B.Com. – BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
COURSE : B.Com - 101

B.Com. (1ˢᵗ Semester)

Directorate of Distance Education
DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY
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B.COM 101: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

BLOCK 1: INTRODUCTING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: BASICS OF COMMUNICATION

UNIT 2: MODELS AND PROCESSES IN COMMUNICATION

UNIT 3: THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

BLOCK 2 : CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

UNIT 2: PREVALENT PRACTICES IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

UNIT 3: PRESENTATION AND REPORT WRITING

BLOCK 3 : WRITING SKILLS

UNIT 1: STAGES IN WRITING AND RELATED SKILLS

UNIT 2: BUSINESS LETTERS AND MEMOS

BLOCK 4 : REPORT WRITING

UNIT 1: REPORTS AND ITS TYPES

UNIT 2: ORAL PRESENTATION – PRINCIPLES, FACTORS AND SKILLS

UNIT 3: SOME COMMON PRESENTATIONS IN BUSINESS

   COMMMUNICATION

BLOCK 5: NON-VERBAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: BODY LANGUAGE

UNIT 2: LISTENING SKILLS AND EXERCISES

UNIT 3: INTERVIEW SKILLS – INTERVIEWER AND INTERVIEWEE

UNIT 4: CONTEMPORARY COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

UNIT 5: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: BASICS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure of this unit

1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Unit Introduction

1.3. Definition of communication

1.4. Importance of communication in business

1.5. The process of communication and its components

1.6. Forms of communication

1.7. Barriers to communication

1.8. Let us sum up

1.9. Terminal Questions

1.10. Suggested readings

1.1. Learning Objectives

This Unit is aimed at:

- Making you understand the basics in communication
- Sensitizing the importance of language
- Introducing the reader to Verbal and Non-Verbal skills in communication
- Providing the importance of reading and listening skills in communication
- Making the reader aware of taking notes and reporting for communication

1.2. Unit Introduction

This Unit introduces the reader to the basics of communication without digging deeper into the concept. There is step wise transition in conceptual delivery for easy comprehension of the concept by the readers. The process of communication is a gradually evolving concept.

The original pillars of the process however, has remained the same. We have to understand the importance of language, the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication, the art of reading, the art of listening and much more before we embark on our journey to understand communication.

1.3. Definition of communication

Human beings are accepted as social beings and hence the need to connect, to transfer information, to comprehend that and to act becomes an inevitable activity in daily life. Often ideas emerge in us, and we start thinking of an effective way to express that. We don't bother to look into the complexity of the process as long as it is functional. The word communication is indeed hold much deeper meaning inside. Keith Davis has defined communication as information transfer between persons. The transfer could be of ideas, factual information, moral values, thoughts etc. The whole process works as soon as the two parties on either side is convinced of the transfer of information and the subsequent understanding of the information. As long as a person wants to keep his thoughts, ideas, facts and information to himself or herself, the need to communicate does not arise. However, it is almost impossible to make the ideas, thoughts and information known to others without communication.

1.4. Importance of communication in business

Communication assumes many a role in the human society. As we observe from day to day use, communication is used for passing instructions and information, teaching and learning etc. Under the purview of business, communication plays some specific roles more importantly than others in general. The following uses of communication can be considered as being important for business.

- For training exercises- Communication is vital for imparting effective training to new recruits as well as refreshing skills of employees.
- Flow of information-The understanding of the process of communication proves important for controlling and administering flow of information across an organization in horizontal as well as vertical direction. The information about assignment of tasks, policy changes, notifications need to flow effectively throughout.

- Performance evaluation- Communication acts as a tool for evaluating the contribution of individuals and teams to the fulfilment of organizational goals.

- Directing employees- The individual employees or departments as a whole are directed through communication. The successful implementation of event he minute objectives need effective communication of directions.

- Motivation- Effective motivation can be provided through right communication. Monetary and non-monetary incentives need to be explained properly for achieving intended motivational objectives.

- Branding and public image- The importance of corporate sustainability and the long-lasting effect of branding on consumer loyalty has been established by multiple research studies. Thus communication is an important element in branding be it a virtual intangible image, or an attractive poster put up in a city.

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                    Check your progress
1. Why is communication important for business?
2. What is communication?
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1.5. The process of communication and its components

Everything complex can be broken down into simpler parts that can be placed in a logical sequence for understanding the process of how it happens. The process of communication is no different. We shall introduce you to the components of the communication process simultaneously laying out the concept of the process. The various components of the communication process are:

- Sender: Also known as the transmitter, is the one component who starts the process.

- The Message: The very idea, concept, fact, information, thought, instruction etc. that the sender wants to transmit, convey, express or dispatch is known as the message.

