

CHAPTER - I**INTRODUCING TO BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION-OBJECTIVES**

The word “communication” (which comes from the Latin word “communicare” meaning to make common) is used in common talk, usually, to mean speaking or writing or sending a message to another person. Communication is really much more than that. It involves ensuring that your message has reached the target audience, (that is, the persons to whom it is sent) and that the receiver understands and responds as you want them to. It also involves ensuring that you yourself take care to receive, understand, interpret, and respond to messages that are sent to you.

Communication is an important aspect of behaviour; human communication is affected by all factors that influence human behaviour.

Role of Communication in Business

Entry into a good organisation requires excellent communication skills. The primary element in the skills of management is competence in communication. It is the tool with which we exercise influence on others, bring about changes in the attitudes and views of our associates, motivate them, and establish and maintain relations with them.

Communication is central to everything that we do. Our city/town are the organisations in which we live and act. Our activities in our family, school/college, office, hobby group, community group, succeed or fail, and our goals are achieved or not achieved, according to our ability to communicate effectively with other members.

Communication is the mortar that holds an organisation together, whatever its business or its size. Without communication an organisation cannot function at all. Without effective communication, information cannot be collected, processed, or exchanged; words and data would remain isolated facts. With effective communication, multinational organisations that are spread all over the world can function like a single unit.

The most important foundation skill for anyone in the new world of work is the ability to communicate. This means being able to express your ideas effectively in writing and in speech. Employers have always emphasized the importance of communication skills, and the current trends in the business environment make these skills even more critical.

Owing to advances in information technology, organisations need smaller staff. Owing to globalisation, an organisation may be spread in many locations in the world. Companies also decentralize, and work is increasingly carried out by teams. Team members must be able to work together to identify problems, analyse alternatives, and recommend solutions. They must be able to communicate their ideas persuasively to others. Ability to work well in teams, to manage your subordinates and your relationships with seniors, customers and colleagues, depends on your communication skill.

Production of goods is of no use if potential buyers have no information about the product. Communicating to the public about the product is the essence of business. A large amount of communication in the form of advertisement and public relations is needed in order to inform the public and to persuade potential customers to buy the products.

Business Communication

The term business communication is used for all messages that we send and receive for official purposes like running a business, managing an organisation, conducting the formal affairs of a voluntary organisation and so on. Business communication is marked by formality as against personal and social communication.

It includes both written and oral communication. Letters, reports, memos, notices are all formal and part of commercial and business activity; so are interviews, meetings, conferences, presentations and negotiations. Some of these are more formal than others; a group discussion would be less formal than a company meeting; a letter is less formal than a report.

Friendly chatting, letters between friends and family, reciting poetry for one's own pleasure or telling stories to entertain friends, are not included in business communication.

The study of communication and efforts to develop skills of communication are needed because communication is absolutely necessary for business. And there is no one who does not have to engage in some kind of business activity. Persons in all professions need to cultivate skills as needed for their work. Doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, actors and others in the entertainment industry, managers of all kinds of organisations, educators, besides persons engaged in business enterprises have to engage daily in some kind of business communication.

Understanding the characteristics of communication helps us to improve our competence and skills in communication.

Communication is unintentional as well as intentional

We do not always succeed in conveying exactly what we want to; the target receiver may receive less or more, or even something other than what we intended to convey. In fact, communication does not happen exactly as the sender wishes. It often fails.

Communication takes place even when we do not plan it and when we are not conscious of it; we may communicate something that we had not intended to communicate. Our non-verbal behaviour, which is always present, conveys something about us.

Communication is a dynamic process

A process is an ongoing activity. Communication is a process and is always changing, always in motion; it grows and develops. Even if the same two persons exchange the same ideas again, the communication will not be exactly the same as it was the first time, because the two persons have grown and developed and changed since then. Every time we engage in an act of communication, we bring to it all our previous experiences, feelings, thoughts, attitudes which have been formed by other communication events.

Communication is systemic

Every component of the process is affected by every other component. The source, the environment, the goal, the medium, the nature of the message, the receiver, the feedback, all affect one another. If the audience is inattentive or uninterested, the source is not able to communicate effectively. If a wrong medium is chosen, the message may fail to have the intended result; if the sender's goal is not clear, the message will be confused. Disturbance at any stage in the communication process affects the entire process.

Communication is both interaction and transaction

The two participants, the source and the receiver, exchange ideas and information and influence each other during the process of communication. They also come to a shared and common meaning as a result of the communication. They share as well as exchange thoughts and meanings.

DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNICATION

There are many definitions of Communication given by many theorists; some of these definitions are quoted here.

* Communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.

— *Keith Davis*

* Communication is any behaviour that results in an exchange of meaning.

— *The American Management Association*

* Communication may be broadly defined as the process of meaningful interaction among human beings. More specifically, it is the process by which meanings are perceived and understandings are reached among human beings.

— *D.E. Mc Farland*

* Communication is the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organisations by means of previously agreed symbols.

- *Peter Little*

A wider and more comprehensive definition is given by National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities:

* Any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states. Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes.

— *Julia Scherba de Valenzuela, Ph.D.*

These definitions show that communication involves exchange of thoughts between two parties. Communication is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another. The crucial element is meaning.

Communication is successful only when the receiver understands an idea as the sender intended it. Both parties must agree not only on the information transmitted but also on the meaning of that information.

In order to transfer an idea, we must use symbols (words, signs, pictures, sounds) which stand for the idea. The symbols must be understood by the person or persons with whom we intend to communicate. Both must assign the same meaning to the symbols used; otherwise, there is miscommunication. Unless there is a common understanding of the symbols, it is not possible to communicate.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

In order to analyse the activity of communication, we must know the process and the elements involved in the process of communication.

There are seven elements or factors which make up the process of communication:

1. Source/Sender, is the one who initiates the action of communicating.
2. Audience /Receiver is the person(s) for whom the communication is intended.
3. Goal/Purpose is the sender's reason for communicating, the desired result of the communication.
4. Context/Environment is the background in which the communication takes place.
5. Message/Content is the information conveyed.
6. Medium/Channel is the means or method used for conveying the message.
7. Feedback is the receiver's response to the communication as observed by the sender.

Each of these is complex; any analysis of communication has to take into account the various possibilities of each of these.

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The process of communication involves decisions and activities by the two persons involved, the sender and the receiver.

The **sender** begins the process of communication. The sender has to be clear about the **purpose** (or goal or objective) of the communication and about the target audience (or receiver) of the communication; that is, the sender decides why and to whom to send a message. Conscious or intended communication has a purpose. We communicate because we want to make someone do something or think or feel in a certain way, that is, to influence the person.

The source has to decide what information to convey, and create the **message** (or content) to be conveyed by using words or other symbols which can be understood by the intended receiver. The process of putting the idea into symbols is called **encoding**; in order to encode, the sender has to select suitable symbols which can represent the idea, and can be understood by the receiver.

The sender also chooses a suitable **channel** or **medium** (mail, e-mail, telephone, face-to-face talk) by which to send the message. The choice of the medium depends on several factors such as urgency of the message, availability and effectiveness of a medium, and the relationship between the two communicants. Note that the choice of the medium/channel also influences the shape of the message.

Finally, the sender tries to note the effect of the message on the receiver; he checks whether the receiver has got the message, how the receiver has responded to the message and whether he has taken the required action; this information about the receiver's response is called **feedback**.

Sender's functions make up half the process of communication. The functions of the sender are:

1. Being clear about the goal/purpose of the communication.
2. Finding out about the understanding and needs of the target audience.
3. Encoding the required information and ideas with symbols to create the message to suit the receiver/ audience.
4. Selecting the medium to send the message.
5. Making efforts to get feedback.

The **receiver** becomes aware that a message has arrived when he perceives it with his senses (he may see, hear, feel, etc). The receiver attends to the message and interprets it. The process of translating the symbols into ideas and interpreting the message is called **decoding**. Interpreting is a complex activity; it involves using knowledge of the symbols and drawing upon previous knowledge of the subject matter. The receiver's ability to understand, level of intelligence, values and attitudes, and relation with the sender, all influence his creation of meaning.

If the sender and the receiver have a common field of experience, the receiver's understanding of the message will be closer to what the sender intended.

The receiver also feels a reaction to the message; this reaction may be conscious or unconscious; it may cause some change in the receiver's facial expression. The message definitely leads the receiver to think. The receiver may take some action, if required. He may also reply to the message. The reaction, the response and the reply together form the **feedback**.

Receiver's functions complete one cycle of the process of communication. The functions of the receiver are:

1. Attending to the received message, that is, listening, reading or observing.
2. Decoding the received message.
3. Interpreting and understanding the meaning of the message.
4. Responding to the message.
5. Giving feedback to the sender of the message.

This is a simplified description of a single cycle in the process of communication. Communication really takes place in several cycles and the two persons take turns and alternately carry out functions of sender and receiver.

Both, the sender and the receiver have important functions in the communication process; it can be successful only if both are efficient and attentive.

Context and Environment: Context is the set of circumstances that surround an event and influence its significance. It is the background of events which lead to the message being sent. A message may acquire a different meaning in a changed context. If both have the same amount of background information about the situation and the issue, it is easier to communicate on the topic. The context influences the sender's encoding and the receiver's decoding, and also each one's interpretation.

The meaning of a sentence depends strongly on the circumstances in which it is said. For example, "How much have you had to drink?" asked of a patient by a nurse could mean "Do you have enough liquids?" The question would have a completely different meaning if asked by a policeman of a driver who had got on to the footpath.

The circumstances of each communicant, each one's position in the organisation, the usual work that each one does, and the present state of mind of each one, can all influence the communication process. The present relationship between the two is a part of the context; the receiver tends to interpret messages in the context of the relationship.

Communication takes place in an environment. Environment includes several things. The most obvious is the place in which the communication takes place; if it is pleasant and comfortable, the communication is better: Noise or disturbance in the environment usually hinders the flow of communication.

The political, cultural, legal, technological environment influences communication as these factors may affect each one's situation and attitude to the content of a message.

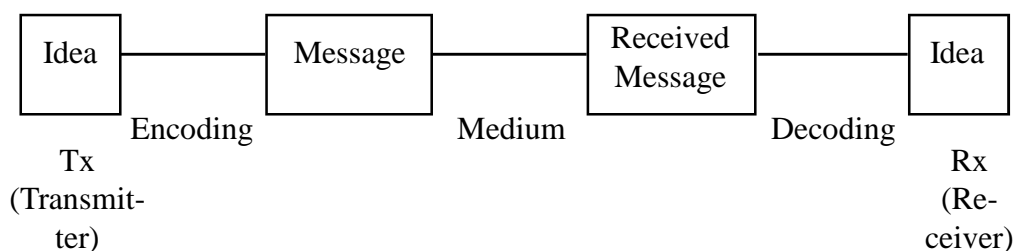
Time is also an element of the environment; it has -three aspects:

(a) The time of the communication (first thing in the morning, just before or just after lunch, when it is almost closing time) affects the communication.

(b) The length of time taken by a communication event (how long the presentation or the meeting or the conversation goes on) influences the quality of the communication. Too long can be tiring and boring; too short may be inadequate and one of them may feel that insufficient attention was given by the other.

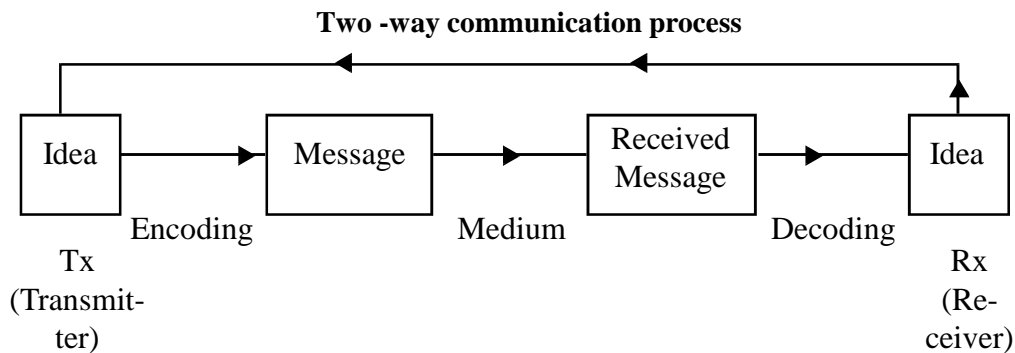
(c) There is a right time for giving some information. If it is given too late, it may be useless; if it is too early, receivers may not be ready for it and may not understand it.

The following figure shows the steps in the one-way process of communication in a linear form.



One-way communication process

This one-way routine is only a part of the communication process. For the communication to be complete, the sender must know whether the receiver has got the message, understood it in the way it was intended, and has received it well. The sender can find out this only on getting a chance to note the reaction and response of the receiver. The response may be in words (spoken or written), signs, or behaviour, both conscious and unconscious. The response or return message is feedback. When sender gets the feedback, one cycle of communication is complete. This may be represented roughly by the following diagram.



EXERCISES

1. Name the factors of communication.
2. Explain the terms: *encoding*, *decoding*, *channel*, *medium*, *sender*, *receiver*, *context*, *feedback*, as they are used in describing the process of communication.
3. Functions of the source are: _____.
4. Functions of the receiver are: _____.
5. Give three examples of unintentional communication.
6. How does context affect the meaning of the message?
7. Explain the process of communication with the help of a diagram. 9. What is meant by "Communication is a two-way process"?

Lesson: 2**TYPES**

An objective is something that we want to get done by our efforts; it is the purpose with which we undertake an activity. When we communicate we have a reason for doing it. When we speak or write to our friends, our purpose is to keep in touch and to be friendly. But in a business or official situation, when we communicate with customers, or to our subordinates or our superiors at work, we have a specific objective or purpose; we want to accomplish something, that is, succeed in getting something done.

In business, we have many reasons or purposes for communicating. We may want to give information, we may want to make a request, give instructions, or make a complaint. We may also want to ask for information or learn. Many times, we want to persuade someone to agree with what we say. There are also some more difficult purposes to achieve when we communicate.

A person who is a leader or manager, or supervisor who has to keep together a team of many persons, has the purpose of motivating them. Sometimes, a leader has to show appreciation and praise the members of the team. Sometimes, the leader has to scold and warn them to do their work properly.

Our communication is clearer and more effective when we know the objective of a particular message which we are going to send. It is also better when we make the objective clear to the receiver. We should be fully clear what we are trying to achieve when we speak to a customer or to a supplier.

All communication has the two broad objectives of information and of persuasion. Other objectives are aspects of these two broad objectives. Whatever we might be communicating, there is some information in what we say. There is also an element of persuasion, because we want the other person to believe us and agree with us and accept what we say.

The objectives of downward communication from seniors to subordinates are different from the objectives of upward communication from subordinates to seniors. Also, the objectives of lateral communication between persons of equal status are different.

Information

Information consists of facts and figures and data which can be arranged in different patterns as required for different purposes. Messages which give information contain data on which the conduct of business is based. Information does not include emotion.

For example, a list of customers' names, addresses and telephone numbers forms a customer data base. It becomes useful information for accounts and collections department when we prepare from it a list of customers who have not paid their dues. It becomes useful for the sales department when we prepare from it a list of customers who have not placed orders for a long time. Both lists are made from the company's data base of customers.

Other examples of information are: the syllabus for a course, a stock market report, a user manual, a signboard and a news report.

We need information to carry on our work. If we are in a new job, we need information about it in order to know what we have to do. If we are in a new situation, we need information to make sense of it and to know what to expect.

Information may be given orally or in writing. It may be given in a meeting, at airports and railway stations information is given over public address system. A large amount of information is available and moves about in an organization and in the world. We need to develop the ability to take what we need.

Companies give employees information about the company's goals, plans, progress and prospects, and also about working and service conditions, training and promotion opportunities, and the benefits available to them. For this purpose, there are organized channels; the notice board is used for fresh information; manuals and instruction sheets are used for information about procedures and regulations; house organs, bulletins, pamphlets, are used for periodical and general information.

Many companies give information to the public about their progress, products, and policies through the mass media like newspapers and television. This type of information forms the basis of persuasion and motivation which is the other important objective of communication.

OBJECTIVES OF DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION

Messages moving from seniors to subordinates in an organization or from persons with expert knowledge to lay persons, have several objectives like giving instructions and orders to carry out tasks, training people for the tasks and for general improvement, motivating people to put in their best effort, to maintain high level of discipline and conduct, giving advice and suggestions when needed and persuading others on various matters. Customers and the general public have to be educated on the use of products, business procedures; customers who do not pay their dues have to be warned, and potential buyers have to be persuaded to buy.

Instructions

Instruction is information about how to carry out a process or procedure. Supervisors instruct their staff on tasks that are to be performed from time to time. In most cases, this can be done orally, individually or in groups.

Oral instruction may be supplemented with written material and visual material. Actually showing how to do something is called demonstration; it is a method of instructing in procedures and in operating machines. Films can also be used for demonstration. User manuals which are given to customers with mechanical articles, have diagrams and pictures. This type of instruction is educational.

Orders

An order is formal assignment of a task. It is often in written form, and generally means that the matter mentioned in it is final. Simple orders to carry out certain tasks may be given orally. Subordinates who question or disobey orders are considered guilty of misconduct or insubordination.

An order must be clear and exact. Junior staff may not have enough understanding to be able to function usefully unless they are given clear and full instructions on their tasks. All communication must be in a style which the recipient understands.

Office Order is a formal written statement of any change to be made in office routine. It is a record and formal instruction to all concerned that the change is effected. It states the change and the date from which it comes into effect. Copies are filed in all the relevant files and sent to concerned persons who are expected to take action and who are affected by it.

Education and Training

Education is the development of the abilities of the mind. Training is practical education or practice in some skill, under the guidance and supervision of an expert. Both require an expert to teach and guide. Education and training are both informative as well as persuasive. Both lead to discipline and development through learning, and practice.

Special communication skills are required to accomplish these objectives. Oral communication in the form of lectures and discussions is most commonly used for this purpose. Written notes and handouts are used for training. Demonstration, films, and actual work experience are used for training in technical work and skills.

Training is also used for changing attitudes and developing a commitment among employees. It is meant to create an emotional commitment to service and high quality of performance.

Customer education is an important objective of the marketing department. Customers who buy consumer durables are given training to use them most effectively. Companies selling products like Xerox machines, computers, vacuum cleaners, cellular phones, etc., arrange for training of buyers. Some customer education communication is done

for the purpose of building up goodwill and public relations; it is informative as well as persuasive.

On-the-job Training

When a new employee takes up a job, s/he needs some instruction and training, even if s/he has had previous experience. The person must be educated and trained to handle the work (especially if it involves handling a machine) and helped to understand the routine.

When a new employee is placed on the job, the supervisor, or another experienced employee watches, supervises, helps and corrects the new person till s/he learns the job. This kind of education/ training communication is informal. A supervisor or mentor who is given the responsibility for on-the-job training must have patience and the ability to teach.

On-the-job communication is oral; it may be supplemented by instruction booklets, policy statements, pamphlets and employee manuals.

Motivation

Motivation means providing a person with a motive, an incentive, an inner urge to make effort to do his best. Managers constantly try to improve performance in the workplace by motivating the staff.

Communication is the most important and critical element in motivation of employees. Managers use communication to improve employees' sense of self-worth by showing recognition and appreciating good work. We all have a need for recognition, prestige, esteem, status and reputation. When our seniors communicate to us that we have done well, we feel happy and good about ourselves. When we feel good about ourselves we are motivated to make better efforts.

Motivation requires regular and careful communication which managers and supervisors need to do skilfully. Subordinates and team mates can be motivated by managers, supervisors and leaders in several ways:

- (i) Listening to them and showing respect for their views. People feel happy and important when their ideas and opinions are heard and respected by their supervisors.
- (ii) Ensuring that credit is given where it is due. Expressing appreciation for achievement and effort is a good way to make people feel that they are recognized.
- (iii) Avoiding personal criticism even when opposing their ideas. Persons must be shown respect and consideration even if specific ideas they express are not acceptable.
- (iv) Maintaining an open communication climate. People should feel free to speak out their view even if they have complaints and criticism to express.
- (v) Using friendly and co-operative style for giving instructions. Instructor and learner have to make co-operative effort to give and receive the communication;

authoritative style is not always effective. For example, after having explained something, the manager might say, "Let me make sure that I have not missed giving you information which you might need; will you summarize for me to make sure I've covered everything?" In this way, the manager takes the responsibility and encourages co-operation from the subordinate. It helps to meet the ego-needs of the juniors and establishes a co-operative climate. It is much better than saying, "Please repeat what I said so I can make sure that you have understood."

- (vi) Making clear statement of expectations. The manager must give the subordinates a clear idea of what is expected from them so that they can make the required effort to achieve it. People generally try to meet the expectations that others have of them.

Raising Morale

Morale is the state of mind and of discipline and spirit of a person or a group. In a work place, it is reflected in the individual and collective actions of the employees; it reflects their level of discipline and confidence. People with high morale feel good about themselves and are highly motivated and have the courage to face problems and meet challenges.

Confidence is an important factor of morale. People need confidence —

- (i) In themselves; they must feel that they can do their job well and have confidence that they can meet challenges;

- (ii) In the management; they must feel confident that their company will support them, give them required training and give them information about plans, progress, changes and problems which affect their job, career, prospects;
- (iii) In their company's ability; they must feel confident that their company can meet outside challenges like competition, crisis, business problems and other threats.

Raising morale cannot be done by a single communication; morale is affected by all communications, and by the manner and style of communications. The communication policy of an organization must be framed with this objective in mind.

An open communication climate helps to keep the morale high. Open communication climate means that there is good flow of information in the organization. For example;

- (i) Information about programs, plans, policies, progress must be circulated
- (ii) Details of welfare schemes and facilities must be publicized
- (iii) Upward communication must be cultivated and encouraged
- (iv) There must be consultations on proposed changes and assurances of job security before any major changes are made.

When morale is low, the performance is poor; there is lack of discipline, absenteeism, and general lack of interest in work. The grapevine is likely to become fast and thick, and there are many rumours. Sometimes, the morale of some employees or a group of employees begins to drop if there are rumours of retrenchment, close-down of a

department, a take-over, or some such possibility which creates fear and anxiety. Morale also comes down if the managers cannot handle a crisis or a threat from outside.

Communications with employees must be increased if the morale goes down or is likely to go down. It is seen in increased rumours. Companies put up notices and distribute circulars giving the correct information in order to stop rumours. Meetings, including informal tea meetings provide a good channel for giving correct information and for improving morale. In case of a difficult or critical situation, a meeting of all staff may be held to explain the correct position and clear the doubts and anxieties of employees.

Such special morale-boosting communications must be carefully planned. Top managers may hold a conference to work out a program of morale-boosting communications in case a crisis appears.

Counselling

Counselling is a specialized form of advice; it is done by specialists. Persons who are experts in psychiatry, medicine, law, or other fields, give advice on matters related to their field of specialization. Companies which take care of employees' welfare have counselling services for their employees; they engage the services of specialists to give advice and career guidance to their employees. Stress, tension and some emotional problems can be sorted out, treated and corrected at the health counselling centre of the company.

