

**ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

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**LECTURE NOTES**

**DEVELOPED BY**

**DR. RASABIHARI MISHRA**

Sl. No. Chapters

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## **MODULE – 1**

# 1. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The word “communication” derived from the Latin word ‘communicare’ that means to impart, to participate, to share or to make common. It is a process of exchange of facts, ideas, opinions and as a means that individual or organization share meaning and understanding with one another. In other words, it is a transmission and interacting the facts, ideas, opinion, feeling and attitudes. It is the ability of mankind to communicate across barriers and beyond boundaries that has ushered the progress of mankind. It is the ability of fostering speedy and effective communication around the world that has shrunk the world and made ‘globalization’ a reality. Communication had a vital role to play in ensuring that people belonging to a particular country or a culture or linguistic group interact with and relate to people belonging to other countries or culture or linguistic group. Communication adds meaning to human life. It helps to build relationship and fosters love and understanding. It enriches our knowledge of the universe and makes living worthwhile.

## ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

The term business communication is used for all messages that we send and receive for official purpose like running a business, managing an organization, conducting the formal affairs of a voluntary organization and so on. Business communication is marked by formality as against personal and social communication. The success of any business to a large extent depends on efficient and effective communication. It takes place among business entities, in market and market places, within organizations and between various group of employees, owners and employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and customers, sales persons and prospects and also between people within the organization and the presspersons. All such communication impacts business. Done with care, such communication can promote business interests. Otherwise, it will portray the organization in poor light and may adversely affect the business interest.

In any organization the main problem is of maintaining effective communication process. The management problem generally results in poor communication. Serious mistakes are made because orders are misunderstood. The basic problem in communication is that the meaning which is actually understood may not be what the other intended to send. It must be realised that the speaker and the listener are two separate individuals having their own limitations and number of things may happen to distort the message that pass between them.

## IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The importance of communication can never be over-emphasized. Communication is the ‘lifeblood’ of all organizations. It is of vital importance to the well being of a state, a business enterprise, a religion and other social or cultural identities including the family. The success of a business enterprise is directly proportional to the level of communication maintained by it. In the new context of globalization and free trade, organizations have to communicate cutting across national and cultural boundaries. Unless effective skills of communication are used, an organization would run the risk of getting insulated and fossilized. Modern techniques would not

be available to them. Within an organization, effective inter-personal relationships are possible only if communication skills are cultivated. Today, Multi-nationals organize communication courses for their employees irrespective of their positions. Effective communication enhances the potential of the employees and acts as a motivating force for greater efficiency and productivity.

Good communication skills place an organization at the correct slot in the society. The image of an organization depends on its ability to communicate with, the society around it. Good communication promotes better understanding between the employer and the employee. In this competitive environment, organizations vie with each other to acquire an employee – friendly image. Thus, communication skills help in establishing, running, producing and marketing of products by commercial establishments. A worker will not be able to turn out a good product and a customer will not buy a product however good it is, until each is convinced to do so through effective communication.

### **Definition of Business Communication**

Business communication is important for any organisation, it is concerned with business activities which are well defined & result oriented. It uses technical jargons, graphic & audio-visual aids. Moreover, it is objective & impartial hence the information passed is exact & concise. Business Communication also uses specific writing techniques & procedures.

### **Forms of Business Communication**

There are two types or forms of business communication & they are;

- **Internal Communication:** is the structured communication within the organisation. It is a vital means of attending to the concerns of an organisation – it consists of upward, downward, horizontal as well as diagonal communication. Internal communication helps in increasing job satisfaction, productivity & discourages flaws. Memos, reports & etc. are part of internal communication.
- **External Communication:** In today's world business organizations are interdependent on each other & this creates the necessity for effective communication. It deals with the communication outside the company to win back a disgruntled customer, negotiate a deal & etc. It has far reaching effect on the organisations reputation & ultimate success. It includes letter, proposals, reports & etc. Even telephone calls and personal conversation are an important part of it.

### **Goals of Business Communication**

In business, communication is purposeful. Any message sent or received ought to have target, hence result-oriented. There are four basic goals of business communication which the sender must achieve:

- Receiver understanding
- Receiver response
- Favorable relationship
- Organizational goodwill

**Receiver Understanding:** It is the first goal. The receiver understands the message as intended by the sender.

'No one plans a meeting like you do' is what a supervisor sends a message to a subordinate. What's the expected reaction: pleasure or disappointment?

'Will you join me in lunch today?' is a question that does not imply as to who will pay the bill.

The above two questions thus establish the fact that it's challenging for the sender to achieve receiver understanding. So, the sender must consider following points for receiver understanding:

- Receiver characteristics
- Message form and content
- Receiver feedback
- Communication feedback

**Receiver Response:** It may be positive/negative/neutral. The receiver's response may be conceived through words or actions or both. It depends on situations. For example, if the chairman distributes a memo announcing the time and date of a meeting, those who receive the memo may act in four ways:

- Notify the chair that they will attend
- Notify the chair that they will be unable to attend
- Attend without notifying the chair in advance
- Miss the meeting without advance notice

The fourth action doesn't achieve receiver response. So, wording of the message must encourage response. But in face-to-face conversation, the sender asks/clarifies receiver response which makes it easy for receiver.

**Favorable Relationship:** The sender and receiver must be related to each other positively, personally and professionally. For a sender who is manufacturer in goods or provider of services, favorable relationship means job satisfaction, increased sales, and more profit. For a customer who is a sender, favorable relationship leads to a continued source of supply, better prices, assistance if problems develop. The sender's primary responsibility to create FR can be possible in different ways:

- Stressing the receiver's interests & benefits
- Using positive wording
- Doing more than is expected

Example: suppose you have to refuse to work overtime on Wednesday. If you say no, it's not helpful to promote FR with your supervisor. What you can do is either offer to work overtime on Thursday or find someone who is willing to work on Wednesday. Thus, you have helped your supervisor, taken a positive stand, done more than is expected.

**Organizational Goodwill:** It benefits organization. The goodwill of customers and clients is necessary for continued business. Deliberate effort is made to achieve this. Message senders do so by ensuring that their communication reflects positively on the quality of the company's products, services and personnel. Suppose the store policy dictates that employees should accept returned merchandise even when customers don't

have a receipt. The employee could say: would you prefer a refund or replacement? After the customer has chosen, the employee should complete the transaction quickly and courteously. Doing so enhances reputation of the company.

## THE SEVEN C'S OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The message is said to be effective when the receiver understands the same meaning that the sender was intended to convey. For any communication in business, in order to be effective, it must have seven qualities. These seven attributes are called seven C's of effective business communication. (All these attribute starts with the alphabet 'C' so are called 7 C's)

- Correctness
- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Completeness
- Consideration
- Concreteness
- Courtesy

**Correctness-** At the time of encoding, if the encoder has comprehensive knowledge about the decoder of message, it makes the communication an ease. The encoder should know the status, knowledge and educational background of the decoder. Correctness means: Use the right level of language, correct use of grammar, spelling and punctuation, accuracy in stating facts and figures. Correctness in message helps in building confidence.

**Clarity-** Clarity demands the use of simple language and easy sentence structure in composing the message. When there is clarity in presenting ideas, it's easy for the receiver/decoder to grasp the meaning being conveyed by the sender/encoder. Clarity makes comprehension easier.

**Conciseness-** A concise message saves time of both the sender and the receiver. Conciseness, in a business message, can be achieved by avoiding wordy expressions and repetition. Using brief and to the point sentences, including relevant material makes the message concise. Achieving conciseness does not mean to lose completeness of message. Conciseness saves time.

**Completeness-** By completeness means the message must bear all the necessary information to bring the response you desire. The sender should answer all the questions and with facts and figures. and when desirable, go for extra details. Completeness brings the desired response.

**Consideration-** Consideration demands to put oneself in the place of receiver while composing a message. It refers to the use of your attitude, emphasizes positive pleasant facts, visualizing reader's problems, desires, emotions and his response. Consideration means understanding of human nature.

**Concreteness-** Being definite, vivid and specific rather than vague, obscure and general leads to concreteness of the message. Facts and figures being presented in the message should be specific. Concreteness reinforces confidence.

**Courtesy-** In business, almost everything starts and ends in courtesy. Courtesy means not only thinking about receiver but also valuing his feelings. Much can be achieved by using polite words and gestures, being appreciative, thoughtful, tactful, and showing respect to the receiver. Courtesy builds goodwill. Courtesy strengthen relations.

## CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

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Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages, whether you are exchanging email, giving a formal presentation or chatting with co-workers around the espresso machine.

Effective Business Communication provides practical information, gives facts rather than impressions, clarifies and condenses information, states precise responsibilities, persuades others and offers recommendations.

Communication provides the vital link between people and information in every business organization. The information is exchange between the people both externally and internally. This means that we have Internal Communication and External Communication wherein information travels over both Formal and Informal Channels.

The formal channel is the most effective. The informal channel is also called the grapevine. Both formal and informal channel work side by side, run parallel to each other. Often they get mixed up or cast their influence on each other, making it quite a job for the manager to get to the actual position and take a decision. While on the one hand there are clear orders and directives or memos sent along the vertical lines of communication, on the other hand the rumour mill or the grapevine is doing its own job of diluting or distorting or giving edge to the information meant to be sent across. It shows that communication is a complex process indeed. Therefore it is of paramount importance that an organisation develops a pattern of communication so as to improve its effectiveness. This is primarily a question of human relationships as they develop and are encouraged to develop in an organisation.

The communication system of an organisation is generally influenced by the formal channels of communication, the authority structure of organisation, job specialisation and information ownership.

Every organisation has a Formal Communication Network, in which ideas and information flow along the lines of command (the hierarchical levels) in the company's organisation structure. Throughout the Internal Formal Network, information flows in three directions:

**Downward flow:** Downward communication flows from executives to employees, sharing executive decisions providing information that helps employees do their jobs. It is more than passing on information to subordinates. It may involve effectively managing the tone of the message, as well as showing skill in delegation to ensure the job is done effectively by the right person.

A few examples of this flow can be Annual Confidential reports, Performance Appraisals, Announcement of Company Policies, Official Instructions and so on.

The downward communication can take place through various forms like notes, notices, memos, telephonic conversations, voicemails and face to face conversations.

**Upward flow:** Upward communication flows from employees to executives, providing accurate, timely reports on problems, trends, opportunities, grievances and performance. Thus allowing executives to solve problems and make intelligent decisions. Business Reports, Business Proposals, Suggestion Box, Exit Interviews and

Grievance Committees are some of the examples upward communication. It promotes better working relationships and facilitates employee involvement in the decision making process.

**Horizontal flow:** Horizontal/Lateral communication involves communication among persons who do not stand in hierarchical relation to one another. Horizontal/ Lateral communication flows between departments to help employees share information and coordinate tasks. Such communication is especially useful for solving complex and difficult problems because it takes place between the Professional Peer groups. It plays a vital role in developing teamwork and promoting group coordination. Informal discussions, Management Gossip, Telephone Calls, Teleconferencing, Videoconferencing, Memos and Routine Meetings may be considered some of the forms/ media of communication.

Besides these flows there is one more flow called the diagonal flow of communication which is the outcome of the changing trends in the business world. The emergence of large size organisations, growth of trade unions, the human relations aspect, technological advancement and development of behavioral sciences has led to the inevitability of Diagonal Communication.

**Diagonal flow:** It refers to communication between managers and workers located in different functional divisions. Although both vertical and horizontal communication continue to be important, these terms no longer adequately capture communication needs and flows in most modern organizations. The concept of diagonal communication was introduced to capture the new communication challenges associated with new organizational forms, such as matrix and project-based organizations. It is a product of modern changes in information technology and management and also the result of growing realisation of fraternity and equality in the corporate sector.

Basically it is a response to the market needs that demand speed and efficiency. Diagonal communication doesn't follow rigid norms of communication protocol.

#### **Grapevine communication:**

Every organization also has an Internal Informal Network called a Grapevine that operates anywhere two or more employees are in contact, from the lunchroom to the golf course to the company's email and instant messaging systems. Some executives are wary of the informal network, but savvy managers tap into it to spread and receive informal messages. Grapevines tend to be most active when employees believe the formal network is not providing the information they want or need. Grapevine generally develops due to various reasons. One of them is that when an organization is facing recession, the employees sense uncertainty. Also, at times employees do not have self-confidence due to which they form unions. Sometimes the managers show preferential treatment and favor some employees giving a segregated feeling to other employees. Thus, when employees sense a need to exchange their views, they go for grapevine network as they cannot use the formal channel of communication in that case. Generally during breaks in cafeteria, the subordinates talk about their superior's attitude and behavior and exchange views with their peers. They discuss rumors about various occurrences in the organization.

### **Advantages of Grapevine Communication**

Grapevine channels carry information rapidly. As soon as an employee gets to know some confidential information, he becomes inquisitive and passes the details then to his closest friend who in turn passes it to other. Thus, it spreads hastily.

The managers get to know the reactions of their subordinates on their policies. Thus, the feedback obtained is quick compared to formal channel of communication.

The grapevine creates a sense of unity among the employees who share and discuss their views with each other. Thus, grapevine helps in developing group cohesiveness.

The grapevine serves as an emotional supportive value.

The grapevine is a supplement in those cases where formal communication does not work.

### **Disadvantages of Grapevine Communication**

The grapevine carries partial information at times as it is more based on rumours. Thus, it does not clearly depict the complete state of affairs.

The grapevine is not trustworthy always as it does not follow official path of communication and is spread more by gossips and unconfirmed report.

The productivity of employees may be hampered as they spend more time talking rather than working.

The grapevine leads to making hostility against the executives.

The grapevine may hamper the goodwill of the organization as it may carry false negative information about the high level people of the organization.

A smart manager should take care of all the disadvantages

External Communication flows into and out of the organisation along the formal lines (carefully prepared letters, announcements, email messages, face to face meetings and so on). It can also take place by informal means, such as discussing work with your friends, meeting potential sales contacts at industry gatherings, networking at social events, talking with customers and so on. Although these interactions are informal, they can still be vital to the company's success, so that require the same care and skill as formal communication. External communications are letters, ads, brochures, web sites, catalogues, and reports.

## FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

	<b>INTERNAL</b>	<b>EXTERNAL</b>
<b>FORMAL</b>	Planned communication among insiders (letters, reports, memos, e-mail, instant messages) that follows the company's chain of command	Planned communication with outsiders (letters, reports, speeches, websites, instant messages and news releases)
<b>INFORMAL</b>	Casual communication among employees (e-mail, instant messages, face-to-face conversations, and phone calls that do not follow the company's chain of command)	Casual communication with suppliers, customers, investors, and other outsiders (face-to-face conversations, e-mail, instant messages, and phone calls)

# CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Market globalisation and technological advances in travel and telecommunications have made the natural boundaries and national borders disappear. Domestic markets are opening up to world-wide competition and to be successful in the global marketplace, cultural & language barriers must be minimized.

Ours is the age of globalization. We now live in global village in which we are linked to people in every corner of the world. We travel regularly from one country to another and migration across national borders occurs with increasing frequency. Digital technology blurs the territorial boundaries between countries. We have become friends, neighbors, and coworkers with people once considered strangers. Intercultural communication is the process of interpreting and sharing meaning with individuals from different cultures, whose cultural background leads them to interpret verbal and non-verbal signals differently.

As business has soared language & cultural barriers have made it increasingly difficult for employees to meet customer needs, creating frustration & job dissatisfaction among employees.

## **Example:**

### **Communication goof-up at Sheraton Hotels Hawaii**

A common mistake employees make is assuming that international guests have the same behavior & communication patterns as themselves. For instance, at Sheraton Hotels, Hawaii guests from the US complain directly when they are unhappy about the hotel's service as they belong to a low context culture & rely mostly on verbal messages. On the other hand, Japanese rely on the non-verbal aspect of communication and hence expect the employees of the hotel to understand their difficulties rather than complaining or explaining about it. Gestures are another big difference Japanese guests find some Western forms of non-verbal communication offensive like leaning on a wall, moving things with one's feet & etc.

Certain other behavioral differences are more overt. Like, when a hotel receptionist pulls out a chair for a Japanese woman to sit down, the woman's husband will typically sit down first, thinking it is for him.

The employees had to learn to avoid offensive behavior & to make the guests feel comfortable – the necessity of developing, a training program for understanding cultural differences & learn intercultural communication.

## **Intercultural Communication**

It is the process of transferring information between people whose cultural background leads them to interpret verbal & non-verbal signals differently.

### **Understanding the importance of communication across cultures:**

Two trends contributing to the increasing importance of intercultural communication in the workplace are globalization and the multicultural workforce.

**Market globalization:** It is the increasing tendency of the world to act as one market. In the global market place, natural boundaries and national borders have mostly disappeared as more and more domestic markets

open to worldwide competition. Companies are going global by the use of fax machines, overnight delivery services, internet, etc.

**Example:**

Trek Bicycles of Waterloo, Wisconsin may seem like an unlikely place for the headquarters of an international bicycle business, yet the company sells more than half a million bikes in more than 70 countries, with 40% of sales coming from international business.

Companies like Sheraton Hotels, Hawaii and Trek Bicycles know and understand the necessity to minimize the cultural barrier between employees and customers.

