verbal communication. It plays a vital role in case of interpersonal and emotional interchange, as considerable information is transmitted through non-verbal communication.

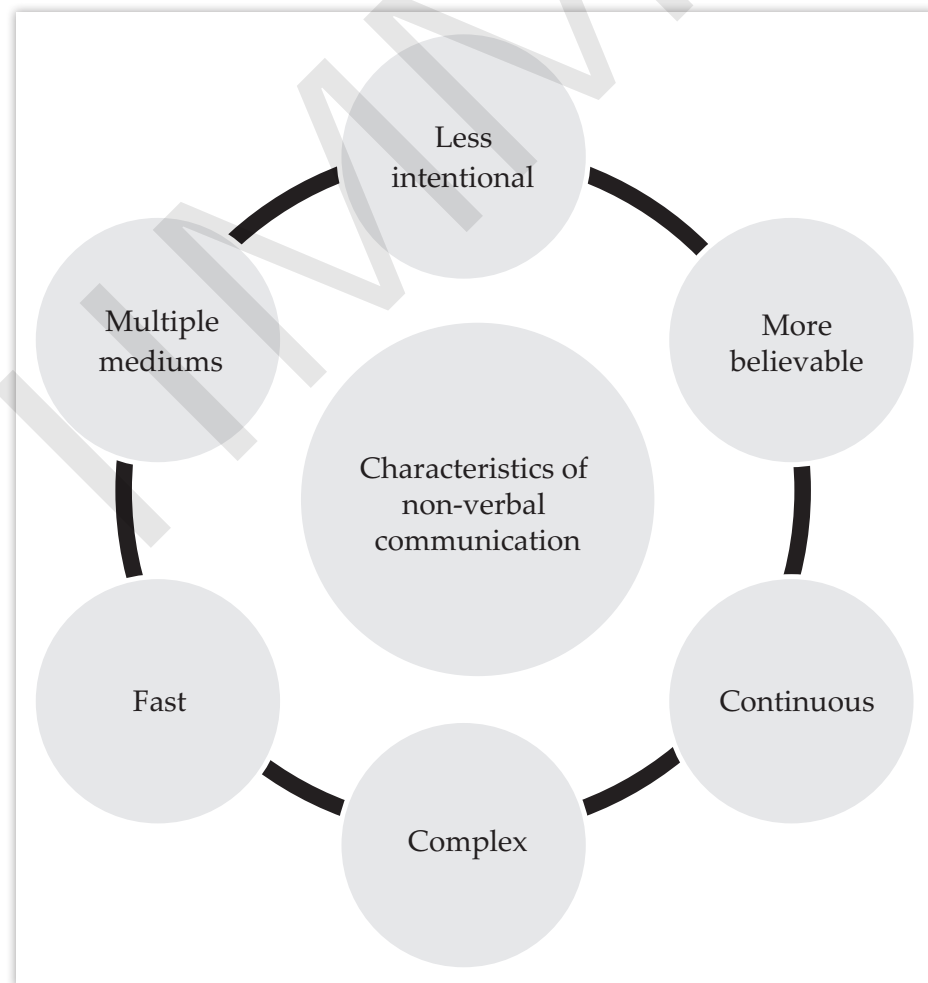The various characteristics of non-verbal communication are shown in Figure 2:

FIGURE 2: Characteristics of Non-Verbal Communication

The characteristics of non-verbal communication are as follows:

❍ **Less intentional:** This is one of the unique features of non-verbal communication. Unlike verbal communication, the message communicated by the sender is not always intentional in non-verbal communication. The sender may either be conscious or unconscious about the message that has been transmitted.

The main reason behind the evolution of non-verbal communication was to develop a language through which messages can be communicated instantly, such as fear, emotions, and desires, with each other so as to survive. Subsequently, there are many non-verbal cues which are intrinsic and uncontrolled. For example, a person may unintentionally clench his fists when angry, or blush when embarrassed.

❍ **More believable:** Some people considered non-verbal communication as more authentic communication source due to its uncontrollable nature, which makes users find it difficult to fake themselves. Also, at times, it may reveal the true intent of the users. A variance in ordinary behaviour and speech pattern can be an indication towards the partial picture that is depicted by mere oral words.

❍ **Continuous:** Non-verbal communication is continual in nature. It occurs constantly as an individual continuously communicates through his/her behaviour. Thus, it is difficult to know the switching between the two non-verbal messages, i.e., to decide where one non-verbal message ends and the next initiates, whereas verbal communication is always definite.

❍ **Complex:** The complexity of the interpretation of message is another such characteristic of non-verbal communication, which differentiates it from verbal communication. The past encounter and cultural background of user as well as the receiver have a significant impact on how the message is interpreted in non-verbal communication. Sometimes the sense of some expressions and gestures are abstruse and can vary conditionally. It is easy to identify and separate the oral words, but isolating non-verbal cues is tough and can be missed or misjudged sometimes. Non-verbal messages can be observed and interpreted, but the interpretation is not reliable since it lacks syntax and grammar. However, one can learn the skill of interpreting non-verbal cues or enhance it by learning the non-verbal behaviour of individuals from different cultures.

❍ **Fast:** Non-verbal communication is far quicker than verbal communication, as messages are transmitted instantly through non-verbal communication. The reason behind this are the non-verbal cues that arise during non-verbal communication. Moreover, the reaction is much quicker in intentional non-verbal communication as compared to verbal communication.

❍ **Multiple mediums:** There are multiple mediums through which non-verbal communication can be transmitted simultaneously. For example, an individual may clap his hands and laugh at the same time, which indicates the use of multiple senses in combination to express happiness. Also, multiple senses are used to interpret non-verbal communication as different cues are used in it. For example, facial expressions and gestures to make a decision.

3.3.2 | FUNCTIONS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The various functions of non-verbal communication are shown in Figure 3:
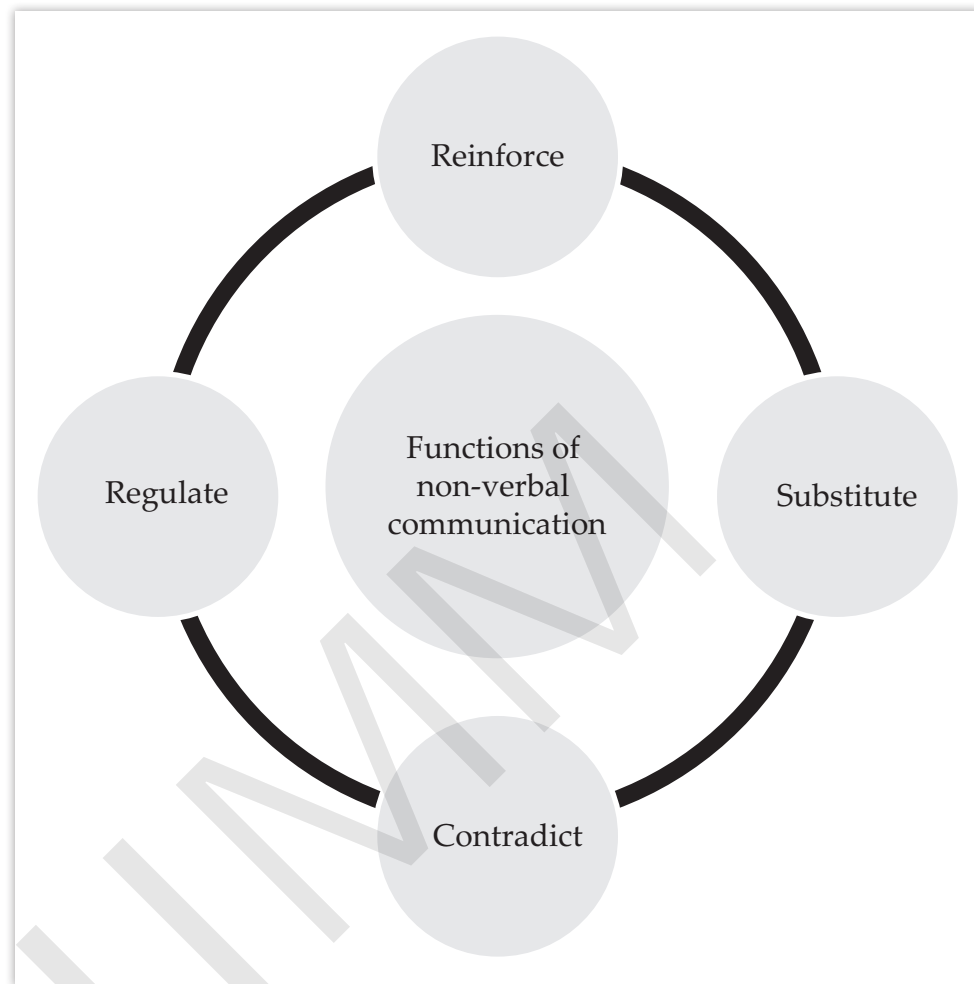
FIGURE 3: Functions of Non-verbal Communication

Following are the functions of non-verbal communication:

❍ **Reinforce:** It reinforces the oral words by adding meaning to them. For example, shaking hands while saying hello.

❍ **Substitute:** Sometimes it can even act as a substitute for the oral words during a communication. For example, instead of saying 'bye', just waving the hand.

❍ **Contradict:** The sense of a sentence can be contradicted by altering its meaning. For example, the sense of oral words can be contradicted by using a sarcastic tone.

❍ **Regulate:** Regulators are the non-verbal messages that control verbal communication. They can either support or discourage communication. For example, smiling to show interest while communicating.

Summarised differences between verbal communication and non-verbal communication are presented in Table 3:

TABLE 3: Summarised Differences between Verbal Communication and Non-verbal Communication

Feature	Verbal communication	Non-verbal communication
Types	Oral, written	Kinesics, Proxemics, Paralanguage, Time Language, Sign Language
Control	Voluntary	Both voluntary and innate
Fluidity	Structured and exact	Highly fluid and continuous
Mode	Single medium involved	Multiple mediums and senses involved
Complexity	Easy to understand	More complex, ambiguous
Speed	Slower	Fast

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. The _____ and _____ elements are present in both verbal as well as non-verbal communication.

4. _____ are the non-verbal messages that control verbal communication.

3.4 TYPES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Similar to verbal communication, non-verbal communication can also be classified under different categories on the basis of medium used. Different categories are body language or kinesics, time language, sign language, paralanguage, and proxemics. These categories are as shown in Figure 4:
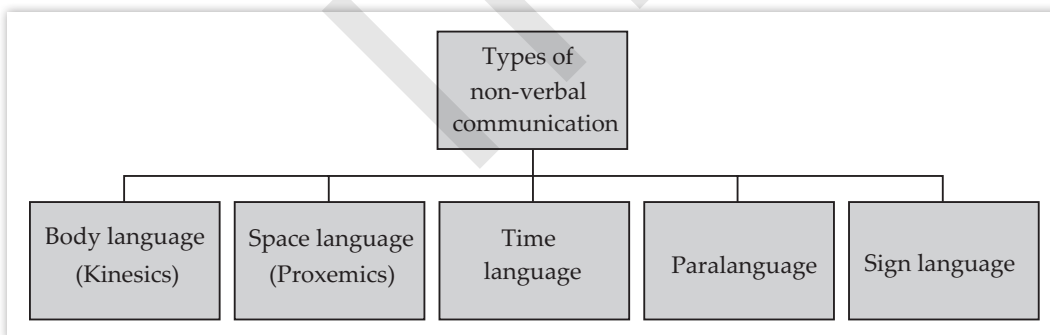
FIGURE 4: Types of Non-verbal Communication

3.4.1 BODY LANGUAGE (KINESICS)

A non-verbal form of communication that occurs through physical or body movement is known as body language or kinesics. It explains the importance and usage of various types of body language, including gestures, body postures, eye contact, facial expressions, and appearance in the form of non-verbal communication.

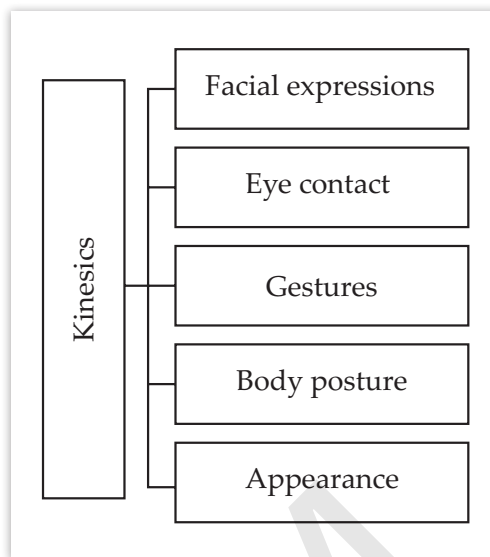Different types of body languages or kinesics are presented in Figure 5:

FIGURE 5: Types of Body Language

Let us now briefly discuss the different types of body language as follows:

❍ **Facial expressions:** Humans are gifted with an expressive face. Eyebrows, nose, mouth, and facial muscles around the forehead can be used to express numerous emotions of human being. Although true feelings are not always revealed by facial expressions of a person, but these are useful in setting the emotional tone during communication.

Facial expressions are intrinsic and are associated with an individual's emotional state or internal natal stimulus. However, they can also be intentional sometimes. The voluntary facial expressions are generally inured and are delivered as a means of communicating social information. For example, an individual can also smile for social comfort and not because of his emotional state of happiness. Although facial expressions are considered as genuine and are tough to be faked, but social smiles are made initially for the society and are different from the real cheerful smiles.

A set of basic expressions which are common among cultures are fear, joy, sadness, anger, disgust, and surprise. These expressions help people communicate feelings among different cultural groups who do not share a common language.

It is important to read the facial expressions of others and also cautiously use one's own facial expressions to make an effective communication. The use of proper facial expressions, such as a minor smile during an interview can display assurance among the interviewee and ensure success. On the other hand, negative facial expressions such as glowering can depict a lack of confidence in the person and can have a depressing effect.
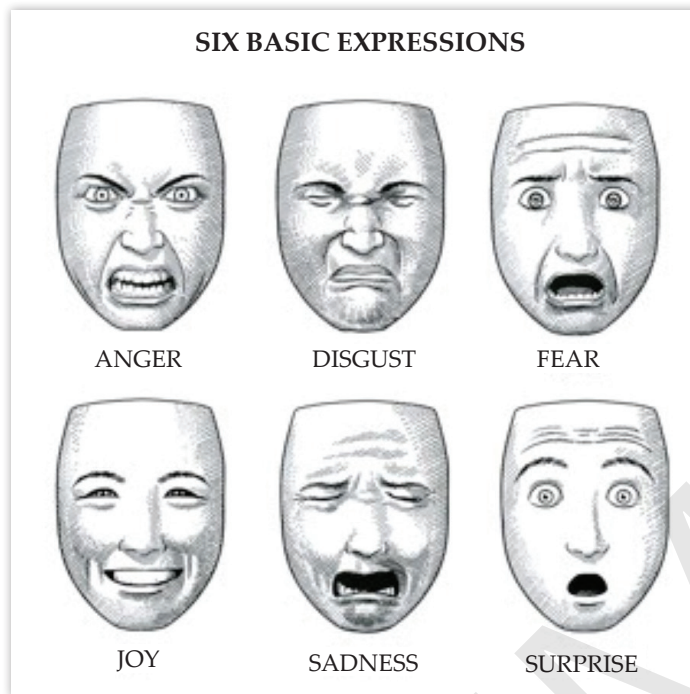
The expressions are shown in Figure 6:

SIX BASIC EXPRESSIONS

ANGER   DISGUST   FEAR

JOY   SADNESS   SURPRISE

FIGURE 6: **Different Types of Facial Expressions**

Source: *https://medium.com/kinesics/reading-facial-expressions-as-a-channel-of-non-verbal-communication- 26f929ba172a*

○ **Eye contact:** As per **William Henry**,

The primary and most effective way to express non-verbal communication is eye contact. For example, a signal of disagreement with a child can be shown just through a meek stare from his parents.

In kinesics, eye behaviour can be further divided into subcategories, which is known as oculesics. Following are the some functions that eye contact can perform:

● Regulating communication is to give others a chance to express or speak that we ourselves are prepared to communicate. For example, looking at a person in a meeting to give him a chance to speak next.

● Monitoring interaction is to judge the feedback that is received from the people during communication. For example, the eye behaviour of the audience can be used to determine whether they are active or bored.

● Sending the information to others. For example, a person can be ignored by just taking the eyes off from that person.

● Intimidating others implies glaring or staring. Eye contact is the most suitable form of showing interest in conversation that is being held between individuals. Perception towards people can also be modified by just observing their eye movement/facial expression. A steady age movement along with a facial expression depicting, and self-respect can build confidence in oneself. Feeling of insecurity, stress, or dishonesty are displayed through excessive eye blinking. Feelings of aggression and discomfort can be displayed by prolonged staring.

○ **Gestures:** When non-verbal communication occurs through an observable body movements to transfer certain messages, these movements are known as gestures. There are mainly two types of gestures, which are discussed as follows:

- **Informative:** Information about speaker is conveyed through informative gestures. These are mere inert gestures which are not linked to the information that the speaker is willing to express. Informative gestures are used not only to communicate, but also for various other purposes, such as adjusting clothing and shivering. These gestures are irrelevant to communication, though they occur simultaneously with spoken words. Additionally, an independent information can also be conveyed through gestures. For example, shivering may be an effect of the mere cold weather.

- **Communicative:** Communicative gestures, on the other hand, are made intentionally by an individual to reinforce or modify the speech. However, he might also inertly yield communicative gestures. For example, the emotion of fear might be displayed through shivering, which is a form of communicative gesture. There are mainly two types of communicative gestures, which are described as follows:

  ✓ **Manual communicative gestures:** These are the gestures which are conveyed through hands and arms. For example, shaking hands to say 'hello' or waving them to say 'goodbye'.

  ✓ **Non-manual communicative gestures:** These are the gestures which are conveyed through other parts of the body. For example, shrugging and nodding head.

  Apart from pre-defined meaningful gestures, such as shaking or waving hands to say 'hello' or 'goodbye', respectively, or nodding a head which means approval, there are many more gestures which do not hold a specific meaning on their own, but denote an action when used in combination with speech. For example, pointing a finger to denote a direction.

○ **Body posture:** The bearing or position in which an individual holds his body is termed as 'posture'. Posture is a more elusive way of communicating as compared to facial expressions or gestures, and 'hence' can alter the perception of people. A posture of an individual can display one's level of:

- Professionalism

- Competence

- Poise

- Authority

For example, the confidence of an individual displayed by standing straight is considered as professionalism or activeness, whereas a person with a slouching posture is considered as unprofessional and lazy. Similarly, a forward-leaning posture during a discussion or meeting conveys the interest of that individual in communication, whereas the negative message can be depicted by a backward-learning posture. However, responsiveness can be conveyed through an open posture sent across a message.

○ **Appearance:** Appearance has great significance when it comes to non-verbal communication. It defines attitude towards the words that are spoken. Therefore, appearance has been considered one of the most powerful aspects to persuade individual's perceptions towards other people. For example, there are a few factors that influence behaviour of a speaker, such as age, gender, hairstyle, clothes, grooming, etc., which help audience learn about status, background, and competency of the speaker.

There are two components of personal appearance, as follows:

- Physical characteristics, which are displayed by an individual's looks and the way he presents himself.

- Objects that are around an individual.

There are many studies that prove appearance is a success factor. It is assumed that people with attractive physiques have various advantages over others in several situations.

The thoughts regarding physical attractiveness differ in different cultures, however well-groomed and tidy are universal traits of a good physique. A well-presented person has an upper hand towards making a constructive impact on others. The use of objects and space around an individual are also included in one's physical appearance and significantly influence people's behaviour towards him/her. For example, a branded watch and an expensive suit indicate a successful personality or the books present on a bookshelf of an individual portray his/her character.

3.4.2 | SPACE LANGUAGE (PROXEMICS)

A space language or proxemics is defined as a communication that occurs through the use of objects and space around us. People show possession towards the space and objects around them as humans are intrinsically territorial and the way in which they express this behaviour can be understood through proxemics. Affection, aggression, or dominance can be expressed through objects and personal space around the individual. Following things are included in proxemics:

○ A space occupied by an individual at a given time is known as personal space.

○ An area in which one's music or voice can be perceived is known as acoustic space.

○ The space which one claims as his/her is known as territory.

○ The objects that are used to define the territory are known as artefacts, such as fences and buildings.

Moreover, the space around people is also defined by them which can be understood through proxemics. People divide the space around them into four types as follows:

○ **Intimate:** Distance that is preserved for family, partners, and close friends, and considered as most intimate among all the distances.

○ **Personal:** Friends and acquaintances occupy this distance.

○ **Social:** Professional and casual communications reserve this distance.

○ **Public:** This is earmarked for formal communication and is the least personal space.

Culture differs between tolerable physical contact and personal space as they are learned through observation. Therefore, the personal space of one culture can contradict with social distance of another culture. The common acceptable proxemics distances, which may deviate depending on cultural differences, are shown in Figure 7:
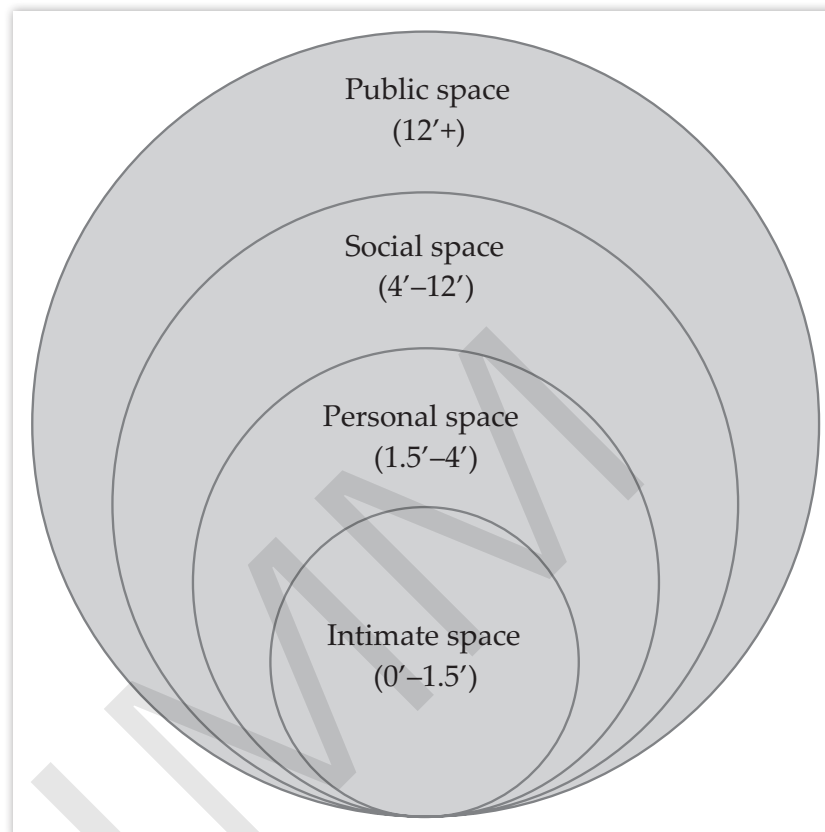
FIGURE 7: Proxemics Zones of Distance

Source: *http://open.lib.umn.edu/communication/chapter/4-2-types-of-non-verbal-communication/*

Connection between individuals can be conveyed through body angles and proximity. For example, an individual initiating among many may be inferred to as a dominant person.

3.4.3 | TIME LANGUAGE

Time language, or chronemics, is referred to as the study of how time affects communication. The manner in which time is used or perceived has a great importance of non-verbal forms of communication. An individual's status has a great influence on this and also assists in predicting others. Individuals at the bottom of the pyramid of hierarchy are the ones with high degree of tolerance and punctuality, and those at the top are the ones with the least degree of tolerance and punctuality. Therefore, the level of tolerance and punctuality can be used as a parameter to predict the hierarchy in any organisation. For example, a patient keeps on waiting for long even after taking appointments from the doctors, or a meeting can be called up by superiors even at a short notice for their subordinates, but vice versa is not possible.

Also, variation in interest and moods can influence perception of time. It is assumed that time passes swiftly when one is indulged in deep conversation, whereas a boring conversation tends to prolong the passage of time.

3.4.4 | PARALANGUAGE

A vocal form of non-verbal communication is known as paralanguage. It includes various sounds, volumes, pitches, tempos, and intonations. These add tone to, alter or controvert, a message when used in combination with verbal communication. Following are the elements of paralinguistic communication:

❍ **Vocal characterisers (laugh, cry, sigh, grunt, moan, etc.):** Joy, satisfaction, boredom, embarrassment, etc., are displayed through vocal characteriser.

❍ **Vocal qualities (tempo, rhythm):** The stable qualities of speech are the major concern for vocal qualities which includes:

   ● **Tempo:** A presentation or conversation can be boring if a speaker has a slow pace which fails to draw the attention of the audience, whereas it is difficult to match the speaker with a high tempo.

   ● **Rhythm:** This refers to the sense of movement of speech and is significant for understanding the speech.

❍ **Vocal qualifiers (volume, pitch, and tone):** The manner in which words are pronounced is linked with vocal qualifiers.

   ● **Volume:** A more powerful and intense message can be communicated through a louder voice and may discomfort the listener, whereas some cultures consider a soft volume as a sign of weakness.

   ● **Pitch and tone:** Meanings of oral words can be augmented by altering their pitch and tone. For example, a sarcastic tone adds a different meaning to the sentence.

❍ **Vocal segregates (short non-lexical noises, like ah, eh, ooh, hmm, mmm, clearing of throat):** Uncertainty, agreement, satisfaction, etc., are suggested through vocal segregates during communication.

3.4.5 | SIGN LANGUAGE

It is a myth among people that sign language is a language only for physically disabled people, whereas the truth is that it is a neutral language for all and is a typical leeway of verbal communication. Sign language is very helpful in conveying message in a situation where vocal communication is difficult, such as communication between two individuals who do not share a common language. The reason behind this is the common element that conveys a similar meaning regardless of culture. For example, for denoting the size of an object, hands are used, which is common in almost all cultures.

The words are replaced by symbols in sign language which convey the same meaning. However, there are still some flaws in sign language, as there might be a possibility that a sign or symbol possesses some meaning in one culture and a completely different meaning in another culture. For example, an index finger and thumb can be used to form a circle depict 'good' in one nation but 'zero' in another. Following are few other forms of non-verbal communication:

○ **Silence:** A form of non-verbal communication by which a positive or negative message is expressed depending on the situation is referred to as silence. For example, silence in a classroom displays keen attention of the students, whereas a sad or an unpleasant mood can also be depicted by silence.

○ **Olfactory communication:** A form of non-verbal communication through smells and scents is termed as 'olfactory communication'. A more reliable and complex information is transmitted through this form of communication. An evolution in mankind has reduced the sensing power, which has made olfactory communication dull. However, it is still the most persistent form of non-verbal communication. This is because aroma remains for a longer period of time.

○ **Haptics:** It refers to usage of the feeling of touch to communicate with others. For example, a kind tap on the back or a high-five.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. Kinesics is also known as _____.

6. _____ expressions are a part of body language.

7. Olfactory communication is a type of which communication?

    a. Time language

    b. Body language

    c. Space language

    d. Sign language

3.5 DEVELOPING GOOD NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

It is obvious that non-verbal communication plays an important role in workplace. Therefore, it is necessary to develop non-verbal communication skills. Developing these skills is a two-faced approach which is discussed as follows:

○ **Enhancing ability to send positive non-verbal messages:** It is important to develop a good non-verbal communication skill as it is said that 'the first impression is the last impression' and non-verbal communication is the initial sign that is communicated to others Therefore, one should focus on learning positive non-verbal cues. Individuals are perceived to be appealing and more charismatic if they convey more positive non-verbal messages. Also, these positive cues help an individual interact with people by making them more comfortable during

conversation. There are a few guidelines that need to be concentrated for these to be effective. These guidelines to develop good non-verbal communication skills are shown in Figure 8:
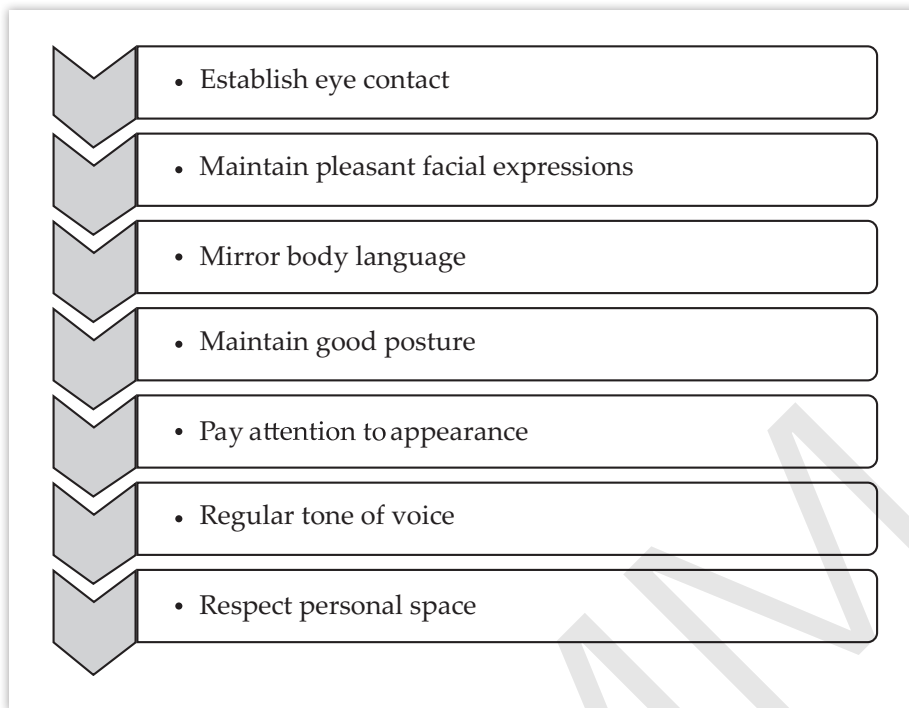

FIGURE 8: Guidelines to Develop Good Non-verbal Communication Skills

Following are the guidelines for developing good non-verbal communication skills:

● **Establish eye contact:** A trust can be established among people through making a proper eye contact as it displays openness and communicative behaviour. On the other hand, lack of proper eye contact or looking elsewhere while communicating with others conveys a lack of interest in communication. For example, while giving a presentation or during public speaking, one should try to make eye contact with people among audience as it adds confidence in what is said or presented by the speaker.

● **Maintain pleasant facial expressions:** Emotions are communicated through one's facial expressions. Therefore, one should avoid frowning in front of the audience while presenting as it conveys a feeling of nervousness or distress. On the other hand, a gentle smile shows attentiveness of a listener during communication and also makes others comfortable. However, one should be cautious and should use a smile or a laughter depending on the situation.

● **Mirror body language:** When an individual adjusts his/her own body language to match the body language of others while communicating is known as mirroring. For example, leaning towards them if they lean towards an individual. However, one should be cautious not to mirror any negative body language, such as crossing arms or fidgeting.

59

- **Maintain good posture:** Seriousness, professionalism, and confidence can be conveyed by sitting and standing up straight. Also, a greater amount of attention can be paid towards the conversation while sitting up straight, whereas slouching denotes an uninteresting behaviour towards the conversation.

- **Pay attention to appearance:** Personality of an individual is reflected in his/her appearance. Therefore, one should aim at presenting himself in the best possible manner. There are a certain sets of protocol related to work attire in every organisation; himself although neat and well-groomed staff is universally preferred. Also, there are many organisations that permit casual attire. However, an individual should be formally dressed while representing his/her organisation externally.

- **Regular tone of voice:** Speaking too loudly or a sarcastic tone should be avoided. Also, an individual should avoid making any uncomfortable sounds, such as mumbling or repetition of words, as it conveys disapproval and frustration, respectively. Speaking too fast or too slow can also leave a negative impact while communicating.

- **Respect personal space:** One should be aware about his/her proximity to others. Various proximities or personal space differ among different people and one should respect personal comfort of people while communicating to them. In other words, an individual should maintain appropriate distance with the person with whom he/she is talking.

○ **Enhancing ability to read non-verbal cues from others better:** It means learning and developing skills so that non-verbal cues of others can be effectively interpreted. This can be perfected only by observing others and practising. Non-verbal communication can only be interpreted with respect to certain situations as these are more indefinite than verbal communication. Although, awareness and skill of interpreting non-verbal cues can be developed through observing various non-verbal cues in the surroundings. This will make an individual more comfortable in the society and also more engaged, attractive, and enhance social connections. Following are the ways by which this can be accomplished effectively:

- **Paying attention to non-verbal signals:** It is obvious that a number of non-verbal cues are sent by the people around us in combination with verbal communication, which can be interpreted through observing paralanguage, body language, etc., of an individual. Moreover, the message that cannot be conveyed through words can be understood by these signals. For example, interest of the audience in conversation can be read by observing signs of boredom and dullness among them. Intentions of individuals can be determined by interpreting and understanding their body language, which helps in making effective communication with them.

- **Watching out for mixed messages:** Sometimes mixed messages are transmitted by people when their verbal and non-verbal messages oppose each other. Therefore, it is important to observe both verbal and non-verbal cues carefully to assure whether they match or not. Sometimes these may not match and you might want to make an interpretation using both in combination. For example, an individual tells that he is interested in slouching.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

8. When an individual adjusts his/her own body language to match the body language of others while communicating is known as _____.

9. Seriousness, professionalism, and confidence can be conveyed by sitting and standing up straight. (True/False)

ACTIVITY

1. Ask the class to form groups and present a role play of their choice without using written words. Make sure that the best among all the role plays is rewarded.

2. Make two teams within a class. One team can decide the name of one movie or an actor, or even the names of famous personalities, and can call a person from the other team to act. The called person has to communicate the given name to his/her own team members without using words (only through signals and expressions, i.e. dumb charades) and the team has to guess the right answer.

3.6　SUMMARY

○　A non-verbal form of communication that occurs through physical or body movement is known as body language or Kinesics.

○　50% of all the communication is done by using body language. Body language is a reflection of our thoughts, feelings, and our position in the organisation.

○　The study of space language is called as Proxemics.

○　The space around any individual is divided into four types according to the distance. They are intimate, personal, social, and public spaces.

○　Space, time, and physical context – all these three factors are important aspects of non-verbal communication.

○　Paralanguage means 'like' language. It is concerned with the fashion in which a speaker conveys his meaning through words.

○　Voice is the first and foremost element of speech. Pitch variation is necessary to make speech effective. On different occasions, and for different purposes, a communicator speaks at different speeds.

○　Oral message cannot be completed without using paralanguage.

3.7　KEY WORDS

○　**Non-verbal communication:** Communication without the use of spoken or written words.

○　**Kinesics:** The systematic study of body language works through facial expression, eye contact, gestures, head position, body shape, posture, and appearance.

○　**Proxemics:** The study of space language.

○ **Gestures:** The physical movements of arms, legs, hands, torso and head, done to convey or help to express thought or to reinforce speech.

○ **Space language:** The space around its contents and us conveys a definite meaning. In other words, it tells us how people communicate with space.

○ **Time language:** A type of non-verbal communication. With it's help we communicate with others in terms of time.

○ **Paralanguage:** 'Para' means 'like'. Hence, 'paralanguage' literally means like language and 'paralinguistic' is the systematic study of how a speaker verbalises his words/speech.

○ **Sign language:** Communication through signs, visuals, etc., is called sign language.