Communication for counselling is oral, face-to-face and confidential. There may also be some printed material for the purpose of giving the required information. Counselling can be successful only if there is free two-way communication; the counselor can give useful advice only when the person needing the advice is willing to explain and discuss the problem.

Advice

A manager or supervisor may advise junior employees on matters related to work or on personal matters if the relationship is close. A senior may give advice to a confused employee on how to be more efficient. Advice on purely official matters can be given with authority; but advice on personal matters can only be offered as a suggestion.

Communication for advice is oral, face-to-face, informal and confidential communication. The person giving advice must be tactful and have a sympathetic nature.

Persuasion

Persuasion means making efforts to change or influence the attitudes and behaviour of others. Persuasion is achieved by skilful appeal to emotions. The style and tone of persuasive communication is different from the style and tone of informative communication.

Persuasion means using the best arguments to win over and convince others. It requires the skill and ability to use the symbols of communication in an effective manner; the persuader should be able to use words, both spoken and written, as well as non-verbal methods in such a way as to have the most influential effect on the target audience.

Persuasion needs a basis of information; we cannot persuade customers to buy unless we give them information about our goods and services.

A great deal of communication in an organization is persuasive. We use persuasion to motivate employees to make better efforts or to accept a change; we use it to sell goods to customers and collect dues from customers. A company uses it to get the public's goodwill and investment. Government uses persuasion to make people pay taxes.

There are three factors of persuasion:

- (i) The personal character and reputation of the persuader must be respected and accepted by others; people believe what is said or written by a respected and reputable person or organization. This is known as source credibility.
- (ii) The emotional appeal made by the persuader must be suitable and effective. All persons have three types of needs: physical needs, social needs and ego needs. Social and ego needs are the emotional needs; social needs are the need to belong to a group, to have friends, to meet others and have social interaction; ego needs are the need to win, to be successful, to do well, to be appreciated and recognized and to feel good about oneself. If the persuader offers satisfaction of these emotional needs, people respond favourably.
- (iii) The logic of the presentation made by the persuader must be reasonable. People must be shown how they will benefit by accepting the proposed ideas, views, or actions. The persuader

needs knowledge of the background and the present attitudes/views of the people in order to use the right appeals and reasons.

Warning

Warning means advising or urging someone to be careful; it is meant to caution someone of possible danger. A warning is also an authoritative and formal notice of something unfavourable. Warning is given in special circumstances.

An employee who does not work properly is given a warning. Groups may also be given a warning; for example, workers' union may be given warning that their agitation might lead to closing of the factory, which is a loss to all parties. A customer who has bought goods or services on credit and does not pay his dues is given a warning of the dangers of not settling his dues. The warning is caution that credit facilities will be stopped, that other sellers would get information about his failure to pay, possible loss of credit reputation. Finally, there is a warning that legal action would be taken to enforce payment.

Warning is given only after milder methods have failed to achieve results. At first, an attempt is made by advice, request, instruction, or order; only if all these fail, a warning is given.

Warning may be given orally or in writing. A warning, whether oral or written, is always confidential. When severe disciplinary action, like dismissal, is to be taken against an employee, a warning notice must be given in writing. The termination of any contract requires that one of the parties should give a written notice to the other party. Similarly, an employees' union that intends to go on strike has to give a written notice of strike.

The purpose of a warning is not to break the relationship. You need good communication skill to be able to give a warning without being insulting. Courtesy, even while giving warning, is necessary to maintain one's dignity and proper relationships.

Appreciation

Appreciation means showing and expressing praise for the work of others. Appreciation by managers and supervisors when employees do good work and make achievements creates a good attitude among the staff.

Simple appreciation can be expressed orally, in writing and by non-verbal methods. Oral methods are:

- (i) The manager may tell the person or group personally, immediately, that has made the achievement that their work is appreciated.
- (ii) If the achievement is big, appreciation can be expressed again at a meeting or a function.
- (iii) It may also be mentioned at the time of introducing the person or group to a guest or visitor.

Important achievements are given written appreciation. Methods of written appreciation are:

- (i) Letter of appreciation is issued to the person or persons
- (ii) Notices on the notice board and bulletin board
- (iii) It is mentioned in the minutes of a meeting of the staff
- (iv) It is reported in the company's House Magazine.

Non-verbal methods of appreciation include:

- (i) Award of a certificate at a function
- (ii) Promotion
- (iii) Invitation to a special meeting/function
- (iv) Giving additional opportunity for career development (such as training courses)
- (v) Assignment of more important and responsible tasks. Appreciation always makes the recipient feel good and improves the motivation.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION TO AUTHORITY

Most of the objectives discussed so far are related to communication from superiors to subordinates and from sellers to buyers. A good deal of communication also moves from subordinates to superiors and from buyers to sellers. Information moves upward by a system of periodical reporting and collection of feedback and users' evaluation sheets.

Also, people make requests, applications and appeals to those who have the power to grant them; aggrieved persons may make demands and representations and complaints; more creative and motivated persons make suggestions.

Request

Requests are made by staff for various kinds of permission or favours. There may be requests for leave, for permission to report late or leave early on a particular day, for permission to attend classes, a request to be sponsored for a special training course, or for an increase in salary. These are best done in two stages; first, orally with the immediate superior and then, through the immediate superior, a written request to a higher authority.

Application

Application is a written request, giving full details of the matter and supported with reasons, whenever necessary, for example, an application for a job, or for leave.

Appeal

Appeal is an earnest request for help or support or for something that does not fall within your privileges. Such special favours may be obtained by appealing to a higher authority with proper reasons. An appeal may be written or oral, by an individual or by a group. Power or persuasion is necessary for success in having an appeal granted.

Demand

A demand is formal and is put up through an employee union. It has to be supported by good arguments. Demands are usually collective and in writing. Requests and appeals for better service conditions may turn into demands if the management is unsympathetic or the union is aggressive.

Representation

Representation is always in writing. An employee who feels that he has not been given what he deserves, for example, a promotion, makes a representation.

A representation must contain full explanation of the case; evidence in the form of documents like an appointment letter, rules in the service-conditions book, government circulars, etc., may be quoted or cited.

A representation may be made by a group of persons; for example, a group of students may represent to the University Vice-Chancellor to get their grievances redressed; a group of citizens may represent to the city transport company to get bus services extended to their locality; a group of aggrieved employees may make a representation to top management to get redressal of their grievances.

Complaints

Complaint is made when there are faults or defects in the system or in the goods supplied or services rendered, so that they may be corrected. A complaint may be oral or written. Within an organization, minor complaints may be adjusted by oral communication. In commercial transactions, it is necessary to make complaints in writing. Customers can also make complaints by telephone.

If an internal complaint is of a serious and complicated nature, and if its correction is likely to involve action over a wide area, a written statement is necessary for circulation as well as for constant reference. Otherwise, good managements do not need written complaints because they are alert in correcting faults as soon as they are pointed out. There should be courtesy in making a complaint. Courtesy is not contrary to firmness; talking or writing with courtesy and normal respect due to other human beings does not dilute the strength of a complaint or of a warning.

Suggestion

A suggestion is a new idea proposed for consideration. Everyone develops ideas about better ways in which to do their work or to improve their conditions and environment. In an organization, employees at all levels may suggest to their supervisors and seniors, ideas on better procedures and methods. A suggestion is usually oral, and may come in a formal or informal discussion. However, a good suggestion which requires attention and careful consideration may be put up in writing so that it can be circulated to several concerned persons.

A suggestion can be made by any employee or customer. Suggestions from employees at all levels are greatly welcomed by modern managements. Many companies have suggestion schemes as an organized method to encourage suggestions from employees. A well-operated suggestion scheme is an effective morale-builder. This is discussed in detail in chapter 21 on Public Relations.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION AMONG EQUALS

Communication among persons of the same status is very important for co-ordination and planning. Managers need to meet at regular intervals to ensure that the organization's activities are in harmony. While official issues may be taken up in formal meetings, requests, suggestions and advice may be exchanged informally.

The main functions of horizontal or lateral communication are:

(i) Exchange of information: Heads of departments and other peer groups need to share information about work, activities, progress and processes. Some information is conveyed formally through copies of documents like letters and reports; a good deal of information is exchanged orally by formal and informal meetings or over the intercom.

(ii) Requests: Informal and formal requests may be made among peer groups for suggestions, advice, favours and so on.

(iii) Discussion: Plans and projects require discussion and review; formal and informal meetings are held for this purpose. Daily routine matters may be settled by informal discussion. Discussions among persons of equal status have an educative value, and are used in training programs.

(iv) **Co-ordination:** Projects and tasks involve several departments; co-ordination needs lateral communication. Every department must know how the other aspects of a task are progressing so that all can make proper contribution. Members of a team need to meet regularly to review and understand the progress of their project.

(v) **Conflict resolution:** Conflicts are unavoidable when different personalities work together. Regular lateral communication is necessary for preventing and resolving conflicts that arise between departments or individual members of a team.

(vi) **Problem solving:** Problems may arise in the course of carrying out any task or project. Most of these can be solved by horizontal communication among all those who are concerned with the problem and affected by it. Brainstorming is often used for finding solutions.

(vii) **Advice:** Persons of the same status **also** exchange useful suggestions and advice in a friendly informal way.

(viii) **Social and emotional support:** One of the important and informal objectives of lateral communication is to provide social and emotional support among peers.

Persuasion plays a large part in horizontal communication, as matters are discussed and agreed upon and co-ordinated.

EXERCISES

1. What is meant by "objective of communication?"
2. Write notes on the following:
 - (a) Raising morale as an objective of communication
 - (b) Communication for Education and Training
 - (c) Motivation as an objective of communication.
3. **Fill in the blanks:**
 - (a) Complaint and application are objectives of communication to ___ %
 - (b) ___ and ___ are objectives of communication between persons of equal status.
 - (c) Counselling and motivation are objectives of ___ communication from ___ to ____ .

CHAPTER-3**WAY OF COMMUNICATION**

Most of our communication is with words. Language is a common system of symbols which we use for sharing our experience with others. We do communicate a number of things by our facial expressions, movements, clothing, and so on, whether we speak or not. We can also use other symbols like pictures, colours, signs and sounds to communicate. Communication with words is called verbal communication; communication with other symbols is called non-verbal communication.

Verbal communication may be oral or written. Both are naturally accompanied by non-verbal symbols; facial expressions, gestures, voice quality, etc., always **form** a part of spoken language; paper quality, type, appearance of the document etc., form a part of written language. Both can be enhanced by careful and conscious use of non-verbal symbols; body language can be practised and cultivated for better oral communication; pictures, charts, graphs, colour maps can enhance written communication.

Written communication can greatly extend the field and powers of oral communication. Writing overcomes the limits of space and time which confine speech. A written message can wait for the attention of the receiver while speech requires immediate attention. This shortcoming of speech has been overcome by modern technology. It is now possible to use Dictaphones and leave voice mail on the telephone which will be heard by the other person later.

Attributes of Oral and Written Communication

Oral and written communication have different attributes which have to be taken into account in choosing which one to use in a particular situation. Some of the attributes are discussed below.

(i) Speed: Written communication is slower in preparation, in conveyance and in reception; it takes more time to draft, type, dispatch, and to receive and read a letter than it takes to speak, and to hear, listen to, and understand an oral message. Feedback is also slower in written communication.

(ii) Record: Written communication serves as a record and can be used for future reference. It is a documentary proof, and can be used as legal evidence. Oral communication may be taped for later reference, but the authenticity of the voice can be questioned; moreover, tapes can be edited and the message distorted. Written records and documents are more reliable and acceptable.

(iii) Precision and accuracy: Written communication is more precise and accurate than oral. Choice of precise words is possible in written communication because the writer has the time to look for suitable words and phrases, and to revise the draft, if necessary. Accuracy is necessary in written communication because the receiver is not present to ask for clarification. In oral communication, it is not always possible to be so precise in the choice of words. There is also no time to seek and consider words while speaking; however, the receiver can seek clarification on the spot. Besides, oral communication has the support of vocal tone and gestures and expressions which enrich the meaning of the words.

(iv) Length: A written message is usually shorter than an oral communication. The situation of oral communication requires some preliminary and closing remarks, while for written messages there are standard formats for opening and closing which can keep the message short.

(v) Expense: Written communication requires stationery, preparation, and transmission, all of which cost money. Oral communication can also cost a great deal since it requires simultaneous presence and attention of the two parties, and getting together costs money. Costs will depend on the availability of the required person(s) at the particular place. Each type requires different channels for transmission. Availability and cost of each of the channels is a factor to be considered. Modern technology like tele-conferencing, and video-conferencing has made it possible to use oral communication even when the two parties are separated by a great distance. The cost is high but certainly less than travelling when there is a need for interviewing or personal discussions.

(vi) Body language: Oral communication is supported by the speaker's body language and paratanguage. The speaker can control the style of delivery, giving meaning to words and sentences by voice inflexion and facial expressions and gestures. Written communication is separated from the writer's bodily presence and is more in the control of the reader. The reader can give to the words the sound, inflexion and stress as he chooses; and this may be affected by the reader's mood and state of mind at the time of reading.

(vii) Feedback: Oral communication allows immediate feedback; the listener's face gives some feedback and the speaker can modify the message on the spot. Clarifications can be sought and given at once. A conversation can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by continuous exchange of ideas and views. In written communication the feedback is delayed; the reader's facial expressions cannot be seen by the writer; the reader's response is known to the writer only when the reader replies. The reader may give a cautious and guarded reply without letting the other see the really felt reaction.

Oral Communication

Oral communication occurs in situations like conversations, telephone talk, interviews, conferences, presentations, negotiations, group discussions and meetings. Each of these situations requires special oral communication skills, which are discussed in subsequent chapters.

Oral communication is more natural and immediate. It is natural to speak when the other person is present. We speak to communicate in informal situations. We also speak in formal and official situations like interviews and meetings and presentation. Many persons feel nervous and cannot speak easily in formal and official situations; it needs training and practice to speak effectively in a formal situation.

Oral communication requires that both parties should be present and attentive at the same time. The need of personal presence makes certain demands on the skills of both; each must be able to respond to the body language of the other, and must be able to respond immediately to what the other says.

Most persons in an organization are constantly involved in oral communication situations of all kinds. You need to be aware of the subtle, non-verbal communication which accompanies oral communication and take care to cultivate it. A person who has cultivated it to a high degree strikes the audience as a "polished speaker", and can convey meaning effectively.

Channels of Oral Communication

The different channels of oral communication are affected by the environment and the conditions of the situation.

Face-to-face conversation

Oral communication is best when it is face-to-face. A face-to-face setting is possible between two individuals or among a small group of persons at an interview, or in a small meeting; communication can flow both ways in these situations. There is immediate feedback, which makes clarification possible. Besides, a face-to-face setting offers a richer communication experience owing to the close presence of the living personality whose voice, tone, expression, eye contact, and movements add significance to the words.

Telephone conversation

Telephone has overcome the need for both parties to be present at the same place. Telephone conference facility allows three to five persons at different places to have a conversation together. Telephone talk depends entirely on the voice. It does not have the advantage of physical presence. Clarity of speech and skilful use of voice are important. There can be confusion between similar sounding words like “pale” and “bale”, or between “light” and “like”. Names and addresses communicated on the telephone are sometimes wrongly received. It is therefore customary to clarify spellings by saying C for Canada, D for Delhi and so on. Telephone skills and manners are necessary for everyone who speaks on the telephone; this is discussed in a later chapter.

Presentation

A presentation is a formal, well-prepared talk on a specific topic, delivered to a knowledgeable and interested audience; the audience may consist of just one or up to 50 or more. The larger the audience, the more difficult it is to make an effective presentation. If the audience is large, a microphone has to be used; old-fashioned microphones cause some restriction in the movement of the speaker, but modern collar mikes are more comfortable.

A presentation has a face-to-face setting, but it is largely one-way communication, and the speaker has to make careful arrangements for feedback and for interaction with the audience. A presentation is always followed by questions from the audience. The general tone of a presentation is serious and businesslike, though a touch of humour can enhance the presentation; visual aids are also used to support the oral communication.

A good deal of the success of a presentation depends on the environment and the arrangements in the room.

Public Speech

A public speech is given to a large audience through a microphone. It has a face-to-face setting but the distance between the speaker and audience is great; this distance increases as the audience gets larger, as in an open air public meeting. Feedback is very little as the speaker can hardly see the facial expressions of people in the audience. A public speech is followed by applause from the audience.

The purpose of a public speech may be to entertain, to encourage and/or to inspire. The success of a public speech depends on the arrangements and on the speaker's skill in using gestures and voice, and using the microphone.

Interview

An interview is a meeting at which one person or a panel of persons, who are the interviewers, discuss a matter with another person or ask questions of another person, who is the interviewee. An interview is structured, and is characterized by question and answer type of communication. The environment and the arrangements in the room influence the communication in an interview.

The purpose of an interview is, usually, to assess, to judge whether it would be 'worthwhile to enter into a business relationship with the other. Each side makes an assessment of the other.

Group discussion

A group discussion is a meeting of eight to ten persons for discussing a given topic. The group has a problem or a topic to discuss and find a solution or come to a conclusion within the allotted time of half hour to one hour. It is a joint effort of the group. While it is not a very formal situation, the communication has to be controlled and focussed on the task. There is no appointed leader, but a leader may emerge during the discussion. Often, several persons show leadership qualities, and control and guide the group to a conclusion. All participants need discussion skills.

A group discussion is a very stimulating and useful communication act' '*tv It helps in understanding a situation, in exploring possibilities and generates a multiple point of view. Group discussion is used as a tool for selecting candidates by observing their behaviour and abilities in the group activity.

Negotiation

Negotiation is official discussion between representatives of opposing groups who are trying to reach an agreement. Buyers and sellers negotiate to settle the final price, management and employees negotiate to settle their differences. Negotiation is a very difficult form of oral communication and requires complex skills. Both parties have to be shrewd, intelligent, controlled and skilled communicators. Negotiation work is assigned only to experienced and especially skilled persons.

Meeting

A meeting usually involves many persons; there is a chairman or leader who leads and guides the communication and maintains proper order. A meeting is a highly structured event. There is a fixed agenda, that is, a list of items to be discussed at the meeting. Persons attending the meeting are informed of the agenda in advance and are expected to be prepared for a discussion. The items are discussed strictly in the order of the agenda, and other discussions are not permitted during the meeting.

A meeting is backed up by written communication in the form of notice of the meeting and agenda circulated before the meeting, taking of notes during the meeting, and writing of minutes after the meeting. Meetings are of many types, from the small committee meeting of three or four persons to the large conference or the shareholders' meeting.

Channels of Written Communication

Written communication is used for many purposes. First of all it is needed for communicating with persons who are not present. Although the telephone overcomes the problem of distance between the two, it is not necessary to incur the expense of a telephone call unless the matter is urgent. Besides, many types of documents are required for official work and for record. Letters, circulars, memos, notices, reports and minutes are constantly prepared and exchanged in and between organizations. Each has a format and layout which is fixed by custom. Documents are printed out on the organization's official stationery.

Letter

Letters are the most widely used form of written communication. They are used mostly for external communication. A letter has a complex layout which has to be carefully followed as each part of the layout has a purpose and is needed for reference.

It is typed/printed on the company's letterhead. It may be sent by mail, speed post, courier or hand delivery.

Letters can also be faxed or sent by e-mail. Faxed and e-mail letters do not use the complex format since they are usually followed up by other communication.

Memo

Memo (short form of memorandum) is usually an informal message between members of an organization and generally relates to daily work. Information or instructions can be conveyed by a memo. Many organizations provide pads of memo forms (with blank sheets for carbon copies) for the exchange of short messages among individuals. Memo forms are usually small and are used for brief messages. The forms may have the company's name printed on the top; spaces are provided for date, sender's name and department, and the receiver's name and department. Top executives of an organization may have personal memo pads with their name printed on the top, for use within the department. A memo may or may not be signed.

Notice

A notice is used when many people in the organization have to be given the same information. It is the most common method of mass communication within an organization. A notice is short; the language is simple, and the type is large and well spaced for easy reading. A notice is put up on the notice board. %t

Circular

A circular is a detailed document giving information, instructions or orders on a specific matter. A circular has a number and a date for reference, and is signed by the authorized signatory of the issuing office. Circulars are generally issued by government departments and other official bodies like councils, universities, and Head Offices of organizations. Circulars are sent by mail or fax to the various offices that are to be given the information.

Report

A report is a document prepared by an individual or a committee entrusted with the task of collecting information on a given subject. It requires careful research, collection of data and presentation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Reports are of varying length and may be anything from two pages to a full book divided into chapters.

Minutes

Minutes are the written record of decisions taken at a meeting. Different bodies have their own convention of recording the discussion and the decisions. Minutes may be written by hand or typed and pasted in a minute book, or typed and filed in a minute file. Minutes are a legal document.

EXERCISES

1. Compare the features of oral communication and written communication.
2. List three situations in your experience where you would prefer to use written communication, and explain your reasons.
3. List three situations which could occur in your personal life where you would choose to speak rather than write. Explain the reasons for your choice.
4. Name five oral communication situations.
5. Name five types of documents used in business.

Non-Verbal

We communicate by exchanging symbols to describe our ideas and experience. Language is a common symbol system which we use for sharing our experience with others. Communication through words is called verbal communication; communication through other symbols is called non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal methods of communication include all things, other than words and language, that can convey meaning. For example, graphics like pictures, maps, charts, graphs and diagrams in a written document, and body language and voice qualities in speech, are non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication can be independent of verbal communication; but verbal communication is always accompanied by non-verbal communication. Non-verbal methods can be used as a substitute for words like the red colour to mean danger, or nodding the head to mean "yes." Or both may be used together as when we shake the head and also say "no." Sometimes, a gesture like slapping the hand on the table may be used with words like, "We must do it," to emphasise the point.

Sometimes, our body language or voice, or untidy typing may convey something opposite of what we want to convey. This discordant or inconsistent relation between verbal and non-verbal communication occurs when the person is not comfortable or is trying to say something different from what he or she really feels. Non-verbal communication is mostly involuntary and unconscious and difficult to control; it may sometimes reveal the truth which the speaker/writer is hiding behind the words. It is said, "non-verbal communication speaks louder than words." Thus, there can be unintended and unconscious non-verbal communication. On the other hand, non-verbal methods can be consciously created and used with both written and oral communication.

An understanding of non-verbal methods and aspects of communication helps a person to improve oral and written presentation by using the methods and by gaining control over body language.

Uses of non-verbal methods

(a) Non-verbal methods have almost instant effect because of quicker grasp by the receiver; it takes less time to see a colour or a picture and to hear a horn or a bell than to read or hear and understand words and sentences. Speed in conveyance and response makes non-verbal methods extremely useful in critical situations like traffic signs and signals.

(b) Visual non-verbal methods aid verbal communication; maps, charts and graphs are necessary for conveying information or plans related to geography, locations, data, and most of the sciences. A large amount of complex data can be presented in a compact form; one page can convey information that would need several pages of words. It makes information available conveniently, at a glance for comparisons.

(c) Response to visuals and plain sounds is more powerful than to language. A cry of agony arouses stronger response than a sad story; a film is more effective than a written story. TV news is more interesting than on radio.