- Encoding: This is the part where the sender arranges the information that he/she wants to transmit in a form that is presumably comprehensible for the receiver of the message.

- The Channel: Every communication requires a medium for transfer of a message. You may refer it to be the road that connects the sender and the receiver.

- Receiver: This is quite simply the receiver of the message. The message in intended for the receiver. Thus, it is very important to understand the receiver and to frame the message in a way that the receiver understands.

- Decoding: As every person is different in their own way, messages received are received, analyzed and understood in different ways by different people. The way a person rearranges the information contained in a message for his/her own understanding is called decoding.

- Feedback mechanism: Feedback is also significant without which it is difficult to conclude if the receiver has understood the message in the way that the sender intended. The reactions and responses of receivers are known as feedback in the communication process.
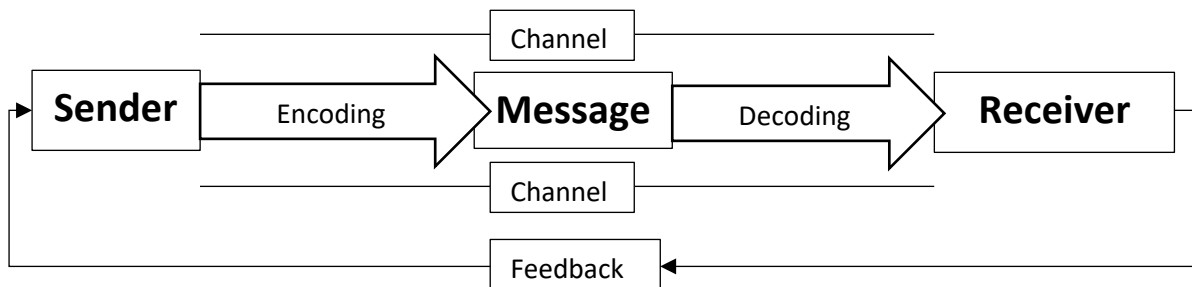
| Sender | Encoding | Message | Decoding | Receiver |

Fig.1: Process of communication

1.6. Forms of communication

We shall, for the most part of this book, look at communication from business perspective only. From this standpoint, we may bifurcate communication into external and internal. The internal communication is the one that happens inside the organization structure of the business. The external communication is the one connects the business with the outside world. We may consider the examples of liaising, branding, promotion, branding, corporate social responsibilities, public relations and the like. Internal communication should be our primary concern at this point although external communication is significant too. It is not necessary that the internal communication be formal all the time. Some of us might have heard of the grapevine communication i.e. the communication that we usually refer to as socializing and networking happening between peers. Formal communication flows through pre-determined channels in stipulated times that are usually determined by the

management. Information passed through formal channels are reliable and trusted by receivers. Informal communications are not prescribed by business, hence follows random patterns of flow in the organization. Feedback is a problem in formal communications as it is downward in nature most of the time. Information passed in informal communication is often critically accepted by receivers that seek validity of the information in alternate sources. Informal communication lacks uniformity in distribution of information.

1.7. Barriers to communication

Obstacles are in everything. Communication is no exception. Effectiveness in communicating messages is under continuous research. Barriers take many form to disrupt the process of communication. Some of the notable ones are mentioned as follows:

- **Environmental barriers:** Noise is the most common barrier to communication alongside interference in electronic medium of communication. Many scholars have also stated that noise could alos means anything that that degrades the quality of effective expression

- **Semantic barriers:** Whether we blame the richness of a language or the comprehension capacity of an individual, it is accepted that every other person understands a message in a different way. There is only the probability that everyone in a group understood the same. Thus, feedback becomes essential.

- **Choice of medium:** Will it be written or oral? Do we need an interpreter? Is digital medium more effective than issued instruction? What language should we write it in? Should I call him or should I send an email?...Such questions bother the sender who is conflicted in the choice of medium. A wrong medium could lead to misinformation or misinterpretation or the loss of the entire information.

1.8. Let us sum up

Communication is the successful transfer of intended message from the sender to the receiver. Business sustenance needs good communication as it helps integrate the various departments and functions, build a public image, establish a brand and pass information across the organization. The important parts of a communication process are sender, receiver, message, channel, feedback, encoding and decoding. There are various ways in

which communication can be done. Some of these fall under formal and some others fall under informal communication. Although both have merits and demerits respectively, each one has a purpose of existence important for the business. Successful communication is often obstructed by various barriers that may take the form of semantic, physical, sociological, psychological and environmental barriers.

1.9. Terminal Questions

1. What do you mean by communication?

2. Why is communication important for business?

3. Explain the components of communication process?/ Explain the process of communication?

4. What are common forms of communication?

5. What are barriers to communication?

1.10. Suggested readings

Hargie, O.D.W., Dickson, D., and Tourish, D. (1999). Communication in Management.