3.8 CASE STUDY: THE NEW HIRING

Preeti's Story

Preeti Sabharwal was very happy while joining her new job. This job was a great opportunity for her as she got this job after her secretarial training was completed. She was excited and arrived fifteen minutes earlier on her very first day at work to build a positive impression on her boss, Mr. Gaurav Bhalla, a manager-in-chief of the marketing department. She had to visit HR office first to submit the documents and complete paperwork, which almost took about half an hour. As she got off the elevator on the sixth floor of the office building, she smiled and nodded to several women who were standing next to her in the elevator. She asked one of them to direct her to Mr. Bhalla's office and after a small pause, the woman provided her the directions. When she reached his office, Preeti knocked at the door. Mr. Bhalla immediately stood up from his chair and came to the door to greet Preeti. He directed her to one of the visitor chairs and then sat against the desk next to her, making her feel comfortable. The next twenty minutes were spent going over her duties and making a list. However, Mr. Bhalla occasionally leaned over to check whether the list was being prepared correctly or not. Preeti understood the work details well, and she responded pleasantly. Mr. Bhalla then ushered her to cabin and she began to work.

Arya's Story

Arya Sharma has been working in the organisation for five years, and in due course, she had seen ten secretaries who came and went. She presumed something was not right with Mr. Bhalla and his secretaries, but none ever uttered anything about it. When the new secretary came in, Arya was surprised seeing her so late, but was not at all surprised by her attractive looks. Arya whispered to her friends: "Here comes one more young and sweet thing for Gaurav to feed on. Have you ever noticed that all his secretaries are young and attractive?" Her friends giggled and went on with their work. Later, Arya saw Mr. Bhalla and observed that he was acting pretty friendly with Preeti.

Mr. Gaurav Bhalla's Story

Mr. Gaurav Bhalla had the worst history with secretaries. They happened to come and go even faster than the seasons, and he badly needed someone to hold up with the workload. He wished this new one would be fine as she spent much time at office and wanted to be harmonious with staff. When Preeti showed up at the office, he was contented at her looks and thought she would energise things around here. Sitting on the brink of his desk, as he inclined to do, Gaurav went over Preeti's duties. She seemed anxious. So, he tried to comfort her. As he did so, she reacted with what looked like a flirting behaviour. Gaurav was confused what to do and he said nothing. After that, he attended Preeti to her cabin and he went on with the rest of his work.

QUESTIONS

1. What non-verbal cues were at play in this case?

   (**Hint:** Non-verbal communication)

2. What elements may have led to several different meanings for the same behaviour?

   (**Hint:** Types of non-verbal communication)

3.9 EXERCISE

1. 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' Comment.

2. What is kinesics? Discuss the role of body language in communication.

3. Define proxemics. What are the elements of proxemics?

4. Elaborate space language in detail.

5. What is time language?

6. Explain how non-verbal messages are instinctive in nature?

7. Discuss the sign language in detail.

8. Discuss the importance of facial expressions and eye contact in communication.

9. What are the advantages and limitations of oral communication?

10. Explain how body shape and posture affect communication.

3.10 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Verbal Communication or Oral Communication	1.	d. Lengthy messages
	2.	One-sided oral communication
Non-Verbal Communication	3.	Vocal, non-vocal
	4.	Regulators
Types of Non-Verbal Communication	5.	Body language

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
	6.	Facial
	7.	d. Sign language
Developing Good Non-Verbal Communication Skills	8.	Mirroring
	9.	True

3.11 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍ Sethi, Anjanee, & Adhikari, Bhavna (2010). *Business Communication*. [Delhi]: Tata McGraw Hill.

❍ Verma, Shalini (2015). *Business Communication: Essential Strategies for 21st Century Managers*. Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd.

E-REFERENCES

❍ The Nature of One-Way and Two-Way Communication Skills. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.legacee.com/communication-skills/interpersonal/1-way-and-2-way-communication/

❍ Smentek, R. (2019). 7 Aspects of Nonverbal Communication - Chauffeur Driven Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.chauffeurdriven.com/news-features/in-this-issue/1264-7-aspects-of-nonverbal-communication.html

Listening and Speaking Skills

Table of Contents

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┌─ LEARNING OBJECTIVES ──────────────────────────────────────┐
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After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍   Describe the listening skills and its types

❍   Discuss the barriers to effective listening

❍   Explain the commandments of listening

❍   Describe the characteristics of an effective speech

❍   Describe how to overcome glossophobia

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you had studied the concept of verbal and non-verbal communication and its significance. Listening and speaking are the most basic forms of communication. A child learns to speak much before than he learns to write. The speaker and the listener are the two sides of any communication. One-sided oral communication takes place when information flows only from the sender to the receiver, providing no feedback to the sender. In contrast, two-sided oral communication occurs when the receiver provides feedback to the sender. In two-sided oral communication, the speaker sends a message to the listener, and the listener, on receiving the message, sends a response back. In order to appreciate the speaker, the listener should be allowed to give feedback and criticism of whatever the speaker has presented. Similarly, to appreciate the listener, speaker should be able to express freely without interruption. The speaker should also be appreciative and patient of criticism from the listener's end. To be a good speaker, it is important first to be a good listener.

In this chapter, you will study about listening skills, its types, barriers to effective listening and commandments of listening. You will also study about speaking skills, characteristics of a good speech, how to deliver an effective speech, and how to overcome glossophobia.

4.2   LISTENING SKILLS

Oral messages are not useful for people if they do not pay attention to them. Communication gap is the main reason for conflict or misunderstanding. There should always be a speaker and a listener for the completion of communication process. Listening is a very important part of the communication process, but it is often observed that people pay more attention to speaking than listening.

First, you will understand the significance of listening in a business environment. To keep up great relations with all inside organisation and customers, it is vital to figure out how to be a great listener. A decent listener can always be a decent speaker. This is because the information received by a speaker is accumulated by a listener. As a result, it enables the listener to effectively communicate information among others.

People face many difficulties in their lives due to poor listening skills. The generation gap between younger and older generations is also mainly due to the communication gap between younger and older generation. People's professional and personal lives would be more successful if they build human relations by listening more empathically. Managers in organisations should improve employees' listening abilities as they need to listen and address the queries of subordinates. A salesperson should also be a very good listener because he has to listen to customers' needs and complaints. In this manner, he is able to satisfy customers.

Listening has positive impact on the whole communication process. Proper listening provides confidence to the speaker and can increase his/her productivity. If a manager wants to gain the trust, respect, and loyalty of the team, he/she should listen to them effectively.

4.2.1 | TYPES OF LISTENING

On the basis of effectiveness, listening can be categorised into two levels – active listening and passive listening.

❍ **Active listening:** It is the most desirable type of listening. Active listening requires the listener must listen carefully and not Just passively hear things. Good managers and leaders proactively involve themselves in active listening. Some traits of active listening are as follows:

- An active listener gives full attention to what is being said.

- Concentration level of listener is very high.

- It makes easier for the speaker to deliver the message.

- An active listener can remember and recall the message in a better manner.

- Listener is directly involved in the conversation.

- Listener provides feedback to the speaker and voices his opinions and arguments.

❍ **Passive listening:** It is mainly about hearing than actually listening. Some traits of passive listening are as follows:

- The listener casually hears the words, but does not understand what is being said.

- The listener focusses on the word content of the message rather than the feelings and emotions associated with the message.

- Not much involved in the communication activity.

Some other types of listening are discussed as follows:

Evaluative Listening

This involves critical aspect of listening which focusses not only on the content but also analyses the content of the message. Backgrounds of the listener play a crucial role in evaluating and analysing the content of the message being spoken.

Selective Listening

This type of listening is done only partly or selectively. The listener selects the part that he is interested to listen and ignores the rest. He does not pay much attention to what is being said. There could be many reasons for selective listening, such as low concentration level and poorly informed speaker on the subject.

Emphatic Listening

This is a higher form of listening. Heart, mind, eyes, and ears are involved in emphatic listening. This type of listening is very intense and directly connects listener to the speaker. But there is a concern about this type of listening that the listener may be vulnerable to the speaker's influence.

4.2.2 | BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

There are mainly three types of barriers to effective listening– physical barriers, physiological barriers, and psychological barriers. Let us discuss these barriers to effective listening in detail.

❍ **Physical barriers:** These are also called environmental barriers. These include sound barriers such as the malfunctioning of the sound system or the transmission failure. A sound issue can be arisen when the speaker is too close or too far from the microphone. The speaker, sometimes, turns his head to look at the screen behind him while giving a presentation. It results in half of the sentence not reaching the microphone or the audience properly. Noise is another important physical barrier to listening. Any kind of noise, whether the sound of an air conditioner or a ringing phone, etc., distracts a listener. As a result, he loses his concentration and being unable to receive the message effectively.

❍ **Physiological barriers:** These barriers arise due to the physical condition of speaker or listener. These barriers may also arise as a result of physical disabilities of the sender or the receiver. The listener may have sensory dysfunction and other physical dysfunctions. These can occur if the listener is not sitting comfortably, or unable to concentrate on the words of the speaker. If the accent and pronunciation of the speaker are poor, then it creates a physiological barrier for the listener.

❍ **Psychological barriers:** These barriers arise due to the behavioural aspects of the listener, such as values, beliefs, prejudice, apathy, fear, attitudes, etc. Poor credibility of the speaker and uninterested topic of the talk also create psychological barriers. Effective listening process requires an unbiased mind and thinking free from any prejudice.

4.2.3 | TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LISTENING

There are ten commandments of listening that can support one become an effective listener. These ten commandments are discussed as follows:

1. **Stop talking:** There is a famous saying that it is often observed that even if you are listening, you are also thinking about what to say next rather than listening to the speaker. So, the very first commandment says to stop talking and start listening.

2. **Put the speaker at ease:** Listening actively puts the speaker at ease. It helps speaker to perform effectively. When speaker is at ease and feels free to talk, he performs better and, in turn, listener also gets better input to work with.

3. **Show that you want to listen:** No one wishes to converse with an exhausted gathering of people. If the listener shows enthusiasm and interest in what the speaker is saying, the speaker performs better.

4. **Remove distractions:** Distractions in communication process, such as faulty communication equipment, ringing mobiles, shuffling of papers, outside noise, etc., can block the listening process. So, every distraction should be removed before communication process begins.

5. **Empathise with the speaker:** We should empathise with the speaker. An uninvolved group of listeners cannot give confidence to the speaker. It can also be possible that the speaker is not perfect, but for exchange of information, it is necessary to create an environment of understanding.

6. **Be patient:** A listener should be patient and should not interrupt or disturb the speaker even if you do not agree with what the speaker is saying. Every individual has his own particular manner of delivering a talk. So, give him space and time to perform according to his ability.

7. **Hold your temper:** Temper obstructs the correspondence and furious individuals never listen to each other. They simply address one another and get angry.

8. **Avoid arguments:** Arguments put the speaker on the defensive. He may shut up and cease from further talk. So, no one benefits from an argument.

9. **Ask questions:** By asking questions, a listener shows enthusiasm for the talk and respect for the speaker. This enables the speaker to convey his message adequately.

10. **Stop talking:** The last and the first commandments are the same because all other commandments depend on it. One cannot be a good listener while talking.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. _____ barriers arise due to the physical condition of the speaker or listener which might even be physical disabilities.

2. Usually, the good managers and leaders involve themselves in _____ listening.

4.3 SPEAKING SKILLS

Those with very effective speaking skills can stir the minds of the masses and motivate them to follow. Spoken words have enormous power. B. Jonson has appropriately stated:

In Julius Caesar, the famous speech of Antony incited the mob against the murderers of Julius Caesar. That speech was a masterpiece of oratory and full of rhetoric devices. Also, there have been numerous famous speeches which influenced and motivated people. The ability to deliver an effective speech directly links to the success and fame of many political leaders, businessmen, salespersons, etc.

4.3.1 | CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SPEECH

A good speech has some basic characteristics which are discussed as follows:

❍ **Clarity:** The most important characteristics of a good speech are clarity of thought and expression. A speaker's language should be clear and correct.

❍ **Informative:** Speech should be an enriching experience for the audience. It should add value to the knowledge of the listener. It should be to the point, otherwise audience would stop paying attention to the speaker.

❍ **Conciseness:** An effective speech has an element of conciseness in it. A good speech ends in a time-bound manner. It should neither be too brief nor too long. Speaker should try to stick to the given time schedule.

❍ **Interesting:** A good speech always has a mixture of anecdotes and facts, which makes the speech interesting and effective.

❍ **Informal:** A speech need not be very formal except when the circumstance demands this. A personal touch enhances the effectiveness of the speech and builds a good rapport with the audience.

4.3.2 | DELIVERING AN EFFECTIVE SPEECH

Delivering a good and effective speech is an art which cannot be mastered overnight, neither this quality can be acquired by birth. A decent speaker sincerely prepares his speech. A speech cannot be powerful if not arranged properly.

Some of the points necessary for delivering an effective speech are listed as follows:

❍ Speaker should always collect and organise his thoughts properly before the speech.

❍ Opening of the speech should be able to arouse the interest of the audience.

❍ Opening with a quotation can be very effective.

❍ The right kind of voice modulation is very essential for the speech to be effective.

❍ Speaker should always try to maintain eye contact with audience.

❍ The body language of the speaker is also important.

❍ In the end, speaker should summarise and outline the main points briefly.

❍ Speaker should not forget to compliment the audience for their patience.

❍ Closing with a fitting verse or biblical quotation can also add to the effectiveness of the speech.

4.3.3 | OVERCOMING GLOSSOPHOBIA

Glossophobia is a Greek term in which glosso means 'tongue' and phobia means 'fear'. This term is used to describe fear of public speaking. Anxiety, rapid heart rate, nausea, and sweating are some of its symptoms. These symptoms arise when a person thinks to communicate verbally with public. Glossophobia can be the reason for many missed opportunities. Thus, to overcome glossophobia is necessary for one's overall development in life.

Following methods are used to treat glossophobia:

○ **Psychotherapy:** Cognitive behavioural therapy is very helpful in overcoming glossophobia. This therapy identifies the root cause of the problem and works upon it. This therapy inculcates a belief in the affected person that all people make mistakes or have omissions when speaking in public and that is alright.

○ **Medications:** Some medications like Beta-blockers and antidepressants are used to control the level of anxiety. These are used to control the physical symptoms of glossophobia.

○ **Other methods:** Attending workshops, preparing content thoroughly, and rehearsing before speaking and counselling session are some other useful methods to overcome the problem of glossophobia.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. The most important characteristics of a good speech are clarity of _____.

4. Cognitive behavioural therapy is very helpful in overcoming glossophobia. (True/False)

ACTIVITY

1. Arrange a get-together with a group and have one individual whisper a sentence to the next individual. Each individual repeats it to the next until the final individual. Have this last individual say the sentence aloud and see how much the two sentences have changed.

2. Prepare a report or story based on a newspaper or magazine article and narrate this report or story before the class. Let the fellow students ask questions about the report.

4.4 SUMMARY

○ Communication gap is the main reason for conflict or misunderstanding.

○ Proper listening provides confidence to the speaker and can increase his/her productivity.

○ There are mainly three types of barriers to effective listening – physical barriers, physiological barriers, and psychological barriers.

○ There are ten commandments of listening that can support one become an effective listener.

○ A good speech has some characteristics like clarity, informative, conciseness, interesting, and informal.

○ Those with very effective speaking skills can stir the minds of the masses and motivate them to follow.

○ Glossophobia is a Greek term used to describe 'fear of public speaking'.

○ Glossophobia can be treated by using some methods or therapies like psychotherapy, medications, etc.

4.5 KEY WORDS

❍ **Communication:** It means conveying and understanding of intended information from one person to another.

❍ **Emphatic:** When something is done or said in a strong way and most assuredly.

❍ **Empathise:** The ability to understand the situation, problems, and feelings of others.

❍ **Rhetoric:** The language of speech or writing intended to be persuasive or leave an impressive effect on people.

❍ **Anxiety:** An uneasy feeling of nervousness or stress about something that is happening or might occur in the future.

4.6 CASE STUDY: FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

This case study intends to discuss the fear of public speaking and how hypnotherapy helped overcome this fear.

Background

An entrepreneur Catherine has to perform stand-up comedy in front of a live audience for a charity event. Catherine was used to making presentations in her business meetings, but she did not enjoy doing this. So, on the very prospect of performing stand-up comedy, she was frightened and nervous. She decided to take the help from a professional counsellor.

Catherine sounds very stressed and low on confidence about performing at a stand-up comedy event. Initially, she thought it would not be difficult, but the event only weeks away, she was terrified. In the very first meeting with the counsellor, she was requested to bring along a printed copy of her proposed script/act. The script of stand-up comedy was very good and interesting.

Therapy

Counsellor's discussion with Catherine disclosed that fear of disapproval from audience was the main reason of the anxiety of Catherine. It is natural for anyone to seek approval from the audience, but it is important to understand that the approval of others is out of your control and cannot be guaranteed. There were many occasions when despite performing your best, you cannot win people's appreciation.

So, counsellor advised her that she should only focus on her act and the quality of her performance. She was told to practise her act and record it, which would increase her confidence and help overcome nervousness and worry. She happily agreed.

Catherine felt relaxed and more confident during the next session when recording of her act was played to her. She was given positive feedback about her performance which helped her deal with the approval issue.

When Catherine returned for the next session, she practised and was comfortable with both the anchoring technique and the affirmations.

In her following session, a proven hypnosis visualisation technique was used. This enabled Catherine to see herself performing effectively in situ. She was also provided with a recording of the session to play at home.

Conclusion

During the night of performance, Catherine was brilliant and the audience loved her act.

Source: *https://www.Hypnotherapy-directory.Org.Uk/hypnotherapist-articles/hypnotherapy-for-public-speaking-case-study*

QUESTIONS

1. What was the biggest fear of Catherine associated with performing at the stand-up comedy event?

   (**Hint:** Fear of disapproval from the audience)

2. What were the methods or therapies used by Catherine to overcome the problems associated with performing in front of the live audience?

   (**Hint:** Practising and recording her act, visualisation technique)

4.7 EXERCISE

1. Describe the types of listening.

2. What are the barriers to effective listening?

3. What are the ten commandments of listening?

4. Describe the characteristics of a good speech.

5. Describe the methods to overcome glossophobia.

4.8 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Listening Skills	1.	Physiological
	2.	Active
Speaking Skills	3.	Thought and expression
	4.	True

4.9 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍ Kuhnke, E. (2013). *Communication Skills for Dummies.* John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

❍ Bernard T. Ferrari (2013). *Power Listening: Mastering the Most Critical Business Skill of All.* Portfolio.

E-REFERENCES

○ Better Public Speaking. Retrieved from: https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/PublicSpeaking.htm

○ Communication Skills: Speaking and Listening. Retrieved from: https://www.kent.ac.uk/ces/sk/communicating.html

Reading Skills

Table of Contents

┌───┐
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Know about the importance of reading

❍ Describe the process of reading

❍ Understand the different styles of reading

❍ Explain the different methods to enhance reading skills

❍ Know about comprehension and précis
└───┘

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you have studied about the listening and speaking skills. You also studied about the barriers to effective listening and the concept of glassophobia.

Reading is a cognitive process which involves comprehending words and symbols to come to a meaningful explanation. Reading helps in recognising words and is an active process which leads to the comprehension of a text or content of words. The process of reading helps readers understand the purpose and meaning of the text. Reading involves different processes of thinking, perception, and reasoning. It helps readers use or understand what they may already know in terms of previous knowledge and information.

According to **Stallfter (1969),** *reading is a complicated procedure. Readers read to get information from the printed pages. They should be able to pronounce and comprehend the printed words, signs, letters and symbols by assigning meaning to them.*

The process of reading involves thought and perception, which consists of mainly two processes – Recognising words and comprehending them. Recognising words involves the perception of how written symbols correspond to the reading language. Comprehension means to make sense of the words, texts and the written sentences. The reading process uses the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and other knowledge and experiences that help apprehend the written text. It brings in the use of various strategies to understand what is being read. It involves the use of subject ideas to organise and use the clues for the written text to find the meaning of the words.

According to **Grabe,** *the reading processes involve both an array of low-level rapid, automatic identification skills and an array of higher-level comprehension/interpretation skills.*

Reading skills help in reading texts in a more focussed and selective manner that helps reduce unnecessary reading time. The process helps in increasing our levels of understanding and concentration on the process. The ability to read opens up new avenues and opportunities and allows us to do things that are a part of the modern-day life, like reading papers, maps, instructions, manuals, etc. Reading is a complex skill which a person deals with a lot of practice and experience throughout

his lifetime. The process of reading becomes even more complicated when the text appears in a language which is foreign and the reader is not proficient in it.

In this chapter, you will study about the meaning of reading, its process and enhancing reading ability. You will also study about different styles of reading include slow reading, normal reading, skimming, surveying and scanning, and also discuss the concept of comprehension and précis.

5.2 WHAT IS READING?

Reading is an interactive learning process between the reader and the writer. There are studies which prove that reading makes a big difference to an individual's educational performance. Reading is an important skill which brings forth a broad perspective of the field of knowledge and information that helps us with an understanding of new facts and relationships.

Likewise, the people who read for pleasure everyday not only gain good knowledge and information, but their reading speed and skill also improve with time. They develop a good amount of vocabulary with an increased knowledge about other cultures and society. According to **Mariam** (1991), *a major avenue of learning is through reading.*

The process of reading involves many different processes of recognising words, comprehending them, being fluent in them, and being motivated by them. It has various processes connected to it, which are as follows:

❍ When we identify printed words, it is called 'word recognition'.

❍ Comprehending and building an understanding from these words is called comprehension.

❍ Once the words have been identified and the meaning is constructed, it brings a flow of reading that is accurate and automatic, and which helps in achieving fluency in reading.

❍ The person's eagerness and willingness to read the given text depends on his motivation.

Reading is a process wherein certain written words or text is received and interpreted by the receiver. It helps in recognising what is written and thereafter comprehending the text and understanding the main and other points along with links between different parts of the written content. There are times when we are also able to decipher meaning from the print without actually identifying all the printed words.

5.2.1 | PROCESS OF READING

The process of reading is a comprehensive process that includes recognising words and symbols with comprehension and fluency. Individuals tend to connect with the nature of the text and relate it to similar situations or experiences from their own lives. There are two types of reading which the readers indulge in:

❍ Reading for pleasure

❍ Reading for knowledge and information

According to **Education.com**, the reading process can be defined as *steps that most children go through as they read, which are pre-reading, first reading (of fiction), re-reading, and extended reading.*

The process of reading can be defined better when one understands the different stages of the reading process:

1. **Pre-reading:** The pre-reading stage involves the initial process when individuals prepare themselves to read a printed text. They can use their experience and knowledge to understand and perceive what the content in the text is about.

2. **Reading:** In this stage, individuals actually get down to read what is written. They make certain predictions and on what is in the text and they are able to adapt to their predictions. The process of reading can be done independently or with groups, guided reading, or with friends. It can be done silently or it can be read aloud.

3. **Responding:** This is the process where individuals are able to react to what is being read. It is what the person does after reading the content. The person can either discuss what he has read or connect it to real life and experiences.

4. **Exploring:** The exploring stage makes individuals continue reading and gather information to expand their knowledge with the new set of vocabulary and move ahead on a broader path.

5. **Applying:** In this stage, individuals use the new knowledge and utilise it for various things. Here, they also analyse what they have read, re-read similar material, comprehend the text, reflect on what is understood, and apply the information taken from reading the text.

5.2.2 | ENHANCING READING ABILITY

Good reading ability comes only with practice and understanding. The main aspects of reading, such as recognising the word, using phonetics, and reading fluency, can be acquired in a few years. However, it is important for the individuals to repeat the words and go through the process of reading with comprehending the text aptly and fully understand the content with predicting and recognising the characters. It helps in gaining insight and understanding the content to construct and relate to what they're reading to their own life's experience.

There are many ways of enhancing the reading skills of an individual. Some of these skills that are required in order to improve the reading comprehension within individuals are as follows:

○ **Decoding skill with phonetic awareness:** Decoding skill is an important skill required in the reading process. It is a skill to use the sound of words individuals have heard before. This is called phonetic awareness. Phonetic awareness enables individuals to hear the sounds in words which are known as *'phonemes'*. It is this sound that they use for the words and at the syllable level and connect these sounds to the letters on the text. This skill is the foundation for other reading skills. People cannot understand the written text unless they are able to read words. The blending of sounds through phonetic systems helps them identify words.

❍ **Comprehending using vocabulary and word knowledge:**

- **Using vocabulary:** It is necessary for a person to understand what he is reading and also it is important to know the words and to be able to comprehend and have a good vocabulary. The individuals are able to identify and learn the words by reading them and by relating the entire text to their everyday experience. This brings in a strong knowledge of vocabulary. Therefore, it is very important for people to read because it brings them in contact with new words and helps them increase their vocabulary.

- **Word knowledge:** The word knowledge increases by reading and by relating the reading to what is already known. Readers also need to be able to comprehend the meaning of the word and learn to understand it even when it is not clearly spelled out. Comprehension of reading can be virtually affected by the knowledge of words. People who are avid readers have a rich knowledge of words since they possess the initial ability for reading and normally understand reading better than others with lesser initial knowledge. Hence, when individuals process text containing new words and information, they automatically connect that information to their earlier knowledge.

❍ **Cohesion and construction of sentences:** Once individuals are able to identify the words, they are able to connect and construct the sentences. The understanding of how the sentences are connected with the bringing in of ideas and words within and between sentences is called *cohesion*. These skills are important for reading comprehension along with the ability to connect ideas in an overall construction of sentences.

❍ **Monitoring comprehension strategies:** People who are avid readers are well aware of what they are reading. With their experience, individuals are able to predict the upcoming text and gather an overview of the text even before reading the complete text. Readers connect their ideas in the text to prior knowledge and make a note of their expectations and predictions regarding the content along with their prior knowledge. They make notes and remember important points which help them interpret the text. Thereafter, they analyse the important points of the text and decipher how they might be used in the future.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. The _____ stage involves the initial process when individuals prepare themselves to read a printed text.

2. With their experience, individuals are not able to predict the upcoming text and gather an overview of the text before reading. (True/False)

5.3 DIFFERENT STYLES OF READING

The process of reading is a difficult communicative process of receiving and interpreting the written words. Reading helps recognise what is written in the text. Individuals are able to comprehend and understand the matter and are able to link it to their prior knowledge. The process of reading does not really start from the first word and going to the next and then so on until the end. It is important to

understand the context of the total content. There are different styles of reading texts, like a newspaper, books, paper, manuals, and more.

People read a lot of text for gaining information or for pleasure. For every individual, there would be a different style and purpose for reading text or content. Reading can be done loudly or silently.

Loud Reading

Reading loudly helps people correct their pronunciation, pitch, speed, and fluency. It teaches them to read with the right form of expressions and understand the meaning of the words, sentences, and phrases.

According to **Ryburn**, *to test the pupils' knowledge of English words and phrases and whether they know how to pronounce them, how to phrase words how to articulate clearly. That is, reading aloud is a test as well as a practice*.

Silent Reading

Silent reading is considered to be the best form of reading as it keeps the individual occupied and also does not disturb anyone in the process.

According to **Ryburn**, *the aims of silent reading are pleasure and profit; to be able to read for interest and to get information*.

The four basic styles of silent reading are as follows:

❍ **Skimming:** Skimming through text is for the purpose of understanding the gist of the text. It gives an idea of what the content is about at the initial level. People do that in the morning when they glance through the headlines of the newspaper or a magazine to know about the main points. They read what they feel is important after that.

❍ **Scanning:** Scanning is moving your eyes quickly through a text to get some specific information. One uses this technique to look for a phone number or a name in the telephone book. People normally scan through information in books or manuals to see whether they are useful for them or contain what they want to read.

❍ **Intensive reading:** This type of reading is done to understand and get detailed information on a subject. This kind of reading is done for a definite purpose or task. It is beneficial for people since it helps them understand the content and vocabulary by finding out the meaning of words in the context. It gives them information which they can retain for a long time. The knowledge and information from intensive reading remain in our memory for over a period of time.

According to **Jesperson**, *intensive reading refers to keeping readers occupied with the text repeatedly in such a way that they do not lose sight in the meaning, so that they may thus become so familiar with it at last that they know it almost or entirely by heart, without having been directly required to commit it to memory.*

❍ **Extensive reading:** Extensive reading involves reading larger content or book for pleasure, professional purpose or going through a technical manual. People

normally opt for extensive reading to improve their fluency, vocabulary, and grammar.

According to **Champion**, *the books prescribed for extensive reading should not contain even one unfamiliar word or phrase. There should not be a language barrier between the pupil and what he reads.*

The books should be interesting and according to the culture, taste and liking of the reader, so that they would want to read them. This form of reading is done for longer content, which people can read over a period of time and at their level of ability. This kind of reading improves the speed and learning ability of readers.

According to **Thompson** and **Wyatt**, *the main purpose of extensive reading is the cultivation of a taste for reading and it seeks by encouraging the habit of visualising what is read to make reading a form of visual instruction.*

5.3.1 | SLOW READING

Slow reading involves reading a text slowly to understand the content in a better way. It can be unintentional also due to low fluency in reading. Reading slowly or slowing down the speed of reading intentionally can have some positive effects which are listed as follows:

❍ One of the benefits of slow reading is that it has a calming effect and one does not have to strain hard and the mind can focus on only one thing at that time.

❍ Reading slowly helps people do away with stress and anxiety since they don't force their mind on anything that makes them forget things that might be straining them.

❍ Reading slowly is done with pleasure and it helps in understanding, responding, exploring, and analysing the text better.

❍ With reading slowly, one is able to absorb the content better and retain ideas from the text being read. One can learn new things and gain more knowledge.

❍ Reading slowly helps grasp the meaning of the complex content and symbols within a text that one can miss out if he reads fast.

5.3.2 | NORMAL READING

The average speed of reading of most people is around 200 to 250 words per minute. School and college going students can probably notch up their pace due to practice to around 300 words per minute. In case of intensive reading of technical or scientific manuals, it is 75 words a minute since the reader needs to focus on every word to understand the content better and it can be best done with slow reading.

In the process of normal reading, the reader might miss out on words which are complex or unfamiliar. People who make an effort to read for fifteen minutes a day have the right potential to increase their skills in reading. Normal reading brings in a number of advantages to various people:

❍ It helps develop a habit of self-studying amongst students.

❍ It helps develop the habit of reading.

❍ It helps people understand the meaning of the given content.

❍ It improves the level of knowledge about any information.

❍ It helps increase people's passive vocabulary and grammar.

❍ It helps people concentrate better.

❍ It is normally a form of recreation which gives readers pleasure and cools their mind.

❍ It helps keep readers away from stress and anxiety.

5.3.3 | SKIMMING

Skimming is a sophisticated and fast reading that refers to reading a text or content for getting a rough idea of what it is all about. It is a tool that one uses for reading more in less amount of time. It is a method of looking through the main ideas to get an understanding of the total content. It is a reading process that gears the reader for detailed reading to understand the main idea and the points of the written content. The reader needs to utilise a proper strategy for reading which involves quick reading and analysis of the content. Skimming involves finding the purpose and context of the text. The text or content could be for an academic or professional purpose of reading. It could mean getting relevant information for different purposes.

The process of skimming helps in better understanding of content. With skimming, one goes through the reading material quickly for getting a gist of it, and to understand how it is used. It helps in giving an idea of what the writer wants to portray or it helps to get an idea on the intention of the writer. The process of skimming helps find the information quickly while making sure the time has been used wisely.

5.3.4 | SURVEYING

Surveying a text is going through it in a broader aspect, focussing on the useful aspects rather than the general details. The important purpose of this is to understand the importance of the text and to know whether it is worthwhile reading more of it. Surveying the content helps in fluency of the text and increases the reading speed and improves comprehension of the content.

Surveying helps decide whether one should read the text slowly, normally, or just skim through it. When surveying a text, one does not normally read the first and last lines of every paragraph, more so for the longer content. This would be time-taking and does not give a general understanding of the main ideas to understand its importance. Surveying helps:

❍ Facilitate and improve on the reading ability

❍ Improve comprehension

❍ Give a broad idea on whether to read the content, skim through it, or do selective reading

5.3.5 | SCANNING

The process of scanning helps us look for definite information by doing fast reading. Scanning is different from skimming since, in scanning, we ignore the majority of the content and focus only on certain definite words or phrases.

Scanning helps us look through a text or content in the following ways:

❍ Looking for a certain point or fact in content

❍ Trying to locate a sign or formula in text

❍ Looking for a word in the dictionary

❍ Going through train schedules

❍ Looking through the list of references

❍ Going through examination results

❍ Looking for a specific note or remarks in the paragraph

While scanning to find some specific information, we do not go through the whole text, but let our eyes wander until we find what we are looking for. It could be some fact, date, name or any other piece of information. The comprehension gained with the help of scanning is adequate to complete the relevant task.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. People read a lot of text for gaining information or for _____.

4. While scanning to find some specific information, we do not go through the whole text but let our eyes wander until we find what we are looking for. (True/False)

5.4 | COMPREHENSION AND PRÉCIS

Comprehension is the process of understanding what is being read and, at the same time, it is a process which is not easy to teach, learn or practise. Reading comprehension is an individual's ability to read text, decode, and process it, understand it and then integrate it with knowledge that the individual possesses already. Reading comprehension is a continuous process and it happens before, during and after a person has read a particular text. Reading comprehension is an exercise which is aimed at improving a person's ability to read and understand the direct, suggested and hidden meaning within the given text. While comprehending the given content, readers are able to improve their ability to read in between the lines and also improve on their expression. It is an important tool to judge the level of understanding of the passage by an individual. Comprehension essentially can be divided into three aspects:

❍ The reader who wants to comprehend

❍ The content that is to be comprehended

❍ The process in which comprehension is a part of it

Reading comprehension is one of the important parts of the act of reading. While reading text, a person goes through different cognitive processes. He is simultaneously taking help of different factors like using his knowledge and understanding of 'phonemes' to identify the sound of words and 'phonics' which is connecting letters and sounds. It brings forth the relationship between sounds, letters and words, and the ability of the individual to understand and find meaning from the text. Reading comprehension is the last part of the act of reading. It cannot happen independently of the other two factors of the process and is the most complex as well as the most significant of the three components.

According to **Jeniffer Serravallo**, *comprehension is at the heart of what it means to really read by thinking and understanding and getting at the meaning behind a text.*

Reading comprehension is made up of two factors – text comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. For going through the text and to understand it, the reader should be able to identify the vocabulary which is used in the piece of content. It is important for the words to make sense or else the entire passage or story will have no meaning. It is necessary for the readers to go through their prior knowledge of vocabulary, and, at the same time, it is important for them to continuously learn new words and vocabulary. It is necessary for them to learn new words that they might come across in a text or help them in their understanding of unfamiliar words as they come across them in the writing. Apart from being able to understand every specific word in a text, the individual also needs to put them together to construct it and be able to understand what is being tried to be said. This process is called text comprehension. The process of text comprehension is more difficult and different from the knowledge of vocabulary. There are different text comprehension methods that the readers use to develop their habit of reading comprehension. There are different factors that help comprehension which include generating and answering questions, understanding the text and summarising and being able to find a meaning to the content.

In the words of **Bonnie B. Armbruster**, *comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading.*

Reading comprehension is an important component of functional progression of skills, which begins with the ability to understand spoken words and decode written words, and which aims at a proper understanding of the text. To be able to comprehend and read important instructions on medicines or warnings on a container with dangerous materials is very important. If people are able to read and comprehend things, they are able to live safely and, at the same time, they are able to develop intellectually and socially.

Précis requires readers to go through the passage well and to write well while communicating their thoughts clearly and in a precise and effective manner. To put down the thoughts after reading and writing the précis helps readers to be clear, to avoid being haphazard in their recollection of facts, to ignore irrelevant details and other repetitions while summarising the content. It is necessary to use the right vocabulary by choosing the right and effective words in a particular sentence and to reconstruct the sentences, without losing on the facts and ideas, in a structured manner.

According to **Richard Palmer**, *the ability to write a précis* is the central language skill. For a start, it is a craft essential in all professions and businesses; indeed, anyone whose work includes dealing with documents at some time (and that accounts for most people) will need précis skills as a matter of course... Such vocational considerations, though important, are not, in my view, worth discussing, however. The fundamental value of précis is that it tests and exercises every aspect of linguistic competence.