**Examples of companies 'go global':**

- UPS expanded its web-based tracking services so that customers in 13 European countries can check-in their own language – to see whether packages have reached their destinations.
- Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) noticed many orders were coming from Japan, the company hired native speakers to develop a site for the country – it adjusts the graphics as well as words, for e.g. if an item is out of stock, the site displays a graphic of someone politely bowing.

**The Multicultural Workforce:** A company's cultural diversity affects how its business messages are conceived, composed, delivered, received and interpreted. It also contributes to the importance of intercultural communication.

The US workforce is partly composed of immigrant workforce (Europe, India, Canada, Latin America, and Africa) and from various ethnic backgrounds (African, American, Asian etc.) who bring in their own culture to the workplace. The present workforce is hence made up of people who differ in race, gender, age, culture, religion, family structure, educational background etc. such cultural diversity affects how business messages are conceived, planned, sent, received and interpreted at the workplace.

Because of the diverse workforce, managing the diverse mix of ages, values, views become more difficult. Supervisors hence need to be careful and should motivate these diverse employees while fostering harmony.

**EXAMPLES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION GOOF-UPS:**

Rafael Rodriguez, a stock clerk supervisor at a general store in California typifies the diversity challenges that today's employees face. The employees that he supervises have varied cultural backgrounds. He feels that basic language barriers often create misunderstanding, but then problems go far beyond that. In one case, a recently immigrated employee was unintentionally making a female employee feel uncomfortable by asking personal questions about her tattoo and nose-piercing. His questions were innocent but he could not see the invisible boundary that his colleague had built around her personal life.

To be successful, be sensitive to cultural differences as you communicate with people throughout the world. Companies offer training to employees regarding cultural sensitivity & respecting & understanding a different culture.

## **Improving cultural sensitivity and recognizing cultural differences:**

Culture is a shared system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations and norms for behavior. To understand culture better remember that culture is learned and that it varies in stability, complexity & tolerance.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to judge all other groups according to your own group's standards, behaviors, and customs and to see them as inferior by comparison.

One can improve one's ability to communicate effectively across cultures by recognizing cultural differences and then overcoming ethnocentrism.

**Recognize Cultural Differences:** When an individual writes or speaks with someone from another culture, he/she encodes messages using the assumptions of his/her own culture. However, member of the audience decode it according to assumptions of their own culture, so meaning may be misunderstood.

Effective intercultural communication depends on recognizing ways in which people differ. Employees & clients from different cultures can interpret a company's best intentions negatively. The greater the difference between cultures the greater is the chance of misunderstanding.

## **EXAMPLES OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION GOOF-UPS:**

- **Hewlett-Packard (HP):** when HP brought its US and French engineers together to design software, cultural differences came up. The US engineers sent long and detailed e-mails to the French who considered them as patronizing and sent back short and concise e-mails. This made US engineers to believe that the French were withholding information. The situation spiraled out of control & HP had to hire a consulting firm to give training to engineers on both sides on cultural sensitivity.
- **Chinese at a trade show:** exhibitors at a trade show could not understand why Chinese visitors were not stopping by their booth. The exhibitors were wearing green hats and giving them away as promotional items. They soon discovered that for many Chinese people green hats are associated with infidelity – indicates that a man's wife has been cheating on him. As soon as the exhibitors discarded the green hats (giving t-shirts instead), the Chinese visitors began visiting the booth.

We can improve intercultural sensitivity by recognizing & accommodating four main types of cultural differences:

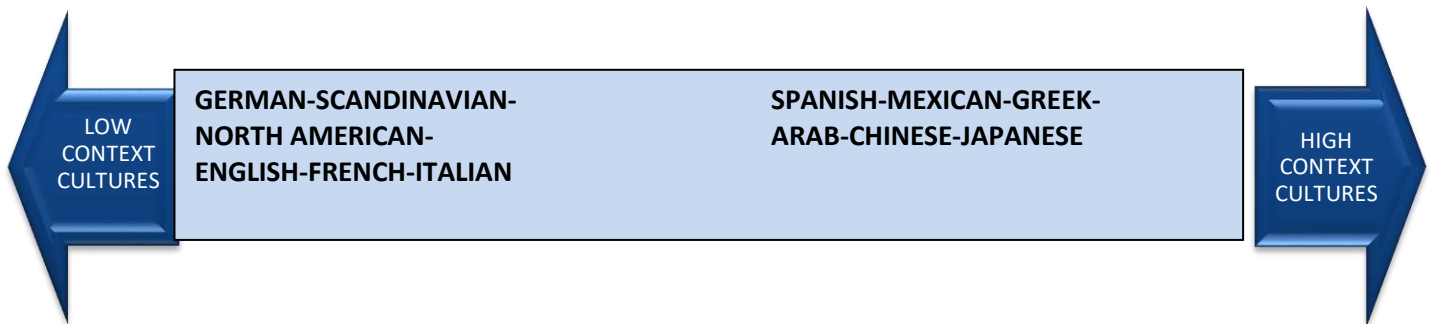
- a. Contextual differences
- b. Legal differences
- c. Ethical differences
- d. Social differences
- e. Non-verbal differences

**a. Contextual Differences:** Cultural context is the pattern of physical cues, environmental stimuli, and implicit understanding that conveys meaning between members of the same culture. There are two types of cultural context – (i) High context culture & (ii) Low-context culture.

In a high-context culture people rely less on verbal communication and more on implicit nonverbal actions and environmental setting to convey meaning. A high context culture encourages lengthy discussions & concentrates on details. In high-context cultures, the rules of everyday life are rarely explicit; instead as individuals grow up they learn how to recognize situational cues and how to respond as expected. While a low context culture relies mostly on explicit verbal cues. It emphasizes quick & efficient decision making.

**Difference between High Context Culture & Low Context Culture:**

Low Context Cultures	High Context Cultures
Executive offices are separate with controlled access.	Executive offices are shared and open to all.
Workers rely on detailed background information.	Workers do not expect or want detailed information.
Information is highly centralized and controlled	Information is shared with everyone.
Objective data are valued over subjective relationships.	Subjective relationships are valued over objective data.
Business and social relationships are discrete	Business and social relationships overlap.
Competence is valued as much as position & status.	Position & status are valued more than competence.
Meetings have fixed agenda and plenty of advance notice.	Meetings are often called on short notice.



**b. Legal differences:** High-context cultures view laws as being flexible whereas low-context cultures tend to value written agreements and interpret laws strictly. Like in the United Kingdom and the United States, someone is presumed innocent until proven guilty. However, in Mexico and Turkey, someone is presumed guilty until proven innocent.

**c. Ethical differences:** Ethical choices can be even more complicated when communicating across cultures. For example, bribing officials is viewed differently from culture to culture. In the US bribing officials is illegal, but Kenyan’s consider paying such bribes as part of their lives (KITU KIDOGO - something small), Chinese business pay HUILU, Russian business pay UZYATKA, Middle East call it as BAKSHEESH etc.

We can use four principles to avoid misunderstanding while communicating across cultures:

- Seek mutual ground.
- Send and receive messages without judgment.
- Send messages that are honest.
- Show respect for cultural differences.

**d. Social differences:** formal rules of etiquette are explicit and well defined, but informal rules are learned through observation and imitation. Violation of these informal rules makes members of a culture feel uncomfortable. Such informal rules include the attitude of people towards wealth, status, manners, etc.

- **Attitude towards materialism:** people from the US emphasize hard work, material success and efficiency more than many people in other countries. Given below is the difference in annual working hours of countries.

**ANNUAL WORKING HOURS:**

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| • US – 1900 hrs          | • East Germany – 1700 hrs |
| • France – 1750          | • Spain – 1770 hrs        |
| • Switzerland – 1850 hrs | • West Germany – 1600 hrs |
| • Italy – 1710 hrs       | • UK – 1760 hrs           |
- **Role and status of women:** Women in many countries still don't play an important role in business. The position of women in business establishments differs widely from one country to another. US and Europe may be liberal towards women working at offices but situation changes in Eastern European and Latin American societies and becomes a lot stringent in Middle East and East Asia.
  - **Use of manners:** In Arab culture it is impolite to take gifts to a man's wife, but acceptable to take it to his children. In Germany taking a red rose to a woman is considered as a romantic invitation but inappropriate for establishing a business relationship. In India the idea of visiting someone's home "any time" is considered acceptable and if not followed may be considered as unfriendly.
  - **Concept of time:** People from the US and Germany are very particular about time, but from Latin America and Asia see time as more flexible.
- e. Non-Verbal differences:** The simplest hand gestures change meaning from culture to culture, so interpreting non-verbal elements according to your own culture can be dangerous. For example, the sign with the forefinger & thumb together is accepted as gesture for saying okay in USA, the same however, is considered vulgar in Italy. In the same way, thumbs up in US means approval while in Ghana & Iran it's a vulgar gesture.
- **Concept of personal space:** People in Canada and US stand 5 feet apart during a business conversation. But this distance is uncomfortably close for Germans and Japanese and too far for Arabs and Latin Americans.
  - **Use of body language:** gestures help members of a culture to clarify confusing messages, but differences in body language may be a major source of misunderstanding during intercultural communication. For example, in the US business people who do not meet their gaze are considered evasive and dishonest, but in Asia keeping one's eyes lowered is considered as a sign of respect.

## Overcome Ethnocentrism

**Ethnocentrism** is judging another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture. The ethnocentric individual will judge other groups relative to his or her own particular ethnic group or culture, especially with concern to language, behavior, customs, and religion. These ethnic distinctions and subdivisions serve to define each ethnicity's unique cultural identity.

Ethnocentrism usually leads to **stereotyping** – the attempt to categorize individuals by trying to predict their behavior or character on the basis of their membership in a particular group. For example, Japanese visitors often stereotype Americans as people who walk fast, are wasteful in utilizing space, speak directly, are disrespectful of age and status, lack discipline and are extravagant.

When ethnocentric people stereotype, they tend to do so on the basis of limited or inaccurate evidence. They often develop biased attitudes toward the group and fail to move beyond the initial step.

To avoid Ethnocentrism we can follow certain rules:

- Acknowledge distinctions.
- Avoid assumptions.
- Avoid judgments.
- Improving Communication across Cultures
- Study others culture:
- Assume differences until similarity is proved.
- Take responsibility for communication
- Withhold judgment
- Show respect
- Empathize –Imagine the receivers feelings and point of view
- Tolerate Ambiguity-Learn to control your frustration when placed in a n unfamiliar situation
- Look beyond the superficial-don't be distracted by dress, appearance, environmental discomforts, etc.
- Be patient and Persistent –don't give up easily while comm.
- Recognize your own cultural biases.
- Be flexible
- Emphasis common ground.
- Send clear messages.
- Deal with individual by avoiding stereotyping.
- Learn when to be direct.
- Treat your interpretation as working hypothesis: once you think you understand a foreign culture, carefully access the feedback provided by recipients of your communication to see if it confirms to your hypothesis.

**Linguistic Barriers:** Language barriers can result from your choice of words & from the fact that words can be interpreted in more than one way. For example,

- When KFC entered the Chinese market its slogan ‘finger licking good’ came out in translation as ‘eat your fingers off’,
- The first translation of Coca Cola in Chinese was ‘ke-kou-ke-la’ as it roughly sounded like it but it meant ‘female horse stuffed with wax’. After research, the company came up with ‘ko-kou-ke-le’ which translates to ‘happiness in the mouth’.
- Catastrophe in French means a ‘casual exaggeration’

Slangs & idioms, local accents & pronunciation & vocal variations can pose problems when you are speaking to people from other cultures, for e.g. ‘cannahepya?’ is ‘can I help you?’

In US workers prefer an open & direct communication. Workers from Japan & China tend to be more indirect. Moreover, Finnish & German workers prefer written communication instead of face-to-face interaction.

### **Overcome Language Barriers**

Linguistical interpretation of ideas differs from one culture to another. As do vocabulary of varied professions vary.

### **Breaking through ESL barriers:**

- Avoid using slangs and idioms:
  - US usage: “piece of cake”, “doesn’t cut the mustard,”
  - Slang usage in US: “shit”, “crap”
- Pay attention to the local accents and pronunciation:
  - Example- “Jeat yet” means “Did you eat yet”
  - “Cannahepya” means “Can I help you”.
- Be aware of Vocal Variations:
  - Example- Russians use a flat tone so the US people consider it boring.
  - Middle Easterners speak loudly so are considered to be more emotional by westerners
- Respect Preferences for communication styles

### **Improve Your Writing skills:**

- Use plain English
- Be clear
- Address international correspondence properly.
- Cite numbers carefully-use numbers instead of words.
- Avoid slang and idioms.
- Be brief
- Use transitional elements.

## Improve Your Oral Skills:

- Try to eliminate noise: pronounce words clearly and correctly with punctuation, make one point at one time.
- Look for feedback by looking out for signs of confusion or discomfort of the listener.
- Speak slowly and rephrase sentences when necessary.
- Clarify your true intent with repetition and examples
- Don't talk down the other person – don't put blame on the listener for not understanding. Say "Am I going too fast?" than "Is it too difficult for you?"
- Use objective and accurate language: avoid throwing adjectives around which people of other cultures may consider over dramatic.
- Learn foreign phrases.
- Listen carefully and patiently.
- Adapt your conversation style to that of the listener.
- Check frequently for comprehension.
- Clarify what will happen next.
- Observe body language.

## 4. Bias-Free Communication

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### Communicating in a Diverse Community

Bias typically involves a leaning or predisposition on an issue that may inhibit being neutral when communicating with others. When bias exists in attitudes, it is often reflected in the language and the way in which individuals interact with each other. Language can have a significant impact on the quality of our interactions. Many times, we do not intend to exclude or offend others by the words we choose. We may simply lack information about, and sensitivity to, certain words or phrases. Being aware and mindful of our language, both written and oral, can help create a supportive and inclusive climate.

The content below provides suggestions for eliminating bias from our communication as one means of creating a more inclusive environment and modeling the attitudes about diversity which the University values. While some basic suggestions are offered below, the key to effective bias-free communication is treating all people with respect and consideration regardless of characteristics such as age, gender, gender identity, race, color, religion, national origin, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or political preference.

#### General guidelines for bias-free communication include:

- Pay special attention not to limit or imply limitations for anyone to participate in any activity, occupation or area of study, e.g. "his disability will preclude him from doing this job," "women shouldn't play certain sports."
- Speak of all members of the University community--students, faculty and staff--in relationship to the issues at hand and the abilities of those involved.
- Assign tasks on the basis of ability rather than gender, race, disability, or other irrelevant stereotypical characteristics, e.g. "we need a man to lift this computer."
- Diversity in leadership and presenters is important in demonstrating bias-free communication.
- Every reasonable effort should be made to assure that meeting places are barrier-free and can accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Every person at a meeting or gathering should be given opportunities to participate.
- "In-group" references and comments, while they may enhance the workplace for the in-group, may create an unwelcoming or hostile working or educational environment for non-members.
- Lesbian-bisexual-gay-transgender (LBGT) persons are likely to be present at every meeting or event and in every racial and ethnic group. Be sure to avoid language that stereotypes or patronizes LBGT persons.
- Avoid stereotyping or patronizing racial or ethnic groups, LBGT persons, or persons with disabilities in news stories, anecdotes or hiring practices.

There are other, more characteristic-specific guidelines for bias-free communication that can increase awareness of, and confidence in, our use of inclusive language. These guidelines change from time-to-time, and individuals or groups most often affected by bias suggest such changes. While these guidelines are

common recommendations, they may not be the preference of every individual. The overall goal is to be sensitive and try to communicate in a way so that everyone can feel included.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

- Avoid qualifiers that imply that all members of specific ethnic groups or races are the same, e.g., suggesting that all persons of a certain ethnicity are good at athletics or math.
- If you specify race or ethnic origin, be certain it is relevant.
- Avoid language that has questionable racial or ethnic connotations, e.g., “you people,” or “those foreigners.”

### **Gender and Gender Identity**

- Use gender-neutral words/phrases in your language, e.g. journalist, fire fighter, chairperson. Avoid the use of "man" or "woman" in job titles.
- Address both female and male perspectives with phrases like "employees and their spouses or partners." Use pronouns and references that include both genders instead of only male, e.g. "he/she" or "women/men."
- Avoid describing men by profession and women by physical attributes.
- Use "gender" rather than "sex" to differentiate between men and women.

### **Ability Status**

- Use "person first" language, e.g., "person with a disability," "student with a disability."
- Avoid using the term “disability” as an adjective, e.g. the disability community.
- Avoid using adjectives as nouns, e.g. "the deaf, the blind, the disabled." Rather, use "people who are deaf."
- Plan for and provide alternate forms of communications at events and gathering. This might include having interpreters, providing written materials in print format or in Braille, or providing oral interpretation for all visual information.

### **Sexual Orientation**

- Use "sexual orientation" rather than phrases like "the gay lifestyle" or "sexual preference."
- Use the phrase "partner or spouse".
- When discussing families, be inclusive of families that are headed by same gender partners or lesbian, bisexual, gay, or transgender single parents and recognize the presence of LBGT youth in families.
- When using the terms "diversity" or "multicultural," and reference is made to specific groups, include lesbian-bi-gay-transgender persons in such statements.