Mohan, T., McGregor, H., Saunders, S. and Archee, R. (1997). Communicating: Theory and Practice, 4th edition. Sydney: Harcourt Brace.

Hartley, Peter & Bruckmann, Clive G. (2002). Business Communication. Routledge (New York).

UNIT 2: MODELS AND PROCESSES IN COMMUNICATION

Structure of this unit

2.1. Learning Objectives

2.2. Unit Introduction

2.3. Models of communication and their types

2.4. Aristotle's model of communication

2.5. Harold Lasswell Model of Communication (1948)

2.6. Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (1949)

2.7. Theodore M Newcomb's model of communication (1953)

2.8. Wilbur Schramm & Osgood Model of Communication (1954)

2.9. George Gerbner Model of Communication (1956)

2.10. Westley & Maclean's Model (1957)

2.11. David Berlo Model of Communication (1960)

2.12. Dance's Helix Model (1967)

2.13. Davis Foulger (2004)

2.14. Let us sum up

2.15. Terminal Questions

2.16. Suggested readings

2.1. Learning objectives

This Unit is aimed at:

- Making you understand the meaning of models
- Introducing readers to the various notable models in the field of communication
- Stating the various types of models in communication

2.2. Unit Introduction

This unit specifically states the various models in communication as proposed by scholars in an evolutionary manner. The models of communication help us understand the process of communication from multiple perspectives. As the models evolve they move from being only linear to complex designs that ultimately aim at effective communication. The impact of factors and the sub processes inside need a deeper understanding before we move towards the types of communication.

2.3. Models of communication and their types

A model is a schematic representation of a proposed or established theory. Models are more graphical in nature than written literature. As introduced in unit 1, the components of communication process interplay to produce varied results. Hence, an understanding of the dynamics of communication is necessary. Models in communication are of different types viz. linear, interactive and transactional. The linear models explain communication as a straight line process that lacks an immediate feedback mechanism. According to such models communication is on-way only. In later years, interactive models were proposed to define the communication process. Feedback was incorporated into these models leading to interactions between senders and receivers. The interactive models also had a drawback of confirmation based feedbacks. The dynamic nature of communication could not be defined by such models. The transactional models are the latest in line that define communication processes as being continuous. The relation between various process elements are well explained in transactional models. A notable addition in such models is the study of individual factors of people that influence the entire process. These factors are previous experiences, perception, attitude, beliefs and values of people involved in communication. We shall now attempt to understand the various models presented in an evolutionary manner in the following sections.

2.4. Aristotle's model of communication

The models of communication can be traced back to the time of Aristotle. Aristotle's model primarily laid emphasis on mass communication than between peers. This model served the purpose of influencing the receiver of the message. As the matter is of influencing, hence it was utterly important to organize a message that was attractive as well as convincing at the same time. The active sender is dominant over the passive receivers in this model. Aristotle's model consisted of the Speaker, the Speech and the Audience. The proponent had a belief that messages must undergo modification as per the concerned audience, its presumed effect and the time of delivery.

2.5. Harold Lasswell Model of Communication (1948)

Lasswell introduced the concept of channel or medium into the already existing and accepted model of Aristotle. While Aristotle paid greater attention to the speaker (now referred to as a sender), Lasswell thought of messages as being more important. Lasswell defined the process of communication by answering a few specific questions framed by himself, viz. Who? Says What? In which channel? To whom? With what effect?. The model so proposed has be presented in fig. 2 below:
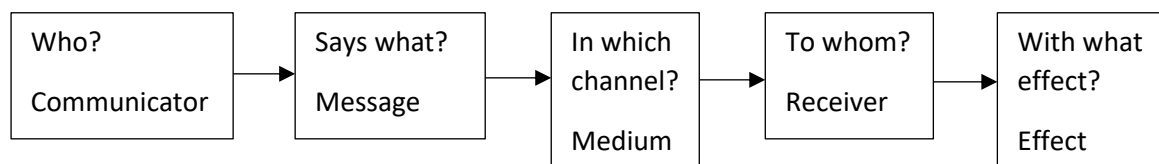
| Who? Communicator | → | Says what? Message | → | In which channel? Medium | → | To whom? Receiver | → | With what effect? Effect |