The person writing a précis should be able to recognise the important ideas in a given passage and separate them from unimportant ideas. It is an effective way for improving our reading, comprehending and writing skills. It helps explain the summary of a text or content. The word 'précis' comes from the English word 'precise'. The process of a précis involves compressing a given passage to explain the gist of the important meaning of the passage. It is necessary to be able to comprehend first as only then can one be able to summarise the content properly. A précis is not long and is generally a concise form of the original passage. Every important detail is included in the summary so that the précis is able to convey the main concept of the text in a total condensed form. Reading of précis requires a lot of concentration so that one is able to understand and remember the content that has been read. It is important for one to be able to understand the main concept of the passage so that he can summarise the content. This process is similar to that of reading comprehension.

Précis writing has an important role to play in today's busy and competitive world. It helps in summarising the lengthy documents that are prepared for the business executives who are busy and do not have enough time to go through the entire content. Even though there is no specific rule regarding the length of the précis, the length of the précis can be approximately one-third of the length of the content. Writing a good précis is an advantage and can help a good communicator have a high level of perfection. Following are some areas where précis are much required and used:

❍ **Reading:** It is important to read the passage in the same manner as one would read comprehension. It is important to keep the main ideas in a précis. This helps in condensing and zeroing in on the subject and the content. Reading the content helps in understanding the passage and one can then give it a name or a subtitle. The same process we have read in connection to comprehension can be applied to précis also to find the main concept of the passage. Reading carefully would help in locating an idea of the important details which one cannot leave out in a précis. It is important to be clear and definite about the meanings of words within the passage. One can even refer to a dictionary to know the meaning of the words, if in doubt, because if one misunderstands the word or the phrase, then the mere essence of the passage can get lost.

❍ **Writing:** The other area where précis are used is in the form of writing where one makes a rough draft after reading the passage, takes notes and follows a logical structure. At times, the original contents are not logically structured. However, while writing précis, care must be taken to logically and systematically arrange the ideas based on the important points that were noted after reading the passage. While writing the précis, it is important to shorten the passage to one-third its length. One must keep in mind that the number of words of the précis should be

within the limit. One may have to make many drafts before we are able to get it right. While making the draft, it is important to use own words and vocabulary and not copy them from the passage unless there are some technical words which cannot be substituted.

❍ **Compressing techniques:** It is important for the reader to understand the contents of the passage before compressing it. It is certain that the passage for précis has to be shortened. Every passage will contain long sentences and other details which can safely be left out of the précis for shortening it without changing the meaning of the context while summarising it. Long sentences can be shortened and certain words and phrases can be ignored with restructuring the sentences to express the message in a short way. A précis is normally put forth in an indirect speech. It is important to summarise and condense them in their indirect form.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. Reading comprehension is made up of two factors – text comprehension and _____ knowledge.

6. A _____ is normally put forth in an indirect speech.

ACTIVITY

Search on the Internet for an example of comprehension and précis writing. Prepare a tabular comparison of the major differences that you find between the two styles of reading and writing.

5.5 SUMMARY

❍ Reading is a cognitive process which involves comprehending of words and symbols to come to a meaningful explanation.

❍ The process of reading involves thought and perception, which consists of mainly two processes of recognising the words and comprehending them.

❍ Reading is an interactive learning process between the reader and the writer.

❍ Good reading ability comes only with practice and understanding. The main aspects of reading, such as recognising the word, using phonetics and reading fluency, can be acquired in just a few years.

❍ The process of reading is a difficult communicative process of receiving and interpreting the written words.

❍ For every individual, there would be a different style and purpose for reading a text or content. Reading can be done loudly or silently.

❍ Comprehension is the process of understanding what is being read and, at the same time, it is a process which is not easy to teach, learn or practise.

❍ Reading comprehension is one of the important parts of the act of reading.

❍ Précis requires a reader to go through the passage well and to write well while communicating his thoughts clearly and in a precise and effective.

○ The process of a précis involves compressing of a given passage to explain the gist of the important meaning of the passage.

5.6 KEY WORDS

○ **Pre-reading:** It involves the initial process when individuals prepare themselves to read a printed text.

○ **Skimming:** It is the rapid reading that refers to the process of reading a text or content for getting a rough idea of what it is all about.

○ **Surveying:** It refers to taking a broader look at things, which gives an overall picture and helps us analyse what its key features are, and how valuable it is.

○ **Scanning:** It helps with the ability to find specific information or data as fast as possible.

○ **Comprehension:** It is the understanding and interpreting of what one reads. It is the process of understanding what is being read and, at the same time, it is a process which is not easy to teach, learn, or practise.

○ **Précis:** It requires a reader to go through the passage well and to write well while communicating his thoughts clearly and in a precise and manner effective.

5.7 CASE STUDY: IMPROVING ON READING ABILITIES

Jane Butler was a JSS teacher of English and Social Studies. She was very eager to attend a training program for English teachers in Cape Town. She wanted to learn important and necessary methods of helping her students from Grade 9 so that they are able to read better. It was noticed that the students, for unknown reasons, were very eager to read their English textbooks with more interest than they wanted to read their Social Studies textbooks. It made her think and wonder whether it was because English textbooks were interesting because they had stories and many other things about people, while Social Studies talked about facts and figures.

Jane eventually shared her thoughts and her concerns with the experts. There she realised that it was not only her students who behaved in this manner. There were many others who did exactly the same and the others too were concerned. Other teachers in the school too were facing the same problem. The experts decided to work on it and to make this a complete session of training. The next day, they had many participants, including Jane, working on the exercises connected to the textbooks that they were teaching. During the training, they made Jane and others go through a number of interesting activities. They were made to read through the same texts for different purposes with varying speeds and, at the same time, focussing on different aspects of the passage. This made Jane realise that if she could get her students actively engage with the text while going through a number of activities, then they would read other subject textbooks with the same interest as they would read their English textbooks.

Next day, Jane tried out some of the techniques and exercises she had learned in her class. She found to her pleasant surprise that the students were very much interested and they were eager to read with interest, and they slowly began to perform better

in Social Studies too. This made her realise that no matter what kind of text we read, if we read actively, we will get the maximum benefit and joy out of it.

Source: *http://orelt.col.org/module/unit/3-reading-efficiently-sub-skills-reading*

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jane worried for her students?

   (**Hint:** Lack of interest in reading)

2. How did Jane change the interest of her students?

   (**Hint:** By using different strategies and methods while reading)

5.8 EXERCISE

1. Explain the importance of reading.

2. What are different styles of reading?

3. What are different ways of enhancing reading skills?

4. What are comprehension and précis?

5.9 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
What is Reading?	1.	Pre-reading
	2.	False
Different Styles of Reading	3.	Pleasure
	4.	True
Comprehension and Précis	5.	Vocabulary
	6.	Précis

5.10 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

○ Wallace, M.J. (1980). *Study Skills in English*, 1st ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

○ Francois Grellet. (1981). *A Practical Guide to Reading Comprehension Exercises*. Cambridge University Press.

E-REFERENCES

○ https://passnownow.com/language-structure-reading-skills-surveying-skimming-scanning/.

○ http://spectrumbooks.in/books/english/comp_precis.html.

CHAPTER

6

Business Correspondence – I

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ List the advantages and limitations of written communication

❍ Explain the principles of effective writing

❍ Discuss the purpose and features of business letters

❍ Describe the layout of business letters

❍ Explain various types of business letters

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you learned the importance of reading and developing reading skills. The chapter also elucidated different styles of reading, and comprehension and précis.

Business correspondence refers to the exchange of written messages and documents between individuals, organisations, or departments for the purpose of conducting business activities. It is a formal means of communication that involves the use of letters, memos, emails, reports, and other written documents to convey information, make inquiries, place orders, negotiate deals, address concerns, and perform various other business-related tasks.

Effective business correspondence contributes to clear communication, establishes a positive professional image, and helps build and maintain business relationships.

Business correspondence can have various forms such as internal correspondence, external correspondence, routine correspondence, sales correspondence, personalised correspondence, circulars, memos, faxes, etc. Most business correspondences have widely accepted layouts that are followed universally.

This chapter discusses the objectives and ways of effective business writing. It also explains different types of business correspondences and business-letter formats. In the end, the chapter describes the basic guidelines for writing business letters.

6.2 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

When two or more individuals or groups communicate with each other using written symbols, it is known as written communication. The major objective of written communication is to share ideas and information in a comprehensible manner. Effective written communication requires that the sender has extensive knowledge of the intent, receivers, content, language, and the concerned organisation. In the next sections, you will learn about the goal of written communication and the principles of effective writing.

6.2.1 ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Written communication is one of the most extensively used modes of communication in most organisations. There are different forms of written communication that are

primarily used to exchange information related to business operations, such as memos, reports, circulars, notices, manuals, e-mails, etc. Some of the benefits that written communication offers are as follows:

❍ **Can maintain records:** Most written correspondences can be on record, such as information exchanged with stakeholders, minutes of meetings, mails, etc. Just imagine getting an oral appointment letter. Written documents provide a long-lasting record that can be used for future references.

❍ **Has legal validity:** Written records provide legal authority, which can be used as proof of any information by organisations for any legal defence.

❍ **Is a fast and affordable medium:** E-mails, for instance, are the most inexpensive and quickest medium of written communication in cases where in-person communication is not possible.

❍ **Is accurate and dependable:** Written communication is considered more accurate and reliable than oral communication because the information exchanged cannot be changed, unlike in the case of the latter.

❍ **Can be well drafted:** Oral words can be spontaneous unlike written communication which can be edited, modified, and carefully articulated, offering maximum clarity and accuracy of meaning.

❍ **Can be used to assign responsibility:** It may not always be possible to communicate the work responsibilities to all employees in person. To take care of such situations, written communication can be used to effectively assign responsibilities.

❍ **Allows little chance of misunderstanding:** In case the words to be written are carefully chosen and present the meaning precisely, there are very little chances of misunderstanding using written communication.

❍ **Allows editing and omissions:** Written words can be edited or modified to suit the receiver before the message is sent across to the receivers.

However, written communication has certain limitations, which are as follows:

❍ **It is a time-taking medium:** Written communication requires a lot of time. Putting one's thoughts into words and formulation of the same is, of course, a time-consuming process, as proper structuring is required.

❍ **It uses too many resources:** A large amount of resources are wasted in an organisation on stationery and storage of files and records. Though the use of computers helps to save, or rather just cut down on, some of these expenses, but still written communication costs a lot to organisations and also to the environment, as the use of paper means cutting down trees.

❍ **It requires good writing skills:** Proper grammatical knowledge of a language is required to communicate effectively. Written communication is constrained by grammar and, of course, the handwriting if the records are not typed. Also, poorly drafted messages may lead to the loss of business for an organisation.

6.2.2 | PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

The main principles of effective writing are as follows:

❍ **Determining the purpose:** The first step of writing is to decide the purpose and identify the type of business write-up required.

❍ **Considering the audience:** Effective writing requires that the content should be according to the type of audience. Identify your receivers before writing the text to be delivered.

❍ **Maintaining clarity:** Make sure that the message is comprehensive and logical. Avoid using irrelevant text as it may cause confusion and ambiguity.

❍ **Keeping content simple:** A short and to-the-point message leaves more impact than rhetoric sentences that are repetitive and lengthy. Therefore, avoiding unnecessary words and long sentences would help in gaining the attention of the receivers and getting across the meaning more effectively.

❍ **Being to the point:** Avoiding ambiguity in the content and sticking to exact details so as to not confuse the reader helps in effective written communication.

❍ **Avoiding passive voice:** Using an active voice while writing and keeping the messages short and direct helps to create short, crisp and more informative content.

❍ **Avoiding the use of jargons:** Jargons are not understood by everyone and, hence, their use must be avoided. Use easy to understand text that is understood by everyone. Jargons may be appreciated by some readers but for most others, they only create confusion.

❍ **Maintaining factual accuracy:** The written content should include genuine and original facts and not present anything that is false and overpromising for the benefit of the readers.

❍ **Proofreading to avoid grammatical and spelling errors:** Errors in writing may completely distract the readers, leaving them in doubt about the authenticity of the sender and the message. Proofreading the written text to avoid any spelling or grammatical errors is a must to keep the communication effective.

❍ **Structuring and formatting the text:** Effectively structured content, which is organised in a way such that the information is arranged in a logical and coherent way, is greatly preferred by readers. Structured writing also looks elegant and sophisticated. Sticking to prescribed formats, for example when writing scientific reports, resumes, etc., helps in maximising clarity.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. The major objective of written communication is to share ideas and information in a comprehensible manner. (True/False)

2. If the words to be written are carefully chosen and present the meaning precisely, there are very few chances of misunderstanding using _____.

6.3 | BUSINESS LETTERS

A business letter is different as compared to other kinds of letters that individuals write or receive in terms of the content, format, and other characteristics. Clear and precise communication is key to effective business letters and, hence, care should be taken in writing a business letter.

6.3.1 | FEATURES OF A GOOD BUSINESS LETTER

Some of the main features of a business letter are shown in Figure 1:
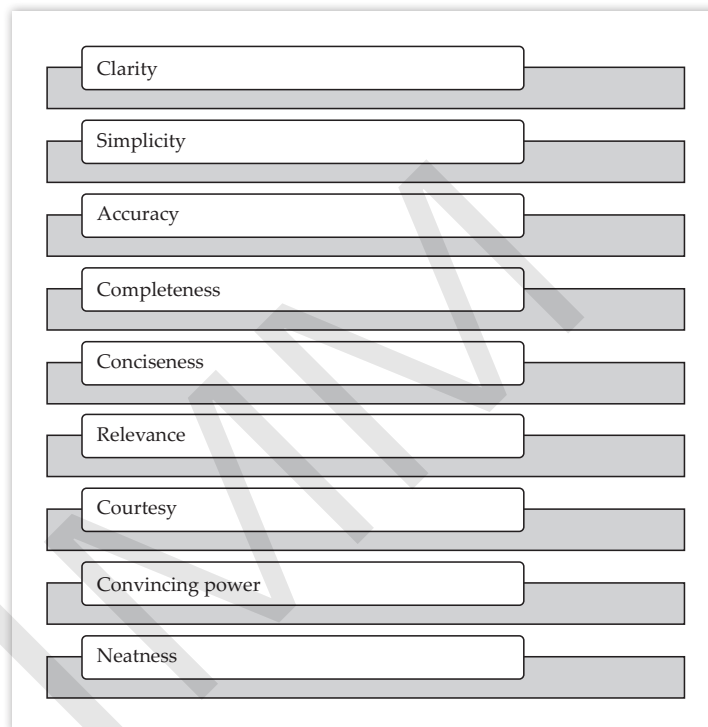

FIGURE 1: Features of a Business Letter

Let us discuss these features in detail:

❍ **Clarity:** A business letter should be clearly written so that the receiver is able to comprehend the exact meaning of the letter. Any ambiguity in the use of words can leave the receiver confused. The writer should organise the letter in a clear, logical, and coherent manner for maximum understanding.

❍ **Simplicity:** The choice of words in a business letter should not leave the reader guessing the meaning of the same, which would also leave him/her distracted and uninterested in reading the complete letter. A business letter should be written using simple language.

❍ **Accuracy:** False information may lead to loss of business and even invite legal action in certain instances. Therefore, the information shared through a business letter should be accurate. It should also be free from grammatical and spelling errors.

○ **Completeness:** Business letters should provide all the necessary information to the receiver. Incomplete information may leave the customers or stakeholders feeling betrayed and would not yield the desired results.

○ **Conciseness:** Time is crucial in business, and thus, business letters should be concise but not at the cost of completeness and clarity. Redundant and unnecessary information should be avoided at all costs.

○ **Relevance:** In a business letter, care should be taken to include only the relevant information. Irrelevant information may distract the reader and not achieve the very purpose of the business letter.

○ **Courtesy:** Though formal, a business letter should also be courteous, respectful, and sensitive. Courtesy wins the heart of the reader. Being courteous and respectful can help even if there is a dispute to be settled.

○ **Convincing power:** The purpose of a business letter is to expand the business, which means to win customers. Hence, a business letter should be highly convincing. A correspondent should have a very good power of expression so that he/she creates a letter that is impressive, effective, and convincing. The power of persuasion of the correspondent is clear from a letter.

○ **Neatness:** An untidy letter irritates the receiver. Therefore, irrespective of whether a business letter is handwritten or typed, it should be neat and attractive. Untidy paper, overwriting, and cutting should be avoided.

6.3.2 | LAYOUT OF BUSINESS LETTERS

While writing a business letter, it is best to stick to a structured layout so that the letter is easy to read and appears professional. Appropriate use of salutation and closing, spelling and grammar, and the tone used are equally important to make the business letter look impressive to the readers. The various elements in the layout of a business letter include:

○ **Heading:** It contains the name of the sender of the letter, along with information about the organisation, logo, name, address, contact details, etc.

○ **Date:** It states the day when the letter was written.

○ **Reference line:** It is a sentence that describes what the letter is all about.

○ **Inside address:** It states the name and address of the receiver.

○ **Salutation:** It is a written greeting or acknowledgement that is written for the receiver.

○ **Body:** It contains the reason for the letter and usually consists of three parts: introduction, object, and conclusion.

○ **Complimentary closing:** It is a form of courtesy to end the letter.

○ **Signature:** It represents the person who wrote or dictated the letter.

Based on the above elements, the most frequently used layout of business letters is the block style, where all elements are aligned with the left-hand margin, except the heading, which is usually centred. This is shown in Figure 2:

[Sender's Name]

[Sender's Company Name]

[Sender's Street Address]

[Sender's City, State/Province & ZIP/Postal Code]

[Sender's phone number and/or email address]

[Date]

[Recipient's Name]

[Recipient's Company Name]

[Recipient's Street Address]

[Recipient's City, State/Province, & ZIP/Postal Code]

[Recipient's phone number and/or email address]

[Subject line]

[Salutation: Dear Name],

[Introduction – This is where you explain the purpose of the letter, why you are writing it, what you hope to achieve from it, and any other important information about it.]

[Middle Section – This is where you elaborate and provide more details about what you outlined in the first paragraph. There may be several more paragraphs like this depending on how long the letter needs to be.]

[Conclusion – This is the place where you wrap up and summarise things. There may be a call to action or next steps included in this paragraph.]

[Sincerely],

[Signature]

[Name of Sender]

FIGURE 2: Format of a Business Letter

Source: *https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/templates/transactions/business-letter-format/*

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. While writing a business letter, it is not necessary to follow a structured layout as readers belong to different groups and classes. (True/False)

4. _____ is a statement describing the main focus of the letter.

6.4 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

Business letters are written to meet several organisational objectives such as negotiating with creditors, enquiring about a product, sending out quotations to clients, writing complaints, etc. A single business letter cannot be used to have all types of information exchange within an organisation. Therefore, based on

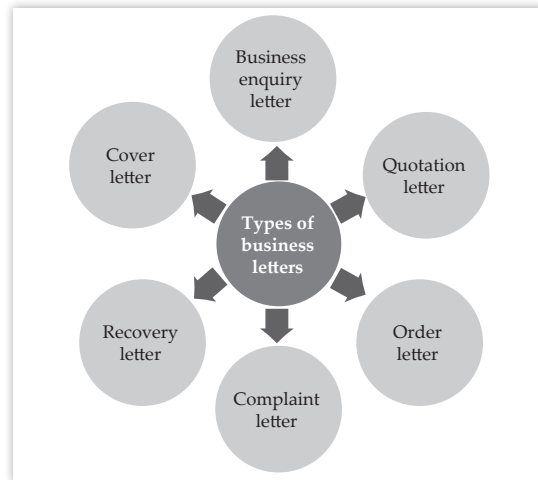the purpose of communication, business letters are categorised into different types, as shown in Figure 3:

FIGURE 3: Types of Business Letters

6.4.1 | BUSINESS ENQUIRY LETTER

Often, buyers would like to enquire about the details of the products/services that they want to buy. This information could be related to the quality, price, mode of delivery, payment, etc. They may also request a sample. When organisations (buyers) write letters to sellers in the attempt to gain one or more of the above information, the business correspondence is known as an enquiry letter.

A sample business enquiry letter is shown in Figure 4:

Your Company Name

Your Company Address

City, State, ZIP Code

Email Address

Phone Number

Date

Supplier's/Manufacturer's Name

Supplier's/Manufacturer's Address

City, State, ZIP Code

Sub: Enquiry letter for laptops

Dear Supplier's/Manufacturer's Name,

I am writing this letter to enquire about [Your Company Name], a [brief description of your business, e.g., leading technology solutions provider].

We are currently in the process of expanding our business operations and are in need of high-quality laptops to support our growing team's computing requirements. After conducting market research, we came across your esteemed company and were impressed with the reputation and quality of your products.

We would appreciate it if you could provide us with detailed information about the laptops your company offers, including specifications, features, and pricing. Additionally, we are interested in any available bulk purchase discounts, warranty terms, and delivery timelines.

Kindly send the requested information to [your@email.com] by [desired date]. If you have any further questions or if there is a dedicated contact person for business inquiries, please provide their details.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to the possibility of working with your company.

Sincerely,

Your Full Name

Your Position

Your Company Name

Contact Information

FIGURE 4: Sample Business Enquiry Letter

6.4.2 | QUOTATION LETTER

When an organisation receives an enquiry letter from a prospective buyer, they provide them relevant information by replying to their enquiry letter with the quotation letter. This letter is referred to as a quotation, which is drafted keeping in view the information asked for, such as price list, mode of payment, discount offered, etc. The seller should reply to the inquiries carefully and promptly.

A sample quotation letter is shown in Figure 5:

Tel.   Name and Address   e-mail:

Fax:

Ref.SL/F/2018/10   Date: December 10, 2018

M/s ABC Electricals

_____

Subject: Your letter No. _____ Dated _____

Dear Sir,

We received your letter of enquiry and thank you for the same. We would be happy to meet your requirements of selling our product at your retail outlet.

The quotations are given in the price list enclosed. We are offering a 20% discount on orders above _____. In addition, we are also giving a grace period of 45 days for payment of dues to our customers.

We are sure you would find our prices competitive and our offers reasonable. We look forward to associating with you soon.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

For M/s _____

Enclosure

FIGURE 5: Sample Quotation Letter

6.4.3 | ORDER LETTER

The next step in the procedure is that the prospective buyer considers the reply to his/her enquiry letter and may decide to place an order with the seller who is meeting the terms and conditions as desired by the buyer. Such a letter which is written by the buyer to the seller and which contains an order to purchase the products is called an order letter.

A sample order letter is shown in Figure 6:

Tel. 011-29292929   M/s ABC Electricals   e-mail: m.abc@gmail.com

Fax: 28282828 29   Website: http://www.m.elec.com

Ref.PA/F/2008/27   Date: December 17, 2018

Subject: Your letter of quotation no. _____ dated December 12, 2018

Dear Sir,

We appreciate your prompt reply to our enquiry letter and find your prices and terms quite reasonable. In regards, we would like to place a trial order as per the list enclosed.

As stated in our enquiry letter, we give the most consideration to product quality. Should the products meet our expectations, a substantial order will soon follow.

Payment shall be made within the time limit prescribed in your quotation letter.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

For M/s _____

Name and Signature

Enclosure

FIGURE 6: Sample Order Letter

6.4.4 | COMPLAINT LETTER

After receiving the products, if the buyer is not satisfied with the product's quality or manufacturer, he/she may address the seller through a complaint letter. It is generally written by the buyer in case he/she receives defective/damaged goods,

incorrect quantity of goods or substandard goods. The letter can also be written directly to the transit authority in case the products are damaged during transit. Thus, a complaint letter is a business correspondence that draws the attention of the supplier for the supply of defective or damaged goods. Certain points to be considered while writing a complaint letter are as follows:

❍ Complaint letters should be written promptly after receiving damaged products.

❍ The letter should suggest to the seller how the complaint can be dealt with, such as the mention of compensation, replacement, etc.

❍ The letter should include the period within which corrective action can be taken.

❍ The letter should end with a request to be more careful in the future.

A sample complaint letter is shown in Figure 7:

Tel. 011-29292929	M/s M. Electricals	e-mail: m.elec@gmail.com
Fax: 28282828 29	Main GT Road	Website: http://www.m.elec.com
	Chandni Chowk, Delhi – 6	

Ref. _____   Date: September 10, 2008

Ref. _____   Date: September 10, 2009

M/s Name _____

Address _____

Subject: Complaint regarding generators

Dear Sir,

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that 3 out of 5 generators, dispatched by you, have been found defective. I received the generators' delivery today. It appears that all the generators were not checked properly before dispatching.

We will appreciate if the three generators are replaced as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully,

For M/s _____

Name and Signature

Enclosure

FIGURE 7: Sample Complaint Letter

6.4.5 | RECOVERY LETTER

Business correspondence written by the seller of products to buyers with regard to the collection of dues is referred to as a recovery letter. The objective of a recovery letter is to get payments cleared without annoying the buyer. The letter should accurately and politely give details of the amount of arrears. The most important point to consider is that the language used in the recovery letter should be such that the buyer does not feel offended or mistrusted and future deals are not adversely affected.

A sample recovery letter is shown in Figure 8:

Tel. 011-29292929	M/s ABC Electricals	e-mail: m.abcelec@gmail.com
Fax: 28282828 29	Main GT Road, Delhi-06	Website: http://www.m.elec.com
Ref. _____		Date: September 10, 2008

M/s _____

Address _____

Subject: Recovery of payment dues

Dear Sir,

We believe that the payment of our bill no. _____ dated _____ must have escaped your attention. Since the payment is long due, we would appreciate if you do the needful at the earliest.

Please let us know if the payment is being withheld for specific reasons unknown to us. Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

For M/s_____

Name and Signature

Enclosure

FIGURE 8: Sample Recovery Letter

6.4.6 | COVER LETTER

The cover letter is a tool to help introduce a job seeker in an impressive and personalised manner while applying for a job. A well-crafted cover letter gives information over and above the individual's resume and expands this information for the potential employer guiding them through the journey of some of the most important career and life achievements of the applicant. When writing a cover letter, it is best to organise the content of the letter based on the requirements of the job one is applying for.

OBJECTIVES OF A COVER LETTER

Before beginning the cover letter, it is best to become aware of the objective of the same so that it meets the requirements and achieves the purpose of complementing the application along with the applicant's resume. A well-written cover letter achieves several goals, which are as follows:

❍ Introduces the applicant and his/her credentials to the potential employer.

❍ Brings out the reasons for one's interest in the organisation and the position.

❍ Acts as a sales letter specifying why one qualifies for that specific job.

❍ Establishes a personal connect with a potential employer which goes above a simple resume.

❍ Highlights an individual's unique personality and proves his/her suitability.

❍ Catches the attention of the potential employer in setting up a personal interview.

101

GUIDELINES TO WRITE A COVER LETTER

Before you read the guidelines, remember you need to do your best in drafting the best cover letter you can. This is your first introduction to the organisation; hence it should make them want to meet you. Remember you want them more than they want you. The following are some guidelines to write an impressive cover letter:

○ Stick to the accepted format for a cover letter.

○ Format the cover letter on one page, typed, and single-spaced.

○ Proofread the letter before sending it across to avoid grammatical, technical, factual, or spelling errors.

○ Address the letter to a specific person, rather than keeping it general.

○ Avoid guessing the gender of the addressee. Instead use the individual's full name, for example, 'Dear Kelly Jones'.

○ Be creative. Refer to samples but do not copy the content as such.

○ Write the beginning paragraph in a way that interests the employer to read further.

○ Gain the attention of the reader by showing interest in the organisation and the job profile.

○ Highlight points that show what you can do and how you can contribute to the organisation.

○ Exhibit enthusiasm and self-confidence but with modesty.

○ In case the cover letter needs to be mailed along with the resume, it should be in the body of the email and the resume should be attached along.

○ Be patient, polite, and persistent while following up with the organisation.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. Business correspondence written by the seller of products to buyers with regard to the collection of dues is referred to as a _____.

6. The _____ is a tool to help introduce a job seeker in an impressive and personalised manner while applying for a job.

ACTIVITY

1. Ms. Vaishali has applied for the job of a Sales Manager at ABC Bank. She has six years of experience in the sector and has a special interest in Mutual Funds. Draft a cover letter to be enclosed with her résumé.

2. Draft an order letter requesting the seller of air conditioners and coolers for installing 10 ACs and 7 coolers in your organisation.

6.5 SUMMARY

○ Written correspondences in organisations are referred to as business correspondence. It includes any communication within an organisation that occurs through the exchange of letters.

○ Written communication includes any communication within an organisation that occurs through exchange of letters.

○ There are different forms of written communication to exchange the information related to business operations, such as memos, reports, circulars, notices, manuals, e-mails, etc.

○ Business correspondence has several objectives such as maintaining good relationships, serving as evidence, creating and maintaining goodwill, exchanging formal communication, expanding the business, etc.

○ Clear and precise communication is key to business letters and, hence, care should be taken in writing a business letter.

○ While writing a business letter, it is best to stick to a structured layout so that the letter is easy to read and appears professional.

○ Appropriate use of salutation and closing, spelling and grammar, and the tone used are equally important to make a business letter look impressive to the readers.

○ The letter that is drafted keeping in view the information asked for, such as price list, mode of payment, discount offered, etc., is known as a quotation.

○ A letter which is written by the buyer to the seller and which contains an order to purchase the products is called as order letter.

○ After receiving the products, if the buyer is not satisfied with the product's quality or manufacturer, he/she may address the seller through a complaint letter.

○ Business correspondence written by the seller of products to buyers with regards to the collection of dues is referred to as a recovery letter.

○ The cover letter is a tool to help introduce a job seeker in an impressive and personalised manner while applying for a job.

6.6 KEY WORDS

○ **Business correspondence:** The exchange of business-related information in a written form.

○ **Formatting:** The material to be printed or stored data is modified in a particular computer ready format and this is known as formatting.

○ **Proofreading:** The act of finding and correcting mistakes in files or documents, either in soft-copy or in hard-copy, before the final copies are printed.

6.7 CASE STUDY: HURLEY WRITE, INC. OFFERS EMPLOYEES NECESSARY SKILLS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

An aviation organisation, which is the international leader in designing, manufacturing, and servicing of aircrafts, has a vast base of employees including experts, engineers, designers, technicians, etc., who must communicate with customers and clients to achieve organisational objectives.

However, the high-tech aircraft manufacturer faced writing challenges in both its internal and external teams. One of the employees, Robin Casper, who is the lead designer for the flight controls engineering team, was required to take feedbacks about issues in the organisation's creations. He was also required to interact with outlets that help mechanics resolve issues and respond to supervisors' concerns. With an audience comprising mechanics, engineers, and management, Robin often faced challenges in communicating with all the readers.

Another employee in the organisation, Cherry Cwalina, an engineer also writes responses to proposals for the organisation's projects. Writing clear and effective proposals are keys to the business success; however, she is also faced the challenge of writing succinct, precise, and to-the-point proposals.

The aviation giant sought help from an onsite technical writing course by Hurley Write, Inc, that offered professional skills to address multiple audiences and undertake challenging revisions. Hurley Write developed a custom workshop for the aviation organisation based on the samples submitted by its employees. The employees were pleased to discover that the course used actual documents sent as samples to form the basis of the teaching material.

Hurley Write's course offered participants a better understanding of how to draft effective technical documents. The customised features, like proofreading and formatting internal documents, helped employees in polishing their writing processes.

Source: *https://www.hurleywrite.com/for-a-high-tech-aviation-manufacturer-clearly-written-proposals-white-papers-and-technical-documents-are-imperative-for-business-success-a-customized*

QUESTIONS

1. What were the challenges faced by employees in aircraft designing and manufacturing organisation?

   (**Hint:** Communicating with clients, solving issues received as feedback, and drafting effective proposals, etc.)

2. What are the points to be considered for effective business writing?

   (**Hint:** Accuracy, politeness, clarity, etc.)

6.8 EXERCISE

1. Describe the advantages and limitations of written communication.

2. Explain the principles of effective writing.

3. Discuss the purpose and features of business letters.

4. Describe the layout of business letters.

5. Discuss various types of business letters.

6.9 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Written Communication	1.	True
	2.	Written communication
Business Letters	3.	False
	4.	Reference line
Types of Business Letters	5.	Recovery letter
	6.	Cover letter

6.10 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

○ Gopala Krishna, C., & Ramakrishnan, L. (2009). *Business Communication*. Mumbai: Himalaya Pub. House.

○ Bovée, C., & Thill, J. *Business Communication Today*.

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E-REFERENCES

○ For a high-tech aviation manufacturer, clearly written proposals, white papers. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.hurleywrite.com/for-a-high-tech-aviation-manufacturer-clearly-written-proposals-white-papers-and-technical-documents-are-imperative-for-business-success-a-customized

○ Business Letter Format - Overview, Structure and Example. (2019). Retrieved from https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/templates/transactions/business-letter-format/

Business Correspondence – II

Table of Contents

┌─ **LEARNING OBJECTIVES** ─────────────────────────────

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍　　Describe the use of notice, agenda and minutes

❍　　Explain the importance of making business proposals

❍　　Explain the importance of writing summaries

❍　　Describe the important components of an e-mail

❍　　Write effective e-mails

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7.1　INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you studied the founding concepts of written communication used in businesses. Business letters are one of the most common types of communication used by organisations. These are of various types, such as cover letter, order letter, enquiry letter, etc.

Business managers and owners regularly require meetings to discuss some issues or to find solutions to on-going issues. Individuals are invited to attend the meetings by issuing notices which contain the time and place of meeting. At times, notices may also contain a list of issues that have been planned for discussion during the meeting; this list of issues is called as agenda of the meeting. The happenings and the important conclusions that have been drawn during a meeting called as minutes of the meeting and are meant for future reference. Organisations need to present to buyers their potential business or product details which are contained in the business proposal documents. The organisation's members at the high levels may not have time to read out the entire contents of communication received by the organisation. Therefore, they present the contents of written communication in a concise manner in the form of summary. Today, most of the formal business communication is carried out using e-mails.

In this chapter, you will study notices, agendas, and minutes used in business organisations. It also includes business proposals, summary writing, and e-mails.

7.2　NOTICE, AGENDA AND MINUTES

Organisations usually work in a structured and organised manner. Whenever some issue or problem is to be resolved or when an organisation needs to plan for something, they do this by conducting meetings. Meetings are of two types, namely formal meetings and informal meetings. Formal meetings are pre-planned events, wherein two or more people meet and discuss certain pre-decided issues. In contrast, informal meetings are those which occur on the spur of moment and do not follow any specific way.

In every organisation, formal meetings are conducted by first planning for a meeting and then issuing a notice to all the personnel who need to attend the meeting. The notice of the meeting usually contains the agenda of the meeting. An agenda refers to a list of issues or matters that need to be discussed during the meeting.

A notice is a formal communication that is meant for one or more persons. It serves the purpose of officially informing a group of people about an event or change in policy or any other matter that needs to be communicated. In the context of meetings, all the people or personnel who are invited for attending a meeting are sent a written official notice. It is given well in advance. A notice usually includes details such as the place, date, and time of the meeting, accompanied by a concise explanation of the purpose for convening the meeting. The person who has the authority to call the personnel for the meeting needs to sign on the notice.

A sample notice without an agenda is shown below in Figure 1:

ABC Pvt. Ltd.

XXXX, Taj Enclave,

Delhi – 110031

Date: March 27, 2019

NOTICE FOR MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the fourth quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors will be held in the Conference Hall of Building C (3rd Floor) on March 31st, 2019 at 11:00 am.

Mr. Ashwini Rai

CEO, ABC Pvt. Ltd.