### **Age**

Mention age only when it is relevant and avoid making inappropriate assumptions about people based on their age. Permit people of all ages to speak for themselves rather than assuming you know what they want.

## 5. Oral Presentation

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Oral presentation is a form of oral communication. It is a participative two-way communication process characterized by the formal and structured presentation using audio-visual aids.

It is,

- **Purposeful** – there is a definite purpose
- **Interactive** – involves both speaker & audience
- **Formal** – is in a formal situation
- **Audience Oriented** – listeners or audience perspective is given importance.

It is a tool for professional & business interaction and is an important element & factor for professional success.

The 4ps' of an effective presentation are – Plan > Prepare > Practice > Perform.

### Planning the Presentation

It involves conveying a lot of information in a limited time it is necessary to plan the presentation. Planning a presentation involves:

- a. Defining the Purpose – it is important to make the presentation focused with clear objectives. The purpose of presentation can be,
  - To inform – sharing of information
  - To persuade – change belief/ behavior/ etc.
  - To demonstrate – to help the audience learn how to do something
- b. Analyse the Audience – an integral part of the process of oral presentation is audience analysis. The presentation must be audience oriented dealing with the topic from their perspective. The presenter may not change his/ her ideas & facts for his/ her audience but he/ she may change the way he/ she conveys them. Factors that meet the need of the audience or listeners should be determined. Listeners will be more interested in the presentation if it meets their requirement.

### **What does AUDIENCE stand for?**

*A\_u*dience – who? And how many?

*U\_*nderstanding – their knowledge about the topic.

*D\_*emographics – the age/ gender and etc. of the listeners

*I\_*nterest – why are they here? Who asked them to be?

*E\_*nvironment – Where will I stand? Will everyone will be able to see me??

*N\_*eeds – what do they need? What are the needs of the speaker? What are the needs of the sponsor?

*C\_ustomised – How can I customize the messages?*

*E\_xpectations – what do they expect?*

- c. Analyse the Occasion – Occasion in which the presentation is to be made should be analysed to be made should be analysed to understand the nature of the situation and aspects like background/ people involved/ organisations involved & etc.

Questions like –

- What is the venue?
  - Who are the other speakers?
  - What is the duration of my presentation?
  - Who am I designing the presentation for?
  - What is the occasion?
  - Who are the speakers?
  - Who are the sponsors?
- d. Choose a suitable title – The title gives the audience the first glimpse of the presentation. It is important that the title is appropriate and conveys the essence of the message. A vague, misleading & fussy title may confuse the audience. The choice of the topic depends on the occasion, the audience, the type & the purpose of the presentation.

### **Preparing the Presentation**

Preparing well is the key to success. It involves developing the central idea & main points, gathering relevant supporting material & planning visual aids.

- a. Develop the Central Idea – it should a complete declarative sentence that captures the essence of the message.
  - It should be simple audience centered idea,
  - Restates the topic,
  - Uses specific language,
  - One-sentence summary.
- b. Develop the Main Idea –
  - Make a logical division of the central idea,
  - Establish reasons for the idea being true,
  - Support it with a series of steps,
- c. Gather Supporting Material - Information to be used in the presentation should be carefully selected. An outline of the collected material is developed and reworked until it's in good order. It is important to check for accuracy, redundancies & clichés. The style and presentation should be informal, preferably using everyday language & avoiding technical terms & statistics.
- d. Plan Visual Aids – Good visuals serve the following purpose –

- Serve as speech notes
- Give confidence
- Help in focusing on the theme of the presentation
- Increase audience interest
- Gives clarity & precision

Visual Aids can be of two types –

1. Three Dimensional Aids: Objects/ Models/ People
2. Two Dimensional Aids: Drawings/ Photographs/ Slides/ Maps/ Graphs/ Charts/ Computer Presentations

### **Organising your Presentation**

The key to good presentation is 3T's –

- Tell the audience what you are going to tell.
- Tell it.
- Tell them what you have told.

The presentation should be organized into –

1. **Introduction** – it serves 5 functions i.e.
  - To get audience attention – one can do so by using startling statements, asking questions, relevant quotes, humorous reference, anecdote (short story),
  - Introduce subjects – in simple and direct language so they know what it is about,
  - Give them a reason to listen – by telling them how the topic affects them directly,
  - Establish credibility – well prepared, confident, able to strike a rapport with the audience,
  - Preview main idea – what are they going to listen to, central idea, main idea

#### **'Remember KISS – Keep it Simple & Short'**

2. **Body** – it contains the main content. The mantra is to have few main points with supporting details. There should be appropriate transitions & it should be structured.

A presentation should be organized in the following manner:

- Sequential
- General to Specific
- Specific to general
- More important to less Important
- Less important to more important
- Problem & Solution
- Categorical
- Contrast & comparison

3. **Conclusion** – Summarise your Presentation by repeating the main ideas. And re-emphasize the central ideas & restate in a memorable way.
- Keep your focus on the goal or objective of the presentation i.e. concentrate on what you want from the audience. And motivate the audience to give feedback.
  - It is very important to leave your audience with a clear summary of everything you have covered.
  - It is also important not to let the talk just fizzle out. Make it obvious that you have reached the end of the presentation. Summarise the main points again, using phrases like: 'To sum up...'/ 'So, in conclusion...'/ 'OK, to recap the main points...'
  - Restate the purpose of your talk, and say that you have achieved your aim: 'I think you can now see that...'/ 'My intention was ..., and it should now be clear that ...'/
  - Finally, thank the audience, and invite questions: 'Thank you. Are there any questions?'

### **Rehearsing the Presentation**

Rehearsing the presentation is important as it gives confidence and helps in avoiding distraction and deviation during actual presentation. Moreover, it also gives sufficient time to make positive changes in the presentation. It helps if the rehearsing is done in front of a live audience as it gives a chance to analyse reactions and respond appropriately. Rehearsal also helps in keeping tab on the timing to be effective, to speak clearly and slowly with appropriate pause between main points. It helps in learning to make the presentation in a natural & spontaneous way.

### **Delivery**

**Talk** to your audience, don't read to them!

A presentation is not the same as an essay.

If you read out your presentation as if it were an essay, your audience will probably understand very little and will lose concentration quickly.

So use notes, cue cards or overheads as prompts, and **speak to** the audience. Include everyone by looking at them and maintaining eye-contact (but don't stare or glare at people).

### **Watch your language!**

- Keep it simple. The aim is to communicate, not to show off your vocabulary.
- Emphasise the key points—and make sure people realise which are the key points. Repeat them using different phrasing.
- Check the pronunciation of difficult, unusual, or foreign words beforehand.

### **Use your voice to communicate clearly**

- Speak loudly enough for everyone in the room to hear you.  
This may feel uncomfortably loud at first, but if people can't hear you, they won't listen.
- Speak slowly and clearly.  
Don't rush! Speaking fast doesn't make you seem smarter, it will only make it harder for other people to understand you.

- Key words are important. Speak them out slowly and loudly.
- Vary your voice quality. If you always use the same volume and pitch (for example, all loud, or all soft, or in a monotone) your audience will switch off.
- When you begin a new point, use a higher pitch and volume.
- Slow down for key points.
- Use pauses—don't be afraid of short periods of silence. (They give you a chance to gather your thoughts, and your audience a chance to think.)

### **Use your body to communicate, too!**

- Stand straight and comfortably. Do not slouch or shuffle about.
- Hold your head up. Look around and make eye-contact with people in the audience. Do not just address the lecturer! Do not stare at a point on the carpet or the wall. If you don't include the audience, they won't listen to you.
- When you are talking to your friends, you naturally use your hands, your facial expression, and your body to add to your communication. Do it in your presentation as well. It will make things far more interesting for the audience.
- Don't turn your back on the audience!

### **Interact with the audience**

- Be aware of how your audience is reacting.  
Are they interested or bored? If they look confused, ask them why.  
Stop if necessary and explain a point again.
- Check if the audience is still with you.  
'Does that make sense?'  
'Is that clear?'
- Be open to questions.  
If someone raises a hand, or asks a question in the middle of your talk, answer it. If you can't answer it, turn the question back out to the audience and let someone else answer it!  
Questions are good. They show that the audience is listening with interest. They should not be regarded as an attack on you, but as a collaborative search for deeper understanding.
- Be ready to get the discussion going after your presentation. Just in case nobody has anything to say, have some provocative questions or points for discussion ready to ask the group.

### **Delivery Methods**

There are three methods for successfully delivering a presentation, they are,

- Memorising Method:** it is to memorise the presentation and present it from memory, it requires considerable confidence in the presentator.  
A few disadvantages of this method are,

- It may not be spontaneous and natural then the presentation will sound monotonous,
  - It might be unable to involve the audience,
  - One might forget something in the middle & hence, would be unable to carry on.
- b. **Reading Method:** is useful while presenting a technical paper or report that may contain complex technical information or statistical data. This method controls nervousness as there is no chance of forgetting anything.
- c. **Outlining Method:** is usually used to make effective presentations by referring to speech notes and points. The presenter is able to make eye-contact with the audience and is both flexible & spontaneous.

### To Improve Delivery

- Concentrate on the 3P's: Plan, Prepare and Practice,
- Do not memorise the entire presentation,
- Keep a set of notes ready for reference,
- Try to be flexible and spontaneous.

### Dealing with Nervousness

The first few times you make a presentation, you will be nervous. That's quite a good thing—a bit of adrenalin often helps you to perform well.

However, to make sure that your nervousness does not become a problem, here are some things to consider:

- Smile! Your audience will react warmly to you if you smile and at least look relaxed.
- Treat your audience like friends.
- Confess that you are nervous! Your audience will be very sympathetic—they know how you are feeling.
- Breathe deeply. It will calm you down and help to control the slight shaking that you might get in your hands and your voice.
- Be well-prepared. Practice giving your talk
- Be organised. If you are well organised, your task will be easier. If your overheads are out of order, or your notes are disorganised, you may get flustered.
- Slow down! When people are nervous, they tend to get confused easily. So your mind may start to race, and you may feel panicky. Make use of pauses: force yourself to stop at the end of a sentence, take a breath, and think before you continue.
- Remember: ***The way you perform is the way your audience will feel.*** Giving an oral presentation is a performance—you have to be like an actor. If you act the part of someone enjoying themselves and feeling confident, you will not only communicate these positive feelings to the audience, you will feel much better, too.
- Accomplished public speakers feel nervous before and even during a talk. The skill comes in not communicating your nervousness, and in not letting it take over from the presentation. Over time, you will feel less nervous, and well able to control your nervousness.

## Sample Oral Presentation:

Good morning friends, I am Rahul Karthik and I'm a student of 1<sup>st</sup> Year, B.Tech of EEE-2 Branch in GITA. I'm here today to talk about smart money management.

I'm sure it's everyone's favorite discussion topic. Before we begin, I wanted to highlight exactly what we want you to take away from this presentation.

- First and most important -- HOW to Budget?
- Second, HOW to deal with your credit card or cards?

First we need to know what a credit card is. Well, essentially it is money that's been LOANED to you. We all know that credit cards can be great – but they have to be used the right way. We are going to discuss a few ways of how you can master your credit cards.

Let's talk about summer vacations trips now.

How many of us have taken a summer vacation trip and have used our credit card to do so?

Let's think, how did we pay for our trip this year? Our flight fare and hotel bills, etc?

Actually it is VERY common for college students to put their trips on their credit card.

Let's say Raj's Goa trip is originally Rs. 35,000 which includes roundtrip airfare, hotel, and food. He really can't afford Rs. 35,000 but the trip is on-sale and it's Rs. 30,000. He really can't afford Rs. 30,000 but it's such a steal that he can't help it.

So, Raj charged the trip on his credit card. But it's actually not really a great deal for Raj as he thinks. If he only pays the minimum payment each month it will cost a total of Rs. 50,000 and will take 7 years to repay.

Raj will be 26 and still be paying for his sophomore year college trip.

So now that we know what NOT to do — there are a few things key things that we should do. Firstly, budgeting and cash flow management. I know, but it's not as terrible as it sounds. I know some of you think that budgeting is impossible because it's too much math. Trust me, if I can budget, anyone can.

It's important to budget because you will follow your cash flow and balance your budget.

It's simple:

1. Write down your MONTHLY income
  2. SUBTRACT all expenses
- Include EVERYTHING
  - Analyze your habits

- Take notes for a week on all purchases

To balance your budget, cut expenses to make it work on paper and in-person.

Secondly, keep track of everything you spend. Another easy way to reduce your spending is to take a look at how much you spend on eating out or on having coffee outside. Let me put it to you this way—EVERYTHING adds up.

Sometimes budgeting means making intelligent choices between one's wants and needs.

So some of you may be sitting in your seats thinking this is a little too late. You might already be in debt or on your way in debt. Trust me, there is a lot you can do.

Let's now discuss how we can manage our money smartly and intelligently so that we can avoid getting caught in the trap of debts. First, pay more than the minimum. Second, don't miss a payment – late fees and interest add up too. Third, don't go above your limit – there are usually fees for exceeding your limit. Fourth, find out the rate of interest being charged and compare between rates to find a suitable offer. Fifth, review your statement carefully each month – check for errors. Sixth, there are often fees associated with cash advances with higher interest rates. Last but not the least, remember to protect your credit card and never give out your card number or pin code to anyone. Also ensure that your online purchases are secure. Remember the helpline numbers of your bank/credit card issuer, so that you can contact them in case your card is lost or stolen.

Another important thing is to keep your bank or credit card provider updated with your address and don't forget to update them if you change your address.

To sum up, one can manage money effectively by proper budgeting, careful spending and keeping track of your expenses and choosing smartly between needs and wants.

Thank you.

Does anyone have any questions?

## 6. Business correspondence

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Business correspondence is an important instrument for making decisions in the business world. It helps in reinforcing professional and business relations and is an instrument of professional exchange of ideas, opinions and information.

In today's competitive environment effective letter writing skill is a must. A good letter is not only lucid in style but also makes an impression regarding the sender as well as the company in the mind of the reader. As an executive it is necessary to hone the skill of preparing and presenting ideas as precisely as possible to reinforce business relations, maintain good public relations and motivate or persuade people.

### a. BUSINESS LETTERS

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Difference between Personal and Business Letters:

1. A personal letter is an informal letter while a business letter is formal written message.
2. A personal letter is in the form of a dialogue and follows norms of private dialogue while a business letter is written in a conventional form for a specific audience to meet a specific need.
3. A personal letter normally does not follow any set pattern of writing and the writer is free to choose any style or pattern that suits his/her mood and content while a business letter is more structured as it follows a set pattern and style.

### **Structure**

Sender's Address: (should not be written if a printed letterhead is used)

Date: (dd/mm/yy)

Reference (optional):

Receiver's Address: (name, designation & address)

Subject: (the topic of the letter should be written in phrase form)

Salutation: (use the personal title and the surname should be followed by a comma/ colon)

Body: a. Opening (states the main idea or the purpose of the letter)

b. Middle (includes details & supporting ideas)

c. Closing (restates the purpose & the expected action)

Complimentary Closure: (thanking you, sincerely)

Signature: (name of the sender)

Enclosures (optional): (documents to be attached along with the letter)

## Business Letter Formats

There are four popular types of business letter formats, they are;

**a. Block Format:** All parts of the letter begin at left and the paragraphs are not indented. The line endings are also not justified for better readability.

**b. Modified Block Format:** In this style, the date line, the complimentary closure and the signature block begin at the centre of the page to align to the closing lines. The paragraphs are not indented and the line endings are unjustified.

**c. Semi-Block Format:** It is same as the modified block format except that each paragraph is indented and the line endings are unjustified.

**d. Simplified Format:** It resembles the block style except that the salutation and the complimentary closure are omitted. It may also include a subject line in capital letters.

## Characteristics

The 5 c's of good business letters is;

**a. Clarity:** using clear, simple, familiar and specific words and expressions and clear references should be used. In addition, short sentences and paragraphs should be used.

**b. Courtesy:** a good business letter must be courteous as the basic principle of business interaction is mutual understanding and respect. Moreover, it should also use goodwill expressions as well as positive and encouraging phrases.

**c. Conciseness:** business letters should be concise and direct. Unnecessary words, wordy expressions, repetitions and etc. should be avoided. Direct language and expressions should be used in order to avoid misunderstanding.

**d. Correct Tone:** Tone in business letters refers to manner or mood of expression. It should be formal, tactful, personal and positive. Moreover, a conversational tone gives a personal touch to letters.

**e. Correct Attitude:** it involves proper understanding of the role of positive thinking in business interaction.

## Types of Business Letters

**a. Letters of Enquiry/ Letters of Inquiry:** these are written to request information or seek clarification. A letter of inquiry should be organised into three parts;

Opening: should open with a clear statement that states the purpose of the letter.

Middle: tells the reader what the writer is working on and why does he/she need the information. If the request involves more than one question they should be listed.

Closing: should be closed with a goodwill expression seeking an action-oriented response & specifying the action that the reader should take.