(d) It is the best method to convey information to illiterate people. Containers of poisons are marked with a skull and cross-bones as a warning; illiterate drivers manage with the non-verbal traffic signals. Films are used to explain processes to people who may not follow oral explanations easily. Non-verbal communication can overcome the barrier of language.

METHODS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non-verbal communication occurs mainly through visual symbols and auditory symbols. Visual symbols are those which are seen and auditory symbols are those which are heard. Our other senses like smell, taste and touch also take in meanings and can be used for non-verbal communication. For example, the fragrance in a room, the feel of the plush covering on furniture, the taste and aroma of the coffee served in the visitors' room of an office, make significant impressions.

Non-verbal aspects of written communication

A document has an appearance which is the consequence of font size and style, margins, spacing, quality of the paper,

Written communication can be enhanced by using various symbols and graphics. Written communication implies a document, and the paper (or synthetic plastic paper, or cloth or other material as for invitation cards) on which it is printed has characteristics like size, thickness, quality, and colour. The print also has characteristics like colour, font type and size, spacing, margins and general layout. The appearance and feel of a document convey impressions about the status of the sender and also make it more readable and attractive to the receiver.

A company's letter is carefully designed with attention to its visual aspects and the impression it conveys.

Besides, other visual symbols can be created and used to enhance the quality of written communication.

Colour

Colour is an important and powerful means of communication. Matters of life and death, as in traffic signals, are conveyed by colours. It is also used for classification and identification of different products and materials in industries; the cosmetics industry uses colour to make products attractive as well as to classify and differentiate types. Carbon copies of documents are on different coloured paper to distinguish copies meant for different departments. Teams have colour in their uniform to identify their members; countries have their colours on their flag. Colour gives an added dimension to maps, chart and graphs, and makes it possible to convey a greater amount of information within the same visual/graphic representation.

Colour is used in clothing, design, decoration and to enliven a dull environment. Colours are associated with different moods and feelings like, white with peace and purity, red with danger and black with death and sorrow.

Colour also has psychological effect. The state of mind of employees is influenced by the colour of their surroundings. Pleasant, cool colours in the work place have good influence on workers; black, dark, gloomy colours are known to reduce productivity; very bright, gaudy colours may be disturbing and over-exciting; softly blending colours are pleasant and soothing.

Pictures

Pictures, from simple drawings to coloured photographs, are used in brochures, posters and advertisements. Pictures can be combined with a very few words for persons who cannot read well as in posters. Besides, pictures are universally understood, more easily remembered and make an immediate impact because they are easier to “take in”. Reading requires practised eye movement, while a picture may be tackled in any order. Pictures are used extensively in advertising because they attract the eye and convey instantly even when the reader just glances at them.

Diagrams

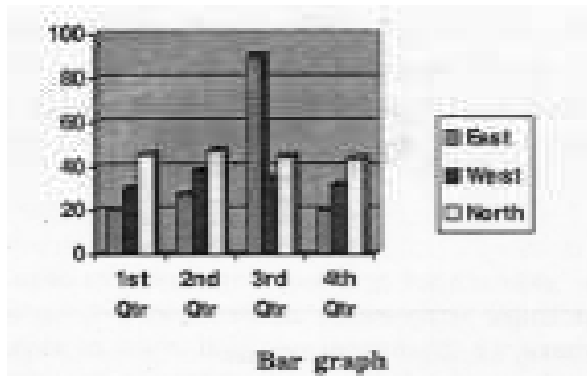
A diagram is a figure consisting of simple line drawing made to accompany and illustrate the parts and the operation of something.

Graphs and Charts

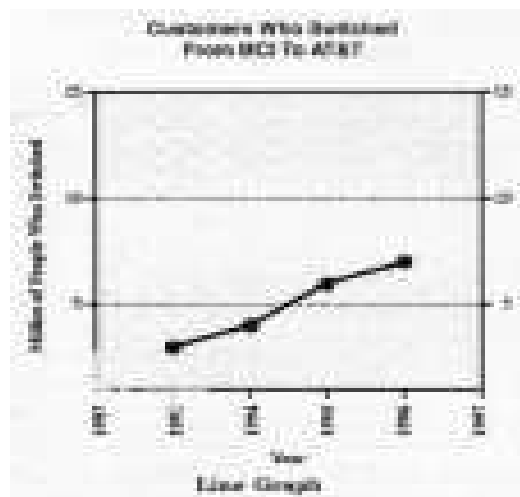
Graphs and charts of different kinds represent statistical information. Special skills are needed to prepare and to understand a chart or a graph. Information presented in a chart or a graph allows the overall situation to be seen at a glance; the relationships between the figures are also seen easily. Every charts or graph must be properly titled to show what information it represents; it must have labels and a scale/ key to explain the symbols used and to indicate what the different bars or parts stand for. Every chart or graph must show the date of the information.

Charts can be made in many ways. There are bar charts and multiple bar charts like the one shown below. The use of colour can make charts more informative as well as attractive.

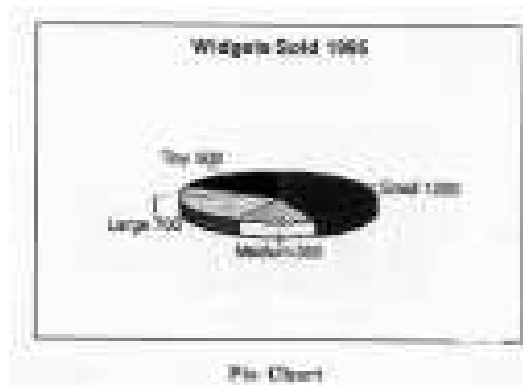
A line graph compares two variables. Each variable is plotted along an axis. A line graph has a horizontal axis (x-axis) and a vertical axis (y-axis). If you want to graph **the** height of a ball after you have thrown it, you could put time along the horizontal x-axis, **and** height along the vertical y-axis.



The line graph is used for showing trends in data. It enables the viewer to make fictions of possible future results.



A pie chart or pie graph *s a circular diagram for displaying percentages. It is used to compare different parts of the same whole. The circle of a pie chart represents 100%. Each portion that takes up space within the circle stands for a part of that 100%. The percentage values are represented as proportionally-sized slices of a pie. In this way, it is possible to see how something is divided among different groups.



Flow charts are used for indicating procedures in which alternative actions have to be taken depending on the result of the previous step. The following diagram is a flow chart.



Maps

Maps are representations of territory and are used for conveying the space relationships between places. They can convey geographical information like transport routes, climatic conditions, distribution of population, crops, animal life and vegetation; sociological factors like religion, literacy, health and nutrition. Maps of small areas are used to give information about routes and to locate places.

A map has labels to show the four directions; it must have a key to explain the meaning of the symbols used, and a scale to show how many kilometres are represented by one centimetre.

Signs and signals

A sign is a mark used to represent something; for example, + for “plus”, skull and cross bones for “danger.” It has a fixed meaning. A signal is a previously agreed movement which serves to warn, direct, or command; for example, the coming on of a green light is a signal to go ahead; the firing of a gun salute signals the arrival of a VIP. A signal may be visual or auditory. Signs and signals used by members of a group may be made with hands, lights, cloth, smoke, drums, whistles or anything that can be seen or heard at a distance.

Auditory symbols

Sounds have very limited use as symbols; they can convey only very simple information. Sounds are used mainly for warning, like **sirens** to warn about enemy air raids in war-time or in factories to warn of fire or accident, and by police vehicles. **Whistles** are used by sport directors, the police/army to call members to assemble. Trains and ships use it as signal for departure and for warning. **Bells** and **buzzers** are used to indicate the starting and ending of work periods; bells and beepers are also used by special vehicles like the fire engine and the ambulance, to warn other road users to give way. A bell with a pleasant sound is used to call the faithful to prayer in many religions. **Beeps** are used by most electronic gadgets.

Tunes are often used as an identification mark. Programs on the radio/ TV have a signature tune; advertisements on these media have their tunes. Secret organisations whistle/hum tunes to identify and recognise members.

BODY LANGUAGE

Body language means the changes that occur in the body position and movements that show what the person is feeling or thinking. Much of it is involuntary and unconscious; most persons are not aware of their body language; but it makes a powerful impact on others. Body language can make or spoil a presentation.

Body Language always conveys meaning. It is:

- **Omnipresent:** it always accompanies spoken communication
 - **Emotionally expressive:** it expresses mainly the feelings of the speaker and also of the listener
 - **Dominates interaction:** it is more communicative than words
 - **Seems trustable:** it is usually felt to be more truthful than spoken words
- Non verbal communication can accent, complement, repeat and substitute for verbal communication. It can also contradict verbal communication.

It is complex and is influenced by many factors:

Biological: certain body shapes, skin colour and features cause persons to have some kinds of gestures, expressions and postures. Besides, we constantly try to adjust and adapt our body to our environment which we may or may not find comfortable. Some gestures or postures are related to this adjustment.

Habitual: Some movements and expressions are learnt as habits in the process of adapting oneself to the environment; they also arise from one's occupation which requires constant posture or movement of certain kinds. Certain speaking styles and phrases are also occupational habits.

Cultural: Customs like not sitting cross-legged before elders, not looking straight in the eyes of elders or superiors, are culture-specific. Customs of receiving guests, introducing, social conduct, also induce some gestures and stylistic features.

Body language can be divided into conscious and unconscious:

- (i) conscious movements, postures and voice modulations are deliberately used. Actors are specially trained for this; skilled communicators, especially good presenters, also learn to make conscious use of body language.

- (ii) unconscious movements are of biological origin, acquired habits and cultural customs. No one can gain full control of one's body language, but it is possible to enlarge one's awareness of one's body and gain a good deal of control on one's posture, movements and voice modulation. If we develop increased sensitivity to our own body language, our ability to read others' body language is increased.

Body language consists of many aspects; it includes facial expressions, posture, gestures and other body movements; it also includes general appearance, clothing, accessories worn or carried in the hands, voice, and so on. It is an important factor in oral communication in face-to-face situations.

Appearance

A person's general appearance depends on several things. Two of the important factors that contribute to appearance are grooming, and personal hygiene. Care of skin, nails, feet and hair are expected standards; a person who neglects these aspects makes an unpleasant impression. Appearance makes the first impression; lack of neatness or cleanliness, carelessness in grooming, clumsy gait or clothes make a negative impression.

State of health is a very important factor in a person's appearance; no amount of cosmetics can hide lack-lustre eyes and poor skin. Poor health is easily reflected in the appearance.

Clothing and accessories

Clothing is a very important aspect of body language. It requires good taste / judgement to make a subtle impression by what you wear. The colour, design, cut, and fitting combine to make up the dress. In India we have several choices as it is acceptable to wear clothing of national style or of Western style. Appropriateness for the occasion is essential; the formality of the occasion, the time of the day, the season, the cultural background of the people who will be present, and the conventions of your own organisation should provide good guidance. Many organisations have a dress code for occasions in order to ensure that its representatives convey the desired impression.

As a general rule, avoid wearing patterned clothing, especially on the upper half of the body, because it tends to shorten the attention span of the person with whom you are speaking.

Accessories like tie, footwear, jewellery need careful selection and should be comfortable to wear. Handbag or briefcase is included in accessories; so is an umbrella if it is necessary to carry one. Whatever you carry on your person or in your hands ought to look comfortable and gracefully carried; otherwise it will convey a poor image.

Posture

Posture is the way we hold ourselves, the way we stand or sit. It indicates something about our feelings and thoughts, attitudes and health. Stiff posture shows tension; comfortably leaning back conveys a relaxed mood; eagerly leaning forward shows the listener's interest. Posture can indicate disregard or disrespect for others; polite and well-bred persons are usually careful of how they stand or sit in the presence of visitors and in formal situations. Graceful posture is a great asset in any business.

Four Types of posture can be clearly identified: (i) forward lean indicates attentiveness and interest (ii) drawing back or turning away, expresses a negative or refusing; (iii) expansion suggests "proud," "conceited," "arrogant"; (iv) forward-leaning body, bowed head, drooping shoulders, and sunken chest usually convey "depressed," "downcast," "dejected."

Postures express attitudes, feelings, and moods more clearly than briefer gestures of hands or head. Slight movements and postures of the body wall are more basic, and more reliable as cues; they are not so easy to manipulate or control consciously as other body movements like fingers, hands, legs, and feet.

In a business meeting where feelings run high, the most truthful expression comes from the torso rather than arms and legs. Unconscious movements sideward, forward, and backward bending, reveal how people really relate to one another.

Angular distance reveals how we relate to and feel about people sitting, standing, or waiting nearby. Our upper body unconsciously squares-up, addresses, and aims towards those we like, admire, and agree with, but angles away from disliked persons with whom we disagree. In a conversation, formal interview, or staff meeting, a greater angular distance (turning away) substitutes for greater linear distance. Angular distance may range from 0 degrees (directly facing) to 180 degrees (turning one's back).

Facial expression

The expression on the face is the most obvious aspect of body language. A cheerful face or a gloomy face influences most people. A cheerful or appreciative smile, a displeased frown, a look of surprise, and several other expressions of the face can convey, with or without words, the attitude, feelings and reaction of the communicants. Expressions accompany the speaker's words and also indicate the listener's reactions. An alert speaker can judge the listener's reaction by the facial expressions that act as a constant feedback. Eyebrows and lips are the most mobile parts of the face; an eyebrow raised unconsciously can convey disbelief or surprise. A frown may convey displeasure or effort to concentrate, depending upon the context. Pursed lips certainly do not convey friendliness.

Smile

A smile is a universal gesture; it is understood by everyone, is generally unmistakable and clears the atmosphere; it is believed to release chemicals which create feelings of happiness.

Here is a quotation from an unknown author. "A smile costs nothing, but gives much. It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes only a moment, but the memory of it may last forever. No one is so rich or mighty that he can do without it, and none is so poor that he cannot be enriched by it. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business and enhances friendship. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed, or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away. If some people are too tired to give you a smile, give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as one who has no more to give."

A smile can also be a useful non-committal gesture when it is better to be silent. And beware of an involuntary (sometimes one-sided) smile either on your own face or on the other's face; it could be sarcasm; it cannot be conducive to good relationships.

Eye contact

Eye movement is a key part of facial behaviour, directing others' attention or showing surprise or happiness and other emotional displays.

Eye contact is a very important communicative factor. Eye contact between speaker and listener is necessary for indicating that both are interested in the communication. While making an oral presentation it is important to create rapport with the audience with eye contact. Presenters make it a point to take in the whole audience with a sweep of the eye, making brief eye contact with as many as possible.

The comfort level for eye contact is three seconds; if eye contact is held longer than three seconds, it can cause discomfort to the other person. Aggressive persons try to fix others with a stare; anger may be expressed with extended eye contact.

It is commonly believed that avoiding eye contact indicates that the speaker is lying; yet, some liars may hold unblinking eye contact and watch to see your reaction. Persons who lack self-confidence also generally avoid eye contact. However, the rules and customs of culture influence how people use their faces and eyes. Several African and Asian cultures consider it impertinent for younger persons to look at elders directly in the eye.

Gestures

Gestures are movements of hands/ head/ body; they are a natural accompaniment of speech; a person who does not make any movement while speaking appears somewhat stiff and mechanical. Gestures may not have specific meaning; a clenched fist may emphasise an important point, or convey determination, or indicate defiance/ opposition. As gestures are closely related to personality, no two persons make exactly the same gestures; yet the general meaning is easily recognised.

The occasion, the size and nature of the audience influence speaker's gestures. On very formal occasions, like employment interview/ conference, speakers use fewer gestures (Note TV news readers). In a relaxed situation, gestures are used more freely.

Energy

Energy and enthusiasm as an aspect of body language is hard to describe, but most people have experienced the impact of a person with a high level of energy. Some impress with high level of physical energy which is almost infectious; some have high intellectual or emotional or spiritual energy. Whatever its source, energy conveys competence and inspires respect. State of physical and mental health plays a large part in body language. A healthy person is energetic and maintains a certain level of enthusiasm in work. A person's enthusiasm is reflected in the style; it is usually infectious and makes listeners also feel enthusiastic.

Space

The way we use space plays a subtle role in body language. Individuals naturally maintain a certain space between themselves in various social and interpersonal situations. The distance we keep from the other person while speaking, indicates the relationship; we keep a longer distance from a slight acquaintance and get closer to persons with closer relationship; we maintain a respectful distance from and allow more personal space to our superiors.

It is important not to invade others' space in any situation. Four types of distance indicate the relationships between persons: intimate space is 0 to 18 inches, personal space is 18 inches to 4 feet, social distance is 4 feet to 12 feet and public distance is 12 feet to hearing and seeing distance.

The way people structure the space around them also conveys meaning. A manager can use space to create an impression of status. A spacious office, a large office desk, a large car suggest important position. Efficient use of space without creating a clutter generates a sense of orderliness.

Time

Our use of time is an even more subtle non-verbal factor in communication. Time given to listen or to speak to people creates a sense of self-esteem in them; it is equated with care and concern.

On the other hand, a person who uses one's own time and other people's time wastefully, creates an impression of being inefficient and disorganised.

A sense of timing in conducting meetings (formal and informal), in conveying good or bad news, in making a presentation, generates respect and goodwill.

PARALANGUAGE

The non-verbal aspects of the spoken word are known as **paralanguage**. It includes the qualities of the voice, the way we use our voice, as well as the sounds we make without uttering words. It is possible to control and use paralanguage effectively by becoming aware of it and paying attention to one's voice and speech.

Voice has characteristics like tone, volume, and pitch. **Tone** is the quality of the¹ voice. **Volume** is the loudness or softness, which can be consciously adjusted to the number of persons in the audience and the distance between the speaker and the listeners; speaking too loud shows lack of self-command or abrasive nature. **Pitch** is the high or low note on the scale; a high-pitched voice is often unpleasant, and suggests immaturity or emotional disturbance; a frightened person speaks in a high pitched voice. It is better to begin softly, in a low pitch and raise the volume and pitch as required.

Speed is factor of speech. Rapid speech indicates excitement; we increase speed of speaking to tell an interesting story, and reduce speed to explain a difficult idea. **Pronunciation** means the accepted standard of the way in which a word is said; correct and clear pronunciation is important and indicates that the speaker is careful and has consideration for the audience. Accent is the way a person pronounces the sounds of the language; every language has its own accent or way of forming the sounds; we carry our mother tongue accent to other languages we learn. Good accent in a new language is "learnt by listening to native speakers of the language. Imitating American or British accent does not convey a good impression; it is more important to speak with clarity so that others understand what we say. **Intonation** is the sound pattern of sentences; like accent, each language has its intonation and we carry our mother tongue intonation to a new language we learn.

Stress on a particular word in a sentence can change the meaning and implication. Try reading the sentence, “*Were you there last night?*” by stressing a different word each time, and note the difference in the implied meaning.

Besides, there are hesitations and non-fluencies which form a part of spoken language. Sounds like *Er-er, Mmmm—*, indicate that the speaker is hesitating or cannot find the next word to say. Sounds like, *Ahem!, huh! Ah-ha! Ouch! Oh-oh!* are used to convey various ideas or emotions.

Silence can be a very effective way of communication. It is not a negative absence of speech but a positive withdrawal or suspension of speech. Silence is a difficult method of communication to use as it takes a good deal of self-control and self-confidence to be able to hold one’s tongue.

Short silences or pauses are very effective in giving emphasis to words. A pause before or after certain words makes the words stand out from the rest, A skilfully placed pause has the power to make the listener more alert. In presentations, silence can be used effectively to emphasise a point; it is often far more effective than wild gestures or table-thumping.

In a face-to-face situation, silence may indicate several things. Facial expression and posture may indicate the feeling behind the silence. It may mean that the person is not sure what to say, or is so full of feeling as to be unable to speak. Sympathy with someone who has suffered loss is often best expressed by keeping silent rather than speaking. Some feelings like anger or displeasure can also be expressed by keeping silent. The terms “dead silence”, “stony silence”, “embarrassing silence,” show that silence has a quality that communicates itself.

Silence can be very embarrassing if it is not possible to interpret it. It can be awkward in a group, if no one knows how to break it. On the telephone, it can cause much discomfort, as one cannot see the other and therefore has no clue from facial expressions as to the reason for the other’s silence.

In a dialogue, two persons take turns to speak. If one maintains silence instead of using his turn to speak, it can puzzle the other person. We expect a response from the other person to what we have spoken; if the response does not come, it belies our expectation and we do not know what to do. When faced with such silence, we may repeat what we said; the repetition is not likely to be in the same words and manner as before; it is possible that we may give additional information, soften what we said, try to explain more or make it more acceptable to the other. In a negotiation, silence, and non-response is a useful strategy; it could make the other person speak more.

Body language like eye contact, facial expression and posture can convey something of the silent person’s thoughts. A person who can control all facial expression can really puzzle the other.

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.
 - (a) _____ and _____ are pictorial representation of statistical data.
 - (b) _____ and _____ are aspects of body language.
 - (c) _____ help to review geographical facts and comparisons.
 - (d) _____ is a good method for communicating to illiterate masses.

2. Are these statements true?
 - (a) Silence is always embarrassing in a communication situation.
 - (b) Body language is entirely unconscious and involuntary.
 - (c) Careful cultivation of one's body language can enhance one's oral communication.
 - (d) It is not possible to control non-verbal communication.
 - (e) Non-verbal communication can be completely controlled.
 - (f) Non-verbal communication may convey meaning that conflicts with the words used.

3. Explain what is meant by body language.
4. Write a detailed note on non-verbal communication.
5. What is the role of body language in making a presentation?
6. How can written presentation be enhanced by non-verbal methods of communication?

Lesson - 4

INSTRUMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication networks have taken on a new pattern because of recent advances in information technology. In some organizations, employees are allowed to work from any place and at any time. As a result, task groups may be scattered and may be working at different times. Communication with and between persons who are not located in the office is carried out by electronic media.

Computer-mediated communication is replacing many of the traditional forms of internal communication in many organizations; memos, queries, instructions, exchange of ideas and even discussions may be on electronic media instead of by movement of papers or holding meetings. Information can be made available to all simultaneously, clarifications may be sought at once and employees may discuss their work or other things via the intranet.

Computer-mediated communication is quick and tends to be informal, without the need for traditional polite forms of address. The formal hierarchical structure for achieving co-ordination and managing relationships within an organization is likely to be replaced by the more informal and faster exchange of messages. Information, which used to be limited and controlled and was a source of power, is now freely available to the entire organization. These changes in communication flow channels result in changes in organizational structures.

Nevertheless, most organizations still have the traditional channels of communication flow. Channel of communication refers to the way along which a message flows from the sender to the recipient. An organization has well-ordered network of channels along which communication flows. Formal communications move along the established channels.

The direction of the flow of communication is described in terms of the formal power and authority relationships among the members of the organization. Communication from superior to subordinate is called downward; communication from subordinate to superior is called upward; and communication between persons at the same level is called horizontal or lateral communication. In addition to the formal channels of communication, an organization develops informal channels which satisfy various human needs of the members of the organization.

An organization has internal and external communication. Communication with those outside the organization is external; communication within the organization, among its members is internal;

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Messages that go out of the organization are outward communication; messages that are received from outside are inward communication. Organizations have office procedures and systems for handling external communication; both, the incoming and the outgoing messages are recorded and filed.