Fig. 2: Laswell's Model of Communication

2.6. Shannon and Weaver's model of communication (1949)

Calude Shannon and Warren Weaver are well known for this model. Just like the predecessors, this model was also a linear model. This was the first model to include some technical information developing communication models further. This model holds that messages are identified easily but interpretation is not that simple. The concept of noise as a disruptive agent was introduced in this model. Contemporary experts believe that applicability of Shannon and Weaver model is limited to specific cases than in universal situations. The one directional flow of message in a channel proposed by this model along

with the assumption of information being intact, is in contrast to practical real world scenario.
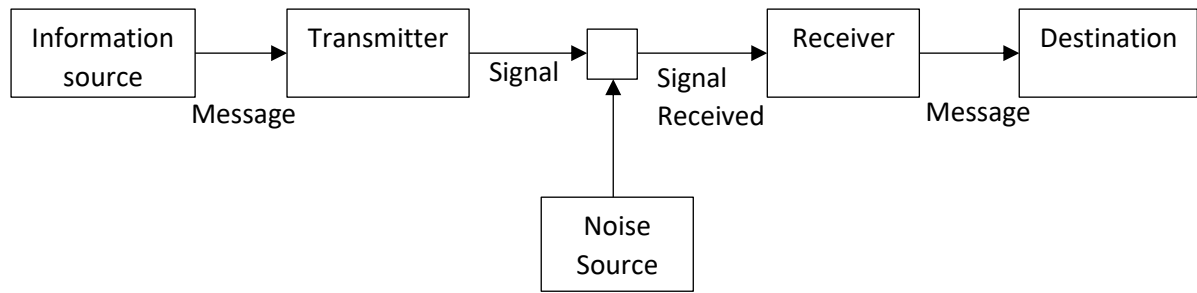

Fig.3: Shannon & Weaver's Model of Communication

2.7. Theodore M. Newcomb's model of communication (1953)

Theodore looked at communication as a social system that helps maintain relationship in the society. The concept of message has been absorbed in the flow of communication and not defined as a separate entity. This model is also referred to as an A-B-X model owing to its structure as given below:
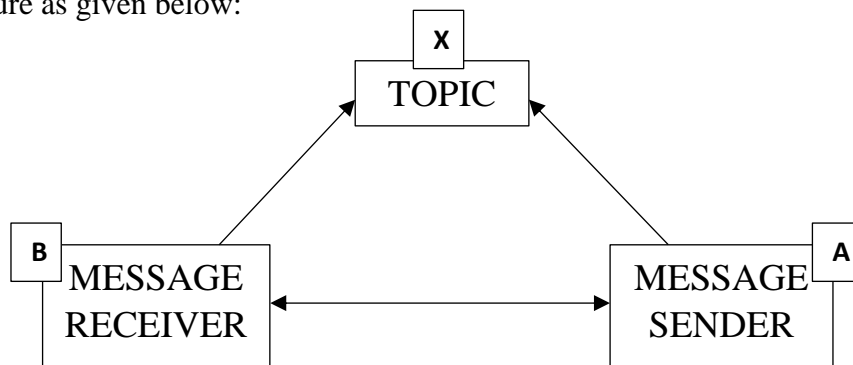

Fig. 4: Newcomb's model of communication

The social purpose for communication is highly emphasized in this model.

2.8. Wilbur Schramm & Osgood Model of Communication (1954)

Schramm and Osgood came up with a different conceptual understanding of the process of communication. They suggested communication to be a dynamic and circular process without any end-point. In this model, sender and receiver have not been distinguished as being separate. Instead, it explains that the sender and receiver acts as interpreter that interchanging roles with one another as feedback is continuous in such a system. Similarly, the functions of encoding and decoding are also practiced by both parties communicating as and when needed. The model also mentions that the interpretation of messages could be different considering culture, background, education, values and social differences from

individual to individual. In addition to simple flow of information, some explanations are offered for the process of interpretation of messages.
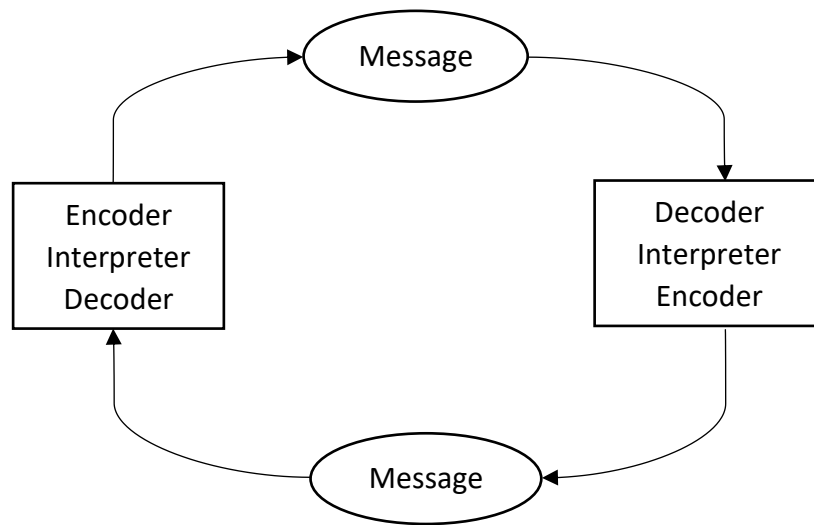