FIGURE 1: A Sample Notice Without an Agenda

As explained earlier, agenda refers to the list of activities that have been planned for discussion during a meeting. It is usually written and sent along with the notice for meeting. The agenda of the meeting gives a glimpse of what would be the direction of the meeting and the personnel who are invited to the meeting can prepare themselves for the meeting. At times, the notice for meeting does not contain any agenda and the same is briefed to the participants when they reach the venue.

A sample notice with an agenda is shown below in Figure 2:

ABC Pvt. Ltd.

XXXX, Taj Enclave,

Delhi – 110031

Date: March 27, 2019

NOTICE FOR MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the fourth quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors will be held in the Conference Hall of Building C (3rd Floor) on March 31st, 2019 at 11:00 am.

Agenda:

1. Review the minutes of the previous meeting
2. Evaluate the performance reports of the third quarter
3. Confirm the appointment of General Manager

Mr. Ashwini Rai

CEO, ABC Pvt. Ltd.

FIGURE 2: A Sample Notice with an Agenda

Minutes refer to the official records of any meeting that has been held. In the minutes of meeting, issues raised, issues discussed and decisions taken are recorded in a brief but accurate manner. They must be recorded and maintained properly in order to be referenced readily in the near future. Any member who has attended the meeting or a clerical staff member can be assigned with the duty of preparing and maintaining minutes of the meeting. After the minutes of the meeting have been drafted, they must be signed by the person who had called the meeting after verifying its contents. These are recorded in a brief manner and contain details of the date, time period and venue of the meeting.

Usually, the meeting is headed or directed by one or more personnel. They are called as presiding officers. Presiding officers may or may not be the same as the person who has called the meeting. Minutes of the meeting also include the name(s) of the presiding officer(s) and the agenda. Ideally, minutes should be recorded soon after the meeting has concluded. Minutes of the meeting are of two types, namely minutes of resolution and minutes of narration.

The minutes of narration includes resolutions passed and the details of discussions preceding the resolution. In the minutes of the resolution, only the passed resolutions are recorded. No reference is made to discussions that were done to reach the resolution. In this, each statement begins with the word 'Resolved'. A sample of the minutes of resolution is shown below in Figure 3:

ECLIPSE.ORG FOUNDATION, INC.
MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (MAY 21, 2014)

A Meeting of the Board of Directors (the "Board") of Eclipse.org Foundation, Inc., a Delaware corporation (the "Corporation"), was held on held as a regularly scheduled teleconference. Present at the meeting were the following Directors:

Present?	Director	Organisation
Y	John Arthorne	Elected Committer Representative
Y	Jutta Bindewald	SAP AG
Y	Paul Clenahan	Actuate Corporation
Y	Pat Huff	IBM
N	Etienne Juliot	OBEO
Y	Mik Kersten	Elected Sustaining Representative
Y	Markus Knauer	Innoopract GmbH
Y	Dennis Leung	Oracle
N	Paul Lipton	CA Technologies
N	Achim Loerke	BREDEX GmbH
N	Ed Merks	Elected Committer Representative
Y	Wolfgang Neuhaus	itemis AG
N	Shawn Pearce	Google Inc.
Y	Max Rydahl Andersen	Elected Sustaining Representative

Present at the invitation of the Board was Mike Milinkovich, Executive Director, and Janet Campbell, Secretary of Eclipse.org Foundation, Inc.

General Business

Mike Milinkovich advised the Board that the Eclipse Foundation's Annual Report was not yet available but would be shortly and that he would circulate it electronically for comment, following which there would be an Electronic Vote of the Board to seek approval of the document.

Mike further introduced a discussion surrounding the minutes of the March and April 2014 Board meetings, the related material for which is attached as Exhibit A and B hereto. Following discussion, the following resolution was unanimously passed:

RESOLVED, the minutes of the March and April 2014 Board meetings are approved as circulated.

Re-appointment of Officers:

Mike Milinkovich introduced a discussion surrounding the re-appointment of the Eclipse Foundation officers. The following resolutions were unanimously passed:

RESOLVED, the Board re-appoints Mike Milinkovich as Executive Director of the Eclipse Foundation.

RESOLVED, the Board re-appoints Janet Campbell as Secretary of the Eclipse Foundation.

RESOLVED, the Board re-appoints Chris Larocque as Treasurer of the Eclipse Foundation

FIGURE 3: Sample Minutes of Resolution

Source: *https://www.eclipse.org/org/foundation/boardminutes/2014_05_21_Minutes.pdf*

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Formal meetings are conducted by first planning for a meeting and issuing a _____ to all the personnel who need to attend the meeting.

2. The minutes of resolution include resolutions passed and the details of the discussions preceding the resolution. (True/False)

7.3 BUSINESS PROPOSALS

A business proposal is a written document that is designed and developed by a seller (individual or organisation) for being presented to a prospective buyer. A business proposal can also be prepared by an organisation to be presented to a bank or financial institution to seek funds for the business.

Business proposals are also required in case a buyer considers multiple prices in a transaction. While developing a good business proposal, the developer must take into account the requirements of the buyer. However, the developer must also take care that the proposal favours the seller's products and services and aims to persuade the buyer about the offer.

Developing a good business proposal is the first step towards a successful venture. Usually, there are two types of business proposals, namely solicited proposals and unsolicited proposals.

Solicited proposals are those which are requested by the clients and submitted to the buyer as a response to public advertisements. Solicited proposals are prepared keeping in mind the requirements of the client who sought the proposal.

Unsolicited proposals are submitted to prospective clients on the discretion of sellers. Buyers do not request for any business proposal. These proposals are made in a non-specific manner and do not account for buyers' requirements.

Developing a business proposal is a time-consuming task. Developing a business proposal from scratch is even more tedious. Therefore, organisations usually start developing business proposals by using any available template that matches requirements of the organisation and then customises it according to customer requirements.

A business proposal contains multiple sections. However, the most important and common sections present in a business proposal include a cover letter, executive summary, proposal, pricing information, and terms and conditions sections.

Let us now discuss the common sections of a business proposal in detail.

○ **Cover letter:** A cover letter is usually a letter that communicates the details of another document that is sent along with it. Cover letters that are sent along with business proposal are written in a manner as to stimulate interest in the proposal. A cover letter must highlight the positive side of the proposal. The cover letter must be personalised as per the client to whom the letter is being sent.

○ **Executive summary:** An executive summary describes the problem statement and helps the clients in identifying the challenges and requirements in their business. Details of the problems must be listed out to the clients in order to realise them their needs and that the seller would be able to help them meet those requirements.

○ **Proposal:** The proposal section provides a detailed solution to challenges and needs of the prospective client. The proposal should be as detailed as possible and should address the maximum number of clients needed. The proposal should contain customised details of all the services the seller can provide for clients. The proposal should also include the estimated project schedule.

○ **Pricing information:** Usually, buyers consider the price of services before offering any contract to the seller. Therefore, they must be provided accurate pricing. The proposal must ensure that it contains exact pricing. Also, the proposal should never mention a price that is lower than a project's worth. The proposal may contain a fee summary or a fee schedule.

○ **Terms and conditions:** The seller must get the business proposal reviewed by a good lawyer as he may save him/her from potential legal claims.

A good proposal has three important characteristics as follows:

○ It serves as a marketing instrument for the seller.

❍ It is based on sound market research.

❍ It is made by keeping the interest of both the seller and the buyer.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. _____ proposals are requested by the clients.

4. List two common sections of a business proposal.

7.4 SUMMARY WRITING

There are various modes of written communication such as essays, reports, articles, presentations, etc. At most times, these are made as elaborate as possible. However, sometimes, it is required to present only a small write-up of the given written communication. In such conditions, a summary of the written communication that contains only the main points or the essence of the write-up needs to be presented. A summary is a short recap of the main text presented in the written communication which presents the essential components of a write-up and excludes the rest of the details. Summary writing and reading help in building up reading as well as writing skills.

A person can write a good summary if he has carefully read the write-up. This enables him to comprehend and present the write-up in a brief, crisp and concise manner.

Summaries are of two types, namely informative summaries and descriptive summaries. In informative summaries, the content of the write-up is written in an objective and accurate manner. These types of summaries are developed for scientific, non-fictional works and factual content. In descriptive summaries, the original text's content, its structure and the main theme are presented without presenting the information contained. These types of summaries are developed for fictional and literary works.

To write a summary, a person needs to follow four steps as shown below in Figure 4:
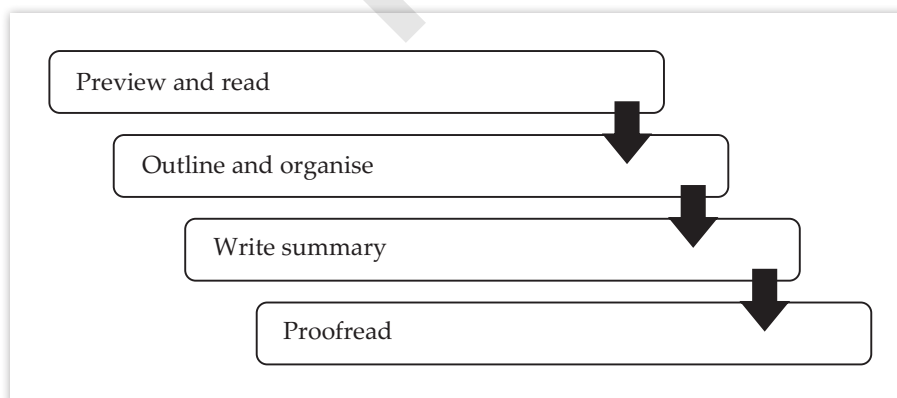

Preview and read

Outline and organise

Write summary

Proofread

FIGURE 4: Steps for Writing a Summary

Let us now discuss the steps for writing a summary.

1. **Preview and read:** To write a summary, start by carefully and critically reading the write-up followed by identification of main and supporting ideas. The writer

must be able to differentiate between the essential and non-essential parts of the write-up.

2. **Outline and organise:** After carefully reading the write-up, all the main ideas and the supporting ideas, the writer must prepare an outline to organise these ideas.

3. **Write summary:** Now, the writer will be able to write a summary explaining the main and the supporting ideas. Ideally, two to three sentences are sufficient for each concept and details are included only if these are absolutely necessary.

4. **Proofread:** After the summary has been written, it must be checked or evaluated by the writer or a professional proof reader to detect the grammar, spelling and content mistakes.

As per one classification, summaries are classified as descriptive and informative summaries. However, according to another classification, the business summaries are of four types as shown in Figure 5:
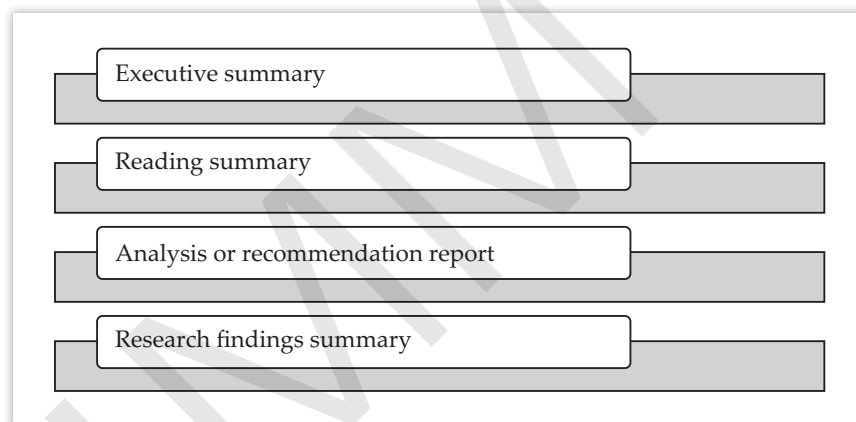

Executive summary

Reading summary

Analysis or recommendation report

Research findings summary

FIGURE 5: Types of Business Summaries

Let us discuss various types of business summaries in detail.

❍ **Executive summary:** An executive summary is accompanied by lengthy reports. It presents main ideas of the report to decision makers who cannot read the whole report due to lack of time. Business proposals are usually accompanied by an executive summary.

❍ **Reading summary:** A reading summary helps a reader in deciding if he/she should read the entire article. It represents information in an objective and accurate manner. Care must be taken that the personal opinion(s) of the writer does not make the summary biased.

❍ **Analysis or recommendation report:** A recommendation report is made after thoroughly analysing certain text and provides a summary along with the opinion of the writer.

❍ **Research findings summary:** Today, no organisation of the world can survive if it fails to engage itself in market research. Organisations need to conduct research for making various business decisions. All the findings of the research are summarised in the research findings summary. Other details might have to

be provided if required, such as the background and reason for the research, information on costs, benefits, etc.

7.5 E-MAILS

E-mail stands for Electronic-mail which is an equivalent of letters or mails but is sent electronically and not physically. It is an extremely popular means of communication. It is a digital communication method utilising electronic devices to transmit messages across computer networks. It encompasses both the system facilitating delivery and the individual messages exchanged between users.

An e-mail consists of three main parts, which are explained below:

❍ **SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) envelope:** The SMTP envelope contains sender and recipient e-mail addresses, guiding the e-mail's delivery between servers. It's similar to the addresses on a physical envelope used by mail carriers. This envelope data is updated with each server transfer.

❍ **Header:** The header also includes sender and recipient details but might not always match the SMTP envelope, allowing potential manipulation. It carries essential fields like date, sender, recipient, subject, and options for replying, forwarding, and categorising the e-mail.

❍ **Body:** The body contains the message content, which can range from text, images, links, and attachments. E-mails can be formatted in plain text or HTML, accommodating different devices and allowing multimedia elements. However, HTML formatting might face display issues or be flagged as spam by certain systems.

Let's discuss how e-mail works:

E-mail operates through a system of interconnected servers and protocols. When an e-mail is sent, it travels through a series of steps:

1. **Compose and send:** The message is composed using an e-mail client or web interface and sent by clicking the "send" button.

2. **Sender's Mail Server:** The e-mail client communicates with the e-mail server, which is referred to as the Mail Transfer Agent (MTA). The MTA processes the message and forwards it to the recipient's domain.

3. **Recipient's domain lookup:** The MTA looks up the recipient's domain using the Domain Name System (DNS) to find the appropriate Mail Exchange (MX) server for the recipient's e-mail address.

4. **Recipient's mail server:** Once the recipient's MX server is located, the e-mail is routed to that server.

5. **Storage:** The e-mail is stored on the recipient's mail server until the recipient retrieves it.

6. **Recipient retrieval:** The recipient uses their e-mail client or web interface to access their mail server through protocols like POP or IMAP to download and view the e-mail.

E-mail has gained much popularity because of the following reasons:

❍ It is a reliable and fast mode of communication.

❍ It is cheaper than a letter.

❍ It is a low-cost method of transferring information.

❍ E-mail messages are transmitted instantaneously and time zones do not matter.

❍ E-mail message can be sent to various recipients simultaneously.

❍ Attachments such as document files, music files, video files, etc., can be attached to the e-mail message.

❍ The e-mail length needs not to be curtailed; one can write a letter as long as he wishes.

❍ E-mails provide faster incoming and outgoing communication.

An e-mail is a type of written communication and follows a fixed structure. Different e-mail service providers structure their e-mails differently. However, a sample e-mail structure is presented below in Figure 6:
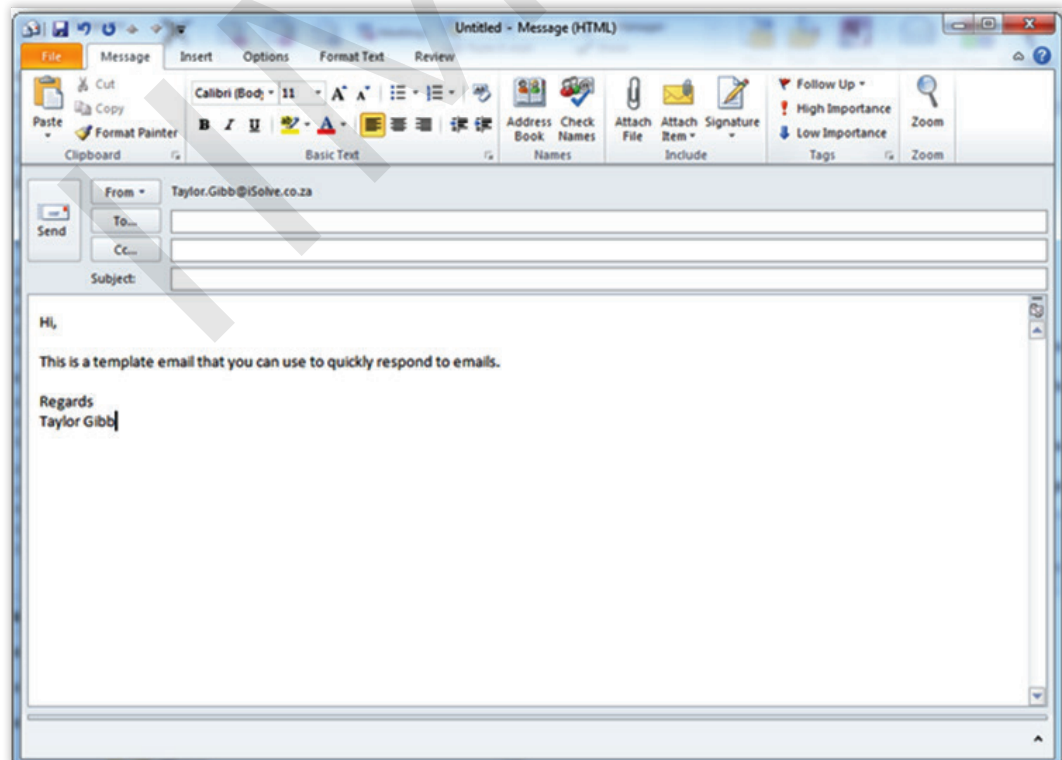

FIGURE 6: A Sample E-mail Structure

Source: *https://www.howtogeek.com/97859/how-to-create-and-use-templates-in-outlook-2010/*

As shown in figure, an e-mail contains components such as From, To, Cc/Bcc, subject, attach file, etc. Against the space reserved for **'From'** component, the e-mail id of the sender is filled up automatically. Against the space reserved for **'To'** component, the e-mail id(s) of the primary receiver(s) are to be filled. The e-mail id(s) of the secondary receiver(s) can also be filled in the space reserved for **Cc/Bcc**. Against the space reserved for '**Subject**', the sender needs to mention the subject of the mail which can be written in a few words or in a sentence. The sender should ideally make a subject line attractive so as to catch the receiver's attention.

Apart from these, almost all the different e-mails have the option to **attach files**. The e-mail window also contains the space that is reserved for the body of the e-mail. Usually, the e-mail body begins with a greeting or a salutation. After the details of the e-mail have been written in the body, it must be followed by complimentary close. The writer of the e-mail should ensure that they are using simple and lucid language. The writer should keep the paragraphs crisp, short and focused.

As a good practice, in formal business e-mails, writers should not use abbreviations. However, a few abbreviations that are generally used in e-mails include ASAP (As soon as possible), FYI (For your information), RSVP (Please reply), FAQ (Frequently asked questions), NB (Please note), etc.

Some of the generally accepted rules that must be followed while writing an e-mail are as follows:

❍ The e-mail should be written in a professional manner.

❍ The e-mail must be written in a grammatically correct manner. It should also be worded correctly.

❍ The e-mail must be drafted carefully so as to ensure that the organisation does not have to face costly lawsuits. Avoid spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.

❍ E-mail must be drafted in a way that the receiver feels a personal touch.

❍ Be prompt in replying to e-mails. If it is not possible to send a full-fledged reply, at least an acknowledgement must be sent.

❍ Each computer system must be enabled with an effective anti-virus.

❍ Each e-mail must be structured properly.

❍ Contents of the e-mail must be structured in a proper layout to give it a neat and clean look.

❍ When a certain event is being discussed in e-mails, the receiver or the sender should try to reply to the original message threads.

❍ Organisations should ideally add disclaimers to both their internal and external e-mails to protect itself from any liabilities.

❍ E-mails must be drafted using active voice as far as possible.

○ Write e-mail body in a concise manner and avoid making long sentences.

○ Care must be taken to not send or forward e-mails that contain any objectionable content such as defamatory remarks, offensive content, racist or sexist remarks.

○ No organisational member should forward chain mails.

○ Language of the e-mail should be gender-neutral.

○ Use Cc/Bcc options carefully.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

7. _____ is an equivalent of letters or mails but is sent electronically.

8. E-mails must be drafted using active voice as far as possible. (True/False)

ACTIVITY

Assume that you have a test next month on the topic of 'different layout patterns for a plant'. You need to refer to various websites and study the different layouts. After studying, prepare a summary of the topic you studied to serve as study notes.

7.6 SUMMARY

○ Formal meetings are pre-planned events wherein two or more people meet and discuss certain pre-decided issues. In contrast, informal meetings are those which occur on the spur of moment and do not follow any specific way.

○ A notice is a formal communication that is meant for one or more persons. It serves the purpose of officially informing a group of people about an event or change in policy or any other matter that needs to be communicated.

○ An agenda refers to the list of activities that would be taken up or discussed during a meeting.

○ Minutes refer to the official records of any meeting that has been held. In the minutes of meeting, issues raised, issues discussed and decisions taken are recorded in a brief but accurate manner.

○ A business proposal is a written document that is designed and developed by a seller (individual or organisation) for being presented to a prospective buyer.

○ A business proposal contains multiple sections. However, the most important and common sections present in a business proposal include cover letter, executive summary, proposal, pricing information and terms and conditions.

○ Sometimes, it is required that you present only a small write-up of the given written communication. In such conditions, a summary of the written communication that contains only the main points or the essence of the write-up needs to be presented.

○ A person can write a good summary if he has carefully read the write-up, is able to comprehend the meaning and present the same in a brief, crisp and concise manner.

○ E-mail is a digital communication method utilising electronic devices to transmit messages across computer networks.

7.7 KEY WORDS

○ **Presiding officer:** An officer who is in-charge of the meeting.

○ **Resolution:** A firm decision to do or not to do something.

○ **Venture:** A new and risky business undertaking.

○ **Proposal:** A formal and written suggestion put across for consideration by others.

7.8 CASE STUDY: WIMMER SOLUTIONS PROVIDES MANAGED PROPOSAL WRITING SERVICES FOR A PARTNER OF THE MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE

Catalyst Solutions, a major partner of the Microsoft Enterprise was facing certain challenges and wanted to acquire solutions to address three issues as follows:

○ Executing the proposal creation process in a continuous and uninterrupted manner

○ Pushing the growth of the existing business

○ Developing highly qualified proposal desk team members

To achieve these and a few other goals, Catalyst Solutions engaged Wimmer Solutions. The Wimmer had the responsibility of increasing the license renewal rates among the partners of Catalyst Solutions. In addition, the Wimmer also had to increase the net new and add-on proposals in order to have positive win rates.

For solution to this problem, the Wimmer Solutions did the following:

○ Wimmer assigned a proposal manager. The manager was bestowed with the responsibility of developing a strategy for creating proposal templates. It was also the responsibility of the manager to disseminate the templates to the proposal writing teams.

○ The proposal manager was also liable for streamlining and ensuring quality of stakeholder interviews.

○ Proposal manager had to manage the team of proposal writers.

○ Proposal manager had to serve as a connecting link between the sales teams, internal client divisions and among the proposal writers.

○ Wimmer created a team which was given the responsibility of updating the sales pipeline. The team also had the responsibility of facilitating deliverable feedback using a streamlined communication process.

○ Wimmer team was also responsible for creating surveys, project plans and documentation related to proposal teams' SLAs.

○ In order to achieve the given goals, Wimmer team utilised skills such as project management, content management and technical writing as shown in the below figure.

WIMMER SOLUTION TECHNICAL SKILL SETS
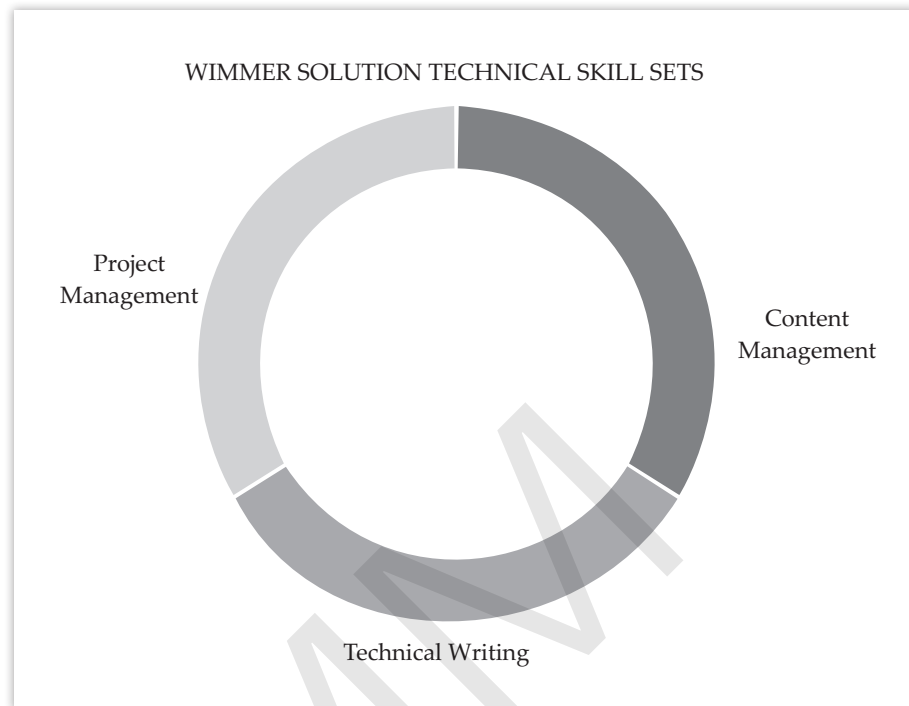
○ Wimmer team also conducted targeted stakeholders' interviews to inform them of a customer-specific list of priorities and also explained the business impact of each IT priority.

Catalyst Solutions realised the following benefits:

○ Managed proposal solution helped the organisation in decreasing the renewal lag by establishing an efficient process to engage the sales teams.

○ Detailed agendas.

○ Targeted approach.

○ Proposal creation process was accelerated.

○ Proposals were created timely with greater accuracy.

○ Sales teams were engaged in the proposal creation process which helped Catalyst Solutions in creating proposals which were relevant for the clients.

○ Final business proposals had enhanced business value.

○ Clients started to get their products renewed on-time.

○ Increased number of renewals.

○ Increased number of proposal submissions led to greater win rates for Catalyst Solutions.

Source: *https://wimmersolutions.com/case-study-managed-proposal-writing-microsoft-epg/*

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Catalyst Solutions contact Wimmer Solutions?

    (**Hint:** For executing the proposal creation process in a continuous and uninterrupted manner.)

2. What were the major benefits realised by Catalyst Solutions as a result of Wimmer's interventions?

    (**Hint:** Increased number of renewals, etc.)

7.9   EXERCISE

1. Discuss the importance of preparing notices, agendas and minutes of meetings.

2. Provide two examples each type of notices with and without agendas.

3. Describe two types of minutes of meetings.

4. Describe the importance of preparing business proposals.

5. Explain how can a person write good summaries.

6. Describe the uses of an e-mail.

7.10   ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Notice, Agenda and Minutes	1.	Notice
	2.	False
Business Proposals	3.	Solicited
	4.	Executive summary and pricing information
Summary Writing	5.	Informative summary
	6.	Proofreading
E-mail	7.	E-mail
	8.	True

7.11   SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍   Means, T., & Hathaway, V. (2019). *Business Communication*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, Inc.

❍   Gopala Krishna, C., & Ramakrishnan, L. (2009). *Business Communication*. Mumbai: Himalaya Pub. House.

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Presentation Skills

Table of Contents

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┌─ LEARNING OBJECTIVES ──────────────────────────────────────┐
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After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Describe an overview of a presentation, including its objectives and elements

❍ Describe how to plan and prepare for a presentation

❍ Describe how to design an effective presentation using storytelling structures

❍ Identify the different types of visual aids in presentations

❍ Identify the reasons and guidelines for rehearsing a presentation

❍ Explain the guidelines of delivering an effective presentation

❍ Explain how to grade team and individual presentations fairly

❍ Identify the guidelines of giving and taking feedback on presentations

❍ Analyse data effectively using tables, charts, and graphs for visual clarity

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you studied the concepts of notice, agenda, minutes, and business proposals. You also studied summary writing and e-mails.

Presentation skills encompass the ability to effectively convey information to an audience, be it clients, colleagues, or stakeholders. This proficiency involves structuring content logically, utilising engaging visuals, and delivering the message with clarity and confidence. A skilled presenter understands their audience, tailors the message accordingly, and employs effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques. This includes maintaining eye contact, using appropriate gestures, and managing voice modulation to captivate the audience's attention. Successful business communicators not only articulate their ideas coherently but also exhibit adaptability and poise, ensuring their message resonates and influences positively.

In this chapter, you will study about presentation and its design. You will also study about rehearsing before presentation, effective presentation delivery, grading team and individual presentations, and use of tables, charts and graphs in presentation.

8.2 WHAT IS A PRESENTATION?

A presentation communicates a message, an idea or information to a group. It is similar to a report, but with a key difference–the human element. A presentation conveys the speaker's personality and enables immediate interaction among all participants. The main objectives of a presentation are:

❍ **To inform:** A presentation is created to convey some information to a group. For example, a presentation may display a company's quarterly performance.

❍ **To train:** Most training programmes in organisations are done via the presentation mode. Such instructional presentations convey a lot of information and are created with instructional design principles to keep the audience engaged for a long period.

❍ **To persuade:** Some presentations are used to convince a group to accept a particular idea and/or make a certain choice.

❍ **To motivate:** The immense popularity of TED Talks indicates how a presentation can be a powerful motivation tool. These presentations trigger emotions and inspire people to take an action.

❍ **To entertain:** Presentations can also be used to celebrate an event. For example, during an engagement ceremony, a presentation can be used to narrate the story of how the bride and the groom were met in a light-hearted, romantic way. Another example could be the farewell presentation of a colleague.

A presentation has three main elements which are as follows:

❍ **Specific content:** This refers to the information that will be conveyed in the presentation. The information must be conveyed so well that it is absorbed by the audience in one sitting. It should be relevant and meaningful to them.

❍ **Audience:** A presentation should be targeted for a specific group of audience, who share the same purpose and have the same level of information.

❍ **Presenter:** The presenter should act as the advocate of the information. If his/her conviction and passion in the message is clearly articulated, then the audience will also pay attention to the subject.

8.2.1 | PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR A PRESENTATION

An effective presentation can be delivered using better planning and preparation. This will make you feel confident when you appear to audience. As a result, audience is more engaged to your message. For preparing a presentation, following points need to be followed:

❍ **Objective:** Before preparing a presentation, ask yourself, "What is the purpose of this presentation?" If you do not understand the objective of the presentation well, then it will not be clear to your audience.

❍ **Timing:** Remember, you only have a limited amount of time in which you should deliver the presentation. Your presentation should only convey the information that the audience needs to know, instead of everything that is there to tell.

❍ **Method:** It should be clear that how you will deliver your presentation. It can be delivered in many ways like face-to-face, video, or audio, etc.

❍ **Structure:** A presentation is made up of three parts:

● **Beginning:** The beginning of a presentation is a short introduction wherein the presenter welcomes his/her audience, introduces the subject, and explains the structure of the presentation.

● **Middle:** This is the body of the presentation, where you convey the subject.

● **End:** This is where you wrap up the presentation. Here, you present a summary, thank your audience, and invite questions.

○ **Rehearsal:** There are no shortcuts to rehearsal. The more you rehearse, the better your presentation will be. It will provide the following benefits:

- Make you familiar with the presentation's content and message

- Identify weak spots and improve the presentation

- Increase your comfort level

- Time your presentation against the clock

- Practise difficult pronunciations

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What is not an element of a presentation?
   a. Visual aid   b. Presenter
   c. Audience   d. Content

2. What will help you the most to pick the right content for your presentation?
   a. Time limit   b. Source material
   c. Audience's needs   d. Your knowledge

8.3 HOW TO DESIGN A PRESENTATION?

All the powerful presentations have one thing in common—stories. Despite how much data or charts you need to present, including a story will help you keep the audience hooked and focussed. However, what if you do not have a story to tell? In that case, simply design the presentation so that it tells a story. Following steps will help you design such a presentation:

1. **Message:** Consider the message you want to tell in your presentation. What will be the purpose of this message? Is it to inform, entertain, inspire, or convince the audience? In a business communication, you might need to pick up a combination of these things (inform and persuade). The main message should be clearly evident from the title on your first slide. It should be brief, precise and in one or two sentences.

2. **Ideas:** Once you have established the message of your presentation, brainstorm your ideas and weave them into a rough draft, on paper, to outline all the points you want to cover.

3. **Structure:** After a rough draft is created, you should structure the presentation. This is the time when you will frame your story into the presentation. There are seven different storytelling structures. Each structure depends on the presentation's message and targeted audience:

   1. **Fact and Story:** This presentation structure moves back and forth between the current reality (what is) and promised future (what could be). This type of structure will keep the audience engaged till the end of the presentation.

      The presentation ends at a higher point than from where it started. The audience will feel that they gained something valuable and will be inspired to change.

This type of structure is suitable for presentations that intend to inspire and inform.

Example: TED Talk – The Beauty of Data Visualisation by David McCandless

2. **The Explanation:** This presentation structure aims to teach new insights. It informs about a process, a plan or a solution. It uses a story, which progresses as the facts evolve. Figure 1 shows explanation presentation structure:
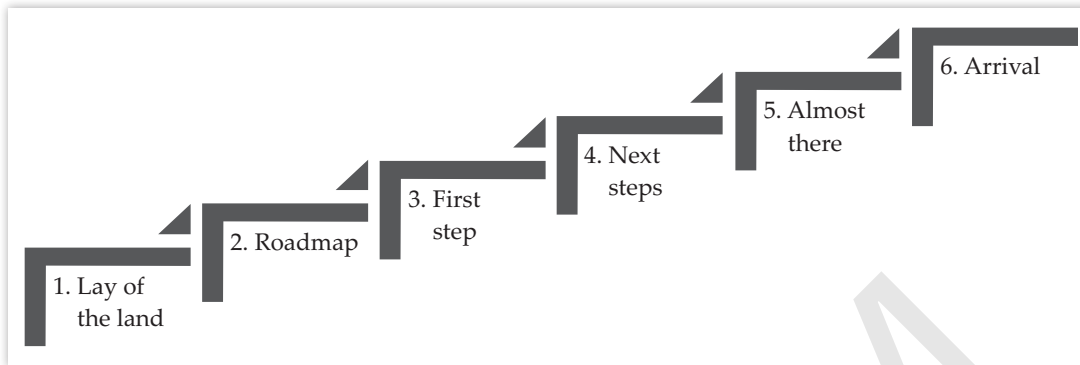

FIGURE 1: Explanation Presentation Structure

1. **Lay of the land:** Start with a story to show the current facts, the intended destination, and the plan to get there. This will get immediate attention from the audience.

2. **Roadmap:** Present a visual map of how the final destination will be reached.

3. **First step:** Begin the adventure to start the journey.

4. **Next step:** This is the middle section, where you list all the steps.

5. **Almost there:** Recap and evaluate the progress achieved so far.

6. **Arrival:** Celebrate the end of the journey. The audience should feel that they have learned new knowledge.

This type of presentation structure is well suited for consultants who want to instruct a new way of doing things, or for salespersons who want to explain a sales plan.

Example: TED Talk – Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are by Amy Cuddy

3. **The Pitch:** This presentation structure is used to convince the audience how an idea can improve a situation. It uses an uphill structure where it takes the audience over a hurdle and then to a positive resolution. The steps taken in this presentation are as follows:

1. **Wind up:** Begin with a quick recap of the current facts.

2. **Hurdle:** Present the problem using a relatable story.

3. **Vision:** Briefly present the main idea to solve the problem.