**Sample:**

Charles Taylor  
4511 John Tyler Highway,  
Williamsburg, VA,  
United States  
(757) 564-3955

Date: October 15, 2008

Linda Robinson  
Admission Coordinator  
Virginia University  
918 Emmet Street South,  
Charlottesville, VA,  
United States  
(434) 924-3344

Dear Ms. Robinson:

*I have heard a lot about the various courses offered by Virginia University. The official website of the university gives a lot of guidance and help to students who want admission. This is of great use as you can go through the courses and select a few that you are interested in.*

*While going through courses in Management, I came across a course in Waste Management. This featured under the category of green education. That really interested me as I have completed my honors in Environmental Science. I love nature and want to do something to nurture it through my profession. I feel waste management is a course that will help me fulfill my dream. A lot of jobs are available in this field of management as many countries have started feeling the heat of global warming. I have some knowledge about the basics of this course but I need detailed information, so that I can take a decision to pursue my post graduate degree in waste management.*

*I request you to send me the detailed course structure, curriculum and admission procedure for the course as these details are not available on the website. The website gives information about fee structure, duration of course and eligibility criterion for admission.*

*You can send me information on my email address- charles\_taylor@hotmail.com. This will be great help for me. I know it is a tough task and it will be time consuming. I look forward to your positive reply.*

Sincerely,

Charles Taylor

**b. Replies to Inquiry Letters:** there may be two kinds of replies to letters of inquiry, they are, letters complying with requests (i.e. positive reply) and letters not complying with requests (i.e. negative reply).

**b1. Letters complying with requests:** should use a direct approach.

Opening: states the purpose of the letter.

Middle: gives the requested information and other relevant details.

Closing: close with a goodwill expression for e.g. 'we hope the enclosed information will help you make your decision. We look forward to receive a purchase order from you.'

**Sample:**

*Starlight Building  
Hill Road NOVELTY SAFETY EQUIPMENT LTD  
14th Floor, Bangalore*

*26 Jun 2012*

*Mr Tim Lee  
Manager  
Sun Lee Consultancy Ltd  
198 Pali Street  
Bandra(w)  
Mumbai.*

*Dear Mr. Lee*

*Enquiry regarding fire extinguishers*

*Thank you for your enquiry regarding our newly released range of fire extinguishers.*

*You will see from the enclosed catalogue that the range has been extended to include some highly efficient portable extinguishers for use on construction sites.*

*We are offering to our existing customers a 15% discount on orders of extinguishers from this new range.*

*We look forward to your increased order at this discount rate.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Silvia Andrews,*

*Merchandising Manager*

**b2. Letters not complying with requests:** Should use an indirect approach like a buffer statement that can be an expression of appreciation, a compliment or understanding.

Opening: Starts with a buffer statement.

Middle: Explain reasons for not being able to give the information asked for.

Closing: close with a goodwill expression.

**c. Letters Placing Orders:** is written to order supplies, services or merchandise. It should mention clearly the items quantity or number, price, insurance details, payment method and delivery schedule.

Opening: should begin in order language making it clear that it is a supply or purchase order.

Middle: should list detailed description of the item or items, catalogue reference, quantity, price, insurance, address for delivery and other necessary information to execute the order.

Closing: mentions the time period for delivery and mode of payment must be stated. It should close with a goodwill expression.

**Sample:**

To

Anand Publishers,

21, Bhimsingh Road,

SabziMandi, Kolkata

Sub. : Placement of order for books.

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your letter dated 26.06.2012, together with a catalogue of your publications.

We have pleasure in placing the following order:

Current Affairs -07 copies

Office Procedure and Drafting - 10 copies

Encyclopedia of General Knowledge - 05 copies

Business Letters - 03 copies

Indira Priyadarshini - 01 copy

Please send the goods by passenger train for Cuttack, and forward the documents through Indian Bank, Cuttack.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,

Bharat Khandelwal

**d. Instruction Letters:** is a routine letter that consists of directions for the reader.

Opening: should state the purpose clearly with the sequence of instructions that can be logically connected by using sequence words like first, second, then, finally and so on.

Middle: should contain the necessary details about the instructions given.

Closing: focus on the required action and should be closed with a courteous conclusion.

**Sample:**

*Date: 22.04.13*

*Mr. Girjashankar*

*Chief Manager, State Bank of India,*

*ISM Branch, Dhanbad*

*Subject: Issuing new cheque book.*

*Dear Mr. Girijashankar,*

*I am writing to inform you to that I have lost my cheque book number 233601. Please issue me a new cheque book. Also, stop any payment against any cheque bearing the number 233601 to 233650.*

*I have signed the cheque requisition slip & handed over the same to my office help.*

*I am sending him to collect the cheque book. I would be obliged if you could give him the cheque book.*

*Thank you.*

*Sincerely,*

*A K Mishra*

*Department of Mining Engineering*

*Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.*

**e. Letters Urging Action:** are persuasive messages that urge the reader to do what the sender wants. It begins with an attention catching statement, tells what needs to be done and motivates the reader to act.

Opening: opens with a statement to catch the reader's attention. it can be done by a - compliment, question, startling fact, surprising statement or a problem description.

Middle: information should be given to build the interest of the reader & convince the reader. Direct& indirect reader benefits and specific details should be included here.

Closing: must motivate the reader to act. it should be specific and may be closed with a goodwill expression.

**Sample:**

Date: 15.04.2013

S K Chatterjee

HR Consultant

Allen Management Consultants, Noida

Subject: Request for participation in Training Programme

Dear Mr. Chatterjee,

Our organisation admires your consultancy's expertise in conducting training programmes in marketing management.

The success of your training programme in Export Management has revolutionized the very idea of corporate training. We are now organizing our XIIIth Training Programme on Export Marketing from 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> April'13 at our office. I have been asked by the members of the organizing committee to invite you to give a talk on 'New Trends in Export Marketing'. The participants will benefit positively by interacting with you.

We will offer you a honorarium of Rs. 5000.00 and the normal travelling expenses by train (AC tier 1).

I am sending you the necessary programme details and am sure that your presence will make the programme a success. Please give me a call on 9756543423 by April 20'13 to give your consent so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Sincerely,

V S Sood

General Manager

Smart Marketing Services

**f. Complaint Letters:** is an expression of dissatisfaction. However, they should not vent anger; they should be logical and persuasive based on facts and not on personal opinions and emotions.

Opening: should open with a direct statement which makes it clear that the sender is complaining.

Middle: direct, factual and plain explanation along with relevant information supported by appropriate documents that convinces the reader that the complaint is genuine and the claim is legitimate. The tone should be polite but firm and not apologetic.

Closing: should request the reader to take the appropriate action and should be closed with a goodwill expression.

**Sample:**

606 Stratford Plaza,  
Lokhandwala, Mumbai.

*Date: 07.06.2012*

*Bills Products,*

*764, VidhanSabhaMarg,*

*Ahmedabad.*

*Subject: Delivery of Wrong Product*

*Sir,*

*I had placed an online order for a cell phone bearing model number #327 of Nokia to be shipped to my address. I am writing to make you aware of an unacceptable turn of events regarding my order.*

*The product delivered was not the cell phone model of Nokia that I had ordered and after my attempt to resolve this issue over the phone and via multiple visits to your retail outlet in Lokhandwala has been fruitless. I would appreciate if you kindly look into the matter and ensure that the booked model is delivered soon.*

*I have always been pleased with the products and services offered by your company, and I did not expect such mismanagement from your company.*

*Please give this problem your personal attention. I look forward to hearing from you within seven business days. I can be reached at 098777552316.*

*Sincerely,*

*Neil Johnson*

*606 Stratford Plaza,  
Lokhandwala, Mumbai.*

**g. Adjustment Letters:** attempt to satisfy an aggrieved customer & protect the goodwill of the company in the market. It expresses clear understanding of the problem and offers reasonable solutions.

Opening: should open with an appreciation and thank the writer for drawing attention to the problem.

Middle: starts with an apology for the inconvenience caused and provides precise explanation convincing the customer that the problem has been understood and that a positive action will be taken. The tone should empathetic.

Closing: should be closed with a goodwill expression.

**Sample:**

*Bills Products,*

*764, VidhanSabhaMarg,*

*Ahmedabad.*

*Date: 12.06.2012*

Neil Johnson

606 Stratford Plaza,  
Lokhandwala, Mumbai.

Subject: Re: Delivery of Wrong Product

Dear Neil,

I am writing with reference to the letter citing the mistake made in shipping you the wrong cell phone dated 07.06.2012.

Firstly I apologise for the inconvenience created by our error. We take great care to ensure that important matters such as this are properly managed properly and are investigating the cause of this incident.

In the meantime, we are re-shipping the ordered model to you, along with a prepaid voucher to send back the incorrect phone model. As a token of our appreciation, we also want to include a gift voucher of Rs. 300.00, which can be used for any product in our store.

Again, we hope you accept our apologies and the corrections to the above mistake!

Thanks,

Mr. Ram Jethmalani,

Bills Products

**h. Sales Letters:** are persuasive messages that are written to;

- \* make new customers,
- \* promote a business,
- \* introduce a new product,
- \* generate demand for an old product,
- \* increase or expand customer network,
- \* promote goodwill.

Sales letters should be innovative, fresh and persuasive and are written for a specific audience.

The key elements in a sales letter are gaining the reader's attention, building the reader's interest about the service/ product, convince the reader that the service/ product is the best and finally, motivate the reader to act.

Opening: should open with an attention catching statement that could be a special offer, unique product feature, stimulating question, startling statement, remarkable quotation, etc.

Middle: gives related information that builds reader interest that convinces the reader that the product is worth buying. The selling points must be highlighted and claims should be sustained by facts, figures, guarantees etc.

Closing: should motivate the reader to act and add special offers to get a quick response. It should end with a goodwill expression.

**Sample:**

*Bharat Kumar,*

*Marketing Manager,*

*Avenue Software*

*Date: 09.06.2012*

*Mr. Joe Black,*

*Chief Accountant,*

*Brookes Accountants,*

*24 Driveways,*

*Oshiwara, Mumbai.*

*Subject:*

*Dear Mr. Black,*

*Are you experiencing problems with calculating tax returns for your clients? Does your company sometimes find that the work is overwhelming? Avenue Software has the solution for you.*

*Our team of software programmers and tax specialists has designed a new program that will help ease the workload you are experiencing. Our software will help you keep records and update them online while allowing your clients to view and make appropriate changes. Calculations can be done in a matter of minutes using this novel software.*

*If you want to reduce your current workload, visit us at our website for a free demonstration at [www.avenuesoftware.com](http://www.avenuesoftware.com).*

*Regards,*

*Sincerely,*

*Bharat Kumar,*

*Marketing Manager,*

*Avenue Software*

## B. Reports

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Reports are a factual & systematic account of a specific business or professional activity. It's a formal document for a specific audience to meet a specific need. It can also be an informal one page trip report or an 250 page formal annual report.

It may contain,

- Facts of a situation/ project or process,
- Analysis and interpretation of data/ events/ records,
- Inferences or conclusions,
- Suggestions or recommendations,
- Describing problems and suggesting solutions,
- Recording events & happenings.

### Objectives

- To give information about the organisation's activities,
- To record events for future reference in decision making,
- To recommend specific action,
- To justify & persuade readers about the need for action,
- To present facts to the management to help decide the direction the business should choose.

### Characteristics of a Good Reports

- **Brevity:** fewest possible words. It should be concise & to the point.
- **Accuracy:** facts presented should be accurate.
- **Clarity:** the ideas should be clear.
- **Reader Orientation:** it should be reader oriented.
- **Objectivity of Recommendations:** the end of the report must be impartial & objective.
- **Simple & Unambiguous language:** it should be free from jargons & figures of speech
- **Grammatical Accuracy:** should use appropriate grammar
- **Special format:** like title page, letter of transmittal, table of contents etc.
- **Illustrations:** should have tables, graphs, maps & so on.

### Types of Reports

#### 1. According to Function:

- a. Informational Report: objective presentation of data without analysis or presentation. For e.g. seminar reports & conference reports
- b. Analytical Report: presentation of data with analysis & interpretation. For e.g. project reports & feasibility reports.

#### 2. According to Periodicity:

- a. Routine Report: presentation of routine information for e.g. annual reports & monthly sales reports.
- b. Special Report: Presentation of specific information related to a single condition or situation or problem. For e.g. research reports & inquiry reports.

**3. According to Communicative Form:**

- a. Oral Reports: Face-to-face presentation of information. For e.g. Sales reports, Conference reports & Accident reports.
- b. Written Reports: Presentation of information in written form. For e.g. Project reports & research reports.

**4. According to Nature, Scope & Length:**

- a. Formal Reports: Long reports with elaborate description & discussion. For e.g. annual reports, project reports & thesis.
- b. Non-formal Reports: Short reports of a specific business & do not need elaborate descriptions. For e.g. daily production reports & trip reports.

### Report Formats

There are 4 common formats of report writing, they are –

- a. **Printed Format:** It is generally used to collect routine information. It is simpler to fill & detailed descriptions or discussions need to not to be provided. The three main advantages of using printed formats-
  - Systematic & easy to read
  - Objective & factual
  - Less time consuming.
- b. **Letter Format:** it is used for short reports that have to be communicated to someone outside an organisation. The format contains all the elements of a letter with additional sections such as headings, illustrations, reference & etc. It is used for informational, analytical, routine, special & non-formal reports.
- c. **Memo format:** it is used for short reports to be communicated within an organisation. It contains all elements of a standard memo – it should have headings for easy reading & reference. It is used for all report types – informational, analytical, routine, special or non-formal.
- d. **Manuscript format:** it is used for long and formal reports. It is divided into sections & sub-sections with clear headings. It is structured as it would help the reader to find the information they need. It is carefully planned & logically organized.

## Parts of a Report

A formal report has the following parts;

1. **Title Page:** contains the title of the report, name of the person or organisation submitted to, submitted by & date.

A Report on XYZ Submitted to: Submitted by: Date: (mm/dd/yy)
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2. **Preface:** Optional element in a report. It mentions its scope & salient features.
3. **Letter of Transmittal:** a brief covering letter from the writer. It may contain the objective, scope & highlights of the report. It may contain acknowledgements.
4. **Acknowledgement:** is a 'thank you note' with the names of the one's who helped you.
5. **Table of Contents:** it is the overall view of the report. It is a list of headings & sub-headings with page numbers.
6. **List of Illustrations:** it gives systematic information about tables, graphs, charts, figures & etc.
7. **Abstract:** it is also known as 'executive summary'. It summarises essential information and focuses on key facts, findings, observations, results & recommendations.
8. **8a. Introduction:** provides background information, defines aims & objectives. It discusses scope & limitation. It helps in understanding the report.  
**8b. Methodology:** it summarises the method of data collection, the procedure for investigating & criteria of survey.  
**8c. Discussion:** it is also known as description or analysis. It presents data, focuses on findings and analysis. It is structured with clear headings.  
**8d. Conclusion:** it is a summary of discussion, finding & results. It concludes the discussion and the implication of conclusion.  
**8e. Recommendation:** it proposes the course of action, present ways to solve a problem. It indicates need and nature of the further work.
9. **Appendices:** it contains supporting material. It is kept separate from main body to avoid interruption.
10. **References:** it is also known as bibliography. It contains reference books, journals & other sources used in the report.

## **SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL REPORT:**

### **A REPORT ON LITERACY DRIVE IN BANKI BLOCK**

**SUBMITTED TO: PRESIDENT, NETAJI YOUTH CLUB**

**SUBMITTED BY: RAJESH MISHRA, SECRETARY, NETAJI YOUTH CLUB**

**DATE: 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2012**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Netaji Youth Club , Bhubaneswar organized a literacy drive in three villages in Banki block, Cuttack District for two months with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2012 to 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2012. The villages selected were Haripur, Chandipur, and Badapatna. Mr. SubratNaik, Vice-President of the club was heading the entire operations and 29 members of the club worked as active campaigners and participants.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

During the drive each village was entrusted to 8 members. The BDO and the Sarpanch of BankiPanchayat co-operated with us in the drive. The target group in each village consisted of 10 illiterate boys and girls and 20 illiterate adults. The club also provided teaching resources like blackboard, chalk, slate, paper, pencils, erasers etc. The young boys and girls were taught for 3 hours from 10 AM and adults for 2 hours from 7 PM every day. The club members devoted one hour daily for motivating and educating the people on the aims and objectives of the campaign.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

It is the hard work and dedication that was put forth by the members of the club along with co-operation of the villagers that the objective of the campaign was achieved in 2 month time. A test was also conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February. It showed that both the youth and adult members of the village had learnt how to put their signature and also to read and write simple words and sentences. They also learnt simple arithmetic for their daily purpose. It is heartening to mention that the drive was a successful one and the next drive is all set to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2012 at Jatni block.

Rajesh Mishra

Secretary

## C. MEMO

---

A memo is part of the internal communication process. It is a formal written message & plays an important role in decision making process. It is written in conventional form i.e. in form of a dialogue. It flows in all direction and can be used across hierarchy. Moreover, it is less time taking.

It is used to,

- Describe problems
- Inform employees
- Request information
- Explain policies & actions
- Provide direction
- Give feedback

However, it is certainly not as informal as a personal letter either. The tone of a memo is generally friendly as it is a communication between colleagues. Like a business letter, a Memo intends some action/business within a timeframe. There is no complementary closure. The term "memorandum" can be used instead of "memo".