Fig.5: Schramm & Osgood Model of Communication

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                    Check your progress

1. What was the contribution of Schramm & Osgood Model of
Communication?

2. Who explained the first model of communication?

3.  How  did  Laswell  contribute  to  the  process  of
communication?
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2.9. George Gerbner Model of Communication (1956)

The focus of this model is the continuously changing nature of communication and the factors that affect its reliability. The proposed model was aimed at generalization all kinds of communication without concentrating on specific situations. Gerbner refers to an event (E) as the primary source of information. M is any man or machine that observes the event (E). The entire event is not understood by M in most cases. So, M will try to derive an essential part of the event as E1, based on his/her perceptual dimension (perception, context and availability). M is now ready to transmit. M chooses a channel (means) to transmit a newly organized message (E2) meant for others. The transmitting of message E2 from M depends on M's means and control dimension (i.e. skills and control over the use of the channel). The next audience becomes M1 and hence the process continues.
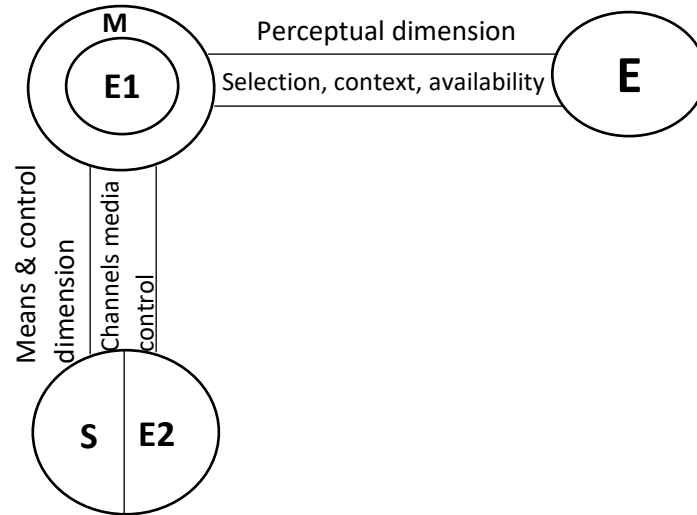
Fig.6: Gerbner Model of Communication

2.10. Westley & Maclean's Model (1957)

The model proposed by Westley and Maclean says that communication is not essentially initiated by someone's talk. Communication starts as soon as the need arises to do so upon any kind of change in the environment. The response to change in surroundings is also selective in nature.

2.11. David Berlo Model of Communication (1960)

The relationship between the sender and the receiver is explored in this model. Encoding and decoding depends highly on the skills of the sender and receiver. Commonly referred to as the SMCR model, the Berlo model consists of four major parts with respective sub parts. S stands for source, the originator of the message. The source consists of communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, social system, culture and encoding skills as sub parts. M stands for Message, the information or matter to be transferred. Message in turn comprises of content, structure, elements, treatment and code. C stands for Channel and it includes the hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and seeing as an individual medium or a combination of these. R stands for Receiver, who decodes and receives the message. The same sub elements as mentioned for Sender is also necessary for the receiver for effective communication to take place. The drawbacks of the SCMR model includes the lack of feedback and noise barriers. The use of sixth sense as a medium is ignored in this model.
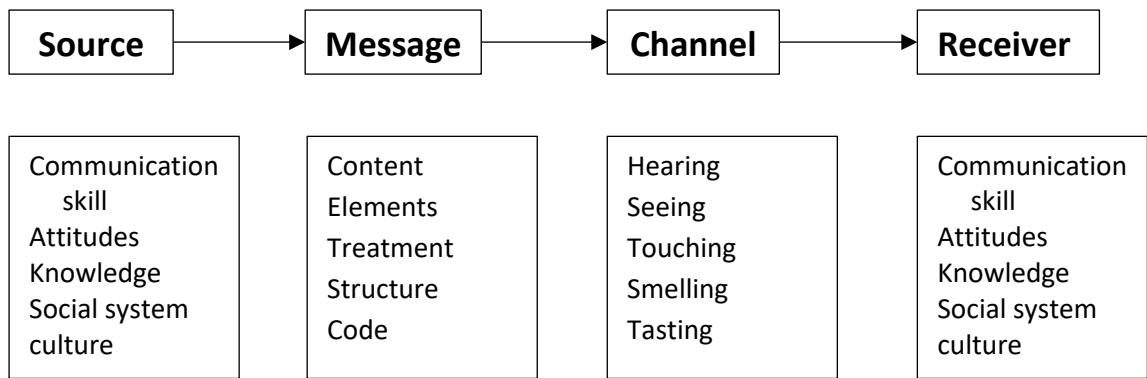
Source	Message	Channel	Receiver
Communication skill Attitudes Knowledge Social system culture	Content Elements Treatment Structure Code	Hearing Seeing Touching Smelling Tasting	Communication skill Attitudes Knowledge Social system culture