Outward

Messages go out of an organization to customers, suppliers, banks, insurance companies, government departments, the mass media and the general public. They may be in the form of letters, faxes, telephone calls, telegrams, reports, advertisements, press handouts, speeches, visits and so on. The style, format and tone of the company's outgoing communication affect its public image and public relations. Therefore, most organizations have a policy about the style and appearance of the company's messages that go out.

Copies of outgoing written documents are filed for reference. A written note or summary of oral communications is also filed by many companies.

Inward

An organization receives letters, telegrams, fax messages, telex messages, reports, brochures, circulars, journals and magazines, telephone calls, and personal visits. These may be from customers, suppliers, other organizations, government departments and so on. These inward communication messages are filed for record and reference. A written note or summary of visits, meetings, telephone talks may also be filed.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

There is a large volume of communication within the organization. The flow of communication within an organization forms a complicated pattern. The volume and the direction are usually determined by the pattern of hierarchy, the levels of authority and also by the requirements of tasks.

Formal Channels

Formal channels are those which carry the official messages in the organization. The efficiency of an organization depends on a regular flow of messages. The flow of messages needs to be organized into a well-ordered network, to ensure that communication flows easily and reaches the persons who need the information. If communication by-passes the channels, someone who needs the information may not get it; the managers may not get information about what is going on in other parts of the organization. This can lead to gaps in information, and failure to take the required action. If the channels are not well organized there can be a communication gap which causes confusion and failure to take action.

Information has to go through proper channels. Clerks from one department are not supposed to exchange official papers directly with clerks from another department; the papers must move through the supervisors or section heads. A clerk can approach the manager only through his own supervisor or officer. Messages are made to move through fixed channels so that the executives concerned are kept informed of what is going on.

Messages within an organization, between managers, supervisors and workers, are varied and numerous. They move up and down the chain of authority as well as sideways between persons at the same level of authority, and among teams. Messages that move up and down the authority line are called vertical communication and those which move among persons of the same level are called horizontal or lateral communication.

Vertical Communication

This includes all the messages that move between subordinates and their supervisors. Messages going from superiors to subordinates are downward communication; messages going from subordinates to superiors are upward communication.

Downward

Messages going from the higher authority levels to the lower levels may be written or oral. Written messages are notes, circulars, notices, e-mails; oral messages may be face-to-face, or by telecom or telephone, or announcements over the public address system.

The common purposes of downward communication are to give:

- (i) Instructions about a specific task;
- (ii) Information about the practices and procedures followed by the organization;
- (iii) Information which creates understanding of the task in relation to other tasks of the organization;
- (iv) Feedback about subordinates' performance;
- (v) Information about the ideology and the goals of the organization which would help them to develop a sense of belonging to the organization.

Earlier, when business companies were authoritarian, employees were only told about their task, and how to do it. Now, many organizations realize the importance of giving employees a general understanding of their task's relevance to the organization's work; employees are also given feedback about how they are doing. Such communication makes them feel a sense of identification with the organization's goals.

Downward communication must be simple and carefully explained; persons at the lower levels of the hierarchy may not have sufficient knowledge or understanding of the organization's work; hence they need explanation. Long circulars, written in an official and legal style are not easy to follow. Instruction sheets and employee manuals should be written in a simple style.

A great deal of information is lost as messages move downward. When a message is passed from a senior to a subordinate down the line of command in a chain, it passes through many levels of authority. There is delay in the movement of the message. Also, the message gets changed and modified and there is distortion of the message. Each person along the line edits it, filters it, and simplifies it for the understanding and needs of the next person who is to receive it. If the chain of communication is very long, there may be much change and distortion in the message.

Information is also lost because sometimes, some members of the organization may misinterpret a message, or may not understand it properly, or may neglect it. Even when there is very active downward flow of communication, information that is passed down may not be accurate; it may not be received and understood and accepted by subordinates.

Many organizations avoid long channels to ensure that information moves directly and fast. In a rapidly changing work environment, communication must move fast to keep up the efficiency of the organization. Passing messages down the line in a chain causes the greatest loss of information. It is more effective to communicate downward in a cluster as in a meeting; everyone receives it at the same time, in the same environment. The recipients of the information may be of different levels of hierarchy. This method gives opportunity to everyone to seek

clarification; loss of information is avoided. Organizations that have linked and networked computers (LAN and WAN) are able to send messages at once to all concerned persons; the flow of information is more easy and efficient.

Upward

Messages which go from subordinates to supervisors and to higher levels of authority are upward communication. These may be written or oral. Written messages are in the form of reports, letters, representations, notes and e-mail messages. Oral messages may be face-to-face or by intercom or telephone.

The common purposes of upward communication are:

- (i) to give information to the management;
- (ii) to enable the management to learn about and understand the concerns of the subordinates;
- (iii) to enable all employees to contribute ideas and make suggestions;

Communication does not move upward easily. Subordinates may be too shy or afraid to communicate their ideas to higher authorities. Superiors may be too impatient to listen to their subordinates. The resulting gap in communication can be harmful to the organization.

When messages pass upward through official channels, some information is lost. At every level there is some editing and filtering. There may also be a deliberate suppression of information because of self-interest and jealousy; a supervisor may not pass upward, a good suggestion from a subordinate, or he may change it so as to get the credit for himself; a senior officer may prevent information about discontent in the department from reaching the manager because it reflects on his/her human relations skills. As a result there is an information gap; this can be harmful because the upper level of management may not find out the true state of affairs until it is too late. Therefore, cutting across the official chains of communication is sometimes necessary for the sake of speed and efficiency.

Open and free upward communication also helps to maintain good staff relations. Employees work better when the managers listen to their ideas. Persons at any level in an organization may have good ideas and suggestions for the improvement of the organization; these ideas are encouraged when the organization has good upward communication channels.

Organizations set up special formal and informal channels to encourage and ensure upward movement of communication. Most organizations have these channels:

(a) Regular reporting systems exist in all organizations. There are forms for periodical reports and progress reports of different activities in the organization. These reports convey factual information to the management.

(b) Periodical review meetings are held with individuals and groups of employees; these meetings are conducted in an informal style. They provide an opportunity for employees to express their opinion about work, problems, solutions, ideas, budget allocations, etc. They give an opportunity to subordinates to talk to the superiors.

(c) Suggestion scheme is a formal and well-organized system for making ideas move up from the lower level employees to the management and decision makers. A suggestion scheme requires elaborate set-up, committee meetings, a well-planned award system, and a good deal of

time and energy. The employees feel happy when their ideas are respected and valued. The company also benefits from the ideas of people who are actually on the job.

(d) “Open door” policy provides an informal upward channel. It gives every employee an access to higher authority. Managers allow free access to any member of the staff without prior appointment, during a fixed hour everyday, or on a fixed day of the week. Thus, any employee can approach the manager directly. This system prevents distortion by avoiding the chain of authority. Feelings and attitudes of staff are conveyed to the managers this way.

(e) Informal gatherings, picnics or weekly tea meetings bring together all members of the organization. Some organizations call it the “Happy Hour”. This is an opportunity for socializing and getting to know one another more closely. Such occasions encourage employees to overcome their shyness and talk freely about their work and their ideas and their life. Closer relationships are built up and there is better interaction among all levels.

{f} Standing Committees (like grievance committee, welfare committee, counselling committee) provide a channel for problems, unhappy feelings, troubles, complaints and grievances to be made known to the upper level of the organization where they can be given serious attention.

Upward communication provides two main types of information: one is feedback about the official work which is necessary for the working of the organization; the other is personal information about staff’s performance, views, ideas, feelings, which is vital for employee relations and morale.

Horizontal or Lateral Channel

Messages that flow between persons of equal status or same level of authority in the organization is horizontal or lateral communication. A large amount of communication flows laterally in an organization. Horizontal communication can be oral or written. Written communication may be in the form of letters, memoranda, notes, reports, and copies of documents. Oral communication may be in the form of face-to-face talk, intercom, meetings, committee work or conferences.

There is more horizontal communication at higher levels of authority. The clerks in one department may have no direct contact with the clerks in another department, but section heads and managers have closer contacts. The higher level managers have to be in constant consultation and communication with one another. Horizontal communication is more interactive than vertical communication.

Horizontal communication is needed for several purposes in an organization. It includes both information and persuasion. Besides exchange of information and suggestions, lateral communication is required for persuasive purposes like discussing plans, solving problems, resolving conflicts, negotiating, and co-ordination of work. It serves an important function of providing emotional and social support to one another.

Conference is a form of organized horizontal communication. At a conference, common problems are discussed, and the ideas, information, knowledge and experience of several persons are pooled for common benefit. It serves as a training tool among persons of equal status.

Consensus

Consensus is a method of decision making that reflects the ideas and thought of all the team members. Reaching consensus ensures that decisions are explored thoroughly and strong disagreements resolved. It is used by task forces, teams, departments, work groups and so on.

Consensus is a decision that is acceptable to everyone. It is not unanimity; {the conclusion may not be everyone's first choice} nor is it a majority vote.

Decision making by consensus involves discussion and accountability of view points rather than power struggles. The idea behind consensus is to empower not to overpower. Everyone must act as a member of the group.

◆ requires:

- Time
- Communication skills especially listening, probing and conflict management
- Considering disagreements and conflicts as part of the process
- Keeping an open mind and thinking creatively

At the end, everyone must be able to support the decision even if they do not feel it was the best one. Underlying the consensus decision there must be some shared values which are:

- Unity of purpose - the decisions are made in the best interests of the **group** or organization
- Co-operation - the participants look for a solution that best meets everyone's needs
- Mutual trust - all believe that others will be fair with them, respect them and care about their feelings
- Common ownership of ideas - personal attachment to an idea hinders the process
- Feelings are valued
- Conflict is valued
- Equal power — everyone has equal power and no one is made to feel "conquered " {not respected as a person} or compromised (values not respected)
- Time and process - the process is respected and given the time it needs
- Willingness to learn skills - skills of communication, meeting participation, etc., are learnt willingly by everyone.

GROUP NETWORKS

Most organizations have small task groups and teams working together. Certain patterns of communication network evolve among the members of work groups based on the power structure and relationships among them.

The chain pattern allows only vertical movement of communication and is strictly hierarchical. Messages are passed up and down the chain of authority. There can be loss of information at every level of authority because each person edits the content according to his/her own understanding of what is needed by the person at the next level. The content may be simplified or edited in other ways. This pattern is useful for tasks that have to be performed within given time and without any deviation.

In the **wheel** pattern the person at the centre or hub of the wheel co-ordinates all the communication; persons around the wheel do not interact with one another. All messages have to be addressed to the central person by each member; the central person then passes the required messages to the others. It represents a two-level hierarchy.

The circle pattern allows each member of the group to interact with those on either side, but not to the others. In a group of five persons, it may have three levels of hierarchy in which there is interaction between supervisors and subordinates and lateral interaction at the lowest level. In a larger group, this pattern limits the flow of information.

The all-channel system allows everyone to communicate with every-one else. It is the least structured group, and tasks can be delayed because of too much unstructured communication.

The wheel pattern has been found to be the most efficient in arriving at good solutions. The other patterns can become efficient if they develop a hierarchy, though this takes time. Whether the communication is vertical or horizontal, hierarchical patterns develop among the group.

INFORMAL CHANNELS

In addition to the imposed organizational arrangement, members of groups that work together construct their own communication networks. These informal networks have two basic purposes.

(a) They compensate for inadequacies in the formal network by establishing new links which bypass obstacles that come up in the formal structure. In many groups there is someone who can expedite the matter at hand; often, the expeditor is not the person holding official responsibility. By locating the right person (who may be anyone in the organization), the informal network can be used to serve organizational goals.

(b) They serve the needs of the individuals involved; these needs may or may not be the same as the goals of the organization. These informal networks link persons with similar interests and experiences and those who simply like one other.

Informal networks serve a valuable organizational function: they protect the individual from becoming isolated from professional colleagues by stimulating him/ her to more creative thinking and by supplying a psychological support group. Quite often, an informal work relationship completely obscures the formal organizational structure.

Informal networks are sure to arise in any organization. In examining the advantages or problems of an organizational unit, informal communication networks must be considered as carefully as formal communication networks.

Grapevine

Grapevine is an informal channel of personal, unofficial communication which exists in every organization in addition to the formal organized channels. It has no definite pattern or direction though it is largely horizontal. It is a complex web of oral communication flow, linking all

the members of the organization one way or other. It may sometimes move along in a chain, passing information from person to person; and sometimes in clusters, that is, groups, at meal-times or other free time.

There may be more than one grapevine channel in an organization, and individuals may be on more than one grapevine. People whose places of work are close together, people who come into contact with one another in official work, people who travel to work together, or people with similar temperaments are likely to be on the same grapevine.

It is not related to organizational goals; it does not arise because of the need to expedite one's work or to by-pass the slow official channel.

This informal channel carries unofficial information about the management's policies and plans, individual managers, work programs, the company's performance, and such matters related to the company. Naturally, the talk is coloured by the ideas, prejudices and feelings of the persons engaged in it. The grapevine can become quite powerful and influential though the stories and information are not fully correct. It often carries more information than the formal official communication channels. It moves much faster because it is not hindered by the delays of the official channel.

Grapevine can affect an organization's working by its influence on the opinions, beliefs and attitudes of its members. Attitudes have a direct effect on people's willingness to work. The nature of the talk among the employees affects their attitudes and efficiency. Excited talking and bad tempers lead to poor performance; so does excessive fun. What employees hear and say affects their relationship with the management, and this has a direct effect on productivity. Hence, grapevine cannot be ignored.

The presence of the grapevine is recognized and accepted as a part of an organization. Since it can influence the efficiency of the organization it needs to be skilfully controlled. Efficient managers learn to listen to the grapevine and can find out who are the talk-leaders; they can give the leaders desirable information so that good information spreads.

There is a close relationship between the grapevine and the morale of employees; when the morale is high and employees are well-motivated, the grapevine is usually thin and slow; when the morale drops, grapevine becomes thick and fast. Bad news and unpleasant stories cause excitement; they travel faster and are discussed more extensively than good news. A manager has to keep eyes and ears open; managers encourage upward communication to find out what the employees talk about and how they feel.

Grapevine cannot be destroyed. The management has to watch it. If a harmful half-truth begins to travel around, the management has to take quick action to convey correct information. This can be done in many ways: by giving the information to talk-leaders, by mentioning it at briefing and routine meetings, by putting up notices on notice boards, and by distributing bulletins and circulars. If the matter is serious, a meeting may be called.

Sometimes, a bit of information may be planted in the grapevine in order to test the possible reaction to a proposed decision or plan. Grapevine can be used constructively because of its speed in moving.

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blanks using as few words as possible:
 - (a) Downward communication moves from ____ to ____
 - (b) Horizontal communication moves among ____
 - (c) Freely moving informal communication in an organization is called ____
 - (d) ____ means arriving at a general agreement of opinion.
2. Mention five methods by which communication can be kept moving upward in an organization.
3. Are these statements true?
 - (a) Communication does not move upward easily.
 - (b) Grapevine can be used productively by the management.
 - (c) There is no loss of information in downward communication.
 - (d) There are no barriers to horizontal communication.
4. What is downward communication? What causes loss of information as communication moves downward?
5. What is meant by upward communication? How can upward communication in an organization be improved?
6. Write a note on the informal channels of communication in an organization.
7. What is 'grapevine'? How can management use it to influence the morale of the employees?
8. Write notes on the following:
 - (i) Internal Vertical communication
 - (ii) Horizontal or Lateral communication
 - (iii) Consensus
 - (iv) Grapevine
 - (v) Upward communication
 - (vi) Downward communication
 - (vii) Communication networks
9. Write a note on formal communication channels in an organization.

Lesson: 5 & 6**BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION**

Communication is not always successful. Several things can prevent the message from reaching the intended recipient or from having the desired effect on the recipient. As noted in chapter 1, there are problem areas at every stage in the process of communication. The circular figure in chapter 1, showing the stages in the process of communication, shows the possible gaps in the process which can lead to a failure of communication between two persons.

Besides these pitfalls, there are other things that can hinder or distort communication.

There may be some fault in the communication system which prevent the message from reaching. Some of these defects are in the mechanical devices used for transmitting, that is, the medium. Some are in the symbols we use for communicating, that is, language or other symbols used for encoding. Some are in the nature of the persons who are engaged in communication, that is, the sender and the receiver. In an organisation, these barriers can become quite complicated and can cause information gaps leading to problems in its working.

Barriers can be divided into broad groups: Physical barriers, Semantic and Language barriers, Socio-psychological barriers and Organisational barriers. Besides, there are Cross-cultural barriers which distort communication between persons or groups belonging to a different cultural background.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Obstacles that prevent a message from reaching the intended recipient may be outside and beyond the control of the persons concerned. Some can be controlled by the management; some cannot be controlled because they are in the environment.

Defects in the Medium

Defects in the devices used for transmitting messages are external and usually not within the control of the parties engaged in communication. The telephone, the postal system, the courier service, or electronic media may fail. Messages can get delayed, distorted and even lost while being transmitted.

A partial failure of the mechanical equipment is more harmful than a total failure because a partial failure may carry an incomplete or distorted message. A fax message can be wrongly delivered as a wrong number can get dialled on the telephone. The printout may not be clear at all. It is advisable to call up and check that the fax has been received.

If a medium like the telephone is out of order, the communication may have to be postponed or sent by an alternative medium.

Noise in the Environment

Noise is any disturbance which occurs in the transmission process. In face-to-face communication which is carried by air vibration, the air may be disturbed by noise such as traffic,

factory work, or people talking. In a factory, oral communication is very difficult because of the noise of the machines.

Organisations that can afford sound-proof rooms can overcome this barrier to some extent.

Information Overload

When there is too much information, some of it is blocked in transit and may not reach the intended audience. Advertising and sales information is an example of overload; so much communication about products floats through so many media that a good deal of it does not reach the potential buyer.

SEMANTIC AND LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Semantic means pertaining to or arising from the different meanings of words or other symbols.

Language is our most important and powerful tool of communication; and yet it is a tricky tool that needs skill in handling. First of all, many words have multiple meanings. Just look into a good dictionary and see how many meanings you can find for some commonly used words like “charge”, “spring”, “check”, “suit”, “ring”. The meaning that comes to your mind first depends on your occupation (“charge” may mean electrical charge to an engineering student, but fee/rent to a commerce student).

Words like “minute” and “wind” are pronounced in two different ways to mean two entirely different things. Some words like “present”, “transfer”, “record” are used as verb and as noun with a difference in stress in speaking, but no difference in spelling. A person may be present at a function and receive a present (stress on pre-), and present (stress on -sent) some thoughts on the budget.

Similar sounding words like “access” and “excess”, “flour” and “flower”, “cite”, “site” and “sight” can cause misunderstanding in speech. Many people confuse “week” and “weak,” “steal” and “steel” in writing.

Adjectives and adverbs like “fast”, “far”, “few”, “early”, “easy”, convey different meanings to different persons depending on their daily activities and way of life. The meaning of descriptive adjectives like “beautiful” and “ugly” depends entirely on personal taste.

Even a concrete noun like “table” may suggest a writing table or a dining table or a statistical table to different persons; similarly, “chair” could be something to sit on, or a position to occupy. How many ideas does the word “home” convey?

Emotional and cultural attitudes towards something can evoke different responses in people; for example, “dog” will evoke responses according to a person’s past experience with the animal as well as cultural attitudes towards the animal.

Phrases can be more tricky; 'a red and a blue carpet' signifies two carpets: one red and one blue. 'A red and blue carpet' is one carpet in two colours.

Sentences can convey entirely different meanings depending on how they are spoken. Consider the sentence, "*What can I do for you?*" It means something different with every shift of emphasis from one word to another. In oral communication, the speaker can signify the meaning by emphasising particular words; but in written communication, the reader is in control and may read with different emphasis.

Technical terms can be a barrier to communication. Such terms are limited to the group of persons who work together, or work in the same kind of occupation; they need to use technical terms in their work. Often, these words have other meanings in ordinary language, and are differently understood by people who do not belong to that occupational group. Consider the new meanings given to ordinary words by computer technology; to people who are not familiar with computers, "mouse" is only an animal.

New words are being coined almost everyday; everyone does not understand them and many of them are not in the dictionaries yet.

More importantly, semantic barriers arise because words mean different things to different persons. It is said, "meaning is in people, not in words." Age, education, cultural background and many other factors influence the meaning we give to words.

SOCIA-PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

All persons are not skilled communicators. Skill in communicating has to be cultivated. Most people have problems which come in the way of good communication. In order to be a skilful communicator you have to watch yourself constantly and make an effort to overcome your deficiencies or problems in communicating. It is useful to understand how barriers develop in persons, and what problems prevent communication from being successful.

People have personal feelings, desires, fears and hopes, likes and dislikes, attitudes, views and opinions. Some of these are formed by family background and social environment; some are formed by the individual's own intelligence, inherited qualities, education, and personal experiences. They form a sort of emotional filter around the mind, and influence the way we respond to messages that we receive and to new experiences. Factors like the time, the place and the circumstances of a particular communication also influence our understanding and response.

Problems of understanding, interpretation and response to communication arise partly from our socially-learned attributes and partly from our personal attributes. These are called socio-psychological barriers.

In order to understand these barriers, you must know how we deal with a received message. We receive a message at three levels:

- (i) Noticing is at the physical level. We notice the message with our senses; when we become aware that a message is addressed to us, we focus attention on it. It is quite possible that our eyes or ears miss it on account of other competing messages which claim our attention. Sometimes we may not notice a message addressed to us.

(ii) Understanding is at the level of intelligence. We must be able to understand the language or any other symbols used in the message. Also, the ideas and concepts in the message must be within our understanding and knowledge.

(iii) Acceptance is at the emotional level. There is usually an emotional response of pleasure or dislike or indifference to every message that we receive. If the message arouses an unpleasant feeling, we may reject it, resent it or forget it. Emotional blocks may even make us fail to understand the message correctly.

Most of the socio-psychological barriers discussed below operate at the emotional level.

Self-centred Attitudes

We tend to see and hear everything in the light of our own interests and needs and desires. We pay attention to messages which are useful to us, and often do not pay enough attention to those messages which do not interest us. Self-interest may prevent us from seeing the point of view of others. If we look at everything from the point of view of our own interests and desires, we miss some useful information and develop narrow ideas. A person who is highly self-centred also fails to build up good relationships with other people. In order to win the goodwill of others with whom we work, we must be able to understand how other people feel and think.

Group Identification

Our values and opinions are influenced, in some matters, by the group to which we belong. All persons have a sense of belonging to a group, like family, the larger family of relatives, people of our locality or city, our religion or language group, age group, nationality, economic group and so on. Many of our ideas, attitudes and values are picked up from the group. We tend to reject an idea which goes against the interests of the group. Sometimes it is difficult for parents and children to agree because of the different age group ideas; there are disagreements between women and men because of different gender values and attitudes; employees and the management cannot come to an agreement because the interests are different. It is difficult for persons of one group to understand how persons of another group think and feel. This becomes a barrier to communication.

Self-Image

We have a certain idea of our self; some persons even take care to project an image of themselves. Self-image is our idea about what we are, what we look like and what impression we make. It is usually based on some truth and some exaggeration of our good points.