4. **Options:** Present two possibilities to solve the problem. First, give an average option and then a great option.

5. **Close:** Present the ideal option as in why it is the best option.

6. **Hook:** End the presentation with an inspiring message that conveys an extra benefit to the solution of the problem.

This presentation structure will effectively convince the audience about an idea. It is mostly used for presenting business cases.

Example: TED Talk: Let's Turn the High Seas into the World's Largest Natural Reserve by Enric Sala

4. **The Drama:** This is the most familiar theme in storytelling where a hero's journey is presented. It includes following steps:

1. **One fine day:** Lay out the setting to give the audience an idea about the time and place. Start with a scenario where things are not ideal.

2. **Challenge:** Present a problem or a challenge.

3. **Descending crisis:** The first attempt to meet the challenge head-on should only worsen things.

4. **Rock bottom:** Present the scenario where everything is at its worst. Pause for a while for extra effect.

5. **Discovery:** Show a glimpse of light by presenting a new discovery or a new way to solving the problem.

6. **Rise:** Solve the problem in the new way.

7. **Return:** After the problem is solved, give a break-through to the character so that he/she reaches out to new possibilities.

8. **Lesson:** End with a strong lesson and resolution.

This type of structure will inspire, inform, and entertain the audience.

Example: TED Talk – My Journey from Marine to Actor by Adam Driver

5. **Situation-Complication-Resolution:** This is the most common presentation structure in B2B and business consultancy companies. It presents a 3-elements story linked with 'but' and 'therefore.' These three elements are as follows:

1. **Situation:** Start with the current facts. The current situation is connected to the next step using the word 'but'.

Example: "Our training company is doing well this quarter, but."

2. **Complication:** Present the complication as a challenge. Support it with facts.

Example: "Our training company is doing well this quarter, but we have been spending too much on trainer's expenses."

3. **Resolution:** This is the action that is required to solve a problem. It is connected to the complication using the word 'therefore'.

Example: "Our training is doing well this quarter, but we have been spending too much on trainer's expenses. Therefore, we need to start removing training delivery options that are cost-effective."

Example: TED Talk – The Four Fish We're Overeating – And What to Eat Instead by Paul Greenberg

6. **Situation-Opportunity-Resolution:** This 3-part presentation structure replaces 'Complication' with 'Opportunity.' It is used when you need to show that a problem is not that hard to fix and the solution is easier than imagined. Thus, this type of presentation is usually short if it only includes facts. Including a story will make it more effective.

   Example: TED Talk – How to Speak up for Yourself by Adam Galinsky.

7. **Hook, Meat and Payoff:** Just like the drama, this presentation structure also includes a story. This presentation structure feels more like a movie-going experience. This presentation includes three elements as follows:

   1. **Hook:** A hook is a way of giving the audience a sense of what is about to come up and making them interested in the upcoming content.

   2. **Meat:** The middle and the longest part of the presentation, where you present information in an interesting manner.

   3. **Payoff:** Provide a motivating conclusion that takes the audience back to the beginning and leaves them feeling inspired.

   Example: TED Talk – My Stroke of Insight by Jill Bolte Taylor.

4. **Storyboard:** After structuring your presentation, make a storyboard. A storyboard is a visual draft of your presentation. It will help you to visually foresee how your presentation will look like before you actually create it. Keep the text to minimum and use as much visuals as you can. Use maximum one to two sentences per slide. An effective way of storyboarding is by using index cards, where each card represents a slide. That way, you can easily add new cards or remove them before you finalise the draft. Figure 2 displays making of a storyboard:
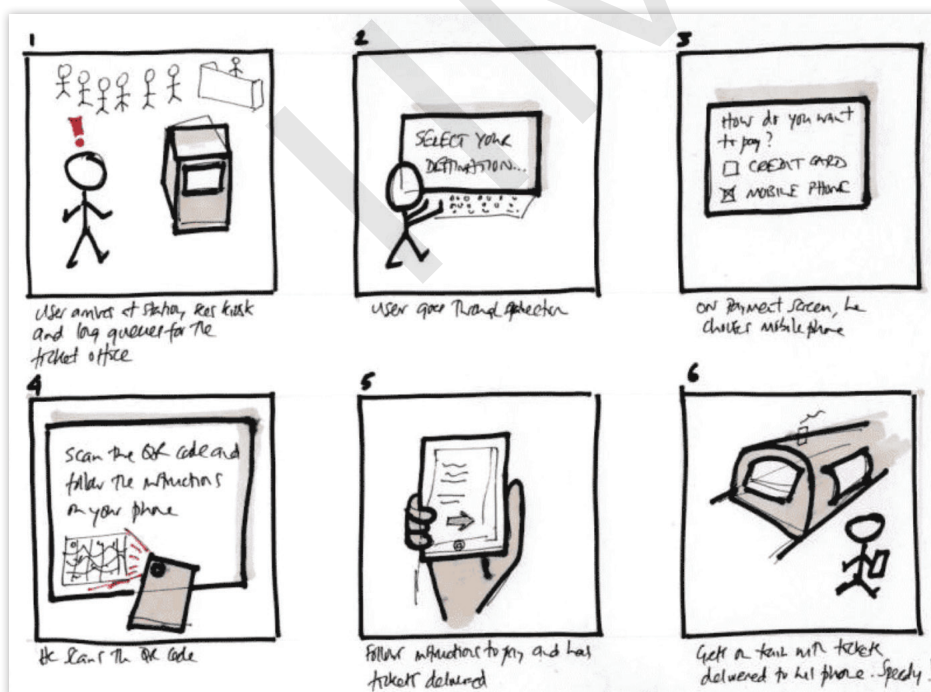

FIGURE 2: Making of a Storyboard

Source: *https://visme.co/blog/presentation-structure/*

129

5. **Build a presentation:** Once the storyboard is finalised, you can build your presentation using any presentation software. It involves following steps:

1. Open a new presentation template or start from scratch. When you start from scratch, you can use built-in slides and customise them.

2. Create slides as per your storyboard.

3. Use animations, audio and video.

4. If the presentation is intended to be used as a stand-alone presentation (without a presenter), an online presentation, or a PDF, then you may need to insert more text to replace the speech part. Here, you can animate the text block.

5. For presentations with audio, mention on the first slide to turn up the volume. This will ensure that participants turn on their mikes.

6. If the presentation is to be used as a supporting material for a presenter's speech, more visual elements should be added to it.

7. Rehearse your presentation along with the slides and time it. According to some experts, you should rehearse a presentation at least 10 times until it will start to feel natural.

8.3.1 | USING VISUAL AIDS

A research from MIT suggests that humans can process an image in 13 milliseconds, which is much faster than our processing of text. World's 65% population is visual learner. Despite that, most presentations still tend to be overloaded with text. They are just bullet points after bullet points with an image thrown in between. A well-designed presentation uses visual aids effectively to reinforce the main points and enhance the audience's level of understanding. Visual aids include a whole range of options, such as:

❍ **Personal appearance:** The presenter must dress up appropriately and decently keeping in mind the kind of audience and venue. For example, if you are delivering a presentation to a business, then you must wear professional attire. If you are delivering a presentation on a sports activity, then you should wear a casual dress. Your dress and manners will make the first impression on your audience.

❍ **PowerPoint or similar presentation format:** Table 1 lists some dos and don'ts of using PowerPoint or similar formats:
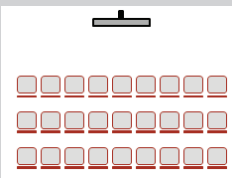
TABLE 1: Dos and Don'ts of Using Presentation Software

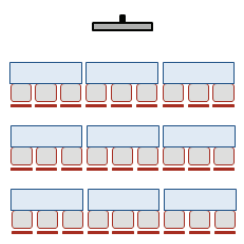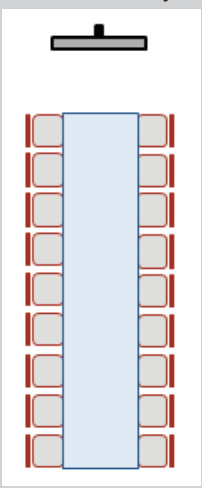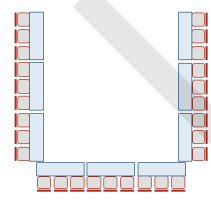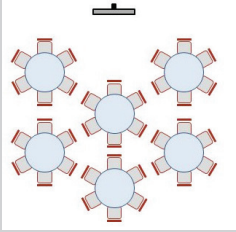| Dos	Don'ts
Use a large font (minimum 20 pt.)	Avoid using a small font that is illegible
Use a simple background	Avoid using a frilly background image
Use animations only when appropriate	Avoid overdoing animations, as they are distracting
Make slides visual	Avoid overuse of bullet points slide after slide

❍ **Whiteboard or blackboard:** You can use them to record your key points or explain the sequence of ideas. These include following tips:

● Use them to explain complex terminology

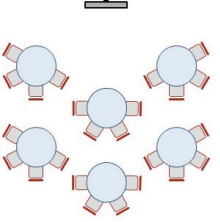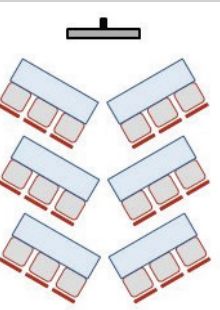● Give time to the audience to take notes and then rub them off

- Do not leave out-of-date material from an earlier presentation on the board

- Use large font to make sure that audience can read your writing

○ **Flipchart:** This is a large pack of paper on a stand where you can write key points. It includes following tips:

- Pre-prepared sheets should be used for key points

- Paste these sheets on the walls throughout the room in a logical sequence. This will help you to draw the audience's attention to any point you want to revisit and recall the main points discussed in the presentation

- After the presentation is over, take photographs of the pasted flipcharts and circulate them to the group as reference material

- Restrict each sheet to only one main idea

- Write clearly and make simple diagrams

○ **Video:** This is used to stimulate your presentation through movement, pictures and sound. It includes following tips:

- Use relevant video clips. Keep them short

- Test them before you play them

- Before showing a video clip, tell the audience what it is about

○ **Objects and props:** These are the real items used as a part of a demonstration. You can use them to reinforce your message and/or build an emotional connect with the audience. For example, you can use these props to demonstrate how the real product works. These include following tips:

- Make sure that the prop is visible to everyone in the room. If not, then pass it around the room

- If the prop is a large one, then hide it till you really need it; otherwise, it might distract the audience

○ **Room layout:** Your audience should be able to see you as well as the visual aids. Therefore, you should use appropriate room layout. Table 2 shows some popular room layouts with their pros and cons:

TABLE 2: Room Layouts

Room layout	Features	Pros	Cons	Best for
Theatre style	Chairs arranged in parallel rows, all facing forward No tables	High density seating Maximises energy in the room	No place for laptops or writing pads Cumbersome Poor sight lines for front corners, back, and along the sides Zero eye contact among audience Uncomfortable seating	Large audience where the information flow is one-way and there is no need to take notes

131

Room layout	Features	Pros	Cons	Best for
Classroom style	Tables and chairs arranged in parallel rows, all facing to the front of the room	Space for laptops and notepads Highest density of any arrangement with tables and chairs	Poor sightlines for front corners Slight discomfort in seating Zero eye contact among audience, making it difficult for discussions	Training sessions where information is mostly one-way and audience needs to take extensive notes or work on laptops
Boardroom style	A single large table surrounded by chairs on both sides	Space for laptops and notepads Lots of eye contact among audience to facilitate discussion	Bad sightlines to view slides from the far end The presenter is not easily visible and he must either stand to a side or sit in the middle.	Brainstorming sessions among small groups where there is no main presenter and little dependence on slides
U-shaped style	A series of tables form three sides of a square/ rectangle, with seats facing the middle	Clear sightlines (audience-presenter and audience-audience) facilitating large group discussions Unique dynamism due to the ability of the presenter to walk amongst groups	Requires a large room Isolation of people sitting in corners	Training sessions with heavy reliance on group discussions and less focus on slide content
Banquet style	A number of tables spread around the room with seating around each table	Tables serve as focal points of small-group discussions Increased group cohesiveness	Many people face away from the screen Side chatter on unrelated topics Limited table space Cumbersome movement	Training sessions that focus more on small-group discussions and less on slide content

Room layout	Features	Pros	Cons	Best for	NOTES
Cabaret style	Banquet style but with only partial seating around each table	Tables serve as focal points of small-group Most people are facing screen and presenter	Side chatter More tables and larger room required	Training sessions with equal focus on small-group discussions and slide content	
Chevron style (V-shaped seating)	Tables arranged in angular patterns relative to one another, so that every chair faces the screen or speaker	Comfortable note-taking Comfortable viewing of slide or speaker Full or partial eye contact with everyone, enabling discussions Relatively high density Support to small-group discussions	Large group discussion is not perfect as some people are still looking at others' backs	Training sessions with focus on slide content, but also want to include small-group and large-group discussions	

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. In their new hire orientation program, Tata Group shows a video film where the actor Kabir Bedi narrates the journey of the Group founder Jamsetji Tata and JRD Tata on how they set up the Group. What kind of a presentation structure is this?

   a. The pitch
   b. Fact and story
   c. The explanation
   d. The drama

4. Krishna wants to deliver a training session on critical thinking. She wants that the audience should be easily able to view her slides as well as participate comfortably in small groups. What kind of room arrangement should she use among the following?

   a. Banquet style
   b. Cabaret style
   c. U-shaped style
   d. Classroom style

8.4 REHEARSING BEFORE A PRESENTATION

Even the most powerful presentation may fail if the presenter comes unprepared. His scrambling for words will only disengage the audience and undermine his credibility as a professional. So, rehearsal is very important to deliver a memorable, confident and charismatic presentation.

It provides the following benefits:

○ **Seamless presentation delivery:** A presentation is both a mental and a physical effort. Rehearsing a presentation will not only make it part of your intellectual memory but also physical memory.

○ **Smooth and logical transitions:** How many presentations have you seen when the speaker moves to the next slide with a statement like, "What this slide shows is?" This kind of awkward jumping from slide to slide indicates the presenter's clumsiness and disengages the audience.

○ **Time the presentation:** You may also have seen that a presenter suddenly realises that he/she has only 30 minutes and there is a lot of content to cover. The presenter will give the cue to the audience to pick up the speed. As a result, the audience is no longer interested in the main message.

Some guidelines on rehearsing a presentation are:

○ **Break the presentation into five parts:** introduction, conclusion, and three most important points. If there are more than three important points, then reduce them to only three points to avoid information overload.

○ Start with writing notes in full sentences for each slide. Read out each note aloud as you rehearse the slides and then cut the notes into bullet points. Rehearse and reduce again. Eventually, only keep a few words that will prompt you to deliver the entire speech.

○ Practice in a conversational style instead of just reciting them. This will make your delivery style more natural.

○ Practice in front of a real audience. You can first record videos of your private rehearsals. When you feel confident enough, practice in front of real people. Seek constructive feedback from them.

○ Do a technical rehearsal with exact sound, lighting and visuals.

After you have rehearsed the presentation, you should check out the venue where you will deliver it. Create a checklist of items and visit the venue before the day of the presentation. If something needs to be corrected, then tell that to the organisers. Follow up with a final walkthrough on the day of your presentation. Arrive early at the venue and check the following:

○ Room layout

○ Seating

○ Room noise

○ Equipment

○ Microphone and sound system

○ Screen

○ Lighting

○ Podium

○ Room temperature

5. Rehearsal should be:

   a. Not too much as it makes the presentation look artificial

   b. Mandatory as it facilitates seamless delivery

   c. Optional for experienced presenters

   d. Avoided as it increases the chances of tripping

6. For rehearsing a presentation, it should be split into an introduction, a conclusion, and _____ parts.

8.5   DELIVERING AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION

Now after rehearsing the presentation, it is time for the actual delivery. To deliver an inspiring, energetic and confident presentation, you should:

❍ **Practice:** Practice will make you perfect. It will help you become familiar with your own voice, words, and phrases and adjust. You will explore how to fit in the different pieces together and practise transitions. Make notes as a part of your presentation support. Using index cards is a common form of note taking, as a quick glimpse through them can guide you through presentation. Use one index card for one main idea plus any supporting information. Connect the cards through a string or a tag so that they remain in sequence.

❍ **Be assertive:** Remember the two Ps:

● **Posture:** Having the right posture is important. A formal and stiff posture will create a different mood among the audience than a relaxed and active one. Changing in postures as per the subject matter being dealt.

● **Presence:** Display a confident presence in front of the audience. You must be polite, but not apologetic in situations such as if the session is running overtime or the microphone has stopped working. Expect and ask for discipline and attention.

❍ **Make contact:** It is important to make contact with the audience to assure them that you are genuinely interested in talking to them.

● **Eye contact:** If you do not make an eye contact with the audience, then they might feel uncomfortable and doubt your sense of involvement in the delivery. Share eye contact with all participants. You should try to involve as many people as possible by regularly shifting your focus across the room.

● **Gesture:** Gestures are a natural human occurrence to reinforce or describe events. Do not keep your hands in your pockets or at sides. As a presenter, you should make extensive use of gestures to welcome your audience, reinforce a point or to end the presentation. You should also use open gestures to move away from the body and extend it towards the audience. Use controlled and precise gestures, as too much movement might be perceived as a sign of nervousness.

- **Spoken contact:** As you start the presentation, ask the audience if they can see and hear you well. It is essential to verify that the sound levels, lights and audio-visual equipment are satisfactory. Intersperse your delivery with verbal questions such as "So, what does this prove?" or "How do we know this is right?" Allow the audience to ask questions at the end of main points or at the end of the presentation to clarify details.

- **Language:** Deliver in a welcoming language that involves your audience. For example, ask your audience questions such as "What can we learn from this?" Introduce visual aids with sentences such as "If we look at this slide, we can say that."

○ **Use voice as a tool:** Your voice is the most powerful and flexible tool. Explore ways in which the same sentence can be said in different ways.

- **Volume:** Speak in a volume that is clearly audible to everyone in the room. Practise listening skills. Your audience may speak in too high or too low volume.

- **Pace:** Deliver in an easy-to-follow pace. Try changing the pace to enliven your presentation. For example, pause intentionally between main points to reinforce them.

- **Pitch:** Just as your pitch varies in normal conversations, it should be used effectively during presentations also. When asking a question, you can raise your pitch. You can lower it down when delivering a compassionate point.

○ **Breathe:** Before the presentation, take a few deep breaths to relax yourself. To ensure smooth transition through the presentation, take pauses after questions or at the end of sections.

○ **Drink:** Always have a water bottle handy to quench your thirst, particularly in long speeches. Avoid drinking ice-cold water as it might constrict your throat and affect your voice quality. Try to relax your throat and ease-up your speaking voice by drinking warm drinks such as tea or coffee.

○ **Humour:** Use humour wisely only if you know it will work. Bad use of humour might make the situation awkward.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

7. Which of the following is the most important aspect of a confident presentation delivery?

   a. Pace   b. Pose

   c. Practice   d. Humour

8. Which of the following actions may lead the audience to think that the presenter is nervous?

   a. Using index cards for checking notes

   b. Checking microphone before starting the delivery

   c. Making eye contact with the people

   d. Using wild gestures to emphasise on points

8.6 GRADING TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS

Grading team presentations is an arduous task. It is difficult to evaluate fair scores, as there will always be some free riders or people who performed poorly or lowered the grade. To circumvent this problem, you can divide the team's scores into two parts: team score and individual scores. Each part should be worth 50 points. On the presentation day, ask the teams to fill in which individual contributed what to the team presentation. For example, Maya did the research, Ellie did the presenting, and Vidya created the slides. Ask individuals to introduce themselves before the presentation. As they present, you can evaluate how well Maya did her research by checking if she has cited the sources or assess Vidya's presentation delivery quality as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Presentation Evaluation Sheet

Category	Scoring criteria	Total points	Score
Research (15 points)	The presentation was appropriate for the topic and audience.	3	
	Material included was relevant to the overall message/purpose.	3	
	Presentation appropriately cited requisite number of references.	3	
	Presentation contained accurate information.	3	
Design (45 points)	Introduction was attention-getting, laid out the problem well, and established a framework for the rest of the presentation.	3	
	Technical terms were well-defined in the language appropriate for the target audience.	3	
	Information was presented in a logical sequence.	3	
	Appropriate amount of material was prepared, and points were made well their relative importance.	3	
	There was an obvious conclusion summarising the presentation.	3	
	Visual aids were well prepared, informative, effective and not distracting.	3	
Delivery (40 points)	Speaker maintained good eye contact with the audience and was appropriately animated (e.g., gestures, moving around, etc.).	3	
	Speaker used a clear, audible voice.	3	
	Delivery was poised, controlled and smooth.	3	
	Good language skills and pronunciation were used.	3	
	Visual aids were well used.	3	
	Length of presentation was within the assigned time limits.	3	
	Information was well communicated.	2	
Score	**Total points**	**50**	

Source: *http://hplengr.engr.wisc.edu/Rubric_Presentation.doc*

After the presentation, sum up the individual's scores and average the total across all scores. This will be the team's score. Now, the score of each individual will be a score out of 100.

To prevent free riders from getting credit, any individual who is listed by a team as "came to meetings but never contributed" or "didn't do anything" the team score only, and give him/her 0 out of 50. This will control free riders and is fair to the rest of the team members.

8.6.1 | PRESENTATION FEEDBACK

Most feedback forms contain the comments section, where the audience can give constructive feedback. Some tips to give constructive feedback are:

○ Phrase the message positively. Reinforce what was done well. Your motive should be to help the presenter and not to show your superiority.

○ Give feedback in specific, observable behaviour. Describe the presenter's actions and the results you observed.

- **Good example:** You quickly worked over the example problem. As a result, many students were still confused.

- **Bad example:** You did a bad job with the example problem.

○ Give a specific action plan. Avoid mentioning what you would have done in their situation.

- **Good example:** Consider incorporating more audience interaction to keep them engaged throughout the presentation.

- **Bad example:** If I were in your shoes, I would have included more activities to make it less boring.

○ Provide feedback that can be changed. Avoid commenting on personality; instead focus on behaviour.

- **Good example:** You presented an agenda but you did not stick to it. I found it difficult to follow you.

- **Bad example:** You are not focussed.

Some tips to receive constructive feedback are:

○ Begin the feedback session with a self-reflection on the points on which you did well and what could have been done better.

○ Discuss the feedback you receive. For example, you said "I did not stick to the agenda. Where exactly did I lose it? How could you tell that I'd lost it?"

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

9. Vidyut did not design the presentation on time. His team member Nomita put together some slides. Rohit delivered the presentation. The presentation was well-received. As a judge, you know that Vidyut did not contribute. You want

to teach him a lesson, yet you do not want the team to suffer. What should you do?

    a. Give more scores to Nomita and Rohit and less scores to Vidyut

    b. Give score to the team presentation but give zero score to Vidyut

    c. Rebuke Vidyut in front of the group

    d. Give less score to the team presentation but more scores to Nomita and Rohit

10. The feedback should be:

    a. Judgemental   b. Critical

    c. Personal   d. Constructive

ACTIVITY

1. In a team of two, design a presentation on any topic of your choice, using the storytelling format. Create a storyboard and mention the visual aids you will use.

2. Deliver the presentation to another group and ask them to evaluate using a feedback form. The evaluation should score both the team and individual effort.

8.7 USE OF TABLES, CHARTS AND GRAPHS IN PRESENTATION

Tables, charts and graphs are essential tools for effectively communicating data in presentations. They can help to make complex information more understandable, visually appealing, and memorable. When used strategically, they can enhance the persuasiveness and impact of your presentation.

Tables

Tables offer a structured arrangement of data in rows and columns, enabling quick access to and comparison of information. When arranged chronologically, such as by presenting sales figures across a decade, tables effectively reveal trends and highlight patterns of increasing or decreasing activity over time.

Tables are best used when you want to present precise data in a structured format. They are ideal for displaying numerical data, such as sales figures, survey results, or experimental outcomes. Tables allow viewers to quickly scan and compare data points, identify trends, and make comparisons.

Formatting Requirements

A table consists of rows and columns organising data. Column headings sit at the top of each column, defining its contents and often indicating the unit of measurement. On the left side, row headings identify the contents of each row.

Complexity arises when grouping or subdividing rows or columns, requiring the creation of row or column subheadings, as illustrated in Table 4:

TABLE 4: Format of Table with Grouped or Subdivided Rows and Columns

Energy Production by Major Source from 2000 to 2020					
Year	Total Production	Production (%)			
		Petroleum	Natural Gas	Coal	Other
2000	35.5	45.2	28.5	36.0	4.8
2010	72.3	30.0	42.0	32.9	2.5
2020	43.8	27.6	29.7	38.8	6.7

In Table 4, the table's title and number are positioned above the table, unlike other graphics, where they typically appear below the graphic.

Guidelines for using Tables

❍ In the text preceding the table, it's crucial to introduce and explain its significance rather than assume readers will grasp it on their own. Simplify the table data, focusing on key points that support the argument while avoiding overwhelming complexity, such as large tables with multiple columns and rows.

❍ To enhance readability, refrain from adding unit abbreviations repetitively within a column; instead, include the abbreviation in the column or row heading. Align numbers correctly within columns (right or decimal alignment) and left-align words in columns, unless centred alignment is specifically appropriate.

❍ For numerical data, centre column headings over the respective columns, forming a T-shape. In cases involving text, use left-align column headings. Additionally, when utilising tables created by others or based on external data, ensure proper citation and referencing within the table title, including in-text citations and reference list details.

Charts and Graphs

Charts are useful for visualising data and highlighting trends and patterns. They can be more effective than tables at conveying overall trends and relationships between variables. Common types of charts include line charts, bar charts, pie charts, and scatter plots. Graphs are a more general term that encompass both charts and diagrams. They are used to represent data visually, and they can be helpful for explaining concepts, illustrating processes, and showcasing relationships. Common types of graphs include bar graph, line graph, histogram and scatter plot.

Formatting Requirements

Ensure clarity in bar charts and line graphs by explicitly labelling the X and Y axes to denote their representations. For example, one axis could signify millions of dollars, while the other might indicate time in five-year segments from 2000 to the present.

Additionally, these visual representations, like bar charts, line graphs, and pie charts, utilise special colours, shading, or line styles (solid or dashed) to convey

information. Include a key (legend) in an available area of the chart or graph to translate these visual elements and clarify their meanings.
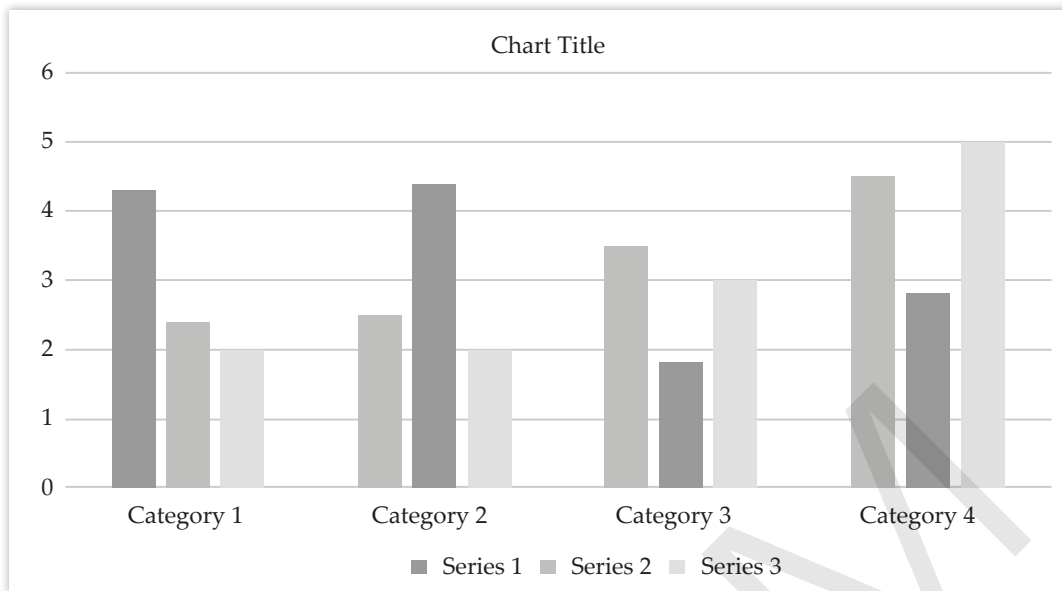
The format of the chart and graph is shown in Figure 3:

FIGURE 3: Format of Chart and Graph

Effective use of Tables, Charts, and Graphs in Presentation

When using tables, charts and graphs in your presentations, follow these guidelines for maximum effectiveness:

❍ **Choose the right type of visual:** Select the most appropriate visual representation for the type of data you are presenting.

❍ **Keep it simple:** Avoid clutter and excessive complexity. Use clear labels, legends, and titles to make your visuals easy to understand.

❍ **Use consistent formatting:** Maintain a consistent style across your visuals to create a cohesive presentation.

❍ **Highlight key points:** Use colour, shading, or annotation to draw attention to important data points or trends.

❍ **Reference your visuals:** Clearly explain the significance of your visuals and how they relate to your presentation's message.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

11. Which formatting guideline is recommended for numerical data in a table?

   a. Right-align column headings

   b. Centre column headings over respective columns form a T-shape

   c. Use centred alignment for all words in columns

   d. Place unit abbreviations repeatedly within each column

12. What is a key difference between tables and charts/graphs when presenting data?

    a. Charts/graphs offer more detail and precision compared to tables

    b. Tables provide a clearer understanding of trends in comparison to charts/graphs

    c. Charts/graphs generally lack specific numerical values present in tables

    d. Tables use special colours and shading to convey information

8.8 SUMMARY

○ A presentation communicates a message, an idea or information to a group. It is similar to a report, but includes the human element.

○ The main objectives of a presentation are to inform, train, persuade, motivate and entertain a specific group of people.

○ It has three main elements: specific content, audience and presenter.

○ To prepare a presentation, identify its objective/purpose, determine the method of delivery, formulate a structure, include visual aids, and rehearse.

○ Effective presentations follow a storytelling structure, which can be fact and story, the explanation, the pitch, the drama, situation-complication-resolution, situation-opportunity-resolution, and hook, meat, and payoff.

○ A well-designed presentation uses visual aids effectively to reinforce the main points and enhance the audience's level of understanding.

○ Visual aids include personal appearance, presentation software, white or blackboard, flipchart, video, and objects and props.

○ The room layout can be theatre style, classroom style, U-shaped style, banquet style, cabaret style or chevron style.

○ Rehearsing a presentation before a live audience and with full effects will ensure smooth delivery.

○ To deliver an effective presentation, practise it several times, be assertive, make appropriate contacts with the audience, speak in well-modulated voice, practise breathing exercises, and drink regularly to prevent dry throat.

○ To grade a team performance on presentation, assign individual scores and average them across all scores.

○ Provide and take feedback constructively.

○ Tables offer a structured arrangement of data in rows and columns, enabling quick access and comparison of information.

○ Charts and graphs are just another way of presenting the same data that is presented in tables. Charts or graphs generally offer less detail or precision compared to tables when presenting data.

8.9 KEY WORDS

○ **Visual aids:** It refers to any supplemental materials used to enhance or support a presentation, speech, or communication.

○ **Room layout:** It refers to the arrangement of seating, equipment, and physical elements within a space where a presentation takes place.

○ **Tables in presentation:** It can include numerical data, text, or a combination of both, and they are commonly utilised in slideshows, reports, or documents during presentations.

○ **Charts and graphs in presentation:** It is visual representation used to illustrate data, trends, or relationships between different sets of information.

8.10 CASE STUDY: STRUCTURING A PRESENTATION LIKE A STORY

This case study demonstrates how a manager created a persuasive story in a presentation by using the 'Fact and Story' structure:
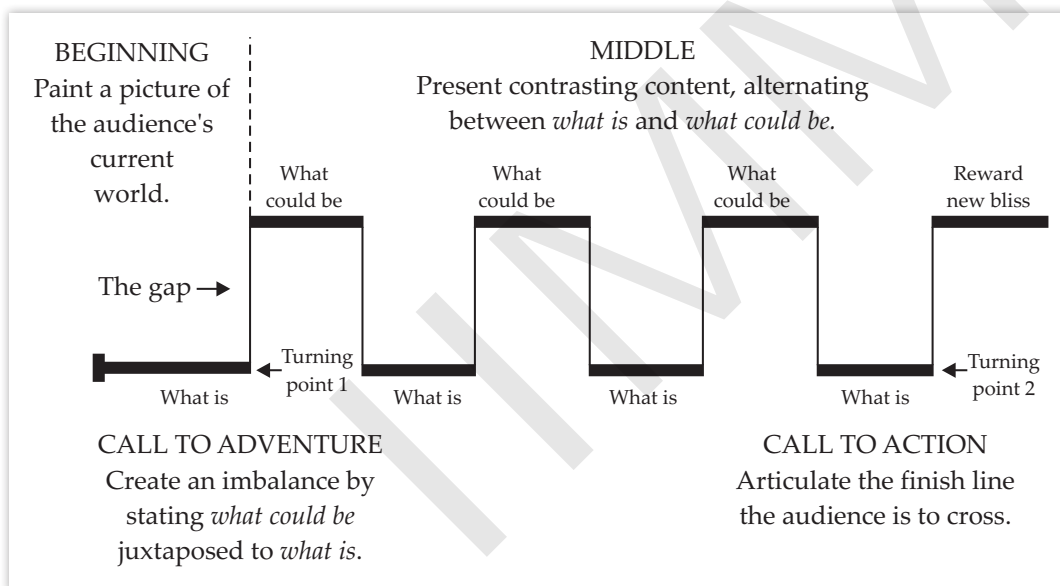
Fact and Story Structure

Source: *https://visme.co/blog/presentation-structure/*

Method

1. **Beginning:** The manager introduced the presentation by describing the current situation, which was, "We fell short of our Q3 target, mainly because we are understaffed and everyone is working in too many projects." This created an immediate bond with the audience. Everyone opened up to hear his ideas. The manager then introduced his vision of what could be – "But what if we could solve the problem by getting in some major clients? Well, we can." By exposing the gap between 'what is' and 'what could be,' he threw his audience a bit off balance. This created a tension among the group and jolted them out of complacency.

2. **Middle:** The manager spent the rest of the time in bridging this gap. He kept going back and forth between facts (what is) and story (what could be), as follows:

   - **Fact:** "We missed our Q3 forecast by 20%."

   - **Story:** "But we must have a good Q4 for our bonuses to be paid."

   - **Fact:** "We have three new customers on the order book."

   - **Story:** "Out of these, two customers have the potential to become our powerhouse clients and bring in more revenues than our current clients."

   - **Fact:** "The new customers will need extensive technology in manufacturing."

   - **Story:** "We are getting in some experts from Germany to help."

   As the manager kept playing the contrast between fact and story, the audience warmed up to the story.

3. **Ending:** In the end, the manager gave an inspiring call to action and described the new bliss. The call to action was a message that inspired people to act, whereas the new bliss was a vision that showed the audience how much better their world would be if they adopted the new ideas.

   - **Call to action:** "Although it will require you to work extra to make up for a good Q4, but this will ensure timely and quality delivery to our new important clients."

   - **New bliss:** "I know everyone is under a lot of pressure, but hang in there. This is our opportunity to pull together like a champion team. If we make this work, things will get easier. We will get extra bonuses at the end of the year."

Results

The team was fully convinced by the manager's presentation and the promise of future rewards. They pulled in their bits and worked extra hard.

Conclusion

Telling a story through a presentation, captures instant attention and engages the audience to the message. You can use a story to remind people of the status quo and then disclose a path to a better future. This establishes a conflict that needs to be resolved. This conflict as well as a vision of a better future will inspire the audience to adopt a new mindset or behave differently.