Fig.7: Berlo Model of Communication

2.12. Dance's Helix Model (1967)

Frank Dance explains the process of communication through a three dimensional helical shape that looks like a funnel. The bottom of the helix is smaller when compared to the top. The bottom represents the starting of the process. As it moves upward, it forms bigger circles and moves in a helical fashion with the expansion of audience. There is greater sharing of information in the upper levels. The element of time in communication is mentioned for the first time in this model.

Check your progress

1. What were the limitations of Berlo Model of Communication?

2. What is unique about the Helix model of communication?

3. Name some general models of communication that do not explain specific situations?

2.13. Davis Foulger's Model (2004)

This model is an elaboration of Lasswell's linear communication process. Drawing from the earlier essence of relationships, some general relationships are established between people, messages, language and media. Communicating people are referred as creators and consumers in this model. The use of language for constructing messages are specified. A total of ten relationships are summarized in the model. However, further derivation of relationships is possible by newer intersections. Quite simply, communication is a process that happens between creators and consumers where messages built using languages are transferred within media.
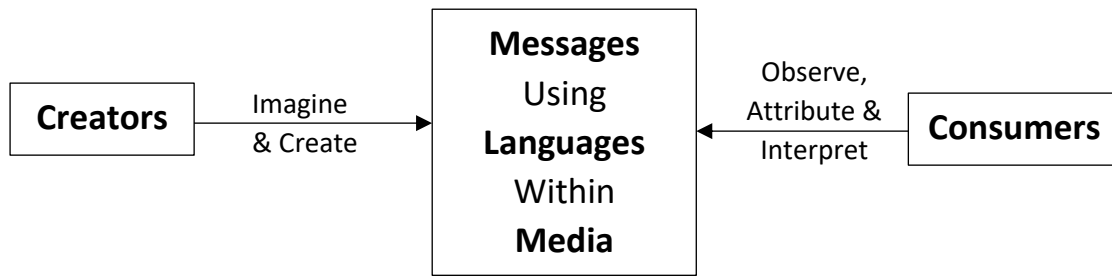
Fig.8: Davis Foulger's Model

2.14. Let us sum up

The process of communication can be better understood by learning the models developed to describe the process. The models can be categorized as being linear, interactive and transactional in nature depending on the flow inside the process. Aristotle was the first to propose a model for the process of communication. As time passed by newer elements like noise, relationships, medium, purpose, social system, senses, individual personality etc. were added to the linear simple model involving sender, message and receiver.

2.15. Terminal Questions

1. What are the types of models proposed to describe the process of communication?

2. State and explain any five significant models of communication.

3. What are interactive models in communication?

4. Explain the Lasswell's model of communication.

5. Explain the Shannon and Weaver's model of communication.

6. Explain Schramm's model of communication.

7. Explain Foulger's model of communication.

8. Explain Gerbner's model of communication.

9. Explain Berlo's model of communication.

10. Which model introduced the concept of feedback in communication?

11. Which are the primary components of communication commonly found in most models?

2.16. Suggested readings

Griffin, E., & Langan, E. (2006). A First Look at Communication Theory, [web page], 3 November, 2013.

Emory A Griffin, (1997) A first look at communication theory. 3rd edition, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Robert, Craig T. (2006) Communication. Encyclopaedia of Rhetoric, OUP, London, 2001 (Print). Published Online.

Sandra D. Collins, (2009) Interpersonal Communication: Listening and Responding, 2nd ed. South-Western

Katz, E. (1957). The Two-Step Flow of Communication. Public Opinion Quarterly, 21, p. 61-78.

Wood, J. T. (2002). Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

UNIT 3: THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

Structure of this unit

3.1. Learning Objectives

3.2. Unit Introduction

3.3. Propaganda theory

3.4. Cognitive Dissonance theory

3.5. Hypodermic needle theory

3.6. Personal influence theory

3.7. Two-step theory

3.8. Multi-step theory

3.9. Categories of communication theory

3.10. Let us sum up

3.11. Terminal Questions

3.12. Suggested readings

3.1. Learning objectives

This unit is aimed at the following:

- It states the popular theories of communication
- It introduces readers to the categories of communication theories

3.2. Unit introduction

Theories of communication explain how the process of communication happens. Apart from this, communication theories try to explain why communication occurs along with its purpose. Some theories concentrate on the process, some focus on the degree of successful communication while others explore the socio-cultural impact on communication. Communication theories have developed alongside the development of information technologies. As theory progressed, models were developed to produce greater understanding of the communication process.