### Types:

There are 3 types of memos, they are,

- **Downward Memos:** are written to seek explanations or clarifications, send feedback, give instructions & convey routine information.
- **Upward Memos:** convey grievances, suggestion, new ideas, findings & etc.
- **Horizontal Memos:** are written to develop co-operation & co-ordination, persuade reader to take an action such as attend a meeting, give a presentation & etc.

### Letters v/s Memos

- a. Letters are for both internal & external communication while Memos are for internal communication only.
- b. Memos have different format in comparison to the letters,
- c. Memos are less formal than letters,
- d. Memos are less structured,
- e. The tone of memo is more conversational,
- f. A memo contains less background explanation & information than a letter.

### Characteristics

- **Clarity:** clearly written, simple & familiar words should be used, clichés & proverbs should be avoided, short sentences & paragraphs should be used.
- **Conciseness:** Should contain only essential information, unnecessary explanations. And, repetitions must be avoided.

- **Unity of Theme:** should deal with one single topic & subordinate related ideas.
- **Informal Tone:** though a formal document the tone of a memo is informal & conversational.

## Structure

<u>Interoffice Memorandum</u>
DATE: <i>(Month Day Year)</i>
TO: <i>(Name &amp; designation)</i>
FROM: <i>(Name &amp; designation)</i>
SUBJECT: <i>(Topic)</i>
{Body
(signature)

## Form

The Memo is divided into 5 distinct parts, they are,

- a. **Heading:** constitutes of the date, to whom is it addressed, who wrote it and the topic.
- b. **Opening:** Mentions the central idea, Purpose of the memo, Specific assignment or task, Context-Assignment-Purpose.
- c. **Body:** describes, explains & discusses the central idea, includes details & key recommendations.
- d. **Closing:** courteous ending stating the action the reader is required to take.
- e. **Signature:** signature line

## Patterns of Organising a Memo

Two widely recognized patterns;

- **Direct Pattern:** it is the most common pattern.
  - The Opening** states the main idea/ focuses readers' attention on it.
  - The Body** explains, supports, develops the main point.
  - The Closing** specifies action desired or required.
- **Indirect Pattern:** is used to arouse reader interest & attention. It is also used when saying 'No' i.e. negative messages.
  - The Opening** begins with meaningful statement, prepares reader & explains the messages.
  - The Body** states the main idea.
  - The Closing** provides a courteous ending & states the action expected from the reader.

## Sample

### Interoffice Memorandum

**DATE:** June 14, 2007

**TO:** Kelly Anderson, Marketing Executive

**FROM:** Jonathon Fitzgerald, Market Research Assistant

**SUBJECT:** Fall Clothes Line Promotion

Market research and analysis show that the proposed advertising media for the new fall lines need to be reprioritized and changed. Findings from focus groups and surveys have made it apparent that we need to update our advertising efforts to align them with the styles and trends of young adults today. No longer are young adults interested in sitcoms as they watch reality television shows. Also, it has become increasingly important to use the internet as a tool to communicate with our target audience to show our dominance in the clothing industry.

#### Internet Advertising

XYZ Company needs to focus advertising on internet sites that appeal to young people. According to surveys, 72% of our target market uses the internet for five hours or more per week. The following list shows in order of popularity the most frequented sites:

- Google
- Facebook
- Myspace
- EBay
- iTunes

Shifting our efforts from our other media sources such as radio and magazine to these popular internet sites will more effectively promote our product sales. Young adults are spending more and more time on the internet downloading music, communicating and researching for homework and less and less time reading paper magazines and listening to the radio. As the trend for cultural icons to go digital, so must our marketing plans.

**(Signature)**

## D. Email

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Electronic mail is the medium of communication that sends and receives messages through specially designed computer networks. Emails are used for quick transmission of information and ideas. Emails can be used both as a means to reach out to people outside an organization, and to send information within an organization.

### **Purpose**

- To convey routine information
- To request information
- To invite the reader
- Contains proposals
- Seeks explanation
- Describes problems
- Persuades the take action
- Provides feedback or suggestion

### **Advantages of Email**

**Speed**-It is faster than letters and memo. A message can be sent quickly to anyone anywhere in the world.

**Low Cost**-It is less expensive than any other channel of communication as it doesn't involve printing and copying.

**Quick distribution** – Email makes distribution quick and easy .there is no wasting of time and no repetition.

**Easy attachments**–It is easy to attach files, photographs, clippings, video clips, and so on

**Flexibility**- The sender may edit, modify, revise and redesign the message easily.

*The Email provides easy upward communication and it is less formal & structured.*

### **Characteristics of Email**

- It should be concise, should not contain unnecessary information, repetitions, exaggerations & etc.
- It should be accurate and correct. Correct format and structure should be used.
- It should be simple and clear. It should use short sentences & simple, direct words must be given preference.
- The tone of the email is usually formal but conversational. The challenge is to maintain professionalism without being too formal. However, one should avoid being too informal & emotional.
- A successful email develops a single theme logically, subordinating related ideas.

## Format of Email

Heading-

Date: Sun,15 June 2011 07:37:58 +5:30 GMT  
From: "Amit Singh" amit\_singh@gmail.com  
To: mona@gmail.com  
Subject: Business communication workshop  
Cc: rsingh@gmail.com  
Bcc: seema@yahoo.com

Note - when sending a message to multiple recipients one can use the Cc, or carbon copy, and Bcc, blind carbon copy fields. When using the Cc feature, all recipients can see the email addresses of everyone the message was sent to. If you want your communication to be more private, choose the Bcc so that the identities of the other recipients will not be shown. Both Cc and Bcc are optional.

**Salutation-** It should be used like Dear, Dear Mr. Das.

**Body** –The body of an email message describes, explains and discusses the central idea of the email. The content should be organised carefully. The first paragraph may begin with a friendly opening followed by a statement of the main point. In the next paragraphs, justification should continued along with background information and supporting detail. The closing paragraph should request some type of action.

**Closing-** An email must be concluded such as Regards, Sincerely, Thank you, Allthe Best, etc

**Signature** –The signature line in an email message generally contain only the writer’s name .However it may sometime include the designation and organization of the sender.

### SAMPLE

Date: Sun,15 June 2011 07:37:58 +5:30 GMT  
From: "Amit Singh" amit\_singh@gmail.com  
To: mona@gmail.com  
Subject: Business communication workshop  
Cc: rsingh@gmail.com  
Bcc: seema@yahoo.com

Dear Amit,

We are pleased to inform you that a business communication workshop is being organized in National Institute For Informational Technology, Rourkela on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

The topic of the workshop is "Teaching Business Communication through Short Stories" People interested to present papers should send their title of the paper at the earliest. All participants must pay a demand draft of Rs 200 for registration. No TA and DA offered.

I am sending you the list of participants and other program details. I am sure your presence will make the program a great success. Please call me at 9888887777 before July 10<sup>th</sup> to give your approval so that we can make necessary arrangements.

Regards

Amit Singh

Associate Professor

NIIT Rourkela

## E. Resume Writing & Cover Letter

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Resume writing is an important part in the process of searching for a job. A resume is a selective record of an individual's background. It basically a professional employment seeking document that presents a summary of an individual's education, professional training, experience, skills, abilities, achievements & references. It does the job of introducing an individual to a prospective employer.

A good resume must answer the following questions, impervious of the design -

- How can the employer contact you?
- What are your career objectives?
- Which institution have you attended?
- What courses have u completed both academic and professional?
- What is your work experience?
- What is your career achievement?
- What are your special skills?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- Who are your references?

### Structure:

#### RESUME

Name:

Address: (address for correspondence)

Phone Number:

E-mail Id:

---

Position Sought:

Career Objective: (one sentence statement)

Educational Qualifications: (in reverse chronological order i.e. latest first)

Job Experience: (in reverse chronological order i.e. latest first)

Skills & Abilities:

Achievements:

Interests:

Reference: (3 persons along with their job title/ name of organisation/ contact details)

(signature)

Date:

## Parts of a Resume:

The standard parts of a resume are,

**a) Heading:** includes the contact information of the candidate i.e. name, full postal address with pin code, telephone number, email address and fax number.

**b) Position Sought:** if applying for a solicited job position it should be mentioned as it helps in distinguishing the application from those who might have applied for different positions.

**c) Career Objective:** is a special and important part of the resume. it occurs just above the job experience and education part. It should be a one sentence statement focused on the position being applied for and convey the applicant's motivation and interest in the job.

**d) Professional Summary:** is a one sentence statement listing the applicant's important qualifications, essential skills and key work experience. It is sometimes used instead of career objective.

**e) Educational Qualification:** Specific details of the applicant's education and professional training must be included. It should include name and location of the school/ college/ university/ institute of study, dates of attendance, major areas of study, degrees or certificates received. It also includes a list of workshops and seminars attended. Reverse chronological order is used to list the educational information i.e. starting from the most recent.

**f) Work Experience:** brief and specific overview of the applicants work experience, it should include title of the position held, employer's name, location and dates of employment and important job responsibilities/ activities/ accomplishments. One should try to showcase positive traits like willingness to learn, motivation and etc. This also is listed in the reverse chronological order.

**g) Special Skills & Abilities:** Applicant's special skills are mentioned which are of relevance to the targeted job or position. For e.g. 'proficient in designing PowerPoint's with presentation skills.'

**h) Achievements & Accomplishments:** showcases the applicant's scholarships/ fellowships/ awards/ distinctions etc. It shows that the applicant is a achiever and worth hiring.

**i) Activities & Interests:** extra-curricular, co-curricular activities & hobbies are mentioned to show that the applicant is a dynamic and energetic person who can accept challenges.

**j) Reference:** usually the name of three persons who are not related to the applicant by blood. They can be previous employers, teachers, immediate supervisors, research guides and etc. It is important to mention the person's designation, contact address, email id etc.

## Styles of Resumes:

There are two acceptable styles of Resume writing, they are –

- a. **Chronological Resume:** It is the most common style of resume writing. It focuses on education and experience. It organizes education & past employment record in reverse chronological order i.e. latest first.
- b. **Functional Resume:** It highlights accomplishments and emphasizes skills. It is used to showcase one's ability to handle a particular position by providing examples of experiences that demonstrate the skills needed for the sought after position

## Final Tips for writing a Resume:

- Use a format and design that makes the resume look professional document and use a resume style suiting the employment needs.
- Ensure that individual components like education and experience are distinct & separate using well-defined headings and space,
- Avoid decorative designs and typography,
- Use facts to highlights the applicant's skills and capabilities and should be accurate,
- Follow a consistent writing style and avoid mistakes in spelling, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar,
- Specific details about the applicant should be mentioned to strengthen the resume.

From the perspective of preparing for exams we usually use the chronological style of resume writing.

## Cover Letter or Job Application Letter

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It is also known as 'Cover Letter' and is written when applying for a specific position. It persuades the reader to believe that the applicant is the best suitable candidate for the position. The key components of a job application letter are gaining attention & building interest of the reader along with showcasing the worth of the applicant and finally motivating a positive action.

A job application letter does the following things for an applicant;

- Introduces to the hiring organization and,
- Draws attention to the applicant's resume,
- Highlights positive traits & achievements,
- Talks about special talents will be beneficial for the organization,
- Asks for an opportunity to be interviewed by the organization.

A Job application letter is divided into three parts,

Opening- it gains the attention of the reader.

Middle- builds readers interest and convinces the reader that the applicant is the most suitable candidate for the position. It highlights the applicant strengths, achievements and capabilities.

Closing- motivates the reader to act, refers to the applicant's resume, restates interest in the company and expresses eagerness to meet the employer. The closing also includes contact info.

Job Application Letters are of two types Solicited and Unsolicited letters.

- a. **Solicited Job Application Letters:** are written while applying for a job which has been advertised. It mentions the source of information – newspaper advertisements, website vacancy notice and company circulars. It tries to match the credentials of the applicant to the Employers needs – focuses on qualifications that meet the needs of the prospective employer. And finally uses references as the employers prefer to hire known people rather than strangers.
  
- b. **Unsolicited Job Application Letters:** are written when the job is not advertised and the applicant is writing to explore possible openings. An effective strategy for writing unsolicited job application letters is to use startling statements that are effective in capturing the reader's attention & stimulating questions that highlight the applicant's qualifications & strengths. It should include facts that show understanding of the employer's business.

#### **Final Writing Tips:**

- Give the letter a professional look i.e. a standard business format should be used,
- Use a positive tone,
- Show confidence about your capabilities but avoid sounding over-confident,
- Show genuine interest and avoid sounding indifferent or stiff,
- Use specific details about your qualifications, experience and etc.
- Be factual & objective in demonstrating skills & achievements,
- Carefully organize the letter,
- Ensure that the letter is free from vocabulary, spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors.

**Sample Cover Letter & Resume:**

234 Pali Hill Road  
Powai, Mumbai

Date: 29.06.2012

Ms. Jenny Mellon  
Midwest Software Solutions  
45, Cantonment Road  
Pune-01

Dear Ms. Mellon,

I am applying for the position of systems analyst advertised June 25 with the placement service in the national daily 'The Times of India'. The position fits my qualification, experience, career interests and expertise. According to the advertisement, the position requires experience in computer systems, and end-user consulting. I am a major computer science and technology from IIT, Chennai. I also have experience with a number of software programs and applications. I am working with ABC Networks, Bangalore for 1 and 1/2 years of practical experience as a programmer. I have got exposure to complex computer programming, testing and operations. I have enclosed my resume that provides more details on my qualifications, experience and expertise.

My background and career goals perfectly match your job requirements. I am confident that I can perform the job effectively. Furthermore, I have read and heard about your company and have strong desire to work with this company with excellent reputation and working environment.

I request you to please consider me for a personal interview to discuss my qualifications and the job opportunity. Please give me a call at 91-80-45679987. The best times to reach me are before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

(AmitGhosh)

Enclosure: Resume

## RESUME

Name: AmitGhosh

Address: 789, White house Road, Koramangala, Bangalore 998 009, India

Email: xxx@aol.com

Phone: 91-80-45679987

Career Objective: To secure a job in the IT industry where I can utilize my knowledge for the organisation's growth.

### Education:

- Pursued B.Tech. Computer Science and Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai (2001-2005)  
Thesis Title: Efficient use of software in offices  
Advisor: Anne D'Coasta  
Summary: Improvement in the use of the software that is used in offices at the moment. This was published in Graphics India magazine in 2005
- Completed St. Xavier's School, Bangalore (Graduated 2000) and was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in school in 12th C.B.S.E. Board Examination.

### Project Work (B. Tech):

- Built a computer that could work on solar energy.

### Traineeship Experience:

- Research Assistant, TIFR, Mumbai (Aug – Dec 2010): Helped the professors to research and collate information on various computer related topics.
- Project Trainee, ABC Networks, Bangalore: (Jan 2011-present): Working as a project trainee for this start-up company. Implemented new projects and participated in them along with testing new software.

### COMPUTER SKILLS:

Software: SQL Server, Apache, CVS, Mathematica, Latex. Also, audio/video formats and codecs. Languages: C/C++, STL, Python, Javascript/C#

Platforms: Linux, FreeBSD, Windows 98, NT 4.0, 2000.

### ACADEMIC AWARDS:

- Best B.Tech thesis – 2004. Dept of Computer Science. IISC Bangalore
- Silver Medalist at the International Mathematical Olympiad at school.
- Ranked 10th in IIT Joint Entrance Examination – 2000.

## TRAININGS / CERTIFICATIONS:

- A six month course in C, C++ and Java from the National Computing Agency
- A certification in multi-media and animation from Animation Toonz
- Communication skills workshops conducted by the British Agency in Bangalore

## REFERENCES:

- a. RakeshRanjan,  
Associate Professor,  
IIT, Chennai.  
Email Id: rakeshr@gmail.com
- b. Ajay Sinha,  
Project Manager,  
ABC technologies, Bangalore.  
Email id: sinha.aj1@aol.com

(AmitGhosh)

Date: 00.00.0000

## F. GROUP DISCUSSIONS

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A GD is a systematic and purposeful oral process. In a GD a group of individuals present their views and ideas on an agreed topic and try to reach group consensus. It uses clear language and persuasive style. The participants are made to sit face-to-face and get an opportunity to express their views and comment on the views of the other participants. An ideal group for a GD consists of 8 to 10 members.

The members of an efficient and productive discussion group must provide for meeting two kinds of needs-- what it takes to do the job, and what it takes to strengthen and maintain the group. What members do to serve group needs may be called functional roles. Statements and behaviours which tend to make the group inefficient or weak may be called non-functional roles. Here is a list of the kinds of contributions which are performed by one or several group members:

### **TASK ROLES:**

Functions required in selecting and carrying out a group task, given below in sequence.

- **Initiating:** Getting things started, suggesting new ideas, suggesting new definitions of the problem, trying a new attack on the problem, or introducing new material.
- **Giving and asking for information:** Offering facts or generalizations, sharing understanding of a topic giving information freely, soliciting everyone's input, and gathering information.
- **Giving and asking for reactions:** Stating opinions and reactions, sharing feelings about what has been said getting reactions from all group members, seeking clarification of values, suggestions or ideas.
- **Restating and giving examples:** By restating, the presenter of the original idea gets feedback; restating clarifies ideas. Examples reinforce meaning and aid understanding, they aid in the search for accurate statements of and understanding of an idea.
- **Confronting and reality testing:** Challenging ideas and information. Often groups allow misinformation and misstatements to pass by out of politeness. Learning takes place when ideas are challenged (politely, of course). Try to envision how a proposal might work if adopted, how an idea will work in the real world.
- **Clarifying, synthesizing and summarizing:** Clarifying ideas and previous statements, pulling together related ideas or suggestions after the group has discussed them. Clarifying, synthesizing and summarizing help provide closure.