Source: *https://hbr.org/2012/10/structure-your-presentation-li*

QUESTIONS

1. When is the call to adventure made in the Fact and Story presentation structure?

   (**Hint:** In the beginning, when an imbalance is created by presenting the contrast between 'what is' and 'what could be'.)

2. What is the second turning point in this structure?

   (**Hint:** When the call to action is made and the new bliss is stated.)

8.11 EXERCISE

1. What is a presentation? Why is it used? What are its three main elements?

2. How will you prepare a presentation? Explain any three structures that will help you include a story in your presentation.

3. What is a storyboard? Why is it used?

4. What are different types of visual aids? What are the guidelines for using them?

5. What are different room layouts? List their advantages and disadvantages.

6. Why should you rehearse before a presentation? Mention some tips on rehearsal.

7. What will help you deliver a powerful presentation?

8. How can you grade team and individual presentations fairly?

9. How should you give and take feedback?

10. How do tables, charts, and graphs enhance data visualisation in presentations?

8.12 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
What is a Presentation?	1.	a. Visual aid
	2.	c. Audience's needs
How to Design a Presentation?	3.	d. The Drama
	4.	b. Cabaret style
Rehearsing Before a Presentation	5.	b. Mandatory as it facilitates seamless delivery
	6.	Three
Delivering an Effective Presentation	7.	c. Practice
	8.	d. Using wild gestures to emphasise on points
Grading Team and Individual Presentations	9.	b. Give score to the team presentation but give zero score to Vidyut
	10.	d. Constructive
Use of Tables, Charts and graphs in Presentation	11.	b. Centre column headings over respective columns form a T-shape
	12.	c. Charts/graphs generally lack specific numerical values present in tables

8.13 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍ Bovee, Courtland, &Thill, John. (2010). *Business Communication Essentials*: Pearson

❍ Sehgal, M.K. (2008). *Business Communication*. [Delhi]: Excel Books.

❍ Singh, Nirmal (2008). *Business Communication: Principles, Methods & Techniques*. [Delhi]: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd.

E-REFERENCES

○ How to Give a Killer Presentation. (2019). Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2013/06/how-to-give-a-killer-presentation.

○ Giving effective feedback on presentations #1. (2019). Retrieved from http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2018/07/24/effective-feedback-presentations/.

CHAPTER

9

Project Report Writing

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

┌───┐
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Explain the overview of project report

❍ Demonstrate writing a project report

❍ Discuss the concept of preparing synopsis

❍ Understand the selection of title for study

❍ Describe the contents of a project report
└───┘

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you studied about the concept of presentation, its planning and the design of a presentation. The chapter also discussed how to rehearse and deliver an effective presentation. The topics related to the grading team and individual presentations and use of tables, charts, and graphs in presentation were also described at the end of the chapter.

A project report refers to a document that contains vital information related to a project, such as project objectives, milestones, challenges, etc. It helps to track a project's progress, identify resource requirements, allocate resources, etc. Project report writing is a crucial skill that involves documenting the details, progress, and outcomes of a project in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

Effective project report writing involves structuring information logically, using a suitable writing style, and incorporating visual elements such as charts or graphs to enhance understanding. It plays a vital role in decision-making, evaluation, and future planning within an organisation. Clarity, objectivity and accuracy are paramount in conveying complex information, ensuring that the report is not only a record of accomplishments but also a valuable tool for strategic insights and informed decision-making in business.

In this chapter, you will study about the concept of project report. This chapter also describes preparing synopsis and includes selecting a title for study. At the end of this chapter, the contents of a project report have been discussed.

9.2 PROJECT REPORT

A project report refers to a comprehensive document outlining the objectives, methodology, findings and recommendations of a specific project or initiative. It typically details upon the project scope, methodology used for data collection or analysis, results obtained and their implications.

A typical project report includes the following elements:

❍ **Objectives and goals:** Outline the project's purpose, what it aims to achieve and how it aligns with wider organisational goals.

❍ **Methodology and scope:** Explain the steps taken to execute the project, the resources used, and the specific limitations or boundaries of the work.

❍ **Progress and results:** Provide information on the project's current status, milestones achieved, challenges encountered and adjustments made along the way. This may involve data, charts, or other visuals to present information clearly.

❍ **Evaluation and recommendations:** Analyse the project's success in meeting its objectives, identify areas for improvement and suggest potential future actions or next steps.

❍ **Financial information:** Include details on budget allocation, spending and any financial outcomes achieved.

Following are three types of project reports:

1. **General project report:** This serves as the foundational project report, outlining predictions and plans for the project. It provides a clear direction for aspects like budget, timelines and overall project success.

2. **Progress report:** Positioned in the middle of the project timeline, a progress report documents the project's on-going status. It facilitates regular reassessment to ensure alignment with expectations, aiding in adjustments and keeping stakeholders informed.

3. **Project completion report:** As the project concludes, a completion report offers reflection on successes and challenges. It not only wraps up the current project neatly but also informs future projects, preventing the repetition of mistakes.

Project Report Template

Project Name	
Stakeholders	
Points of Contact	
Deadline	
Budget	
Additional info	
Additional info	

Project Summary

Use this space to explain your project in a couple of sentences…

Goals/Objectives

❍ *Objective 1*

❍ *Objective 2*

❍ *Objective 3*

Obstacles/Risks

○   *Obstacle 1*

○   *Obstacle 2*

○   *Obstacle 3*

Timeline

Task	Assigned to:	Deadline
Task 1	Team Member	XX/XX/XX

Notes

Use this space to jot down any notes for your project

Additional Links:

Use this space to add links to important documents, e.g.

○   *Project management platform*

○   *Communication guidelines*

(**Source:** https://www.project.co/project-report/)

9.2.1 | WRITING A PROJECT REPORT

Writing a project report is an essential part of any project, as it communicates the results and findings to stakeholders and provides a record of the work completed.

Following is a general guide to writing an effective project report:

○ **Define your objectives**

- What is the purpose of the project?

- Who is the target audience?

- What do you want the audience to know?

○ **Gather your information**

- Collect all relevant data, documents, and results of the project.

- Organise the information in a logical way.

○ **Structure your report**

- Most project reports follow a standard structure, including:

  ✓ **Executive summary:** Shows a brief overview of the entire report.

  ✓ **Introduction:** Provides context and background information about the project.

151

✓ **Methodology:** Describes the methods and procedures used to complete the project.

✓ **Results:** Present the findings of the project, including data analysis and interpretation.

✓ **Discussion:** Explain the meaning of the results and how they relate to the project objectives.

✓ **Conclusion:** Summarises the key findings and recommendations.

✓ **References:** Lists all sources used in the report.

❍ **Write your report**

● Use clear and concise language.

● Avoid technical jargon unless you are sure your audience will understand it.

● Use visuals such as charts, graphs, and tables to present data effectively.

● Proofread the report carefully for errors.

❍ **Get feedback**

● Ask someone else to review your report before you submit it.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Which section of a project report explains the methods and procedures used to complete the project?

   a. Introduction   b. Results

   c. Methodology   d. Conclusion

2. The discussion section in a project report focuses on summarising the key findings and presenting recommendations. (True/False)

9.3 PREPARING SYNOPSIS

A synopsis provides a summary of the key elements of a project, proposal, or research endeavour into a concise and structured format. It serves as a snapshot, outlining the purpose, objectives, methodology, and expected outcomes of the project. Typically shorter than a full report, a synopsis provides an overview, enabling stakeholders to quickly grasp the essence of the project. It should capture the main points effectively, highlighting the significance of the work, its relevance, and the approach taken. A well-prepared synopsis aids in decision-making by offering a clear and concise understanding of the project's scope and potential impact.

9.3.1 CONTENTS OF SYNOPSIS

A synopsis typically includes key elements that provide a concise overview of a document, report, or proposal. The contents may vary based on the specific context, but a business synopsis generally includes:

❍ **Title:** It provides a clear and concise indication of the subject matter of the project or research endeavour. The title should be specific and reflective of the main focus.

❍ **Introduction:** The introduction sets the stage for the project by offering a brief overview of its background and context. It should highlight the problem statement or research question that the project aims to address, creating a foundation for the reader to understand the purpose.

❍ **Objectives:** Objectives articulate the clear and specific goals of the project. These should be measurable and achievable, providing a roadmap for what the project intends to accomplish.

❍ **Methodology:** The methodology section describes the methods, tools, or approach used to conduct the project. It outlines the research design, data collection methods, and any analytical tools used.

❍ **Scope:** This section defines the boundaries and limitations of the project. It clarifies what is included and excluded from the study, helping readers understand the extent and focus of the research.

❍ **Expected outcomes:** Anticipated results or findings are briefly mentioned in this section. It provides a preview of the outcomes that the project aims to achieve and their potential significance.

❍ **Significance:** This section states the importance and relevance of the project. It explains why the project is valuable and what impact it may have.

❍ **Timeline:** An estimated timeline or schedule for completing the project is outlined in this section. It provides a chronological overview of the key milestones and deadlines associated with the project.

❍ **References:** Any sources, literature, or references used during the preparation of the synopsis are listed. The main purpose of mentioning references is to refer to the information if required in the future.

9.3.2 | SELECTING A TITLE FOR STUDY

The title should serve as a concise and inviting entry point for readers, providing them with a clear sense of what the study is about and enticing them to explore further. Selecting a title for a study is a crucial step that should capture the essence of the research while being clear and engaging. Following are some tips to consider when selecting a title:

❍ **Clarity and precision:** Ensure that the title clearly communicates the focus and purpose of the study. Avoid overly complex or vague language.

❍ **Relevance:** Relevance is essential in a title, emphasising its alignment with the study's central theme. The title should concisely reflect the core topic, ensuring clarity and resonance with the research focus.

❍ **Conciseness:** Keep the title concise while conveying the main idea. Aim for brevity to make it easy for readers to understand at a glance.

❍ **Keywords:** Include relevant keywords that reflect the key concepts or themes of the study. This can improve the discoverability of your research.

❍ **Specificity:** Be specific about the scope or context of the study. Avoid overly broad titles that may be unclear or misleading.

❍ **Engaging language:** Use engaging and compelling language to capture the reader's interest. A well-crafted title can generate curiosity and encourage further reading.

❍ **Avoid jargon:** Minimise the use of technical jargon or acronyms unless they are widely recognised in the field. Aim for accessibility to a broader audience.

❍ **Reflect research design:** If applicable, consider incorporating elements of the research design, such as the methodology or approach, into the title.

Example

A study on employee engagement strategies in a corporate setting might have a title like "Optimising Workforce Engagement: A Comprehensive Analysis of Effective Strategies." Such a title clearly communicates the subject matter and purpose of the study.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. The _____ section of a synopsis outlines the boundaries and limitations of the project, defining what is included and excluded from the study.

4. What section of a synopsis provides a brief overview of the background and context of the project, highlighting the problem statement or research question?

   a. Objectives   b. Introduction

   c. Scope   d. Significance

9.4   CONTENTS OF A PROJECT REPORT

The contents of a project report encompass various sections that systematically document the project's scope, methodology, findings, and recommendations. Typically, a project report includes an introduction elucidating the project's background, objectives, and significance. The methodology section delineates the approach, tools, and techniques utilised for data collection or analysis. Findings and results obtained from the project, often presented through tables, graphs, or textual descriptions. The discussion segment interprets the findings, identifies trends, and provides insights into their implications. A comprehensive conclusion summarises key points, implications of the findings, and any recommendations for future actions. Additionally, references and appendices may be included to provide supplementary information, ensuring clarity, credibility and completeness in conveying the project's details and outcomes.

9.4.1   INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The "Introduction to the Problem" section in a project report serves as a critical component, setting the stage for the entire document. This section provides an overview of the problem or issue that the project aims to address. A well-crafted introduction to the problem not only clarifies the focal point of the project but also engages readers by demonstrating the relevance and importance of the identified problem within an organisation.

Following are key elements typically included in the introduction to the problem:

❍ **Background and Context**

- Offer a brief background on the broader context in which the problem exists.
- Describe any relevant historical, industry-related, or organisational factors contributing to the problem.

❍ **Problem Statement**

- Clearly articulate the specific problem or issue that the project seeks to solve.
- Define the problem in a concise and focused manner.

❍ **Significance of the Problem**

- Explain why the identified problem is significant or relevant to the organisation, industry, or stakeholders.
- Highlight the potential impact of addressing or neglecting the problem.

❍ **Objectives of the Project**

- State the comprehensive goals and objectives that the project aims to achieve.
- Outline the desired outcomes and benefits expected from solving the problem.

❍ **Scope and Limitations**

- Define the scope of the project by specifying the boundaries and extent of coverage.
- Acknowledge any limitations or constraints that may impact the project's scope.

❍ **Rationale for the Project**

- Present the rationale behind choosing this particular problem for the project.
- Explain why addressing this problem aligns with the organisation's goals and objectives.

❍ **Relevance to Stakeholders**

- Identify the stakeholders who are directly or indirectly affected by the problem.
- Discuss how addressing the problem aligns with the interests of these stakeholders.

❍ **Current State of Affairs**

- Provide an overview of the current situation related to the problem.
- Include relevant data, statistics, or observations that shed light on the existing conditions.

❍ **Gap Analysis**

- Conduct a brief gap analysis, comparing the current state with the desired state.
- Highlight any disparities or deficiencies that the project aims to bridge.

9.4.2 | SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The "Scope of the Study" section in a project report outlines the boundaries and parameters within which the research or project has been conducted. It provides a clear understanding of what the study includes and excludes. The scope defines the extent of the investigation and sets the expectations for readers.

Following are the key components typically found in the "Scope of the Study" section:

○ **Geographical scope:** This aspect defines the geographical boundaries within which the research or project is applicable. It could be a specific region, country, or even a global perspective, depending on the nature of the study.

○ **Time frame:** The time frame establishes the duration covered by the study. It could be a particular period, such as months or years, providing a context for the temporal aspects of the research.

○ **Subjects or participants:** Identifying the subjects or participants outlines who or what is involved in the study. This could include individuals, organisations, specific groups, or entities relevant to the research.

○ **Variables and parameters:** This part clarifies the factors or variables considered in the study. For example, in a market research project, variables might include consumer behaviour, market trends, or product preferences.

○ **Limitations:** They acknowledge any constraints that may impact the study's scope, such as budget constraints, time limitations, or data availability issues.

○ **Exclusions:** They specify any aspects deliberately left out of the study. For example, if a research project focuses on a specific demographic, it may exclude other demographics.

○ **Delimitations:** Delimitations set specific boundaries on the study, defining its scope more precisely. This ensures that the research remains focused and manageable.

○ **Objectives and research questions:** Aligning the scope with objectives and research questions helps maintain a clear connection between what the study aims to achieve and the boundaries it sets.

○ **Population or sample size:** Describing the population or sample size outlines the group or number of individuals or entities under consideration. It helps in understanding the scale and representation of the study.

○ **Data collection methods:** This component highlights the methods employed to gather data, such as surveys, interviews, or observations.

○ **Research design:** Outlining the research design clarifies the overall strategy or structure of the study, whether it's qualitative, quantitative, experimental, or observational.

○ **Instruments or tools used:** Mentioning the instruments or tools used in the study, such as questionnaires, measurements, or software, provides transparency regarding the methodologies employed.

○ **Significance of the study:** Discussing the significance explains why the study is relevant and what contribution it makes to existing knowledge or practice.

○ **Intended audience:** Identifying the primary audience specifies who will benefit from or be interested in the study's outcomes, guiding the communication of results.

9.4.3 | BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANISATION AND THE PROBLEM UNDER STUDY

The background of the organisation sets the context by providing a detailed overview of the company or entity under study. It encompasses the organisation's history, mission, objectives, structure, and relevant industry information. Additionally, it introduces the specific problem or challenge being investigated within the organisation. It aims to establish a clear understanding of the entity's environment, operations, and any relevant factors contributing to the identified problem. By intertwining the organisation's background with the problem at hand, it lays the foundation for comprehending the issue within the larger organisational framework, facilitating a holistic understanding for readers. The inclusion of the background of the organisation and the problem under study is crucial in a project report.

9.4.4 | LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In a project report, the literature review and theoretical perspective critically examines existing scholarly works, studies, and theories relevant to the problem or subject under investigation. It involves a comprehensive review and synthesis of academic literature, presenting key concepts, theories, empirical evidence, and debates related to the problem. It elucidates the theoretical frameworks and models that inform the study, providing a foundation for understanding the context, complexities, and various perspectives associated with the problem. By synthesising and analysing existing literature, researchers establish a theoretical framework that guides their approach, enriches understanding, and informs the methodology and interpretation of findings within the study.

Following are the elements of each:

1. **Literature Review**

   ○ **Purpose**

      ● To survey existing research, studies, and literature related to the project's topic.

      ● To identify gaps, trends, and patterns in the current knowledge base.

   ○ **Content**

      ● **Relevant research:** Summarise key findings from existing research related to the project.

      ● **Conceptual frameworks:** Introduce theoretical frameworks or models that have been applied in similar contexts.

      ● **Methodologies:** Explore methodologies used in previous studies that may inform or contrast with the current project.

- **Critical analysis:** Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of previous research, highlighting areas that need further exploration.

○ **Significance**

- Provides context and justifies the need for the current project.

- Demonstrates an understanding of existing knowledge in the field.

- Identifies gaps or unresolved issues that the current project aims to address.

2. **Theoretical Perspective**

○ **Purpose**

- To establish a theoretical foundation for the project.

- To guide the project's conceptual framework and research design.

○ **Content**

- **Theoretical framework:** Present the comprehensive theoretical perspective or framework guiding the project.

- **Key concepts:** Define and explain key concepts, variables, or constructs used in the project.

- **Hypotheses or propositions:** If applicable, outline hypotheses or propositions derived from the chosen theoretical perspective.

○ **Significance**

- Guides the project's research questions, hypotheses, and overall design.

- Provides a lens through which data will be interpreted.

- Establishes a scholarly basis for the project within existing theoretical frameworks.

9.4.5 | DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In project report, data collection and analysis focuses on detailing the methods used to gather relevant information or data pertaining to the research objectives. This involves outlining the specific techniques, tools, or approaches employed to collect primary or secondary data, ensuring their relevance and reliability. Additionally, it defines the process of data analysis, describing how the collected information was processed, organised, and interpreted to derive meaningful insights or conclusions. It often includes descriptions of statistical methods, software used for analysis, and steps taken to ensure data accuracy and validity. The data collection and analysis segment play a crucial role in demonstrating the rigour and credibility of the study's findings and conclusions.

Following are the components of data collection and analysis:

○ **Data collection methods:** Describe the methods used to gather information for the project. This might include surveys, interviews, observations, or data obtained from existing sources.

○ **Sampling techniques:** If applicable, provide details about the sampling techniques used to select a representative subset of the population. This helps to ensure the findings are applicable to the larger group.

○ **Instrumentation:** Specify any tools, instruments, or technologies used for data collection. For example, survey questionnaires, sensors, software applications, etc.

○ **Data sources:** Clearly state the sources from which data was collected. This could include primary sources (data collected first-hand for the project) and secondary sources (existing data from other studies or databases).

○ **Data validation:** Discuss the steps taken to validate the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. This may involve cross-referencing information, conducting pilot studies, or employing validation checks.

○ **Data analysis techniques:** Outline the methods used to analyse the collected data. This could involve statistical techniques, qualitative analysis, coding, or any other relevant approach.

○ **Statistical tools (if applicable):** If statistical analysis was conducted, specify the tools or software used. This could include Excel, SPSS, SAS, or other statistical packages.

○ **Interpretation of results:** Present the results of the data analysis in a clear and understandable manner. Provide insights into patterns, trends, correlations, or any significant findings.

○ **Limitations of data collection:** Acknowledge any limitations or constraints in the data collection process. This could include factors such as time constraints, sample size limitations, or unforeseen challenges.

○ **Data presentation:** Display the analysed data using appropriate visual aids, such as charts, graphs, tables, or diagrams, to enhance comprehension.

○ **Comparisons and trends:** If relevant, compare the collected data to benchmarks or industry standards. Identify any trends or patterns that emerged during the analysis.

9.4.6 | FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings, conclusions and recommendations form a critical part of the project report, helping stakeholders understand the project's significance and providing a basis for informed decision-making.

Following are the overview of each concept:

○ **Findings**

- Findings in a project report refer to the results or outcomes obtained from the data analysis and research conducted during the project. These are the factual discoveries derived from the investigation.

- Findings typically include data, statistics, observations, and any other relevant information that answers the research questions or objectives. It aims to present an unbiased and accurate portrayal of the project's outcomes.

○ **Conclusions**

- Conclusions in a project report involve the interpretation and summarisation of the findings. It is the researcher's or project team's analysis of what the results mean and how they contribute to the overall understanding of the project.

- The project team draws inferences from the findings and discusses the broader implications. Conclusions provide insights into whether the initial hypotheses were supported or refuted, the significance of the results, and any patterns or trends observed. It is an opportunity to synthesise the information and offer a comprehensive understanding of the project's outcomes.

○ **Recommendations**

- Recommendations in a project report suggest actionable steps or measures based on the findings and conclusions. It outlines what the organisation or stakeholders should consider doing to address identified issues, capitalise on opportunities, or improve processes.

- Recommendations are forward-looking and practical. They may involve suggested changes in policies, procedures, strategies, or interventions. Recommendations should be specific, realistic, and aligned with the project's objectives.

9.4.7 | BIBLIOGRAPHY

In a project report, the bibliography section lists all the sources referenced or consulted during the research and writing process. It includes books, articles, journals, websites, and any other materials used for gathering information or supporting the study's findings and arguments. The bibliography provides readers with a complete list of sources for further exploration or verification of information presented in the report. Entries in the bibliography follow a specific citation style, such as APA, MLA, Chicago, or Harvard, depending on the guidelines or preferences specified for the report. Accuracy and consistency in citing sources are crucial in the bibliography to maintain academic integrity and credibility.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. What section of a project report provides an overview of the problem or issue that the project aims to address?

    a. Data collection and analysis

    b. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations

    c. Introduction to the problem

    d. Bibliography

6. Which section of a project report lists all the sources referenced and follows a specific citation style?

    a. Findings   b. Conclusions

    c. Scope   d. Bibliography

9.5 SUMMARY

- A project report serves as a comprehensive document outlining the objectives, methodology, findings, and recommendations of a specific project or initiative.

- Writing a project report is an essential part of any project, as it communicates the results and findings to stakeholders and provides a record of the work completed.

- Preparing a synopsis involves summarising the key elements of a project, proposal, or research endeavour into a concise and structured format.

- A well-prepared synopsis aids in decision-making by offering a clear and concise understanding of the project's scope and potential impact.

- The title should serve as a concise and inviting entry point for readers, providing them with a clear sense of what the study is about and enticing them to explore further.

- The contents of a project report encompass various sections that systematically document the project's scope, methodology, findings, and recommendations.

- The "Introduction to the Problem" section in a project report serves as a critical component, setting the stage for the entire document. This section provides an overview of the problem or issue that the project aims to address.

- The "Scope of the Study" section in a project report outlines the boundaries and parameters within which the research or project has been conducted. It provides a clear understanding of what the study includes and excludes.

- The background of the organisation sets the context by providing a detailed overview of the company or entity under study. It encompasses the organisation's history, mission, objectives, structure, and relevant industry information.

- Literature review and theoretical perspective critically examines existing scholarly works, studies, and theories relevant to the problem or subject under investigation.

- Data collection and analysis focuses on detailing the methods used to gather relevant information or data pertaining to the research objectives.

- Findings, conclusions and recommendations form a critical part of the project report, helping stakeholders understand the project's significance and providing a basis for informed decision-making.

- The bibliography section lists all the sources referenced or consulted during the research and writing process. It includes books, articles, journals, websites, and any other materials used for gathering information or supporting the study's findings and arguments.

9.6 KEY WORDS

○ **Stakeholders:** Stakeholders are individuals or groups with a vested interest in a project or organisation. They can include employees, customers, investors, and the community, influencing or being influenced by decisions.

○ **Relevant data:** Information that directly pertains to the subject or decision at hand. It is accurate, timely, and essential for effective decision-making and problem-solving.

○ **Consistency:** Maintaining uniformity, reliability, and conformity in actions, decisions, or outcomes. It ensures stability, reliability, and predictability in processes, strategies, or communication.

9.7 CASE STUDY: PROJECT REPORT WRITING AT ACME INC.

Acme Inc., a leading manufacturer of eco-friendly cleaning products, embarks on a project to develop a revolutionary biodegradable laundry detergent. The marketing team, led by Vibha, spearheads the initiative, aiming to capture a significant share of the growing "green" laundry market.

The Challenge

Vibha and her team face several challenges in effectively communicating the project's progress and success:

○ **Complex technical details:** Translating scientific data and product formulations into clear, concise language for diverse stakeholders including executives, investors, and regulatory bodies.

○ **Engaging multiple audiences:** Maintaining a balance between technical accuracy and audience interest, tailoring the report content to resonate with each recipient group.

○ **Compelling data visualisation:** Presenting results in a visually appealing and easily digestible format to highlight key findings and insights.

○ **Meeting deadlines and maintaining accuracy:** Navigating tight timelines and ensuring factual correctness under pressure.

The Solution

Vibha decided to prepare a project report focused on clarity, conciseness and audience engagement and find out the gaps. She added the following elements in the report:

○ **Executive summary:** A concise overview highlighting key outcomes, achievements, and recommendations, written specifically for busy executives.

○ **Technical section:** In-depth analysis of data, methodologies, and results, presented in a logical, well-organised manner with clear definitions and terminology explanations.

❍ **Infographics and data visualisation:** Utilising visually appealing charts, graphs, and diagrams to showcase trends, comparisons and key performance indicators.

❍ **Plain language:** Avoiding technical jargon and maintaining a professional yet accessible writing style suitable for all audiences.

❍ **Tailored communication:** Creating variations of the report with targeted information and emphasis for each stakeholder group.

❍ **Collaborative review:** Employing peer review within the team and feedback from key stakeholders to ensure accuracy and clarity.

The Outcome

Vibha's comprehensive project report delivered several positive outcomes:

❍ **Clear understanding of project outcomes:** Stakeholders from diverse backgrounds readily grasp the project's progress, successes and challenges.

❍ **Increased buy-in and support:** Compelling presentation of data and findings secures buy-in from executives and investors, leading to additional funding and resources.

❍ **Enhanced communication skills:** The team develops and strengthens their project reporting skills, setting a precedent for future initiatives.

❍ **Improved brand image:** The report's professionalism and transparency contribute positively to Acme Inc.'s reputation as a leader in eco-friendly products.

Lessons Learned

This case study highlights the critical role of effective project report writing. By prioritising clarity, conciseness, and audience engagement, companies can:

❍ Ensure project goals are understood and supported by all stakeholders.

❍ Secure necessary resources and funding for successful project completion.

❍ Enhance internal communication and collaboration within teams.

❍ Foster trust and transparency, strengthening brand image and market reputation.

By applying this case study's lessons, businesses can improve their project communication practices and achieve greater success in their endeavours.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Vibha address the challenge of engaging diverse stakeholders while presenting technical data in the project report?

   (**Hint:** Vibha used tailored communication, infographics, and a plain language approach to resonate with various audience groups effectively.)

2. What positive outcomes did Vibha's comprehensive report writing strategy yield for Acme Inc. in terms of stakeholder support and brand image?

   (**Hint:** The strategy led to increased stakeholder buy-in, additional resources, and enhanced brand reputation for Acme Inc.)

9.8 EXERCISE

1. What is the purpose of the "Introduction to the Problem" section in a project report?

2. Why is the "Scope of the Study" section important in a project report?

3. In a project report, what is the role of the "Literature Review" section?

4. In a project report, why is it important to include a "Gap Analysis" in the "Introduction to the Problem" section?

5. How does the "Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations" section contribute to a project report?

9.9 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Project Report	1.	c. Methodology
	2.	False
Preparing Synopsis	3.	Scope
	4.	b. Introduction
Contents of a Project Report	5.	c. Introduction to the problem
	6.	d. Bibliography

9.10 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

○ Locker, K.O. *et al.* (2023) *Business communication*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

○ Middleton, J. *et al.* (2020) *Business communication*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press, Southern Africa.

E-REFERENCES

○ Simplilearn (2023) How to create a project report: Objectives, components, use cases, Simplilearn.com. Available at: https://www.simplilearn.com/how-to-create-a-project-report-article (Accessed: 17 January 2024).

○ Importance of project reports - who can make it? (2023) Project report builder for bank loan. Available at: https://www.finline.in/resource/importance-of-project-reports/ (Accessed: 18 January 2024).

CHAPTER 10

Communicating within a Group

Table of Contents

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

○ Explain the meaning of meeting and how it is convened

○ Define media management and its importance

○ Describe the press release and importance of press conference and media interview

○ Discuss the importance of seminars and workshops

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10.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you learned about the concept of writing a project report and preparing a synopsis. You had also studied the contents of a project report.

Communicating within a group plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration, synergy, and achieving common objectives. In a professional setting, effective group communication involves the exchange of ideas, information, and feedback among team members, ensuring a cohesive and well-coordinated effort. The dynamics of group communication encompass various elements such as active listening, clear articulation of thoughts, and the ability to navigate diverse perspectives within the team. Group discussions often serve as platforms for brainstorming, problem-solving, and decision-making, allowing for the collective pooling of insights and expertise. Effective communication within a group not only enhances productivity but also contributes to a positive team culture, promoting trust among members. Whether it's during meetings, project collaborations, or strategic planning sessions, mastering the art of communicating within a group is a key competency for individuals and organisations aiming to thrive in the complex landscape of business operations.

In this chapter, you will study the concepts of meetings and its various types, media management and its importance. This chapter also describes the importance of press release, press conference and media interview. At the end of this chapter, the importance of seminars and workshops have been discussed.

10.2 MEETINGS

Communication is the expression of any idea or message from one person to another person. Meetings also involve communication. In workplaces, offices, corporates etc., a meeting is a common phenomenon where matters are discussed related to any subject area. We can define meeting as a gathering or assembly of two or more persons in order to discuss certain things through the mode of face-to-face or telephonic communications or video conferencing. Business ideas, business strategies, business goals, allocation of responsibilities, etc., all are discussed in meetings. Meetings are basically used to convey the idea and decision to one or more persons. Since a meeting is a formal happening, thus, we can say that a meeting requires pre-planning agenda and high professionalism.

A meeting is generally headed by a chairperson. A meeting is conducted in a formal way and is being led by a chairperson. Chairperson controls the happenings of a meeting. The chairperson puts the agenda in front of the persons in the meeting. The discussions of a meeting are recorded in minutes. Minutes are short notes which describe what has been discussed in the meeting and what was the conclusion.

Information about the purpose of meeting, timing of meeting, place of meeting and agenda of meeting are duly delivered to the persons who are ought to attend the meeting. Actions are subsequently taken on basis of conclusion of the meeting.

There are many ways in which a meeting can be conducted. But, the most important requirement element of a meeting is the purpose of meeting, so it is previously conveyed to the members who are attending the meeting. The agenda of a meeting is also known as the objective of a meeting. All the objectives of the meeting need to be discussed sequentially in the meeting. The agenda is supposed to be clearly defined to all the members. Following are some factors of drawing an agenda or objective of a meeting:

❍ Members must be familiarised or made aware of the topics which are needed to be discussed in the meeting.

❍ An agenda also specifies what sort of prior knowledge meeting members must be caring.

❍ An agenda also covers what sort of homework is done by members, before attending a meeting.

❍ An agenda also draws what might be the expected outcome of the meeting. For example, if a meeting's agenda might specify how many boards of directors need to be appointed in the coming year.

The elements of an agenda for a meeting are presented in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1:   Elements of an Agenda for a Meeting

Terms	Definition
Title header	A title header contains title, date, time, email, phone number and other necessary information of members which is required to collect all the participants at one place.
Participants	List of participants who are expected to join the meeting.
Subject line	This contains the purpose of the meeting.
Call or order	This defines who is responsible for calling the meeting.
Introduction	In case all members are new, this part of agenda is optional. But in case if only one or more persons are new, then everyone else must briefly introduce themselves.
Roll call	This takes place when introductions are done.
Reading of the minutes	If a meeting is previously held and the new meeting is related to previous meeting, then the minutes of the previous meeting should be read in the new meeting. The minutes are previously sent to the participants, so that they can review the minutes and can make corrections accordingly.
Previous issues	If anything has been left unresolved in the previous meeting, then that needs to be listed here.

Terms	Definition
New issues	This is the main cause for which meeting has been called.
Reports	Reports are optional for the agenda of the meeting. If there are groups or subcommittees working on some specific business for which a report is needed to be prepared, then in such case reports are to be presented.
Good of the order	If there is news which is related to the subject matter of meeting and is yet not shared, then that must be shared in the meeting.
Adjournment	If a meeting is cancelled or adjourned, then time and date of the new meeting need to be informed.

10.2.1 | TYPES OF MEETINGS

There are various types of meetings such as decision-making meetings, information sharing meetings, innovation meetings, problem-solving meetings, status update meetings, team building meetings, etc.

Let us now discuss these types of meetings in detail:

❍ **Status update meetings:** The most common meetings that are organised for unadapting the status update. The regular team meetings or project meetings are some examples of status update meetings. As the name implies, these meetings do inform participants about the current status of sales, profit, growth, future action plan, etc. of the organisation.

❍ **Information sharing meetings:** As its name implies, the main objective or goal of such meetings is to share information with the members, participants or stake holders. Presentations, panels, key database, important notes and lectures are being included in these meetings.

❍ **Decision-making meetings:** Every organisation requires effective decisions that need to be taken for its business purposes. In case of sole proprietorship, such decisions can be taken by one single person, but in case of partnerships, firms, companies, etc., such decisions need to be taken by partners, shareholders, board of directors, stakeholders, etc. For such cases, decision-making meetings are to be held between specified persons for vital decisions. The decision-making processes usually include activities such as brainstorming, collection and sharing of information, etc. These meetings also include voting process done by participants.

❍ **Problem-solving meetings:** These meetings are regarded as the most complex meetings of all. The formulation of strategy of an identified problem can be addressed in such kind of meetings. Threats and opportunities, priorities and scopes, etc., are also suggested by the participants in this type of meetings. Also, the participants present vital ideas to conclude such meetings.

❍ **Innovation meetings:** As term innovation implies introduction of a new idea into the current business. When anything is approached or introduced a new way, then that approach or new way is called innovation. This type of meeting is called for discussion of a new method of production, a new technique, a new idea of expansion, etc., the participants also discuss all new approaches and their impacts. The idea behind calling these kinds of meetings is introducing a new approach.

○ **Team-building meetings:** Team-building means the development of interpersonal relationship between team members. Hence, the main purpose of the team building meetings is to build a better professional as well as personal relationship among team members, and brings a better work culture in an organisation. These meetings are being called to create a team that could easily coordinate with each other and perform the best for achieving the organisational goals.

10.2.2 | CONVENING A MEETING

If you want to organise a fruitful meeting, then the key factors that you need to consider are to be planned and communicated properly. When a meeting is called in a hurry, it may lead to chaos. Conducting a productive meeting involves the following key points:

○ Send the last minutes of meeting or protocols to the participants or members at least before seven days. This is to ensure that they will be well prepared for the meeting.

○ Communicate the agenda of the meeting to the members or participants before seven days.

○ Send the reminder to members before a day and on the day of meeting. For this, Microsoft Outlook and similar type of software can be used.

○ Make sure that meeting should be conducted on time.

○ Make sure that the participants or members should be aware of their roles and responsibilities before starting the meeting.

○ Introduce the members or participants with each other before starting the agenda of the meeting.

○ At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda should be discussed.

○ The timeframe of the meeting should be duly set, same for every aspect which needs to be discussed in the meeting.

○ Minutes of the meeting must be made in between the meeting about the discussions of the meeting.

○ The agenda of the meeting should be focused during the meeting. Merging and disruption should be avoided.