3.3. Propaganda theory

This is a conceptual theory meant to interpret media communication for political economy. It was put forth by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. This theory explains that media is used for political and economic gains by manipulating release and containing information to masses. Public consent is secured by government and large scale enterprises by exerting pressure tactics on media to maintain a public image. According to Herman and Chomsky, mass media communication is dependent on five factors, viz. Ownership, Sourcing, Advertising, Flak and Anti-communism. These factors act as filters between media and the masses. This model establishes that media is a part of the market system that operates inside a political economy.

3.4. Cognitive Dissonance theory

This theory focusses on individual dynamics in thoughts and actions. The theory was proposed by Leon Festinger. It explains how an individual performs an action in spite of having negative belief towards its performance. The person rationalizes his/her own action by altering his/her attitude to create harmony in their mind. The real world is filled with concepts that cause conflict in our thoughts or simply disharmony/dissonance. This creates tension. To relieve our self of tension, we tend to alter our attitudes so that we can balance our perception and attitude when combating such a situation.

3.5. Hypodermic needle theory

This theory explores the impact of mass media in communication. Mass media has been referred to as a hypodermic needle owning to its immediate effect on the receiver. This theory considers masses is being passive audience that are affected immediately by messages of the media. This theory was flawed by the fact that a hypodermic needle affects different patients differently, while the theory considered the receivers as being undifferentiated where each individual unit acts exactly identical to one another. Later studies confirmed that media has selective influence on individuals.

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                    Check your progress
1. What do you understand by cognitive dissonance?

2. Which communication theory was proposed by Edward S.
Herman and Noam Chomsky?

3.How realistic is the hypodermic needle theory?
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3.6. Personal influence theory

Constructing public opinion during elections was the theme of this theory. Proponents of the theory found that individual opinion of leaders had more impact on masses than that of mass media. However, a study conducted by Lazarsfeld during the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940 contradicted this theory. He stated that voting patterns were unaffected by propaganda. Neither media was influential in this regard. It was also proved that the public filters message according to their own preferences. Interpersonal communication is far more effective for creating public opinions during polls.

3.7. Two-step theory

 Information flow for effective communication is a two-step process. First, the information must flow from political leaders to party workers. As party representatives are in direct contact with the masses, information flows in this successive step. This theory contradicted the earlier mass media theories that gave undue attention to media influence during elections.

3.8. Multi-step theory

This is an extended version of the two-step theory. The political leaders communicate to the masses through two channels, the direct contact and through party workers. The party workers procure precious feedback from masses that in turn mold campaign agenda. Mass media is not a sole channel but an additive medium in effective communication. Exclusion of mass media would be a bad idea as it is also a powerful medium shaping thoughts and opinions of the masses. Besides, reach of the mass media is faster and greater as a tool for building public opinion.

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                    Check your progress
1. What are the theories on public opinion?

2. What are the misconceptions on mass media while shaping
public opinion?
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3.9. Categories of communication theory

Robert T Craig observed that although many communication theories were being proposed, there was no convergence of idea in the field. In his pioneering article *"Communication theory as a field"* 1999, categorizing the various theories on the traditions of communication. Craig reported the following categories of communication theories,

Rhetorical theory: Corax credited for the "*Art of the Rhetoric*" was produced for those engaged in land disputes. Corax stated that in the absence of actual facts, a person should argue from general probabilities to establish connections. Rhetoric theorists study all kinds visual and non-verbal elements. E.g. city planning, design of buildings, architecture, sports, apparels etc. The rhetorical perspective looks all expressions of human symbol. These theorists believe that whatever we communicate effects the people around us.

Semiotic theory: John Locke in 1690 introduced "semiotics" to the English language. It means *"Doctrine of signs"*. Subjects in semiotics include literature, environment, social structures, visual arts, traditions, pedagogy and non-verbal communication. Semiotic theories explain how people understand anything and how people construct messages for transferring to others. Semiotics centre around knowledge, intention, meaning and action.

Phenomenological theory: Phenomenological theories attempt explaining how an individual interprets and understands. Scholars have also criticized phenomenological

theories for ignoring heredity characteristics, biological processes, social systems, motivation and situational influences that shape individual personality. These attributes are very important to understand the reception process. Carl Roger's self theory states that actualization is significant in motivating human behavior. Abraham Maslow has added to this theory by stating that self-actualization is not simply a human capacity but more importantly a human need. These are some of the popular phenomenological theories that explore human understanding at different periods of one's lifetime.