**GROUP BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE ROLES** (functions required in strengthening and maintaining group life and activities).

- **Encouraging and sponsoring:** Being friendly warm, responsive to others, praising other for their ideas, agreeing with accepting contributions of others, encouraging all members to contribute, sponsoring ideas of others, especially those who may be less aggressive in speaking out.
- **Gate keeping and timekeeping:** Trying to make it possible for another member to make a contribution to the group by saying, "We haven't heard from Jim yet," or suggesting limited talking time for

everyone so that all will have a chance to be heard, limiting discussion on a topic to an agreed-upon time limit.

- Standard setting: Expressing standards for the group to use in choosing its content or procedures or in evaluating its decisions, reminding the group to avoid decisions which conflict with group standards.
- Following: Going along with decisions of the group, thoughtfully accepting ideas of others, serving as audience during group discussion

### **NON -FUNCTIONAL ROLES**

- Being aggressive: Working for status by criticizing or blaming others, showing hostility against the group or some individual, deflating the ego or status of others.
- Blocking: Interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent, citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem, arguing too much on a point, rejecting ideas without consideration.
- Self-Confessing: Using the group as a sounding board, expressing personal, no group-oriented feelings or points of view.
- Competing: Vying with others to produce the best idea, to talk the most, to play the most roles, to gain favour with a leader.
- Seeking sympathy: Trying to induce other group members to be sympathetic to one's problems or misfortunes, deploring one's own situation, or disparaging one's own ideas to gain compliments or support.
- Special pleading: Introducing or supporting suggestions related to one's own pet concerns or philosophies, lobbying.
- Horsing around: Clowning continually, joking, mimicking and otherwise disrupting the work and progress of the group.
- Seeking recognition: Attempting to call attention to one's self by loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, and unusual behaviour.
- Withdrawing: Acting indifferent or passive, not participating, daydreaming, and whispering to others.

### **LIST OF CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE GROUPS**

- Action orientation--they get things done.
- Prevalence of a nonthreatening group climate.
- Learning is accepted as the *raison d'être* of the group.
- Everyone participates and interacts.
- The material is adequately and efficiently covered.
- Evaluation is accepted as an integral part of the group operation (i.e., no one gets defensive).
- Members attend regularly and come prepared.

### **BIGGEST PROBLEMS HINDERING GROUP EFFECTIVENESS**

- Groupthink: Everyone suppresses their real views to maintain group harmony and indicates that the group and all of its ideas are wonderful, and that competitors are stupid.
- Lack of clear goals: No one knows what they're there for.
- Star complexes: Vying for the spotlight.
- Wallflowers: No contributors

#### RULES FOR BETTER PARTICIPATION

- Emphasize the agenda.
- Focus on decisions to be reached or items to be clarified.
- Target discussion.
- Keep an open mind.
- Draw out silent members.
- Temper overbearing members' output.

As you have to participate in a Group Discussion. Several questions spring across your mind. You want to know what actions and gestures can get you positive points and what can cost you the selection. Here's a list of Do's and Don'ts of participating in the GD.

#### **Dos of participating in a GD:**

- Listen to the subject carefully
- Put down your thoughts on a paper
- Initiate the discussion if you know the subject well
- Listen to others if you don't know the subject
- Support you point with some facts and figures
- Make short contribution of 25-30 seconds 3-4 times
- Give others a chance to speak
- Speak politely and pleasantly. Respect contribution from other members.
- Disagree politely and agree with what is right.
- Summarize the discussion if the group has not reached a conclusion.

#### **Don'ts of participating in a Group Discussion**

- Initiate the discussion if you do not have sufficient knowledge about the given topic.
- Over speak, intervene and snatch other's chance to speak.
- Argue and shout during the GD
- Look at the evaluators or a particular group member
- Talk irrelevant things and distract the discussion
- Pose negative body gestures like touching the nose, leaning back on the chair, knocking the table with a pen etc.
- Mention erratic statistics.
- Display low self confidence with shaky voice and trembling hands.

- Try to dominate the discussion
- Put others in an embarrassing situation by asking them to speak if they don't want.

## G. JOB INTERVIEWS

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The interviewing process is a complex means of gathering relevant data about a candidate for a particular job position, promotion, or making a selection panel. It is mechanism by which a potential employee is evaluated by an employer for prospective employment in their company, firm, or organization.

What are you being tested on?

The 3 C's -

- Capability
- Credibility
- Confidence

Once you are shortlisted on the basis of your resume, you are asked to appear for an interview with the recruiter. The interview process is one of the most nervous moments for any applicant and more so especially for a student straight out of college with little exposure to the corporate world. To avoid any apprehension that a student might face a better understanding of the interviewer's objectives is important. Broadly the interviewer will evaluate a candidate on the following parameters:

- Education
- Knowledge and Learnability
- Experience
- Interpersonal skills and Professionalism
- Confidence, Aptitude, Attitude

There are 4 broad areas which a candidate can focus his preparation prior to sitting for the interview.

- Know yourself
- Know the job
- Know the organization
- Prepare for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Know Yourself**

**Analyze your background:** It involves a critical evaluation of one's background. Some questions that ask you to talk about your background include:

- Tell us something about yourself?
- How would you describe yourself?
- If you had to live your life again, what would you change?
- Tell us about your education and background?

**Identify your accomplishments:** It reflects your skills.

- What are your accomplishments?
- Describe a situation in which you were successful?
- Have you ever solved a problem?
- What makes you stand out from rest of the applicants?
- Identify your achievements: It reflects your academic and professional success.
- What are your achievements?
- Have you ever done anything that has given you a sense of achievement?
- Do you consider yourself as an achiever?

**Analyze your skills:** Every job has a set of functions and requires skills to perform it. So an analysis of your skills is very important. One should know what skills he/she possesses and try to find out techniques for adapting these skills to fit the job desired. Basic two type of skills exist, learned skills that are to be learned and intuitive that are part of one's personality.

Learned skills	Intuitive skills
Computer programming	Imaginative
Driving	Efficiency
Consulting	Leadership
Selling	Creativity
Teaching	Diplomacy
Training	Resourcefulness
Negotiation skills	Team building

**Most employers may ask the following questions:**

- How will you rate yourself for this position on a scale of one to ten?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your strengths?

**Know the job**

The candidate should know what the job involves. One cannot adapt one's skills to fit the job desired unless he/she knows about the job. One should try to answer the following questions before one actually faces the interview:

- What does the job involve?
- What are the responsibilities associated with the job?
- What are the prospects?
- What are the special duties?
- What are the challenges of the position?
- What is the level of professional knowledge needed?

## **Know the Organization:**

One must be thorough about the organization before going for the interview. Some of the questions the interviewer might ask are:

- What do you know about our company?
- Our company was recently in the news, can you tell why?

The candidate should have some basic information about the organization, which may include;

- Major areas of operation.
- Product/services of the organization.
- Focus of the activities of the organization.
- Growth rate.
- Work culture.
- Corporate culture.
- New products/ services.
- Factors making the organization successful.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

- Tell me about yourself?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What are your greatest weaknesses?
- Tell me about something you did or failed to do that you now feel a little ashamed of.
- Why are you leaving (or did you leave) this position?
- Why should I hire you?
- Aren't you overqualified for this position?
- Describe your ideal company, location and job.
- What are your career options right now?
- Why have you been out of work so long?
- What good books have you read lately?
- Tell me about a situation when your work was criticized.
- What are your outside interests?
- Would you lie for the company?
- Could you have done better in your last job?
- Can you work under pressure?
- Why aren't you earning more money at this stage of your career?
- Who has inspired you in your life and why?
- What was the toughest decision you ever had to make?
- Tell me about the most boring job you've ever had.
- Are you willing to relocate or travel?

- Why have you had so many jobs?
- Where could you use some improvement?
- What do you worry about?
- Have you considered starting your own business?
- What are your goals?

**DEVELOP THE INTERVIEW FILE:**

Preparing for an interview demands a professional approach, so one must develop an interview file that may contain the following documents:

- Interview letter
- Original degrees, certificates, and transcripts
- Experience certificates
- Reference and testimonials
- Certificates of merit
- Copies of your resume
- Your visiting card
- Other relevant papers that might be needed during the interview

## **MODULE – 2**

# 1. Reading

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Reading is a complex communication process of receiving and interpreting the written word. It involves recognising what is written & comprehending the matter that is, undertaking the main & subsidiary points as well links between different parts of the written material.

Reading is the active process of understanding print and graphic texts. Reading is a thinking process. Effective readers know that when they read, what they read is supposed to make sense. They monitor their understanding, and when they lose the meaning of what they are reading, they often unconsciously select and use a reading strategy (such as rereading or asking questions) that will help them reconnect with the meaning of the text. Effective readers use strategies to understand what they read before, during, and after reading.

## The Reading Process

It involves 4 major steps,



- **Decoding:** The reader reads letters & focuses on them in order to change the coded message into information. It requires knowing the language in which the message is encoded. It is influenced by social, cultural, educational & intellectual frames of reference.
- **Comprehending:** It deals with identification of the central theme, main ideas & supporting details. It is recognising the meaning & function of sentence patterns accurately as well as their logical & thematic coherence.
- **Text Analysis:** critical & evaluative understanding of the text. Distinguishing between relevant & irrelevant information, facts & opinions & examples & ideas.
- **Response:** the last step in the reading process. It is the reader's reaction to the message. It can be an immediate reply or remembering the information for later use.

## Reading with Purpose

The basic purpose of reading is to extract information from various sources; it may primarily be to –

- Get broad understanding,
- Understand specific ideas & theories,
- Obtain specific information,
- Broaden one's outlook,
- Find out & learn about new development,
- Discover author's viewpoint,
- Find supporting material.

## Reading Different Kind of Texts

- a. *Reading Entertaining Messages & Texts*: reading for relaxation, need to concentrate on theme, main points & etc.
- b. *Reading General Messages or Texts*: (like newspapers/ magazine articles) though it is too broad & all extensive, the reader has to concentrate on theme/ main points/ supporting details.
- c. *Reading Reference Material*: to obtain specific information, it involves focused reading & requires effective scanning skills.
- d. *Reading Business Document*: attentive reading – it is interactive & productive – demands concentration involvement & responsibility.
- e. *Reading Scientific & Technical Texts*: is complex & multifaceted process – understanding of not only linguistic & semantic patterns but also discipline specific information.

Before reading, they:

- use prior knowledge to think about the topic.
- make predictions about the probable meaning of the text.
- preview the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning.

During reading, they:

- monitor understanding by questioning, thinking about, and reflecting on the ideas and information in the text.

After reading, they:

- reflect upon the ideas and information in the text.
- relate what they have read to their own experiences and knowledge.
- clarify their understanding of the text.
- extend their understanding in critical and creative ways.

### Active and Passive reader

Reading is a dynamic communicative process.

Active Reader	Passive Reader
Pays attention to both content & style.	To either content & style.
Interprets & analyses the written message.	Does not interpret or analyse the message.
Predicts & responds.	Does not predict & respond.
Pays attention to writers attention.	Does not pay attention
Differentiates between ideas, opinions & feelings.	Does not distinguish between factual & non-factual info.

## Reading Speed

It is measured in words per minute (wpm). It differs according to the nature of reading – casual & academic.

Reading Speed	Casual Reading	Academic Reading
Very Fast	+400	+350
Fast	300-400	250-350
Average	200-300	150-250
Slow	Less than 200	Less than 150

## Reading Skills

**Extensive reading:** Extensive reading is reading as much as possible, for your own pleasure, at a difficulty level at which you can read smoothly and quickly without looking up words or translating to English as you go. In other words, instead of spending a half hour decoding a tiny part of one book (also known as intensive reading), you read many simpler books that are at or slightly below the level at which you read fluently. This lets you get used to reading more complex sentences with ease, reinforces the words you already know and helps you learn new words from context.

What are the principles of extensive reading?

Start with stories that are well below your fluent reading level, and while reading, follow these principles:

1. Don't look up words in the dictionary.
2. Skip over parts you don't understand.
3. If you aren't enjoying one book, toss it aside and get another.

The characteristics of an extensive reading approach:

### Vocabulary skills:

To understand what we read, we need to recognise the meaning of words as well as guess the meaning from structure & contexts.

Word meaning recognition is the 1<sup>st</sup> step to understand a written messenger we can do so by developing sight recognition skills, to quickly to recall the meaning, to not consult the dictionary immediately, to try to be able to guess meaning of an unfamiliar word.

- Guessing the meaning from the word structure & context clues & word signals.
- Analysis of word structure i.e. guessing the meaning from prefixes, suffixes & word roots. For e.g. 'interurban' – means between urban. It is important to understand these connections and students can quickly expand their vocabulary with the base words they already know.
- Analysis of context clues like signal words, examples, illustrations & linguistic clues to understand an unknown word or phrase. For e.g. 'he is down to earth & you will find his approach to life very practical.' - The 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence is helpful in understanding the phrase 'down to earth'.

### **Eye Reading and Visual Perception:**

Visual perception is the basic requirement for reading effectiveness as we recognise words through sight. Efficient reading involves reading with fast eye movements & complete elimination of vocalisation i.e. reading loudly or slowly to ourselves as it reduces reading speed. Eye reading makes reading fast, efficient, and result oriented. The focus should not be on a single word but units comprising of several words & concentrate while reading.

We can improve our visual perception skills by following the suggestions given below:

- Develop faster eye fixation – it is the resting of the reader’s eyes on a particular word, phrase, word group, or thought unit. Faster eye fixation will help in perceiving the word groups and thought units quickly.
- Improve accurate visual perception of words and phrases - the reader in order to read fast requires better concentration and motivation for reading. A motivated reader is always a fast reader.
- Avoid vocalisation and sub-vocalisation – vocalisation is saying words loudly while sub-vocalisation is saying words silently to oneself. Both these habits make reading slow and hence should be avoided.
- Rapidly recognize word meaning – the reader should try to recognize the meaning of the word from the context.
- Concentrate while reading - the reader needs to concentrate while reading a text. One must have the urge to read and understand.

### **Prediction techniques :**

Prediction is a rapid reading skill. It refers to the process of reading quickly in order to guess the information that a text contains.

It includes various micro-skills including the ability to:

- Guess the information that the text contains.
- Use the index or chapter headings to roughly predict the central theme of the text.
- Scan graphic or non-verbal context such as graphs, diagrams, charts to predict the nature and scope of content.
- Use discourse and linguistic clues.

### **Prediction technique involves:**

- Glancing rapidly through the text, before reading any part of it, in order to familiarise oneself with the subject.
- Guessing the information that the text contains.
- Recalling related information.
- Analysing the aids in the text that might make reading faster and easier.

**Scanning:** Scanning, is a rapid reading technique which is used to locate specific information as quickly as possible. It is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary. You search for key words or ideas. In most cases, you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. It provides better comprehension while reading scientific or technical texts.

When scanning, look for the author's use of organizers such as numbers, letters, steps, or the words, first, second, or next. Look for words that are bold faced, italics, or in a different font size, style, or colour. Sometimes the author will put key ideas in the margin.

Reading off a computer screen has become a growing concern. Research shows that people have more difficulty reading off a computer screen than off paper. Although they can read and comprehend at the same rate as paper, skimming on the computer is much slower than on paper. It can be increased by regular practice & better concentration. To improve scanning speed;

- One should know what to find or search,
- Should not read everything,
- Use guidelines & aids
- Learn to concentrate.

#### **Examples of Scanning:**

- The "What's on TV" section of your newspaper.
- A train / airplane schedule
- A conference guide

**Skimming:** Skimming is more sophisticated than scanning. It refers to reading a text in order to get a rough idea what the text is all about. It is used to quickly identify the main ideas of a text. When you read the newspaper, you're probably not reading it word-by-word, instead you're scanning the text. Skimming is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading.

The main idea of skimming is to understand the central idea & main points of a text. It also involves discovering the purpose & organisation of text. It is essential for better understanding of text, it involves, fast reading & quick analysis.

Use skimming when you want to see if an article may be of interest in your research. This technique is useful when you're seeking specific information rather than reading for comprehension. Skimming works well to find dates, names, and places. It might be used to review graphs, tables, and charts.

#### **Examples of Skimming:**

- The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day)
- Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail)
- Business and Travel Brochures (quickly to get informed)

**Intensive reading:** The Intensive Reading Technique is detailed reading that demands better concentration & motivation. It is used for a high degree of comprehension and retention over a long period of time. Intensive Reading is not a careful, single reading, but is a method based on a variety of techniques like scanning, the surveying techniques of planning your purpose, and others.

It includes 3 rapid reading techniques –

- Prediction
- Skimming
- Scanning.