○ Appreciation and acknowledgment of the members or participants for their work should also be done in the meeting.

○ If necessary, do inform the members or participants about the next meeting.

10.2.3 | PREPARATION OF MINUTES OF MEETING

Minutes of meetings are a record of discussions, decisions, and planned actions during a company meeting. Attendees take these notes, which are later structured for clarity. Afterward, they are sent to a senior leader for approval. Once approved,

the minutes are distributed and stored, outlining actions, delegated tasks, and significant decisions. They serve as a memory aid for attendees and provide crucial information on meeting discussions and outcomes.

Minutes of Meeting

Date: March 7th, 2023   Time: 10:00 – 11:00am   Agenda:
- Review of Q4 Results
- Discussion of 2023 Budget Proposal
- Update on Project X

Location: Virtual Meeting

Discussion Point:
- Overview of the meeting purpose and goals
- Progress updates on ongoing projects or initiatives
- Review of financial results or budgets
- Feedback and suggestions from team members

Action to be Taken By

No.	Action Item	Assigned To	Deadline
01	Prepare Q4 Results Report	John Doe	February 14th, 2023
02	Finalize 2023 Budget Proposal	Jane Smith	March 1st, 2023
03	Provide progress update on Project X	Bob Johnson	February 14th, 2023
04	Conduct market research	Jane Smith and Bob Johnson	March 15th, 2023
05	Develop marketing plan	John Doe	April 1st, 2023

FIGURE 1: Template of Minutes of Meeting

Source: *https://slidebazaar.com/items/minutes-of-meeting-powerpoint-slide-template/*

When writing minutes of meeting, the main aim is to record crucial details valuable for future reference. Some key components typically included in meeting of minutes are:

❍ The meeting's agenda

❍ Date and time of the meeting

❍ Full names of the attendees

❍ Voting results, when relevant

❍ Attendance specifics, noting late arrivals or early departures

❍ Formal announcements and significant decisions made

❍ Assigned projects, responsible individuals, and deadlines

❍ Amendments or clarifications to prior meeting minutes

❍ Information regarding the next meeting's date and time

Step for creating minutes of meeting

Minutes of meeting involves several key steps to ensure accurate documentation of discussions and decisions.

1. **Before the meeting:** Points included before the meeting are as follows:

   ● **Understand the agenda:** Familiarise yourself with the meeting's purpose and agenda items.

● **Template creation:** Prepare a structured template with placeholders for essential details.

2. **During the meeting:** Points included in the meeting are as follows:

● **Attendance tracking:** Record attendees and note any late arrivals or early departures.

● **Key points:** Focus on capturing crucial discussions, decisions, and actions.

● **Clarifications:** Seek clarification when necessary to ensure accurate note-taking.

● **Shorthand or abbreviations:** Use shorthand or abbreviations for quicker note-taking.

● **Debate summaries:** If there's a debate, succinctly outline the major arguments for and against motions.

● **Voting details:** Note voting outcomes if required by the company.

3. **After the Meeting:** Points included after the meeting are as follows:

● **Transcription:** Transcribe the complete meeting content while it's fresh in your mind.

● **Review and revision:** Have the meeting chair or leader review the minutes for corrections or revisions.

● **Approval:** Seek approval from leadership to finalise the minutes.

● **Distribution:** Circulate the approved minutes to relevant attendees or colleagues.

4. **Documentation and storage:** Points included in documentation and storage, are as follows:

● **Labelling:** Ensure proper labelling of minutes for easy retrieval.

● **Filing:** Establish a well-organised filing system, whether digital or physical, for storing meeting minutes.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. _____ is an expression of an idea or a message.

2. _____ are a record of discussions, decisions, and planned actions during a company meeting.

10.3 MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPORTANCE

An organisation needs to deal with many people at the same time, these are customers, various stakeholders, suppliers, its employees or even common public. Now, how an organisation is going to manage all these at the same time? Obviously, it needs effective communication channels for connecting with these people. For such communication, media is used for the storage and disseminating data to the required persons. Media management also refers to the single mode of communication

channels used to convey the message to a specific person. The purpose of media management are as follows:

❍ Managing better relationships with customers

❍ Increasing social responsibility

❍ Bringing collaboration in a team

❍ Evaluating social performance

❍ Building organisational or brand image

❍ Increasing stakeholder's overall participation

As its name implies the mass media means reaching a large section of society or public of the country. Mass media is used to communicate with a larger section of society. There are various types of mass media mode, such as newspapers, electronic media, newsletters, journals, social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.

Nowadays, the Internet becomes more useful among the common public. A large number of people can be reached by the Internet. People use the Internet for watching news or reading news by using different websites. The Internet replaced traditional ways of getting news from the newspaper or the radios. Nowadays, people, especially youngsters prefer to have access to the latest news from the Internet or the various types of applications. The growing use of smartphones among people have also boosted the use of the Internet and social media users. In the era of twenty first century, social media is the best way of increasing online readers. Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, etc., are used by common people at a larger scale, thus these media are used as the best possible way to deliver the message. For a successful organisation, it is necessary that it should be able to make the best use of mass media and social media.

For the effective and productive use of social media, some key points are needed to be kept in track. These are as follows:

❍ The first and foremost thing is to create appropriate media content which can be published over different type of social media accounts.

❍ There are various social media management tools, which should be used effectively to ensure that social media conveys the messages to the target audience.

❍ Organisation should provide training digital communication, and its tool to its employees in order to achieve the organisation's goal.

❍ Business behind the media industry should be very well understood.

❍ Work with the expert from the media industry in order to get the solution to the problems which are faced by the organisation.

❍ Monitoring the performance at a regular basis on social media platforms.

Media management holds significant importance for several reasons:

❍ **Brand image and reputation management:** Media management helps shape and control the narrative around a business. It allows organisations to strategically

communicate their messages, protecting and enhancing their brand image and reputation.

○ **Crisis communication:** In times of crisis or challenging situations, effective media management is crucial. It enables businesses to respond promptly, control the narrative, and maintain transparency, helping to mitigate potential damage to their reputation.

○ **Audience engagement and communication:** Media management facilitates direct communication with the target audience. Through various channels, businesses can engage with customers, clients, and stakeholders, fostering relationships and building trust.

○ **Market presence and visibility:** Proper media management ensures that a business remains visible in the market. Through press releases, social media, and other channels, organisations can share updates, achievements, and relevant information, staying on the radar of their audience.

○ **Information dissemination:** Media management serves as a conduit for disseminating important information to a wide audience. Whether it's product launches, policy changes, or industry updates, effective media management ensures that information is conveyed accurately and reaches the intended recipients.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. Media management is necessary for what?

4. List one purpose of media management.

10.4 PRESS RELEASE, PRESS CONFERENCE AND MEDIA INTERVIEW

A written document or detailed information of any event, any happening or any occasion of the organisation or means of communication which is basically made to deliver for briefing is referred to a press release. This kind of information is circulated to common public through various means of media. They are two main types of press release. These are as follows:

○ **Immediate release:** In this kind of release, the information is shared immediately on the spot as soon as it is released to the public. Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter are some examples of it. As and when something is posted publicly using e-communication means, the shared information falls into this category of release.

○ **Time-bound release:** In this kind of press release, information is shared only by some sources of media and are available for some specific time, i.e., the release is time-bound in nature. For example, in news channels, print media, websites or blogs, information is shared at a specific time.

Purpose of a Press Release

The primary purpose of a press release is to spread and promote the vital information of an organisation to public. Any press release provides three promotional and marketing purposes. These are as follows:

❍ Different media channels and media persons are informed so that they can share the information about the organisation to the public.

❍ Organisations share their vital information with the media channels and media persons so that they could publish articles and display them on their channels and such a way they get promoted.

❍ Blogs, websites and different social media channels are used to promoting the organisation among the common public.

Some Features of a Press Release

An effective press release contains following characteristics or features:

❍ **Press release should be honest:** This is the most important feature of an effective press release, that it should be genuine and honest in nature. To maintain the integrity of business world, a press release should present only those data and information which are factually true. If the facts and figures are distorted, then it may give short-term benefits to business, but for the long run, it is bad for both company and the organisation.

❍ **Newsworthy and important:** A business or an organisation has much information and details, but not are worthy to be published in a press release. Thus, for an effective press release, it is of utmost importance that an effective press release should provide only contemporary-important or valuable information or else it would not be able to create reader's interest in it.

❍ **Short and concise:** A lengthy and long press release can never be successful and can never create interest among readers regarding the business of the organisation. A concise, short and clear press release contains better chances to get published in the newspaper.

❍ **Easily understandable language:** After the introduction of social media, people are less interested in reading newspapers. They just scan the newspaper with a rough eye and read the article only. Thus, if it is written in typical language, readers would definitely be reluctant in reading.

❍ **Catchy headlines:** This is also obvious that a catchy heading or subheadings attract reader's eye and ignite sensation for reading the complete article.

❍ **Five questions:** An effective press release answers the following five questions:

1. Who are the people involved in the press release?

2. What are their intentions of making or conducting a press release?

3. When are they doing any given action in the press release?

4. Which is the appropriate location of the said incident or event?

5. Why did the press release take place?

Press Conference

A press conference is a formal meeting or event organised by a company or organisation to announce and discuss significant news, events, or developments with the media and, by extension, the public. In a press conference, an organisation

or company's representative read a pre-written statement in front of all media persons, and in return, questions are being asked by the media persons. The representative answers all those questions. The representative could be anyone, whether an employee of trustworthiness and integrity, board of directors or even promoters of the organisation or the company, chairperson of the company, etc. A statement is drafted for the press conference by the media department or public relations department of the company or the organisation. In some cases, a review of the statement for the press conference is required by the legal advisor of the company or organisation.

Following steps are needed for an effective and eye-catching press conference:

❍ It should be short, concise and catchy like a press release. The 5W' and 1 H like who, what, when, where, why and how should be answered.

❍ When media persons are invited to the press conference then time and venue details should be mentioned in the invitation. Purpose of press conference should also be mentioned.

❍ The representative of the company or organisation who is going to address the media person should thoroughly prepare himself and gain all background knowledge.

❍ A moderator is advisable to be used during a press conference. During the question-and-answer session, representatives may need breaks. At such times, the moderator can manage the media, and when necessary, conclude the session at the appropriate time by thanking both the media persons and those attending the press conference.

❍ To organise an effective press conference, deliver the message in best possible way. This is done with the help of video films, PowerPoint slides, etc. It is vital to keep in mind that those slides and video films should be relevant to the message which is to be delivered.

Media Interview

The term interview means meeting with people to ask questions from one to one and seek answers. A media interview is different from a normal personal interview. In a normal personal interview, you usually give normal information about your background, your qualifications, achievements, experience, etc. But in a media interview, the representative of the company or organisation gives the detail of any event or anything related to your organisation.

A Media interview is not an easy task. Media persons are known to create a hill out of a mole. They need a point to criticise you and create spicy news to increase their TRP. Hence, it becomes important to handle media persons very carefully. There are five basic rules of a media interview. These are as follows:

1. Watch your words, as your words can also be used against you.

2. Media persons are known to distort statements and use as per their convenience. Thus, frame your sentence in a way, in which it cannot be used against you.

3. You are supposed to be very well prepared to answer the unexpected questions from media persons.

4. You should be able to counter them as this is the best way to supersede them.

5. Do not say make any controversial statement which can be used against you.

If the above-mentioned points are to be followed, then one can avoid any kind of controversy from media persons. Media persons are pure business persons. They will not care about your brand image and reputation. They will always wait for the time when you would make a mistake and give them an opportunity to make spicy news for their media channels or newspapers. Thus, your single mistake can be used by them for increasing their revenues and viewers by creating catchy headlines and spicy subject matter.

It is not necessary that you have necessarily delivered a wrong statement. Media persons can always distort your original statement and present to the public in such a way that it can create a controversy. Thus, one needs to carefully deliver every single word in front of a media person. Generally, they will ask controversial and unexpected questions. In such a case, spontaneous and intellectual answers should be given. The representative has to keep in his/her mind that he/she is representing the entire organisation or company. Thus, he/she needs to maintain the company's reputation, integrity and dignity while answering the question of media person.

Despite above negative factors of media companies and media persons, there are some affirmative aspects too. These are as follows:

❍ The organisation gets a platform where it could convey its message directly to public on a large-scale level.

❍ If the representative of the organisation addresses on national television, then people are more likely to take the organisation seriously and will consider the organisation as competent enough.

❍ It will send a message to the public that the organisation has more insights to offer to the public. As a result, the brand image will improve.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. For a specific time, which kind of press release is made?

6. What is it called when one person asks questions to another?

10.5 SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

A seminar is conducted by a senior member of the organisation to teach or guide his subordinates about any topic or subject matter. Any subject matter or topic is prepared by the expert as an article, PPT or report and presented in the seminar. Basically, any issue, problem or any project decision is taken in the seminars. In small groups, seminars are carried out where people discuss their agenda or purposes. A speaker is appointed for a seminar, and he delivers the presentation or report to entire members who are participating in the seminar. The participants also discuss and present their views on the topic.

Usually, every seminar has a chairperson. The responsibilities of the chairperson are as follows:

❍ It is his/her duty to direct, guide, control and organise the discussion of seminar in a systematic manner.

❍ He/she can optimise the resources and derive it for maximum benefits from them.

❍ He/she is responsible for the timing of the seminar as well.

❍ Any problem related to staff, evaluation, development, administration, the introduction of an innovative idea, etc., are to be discussed in the seminar by the guidance of chairperson.

❍ He/she is responsible to give feedbacks to the concerned person.

❍ He/she should introduce innovative approaches in teachings and training.

An authorised person of an organisation can also organise the seminars for the people of his same rank. For conducting a seminar finance, infrastructure, visual ads, etc. are required.

The prerequisites for conducting a successful seminar are following:

❍ Agenda must be discussed and communicated well to the persons who will attend the seminar

❍ Date, time and venue must be sent to the attendants

❍ Sufficient time must be kept for the preparation

❍ One who will host the seminar must be well prepared

It may also happen that during a seminar, attendants give their feedback, reviews or suggestions. Those must be recorded and kept in written papers. Those papers must be kept safe for future reference. A future report must be drawn about the seminar and must be given to all the participants for future reference.

Workshops

Just like seminars, workshops are being conducted to encourage interaction and discussion among the colleagues of an organisation or a company. A workshop is conducted on any subject and is headed by the subject matter expert. It is addressed to small group of people. In comparison to seminars, these are conducted for a longer period of time. In a workshop many useful activities are done like, interactive aids, presentations, role-plays, small group work, etc. Workshops help individuals increase their efficiency and workings in any given area. These are conducted for giving training about any subject matter. In workshops, participants or attendants are being trained and guided about any procedure or activity or project or technology. The participants can also ask questions from the expert and seek suitable answers.

> ### Self Assessment Questions
>
> 7. Seminars are headed by whom?
>
> 8. Workshops are addressed to _____ group of people.

> **ACTIVITY**
>
> Search on the Internet about the usefulness of seminars and workshops in detail. Find out the purposes served by them and give a situational example each of the applicability of seminar and workshop.

10.6 SUMMARY

○ Communication is the expression of any idea or message from one person to another person. Any kind of exchange of message between one or more person is known as communication.

○ Meetings are basically used to convey any kind of idea to one or more persons. As a meeting is a formal happening and thus we can say that, a meeting requires pre-planning agenda and high professionalism.

○ The most important purpose of a meeting is to convey the purpose of meeting to the members who are attending the meeting. The agenda of a meeting is also known as the objective of a meeting.

○ Media management refers to the single mode of communication channel used to convey the message to a specific large scale of the person of the society.

○ A written document or means of communication which is basically made for briefing the detailed information of any event, any occasion or any other incident of the organisation is referred to a press release.

○ A press conference is a formal meeting or event organised by a company or organisation to announce and discuss significant news, events, or developments with the media and, by extension, the public.

○ In a media interview, the representative of the company or organisation gives the detail of any event or anything related to your organisation.

○ A seminar is conducted by a senior member of the organisation to teach or guide his subordinates about any topic or subject matter.

○ Just like seminars, workshops are being conducted to encourage interaction and discussion among the colleagues of an organisation or a company.

10.7 KEY WORDS

○ **Communication:** Expression of idea or message.

○ **Meeting:** Gathering of two or more persons for discussion on something.

○ **Press release:** Official statements sent to print media or other media channels.

○ **Press conference:** Official statements given to both electronic and print media.

○ **Interview:** Questions answered by a person to another person or persons

10.8 CASE STUDY: IMMENSE SUCCESS OF MEETINGS AT CHI FRANCISCAN HEALTH

CHI Franciscan Health is a Washington based not-for-profit organisation that owns and runs hospitals which provide acute care, primary-care and specialty-care services.

Almost all organisations go through internal or external changes from time to time. Similarly, organisations in the health care sector also undergo changes such as advances in health care sectors, innovation in health department, alterations in health care, increase in the demand of employees, mergers of hospitals, slow destruction of leaders, etc.

A large health care centre located in Puget Sound had doubled its staff in the last one year and it was about to hold a meeting of its managers. This was the largest meeting till that time. Their management knew that they needed to give the attendees of the meeting, the tools for navigating changes and must build cohesion among the newly created team of managers across the organisation. It was also essential to inspire and motivate everyone so that they could return to work re-energised and more resilient.

Now, it became essential to communicate to all the employees that such high-level changes will continue and they must focus on their work. Organisation's leaders knew that they must break this news by balancing it along with some sense of humour and wit. Boring meetings often fail to deliver the meaning to the attendants. Therefore, Dr. John Izzo and Bill Stainton were chosen as speakers and were given the responsibility of delivering the message with humour and interest in the content.

Dr. John Izzo is a bestselling author and Bill Stantion is an international experts on leadership. They both ensured that nobody in the meeting would feel bored and everyone would take interest in the message which was communicated. They were humourous and interesting speakers. As a result, they got attentive, effective, participating and active attendants. So they produced productivity in their meetings.

After the meeting, it was reported that the attendants of meetings, made highly positive comments about way of presentation of speech of John. In similar way the feedback for Bill was also affirmative. Both of them successfully satisfied the attendants of the meeting and made a good balance of message and humour in their speech.

Source: *http://www.nomoreboringmeetings.com/results/case-studies/*

QUESTIONS

1. What was the outcome of the meeting hosted by John and Bill?

   (**Hint**: After the meeting, it was reported that the attendants of meetings, made highly positive comments about the way of presentation of the speech of John.)

2. How did the organisation ensure that the employees who attended the meeting are not influenced negatively?

   (**Hint**: Organisation's leaders knew that they must break this news by balancing it along with some sense of humour and wit.)

179

10.9 EXERCISE

1. Explain the meaning and purpose of meetings.

2. Briefly describe the different types of meetings.

3. Enumerate some of the important features of press release, press conference and media interview.

4. Discuss the concept of seminars and workshops.

10.10 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Meetings	1.	Communication
	2.	Minutes of meetings
Media Management and its Importance	3.	For interacting with public
	4.	Building brand image
Press Release, Press Conference and Media Interview	5.	Time bound release
	6.	Interview
Seminars and Workshops	7.	Chairperson
	8.	Smaller

10.11 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍ Hirokawa, R., & Poole, M. (1996). *Communication and Group Decision Making*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications.

❍ Hoover, J. (2005). *Effective Small Group and Team Communication*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.

E-REFERENCES

❍ What is meeting? definition and meaning. (2019). Retrieved from http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/meeting.html

❍ The Purpose of a Press Release and How to Write One. (2019). Retrieved from https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-a-press-release-3515529

CHAPTER

11

Communication using Electronic Media

Table of Contents

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┌─ LEARNING OBJECTIVES ──────────────────────────────────────────┐
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After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Describe the concept of electronic media for communication

❍ Explain the uses of e-mail

❍ Discuss the types of SMS

❍ Describe the uses and features of WhatsApp

❍ Explain etiquettes in business

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you learned about the concept of meetings, types of meetings, convening a meeting, and preparation of minutes of meeting. You also studied media management, press release, press conference and media interview, and seminars and workshops.

Communication using electronic media plays a pivotal role in modern business communication. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, organisations rely heavily on various electronic channels to facilitate efficient and timely exchanges of information. Email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and collaborative platforms have become essential tools for internal communication among team members and external communication with clients and stakeholders. These electronic mediums enable businesses to transcend geographical barriers, allowing for real-time interactions and the swift dissemination of critical updates or announcements.

This chapter provides an overview of electronic media for communication, E-mail, and SMS. You will also learn about the concept of WhatsApp and etiquettes.

11.2 CONCEPT OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR COMMUNICATION

Electronic media is an expansive concept that includes a variety of technologies facilitating communication and the sharing of information. Electronic media for communication refers to the various digital methods and platforms used to transmit information, messages, and content electronically. It encompasses a wide range of technologies and channels through which people exchange data, ideas, and multimedia content.

Some common forms of electronic media for communication include:

❍ **E-mail:** One of the earliest forms of electronic communication, allowing the exchange of messages, files, and documents over the internet.

❍ **Social media platforms:** Websites and applications designed to facilitate social interaction, networking, and content sharing, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok.

❍ **Instant messaging:** Real-time text-based communication platforms, like WhatsApp, Messenger, Telegram, and Slack, enable quick and direct conversations.

○ **Video conferencing:** Tools and platforms like Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet that enable live video and audio communication between individuals or groups are often used for remote meetings or virtual events.

○ **Websites and blogs:** Platforms where individuals, organisations, or businesses publish content, articles, videos, and multimedia for public consumption and interaction.

○ **Podcasts and streaming platforms:** Platforms for sharing audio and video content, such as podcasts, YouTube, Spotify, and Netflix, allow users to consume media on-demand.

○ **Webinars and online courses:** Platforms that host live or recorded seminars, workshops, and educational content for remote learning and professional development.

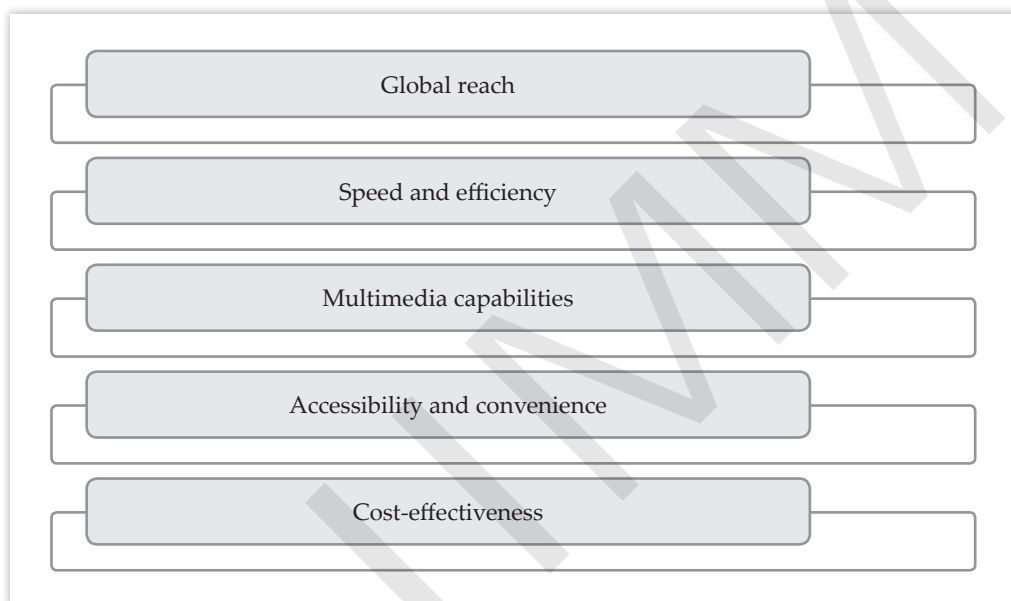Some of the benefits of electronic media for communication are shown in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1: Benefits of Electronic Media for Communication

Let us discuss these benefits in detail:

○ **Global reach:** Electronic media facilitates instant communication across vast distances. It allows messages to reach a global audience in real-time, enabling businesses, organisations, and individuals to connect worldwide.

○ **Speed and efficiency:** Messages through electronic media are transmitted rapidly, promoting swift communication. This speed enhances productivity in business interactions, allowing for quick decision-making and problem-solving.

○ **Multimedia capabilities:** Electronic media isn't limited to text; it encompasses various formats like images, videos, audio, and interactive content. This versatility allows for engaging and dynamic communication, catering to diverse preferences, and enhancing understanding.

○ **Accessibility and convenience:** It offers easy access to information and communication tools. With the prevalence of smartphones, laptops, and other devices, electronic media ensures convenient and continuous connectivity, enabling people to stay informed and engaged from anywhere at any time.

○ **Cost-effectiveness:** Compared to traditional media, electronic communication is often more cost-effective. Sending e-mails, using social media platforms, or hosting virtual meetings significantly reduces expenses associated with printing, postage, and physical gatherings.

While electronic media brings numerous benefits, it also introduces some communication challenges. These include:

○ **Information overload:** The abundance of information accessible through electronic media, such as the internet and social media platforms, can lead to information overload. Individuals may find it challenging to examine the vast amount of data available, making it difficult to recognise reliable and accurate information from the excess content.

○ **Privacy concerns:** Electronic media's ease of collecting and sharing personal data raises concerns about privacy. Users may worry about how their information is being used, shared, or potentially exploited. The digital nature of communication platforms can make it challenging to control the dissemination of personal information, leading to heightened privacy considerations.

○ **Technological divide:** The digital or technological divide refers to the uneven distribution of access to electronic media. Not everyone has equal opportunities to access and utilise digital communication tools, creating disparities between those with internet connectivity and technology access and those without. This gap can contribute to inequalities in information access, educational opportunities, and participation in the digital age.

○ **Cyberbullying and online harassment:** Anonymity on electronic platforms can contribute to cyberbullying and online harassment. When individuals can conceal their identity, it may embolden them to engage in harmful behaviours, targeting others with offensive or abusive content. The digital environment can amplify the impact of such actions, potentially causing psychological distress and harm to victims.

The influence of electronic media on communication has been significant, transforming our interactions both among ourselves and with the global landscape. Following are some of the significant impacts of electronic media on communication:

○ The transmission of information through electronic media has enabled unprecedented speed and global reach, giving rise to real-time communication and erasing geographical boundaries.

○ Electronic media has provided us with a wide range of communication channels, including e-mail, instant messaging, social media, and video conferencing. This has given us more choices for how we connect with others.

○ Electronic media enables interactive communication, fostering real-time dialogue and information sharing among users. This shift has given rise to online communities and social media platforms.

❍ The accessibility of information worldwide due to electronic media has fostered a more knowledgeable and interconnected global community.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Which platform allows real-time text-based communication for quick and direct conversations?

   a. Instant messaging

   b. Podcasts

   c. Social media platforms

   d. Webinars

2. What is one of the challenges introduced by electronic media in communication?

   a. Global reach

   b. Increased accessibility

   c. Technological divide

   d. Increased interactivity

11.3 E-MAIL

An e-mail, stands for electronic mail. It is a digital message sent electronically from one computer user to one or multiple recipients via a network. It typically contains text but can also include attachments such as files, images, or links. E-mails are commonly used for communication, allowing individuals or organisations to correspond quickly and efficiently over the internet.

E-mail is exchanged across computer networks, mainly the internet, but it's also shared within public and private networks, like a local area network. It can go to groups or individuals and be managed through an e-mail reflector for shared lists. Certain mailing lists allow users to join by asking the administrator. When a list is managed automatically, it's known as a list server.

The Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite of protocols establishes an adaptable e-mail system using fundamental protocols like Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) for sending mail and Post Office Protocol 3 (POP3) for receiving it. Another option, Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP), allows mail access from any device and location. In contrast, with POP3, e-mails are downloaded from the server and stored on a specific device, limiting access to that device only.

E-mail messages typically use the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) format, but users can also attach non-text files like images and audios. E-mail was among the earliest internet activities and remains one of the most widespread. A significant portion of internet traffic comprises e-mails. The most common uses of E-mail include:

❍ **Conveying information to a wide audience:** Companies use E-mail to convey information to a large number of employees, customers, and potential clients.

It's commonly used for newsletters, delivering tailored content to mailing list subscribers, and direct e-mail marketing campaigns targeting specific customer groups.

○ **Personal or group communication:** E-mail serves as a convenient means to interact with individuals or small groups like friends or colleagues. It allows the easy exchange of files, documents, images, and links, offering flexibility in communication timing.

○ **Reviews and surveys:** Follow-up e-mails may request customers to provide reviews or participate in surveys about recently purchased products or service quality.

○ **Converting leads to customers:** E-mail can facilitate turning potential sales into finalised purchases. For example, automated e-mails can remind online shoppers about items in their cart, encouraging them to complete the purchase before stock runs out.

○ **Notifications and reminders:** E-mails serve as effective tools for sending reminders after appointments, meetings, or interviews, or notifying about upcoming events and deadlines. Most e-mail platforms include integrated calendars for better time management, aiding users in organising their schedules efficiently.

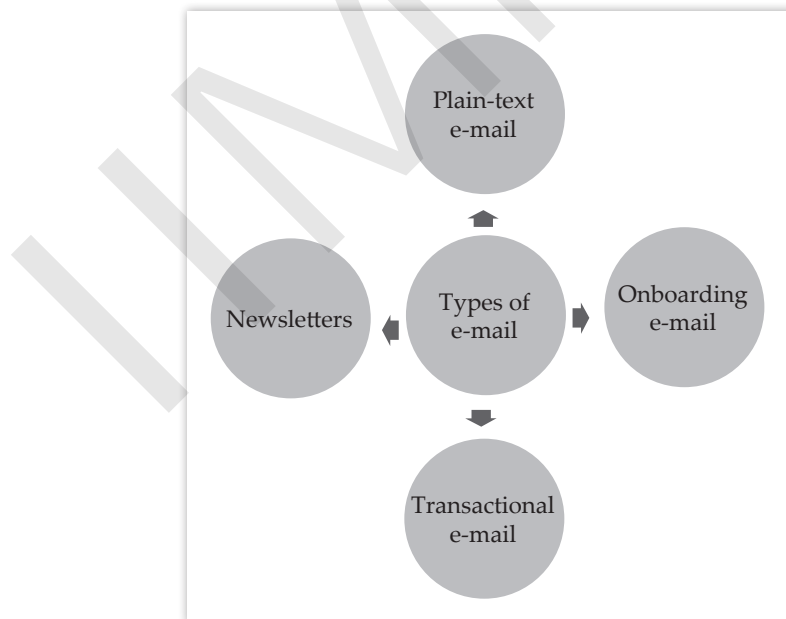Some of the types of e-mail are shown in Figure 2:

FIGURE 2: Types of E-mail

Let us discuss types of e-mail in detail:

○ **Plain-text e-mail:** This e-mail is purely text-based, similar to regular text messages. They don't include images, videos, documents, or any attachments. Plain-text e-mails are commonly used for casual chatting, like other text-based messaging services.

❍ **Onboarding e-mail:** This e-mail is sent to users immediately after they subscribe. It introduces products, guides buyers on their use, and provides information about the new organisation's journey.

❍ **Transactional e-mail:** This type of e-mail often includes invoices for recent purchases and information about the transactions. They also provide details on failed transactions and when the amount will be refunded, serving as confirmation of the purchase.

❍ **Newsletters:** This is a type of e-mail from a person or business to subscribers, sharing advertisements, promotions, organisation updates, and marketing information. This could include events or seminars that are coming up.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. _____ often includes invoices for recent purchases and information about the transactions.

4. _____ is a type of e-mail from a person or business to subscribers, sharing advertisements, promotions, organisation updates, and marketing information.

11.4 SMS

SMS, which stands for Short Message Service, is a widely used form of text messaging that enables the exchange of brief messages between mobile devices. It has become an integral part of communication due to its simplicity, speed, and near-universal compatibility across mobile networks and devices. SMS allows users to send and receive concise text messages, typically limited to 160 characters. These messages are transmitted via cellular networks, allowing individuals to communicate almost instantly, regardless of their location.

SMS serves various purposes in personal and business communication. Individuals use it for quick exchanges with friends, family, and colleagues, sharing information, making plans, or staying in touch. Businesses leverage SMS for customer notifications, appointment reminders, marketing promotions, and service updates due to its direct and immediate reach. Following are the types of SMS:

❍ **Peer-to-Peer (P2P) SMS:** This is the most common type, allowing individuals to exchange messages directly between their mobile devices.

❍ **Application-to-Person (A2P) SMS:** These messages are sent from an application or software to individuals. A2P messages are used for automated notifications, alerts, authentication codes, and marketing communications.

❍ **Person-to-Application (P2A) SMS:** In this type, individuals send messages to interact with applications or services, such as voting via text, subscribing to alerts, or making inquiries.

❍ **Bulk SMS:** This involves sending a single message to multiple recipients simultaneously, often used by businesses for mass communication or marketing campaigns.

SMS operates within mobile networks, using existing infrastructure meant for voice calls. Here's a simplified overview of how SMS works:

○ **Sender initiates a message:** A sender composes a text message on their mobile device and includes the recipient's phone number.

○ **Sending to SMSC:** The sender's device transmits the message to the Short Message Service Centre (SMSC), a central server managing SMS.

○ **Routing and delivery:** The SMSC checks the recipient's number and determines the appropriate network to deliver the message. The message is then sent to the recipient's mobile network through signalling messages.

○ **Storage at recipient's SMSC:** The recipient's SMSC temporarily stores the message until the recipient's device is available to receive it.

○ **Notification to recipient:** Once the recipient's device is accessible, their SMSC notifies them about a new available SMS.

○ **Message retrieval:** The recipient's mobile device connects to the recipient's SMSC to retrieve the message.

○ **Message displayed:** Once retrieved, the message appears on the recipient's device for viewing.

○ **Optional confirmation:** The recipient's device could transmit a delivery confirmation to the sender's SMSC, confirming the successful receipt.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. What type of SMS allows individuals to exchange messages directly between their mobile devices?

   a. Application-to-Person (A2P) SMS

   b. Peer-to-Peer (P2P) SMS

   c. Person-to-Application (P2A) SMS

   d. Bulk SMS

6. Which part of the SMS process involves the temporary storage of the message until the recipient's device becomes available to receive it?

   a. Sending to SMSC

   b. Routing and Delivery

   c. Message retrieval

   d. Storage at Recipient's SMSC

11.5 WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is a free-to-use messaging and calling app that allows you to send text, voice, and video messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, and other files. It is available for mobile devices as well as for computers. It is one of the most popular messaging apps in the world, with over 2 billion users in over 180

countries. It is particularly popular in developing countries, where it is often used as the primary means of communication.

Here's a simplified overview of how WhatsApp works:

1. **Getting started:** To begin using WhatsApp, download the app and set up an account by registering your phone number and confirming your identity. Installing WhatsApp is shown in Figure 3:
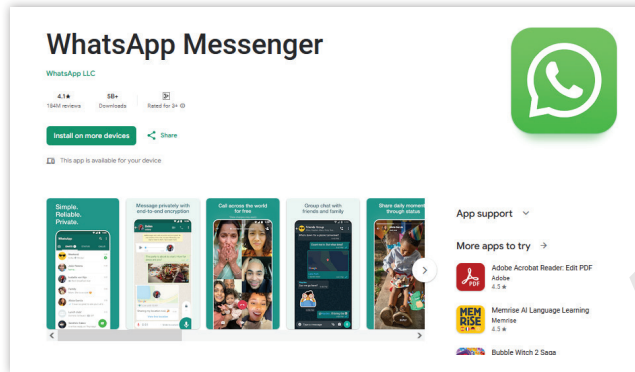

FIGURE 3: Installing WhatsApp

Source: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.whatsapp&hl=en_ZA&pli=1

Once an account is created, adding contacts becomes possible by searching for their phone numbers or importing contacts from the phone's address book.

2. **Sending and receiving messages**:

To send a message to a contact, tap their name and type your message. Voice messages, video messages, and images can also be sent. To receive messages, open the WhatsApp app and check the chats. Notifications will alert you to new messages.