A self-image is built up over the years, and it is quite difficult to accept any idea which goes against it. This makes it particularly difficult for us to give and take feedback. If you make a good self-assessment, it will be easier for you to endure the stress of an assessment by others. A systematic self-assessment gives you a balanced self-image.

Selective Perception

Sometimes, we fail to get the complete message which is sent to us. We see, read or hear selectively according to our own needs, interests and experience. We project our expectations into the communication as we interpret the message. We may not perceive some of the aspects and information content of the message.

Defensiveness

If we feel threatened by a message, we become defensive and respond in such ways that reduce understanding. We may question the motives of others or become sarcastic or judgemental. Such defensive behaviour prevents understanding. This is a particularly harmful barrier in handling complaints and grievances and in resolving conflicts.

Filtering

Filtering is the process of reducing the details or aspects of a message. Each person who passes on a message reduces or colours a message according to his/her understanding of the situation. In the role of sender, we tend to edit information so that it will appear favourable to ourselves; some information is changed and lost in this way. Information which has to be sent up the levels of hierarchy has to be condensed and integrated so that the senior managers at the top are not overloaded with information. At each level, the information gets edited according to what the person thinks is important for the boss. The more the levels of hierarchy in an organisation, the greater is the filtering and loss of information.

A common barrier to horizontal communication is organisational politics; one manager may withhold information from another since possession of information usually has benefits and advantages.

Status Block

A "boss" who is conscious of status finds it difficult to receive any suggestions from subordinates. People in senior positions often develop the feeling that they know everything about how to run the business. They do not agree that a junior may have some good ideas. Many good ideas are wasted only because they come from junior employees who are considered to be too young and inexperienced.

The ideas of workers are most likely to go unheard because of the social distance between them and the managers. A subordinate may be too nervous to speak to a senior manager. Social distance sometimes makes workers too shy or frightened to speak to their senior bosses. Social and official status distance can raise a difficult barrier which both may be unable to overcome.

Resistance to Change

This is a serious psychological barrier. Some people strongly resist new ideas which are against their established opinions or traditions or social customs. They may avoid new ideas because they feel insecure or afraid of changes in methods or situations. People bound by traditions have their own emotions, attitudes, standards and convictions and do not accept anything that goes against their cherished ideas.

Closed Mind

Limited intellectual background, limited reading and narrow interests can cause a person's mind to be narrow. This limits the ability to take in new ideas. Persons with a closed mind do not take any suggestions for change. Young employees with bright ideas and fresh approach feel frustrated by the closed mind of the senior people in an organisation. Persons with a closed mind have limited understanding of human nature; this makes it difficult for them to receive communications with sympathy.

This becomes a serious barrier to receiving grievances and appeals. Organisational procedures like grievance committees, counselling and suggestion schemes are meant to overcome this barrier.

Poor Communication Skills

Lack of skill in writing and in speaking prevents a person from framing the message properly. Oral communication can be handicapped by a number of problems; nervousness in facing an audience may affect a person's clarity in speaking. Even excitement about an achievement or a new idea may make a person's speech incoherent. Written communication can be handicapped by poor skills in using language.

Lack of skill in reading and in listening is even more common though these are really the more important communication skills. Poor reading habits and faulty listening are both psychological short-comings, and need careful training to overcome.

Since listening is an important skill in communication, it is discussed in detail in the chapter 9.

State of Health

Physical condition can affect communication efficiency. Pain or fever certainly makes a person disinclined to engage in communication; but even if the general state of health is poor, communicating ability is reduced. The mind is not sufficiently alert; there will be gaps in attention while reading or listening; there is lack of energy to think clearly and to find the right words. Perception is low when the state of health is poor. Emotions, which play an important part in successful communication, are easily disturbed.

ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS

In an organization, the gaps and barriers become more complex.

The movement of papers and of information gets held up by the system itself. A great deal of loss of information occurs as a message moves from senior management to lower levels. If it has to pass through many levels of authority, there is delay as well as distortion of the message. Each person through whom it

passes edits it, filters it, and simplifies it for the understanding and needs of the next person who is to receive it. If a message passes down through many levels of authority, there may be much distortion in the message. The chances of such distortion are fewer in a flat organisation with few levels of hierarchy.

Loss or distortion of information as it moves downward may be caused by misinterpretation, lack of understanding, and neglect of messages by some of the members of the organisation. Even if there is very active downward flow of communication, it does not mean that the information is accurate, or that it is received *and understood and accepted by subordinates*. *Studies have shown that employees at the lowest level receive only 20% of the information that they should get.*

Too much dependence on written communication is one of the reasons for this. Circulars, bulletins, notices and even letters are not always read carefully. Many employees are unable to read and understand long messages. Even better educated persons at higher levels do not always give proper attention to all written communication. Oral communication has to be used to supplement written communication when the message is important.

Loss of information also occurs as messages move from subordinates to higher levels of authority. Messages are filtered at every level. There may be deliberate suppression of information out of self-interest and jealousy; a supervisor may suppress or change a good suggestion from a subordinate so as to take the credit personally; a senior officer may prevent information about discontent in the department from reaching the manager because it reflects on his/her human relations skills.

Deliberate withholding of information from peers who are perceived as rivals becomes a barrier in horizontal communication.

The resulting information gap can be harmful if the upper level of management does not find out the true state of affairs until it is too late. Therefore, cutting across the official chains of communication is sometimes necessary for the sake of speed and efficiency. The system of routine reports and the system of sending copies of documents for information, is meant to ensure that information is conveyed to the concerned persons, but some information may still not reach some persons.

Improving communication is the responsibility of all educated persons. The advantages of effective communication among members of a working team or any organisation, including the family, are such as to improve the efficiency as well as the quality of life. Ways and means to improve communication are discussed in another chapter.

CROSS-CULTURAL BARRIERS

Even in the best of conditions, communication can be difficult. Cross cultural factors naturally increase the possible problems of communication. If for historical or political reasons, the relationships between two countries are not friendly, there can be even greater problems of communication. Culture is a shared set of values and attributes of a group; it is the sum total of the ways of living built up by a group and transmitted from one generation to another. Culture is so much a part of an individual's manner of talking, behaving and thinking, that communication style and competence are influenced by it. In a world that is becoming global in its business, skill in communicating with people of other cultures is vital to success. Many international business training firms give courses in cross-cultural communication to company executives. Knowledge of some of the features in which cultures differ, provides a good foundation for any training you might like to take later.

Some of the most significant differences between cultures are:

- National character/basic personality
- Language
- Values and norms of behaviour
- Social relationships

Concepts of time
Concepts of space
Thinking processes
Non-verbal communication
Perception

Each nation has a character of its own. The Chinese are not like the Indians, nor the Pakistanis nor the Sri Lankans, although they are neighbouring countries. Neighbouring European nations like the French and the Germans and the Swiss are also different from one another.

The Language of any group directly reflects their culture. You only have to think of some of the sayings or proverbs or idiomatic expressions in an Indian language and in English to see that translation from one to the other is nearly impossible. Many words cannot be translated exactly. Even among countries that speak the same language like the British and the Australians, a word may not have the same significance. It has been pointed out that Russians cannot understand the concepts of free market, regulation, efficiency as the British or the Canadians do. Connotations of words differ in different cultures. When the Japanese say “yes” they mean “Yes, I’m listening.” The Americans may take it to mean “Yes, I agree”. Negotiations are made difficult because of this.

Values are our ideas of what is good and what is evil; they form the basis of our behaviour and actions. Notions of good and evil vary between cultures. Besides, norms, rules and manners of cultures differ. Behaviour expected from women in Eastern cultures is different from what is expected in Western cultures. Certain subjects which are not considered proper for talking about in polite society in one culture may be acceptable in another.

Social relationships depend on the groupings in that society. All societies have groups like families, classes, castes, and so on.

The Indian caste system, though officially abolished, still plays a significant part in social behaviour. Significance of family relationships in India is reflected in the elaborate system of words which can describe the precise relationship of two persons indicating the descent three or even four generations back. In Western languages, the all-covering word “cousin” describes a variety of relationships. Relationships between parents and children, between teachers and students, and the rules of behaviour that govern these relationships differ vastly between Eastern and Western cultures.

Concept of time is perhaps one of the most troublesome differences that cause barriers in cross-cultural communication, especially between Eastern and Western cultures. The Eastern concept of time is that it is circular, while the Western concept is that it is linear. Apart from this, time orientation varies; some cultures focus on the past, some on the present and some on the future. For some cultures, “time is money” and is more important than personal relationships; for others, time is subordinate to relationships.

As a result of perceiving time differently, work behaviour and social behaviour styles vary greatly. Ideas about punctuality and scheduling of activities depend on concept of time. In India, and other Eastern countries, lack of punctuality and not functioning to schedule is almost normal; in Western countries arriving late for an appointment is one of the worst things you can do. The

idea of keeping work time strictly separate from personal time is a Western concept and is not easy for Eastern cultures to understand and follow. Attitude to time is one of the major problems in cross-cultural communication between Indians and people of Western cultures.

Concept of space influences design and use of shapes and colour in design. Besides, it has an important effect on behaviour and the distance between speakers during conversation; in some cultures, speakers stand close enough to touch often, while in others they maintain distance to denote respect. People in South Asian countries like India and Sri Lanka, maintain less inter-personal distance.

Thought processes vary between cultures; some are strictly logical and rational while others may be holistic and emotional. The frame of reference, that is, the higher perspective from which we view a situation makes a difference to the way we see it. Thinking process is affected by acceptance or rejection of superstition, belief in magic, miracles and so on; cultures where these beliefs are rejected are likely to view the world as logical, clear and law-based.

Non-verbal behaviour is another area of trouble in cross-cultural communication. Body language is a major factor that varies between cultures. Not only are gestures understood differently, but the amount of use of gesture varies. Indians use much more natural gesture than the British; the Japanese have many formal gestures for social interaction but less free body movements.

Appearance tends to be an unconscious basis for evaluation. We react unconsciously to the biological appearance (colour and texture of skin and hair, shape and colour of eyes, stature and body structure) as well as to the acquired appearance (style of dress and grooming) of persons we communicate with. Appearance of people of different cultures varies significantly; besides, there are multi-cultural nations like Canada which can present problems to Indians.

Ways of dressing and what is considered formal clothes is another problem area. The Indian saree which seems so formal in India, is not acceptable formal clothing in most American companies.

Use of Voice is another source of trouble with cross cultural communication. Cross-cultural confusion arises from the way we use our voice. People in many countries are put off by loud Indian voices, and noisy Indian tourists. Some Western cultures speak in such low voices that we can hardly hear them, and may wonder if they intend to be secretive. Difference between cultures in speed of talking makes the faster talking people consider the slow talking cultures as slow and lax. Some cultures expect formality and formal tone at work and are embarrassed or put off by the informal tone of another culture. The amount of silence that is considered as right during a conversation can cause confusion. The Japanese believe, "Those who know do not speak—those who speak do not know"; this is quite contrary to Americans who are embarrassed by silence and hasten to fill it by speaking. Closely related are the rules of turn-taking in conversation; most Western cultures consider interrupting as very impolite; each speaker is allowed to complete speaking; in India interrupting others in a conversation is acceptable. Also, "breaking into" a conversation between others is acceptable here, but not in Western cultures.

Perception is influenced by culture. We perceive some things and ignore others; we particularly perceive what is contrary to our own culture and what makes us uncomfortable. What smells "good" or "bad" is perceived differently. Rain means something different for Indians from

what it means for the British. Differences of perception of the world can be amazing. Our world view and attitudes to life affect our meanings.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Constant organizational effort is needed to overcome the barriers which are unconsciously built up by different people in the organization. Persons in positions of authority, as well as subordinates, can be helped to overcome these barriers by training in effective communication. Periodical review and reorganization of communication networks is also needed to ensure that information reaches people in time.

Health centres: Many organisations provide medical aid, gymnasiums and recreation for the staff in an effort to keep down stress levels. Regulations like compulsory vacation after a certain number of months/years are also meant to ensure that employees avoid stress and fatigue.

The responsibility for overcoming barriers to personal communication and ensuring the success of every communication activity falls upon the senior and the better trained person. The higher your position, the greater is your need for effective communication. You have to cultivate all the communication skills including getting feedback and non-verbal communication. The external barriers of defective channels and faulty organizational systems are the Management's responsibility within the organization. The channels must be kept in good working condition; the intercoms, notice-boards, information meetings must be kept up-to-date. Many companies which can afford it, maintain soundproof rooms for meetings and take steps to reduce the noise level in the office.

Semantic and language barriers can be overcome only by being careful with the use of language, and by using words which have clear meaning, by using short and simple sentences, and also by using visual aid whenever possible. Whenever possible, feedback must be got and given to ensure that there is common understanding of a message.

Personal barriers can be overcome only by making a conscious effort, and by training for better communication. Persons in responsible positions are expected to improve their communication skills and overcome their particular blocks. Many companies organize training sessions for their staff for better communication skills.

Barriers can develop unexpectedly since emotions play a large part in communication. It is not easy to overcome all barriers; everyone has to make efforts to be aware of them and take care to avoid them.

To reduce misunderstanding when communicating with people from different cultures, these rules may be useful:

It is better not to assume similarity until you are sure. We tend to think others are similar to us and are often surprised to find they are quite different in their thinking. It is safer to assume difference till you are sure of similarity. Depend on description rather than evaluation or interpretation; persons from different cultures evaluate and interpret differently. Before communicating, try to feel yourself in the other's role, values and frame of reference.

Working in other cultures means understanding the hosts' conception of greetings, timing, hygiene, negotiation, agreement, politeness, personal space, gesture, meal etiquette, and closure.

EXERCISES

1. What is meant by barriers to communication? How and why do they occur?
2. What can be done to overcome the barriers to communication?
3. "The responsibility for the success of communication always lies on the senior person."
Discuss the statement.
4. What are the problems of cross-cultural communication?
5. Fill in the blanks:
 - (a) Barriers to communication can be classified into _____, _____ and _____
 - (b) _____, _____, and _____ are some of the socio-psychological barriers.
 - {c} Responsibility for trying to overcome barriers to communication lies with _____ %
6. Complete the sentence by choosing the correct alternative,
 - (i) Semantic barriers are created by _____
 - (a) difference in age between sender and receiver.
 - (b) disturbance in the environment.
 - (c) divergence in individual understanding of meanings of words.
 - (d) difficulties in accepting others' ideas.
7. Are these statements true?
 - (a) Socio-psychological barriers can be overcome only by one's own effort.
 - (b) External barriers can be overcome by individual effort,
 - (c) Semantic barriers can be eliminated by acquiring an excellent command of the language.
 - (d) There would be no semantic barriers if all people spoke the same language.
 - (e) Semantic barriers can arise among people who speak the same language.
 - (f) Organizations have to make regular efforts to prevent communication barriers.
 - (g) Differences in rules of social behaviour contribute largely to cross cultural barriers to communication.
 - (h) It is the responsibility of the sender of a message to overcome barriers to communication.
 - (i) Continuous effort is needed to ensure that communication is successful.

CONTENTS

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Lesson: 7**ON THE JOB COMMUNICATION**

An interview is a formal meeting in which a person or persons question consult or evaluate another person or persons. Reporters and writers have meetings with eminent persons to ask questions to gather material for a media story broadcast. It is an oral, face-to-face communication.

An interview reveals the views, ideas and attitudes of the person being interviewed as well as the skills of the interviewer. Both, the interviewer and the interviewee must be well prepared for an interview.

While the interview for publication is confined to outstanding personalities and journalists, the interview for employment is an inevitable experience for everyone. The employment interview needs a good deal of preparation by both the interviewer and the candidate and is discussed here in detail.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW

Interviews are classified by the purpose for which the interview is held.

The interview is used in an organization for several purposes besides selection for employment. Interviews of present employees are a channel of upward communication. Employees' attitudes, opinions and views, ideas and suggestions, feelings of fear, hopes and ambitions are revealed during an interview. Rumours which circulate among employees do not move upward through regular, routine channels; they can be made to move upward through interviews.

Besides, the interview is used for getting feedback in specific situations and for finding out information.

Promotion Interview

Persons due for promotion are interviewed even if there is no competition. The interview is likely to be informal and serves as induction into a new team, with new responsibilities. Clarifications about nature of duties and responsibilities and expectations are made during a promotion interview. If there is competition for promotion, the interview helps in the selection process and may also serve as an opportunity for a discussion of career opportunities for each candidate.

Grievance Interview

A grievance is resentment or complaint against some injustice which may be real or imagined. It is unhealthy for an employee to nurse a grievance. Human Resources staff sets up an interview with a person who has a grievance. The employee is given the opportunity to air the grievance, and efforts are made to correct any injustice. If the grievance is imaginary, efforts are made to make the employee see the situation differently. This type of interview is successful only if the person with the grievance is given full opportunity to speak and state his point of view. The interview needs patience and empathy to listen attentively.

Appraisal or Assessment Interview

An appraisal interview is one of the methods of periodical assessment of employees. There are other methods like completion of self-assessment forms and assessment by supervisors. But annual appraisal interview is the best method for judging employees' attitudes. A face-to-face confidential talk is an opportunity for both, the employee and the supervisor to discuss several issues.

This interview is more a discussion than question-answer. The focus is on the career development of the employee; short-comings, areas which need improvement, areas which can be further strengthened, training needs, job enrichment and opportunities for promotion, etc, may be discussed at the interview.

Problem Interview

A problem interview is a meeting with a problem employee. An employee whose performance or behaviour is unsatisfactory in spite of warning represents a problem. An interview is more likely to suggest a solution than warnings and notices. The reason for the employee's poor performance can be found out in a face-to-face talk; it may be domestic problems, ill health, lack of training or dissatisfaction with the job, failure to adjust to the environment, etc. Many organizations have facilities for counselling staff; the employee may be offered a session with the counsellor.

If the employee's behaviour is unsatisfactory, the interview can be used for giving a clear understanding of what is expected, and what will be the consequences of unacceptable conduct. The interviewer needs persuasion and negotiating skills for such interviews.

Reprimand Interview

A reprimand is a warning; it is given after efforts have been made to correct the employee's work and behaviour. The purpose of this interview is to let a seriously erring employee know that his/her behaviour or work is unsatisfactory and the management is displeased with his/her conduct. Usually such an interview is given after the employee has been given an opportunity to explain himself and the explanation has been considered unacceptable. A report of the interview is filed in the employee's personal service file.

Exit Interview

An exit interview is given to an employee who has resigned. Several things can be accomplished in an exit interview. The organization can —

1. —find out the precise reason for the employee's decision to leave. If there has been any misunderstanding or ill-feeling, there is an opportunity to clear it. It is better for an organization's public image to maintain good relations with past employees.
2. —get feedback on employees' attitudes to and opinion of the organization's policies. An employee who is leaving has no fear of the bosses' displeasure and is likely to express his opinion of the organization's employee relations, public relations, sales policies etc., quite freely.
3. —check all the details and information in the employee's personal record file to make sure that they are up-to-date.

4. —give the final pay cheque, or information about when it will be ready and how it will be handed over.
5. —give information about accrued benefits like sick leave, earned leave which % has not been used by the employee. The employee will also have made some calculations and may be anxious to know if the boss concurs.
6. —give information about Provident Fund, Group Insurance or any other benefits, and how and when the dues will be paid.
7. —check that all books, manuals, tools, equipment which were issued to the employee have been returned. When the exit interview is handled carefully and tactfully it can be an asset to the organization.

Stress Interview

As the name suggests, a stress interview puts the candidate into difficult situations in order to test her/his reaction to stress. This method is used for selection for positions in which the person must be able to face difficult situations without getting upset. A stress interview tests such qualities as courage, tact, cool temper, and self-command, which are needed when confronted by employees or people in big or small groups.

Several methods are used to throw the candidate out of balance:

Rapid fire questions on several topics at once; questions asked by different members of the panel together; cross questioning and arguing, disputing the candidate's statements, ridiculing the answers; subjecting her/him to silence and inattention. Only a cool-headed and self-possessed candidate responds appropriately and passes the test. Interviewers need practice and training in taking a stress interview.

The candidate must be informed at the end that it was a stress interview. % % **Panel Interview**

There is a panel of three or four persons who interview the candidate. They belong to different fields of expertise; one may be a technical or function expert. Assessment is made by the panel together, using rating scales or other assessment tools. **The** candidate has to communicate with all members of the panel.

Telephone Interview

Preliminary assessment of a proposal (for a job or a deal) may be made by holding a telephone conversation. Each side may ask questions to collect information about the proposal. While it is possible to make a fairly good assessment of some kinds of deals by telephone, a face-to-face interview is essential for a final decision on recruitment. For jobs in which the interviewee's telephone voice, skills and etiquette are the most important, as in a BPO, final decision may be taken on the basis of the telephone interview.

EMPLOYMENT OR SELECTION INTERVIEW

The most important objective of the selection interview is to assess the suitability of the candidates for specific jobs. The interview is the basis for important decisions for both, the employer

and the candidate. The interviewer has to decide whether the candidate should be appointed; an organization wants to find the right persons for employment and the selection can affect the organization. The candidate has to decide whether he will accept the job; this decision will influence his career.

Employment interviews are usually taken by a panel of interviewers. The panel may have expert interviewers who can draw out and reveal aspects of the candidate's personality which are important for the job. There would also be technical experts and departmental heads and other senior officers to whom the person in the post would report.

For announced vacancies, interviews are taken in a suitable room in the organization's office. Many organizations recruit promising candidates by holding campus interviews in professional colleges and institutions.

An interview may take anything from ten minutes to forty-five minutes or even longer. Interviewers spend more time on good candidates; they have to gather enough information about the candidates to be able to assess their suitability to join the organization. The candidates too must find out about the organization, its employee policies and culture, what it expects the recruits to do and what opportunities for career development it offers. Both, the candidate and the interviewer must be well prepared for the interview.

Candidate's Preparation

The candidate must be physically, mentally and psychologically prepared for the interview. It is not only information and knowledge of the candidate that is assessed at an interview; the whole personality is assessed.

(a) Physical preparation:

(i) The candidate is expected to be properly groomed and formally dressed. Clean and well-cut nails, properly combed hair and general personal hygiene are very important. Well-laundered and well-fitting clothes, neat footwear, and a suitable hand-bag or brief case are the normal requirements of formal appearance.

(ii) Posture, that is, carriage and bearing, develop over the years; it cannot be changed in a short time. Those who find their posture is poor, must practice to improve it. The way a candidate carries himself while standing, walking and sitting reveals a good deal about him. Self-confidence, nervousness or over confidence, are all reflected in the posture and bearing of the candidate. Note your body movements, and take care to stop any bad habitual movements.

(iii) Good manners and conduct are necessary. The candidate must know what is the suitable greeting for the time of the day. Indian style greeting of "namaste" is acceptable if the company is Indian and all interviewers are Indian.

- Do not offer to shake hands unless it is offered by an interviewer.
- Do not sit until you are asked to sit down; if you are not asked to sit, ask for permission to sit: "May I sit down?" should be said politely and without embarrassment.
- Take care while handling the chair; it should not be dragged noisily or clumsily. Sit comfortably and with good posture.
- If you have a large brief case, put it down on the floor near the chair. If you have a small

hand bag, keep it on your lap. Be comfortable and well practiced in handling your bag or brief case.