It is essential for academic & professional reading. It requires text analysis for critical & evaluative understanding of text. It includes distinguishing between facts & opinions, drawing inferences & conclusions. Moreover, intensive reading involves text analysis which is the process of identifying relationships among different units within the text in order to distinguish between:

- Relevant and irrelevant information
- Facts and opinions
- Explicit and implicit information
- Examples and ideas
- Draw inferences and conclusions

In a nutshell we need the following skills for intensive reading of a technical text:

- Understanding major and minor details
- Distinguishing between factual and non-factual information
- Understanding the characteristics of a writer's use of language
- Understanding and interpreting graphic information
- Identifying and evaluating a writer's attitude
- Understanding the author's intention
- Drawing inferences and conclusions

### **Distinguish between Facts, Opinions & Inferences**

- Fact is truth which can be objectively verified while opinion is subjective & cannot be verified.
- Fact is universal in nature while opinion is personal.
- An inference on the other hand is based on situations, facts or specific details. It can be drawn from;
  - a. Facts
  - b. Specific Details
  - c. Factual Observations
  - d. Contextual clues
  - e. Examples & illustration

### **Tips to Improve your Reading Skills:**

In the modern age of information, reading truly is a fundamental survival skill. Here are ten tips that anyone can use to improve their reading skills:

1. You don't have to be a great reader to get the point. *Some people read fast and remember everything. Others read slowly and take a couple of times to get all the information. It doesn't matter, really, so long as when you read, you get the information you're seeking.*
2. Know WHY you're reading. *Are you reading for entertainment or to learn something? Decide why you're reading before you start and you'll greatly improve your comprehension and your enjoyment.*
3. You don't need to read everything. *Not every magazine, letter, and email you receive contains information you need. In fact, most of it is simply junk. Throw it away, hit the delete key! Just doing this will double the amount of time you have available to read.*
4. You don't need to read all of what you DO read. *Do you read every article of every magazine, every chapter of every book? If so, you're probably spending a lot of time reading stuff you don't need. Be choosy: select the chapters and articles that are important. Ignore the rest.*
5. Scan before you read. *Look at the table of contents, index, topic headers, photo captions, etc. These will help you determine if, a) you have a real interest in this reading, and b) what information you're likely to get from it.*
6. Prioritize your reading. *You can't read everything all at once (and wouldn't want to). If it's important, read it now. If it's not, let it wait.*
7. Optimize your reading environment. *You'll read faster and comprehend more if you read in an environment that's comfortable for you.*
8. Once you start, don't stop! *Read each item straight through. If you finish and have questions, go back and re-read the pertinent sections. If you don't have questions, you got what you needed and are ready to move on.*
9. Focus. *Remember, you're reading with a purpose, so focus on that purpose and the material. If you lose interest or keep losing your place, take a break or read something else. You can keep track of where you are by following along with your hand. This simple technique helps you focus and increase your concentration.*
10. Practice! *The more you read, the better reader you'll become.*

## 2. Writing Process

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Writing is a necessary skill for a professional which is rising in importance. It isn't a one shot affair it requires meticulous reviewing and modifying of the first draft to make it better. Good writing not only refers to writing without any spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors but also writing logically which is purposeful and reader oriented.

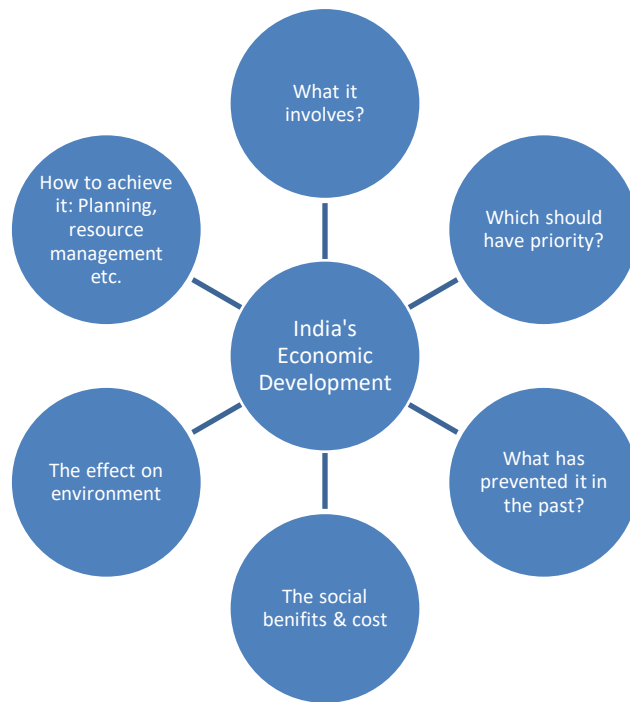
Hence, the process of writing involves writing the first draft to effectively present an idea. The draft is then read, reviewed & rewritten. It is a process of continuously improving the written document.

The process of writing is easily divided into three steps they are:

- a. Planning
- b. Drafting
- c. & Re-drafting

**Stage 1: Planning:** It's the first stage in the process of writing. It involves, throwing the topic/ subject open for discussion- anything that comes to the mind is admitted and no attempt is made to reject any ideas. All the ideas are recorded. This process is called 'brain-storming'. The ideas generated through brain-storming are jotted down in the form of a diagram. The topic or theme is placed in the centre of the diagram and all associated ideas are arranged in a loose circle around it. The main idea and the supporting ideas are connected by drawing lines. This process is called 'idea-mapping'.

Here is an example



Once sufficient ideas have been generated the process of evaluating and selecting ideas begin. The selected ideas are then organised and an outline is prepared that would help in preparing the first draft.

**Stage 2: Drafting (Writing the first draft):** the outline is used to make the first draft. While writing the first draft one should see that the main idea is presented clearly and the related ideas are logically related to each other than trying to avoid spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

**Stage 3: Re-drafting:** the most important part in the writing process. The first draft is proofread to be improved and find spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Again, repetitions, unnecessary ideas, redundant expressions etc. are removed. The suggested changes are incorporated in the redrafting process to make it better. It also helps in making the writing purposeful, precise and reader-oriented.

### 3. Summarizing & Paraphrasing

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The word summary means 'summing up'. It is used to write an abstract, a synopsis, a précis or an outline.

- An Abstract: is a short version of a long text or passage.
- A Synopsis: is a brief account of a research plan,
- A Précis: is a brief account of something,
- An Outline: is a sketch in phrases or sentences.

Summarizing is a productive skill integrating both an effective reading strategy and appropriate writing skills. It involves,

#### **Reading strategy:**

- Glance through a text quickly to get its central idea,
- Reading the text carefully to distinguish main points, facts, relevant information,
- Making a detailed reading of the text to identify relationships in the text, replace words & shorter phrases for long sentences as well as, logical organisation of the passage.
- Then go for detailed analysis to understand key words/phrases, identify examples, identify unnecessary details so as to remove them and note the logical order without altering the meaning.

#### **Summarizing techniques:**

- Selection: the process of choosing the information that is essential to the meaning of the passage is known as selection. The reader needs to concentrate on the central theme and also on the major ideas and the supporting details. As well as, special terms & phrases essential to the understanding of the text.
- Rejection: it is the process of removal of all that is not important in a text. We can avoid repetitions, unnecessary illustrations, redundant expressions & minor supporting details.
- Substitution: it involves synthesis (combining several sentences into one sentence), sentence substitution (substituting short sentences for long and clumsy ones) and one word substitution (substituting one precise word for several words or phrases)

#### **Outlining and Paraphrasing:**

An Outline is a general statement without details and it contains only the main ideas in a text. Once the outline has been designed one can go for paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing refers to the process of rewriting a passage or text in different words without changing or distorting its original meaning.

#### **Techniques of Paraphrasing:**

Replacement of words and phrases through the use of synonyms.

Change of sentence structure:

- Clause to gerund and vice versa
- Active to passive
- Complex to simple
- Direct to indirect
- Change of paragraph structure
- Change of logical organization

### **Do's & Don'ts of Paraphrasing**

- Note essential information
- Identify words & phrases that can be replaced
- Identify expressions that can be replaced
- Scientific & technical terms as well as formal phrases should not be replaced
- Note logical structure of the passage
- Preparing the final draft.

## 4. Paragraph Writing

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A paragraph deals with a single controlling idea and consists of several related sentences. The controlling idea of a paragraph is called its topic or theme.

It is essential to develop the ability to write effective paragraphs as they help in developing the core idea of a document. A good paragraph is clear, cohesive, concise and result-oriented. It requires significant composing and organising skills.

The principles of effective paragraph writing;

**a. Proper Length:** Effective paragraphs vary in length and should be adjusted according to the needs and requirements of the readers' understanding of the subject matter, the logical organisation of the subject matter and the demands of the variety and emphasis so that the writing does not become monotonous.

**b. Unity:** an important element of writing effective paragraphs is maintaining the unity of thought or ideas. As focusing on a single aspect of the topic helps in unfolding the theme logically and the lack of it would distract the reader & the writing would cease to be purposeful. The main idea of a paragraph is sometimes expressed by one sentence called a 'topic sentence'. It may be placed either in the beginning or in the middle or at the end of the paragraph depending on the logical organisation of the paragraph.

**c. Coherence & Cohesion:** is very important in paragraph writing. It ensures that the ideas in a paragraph are linked and one idea leads to the next logically using sentence linkers like pronouns and sequence words and phrases. Cohesion on the other hand is using a single grammatical structure in a paragraph. If unity is concerned with singleness of theme then coherence is concerned with relatedness between ideas.

**d. Logical Development of Ideas:** A paragraph should be organised in such a way that one sentence leads to the next.

## 5. NOTE MAKING

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Note is a brief written record that is used as an aid to memory. It involves;

- Carefully making a reading plan
- Note writing techniques
- Reduction devices – symbols, abbreviations
- Organizational techniques,
- Methods of sequencing- numerals, alphabets

Notes taken during reading or lectures can be one of the strongest tools a student has in their academic experience.

It is a mechanism for gathering resources from many sources & pooling them towards a common objective.

**It is a 'systematic method of writing down quickly, briefly & clearly the important points of a reading text.'**

Why do we take notes?

- To summarize.
- To highlight important information.
- Most importantly, to review and study from later.

### Note Writing Techniques

The writing techniques of writing notes are,

- Topicalising,
- Copying,
- Transcribing,
- Schematising.

### Discussion

- a. Topicalising: is writing a word or phrase to represent an entire section of the text. While rephrasing a text redundant words should be removed.
- b. Copying: is writing down what is written without any changes.
- c. Transcribing: is writing down what is said.
- d. Schematizing: is organizing notes in the form of tables & diagrams for accurate & easy read back.

**Reduction Devices:** are used to shorten expressions to save time. It helps in avoiding repetitive & unnecessary information. However, standard abbreviations & symbols should be used for easy understanding on later revision.

It includes,

- Use of Abbreviations – use first letters of the words, first letter of phrases, use first few words or phrases, special techniques to abbreviate (eg./ etc.)
- Use of symbols like @, %, =

### **Organisational Techniques**

It includes providing the notes with suitable title along with appropriate headings & sub-headings.

### **Methods of Sequencing**

It is done either using numerals & letters or decimalization. For e.g.

- I, II, III, IV – roman numerals indicate main ideas
- A,B, C, D – capital letters indicate main sub-divisions
- 1, 2, 3, 4 – numerals indicate minor divisions
- a, b, c, d – small letters with proper indention indicate further sub-divisions.

**Sequencing helps in making a clear layout for fast & accurate interpretation of notes.**

## **MODULE – 3**

## SOFT SKILLS

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"Hard" skills are more along the lines of what might appear on your resume - your education, experience and level of expertise. Essentially, the people skill, the non-technical, intangible, personality-specific skills are the soft skills. They are a good indicator of job performance just as traditional job qualifications or hard skills.

What are they?

- Communication skills and presentation skills
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Problem solving

They determine your strengths as

1. A Leader
2. A Listener
3. A Negotiator
4. A Conflict Mediator

Soft skills are acquired and experienced. They can't be developed by merely reading the textbooks.

### **Benefits of Soft Skills-**

- Soft skills help you stand out among jobseekers
- Soft skills help advance your career
- Soft skills offer personal growth
- Soft skills empower you & Create opportunities
- Soft skills help you grow beyond money motivation

We can identify soft skills by knowing your own self: Known strengths and Weaknesses, Personal Self Evaluation after projects or crises. Also by feedback from others: Appraisals and Evaluations, Feedback from people you respect.

### **How to develop soft skills:**

- Work with others
- Volunteer work
- Developmental and training opportunity

Professional Coaching-Targeted at Beliefs and

Challenge New Skill Sets-Every task / job has an associated soft skills set.

The key to success is making soft skills and hard skills complement each other. However, hard skills are also important.

## ASSERTIVENESS:

Assertive Communication is communication that is Direct, Honest and Respectful.

As human beings we constantly communicate with each other.

- Sometimes to ask directions to the nearest grocery store;
- sometimes to communicate displeasure; sometimes to offer a compliment;
- sometimes to resolve disputes;
- sometimes to turn down requests;
- sometimes to accept.

Assertiveness is a style of communication that can be used in all these situations. But it is only one of the four styles. The other three are the passive style, the aggressive style and the passive-aggressive style. Assertiveness is both a skill and a way of life.

*Being assertive does not mean that you do not care about the needs and wants of others, or are only interested in pursuing personal gain. Assertiveness is a way of communicating and behaving that sends a clear signal to others that you will not be manipulated or bullied into submission, or the betrayal of your beliefs or personal goals. Assertiveness is the ability to express yourself and your rights without violating the rights of others. It is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication, which is self-enhancing and expressive. Acting assertively will allow you to feel self-confident and will generally gain you the respect of your peers and friends. The individual maintaining an assertive position usually maintains that he or she is the ultimate judge of his or her own behavior, although other people are free to have their own opinions and approve or disapprove as they see fit. An assertive person stands up for his or her tastes, desires, values and opinions while respecting other people's freedom to have their own individual differences on these things.*

A person who behaves assertively understands that he or she is naturally incompatible with certain people and is naturally compatible with certain other people, therefore social rejection is simply an acknowledgment of social incompatibility with a given person and not a reflection of their worth as a person.

### **Which rights do you find easy to exercise for yourself but do not allow others?**

- I have the right to be treated with respect as an equal human being whatever my perceived role or status in life.
- I have the right to state my own needs and ask for what I want.
- I have the right to define my own limits, look after my own needs, and say 'No'.
- I have the right to express my feelings and opinions.
- I have the right to ask for time before I agree, disagree or make a decision.
- I have a right to make my own decisions.

- I have a right to reconsider and change my mind.
- I have a right to say, 'I don't know' and ask for clarification and help.
- I have a right to make mistakes without feeling guilty or being made to feel foolish.
- I have a right to hold my own values.
- I have a right to be listened to when I speak.
- I have a right to refuse responsibility for others people's problems if I so choose.
- I have a right to set my own goals in life and strive to fulfill my own expectations as against the goals and expectations specified for me by others.

### **Strategies to make the assertive 'No' easier:**

A lot of us find it difficult to say "No" to a request that is made to us. We end up saying either "I'll try" or "Ok" or even "Yes" when we know that we might not be able to act on that request. We do this because we think that we will offend the other person or that the other person might think that we are not sufficiently capable, etc.

Experience has however taught us that such responses will not lead to a healthy relationship. A direct, honest and respectful response, even in the negative will go a long way in ensuring that you are not put in difficult positions because of a non – assertive response.

Here we have given you some pointers that will help you on this journey towards being an assertive individual.

- 1.** When someone makes a request, it is always OK to \* **Ask for Time to think it over** \* In thinking it over, remind yourself that the decision is entirely up to you.
- 2.** Use your nonverbal assertiveness to underline the '**No.**' Make sure that your voice is firm and direct. Look into the person's eyes as you say, '**No.**' Shake your head '**No.**' as you say, '**No.**'
- 3.** Remember that '**No.**' is an honorable response. If you decide that '**No.**' is the answer that you prefer to give, then it is authentic and honest for you to say, '**No.**'
- 4.** If you say, '**Yes.**' when you want to say, '**No.**' you will feel resentful throughout whatever you agreed to do. This costs you energy and discomfort and is not necessary if you just say, '**No.**' when you need to.
- 5.** If you are saying, '**No.**' to someone whom you would help under different circumstances, use an empathic response to ease the rejection. For example, to your friend who needs you to keep her child while she goes to the doctor, you might say, 'No, Susie, I can't keep Billie for you. I know it must be hard for you to find someone at that time of day, but I have already made lunch plans and I won't be able to help you.'
- 6.** Start your sentence with the word, '**No.**' It's easier to keep the commitment to say, '**No.**' if it 's the first word out of your mouth.



## LEADERSHIP:

The most important skill a leader needs is to be able to make decisions; leadership is all about having a vision of where you want to be and making decisions along the way to get closer to achieving this vision. Decision-making in leadership however involves other people as leaders need followers, so the decision-making process will usually have an impact on your team of followers. With this in mind, a good leader also needs strong 'people skills' since a leader needs to be able to communicate the vision and motivate the team to follow.

Leadership takes on many different faces; it's just a question of understanding how you lead and why.