3. **Making voice and video calls**:

To initiate a voice or video call with a contact, tap on their name and then select the phone or video icon. Voice calls and video calls on WhatsApp are shown in Figure 4:
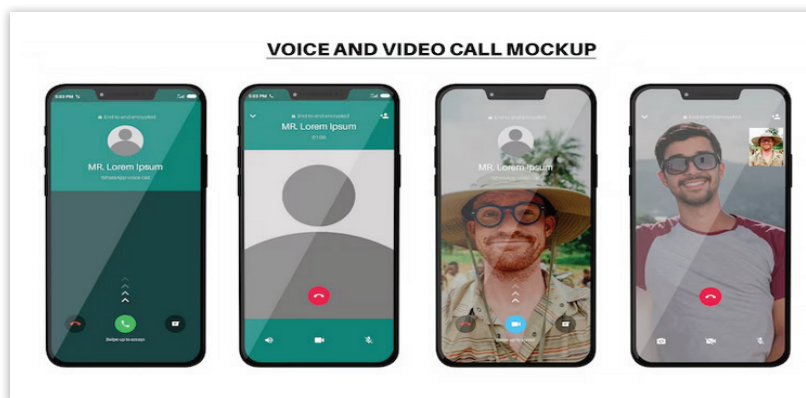

FIGURE 4: Voice Calls and Video Calls on WhatsApp

Source: https://www.freepik.com/premium-psd/whatsapp-voice-video-call-mockup-smartphone_9146269.htm

4. **Sharing images, documents, and other files**:

To share a file, image, or document with a contact, tap the paperclip icon and choose the file you want to share. Sharing images, documents, and other files on WhatsApp is shown in Figure 5:
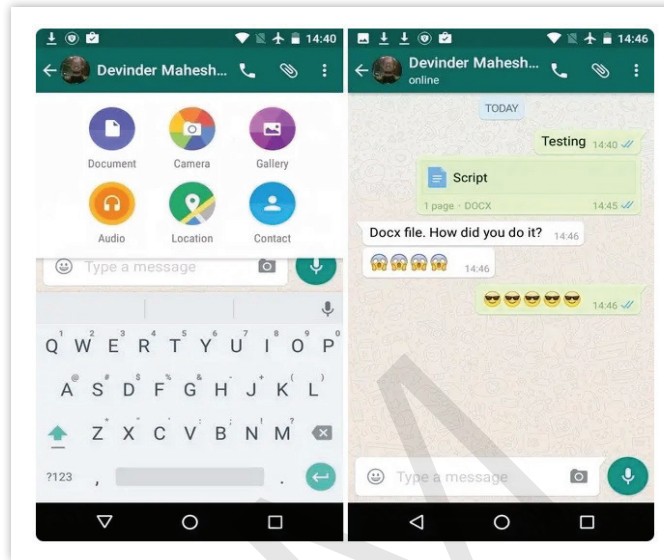

Figure 5: Sharing Images, Documents, and Other Files on WhatsApp

Source: https://beebom.com/whatsapp-send-documents-other-than-pdf/

5. **Creating Groups**:

To create a group, tap on the chat icon and then tap on the "New group" button. Select the contacts you want to add to the group, and then tap on the "Next" button. Creating groups on WhatsApp is shown in Figure 6:
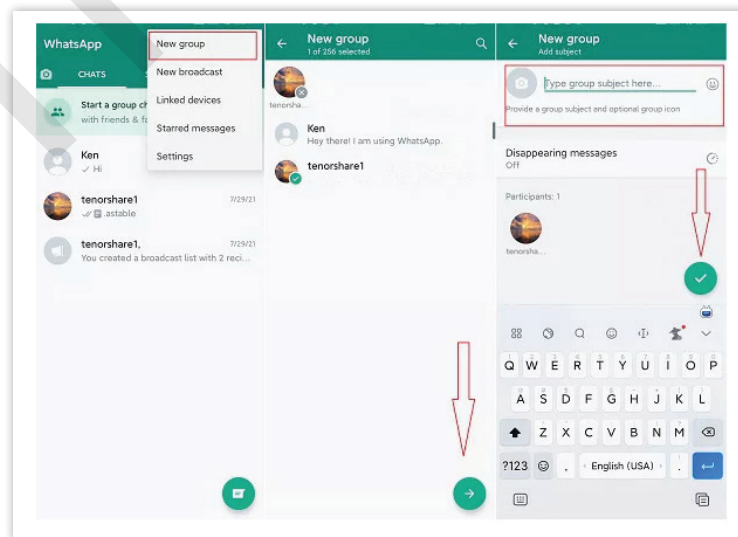

Figure 6: Creating Groups on WhatsApp

Source: https://www.tenorshare.com/whatsapp-tips/how-to-create-whatsapp-group.html

6. **Joining groups**:

You can join a group by tapping on the link to the group or by being added to the group by another member of the group. Joining groups on WhatsApp is shown in Figure 7:
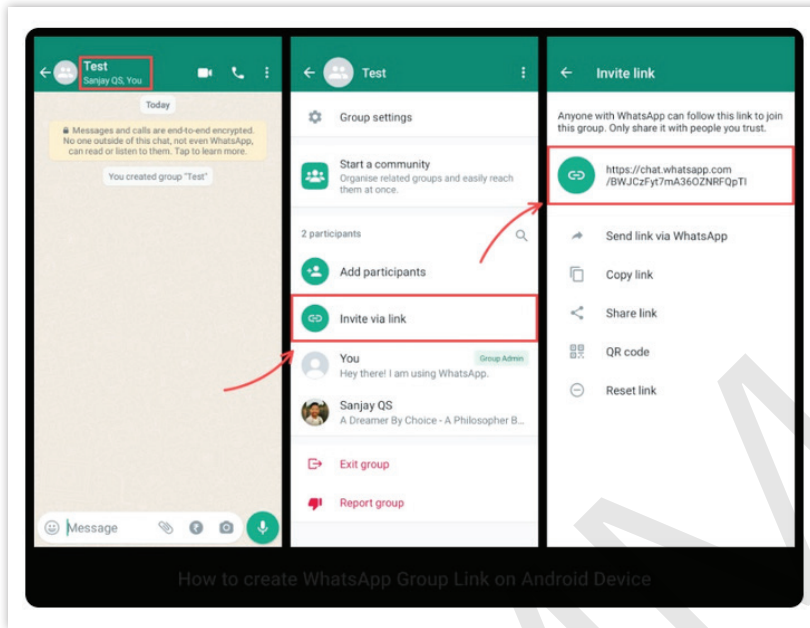

FIGURE 7: Joining Groups on WhatsApp

Source: https://doubletick.io/blog/ultimate-guide-to-whatsapp-group-link-latest-edition

7. **Leaving groups**:

To leave a group, tap on the group name and then tap on the "Leave Group" button. Leaving groups on WhatsApp are shown in Figure 8:

FIGURE 8: Leaving Groups on WhatsApp

Source: https://www.indiatoday.in/technology/news/story/whatsapp-users-can-now-leave-groups-without-letting-anyone-know-1985643-2022-08-09

8. **Deleting messages**:

To delete a message, tap on the message and then tap on the "Delete" button. Deleting messages on WhatsApp is shown in Figure 9:
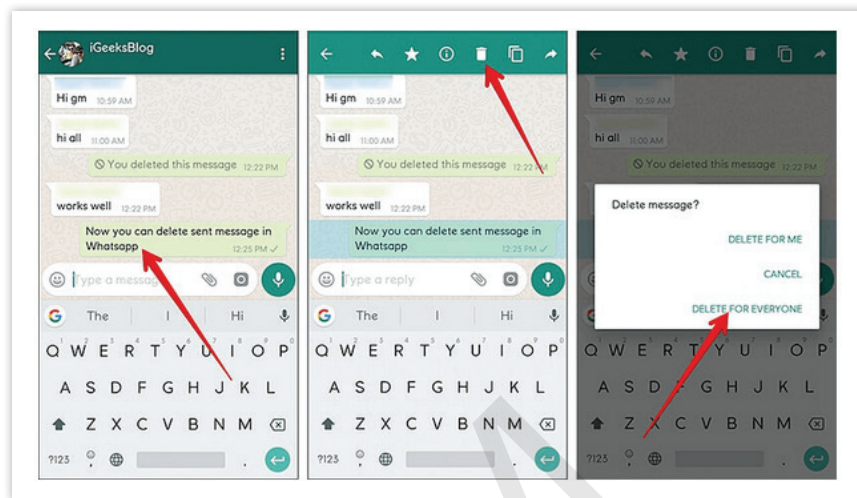

FIGURE 9: Deleting Messages on WhatsApp

Source: https://www.fonetool.com/app-management/how-to-delete-whatsapp-messages-for-everyone.html

9. **Blocking contacts**:

To block a contact, tap on their name and then tap on the "Block" button. Blocking contacts on WhatsApp is shown in Figure 10:
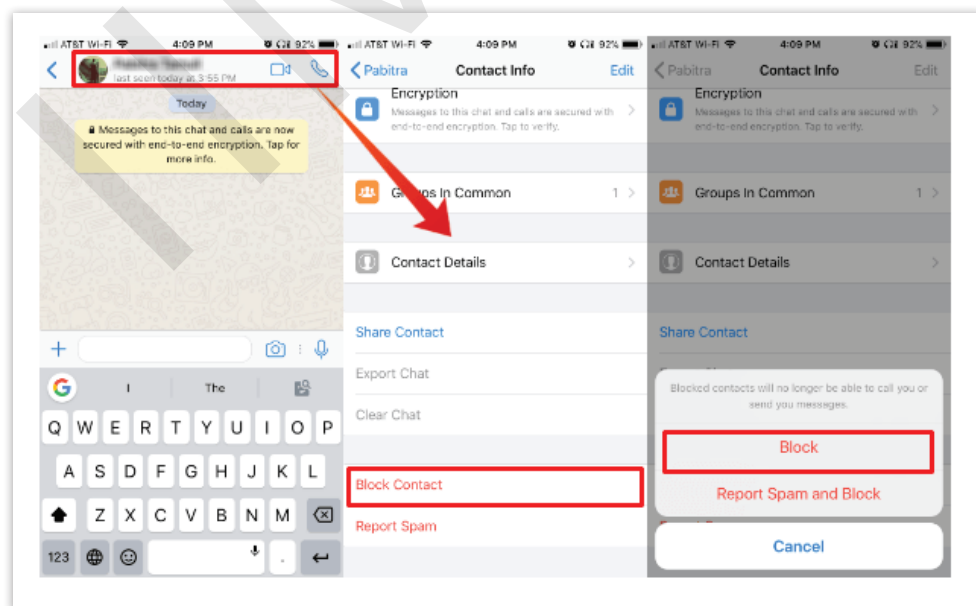

FIGURE 10: Blocking Contacts on WhatsApp

Source: https://mashtips.com/block-numbers-whatsapp/

10. **Reporting spam**:

To report spam, tap on the message and then tap on the "Report" button. Reporting spam on WhatsApp is shown in Figure 11:
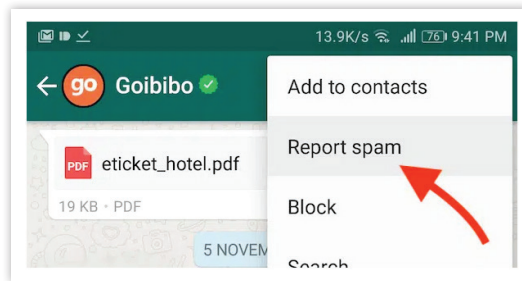

FIGURE **11**: Reporting Spam on WhatsApp

Source: https://messagingapplab.com/how-to-report-someone-as-spam-on-whatsapp/#google_vignette

Following are the features of WhatsApp**:**

❍ **Photos and video sharing:** Videos, photos, and GIFs can be sent without concern about image quality issues or downloadability, which can occur in SMS messages across diverse mobile platforms and wireless carriers.

❍ **Document sharing:** WhatsApp facilitates sending various documents like PDFs, spreadsheets, and slideshows conveniently, eliminating the need for E-mail or separate document-sharing apps.

❍ **Desktop access:** The WhatsApp desktop version is accessible for both Mac and PC.

❍ **Voice and video calls:** Apart from voice calls, WhatsApp provides video call features, including a group option that accommodates up to eight participants in a single call.

❍ **Secure messaging:** WhatsApp employs end-to-end encryption, ensuring that only the communicating parties can access and read the messages, enhancing security.

❍ **Voice messaging:** Voice messages can be recorded and sent to individual chats or group chats.

❍ **WhatsApp business:** The dedicated business account on WhatsApp is crafted for entrepreneurs to display their products and engage with customers on a platform that's both convenient and familiar.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

7. _____ employs end-to-end encryption, ensuring that only the communicating parties can access and read the messages, enhancing security.

8. _____ can be recorded and sent to individual chats or group chats, adding a dynamic element to communication.

11.6 ETIQUETTES

Etiquette comprises guidelines for polite conduct in diverse scenarios, covering manners, customs, and expected behaviours specific to certain settings or groups. While etiquette varies across cultures, there are universal principles.

In the context of business, etiquette defines the rules and standards guiding professional behaviour. Adhering to business etiquette is crucial for upholding professionalism, fostering connections, and preventing misinterpretations.

Here are some of the most important rules of business etiquette:

❍ **Be respectful:** This involves showing politeness and thoughtfulness towards others, even in situations of disagreement.

❍ **Be punctual:** This implies punctuality for meetings and scheduled appointments.

❍ **Be prepared:** This involves conducting thorough research and being knowledgeable about the topic at hand.

❍ **Be professional**: This means dressing suitably and conducting oneself with maturity and responsibility.

❍ **Be ethical:** This refers to acting in an appropriate and ethical manner, even in the absence of an audience.

In addition to these general rules, there are also specific rules of etiquette for different types of business communication. For example, when sending E-mails, it is important to use a professional tone and avoid using slang or abbreviations. When giving presentations, it is important to be clear and concise and to use visuals effectively.

Adhering to these etiquette rules contributes to creating positive impressions among colleagues, clients, and customers. This approach aids in fostering relationships, advancing careers, and realising business objectives.

Here are some additional tips for following business etiquette:

❍ **Be mindful of your body language:** This involves maintaining good posture, establishing eye contact, and refraining from fidgeting.

❍ **Be aware of your cultural sensitivity:** This involves showing respect for different cultures and refraining from making offensive comments.

❍ **Use social media responsibly:** This involves refraining from sharing anything that might be deemed unprofessional or offensive.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

9. Which aspect of business etiquette involves refraining from using slang or abbreviations in professional correspondence, like e-mails?

   a. Respectfulness   b. Punctuality

   c. Preparedness   d. Professionalism

10. Which behaviour falls under being mindful of business etiquette in social media usage?

    a. Being punctual in meetings

    b. Being aware of cultural sensitivity

    c. Avoiding offensive comments

    d. Maintaining good posture

ACTIVITY

Discuss the practical implications of etiquette in business with your friends.

11.7 SUMMARY

○ Electronic media is an expansive concept that includes a variety of technologies facilitating communication and the sharing of information.

○ Electronic media for communication refers to the various digital methods and platforms used to transmit information, messages, and content electronically.

○ An e-mail, stands for electronic mail, is a digital message sent electronically from one computer user to one or multiple recipients via a network.

○ E-mail is exchanged across computer networks, mainly the internet, but it's also shared within public and private networks, like a local area network.

○ The Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) suite of protocols establishes an adaptable E-mail system using fundamental protocols like Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) for sending mail and Post Office Protocol 3 (POP3) for receiving it.

○ E-mail messages typically use the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) format, but users can also attach non-text files like images and audios.

○ SMS, which stands for Short Message Service, is a widely used form of text messaging that enables the exchange of brief messages between mobile devices.

○ SMS serves various purposes in personal and business communication. Individuals use it for quick exchanges with friends, family, and colleagues, sharing information, making plans, or staying in touch.

○ WhatsApp is a free-to-use messaging and calling app that allows you to send text, voice, and video messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, and other files.

○ Etiquette comprises guidelines for polite conduct in diverse scenarios, covering manners, customs, and expected behaviours specific to certain settings or groups.

11.8 KEY WORDS

○ **Group communication:** Exchange of information, ideas, or messages among multiple individuals within a defined group or team for collective understanding.

○ **Bulk SMS:** Sending a large number of text messages simultaneously to multiple recipients, often for marketing or informational purposes.

○ **Body language:** It involves non-verbal cues, gestures, and expressions conveying messages, influencing perceptions, and enhancing understanding.

○ **Etiquettes:** Socially accepted norms and rules governing polite and respectful behaviour in various contexts, guiding interactions and communication practices.

11.9 CASE STUDY: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION WITH ELECTRONIC MEDIA AT NOVA CORPORATION

Background

Nova Corporation, a multinational manufacturing company with a diverse workforce of over 10,000 employees, faced challenges in maintaining effective communication and collaboration across its geographically dispersed locations. Traditional communication methods, such as e-mail and phone calls, were proving to be inefficient and time-consuming, leading to delays in decision-making and project completion. Additionally, the lack of a centralised communication platform resulted in silos of information and hindered knowledge sharing among employees.

Introduction to Electronic Media

To address these communication challenges, Nova Corporation decided to implement a comprehensive electronic media strategy. The company invested in a cloud-based collaboration platform that integrated various communication tools, including instant messaging, video conferencing, file sharing, and task management features. Additionally, the company encouraged the use of social media platforms, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, for external communication and industry engagement.

Impact of Electronic Media

The implementation of electronic media significantly transformed communication and collaboration at Nova Corporation. The centralised communication platform streamlined information sharing and facilitated real-time collaboration among employees, regardless of their location. Instant messaging and video conferencing enabled quick and effective communication for project discussions, troubleshooting issues, and providing customer support. Social media platforms provided Nova Corporation with a valuable channel to connect with industry experts, customers, and potential partners.

Key Benefits

○ **Enhanced communication and collaboration:** Electronic media facilitated real-time communication and collaboration among employees, breaking down silos of information and speeding up decision-making processes.

○ **Improved productivity and efficiency:** Employees could access information and collaborate on projects more efficiently, leading to increased productivity and reduced turnaround times.

○ **Strengthened customer relationships:** Electronic media enabled Nova Corporation to provide prompt and responsive customer support, fostering stronger customer relationships.

○ **Enhanced brand reputation:** Nova Corporation's active engagement on social media platforms enhanced its brand reputation and visibility in the industry.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite the significant benefits, Nova Corporation also faced challenges in integrating electronic media into its operations. Some employees were initially resistant to adopting new technologies, requiring extensive training and support. Additionally, the company had to implement policies and guidelines to ensure the appropriate and responsible use of electronic media in the workplace.

QUESTIONS

1. Analyse the specific communication challenges faced by Nova Corporation before implementing electronic media.

   (**Hint:** Consider the limitations of traditional communication methods and the impact on Nova Corporation's operations.)

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of Nova Corporation's electronic media strategy in addressing the identified communication challenges.

   (**Hint:** Assess the impact of electronic media on communication efficiency, collaboration, productivity, and customer relationships.)

11.10 EXERCISE

1. What defines a wide array of digital platforms facilitating data exchange and information sharing electronically?

2. How does electronic media benefit communication, and what challenges does it introduce, particularly in terms of information overload?

3. Discuss the types of e-mails and also describe the benefits and common uses of e-mail communication.

4. How does SMS operate within mobile networks, and what are the various types of SMS messages?

5. What are the fundamental rules of business etiquette, and how do they contribute to positive impressions in professional settings?

197

11.11 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Concept of Electronic Media for Communication	1.	a. Instant messaging
	2.	c. Technological divide
E-mail	3.	Transactional e-mails
	4.	Newsletters
SMS	5.	b. Peer-to-Peer (P2P) SMS
	6.	d. Storage at Recipient's SMSC
WhatsApp	7.	WhatsApp
	8.	Voice messages
Etiquettes	9	d. Professionalism
	10.	c. Avoiding offensive comments

11.12 SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

○ Locker, K.O. et al. (2023) Business communication. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

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○ Hanna, K.T. (2022) *What is SMS (short message service)?*, *Mobile Computing*. Available at: https://www.techtarget.com/searchmobilecomputing/definition/Short-Message-Service (Accessed: 30 January 2024).

CHAPTER **12**

Effective use of Digital Media

Table of Contents

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

❍ Explain the concept of social media as a platform for communication

❍ Demonstrate the evolution and history of social media platforms

❍ Understand the role of social media in transforming communication

❍ Discuss cross-cultural communication on social media

❍ Describe the concept of troll

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, you studied concept of electronic media for communication. The chapter also discussed email and SMS. The topic regarding the WhatsApp and etiquettes were also explained towards the end of the chapter.

An effective use of digital media is crucial for contemporary organisations aiming to connect to maximum number of prospective and achieve communication objectives. In the digital age, businesses leverage various online platforms to disseminate information, engage with customers, and build brand presence. Digital platforms, like social media, company websites, email marketing, and other channels offer dynamic ways to convey messages and interact with stakeholders.

Digital media facilitates real-time communication and swift dissemination of updates or promotions. The interactive nature of these platforms allows businesses to receive instant feedback and engage in two-way communication, achieving high level of customer satisfaction. Content can be tailored to specific audiences, utilising multimedia elements to enhance engagement and convey complex messages effectively.

In this chapter, you will study about the concept of social media as a platform for communication. This chapter also describes the importance of cross-cultural communication on social media. Towards the end, the concept of troll has been discussed.

12.2 SOCIAL MEDIA – A PLATFORM FOR COMMUNICATION

Social media refers to online platforms and technologies that enable users to create, share and exchange information, ideas and content in virtual communities and networks. These platforms facilitate the creation and sharing of user-generated content, including text, images, videos, and more. Social media has become an integral part of modern communication, connecting people globally and providing a space for interaction, collaboration and information dissemination.

When considering social media as a platform for communication, it's helpful to categorise platforms based on the primary ways in which users communicate and interact.

Following are different types of social media platforms with a focus on their communication aspects:

❍ **Text-Based Communication Platforms**

  ● **X (formerly known as Twitter):** Users share short text updates called tweets, limited to 280 characters. It's known for real-time communication and quick information sharing.

❍ **Visual Communication Platforms**

  ● **Instagram:** Users share photos and short videos to tell visual stories and express creativity.

  ● **Pinterest:** Users pin and share visually appealing images related to their interests in different areas, like cooking, painting, pottery, interior decoration, etc.

❍ **Video-Sharing Platforms**

  ● **YouTube:** A platform for uploading, sharing and discovering videos on various topics.

❍ **Live Streaming Platforms**

  ● **Twitch:** Primarily for live streaming video games, it has expanded to include diverse live streaming content.

  ● **Facebook Live, Instagram Live and YouTube Live:** Platforms for broadcasting live video to engage with an audience in real-time.

❍ **Audio Communication Platforms**

  ● **Clubhouse:** An audio-based social networking app where users participate in live conversations in virtual rooms.

  ● **Podcast Platforms (e.g., Spotify, Apple Podcasts):** Non traditional social media, podcasts enable communication through audio content.

❍ **Professional Networking Platforms**

  ● **LinkedIn:** Focused on professional networking, job searching, and industry-related discussions.

❍ **Messaging Apps**

  ● **WhatsApp, Messenger and WeChat:** Primarily for one-on-one and group messaging, voice calls, and media sharing.

❍ **Discussion Forums and Q&A Platforms**

  ● **Reddit:** A platform with various communities (subreddits) where users engage in discussions.

  ● **Quora:** Users ask and answer questions on a wide range of topics.

12.2.1 | EVOLUTION AND HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The concept of social media has its roots in the early days of the internet, with the development of bulletin board systems (BBS) in the 1970s and 1980s, where users could exchange messages and information. The evolution of social media accelerated with the rise of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, leading to the creation of platforms like Six Degrees, considered one of the earliest social networking sites.

The 2000s saw the emergence of platforms like Friendster, MySpace, and LinkedIn, each contributing to the evolution of online social interaction. However, it was Facebook, founded in 2004, that marked a significant turning point, popularising the concept of a personalised social network.

Twitter, launched in 2006, introduced the concept of micro-blogging, allowing users to share short messages with a wide audience. YouTube, founded in 2005, transformed the way people share and consume video content. Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat emerged later, each catering to specific types of content and user interactions.

12.2.2 | ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN TRANSFORMING COMMUNICATION

Social media has transformed communication in various ways, reshaping how individuals, businesses and organisations interact.

Following are the role of social media in transforming communication:

❍ **Global connectivity:** Social media has eliminated geographical barriers, allowing people to connect and communicate with others worldwide. This global connectivity has facilitated the exchange of diverse ideas, cultures and perspectives.

❍ **Real-time communication:** Social media platforms enable real-time communication, making it possible for users to share updates, news and events instantly. This immediacy has changed the way information is disseminated and consumed.

❍ **User-generated content:** Social media empowers users to create and share content, shifting the role of consumers to active participants in the communication process. This democratisation of content creation has given a voice to individuals and marginalised communities.

❍ **Business and marketing:** Social media plays a crucial role in business and marketing strategies, providing a platform for brands to engage with their audience, build relationships and market products or services. Influencer marketing, viral campaigns and social media advertising have become integral components of modern marketing.

❍ **Social activism:** Social media has become a powerful tool for social and political activism, allowing individuals to raise awareness, organise movements, and advocate for change. Hashtags, online petitions and viral campaigns amplify social issues and bring them to the forefront of public consciousness.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. X is known for allowing users to share long-form articles and in-depth content. (True/False)

2. Which social media platform is primarily focused on professional networking, job searching, and industry-related discussions?

   a. Instagram   b. LinkedIn

   c. TikTok   d. Pinterest

12.3 CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Cross-cultural communication on social media involves the interaction and exchange of information between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. Given the global nature of social media platforms, people from diverse cultures come together to connect, share and communicate. Cross-cultural communication on social media requires a high level of cultural intelligence, open-mindedness and adaptability. By respecting cultural diversity, being aware of differences, and fostering inclusive communication, individuals and organisations can create positive and meaningful interactions across cultural boundaries on social media platforms.

Following are key considerations of cross-cultural communication on social media:

○ **Language and tone**

- Be mindful of language nuances and cultural sensitivities. Choose words carefully to avoid misunderstandings.

- Adjust your tone to align with the cultural norms of your audience. Some cultures prefer direct communication, while others may value indirect or polite expressions.

○ **Cultural awareness**

- Familiarise yourself with the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the audience you are engaging with.

- Avoid making assumptions or generalisations about a culture; instead, approach individuals as unique.

○ **Visual communication**

- Consider the visual elements of your communication, as cultural preferences for images and aesthetics can vary.

- Be cautious with symbols and gestures, as their meanings may differ across cultures.

○ **Humour and jokes**

- Humour can be culturally specific, and jokes may not always translate well. Be cautious with humour to avoid unintentional offense.

- If using humour, consider universal themes or use inclusive, light-hearted content.

○ **Time zones and scheduling**

- Be aware of time zone differences when scheduling posts or engaging in real-time conversations.

- Use scheduling tools to reach your audience at optimal times without causing inconvenience.

○ **Cultural references**

- Avoid assuming that cultural references are universally understood. Provide context or explanations when referencing culture-specific topics.

  ● Acknowledge and celebrate cultural events or holidays relevant to your audience.

○ **Respect for privacy**

  ● Cultural attitudes toward privacy can vary. Be respectful of individuals' preferences regarding personal information and boundaries.

  ● Avoid sharing or discussing sensitive topics without considering cultural sensitivities.

○ **Multilingual engagement**

  ● If communicating in multiple languages, ensure accurate translations to convey intended meanings.

  ● Consider incorporating multilingual content to cater to a diverse audience.

○ **Feedback and adaptation**

  ● Pay attention to feedback and adapt your communication style based on the responses you receive.

  ● Be open to learning from your audience and adjusting your approach accordingly.

○ **Crisis management**

  ● Be prepared for potential cultural misunderstandings or misinterpretations, especially during sensitive situations.

  ● Respond promptly and transparently to address concerns and rectify any miscommunication.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

3. In _____on social media, adjusting your tone to align with the cultural norms of your audience is crucial to prevent misunderstandings and promote effective interaction.

4. When considering time zones and scheduling in cross-cultural communication on social media, it is advisable to engage in real-time conversations without regard to the potential inconvenience caused by time differences. (True/False)

12.4 TROLL

A troll is defined as an individual who intentionally posts disruptive, provocative or inflammatory content online with the sole purpose of provoking a reaction from the audience. Trolls often seek to derail conversations, stir up conflict or spread misleading information. Their actions can have a detrimental impact on online communities, discouraging meaningful dialogue and creating a hostile environment for users. Following are the characteristics of troll:

○ **Intentionally disruptive:** Trolls deliberately post content aimed at disrupting online discussions, hijacking conversations and provoking emotional responses from others.

○ **Provocative and inflammatory:** Trolls use incendiary language, personal attacks and inflammatory statements to elicit negative reactions from users.

○ **Lack of sincerity:** Trolls often make outrageous or absurd claims, lacking genuine belief in their statements, but solely aiming to provoke others.

○ **Enjoyment of conflict:** Trolls derive satisfaction from the chaos and negativity they create, thriving on the emotional distress of others.

Following are the impact of troll on digital media:

○ **Erosion of trust:** Trolls can undermine trust in online communities, discouraging users from engaging in meaningful interactions due to fear of harassment or abuse.

○ **Spread of misinformation:** Trolls can exploit the open nature of online platforms to spread misinformation, distorting facts and creating confusion among users.

○ **Silencing dissent:** Trolls can silence dissenting voices by creating a hostile environment, discouraging users from expressing opposing viewpoints.

Following are the strategies to effectively counter trolls and maintain a positive online environment:

○ **Ignore and disengage:** Avoid engaging with trolls, as this can fuel their behaviour and escalate the situation.

○ **Report violations:** Report troll activity to platform moderators to have their accounts reviewed and potentially banned.

○ **Promote positive interactions:** Encourage respectful dialogue, highlight positive contributions, and foster a supportive online community.

○ **Educate users:** Raise awareness about trolling tactics and empower users to identify and report troll behaviour.

○ **Promote digital literacy:** Equip users with the skills to critically evaluate online information and navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.

SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

5. What is the primary goal of a troll in online communities?

   a. Information sharing

   b. Meaningful dialogue

   c. Provoking reactions

   d. Building trust

6. How can users effectively counter trolls and maintain a positive online environment?

   a. Ignore and disengage

   b. Create provocative content

   c. Spread misinformation

   d. Engage in heated arguments

12.5 SUMMARY

○ Social media refers to online platforms and technologies that enable users to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and content in virtual communities and networks.

○ Social media has become an integral part of modern communication, connecting people globally and providing a space for interaction, collaboration, and information dissemination.

○ The concept of social media has its roots in the early days of the internet, with the development of bulletin board systems (BBS) in the 1970s and 1980s, where users could exchange messages and information.

○ The evolution of social media accelerated with the rise of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, leading to the creation of platforms like Six Degrees, considered one of the earliest social networking sites.

○ Cross-cultural communication on social media involves the interaction and exchange of information between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds.

○ Cross-cultural communication on social media requires a high level of cultural intelligence, open-mindedness and adaptability.

○ A troll is defined as an individual who intentionally posts disruptive, provocative, or inflammatory content online with the sole purpose of provoking a reaction from others.

○ Trolls often seek to derail conversations, stir up conflict, or spread misinformation. Their actions can have a detrimental impact on online communities, discouraging meaningful dialogue and creating a hostile environment for users.

12.6 KEY WORDS

○ **Collaboration:** A set of cooperative efforts using digital tools to enhance teamwork, share ideas and achieve common goals efficiently

○ **Campaign:** A planned series of activities for strategic communication, aiming to promote products, services, or causes effectively and engage target audiences using online platforms

○ **Provoking:** An act of inciting reactions or emotions, often in online discussions, through disruptive, inflammatory, or controversial statements or actions.

12.7 CASE STUDY: EFFECTIVE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN BOOSTING BRAND AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Background

A mid-sized e-commerce company specialising in handmade crafts and artisan products faced challenges in reaching a wider audience and increasing brand awareness. Despite offering unique and high-quality products, their market presence

was limited, and they sought to leverage digital media to expand their reach and engage with potential customers.

Challenge

The primary challenge for the e-commerce company was the limited visibility of its brand in a highly competitive online market. The company needed to overcome the hurdle of reaching a broader audience, effectively conveying its brand story, and establishing a connection with potential customers. Traditional marketing efforts were proving insufficient, and a more innovative and scalable solution was required.

Solution

The company implemented a comprehensive digital media strategy to address the identified challenges. Key components of the strategy included:

❍ **Social media campaigns:** The company established a presence on popular social media platforms, including Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook. They curated visually appealing content showcasing their handmade products, emphasising the craftsmanship and unique stories behind each item.

❍ **Influencer collaborations:** To amplify their reach, the company collaborated with influencers in the handmade and lifestyle niche. Influencers shared their experiences with the products, creating authentic content that resonated with their followers.

❍ **Engaging content marketing:** The company invested in a blog on their website, producing engaging and informative content related to handmade crafts, artisanal products, and the company's values. This content not only attracted organic traffic but also positioned the brand as an authority in its niche.

❍ **User-generated content campaigns:** Encouraging customers to share their own experiences with the products through hashtags and contests helped create a community of brand advocates. This user-generated content was then strategically integrated into the company's social media and marketing materials.

Result

The implementation of the digital media strategy yielded significant positive outcomes for the e-commerce company:

❍ **Increased brand visibility:** The company experienced a substantial increase in brand visibility and recognition across social media platforms, leading to a surge in website traffic.

❍ **Higher engagement levels:** The engagement levels on social media skyrocketed, with users actively participating in discussions, sharing content, and contributing to the user-generated content campaigns.

❍ **Boost in sales:** The combined impact of increased visibility and engagement translated into a notable boost in sales. The company witnessed a growth in both customer acquisition and retention.

○ **Enhanced brand image:** The strategic use of digital media helped shape a positive brand image, emphasising the company's commitment to craftsmanship, ethical sourcing, and community building.

Conclusion

The transformative power of a well-executed digital media strategy is evident in overcoming challenges and achieving business objectives. By leveraging social media, influencer collaborations, content marketing, and user-generated content, the e-commerce company successfully increased brand awareness, engaged with a wider audience, and ultimately experienced a positive impact on its bottom line.

QUESTIONS

1. How did the e-commerce company leverage influencer collaborations to enhance its brand visibility and engagement in the digital media space?

   (Hint: The company collaborated with influencers who shared authentic content about its handmade products, reaching a wider audience and creating a meaningful connection with potential customers.)

2. What tangible outcomes did the e-commerce company achieve through its digital media strategy, and how did these outcomes contribute to the overall success of the business?

   (Hint: The strategy resulted in increased brand recognition, higher engagement levels on social media, a notable boost in sales, and an enhanced positive brand image, ultimately driving business growth.)

12.8 EXERCISE

1. What is the primary purpose of social media platforms?

2. Which social media platform is known for short text updates called tweets, limited to 280 characters?

3. How has social media transformed communication in terms of user-generated content, and what role does it play in empowering individuals and marginalised communities?

4. Why is it important to consider visual elements while considering cross-cultural communication on social media? Discuss the impact of cultural differences in visual preferences impact communication.

5. What are the key strategies recommended for countering trolls on social media, and how do these strategies contribute to maintaining a positive online environment?

12.9 ANSWERS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
Social Media – A Platform for Communication	1.	False

Topic	Q. No.	Answer
	2.	b. LinkedIn
Cross-cultural Communication on Social Media	3.	Cross-cultural communication
	4.	False
Troll	5.	c. Provoking reactions
	6.	a. Ignore and disengage

12.10   SUGGESTED BOOKS AND E-REFERENCES

SUGGESTED BOOKS

❍   Means, T.L. and Hathaway, V.V. (2019) *Business communication*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, Inc.

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