- Do not put elbows or hands on the table. Practice keeping hands comfortably when you are not using them.
- Maintain comfortable posture throughout the interview.
- At the end of the interview, remember to thank the interviewers and wish them Good day.

(b) Mental preparation:

(i) For new job-seekers, it is necessary to revise subjects studied for the completed examinations and courses. Knowledge in the field of specialization must be up-to-date. It is absolutely necessary to take a look at your bio-data, and be prepared to give more information about all items including hobbies and other interests mentioned in it.

(ii) Current events, important current issues in the country and in the world will be subjects at the interview. Regular reading of newspapers, listening to TV news and discussions on current issues are useful in being well-informed. Some personal views and opinions on current issues may be asked for; candidates must be able to discuss issues intelligently and support their opinions with well-considered reasons.

(iii) Information about the interviewing company, its owners/directors, its products, its turnover, share capital, etc., are available in the company's annual report. The candidate must find out as much information as possible about the company whose employment she/he seeks.

(iv) A number of biographical questions and general questions are asked at an interview. Questions listed later in this chapter are representative of questions asked and it will be useful to be well prepared with them.

(c) Psychological preparation:

Several situations or questions during an interview can cause discomfort or embarrassment to the candidate. It is better to anticipate some, and be prepared to handle such situations or questions. Balance of mind is needed to deal with a discouraging situation. Psychological preparedness has to be built up slowly and gradually. It is a part of personality and character development during education.

(i) Honesty in answering questions is the best policy. Dishonesty generally shows up, and makes a bad impression. It is better to admit inability to answer a question than to pretend and guess answers. No one is expected to know everything; it is more important to know the sources of information. Being able to admit lack of information on a topic without loss of face is a strong point.

(ii) Inability to discuss a topic makes a bad impression. If there is any topic that seems too embarrassing to talk about, it is useful to read up information on it and talk about it objectively to a few friends for practice. Inhibitions can be dealt with only by facing them.

(iii) Salary is a topic that must be discussed at the interview. It is important to talk about the

compensation package without appearing to be bargaining, or being driven or defeated. Information about salaries given for such jobs and one's qualifications, and a good self-assessment should give a candidate the confidence to negotiate the compensation package.

(iv) A candidate must have the clarity of purpose and determination to want to know her/his prospects in the organization. Information about the nature of duties, future prospects, other benefits, and any other desired information must be got before leaving. The information is necessary for taking a decision, especially if there are other job offers.

(d) Self-assessment:

Anyone who wants to be successful in life, must make a good self-assessment. Knowledge of one's strong points and weaknesses is very useful in gaining self-confidence. Self-assessment takes time and should be done carefully and patiently. Parents and close friends can help in pointing out faults and in correcting them and also in finding out strong points and strengthening them.

Coming to terms with oneself, knowing how to deal with one's faults, and how to make good use of one's talents and skills is excellent preparation for an interview. It adds a great deal of self-confidence and poise to the personality.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

1. My favourite activities are: (i) (ii)
2. My best skills are:
 - (i) Describing, narrating, explaining, discussing, elocution
 - (ii) Drawing, cartooning, photography
 - (iii) Writing letters, summarizing, reports, stories, poems
 - (iv) Solving problems, settling conflicts, persuading, listening
 - (v) Figures: geometry, maths, accounting, statistics,
 - (vi) Singing, dancing, craft, languages, time management, Yoga, interaction
3. I like to work alone/ in a group
4. My contribution to —
 - (i) family:
 - (ii) friends:
 - {iii} my school/college:
 - (iv) society
5. The skills I have acquired from this are:
6. What are my hobbies?
7. What kind of activities do my hobbies involve?
8. What have I learnt from my hobbies?
9. What are my interests? (Travel, photography, sports, craft)
10. How can I do these activities purposefully?
11. What kind of room/environment do I like to work in?
12. What makes me

- (i) Angry
- (ii) Happy
- (iii) Sad

13. What is my height (cm), weight (kg), state of health and history of health, posture, state of mind, (all facts about myself) date and place of birth, languages I know, family background, places I have visited.

14. What advantages and disadvantages do I have from each of these? Do any of them make me especially fit or unfit for specific tasks/ positions/ jobs?

15. What achievement have I made in the last one year, (in my-life so far) of which I am proud? Why am I proud of it?

16. What are the things I hate doing?

(i)

(ii)

17. What frightens me the most?

18. What subjects do I hate and why?

19. What kind of work do I tend to avoid/ put off?

20. What kind of TV programs do I dislike? Why?

A. List at least 10 skills which you have developed in each of the following areas: Education/ Work/Internships or Volunteer/Extracurricular, use "action words" to write one-line summaries.

B. Circle each of the skills listed in part A that you would like to use in your job. If there are other talents you have that you would like to use on the job, add them to the list of circled skills. Then rank the skills in order of those you most want to use.

C. Make a list of what you consider to be 3 great accomplishments in your life. What personal qualities helped you reach each goal?

The Interview

Candidates should arrive at the place of interview at least ten minutes before the given time. It helps to look around the place and get a feel of the organization.

An interview can be considered as having four parts, all of which must be properly performed: Entry, Answering questions, Asking questions, and Leaving. A candidate is under observation from the moment of showing up at the door till she/he goes out of the door.

Entry: The candidate walks into an unfamiliar room; s/he must be able to adjust quickly to the size and appearance of the room. Manner of opening and closing the door, walking, greeting, and taking the chair will show whether the candidate is clumsy or graceful and well-mannered, nervous or composed and confident. An inexperienced candidate might feel nervous at the time of entry; being nervous is not a shortcoming and it usually disappears when the interview begins.

Entry takes only a minute, but it makes the first impression and impact. A natural pleasant expression makes a better impression than a grim, tense expression or a vain attempt to appear relaxed.

Answering questions: This takes the major part of the interview time. Good interviewers take care to make the candidate feel comfortable because they are interested in finding out the qualities and suitability of the candidate for their job; a nervous and uncomfortable candidate does not show his best qualities. It is in the interest of both that the candidate should be composed and calm

Questions range from details of education and experience, special abilities, personal interests, family background and circumstances, to any problems faced and handled in the past. The questions are meant to test the candidate's information and knowledge as well as personal qualities, character, attitude to work and life, career goals, motivation, and circumstances. The list of questions given later will be useful in making a self-assessment as well as in preparation for an interview.

Asking questions: The candidate is often invited to ask questions. If not invited, you may seek permission to ask for information by saying, "May I ask a few questions?" or "May I ask for some information?"

The questions you ask will depend on your situation, the position you are applying for, and your relationship with the interviewees} and the organization.

The questions should arise out of clarity of purpose, motivation and career goals. You may ask about working conditions, prospects of career growth in the organization, working relationships, etc. Some examples are given below:

- Will this job involve travelling?
- Does the company provide any training or other educational opportunities for staff?
- What are the avenues for promotion?
- When can I expect to hear from you?

The questions must be asked politely and with sincere desire to get information to assess the opportunities the job offers.

Depending on the company, a candidate, especially an experienced person, may ask more confident questions like the following:

- May I see a copy of the job description?
- Why has this job become available?
- Why did the person who held this position leave?
- What qualities are you seeking in a person for this job?
- What is the next step?
- When will you make the selection?
- What would a normal working day be like?
- Can you explain the position and the type of candidate you would like to hire?
- What do you expect from the successful candidate in the first two months?
- Is this a newly created position? If not, what happened to the person who held this position?
- Who will the new employee report to?

- Do you see any major changes within the company that will affect this position?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- Is it possible to tour the facility?
- What is the dress code?

Leaving: Interviewers generally indicate when the interview is over. They may say something like, “Thank you, we’ll get in touch with you later.” Like the entry, leaving takes a very short time, but can be confusing and uncomfortable for an inexperienced candidate. Leave taking should be responsive to the interviewers.

- Thank the interviewers.
- Collect and pack all papers and files quickly and neatly.
- Get up gracefully, without scraping the chair.
- Wish them Good day.
- Do not offer to shake hands; but be alert; if anyone offers to shake hands be quick to take it.
- Put the chair back in its place.
- Walk away with good bearing.
- Shut the door carefully and noiselessly.

On the same day or the next day, send a personalized thank-you letter to the interviewers (or HR Manager or the person to whom you had addressed your application) to refresh their memory of you. This gives you an opportunity to briefly mention any experience or skills that were not discussed in your interview. If possible, mention something that happened in the interview.

Make a “post-interview assessment”, that is, a careful analysis of what you did well and what you could improve on during the interview.

QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED IN INTERVIEWS

Some commonly asked questions are given here; the list is not comprehensive. Well prepared interviewers ask some very probing questions.

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. In what school/college activities did you take part? Which did you enjoy the most?
3. Do you think the extra-curricular activities were worth the time you spent on them? Why?
4. What college subjects did you like the most (least)? Why?
5. Did you earn any part of your college expenses? How?
6. How did you spend your college vacations?
7. How often have you been absent from school/ college/ work/ training?
8. What is your opinion of the education and training you have received?
9. What have you learnt from your extra-curricular activities in school/college?
10. Did you enjoy the years you spent in college?
11. Which of your college years were the most difficult? Why?
12. How were your relations with your fellow- students? with your teachers?
13. Would you choose the same college again? Why?

14. How did you spend your free time while in college?
15. What contribution did you make to NSS /any other social service while in college? What did you learn from it?
16. Why did you choose your particular specialisation (professional course/career)?
17. Why did you choose this particular field of work?
18. How has your education (training) prepared you for a career in this field?
19. How has your college experience prepared you for this job?
20. Have you ever changed your major field of interest while in college? Why did you make the change?
21. Do you think examination grades should be considered by employers? Why?
22. What qualities do you have that might make you successful in this field?
23. Why do you think you would like this particular job?
24. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in this job/field?
25. What do you know about the opportunities in your field of training?
26. What are the disadvantages of your chosen field?
27. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
28. Why do you think you would like to work in. our company?
29. What do you know about this company?
30. What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
31. Do you prefer any specific geographic location? Why?
32. Do you prefer working with others or in a team (or alone by yourself?)
33. What are your career plans?
34. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
35. What kind of work interests you?
36. What are some of the things you find difficult to do?
37. How do you work under pressure? Can you describe a situation in which you worked well under pressure?
38. What causes you to lose temper?
39. Under what conditions do you work best?
40. Why did you (do you want to) leave your previous job?
41. How did your previous employers treat you?
42. What kind of trouble have you had with other people on the job?
43. What have you learned from the jobs you have held?
44. Are you looking for a permanent or a temporary job?
45. Do you like regular hours? routine work?
46. How would you describe the ideal job for you?
47. What criteria do you use to evaluate the company you want to work in?
48. Can you take correction without getting upset? How do you know?
49. What is your father's occupation? your mother's occupation?
50. Which of your parents has had the greater influence on you?

51. What part does family play in your life?
52. What has been the most painful experience of your life?
53. What two accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
54. What do you consider your most proud achievement?
55. And can you describe a situation when it was not so good?
56. What do you consider your worst failure?
57. How long do you expect to work here?
58. What do you really want to do in life?
59. Define cooperation.
60. What preparation did you make for this interview?
61. What does the name ___ mean to you? (anyone currently in the news)
62. What is your major weakness?
63. What do you do to keep physically fit?
64. How do you spend Sundays and holidays?
65. Have you had any serious illness or injury?
66. Are you willing to go where the company sends you?
67. What type of books do you read?
68. What is the last book you read? What is it about? Why did you like (not like) it?
69. What type of TV programs do you like best?
70. Name two or three things most important to you in life.
71. Tell me about your family background.
72. Tell me about your personal life.
73. What type of persons seem to rub you the wrong way?
74. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? the least? Why?
75. How do you get on with persons whose background and interests are different from yours?
76. Have you ever taught a student of a lower class?
77. What are your special skills/abilities?
78. What kind of work interests you? bores you?
79. Have you got an analytical mind? How do you know?
80. What do you consider the highest form of praise?
81. Do you enjoy sports as a participant? as an observer?
82. Would you prefer to work in a large company or a small company? Why?
83. What is your idea about the pressure under which industry operates today?
84. What have you done so far which shows your initiative and willingness to work?
85. How would your best friend describe you?
86. How would an enemy describe you?
87. What are your salary expectations?
88. What did you earn in your last job?
89. What do you expect to earn in five years from now?
90. What major problems have you encountered and how did you deal with them?

91. What have you learned from your mistakes?

92. Did you ever have problems with your supervisor? 93- Why should we hire you?

Role of Interviewer

Good candidates have the option of choosing the organization they want to work for, and to accept or reject a job offer. With changing times, organisations have less power to select or reject a candidate. Interviews have the dual role of attracting candidates and selecting candidates.

The impression that an organization makes on candidates is important. The manner in which the waiting candidates are treated influences the public image of the organization.

The following aspects make an impression and must be arranged properly.

- Candidates should be received with proper welcome and directions to go to the right room. They must be treated respectfully like clients and other visitors. Arrangements must be made for their reception, seating, tea and so on.
- The given schedule should be followed; delays make a negative impression.
- The environment where the candidates wait, and the room in which they are interviewed must be pleasant. Crowding, noise, chaos, poor ventilation, lack of cleanliness make a poor impression. .
- The interview itself must be a well-organized process. Clear information on job description, required qualifications, emoluments, organization's mission or goal, and other information about the organization should be readily available.
- Candidates should be given information on the result of the interview as soon as possible so that they are not kept waiting.

In order to make an-interview fruitful, the interviewer must be adequately prepared. The interviewer must have a clear idea of the qualities and skills required for the particular job. Job description which gives all the details of the elements of the job must be kept in mind.

Job description gives: 'Title of the post' and its 'position' in the organization; that is, to whom the person reports and who reports to the person holding it. 'Duties and responsibilities' are indicated by a list of the tasks which must be carried out by the person in the post. 'Working conditions' indicates the working hours, physical conditions of the place of work, especially if they are different from the normal; very high/low temperature or lighting, unusual hours, night duties, requirement of high mobility, or any other stress conditions are indicated. 'Economic conditions' indicates salary, allowances, benefits, leave, bonus, retirement benefits, etc.

The job description is used to prepare a description of the personal qualities required of the person who will do the job. This is called Personnel Specification; it is an outline description of the kind of person who would be suitable for the job. It is not used for a value judgement of a candidate; it is a way of finding the most suitable person to match the job requirements. A personality sketch of a person can be developed by assessment in five areas

- (i) Impact is the effect of the candidate's personality on others. It depends partly on the appearance and clothes, and largely on the bearing and self-confidence. Communication skills are a very important factor. Different types of jobs need different levels of impact; a PRO needs it in large measure, while an accountant needs a lower level of impact.

{ii} Qualifications include education, training and experience. The details of qualifications are stated in the bio-data. Interview questions on this aspect probe what the candidate has learnt from the experience, and exactly what skill the candidate has acquired.

{iii} Abilities and skills are developed by training and experience; there are also natural abilities. Quickness of understanding, response and reaction to questions and situations at the interview are usually noted. Questions may be asked to find out the level of skill attained in a particular field. Different jobs need different levels of various skills and abilities.

{iv} Adjustment is the emotional balance which a person maintains. This is an important quality for a person to be able to work and get on with others, and to endure difficult or stressing situations. Some jobs require a higher level of stress tolerance than others.

{v} Motivation is indicated by the goals a person sets for oneself and the standards maintained by the person in all activities. Determination to achieve goals and skill in overcoming difficulties also indicate motivation. A person with high motivation is a misfit in a routine job without challenges. The level of the selected candidate's motivation should be suitable for the nature of work.

Interviewer's preparation

Preparation for the interview has to be made well in advance. The received applications are sorted and scrutinized, and qualified candidates are selected for interviewing. If the number of candidates is large, some are eliminated by examining and assessing the presentation of application letter and bio-data.

A panel of interviewers is selected on the basis of requirements of the job and the assessment which has to be made at the interview. A date for the interview is fixed, and the interviewers as well as the selected candidates are sent letters informing them of the date, time and place of the interview. Interviewers may be sent copies of the candidates' bio-data, job descriptions, etc. The candidates' names and other details are tabulated for use during the interview. A copy of the tabulation is provided to each member of the interview panel.

On the day of the interview, the room in which the interview is to be conducted is suitably arranged. The interviewer must see that all conditions are suitable for fair assessment of candidates so that the purpose of the interview is fulfilled.

Another room near the interview room is also arranged for candidates to be seated while waiting to be interviewed. A senior office staff and a peon attend to the needs of the waiting candidates.

Preparing questions: Besides these physical preparations, each panel member has to examine the bio-data of candidates and pre-prepare questions based on the bio-data for each candidate.

Questions can be asked in three ways; each requires a different type of answer and also makes a different impression on the candidate, who tries to answer accordingly.

Can you prepare a trial balance? requires yes or no for answer, and makes the candidate think this skill is one of the requirements of the job.

You can prepare a trial balance, can't you! suggests that it is an essential skill for the job and may put the candidate on the defensive.

How far can you take the books of accounts? makes the candidate describe his skill. Questions which begin with What, How or Why make the candidate speak and give more information; questions which begin with Where, When and Who require limited information.

Conducting the Interview

The interviewer requires several social and interpersonal communication skills.

Welcoming: The interviewees or chairman of the panel must welcome the candidate when he enters, offer him a seat and make him comfortable. A nervous and uncomfortable candidate is difficult to assess; suitable conditions for assessment must be created in order not to waste time and the opportunity of finding suitable staff. A relaxed atmosphere can be created by having a brief conversation unrelated to the interview and by using the candidate's name. A social question or remark like, Did you have difficulty reaching here? if the place is far from the candidate's address, or How do you find the weather in Mumbai (or whichever city it is)? to an outside resident, or You have come a long way for this interview; are you comfortable? can encourage the candidate to be communicative. These can be pre-planned on the basis of each one's bio-data.

Asking questions: This is the most important and longest part of the interview. A good strategy will help to obtain valid and accurate information. The strategy includes these steps:

Develop rapport to encourage the candidate to feel involved; a candidate is more willing to speak openly if the interview shows respect and understanding of his/her needs.

Focus attention and show interest in the candidate's answers and any questions he/ she may ask. Using the candidate's choice of terms and phrases for comments, further questions and to answer questions demonstrates that the interviewer is tuned in.

Note non-verbal and verbal indications of the candidate's emotional state such as defensiveness or resistance to open communication.

Re-phrase the conversation if doubts or resistance appear.

For example, you may say, "What you are saying is —. Is that so?" or "I understand that what you mean is—. Am I right?"

Watch for phrases that try to establish credibility. "I'll be frank with you" "Well, to be quite honest...", "I wouldn't say this to everybody," are often preludes to an attempt at deception.

Friendly responses to what the candidate says make the candidate comfortable and encourage him to speak. While some of the communication at an interview is discussion (not just question-and-answer) the interviewers must take care to see that the candidate speaks the most; if the interview panel begin to discuss among themselves, assessment opportunities are reduced.

It is important not to be sneering or sarcastic; a candidate must never be humiliated even if it is obvious that he is unsuitable. Humiliated candidates speak badly of the organization and

spread word that it insults visitors. This is bad for the organization's public image and can damage its prospects of attracting good staff. Insulting interview candidates also demonstrates poor organizational culture.

If a candidate is subjected to "stress" interview to judge his stress tolerance, the candidate should be told at the end of it that it was stress interviewing and that he need not feel anxious about it. The candidate should never be made to leave with a stressed, anxious feeling.

Giving information The candidate needs information about the job, the organization, about his prospects, etc and might want to ask questions. The questions must be answered clearly and fully; if any information cannot be given the candidate should be told so, with justification whenever possible. Openness in communication is healthier than secretiveness.

Concluding When all required information has been satisfactorily exchanged, the interviewer (chairman of panel) must conclude the interview with a suitable remark to indicate to the candidate that the interview is over. Leave taking must be pleasant and sociable, with response to the candidate's wishing.

The most direct way to end the interview is simply to say, "Well, I've asked the questions I needed to. Is there anything more you'd like to say or ask?"

If the candidate is to be called for a second interview, it is worth addressing these points:

- Make sure that the candidate is interested enough in the position to justify further discussion.
- Briefly indicate the decision making process for filling the post; for example how many more persons are to be interviewed and how long it will take.
- Inform the candidate approximately when to expect a call for scheduling another interview.

Thank the candidate for his/her time and interest in the organization.

For those candidates that are clearly not to be called for another interview, inform them that interviews will take up the next few days/weeks and that all candidates will be contacted at the end of the process whether they are called for second interview or not.

Assessment: This is a continuous process during an interview. Every candidate is assessed individually for personal ability and performance and also in comparison with other candidates. Members of the panel discuss each candidate and also grade them according to their suitability for the job. The assessment and grading is constantly reviewed as more candidates are assessed. At the end, a final ranking is made.

EXERCISES

1. You have been called for an interview next week, for a job as market research assistant. What preparation would you make? Write your answers to these questions which may be asked at the interview:
 - (i) What makes you think you will be successful in a market research job?
 - (ii) What do you do to keep yourself physically fit?
 - (iii) What is your idea of market research?

Write two questions which you would like to ask the inter-viewer.

2. Write answers to five of the questions given in this chapter, everyday till you have answered all the questions.
3. Read your answers six months later, and see if you would like to revise any of them. Give reasons for making changes and also for not making changes.
4. What questions would make you uncomfortable in an interview? Write down your three most uncomfortable questions.
5. Write down three questions that you would like to ask the interviewers at your first interview for a job.
6. What preparation does the interviewer have to make for an interview?
7. What aspects do interviewers assess when they interview candidates?
8. What is an interview? For what purposes is it used?
9. Write short notes on:
 - (a) Appraisal interview
 - (b) Exit interview
 - (c) Stress interview
 - (d) Candidate's preparation for employment interview
10. Fill in the blanks in as few words as possible.
 - (a) An exit interview is taken when —
 - (b) In a — interview, the candidate is often made to feel uncomfortable in order to -.
 - (c) An appraisal interview is —.

CHAPTER 8

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION-BARRIERS

The letter is the oldest method of sending a message, Today, in spite of the telephone and the e-mail, the letter is still an important method of communication. The letter maintains the personal touch, serves as a record, and as a means of keeping other parties informed by sending copies.

Letters are written for getting and giving quotations, making and answering enquiries, contacting potential customers, persuading potential customers to buy, making and answering complaints, making credit inquiries, collecting dues, and maintaining relations with various members of the public. Maintaining customer relations and handling problems requires some very skilful letter writing. Good companies take every opportunity to write letters to customers in order to create and maintain goodwill.

Letters must aim at getting a favourable response from readers. In order to write good letters you need knowledge of language and a clear, concise style of writing. You also need knowledge of the working, procedures, policies and aims of your organization. As a person, you must be sincere, confident, self-respecting and friendly; these qualities are reflected in the style of the letter.

Electronic media like fax and e-mail have high speed and can transmit the written word instantaneously. Messages are now more informal and conversational in style. Letter writing style is changing as a letter may be a confirmation or a follow-up of an earlier message sent by telephone or e-mail or fax.

C's OF EFFECTIVE LETTER WRITING

The qualities which are essential for a good letter are collectively called the Cs of communication because most of them begin with the letter C. The main qualities are correctness, clarity, conciseness, and courtesy. Other related qualities are completeness, coherence, compactness, confidence, consideration, friendliness, directness and vigour; these qualities are found in any writing which takes care of the first 4 Cs.