Here are 10 key business leadership skills you'll need to succeed as a leader:

1. **Lead By Example.** You can't be an aloof leader, someone that's never around and incapable of getting your hands dirty. One of the best ways to lead is by example – pitching in where needed, lending a helping hand, and making sure that the work you do is clearly understood by your team.
2. **Passion.** A leader without passion isn't a leader. He's a paper pusher. Or a taskmaster. Or a government employee... Passion drives a lot, and you can inspire so much in others through your own passion and enthusiasm. That doesn't mean you have to be constantly cheery, it means you've got to believe in what you're doing and what your company is doing.
3. **Be Organized.** A disorganized leader isn't leading, he's chasing his own tail. Disorganization breeds nothing but more disorganization. If you're frazzled and messy, your team will be too. When you're organized you'll be much more productive and so will everyone else.
4. **Delegate.** You can't do everything. A great leader needs to be able to delegate effectively. The key to delegating successfully is giving employees ownership of the work you assign them. They can't just feel like they own the work, they really have to.
5. **Take Ownership and Responsibility.** Although you've just delegated work and truly given your team ownership, you also have to take ownership and responsibility at all times. Your team has to know you'll be there for them through the good and the bad times. That doesn't mean you absolve people from making mistakes or ignore crappy work/effort, but it does mean you take responsibility for the big picture.
6. **Communicate Effectively.** Everyone knows great leaders have to be great communicators. But there are certain points of communication that many people forget. For example, it's critical that you communicate to employees how their work matters in the bigger picture. *Are they a cog, or does their work truly make a difference?* Communicating success is also something leaders forget to do. People need affirmation. They want to know they did a good job. You just have to tell them. And be precise. Insecure leaders will often ramble; uninterested leaders cut things off too quickly. Whether you're giving praise, providing constructive criticism, or defining goals and to-dos, you have to figure out how much to say and in what order. Be precise, specific and concise. Get to the point.
7. **Be Brave and Honest.** Cowardly leaders will shy away from any number of situations that crop up regularly when running a team. The project your team has worked on for 6 months just got shelved. *Now what?* Or you have to talk to someone about their lack of effort recently. *Do you ignore*

*the problem? Or maybe it's time to take your product into a new market. Do you hobble forward, scared and nervous, or do you grab the market by the throat?*

Leaders are brave and honest. Tell it like it is. Don't sugarcoat, don't obfuscate. Don't be a jerk either. You have to learn how to present things to your team in an honest but balanced manner.

8. **Great Listener.** A huge part of being a great communicator is being a great listener. If all you want to do is talk, you're not a leader. Keeping people motivated means listening to them, asking them questions, understanding their issues. When you listen more, you can respond more effectively and get to the heart of things much faster.
9. **Know Your People.** You have to know your people. You don't have to be best friends or even socialize outside work, but you do have to know what makes them tick. You need to know something about their personal lives because their lives outside work matter. Their lives outside work drive a great deal of their success (or lack of) at work. Keep track of simple things: birthdays, marriages, children, etc. The more you know your people the more common ground you're likely to find, the more you'll be able to connect.
10. **Be a Follower.** Benjamin Disraeli said, *"I must follow the people. Am I not their leader?"* That sums up many of the other points so beautifully. Great leaders are followers too. If you're a leader without following, you're a dictator. And as fun as that sounds... Being a leader-follower means finding value in your team, getting inspired by your team, encouraging your team to communicate, brainstorm and be open.

Very few people are great leaders overnight. It takes time and practice. As long as you're open about learning along the way and working with your team on leadership versus dictating to them, most people will be happy to go on the journey with you.

## TEAMBUILDING:

Too often, teams are formed merely by gathering some people together and then hoping that those people somehow find a way to work together. Teams are most effective when carefully designed. To design, develop and support a highly effective team, use the following guidelines:

1. **The team understands the goals and is committed to attaining them.** This clear direction and agreement on mission and purpose is essential for effective team work. This team clarity is reinforced when the organization has clear expectations for the team's work, goals, accountability, and outcomes.
2. **The team creates an environment in which people are comfortable taking reasonable risks in communicating, advocating positions, and taking action.** Team members trust each other. Team members are not punished for disagreeing.
3. **Communication is open, honest, and respectful.** People feel free to express their thoughts, opinions, and potential solutions to problems. People feel as if they are heard out and listened to by team members who are attempting to understand. Team members ask questions for clarity and spend their thought time listening deeply rather than forming rebuttals while their coworker is speaking.
4. **Team members have a strong sense of belonging to the group.** They experience a deep commitment to the group's decisions and actions. This sense of belonging is enhanced and reinforced when the team spends the time to develop team norms or relationship guidelines together.
5. **Team members are viewed as unique people with irreplaceable experiences, points of view, knowledge, and opinions to contribute.** After all, the purpose for forming a team is to take advantage of the differences. Otherwise, why would any organization approach projects, products, or goals with a team. In fact, the more that a team can bring out divergent points of view, that are thoughtfully presented and supported with facts as well as opinions, the better.
6. **Creativity, innovation, and different viewpoints are expected and encouraged.** Comments such as, "we already tried that and it didn't work" and "what a dumb idea" are not allowed or supported.
7. **The team is able to constantly examine itself and continuously improve its processes, practices, and the interaction of team members.** The team openly discusses team norms and what may be hindering its ability to move forward and progress in areas of effort, talent, and strategy.

8. **The team has agreed upon procedures for diagnosing, analyzing, and resolving team work problems and conflicts.** The team does not support member personality conflicts and clashes nor do team members pick sides in a disagreement. Rather, members work towards mutual resolution.
9. **Participative leadership is practiced** in leading meetings, assigning tasks, recording decisions and commitments, assessing progress, holding team members accountable, and providing direction for the team.
10. **Members of the team make high quality decisions together** and have the support and commitment of the group to carry out the decisions made.

### **The Five Stages of Team Formation**

#### **Stage 1: Forming**

- Team members get to know each other
- Familiarize themselves with their task
- The resources at their disposal
- A rough project schedule
- Each member's project responsibilities
- A basic set of team rules

#### **Stage 2: Storming**

- Characterized by competition and conflict within the team as members learn to bend and mold their feelings, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs to suit the team organization.
- Conflicts may or may not surface as group issues, they do exist.
- Questions about who is responsible for what, what the rules are, what the reward system is, and what the evaluation criteria arise.
- These questions reflect conflicts over leadership, structure, power, and authority.
- Members have an increased desire for structural clarification and commitment.
- In order to progress to the next stage, team members must move from a testing-and-proving mentality to a problem-solving mentality.

#### **Stage 3: Norming**

- Team relations are characterized by cohesion.

- Team members actively acknowledge all members' contributions, build community, maintain team focus and mission, and work to solve team issues.
- Members are willing to change their preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members, and they actively ask questions of one another.
- Leadership is shared, and cliques dissolve.
- As members begin to know and identify with one another, the trust that individuals place in their colleagues fosters cohesion within the team.
- During this stage of development, team members begin to experience a sense of group belonging and a feeling of relief as a result of resolving interpersonal conflicts.
- Characterized by the flow of data between team members. They feel good about being part of an effective group.
- The major drawback of the norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future breakup of the group; they may resist change of any sort.

#### **Stage 4: Performing**

- Team members work independently and also support those who can come back together and work interdependently to solve problems.
- A team is at its most productive during this stage.
- Team members are both highly task-oriented and highly people-oriented during this stage.
- The team is unified: Team identity is complete, team morale is high, and team loyalty is intense.
- The task function becomes genuine problem solving, leading to optimal solutions and optimum team development.
- There is support for experimentation in solving problems, and an emphasis on achievement. The overall goal is productivity through problem solving and work.

#### **Stage 5: Adjourning**

- Teams assembled for specific project or for a finite length of time go through a fifth stage, called adjourning, when the team breaks up.
- A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes.
- Disbanding a team can create some apprehension, and not all team members handle this well.
- The termination of the team is a regressive movement from giving up control to the team to giving up inclusion in the team.
- This last stage focuses on wrapping up activities rather than on task performance.

## **PROBLEM SOLVING:**

Everybody can benefit from having good problem solving skills as we all encounter problems on a daily basis; some of these problems are obviously more severe or complex than others. It would be wonderful to have the ability to solve all problems efficiently and in a timely fashion without difficulty, unfortunately there is no one way in which all problems can be solved. As you will discover as you read through our sections on problem solving the subject is complex. However well prepared we are for problem solving there is always an element of the unknown. Although planning and structuring will help make the problem solving process more likely to be successful, good judgment and good luck will ultimately determine whether problem solving was a success.

### **What is a Problem?**

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1995) defines a problem as:

**“A doubtful or difficult matter requiring a solution” and “Something hard to understand or accomplish or deal with.”**

### **Goals**

**Problems involve setting out to achieve some objective or desired state of affairs and can include avoiding a situation or event.**

Goals can be anything that you wish to achieve, where you want to be. **For example** if you are hungry then your goal is probably to eat something, if you are a head of an organisationP (CEO) then your main goal may be to maximize profits. In the example of the CEO the main goal may need to be split into numerous sub-goals in order to fulfill the ultimate goal of increasing profits.

### **Barriers**

**If there were no barriers in the way of achieving a goal, then there would be no problem. Problem solving involves overcoming the barriers or obstacles that prevent the immediate achievement of goals.**

**Following our examples above,** if you feel hungry then your goal is to eat. A barrier to this may be that you have no food available - you take a trip to the supermarket and buy some food, removing the barrier and thus solving the problem. Of course for the CEO wanting to increase profits there may be many more barriers preventing the goal from being reached. The CEO needs to attempt to recognize these barriers and remove them or find other ways to achieve the goals of the organisation.

## **STAGES OF PROBLEM SOLVING**

Effective problem solving usually involves a number of steps as outlined below.

- a) **Problem Identification:** *Detecting and recognizing that there is a problem; identifying the nature of the problem; defining the problem.*

The first phase of problem solving may sound obvious but often requires more thought and analysis.

Identifying a problem can be a difficult task in itself, is there a problem at all? What is the nature of the problem, are there in fact numerous problems? How can the problem be best defined? - by spending some time defining the problem you will not only understand it more clearly yourself but be able to communicate its nature to others, this leads to the second phase.

- b) Structuring the Problem:** *A period of observation, careful inspection, fact-finding and developing a clear picture of the problem.*

Following on from problem identification, structuring the problem is all about gaining more information about the problem and increasing understanding. This phase is all about fact finding and analysis, building a more comprehensive picture of both the goal(s) and the barrier(s). This stage may not be necessary for very simple problems but is essential for problems of a more complex nature.

- c) Looking for Possible Solutions:** *Generating a range of possible courses of action, but with little attempt to evaluate them at this stage.*

From the information gathered in the first two phases of the problem solving framework it is now time to start thinking about possible solutions to the identified problem. In a group situation this stage is often carried out as a brain-storming session, letting each person in the group express their views on possible solutions (or part solutions). In organisations different people will have different expertise in different areas and it is useful, therefore, to hear the views of each concerned party.

- d) Making a Decision:** *This stage involves careful analysis of the different possible courses of action and then selecting the best solution for implementation.*

This is perhaps the most complex part of the problem solving process. Following on from the previous step it is now time to look at each potential solution and carefully analyse it. Some solutions may not be possible, due to other problems, like time constraints or budgets. It is important at this stage to also consider what might happen if nothing was done to solve the problem - sometimes trying to solve a problem that leads to many more problems requires some very creative thinking and innovative ideas. Finally, make a decision on which course of action to take - decision making

- e) Implementation:** *Accepting and carrying out the chosen course of action.*

Implementation means acting on the chosen solution. During implementation more problems may arise especially if identification or structuring of the original problem was not carried out fully.

- f) Monitoring/Seeking Feedback:** *Reviewing the outcomes of problem solving over a period of time, including seeking feedback as to the success of the outcomes of the chosen solution.*

The final stage of problem solving is concerned with checking that the process was successful. This can be achieved by monitoring and gaining feedback from people affected by any changes that occurred. It is good practice to keep a record of outcomes and any additional problems that occurred.

## **TIME MANAGEMENT:**

**Time management** is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity.

Time management may be aided by a range of skills, tools, and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks, projects and goals complying with a due date.

### ***Practice the following techniques to become the master of your own time:***

1. Carry a schedule and record all your thoughts, conversations and activities for a week. This will help you understand how much you can get done during the course of a day and where your precious moments are going.
2. Any activity or conversation that's important to your success should have a time assigned to it. To-do lists get longer and longer to the point where they're unworkable. Schedule appointments with yourself and create time blocks for high-priority thoughts, conversations, and actions.
3. Plan to spend at least 50 percent of your time engaged in the thoughts, activities and conversations that produce most of your results.
4. Schedule time for interruptions. Plan time to be pulled away from what you're doing.
5. Take the first 30 minutes of every day to plan your day and don't start your day without your time plan.
6. Take five minutes before every call and task to decide what result you want to attain. Take five minutes after each call and activity to determine whether your desired result was achieved. This will help you know what success looks like before you start.
7. Put up a "Do not disturb" sign when you absolutely have to get work done.
8. Practice not answering the phone just because it's ringing and e-mails just because they show up.
9. Block out other distractions like social networking sites unless you use them to generate business.
10. Remember that it's impossible to get everything done. Also remember that odds are good that 20 percent of your thoughts, conversations and activities produce 80 percent of your results.

## **STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT:**

Stress can hit you when you least expect it—before a test, after an accident, or during conflict in a relationship. While everyone experiences stress at times, a prolonged bout of it can affect your health and ability to cope with life. That’s why social support and self-care are important. They can help you see your problems in perspective...and the stressful feelings ease up.

Sometimes stress can be good. For instance, it can help you develop skills needed to manage potentially threatening situations in life. However, stress can be harmful when it is severe enough to make you feel overwhelmed and out of control.

### **Symptoms of Stress**

- Disbelief and shock
- Tension and irritability
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions
- Being numb to one’s feelings
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Loss of appetite
- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about the event
- Anger
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Sadness and other symptoms of depression
- Feeling powerless
- Crying
- Sleep problems
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Trouble concentrating

### **WAYS OF AVOIDING STRESS**

#### **1. Figure out where the stress is coming from.**

Oftentimes, when we’re stressed, it seems like a big mess with stressors appearing from every angle. We take a defensive position, and not a good one at that.

Identify what you’re actually stressed about. Is it a specific project at work, an upcoming exam, a dispute with your boss, a heap of laundry, a fight with your family? By getting specific and pinpointing the stressors in your life, you’re one step closer to getting organized and taking action.

#### **2. Consider what you can control—and work on that.**

While you can’t control what your boss does, what your in-laws say or the sour state of the economy, you can control how you react, how you accomplish work, how you spend your time and what you spend your money on.

The worst thing for stress is trying to take control over uncontrollable things. Because when you inevitably fail — since it’s beyond your control — you only get more stressed out and feel helpless. So after you’ve thought through what’s stressing you out, identify the stressors that you can control, and determine the best ways to take action.

#### **3. Do what you love.**

It's so much easier to manage pockets of stress when the rest of your life is filled with activities you love. Even if your job is stress central, you can find one hobby or two that enrich your world. What are you passionate about? If you're not sure, experiment with a variety of activities to find something that's especially meaningful and fulfilling.

#### **4. Manage your time well.**

One of the biggest stressors for many people is lack of time. Their to-do list expands, while time flies. How often have you wished for more hours in the day or heard others lament their lack of time? We all have the same 168 hours, and yet there are plenty of people who are dedicated parents and full-time employees and who get at least seven hours of sleep a night and lead fulfilling lives.

#### **5. Create a toolbox of techniques.**

One stress-shrinking strategy won't work for all your problems. For instance, while deep breathing is helpful when you're stuck in traffic or hanging at home, it might not rescue you during a business meeting.

Because stress is complex, "What we need is a toolbox that's full of techniques that we can fit and choose for the stressor in the present moment,"

#### **6. Pick off the negotiable's from your plate.**

Review your daily and weekly activities to see what you can pick off your plate.

Are you volunteering for too many causes and so stealing time from the ones where you could make the most impact? Does your whole department really need to meet once per week or have that daily conference call?"

Reducing your stack of negotiable tasks can greatly reduce your stress.

#### **7. Are you leaving yourself extra vulnerable to stress?**

Whether you perceive something as a stressor depends in part on your current state of mind and body. So if you're not getting sufficient sleep or physical activity during the week, you may be leaving yourself extra susceptible to stress. When you're sleep-deprived, sedentary and filled to the brim with coffee, even the smallest stressors can have a huge impact.

#### **8. Preserve good boundaries.**

If you're a people-pleaser saying no feels like you're abandoning someone, have become a terrible person or are throwing all civility out the window. But of course that couldn't be further from the truth. Plus, those few seconds of discomfort are well worth avoiding the stress of taking on an extra activity or doing something that doesn't contribute value to your life.

#### **9. Realize there's a difference between worrying and caring.**

"Worrying is an attempt to exert control over the future by thinking about it," whereas caring is taking action. "When we are caring for someone or something, we do the things that support or advance the best interests of the person or thing that we care about."

#### **10. Avoid perfectionism**

Another mindset that can heighten stress is perfectionism. Trying to be mistake-free and essentially spending your days walking on eggshells is exhausting. Talk about putting pressure on yourself! And as we all know but tend to forget: Perfectionism is impossible and not human, anyway.