Correctness

A letter must be correct in every respect:

(i) In spelling, grammar and use of language. Incorrect language spoils the message, distracts the reader's attention, and creates a poor impression of the sender; it may also convey a wrong meaning. All spellings must be checked; spelling of names must be checked with extra care; misspelt names always give offence. Note that the computer cannot check all spellings; it will accept both *steal* and *steel* as correctly spelt words.

(ii) In appearance and form of layout. Poor and untidy appearance, with corrections made in ink or carelessness in the layout, creates a poor impression of the company. Appearance depends on placing the parts of layout correctly on the letterhead and having proper margins on

all sides. In manual typing, even space between letters, words, lines and parts of layout, must also be given attention.

(iii) In the information it conveys. Wrong or incomplete information is the most harmful thing in a letter; it leads to waste of time in making corrections and can lead to loss of goodwill and loss of business. All dates and days, time, numbers and facts must be in agreement. Nothing is more confusing than mismatched information. Correctness depends on completeness. A letter is complete only when it presents all the ideas and information required for the particular situation.

(iv) In tone, formality and style. The tone of every letter must be appropriate to the occasion, the content and the relationship between the writer and the reader. An overdone apology can sound childish or undignified; a grudging or patronizing agreement to grant a request can sound unpleasant.

Clarity

The message of the letter must be clear at the first reading. The information explosion of today takes up so much of everyone's time; people appreciate a letter that takes very little time to read and understand. Clearly written messages avoid misunderstanding and save time.

Consider the following examples of ambiguous writing:

- Please state from what date the patient was ordered to stay in bed and totally incapacitated by your instructions.
- This has been caused by wrong placing of words.
- Certain remedies are available for this condition.

The ambiguity here is caused by the two meanings of the word "certain": definite and some; both meanings are grammatically correct in this sentence.

And here is another example of ambiguous language, probably an attempt to be non-committal.

- We feel that we are inclined to the position that the facts in the case point sufficiently strongly to disregard of basic rules of safe defensive driving as to make consideration of a much more severe penalty more appropriate.

To be clear is to be efficient; but unfortunately, few people take the trouble to be clear in their writing.

Clarity depends upon five factors:

(i) Simple, common everyday words which everyone can understand. Never send the reader to the dictionary. There should be no technical terms unless absolutely needed and if you are communicating within the profession. Abstract words like *beautiful* and *unjust* are often misunderstood as they convey different ideas to different persons. It is better to use concrete words with a definite meaning, or to give concrete examples and description.

Here are some big words often found in letters; the words in the right column are the short, preferable substitute.

Big word	Substitute
incombustible	fireproof
optimum	best
substantiate	prove
terminate	end
utilise	use

(ii) Short and simple sentences. Long sentences confuse the reader, and often confuse the writer also. Phrases and clauses should not be added on to a sentence. Each bit of important information should be given in a separate sentence.

Sentences with an average sentence length of 15 to 20 words keep the writing clear. This does not mean all sentences should have the same length. Longer sentences are balanced with shorter ones, but the average sentence length should be well below 20 words.

Using active verbs rather than passive verbs is the key to good writing. Sentences with passive verbs are long, ambiguous, impersonal and dull. Sentences with active verbs make your writing simpler, less formal, clearer and more precise. Here is an example:

Passive: It was agreed by the committee...

Active: The committee agreed...

(iii) Proper punctuation. It helps to provide pauses and stops and to break up groups of words into sensible units. Besides the full stop, there are other, shorter pauses like the semi-colon and the comma which help to break up a sentence into readable units. A sentence can often be made more easy to follow by using a punctuation mark.

(iv) Giving definite and concrete details with figures and names. Here are examples of vague or general phrases, with specific phrases in the right column.

General	Specific
high performance	95% efficiency
plant	oil refinery (or whatever)
unfavourable weather conditions	rain
structural degradation	leaky roof (or whatever)
in due course	in two weeks
at your earliest convenience	within three weeks.

(v) Logical sequence of ideas. Making a clear plan for the letter ensures that the ideas are in logical order; coherence, that is, logical connection of ideas makes any composition easy to read.

(vi) Consistency in the use of numbers, dates, units of measure, technical terms, abbreviations, hyphens, grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. British or American spellings and style of writing the date vary. Hyphenation, punctuation and capitalization do not have absolutely fixed rules. Whatever you decide on, be consistent throughout the document.

Conciseness

Conciseness means expressing much in a few words; in business writing it means keeping to the point, using as few words as possible without sacrificing clarity or courtesy. It does not necessarily mean being brief; it means making every word count. Some companies lay down a limit of one page for inter-office memos in order to ensure concise writing.

Conciseness can be achieved by:

(i) Leaving out unnecessary modifiers; for example, some writers talk of “new innovation;” (can there be an old innovation?) or “very unique” (unique means only “one of its kind”). Other examples are: “advance plans”, “actual experience”, “cylindrical in shape”, “three cubic meters in volume.”

(ii) Reducing less important ideas to phrases or single words like.

Phrase	Short phrase /word
in the form of	as
in many cases	often
exhibits the ability to	can
on the event of	if
at a later date	later
at the present time	now
or the purpose of	for
have no alternative but	must
in addition to	besides, as well as, also
in order to	to
in relation to	about, in, with, towards, to
on a regular basis	regularly

(iii) Making sure that only the necessary and relevant details are included.

Using more words than necessary confuses the idea as in the following sentence:

- Our experience with having Mr. X as credit customer has been fairly favourable and we are of the opinion that he may be allowed to enjoy the benefits of a credit account of a moderate amount. The writer may have been trying to be non-committal but the sentence does not convey any clear meaning. It is easier to understand if it is concisely written.

- *Our experience with Mr. X as credit customer has been favourable and we consider him to be safe for a credit account of up to Rs. 60,000/-.*

Conciseness and clarity are closely related; giving clear and definite details often reduces the length of a sentence; for example:

- We would appreciate receiving the goods as early as possible since arrangements have to be made for export so that they will reach our foreign customer within the required time.

This can be made concise by giving concrete details instead of vague phrased.

- *Please dispatch the goods so as to reach us by 7 September since we have to ship them to Mexico by the 17th.*

Check all messages to see if it is possible to cut out needless words. If you use ten words where two will do, you will waste the reader's time as well as yours. Readers are thankful for precise and clear messages.

Courtesy

Courtesy is consideration for other people's feelings. It is seen in an individual's behaviour with others. A well-mannered and courteous person shows consideration and thought for others. In a letter, the style, the manner and the choice of words reflect the courtesy of the writer. Some simple rules for courtesy are:

- (i) Use the courtesy words *please*, *thank you* and *sorry* as the situation requires,
- (ii) Express appropriate feeling according to the situation. For example, sympathy when someone suffers, good wishes when someone begins something new, and congratulation when someone achieves something,
- (iii) Make the other person feel comfortable. This is an important factor of courtesy. Care and consideration for the reader is reflected in the letter. The opening sentence itself shows the courtesy of the writer:

- *We appreciate your promptness in sending the goods.*
- *Thank you for sending your quotation so promptly.*
- *We are sorry to learn that you were inconvenienced.*

Requests must also be made courteously:

- *We would appreciate it very much if you could send your cheque within three days of receiving our bill.*
- *Will you please look into the matter at once?*

(iv) Be attentive and prompt in responding. Every letter (and missed telephone call) should be answered within twenty-four hours. If it is a letter of complaint, the response should be immediate; it is courteous to make a phone call or send a fax message immediately on receiving a complaint or hearing about a problem. Everyone appreciates prompt attention.

(v) Let the tone, the choice of words and the style of the message reflect your consideration for the feelings and needs of the reader. This is particularly important if the message to be conveyed is likely to be unpleasant for the reader. A courteous letter has the best chance of getting a favourable response. Seeing the situation as the reader sees it, and taking care of his/her needs, is courtesy. You must have an awareness of how the words sound to the reader.

LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS WRITING

Modern business language is simple, easy to understand, friendly and courteous. Personal relations with customers can be cultivated by writing friendly letters in a natural and informal style.

Old fashioned business language is not suitable for modern business methods and practice.

Letters convey messages; letters must also build goodwill and create positive and pleasant feelings in the reader. Whatever the message of the letter may be, the writer must try to get a favourable emotional response from the reader. A large amount of written material reaches the desk of every businessman executive; there is a great deal of competition for the reader's attention and interest. The brief contact with the reader which a letter makes, must be pleasant and memorable. The manner in which a company's letters are written contributes a great deal to its public image.

Avoiding Business Jargon

Jargon means the vocabulary and phrases peculiar to a particular trade or profession. Business jargon or commercialese refers to the words and phrases which businessmen used in the old days for writing letters. Today, business people are well educated and write good English. Letters, memos and notes and reports are written in modern, simple style which is easy to understand.

Unfortunately, some companies still continue to write in the old-fashioned style. Given below, is a list of out-dated words and phrases which are found in the letters of some old-fashioned companies and government departments. They fail to make personal contact with the reader; they are to be strictly avoided. The following jargon phrases/sentences often occur in the opening paragraph of letters; change them to modern English.

- * Referring to your favour of 17th inst. we have to state that ..
- * Further to my recent letter ...
- * I write in reference to ...
- * In respect of the above ...
- * I refer to previous correspondence
- * This is to inform you...
- * Attached/enclosed herewith please find...

In the closing paragraph the following jargon phrases/sentences are found; they fail to leave any friendly impression on the reader.

- * Thanking you in anticipation
- * Assuring you of our best services at all times
- * Trusting to be favoured with further orders " At your earliest convenience
- * We hope that the position is now clear
- * I trust this clarifies the situation
- * Thanking you for your...
- * Hoping for a prompt reply...
- * Thanking you in advance for your assistance...
- * Trusting this answers your questions...
- * Please do not hesitate to contact me

In the contents of letters, the following jargon phrases appear:

- * said matter
- * deem it advisable

- * as per your letter
- * wherein you state
- * please be advised
- * we wish to state

Such terms are not used in modern letters. They ruin clarity; they are unfriendly and pompous; and they waste typing time.

Dealing with Technical Terms

The use of technical terms is not a problem if the letter is being written to a person who is in a related profession, e.g., a person who knows accounts understands the term “current liabilities” or “fixed assets”; a person familiar with computers understands “megabytes” or “64K”. But when writing to persons who do not know the technical terms, they must be avoided.

If the technical terms are absolutely unavoidable in describing a product, the meaning should be given in plain terms. As far as possible the language should be adapted to lay persons; it should not have any technical terms which the non-professional or non-technical person would not understand.

Meanings and Associations of Words

Words do not have just a dictionary meaning; most words acquire associations and implications. Some words get additional meaning or power of suggestion because of being associated with certain ideas or activities; for example, *investigation* may suggest suspicion, *computerization* may suggest efficiency, speed and accuracy. *Profit* is pleasant suggestion to the seller but is disliked by workers and customers, who think of it as seller’s benefit. *Competition* suggests risk and extra effort to the trader, but lower prices to the buyer.

Certain words like *debt*, *failure*, *complaint*, *deceive*, *cheat* are definitely unpleasant and should be avoided in letters. When such unpleasant matters have to be mentioned, it is better to soften them by saying, outstanding *bill* or *overdue payment*; some unpleasant ideas can be softened by saying *oversight*, *not in accordance with the agreed terms*, or *not as we were led to believe*.

You must develop the skill of using the language so that the letter would never be offensive to the reader.

TAKING THE READER’S POINT OF VIEW

Looking at a situation from the reader’s point of view helps you to frame **the** message in a pleasant and acceptable way. Presenting ideas, suggestions, proposals in such a way that the reader sees how it is advantageous to himself, is called the “You” attitude. “You” attitude is the secret of effective letters.

You must show understanding of the reader’s needs and desires. What does the reader expect from the letter? Naturally, he expects to benefit in some way; to get some useful information, to find out what advantages are available to him. A letter usually proposes that the reader should take an action; the reader’s action will ultimately benefit the writer in some way, but the writer’s

benefit should not be the main point of the letter. The main point and emphasis should be on the advantage of the reader.

Take the trouble to show the reader that it will be to his/her advantage to take the action you are suggesting in the letter. If you think only of your own advantage and offer none to the reader, you cannot get action from the reader. In order to be able to emphasize the reader's advantage, you must look at the situation from the reader's point of view, and try to realise how it feels to be in that situation.

In business transactions many difficult situations arise which need the cooperation of both, the supplier and the buyer, the debtor and the creditor, the employer and the employee. Co-operation is crucial; messages must be an effort to exchange views and share understanding in order to co-operate. In every communication, there are two points of view and therefore, two sets of ideas: one that interests the recipient and one that interests the sender; messages can be conveyed with the recipient's interest in mind, as in the following examples:

The seller's desires are to sell goods or services, to make profit, to collect his dues, to get a contract, to win a customer, to find a job.

These desires can be fulfilled only through the satisfaction of the buyer's needs, namely, to buy what is worth-while, to maintain a good credit reputation, to find an efficient employee. The letter writer must clearly show that he is offering to satisfy the reader's needs.

Organize the message to suit the reader's convenience. Appeal to the common human needs and desires like desire for security, status, leisure, comfort, need for sympathy, courtesy and consideration.

A customer who has not paid his dues can be approached by pointing out that he would be free of commitments and would protect his own reputation if he paid promptly. A difficult situation like refusing credit terms can be tactfully handled by stressing the customer's own advantage in buying on cash, such as freedom from commitments, gains in the form of discounts, and avoidance of risk.

The purpose of a letter is to create a response. The letter should try to influence the reader's feelings, thoughts and actions in such a way that the response will be beneficial to both the reader and the writer. The goal of writing is not merely to tell something but also to create a favourable reaction to the message.

It is important that the emotional response of your reader should be favourable to you. A sales letter may convince an executive of the value of computerizing the office work, but he may feel emotionally inclined to go to a competing firm. A collection letter may convince a reader intellectually that he will benefit by paying off his debt, but emotionally, he may feel dislike for the creditor who urges him to pay. The test of the effectiveness of a company's letters is the number of customers it retains even after collecting dues and refusing credit terms.

EXERCISES

1. Rewrite these sentences in simple modern English:
 - (i) If the occasion should arise, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if we can be of assistance to you in similar circumstances.
 - (ii) Under the date of 14 September, we communicated to you by means of a letter our desire to have the meeting held in or around Mumbai.
 - (iii) We are in receipt of your cheque for Rs. 3000/- and wish to thank you for the same.
 - (iv) You are hereby requested to supply us with the serial number which you will find on the motor.
 - (v) Kindly advise us if the said premises have been vacated by you as per our agreement, and oblige.

2. Rewrite these sentences to make them clear in meaning:
 - (i) Please send us a supply of leaflets for distribution to our customers. We count on early delivery since our need is urgent.
 - (ii) Our local warehouse will handle your needs.
 - (iii) Rico Appliances have excellent relations with their Delhi distributors, but they are still not doing as much publicity as they want them to do. (replace the pronouns; they are confusing).
 - (iv) He returned the share certificates which he had received by mistake, by registered post, (did he return or receive by registered post?)
 - (v) Refusal by management to consider an outlined scheme for staggered working hours which had been put forward by the works committee was a cause of grave dissatisfaction on the part of the latter (Make 2 sentences; use active voice).

3. Make these sentences concise:
 - (i) It is obvious that it is becoming more and more important that top management should receive timely and up to date reports. It is therefore necessary that the methods of getting information from our branch offices should be improved.
 - (ii) I would like to inform you about the policy of our company regarding adjustment of complaints. Since the inception of our company it has been the policy of our company not to charge for services and repair work from a customer who has purchased our products not more than one year ago.
 - (iii) In view of the reasons explained above, and after subsequent talks with our director, we would like to inform you that it will not be possible to replace the machine as per your request.
 - (iv) This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter sent under date of 16 March, which we are glad to answer related to information about our new vertical files which have just been introduced in the market.

- (v) We wish to inform you of the fact that it has come to our notice that your trucks are parked at our gate causing grave inconvenience to our office car drivers who cannot get through the gate because your trucks are in the way.
4. Rewrite these sentences making them courteous:
- (i) We have received your complaint that you received the consignment we sent, in a damaged condition. We have received no such complaints from other customers.
 - (ii) I am surprised to learn that your kitchen grinder is not working properly. All our machines pass under strict quality control.
 - (iii) Your failure to deliver our goods efficiently has caused us great inconvenience.
 - (iv) Your typewriter has not been oiled for a very long time.
 - (v) Taking care of the articles you buy is your own responsibility.
5. Describe, in 3 to 4 sentences, the customer's feelings and expectations from the seller in the following situations:
- (i) He has spent Rs. 1000 on buying a camera; owing to his inexperience his pictures are all spoilt.
 - (ii) He has a fairly large debt to pay and finds himself unable to pay because of keen competition in business.
 - (iii) He has asked for a quotation and is waiting for a reply.
 - (iv) He had ordered goods for a sale; the goods arrived just in time but in a damaged condition, unfit for sale.
 - (v) She finds that the kitchen gadget she bought a few months ago is not giving satisfactory service.
6. Write down the possible benefits to both, the writer and the reader, in the following situations:
- (i) Publisher of a news magazine asks for prompt renewal when subscriptions are about to expire.
 - (ii) Fresh graduate writes to a private company asking for a job. (Mi) Creditor reminds a forgetful customer to pay his bill.
 - (iv) Customer informs seller that goods he ordered have not arrived even 15 days after the order.
 - (v) Camera dealer explains to a customer that damage caused by accident is not covered by guarantee.
 - (vi) A firm informs its customers (a) that their office is to be shifted to more spacious premises, (b) that they are opening a new branch.
7. Rewrite the following from the reader's point of view:
- (i) We hope that you will pay your bill of Rs.750 as early as possible. We have our own bills to pay, and it is expensive for us to keep sending reminders of past-due accounts. You can help us greatly by sending your cheque promptly.
 - (ii) We are surprised by your letter in which you claim that we did not dispatch your goods promptly. We maintain a policy of shipping all orders on the day they are received. However, we are looking into the matter.

- (iii) It is our policy to send a wrist watch to customers whom we have served for fifteen years. Since you have now completed 15 years of buying from us, we are sending your watch by parcel post. If you do not receive it in the next five days please let us know.
 - (iv) This new microwave oven is our greatest achievement. We developed it in our own research department, and it will be distributed through our own dealers. We are so proud of this kitchen equipment that we would like you to see it working.
 - (v) Our business has been so successful that we are opening a new department for cosmetics and shall be stocking a varied selection of articles.
 - (vi) If we grant the adjustment that you ask for, we shall soon go out of business. The company from which we buy our stocks does not give us such adjustments.
8. Say whether the following statements are true or false:
- (a) "Referring to your letter of 8th instant, the cheque could not be paid out" is a grammatically incorrect sentence.
 - (b) You can impress customers by writing letters in a legalistic style.
 - (c) "Assuring of our best services at all times" is a good closing sentence for a letter.
 - (d) "Please refer to the above-mentioned subject" is an effective opening sentence for a letter.
 - (e) Letters to customers should be written in polite language even if the content is not pleasant.
 - (f) Writing "you" when you mean "I" shows concern for the reader.
 - (g) Letters of complaint should be written in an angry and legalistic style in order to make an impression on the supplier.
 - (h) Sales letters should be written in a fresh and flexible style.
9. When dealing with an unpleasant situation, the reader may be most willing to see the writer's point of view if the letter ends with the sentence —
- (a) If there is anything that still needs clarification, we shall be happy to discuss this further.
 - (b) If you consider this explanation carefully, we are sure you will find it satisfactory.
 - (c) We hope and trust that the matter is now fully clear and satisfactorily explained.
 - (d) If you find this explanation unsatisfactory, please let us know.
 - (e) We are confident that you will now see this our way and consider this a satisfactory explanation.

Lesson: 9**BUSINESS LETTER**

A business letter has a distinctive structure and appearance. Each of the parts has a specific style, position and function which has been established by custom and is followed because it is convenient for handling and processing correspondence in an organization's office. A letter is usually an organization's first visual contact with another organization or person, and makes an important impression.

APPEARANCE OF A BUSINESS LETTER

A letter makes a visual impression before it is read, and the first impression is often decisive. Everyone is attracted by a good, presentable appearance.

The appearance of a letter depends on all the things that make up the letter.

Stationery must be of good quality. Most companies prefer to use pure white paper, with black print. The envelope must be of the same quality paper with the same type of print as the letterhead.

The printers and typewriters must be maintained well and cleaned regularly; **the** ribbons need regular attention. Good quality carbon paper must be used for making copies.

Typing must be neat, without cancellations or corrections. There should be equal spacing between words and between lines, and double spacing between paragraphs and different parts of the letter. The letter should be placed carefully in the centre of **the** page, leaving equal margins on the sides and at the bottom. The margins are usually one-and-a-half inch on the left, one inch on the right, and at least one inch at the bottom. If a continuation sheet is used, it must have the same margins as the first page.

A suitable style of layout is selected by every organization and all typists are expected to use the adopted style. Most word processing packages offer the choice of full block or modified block style of layout. Templates can be created and stored in computers.

Paragraphing is necessary for breaking up a composition into readable, logical and progressive units. It is also needed for a pleasing appearance. A large block of writing is not pleasant to see; it is restful to the eyes to see a good amount of white space between the reading material. In a business letter, paragraphing is important for appearance as well as for composition. Usually, a letter has three to four paragraphs: a short opening paragraph which may have only one or two sentences; one or two longer middle paragraphs which carry the main message of the letter; and a short closing paragraph which may be only one sentence.

Folding of the letter must be neat. It makes a poor impression if it is badly folded. The size of the folded letter must be such as to fit in the envelope leaving enough space for cutting the envelope open.

Address on the envelope is typed halfway down and one-third in from the left in order to ensure that the post office franking or stamping does not efface it. It is typed in block form. Its appearance is as important as that of the letter as it is seen before the letter. The practice of writing *To*, before the address is outdated.

PRINTED STATIONERY

Every office has certain standard stationery required for correspondence. The sizes of the sheets and envelopes are standard, but some organizations have distinctive sizes. The quality of the stationery, the designing of the letterhead, the layout and printing/typing together make the first visual impression on the receiver.

Letterheads

Letterheads can be got in several sizes. Most companies have letterheads of at least two sizes: the standard 8.5 x 11 inches for most letters, and smaller 5.5 x 8 inches for short letters. The appearance and the quality of the letterhead makes an important first impression on the receiver of the letter. Good quality, white paper should be used for letter stationery. Letterhead can be designed in consultation with a commercial artist or a computer graphics firm. Simple, elegant, streamlined designs are in keeping with modern style.

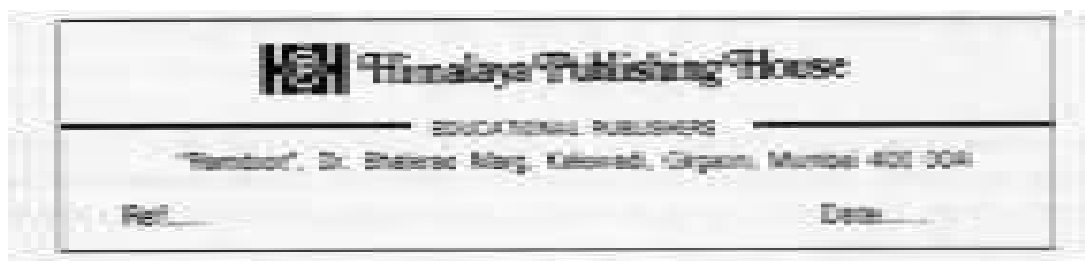
The letterhead includes the company's

- (a) name and business
- (b) emblem
- (c) postal, telegraphic, and e-mail addresses
- (d) telephone, telex, and fax numbers.

If the company's registered office is different from the one given at the top, it is printed at the bottom along with the company's registered number.

Some companies include the names of directors or of the Chairman or of the Managing Director. Most companies prefer to have letterheads with a streamlined appearance; the printed portion does not occupy more than one-fifth of the sheet. It is printed in a simple attractive design in a single colour, usually black. The printed sheet is called letterhead.

An illustration is given below.



Continuation Sheets

A continuation sheet is used if a letter does not fit on a single sheet. The continuation sheet is of the same size and quality as the letterhead. The company's name and logo are printed at the top of the sheet in the same colour as the print on the letterhead.

If a continuation sheet is used, it must show the name of the receiver, the page number, and the date of the letter; these details may be typed at the top in one line or each may be aligned at the left margin.

The top margin should be one inch, and the side and bottom margins should be the same as those on the letterhead on which the letter begins.

The following points are guidelines when using a continuation sheet:
It is not necessary to indicate anything at the bottom of the previous page since it is obvious that the letter has not ended.

There should be at least three of four lines of text on the continuation sheet before the closing section.

“

There should not be just one line of a paragraph either left on the previous page or carried over to the next page. As far as possible, a new paragraph should begin on a new page.

Envelopes

Offices usually have envelopes of several sizes for use according to the size and quantity of the material to be dispatched. The company's name and address are printed at the bottom on the left; some companies have it printed on the flap of the envelope.

The receiver's address is typed, or the address label is affixed neatly on the back of the envelope.

The quality of the paper and the colour of the envelope must match those of the letterhead. Some offices also have brown paper envelopes for dispatch of printed material.

Window envelopes have a transparent panel in the place where the receiver's address is to be written. The letter is folded and inserted in the envelope in such a way that the inside address can be seen through the window of the envelope. Window envelopes are most useful for sending out circulars as they eliminate the need for addressing the envelope. They are not generally used for confidential letters.

PARTS OF A LETTER

An official letter looks different from a personal letter and from other types of business documents. Convenience and custom have laid down certain requirements as parts of a letter. Since letters serve as records, some routine details are necessary in the make-up of a letter.

Different parts have their own fixed location on the sheet; there is a slight variation from left to right in the different styles of layout; their order of appearance from top to bottom is the same in all styles.

The main parts of the letter, apart from the text of the message are: Date, Inside address. Salutation, Complimentary close and Signature. In addition to these, the following details are included, according to the requirement of each letter: Reference number, Delivery mode. Subject line, Attention line, Enclosures, Courtesy copies, Sender's & Typist's initials. The letter wizard in most Word processors guides you through all the parts of the letter.

Date

Every official document must be dated. The date provides an important point of reference in further correspondence and in following up the issues dealt with in the letter. The date is placed two line spaces below the heading, on the right. In full block and NOMA styles, the date is at the left margin.

The date must always be written in full. The name of the month is spelled out in full and the year is written in all four figures. In British practice, the date is written in the order of day, month, year, with no commas.

16 June 2004

In American practice, the date is written in the order month, day, year with a comma separating the figure of the day from the figure of the year.

June 16, 2004 The practice of writing ordinal numbers, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, has fallen out of use.

Reference number

Reference number appears on the left on level with the date. The reference number gives the letter number, file no. and other filing details to make it easy to locate the file related to the issue.

Some companies include both, *Our ref. no.* and *Your ref. no.* both numbers in their letter. The words *Ref. no.* (and *Your Ref. no.*) are sometimes printed on the letterhead but this practice is getting outdated because, with modern word processors and printers, it is difficult to line up the printing on the pre-printed stationery.

Inside Address

Inside address is the name and address of the receiver as it appears on the envelope. The recipient's name should be exactly as they sign it in their letters. For example, if a person signs his name "Vishnu B. Kumar", he should be addressed "Mr. Vishnu B. Kumar" Addressing him as "Mr V.B. Kumar" is inappropriate.

For letters overseas, the name of the country is the last line of the address.

The inside address is typed in block form. In the block form all lines begin at the margin and there is no punctuation at the end of any line. This style looks neat and takes less time to type.

In the old indented form the first line began at the margin and subsequent lines were indented two spaces away from the beginning of the previous line; a comma followed each line

and a full-stop followed the last line. The indentions and punctuation marks take more time to type, and also present a cluttered appearance. This form is now obsolete.

Block

Neil Publishing House,
896, Mahatma Gandhi Road
Mumbai 400 001

Indented

Neil Publishing House
896, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Mumbai 400 001.

Remember that the practice of writing *To* before the address is outdated.

Special markings

If a letter is **confidential**, this is indicated above the inside address, either at the margin or in the centre. It may be either in all capitals or with initial capital and underlined :

CONFIDENTIAL or Confidential

Attention line is used only if, from previous communication, you know the name of the person in the organization who is handling the matter about which you are writing. The letter is addressed to the organization, but directed to the attention of the individual, by name, so that the letter is sent to that person without delay. It is not used if the letter is addressed to an individual by name.

The Attention line is placed after the inside address and before the salutation, either at the margin or in the centre. It does not affect the salutation. The salutation must match the first line of the inside address, e.g.,

The Blank Foods Manufacturers
Sir Dadabhoy Naoroji Road
Mumbai 400 001

Attention: Miss A.C. Patel

Gentlemen:

Subject line

Subject line gives a brief indication of the subject of the letter. It adds to the clarity of the letter, especially if the letter is long. It helps to focus the reader's attention. It is also used for classifying and filing the letter.

It is placed either above or below the salutation at the centre; in full block form, it is placed at the left margin. When there is an Attention line, the Subject line is placed after the Salutation. It is introduced by the word *Subject* or the Latin word *Re* but this is getting outdated.

In modern practice, the subject line is placed at the margin below the salutation, without any introductory word. It may be in capitals or initial capitals and underlined; e.g.,

Dear Sir,
YOUR INSURANCE POLICY NO. 88732265

Or

Gentlemen:
Your Order No. YA-42

(Note: *Re* is a Latin preposition meaning “in the matter of” or “in the case of”; it is not the short form of any English word; it is not correct to write *ref. or reg.* for the subject line.)

Salutation

The salutation begins at the margin, two line spaces below the inside address. It is followed by a comma; in American practice it is followed by a colon. In full block style it has no punctuation mark.

The salutation matches the first line of the inside address. If the letter is addressed to an organization, the salutation is plural: *Gentlemen* or *Dear Sirs* or *Sirs*. If the letter is addressed to a particular official mentioned only by designation, e.g., “The Sales Manager” the salutation is singular: *Sir* or *Dear Sir*. If the official is a lady, the salutation is *Madam* or *Dear Madam*.

It is quite common, now, to address business letters to an official by name and designation, e.g., *Mr. A.P. Shah, Sales Manager*, or *Ms A.B. Coelho, Finance Manager*. -In this case, the salutation is *Dear Mr. Shah* or *Dear Ms Coelho*. *Ms* can be used before a lady’s name as it stands for both Miss and Mrs.

Review

Fill in the blanks using the minimum number of words for each blank.

- A letter addressed to Tristar Computers Ltd. and directed to the attention of Mrs. Anita Dasgupta may have the salutation _____.
- The commonly accepted styles of writing the date are _____ and _____.
- The purpose of the reference number in a letter is _____.
- The attention line is used only when _____ in order to _____.
- In a letter which is addressed to The Sales Manager, the salutation would be _____; if it is addressed to The Sales Department, the salutation would be _____.

Complimentary Close

The complimentary close is written two line spaces below the last line of the text of the letter; it is placed on the right and is followed by a comma. In full block style it is placed at the left margin and has no comma.

The first word begins with a capital letter.

The most common form is : yours faithfully; other common forms are : faithfully yours, yours truly, Truly yours.

If the addressee’s name is used in the salutation, the complimentary close is yours sincerely, or Sincerely yours.

Respectfully is used only when writing to a high public official.

Signature

The signature is placed just below the complimentary close. The name of the signatory is typed three or four line spaces below, to leave space for the actual signature; the designation/title is typed below the name.

Some companies include the name of the company just below the complimentary close, or below the name and designation of the person who signs; but most companies do not put the company's name in the signature as it is already in the heading.

Note that Mr. is not written before a man's name. If the signatory is a woman, (Mrs) is shown in brackets after the name.

yours sincerely,

Will lyle
Marketing Manager

Yours faithfully,

Raveena Murthy (Mrs)
Finance Manager

When a letter is signed by another person on behalf of the sender, the work for is shown before the sender's printed name.

Letters with legal implications use the words per pro or pp (per procuracionem) which means "on behalf of".

Reference section

(a) **Enclosures:** Enclosures are related documents sent with a letter; bills, cheques, quotations, brochures, price-lists, etc., which have been mentioned in the letter and are sent as enclosures. If there are many enclosures, they are numbered and placed behind the letter in the order of their serial number.

Enclosures are indicated in the letter by writing *Enc(s)* or *Ends:* at the bottom left of the letter, after the signature. If there is more than one enclosure, the total number is also indicated, e.g. *Encs: 2*, Sometimes, the enclosure is named, e.g. *End: pro forma invoice*.

(b) **Copies:** When a matter concerns more than the two parties, a copy of letters related to the matter is sent for information to the other parties who are concerned. This is indicated by writing *copy* (or copies) or *cc* (copy circulated) followed by the name and designation of person to receive the copy :

copy: Mr. A.C. Sheth

or

copies: 1. Mr. A.C. Sheth
2. Accounts Manager, ABC Transport Service

If the receiver of the letter is not to be informed that copies have been circulated to others, *bcc* (blind copy circulated) is shown on the office file copy and on the 'bcc' copy; it is not shown on the copy to be received by the recipient of the letter.

(c) **Delivery service:** The type of delivery service to be used is indicated as Air Mail, Registered Mail, Express Delivery, Hand Delivery, Courier, Fax, etc. This detail is often placed at the top of the letter.

(d) **Initials:** The dictator's and the typist's initials are placed at the bottom. This is for future reference in the sender's office; the person who prepares or dictates a letter is not necessarily the person who signs it. The letter may be dictated by a senior clerk or a junior officer; it will be signed by the manager or a person who is authorized to sign outgoing letters of the company. The initials may be shown as: *PSW.rd* or *CRT gt* or *MRO/cs* or any such style.

Postscript

Postscript is a bit of writing, not more than three lines, added to the letter after the signature and after enclosures; it is signed again, without the complimentary close, by the same person. It is used for conveying a small bit of information which is not a part of the main message of the letter; it is an extra or unrelated point and is often written in hand at the time of signing the letter.

Postscript should never be used for adding something which was forgotten while preparing the letter. The idea of using P.S. to add a forgotten point is outdated with word processors. Even if a manual typewriter is being used, the letter must be typed again.

The postscript can be used to add a friendly personal note to a formal letter; it may be just a line, but it can successfully establish personal contact by referring to some common experience or by making a friendly personal enquiry. For instance:

- P.S. It was nice meeting you at the dinner last Sunday.
- P.S. How's your new venture in Pune coming up? Wish you the best of success.

The Postscript can be used effectively in a sales letter to impress an "action incentive" sentence on the reader's mind.

- PS: There's an early bird prize for the first seven orders.

It can also be used to make an impact at the end of a "stunt" collection letter.

- PS: Do clear your account before the fast approaching festival season.

Review

Complete the sentence by choosing the correct answer.

(1) An acceptable form of writing the complimentary close is _____

- (a) yours Faithfully,
(b) Your's faithfully, (c) Yours' faithfully, (d) Yours faithfully, (e) yours faithfully,

(2) When the salutation is Dear Mr. Gohel, the correct complimentary close is _____

- (a) Yours obediently,
(b) Yours faithfully,
(c) Yours affectionately,
(d) Yours sincerely, Fill in the blanks.

- (a) The reference section includes _____, _____, _____, and _____
- (b) A letter addressed to Comfort Furniture, with the salutation *Gentlemen*, may end with
Yours
- (c) Copies are sent to _____ for the purpose of _____.
- (d) Any documents sent together with a letter are indicated by _____
- (e) Postscript is indicated by writing _____ and is used for _____

STYLES OF LAYOUT

Layout means the design in which the different parts of the letter are placed on the letterhead. The parts are placed in the same order from top to bottom in all forms or styles; the variation is in the indention and the paragraph styles.

Indented Form

This old style is now outdated. In this form, the inside address was in indented style as shown earlier, and every paragraph began three to five spaces away from the left margin. The indention caused the letter to look uneven at the left margin. Besides, it took more time to type because of the indenting. This style is not used today.

Full Block Form

This is the most modern style. There is no indention from the left margin at all; every line, including the date and the complimentary close, begins at the left margin.

The address has no punctuation at the end of the line. The salutation and the complimentary close do not have a comma at the end. There is double line space between the parts and between the paragraphs.

This form takes less time to type because it requires no indention and has no punctuation in the layout parts.

Some companies do not like this form because it looks heavy on the left, and rather blank on the right.

A clear disadvantage of this form is that, after the letter has been filed, the date and the signature cannot be seen unless the file is fully opened. The date of a letter is an important item and is often referred to for many purposes. Quick reference to date and to signature in the filed letter is not possible in this form.

Modified Block Form

This style is a modification of the full block form. It eliminates the shortcomings of the full block style by keeping the date and the complimentary close on the right in their usual position. The inside address is in block form.

The salutation and the complimentary close are followed by a comma; however, many firms now do not use the comma after the salutation and the complimentary close.

All the paragraphs begin at the left margin, and there is double space between the paragraphs.

This is the most popular form as it has most of the advantages of the full block form without its disadvantages. Its appearance is balanced and neat.

Semi-indented Form

This form is also called Semi-block form. It has the inside address in block form but the beginning of every paragraph is indented. The date and the complimentary close are on the right side. The salutation and the complimentary close are followed by a comma as in the traditional style.

This style is getting outdated rapidly.

Hanging Indention Form

In this style, the inside address is in block form. The date and complimentary close are on the right. The beginning of every paragraph is at the left margin, but the subsequent lines of every paragraph are indented three to five spaces.

This style is adopted for sales letters, brochures and other documents in which striking appearance is useful. The opening line of every paragraph “hangs out”, and can be used for high-lighting important points.

If this style is used, the opening words of every paragraph should be important and worth high-lighting.

NOMA Form

This is the most recent experiment in layout style. It is recommended by National Office Management Association of America (the name NOMA is an acronym). It has been accepted in the UK by the Institute of Office Management.

It has most of the features of Full Block form: all lines begin at the left margin, and the inside address is in block form.

The special features of this form are: (i) it has no salutation and no complimentary close; (ii) the subject line is in capitals, three lines below the inside address; (iii) numbered items of a list begin at the left margin, but if there is no number, the items are indented five spaces; there are no full-stops at the end of items; (iv) the writer’s name and title are typed in capitals in one line below the space for signature; (v) the typist’s initials are in the left bottom corner.

This style is not popular as it is too far removed from the familiar, conventional styles. Some people feel that this style saves time and sensibly omits meaningless salutation and close; but most people feel that this omission makes it impersonal and distant, and lacking in feeling.

Review

Answer in two or three sentences.

- (a) What are the main differences between the full block form and the modified block form?
- (b) What is the distinctive feature of the Hanging Indention form?
- (c) How would you use the distinctive feature of the Hanging Indention form?

(d) Why do some people dislike the NOMA form?

An organization decides on its letter layout style and appearance after careful consideration and all typists are expected to conform to the standard of typing set up by the company.

Illustrations of all the styles are given below:

18 November, 2005

Excello Typing Institute,
14, Green Avenue,
Mumbai 400 053.

Dear Sirs,

This is the Indented form which is considered old fashioned now. The inside address is indented, i.e., each subsequent line is indented 2 spaces from the previous line; each line is followed by a comma, and the last line by a full stop. Each paragraph begins five spaces away from the margin.

This form was used in the days before the typewriter when all letters were hand-written. Today even hand-written letters are not written in this style.

The appearance of this style is not very neat; besides, it wastes typing time because of the indentions.

Yours faithfully,

Office Superintendent

Indented Form

May 2, 2005
Windsor Stationery Mart
86, Main Avenue, Santa Cruz
Mumbai 400 054

Gentlemen

This letter is in Full-Block form. Every part of the letter, including the date and complimentary close, begins at the left hand margin.

The inside address is in block form with no end-of-line punctuation. There is no punctuation mark after the salutation or after the complimentary close.

As there is absolutely no indentation, this form takes the shortest time to type, and is very useful in a firm which sends out a large number of letters. It is the latest in styles of layout, but it has already become quite popular and is used in a number of firms.

The drawback of this form is that it looks rather blank on the right side and heavy on the left. Besides, when the letter is filed, it is difficult to refer to the date and the signature without taking out the file and opening it fully.

Yours faithfully

Correspondence Supervisor

Full-Block Form

10 September 2005

Pinto Commercial Institute
23, Rampart Row
Mumbai 400 001

Dear Sirs,

This is the Modified Block Form, and is in most common use today. Most companies adopt this form as the most convenient and also the most attractive.

The date and the complimentary close are at the right. The address is in block form, that is, all lines begin at the margin and there are no punctuation marks at the end of any line. The paragraphs begin at the left margin and are separated only by double spacing. As most of the lines begin at the left margin, this form saves the time of the typist.

This form is neat and balanced in appearance. It is a modification of the ultra modern Full Block Form.

Yours truly.

Supervisor

Modified Block Form

15 July 2005

Modern Typists
29, Mount Road
Mumbai 400 002

Sirs,

The Semi-Block form combines the indented and block forms. Some of its features are taken from the old style and some from the new style.

The date and the complimentary close are on the right and the paragraphs are indented five spaces away from the margin. This form although it does not look so streamlined as the modified block form. Many firms use it as the modified block form.

This form will probably fall out of use for typewritten letters and will be used only for handwritten letters.

Yours faithfully,

Sales Manager

Semi-Indented Form

20 August 2005

Expert Advisory Service
Beach View Warden Road
Mumbai 400 026

Gentlemen:

This is the Hanging Indention form. It has the address in block form, every paragraph starting at the margin, and subsequent lines of every paragraph indented a few spaces from the margin.

As the first line of every paragraph 'hangs' out, it attracts attention. Sales and stunt collection letters are written in this style in order to catch the eye. The opening words of every paragraph must be striking and the drafting must be done carefully.

Typing time is wasted in this form because of the large number of indentions. It is not used for routine letters.

Yours faithfully,

Sales Manager

Hanging Indention Form

11 May 2005

Expert Advisory Services
Beach View
Mumbai 400 026

NOMA LETTER LAYOUT STYLE

The name NOMA is an acronym of National Office Management Association. This American organization has recommended this style. It has been accepted in Britain with some modifications.

Most of its features are the same as those of the full block style. The address is in block form with no punctuation at the end of the line. All lines begin at the left margin.

This style has the following special features:

- a. Salutation and complimentary close are omitted
- b. Subject is in capitals three lines below the inside address
- c. Enumerated item lists, like this one, begin at the left margin. Lists of items without number/letter are indented five spaces
- d. There is no full stop at the end of the items in the list
- e. The writer's name and title are typed in capital letter in one line at the left margin at the end of the letter, leaving space for the signature
- f. The typist's initials are at the bottom left corner

Some people like this form as it eliminates the needless salutation and complimentary close, but it is impersonal, distant and too far removed from the familiar conventional styles.

KAMAL BHUTA - REGISTRAR
vsd

NOMA Form

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blanks using as few words as possible.
 - (a) A window envelope has ____; this saves office time because ____
 - (b) On envelopes, the sender's name is printed at ____ or ____
 - (c) On a continuation sheet, ____ is printed; you have to type ____, ____ and ____ at the top.
 - (d) Companies have letterheads and envelopes in several sizes because —.
 - (e) Appearance of a letter depends on ____, ____, ____.
2. Are these statements true?
 - (a) Continuation sheets may be of a lower quality paper than letterheads.
 - (b) Letterheads used for official letters should be colourful in order to be attractive.
 - (c) Envelopes match the letterheads in quality, colour and printing style.
 - (d) The manner in which a letter is prepared for dispatch affects its appearance and the impression it makes on the receiver.
3. How will you ensure that your letter makes a good visual impression?
4. Write notes on:
 - (i) Letterhead and heading
 - (ii) Date and reference no.
 - (iii) First line of inside address
 - (iv) Inside address and salutation
 - (v) Attention line and salutation

- (vi) Subject line and attention line
 - (vii) First line of inside address and salutation
 - (viii) Salutation and complimentary close
 - (ix) Complimentary close and signature
 - (x) Reference section
 - (xi) Enclosures
 - (xii) Postscript
5. Write a note on the stationery required for letter writing.
6. Write notes on:
- (i) Advantages and disadvantages of full block form
 - (ii) Modified block form
 - (iii) NOMA form of layout
 - (iv) Disadvantages of Indented form
 - (v) Features of Hanging [ndention form of layout
 - (vi) Semi-indented fqwm ,pf layout
 - (vii) Continuation sheets.
 - (viii) Letterheads
 - (ix) Envelopes
 - (x) Window envelopes
7. Say whether the following statements are true or false:
- (a) A letter addressed to United Insurance Corporation with an attention line to Ms Radhika Sheth should have the salutation "Dear Madam".
 - (b) In the modified block form, the date and the complimentary close are on the right.
 - (c) It is acceptable to write the date in the form *23 Dec, '05*.
 - (d) A letter addressed-to "Omega Watches (Pvt) Ltd." should end with "Yours sincerely",
 - (e) Hanging indention form of layout is most suitable for routine letters.
 - (f) Postscript is used for adding a point which was forgotten while typing the letter.
8. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences using the fewest possible words.
- (a) In the Hanging Indention form, the paragraphs begin _____ and the rest of the lines of the paragraph _____
 - (b) The disadvantages of the full block style of layout are that _____ and _____.
 - (c) If a letter begins with the salutation "Dear Sirs," the complimentary close should be _____.
 - (d) Post script can be effectively used for _____.
 - (e) The abbreviation Ms stands for _____
 - (f) The full form of NOMA is _____.
9. Choose the correct answer.
In an official letter, the date may be written in the form _____
- (i) Jan. 12, 2005
 - (ii) 12 Jan. '05
 - (iii) 12 January 2005
 - (iv) 12th January, '05

10. Discuss the advantages of the different forms of layout. Which form would you select for letters to be sent out by your office? Give reasons for your choice.
11. What is wrong with the following extracts from letters? Make the correction.

Dear Sir,

Sub: Negligence in delivering goods

Thank you for delivering the two steel cupboards which we had ordered.

Confidential

Zen Graphics (Pvt) Ltd.
Green Avenue
Mumbai 400 004

Sirs,

Sub: Condolence on death of your partner