Cybernetic theory: Norber Wiener proposed a theory in 1948 stating that a person transmits messages urged by the need to control his/her surroundings. Wiener thus defines the purpose of communication as being to control the environment of the communicator. The theory considers people as being complex machines that transmit messages by use of languages and other techniques seeking control of its environment. He introduced the concepts of entropy and feedback to communication.

Socio-psychological theory: Such theories study people from socio-cultural perspective. They rely on the psychological research that boost understanding of human behavior in society. The social exchange theory explains that social action happens to maximize benefits and to minimize costs. Sociological theories are different from economic theories in the point that they predict relationships between persons without the evaluation of goods.

Socio-cultural theory: These theories look at the impact of society and culture on individuals. The involvement of parents and peers are given importance in individual behavior. The cultural beliefs and traditions are not ignored in these theories. Their effects on instruction and learning have been properly studied. Socio-cultural theorists believe that an individual by himself/herself is unable to learn all the essential communication skills if excluded from society and culture. Hence the contribution of society and culture in individual development and understanding must be studied for effective communication.

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        Check your progress
1. What do you understand by semiotics?
2. What does the rhetorical theory deal in?
3. What did Norber Wiener propose about communication
process?
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Critical theory: Max Horkheimer proposed the critical theory which is aimed at changing society. This theory contrasts the socio-cultural theories explain the society and culture. This theory always questions problems and situations focusing to solve them. Thus critical theory is the theory that critically examines communication to make it more effective.

3.10. Let us sum up

Communication theories have evolved along with the advancement of information technologies. These theories explain how the process of communication happens. The initial theories of communication were very simple in nature. In following years, scholars went on to add to the complexity of the process by exploring factors affecting the process like the society, culture and even individual behavior in communication. Communication is very important in shaping public opinion. Mass media was thought to be the most powerful tool for securing public consent considering masses as being passive. It was later found out that people filter information as per requirement and preference. Direct channels have even greater impact when used in addition to mass media. Although different communication theories are not in consensus, yet they can be categorized according to their perspectives as provided by Craig.

3.11. Terminal Questions

1. Why are communication theories important for business?

2. What is two-step theory of communication?

3. What are the types of communication theories?

4. What is cognitive dissonance theory?

5. What is propaganda theory?

6. Explain any five communication theories.

3.12. Suggested readings

Emory A Griffin, (1997). A first look at communication theory. 3rd edition, New York: McGraw-Hill.

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BLOCK 2 : CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Structure of this unit

1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Unit Introduction

1.3. Corporate communication

1.4. Types of networks in corporate communication

1.5. Formal communication networks

1.6. Informal communication networks

1.7. Let us sum up

1.8. Terminal Questions

1.9. Suggested readings

1.1. Learning Objectives

This unit is aimed at:

- Introducing the readers to various networks existing in corporate communication
- To make readers understand the types of formal communication networks
- To acquaint readers to the various types of informal communication
- Presenting the features of grapevine communication in corporate communication

1.2. Unit introduction

While the previous block presented communication as a general topic of discussion, we shall look specifically look at business communication in throughout Block 2. This unit lays emphasis on corporate communication. Readers need to understand that inside an organization it is no longer the usual chat that goes on every day. There are what we call protocols that need to be observed while conveying messages and passing information. There are rules that ban flow of information in specific directions. This does not mean that people inside organizations behave as though performing various theatrical roles. There exist certain networks inside an organization that operate without administrative control. Socializing, chatting, canteen gossips, unofficial texts etc. are other communication that goes on beyond the radar. We shall take up all those types of communication and study the way they connect individual employees inside and out of the organization.

1.3. Corporate communication

Before we understand what is corporate communication, it is quite advisable that readers are sensitized about the communicating elements in corporate communication. For a business, employees of all levels on direct employment or contract payrolls, suppliers, distributors, consumers of the business, people providing supportive services, the government, community surrounding the business, stakeholders, shareholders, investors, competitors of the business, advisors to the business etc. are a few elements that are commonly involved in corporate communication. We may have an idea now, that corporate communication does not just happen within but to the environment related to the business concerned. Now, the question comes as to what is communicated. Corporate communication could involve the issuance of orders, instructions, advertisements, announcements, information on strategy decisions, administrative information, operating guidelines, press releases, reports, statistical figures and an infinite number of items that are required for the smooth functioning of business operations. Our primary focus in this unit is to understand the pattern in which the communication process flows for the business.

1.4. Types of communication networks

We have stated in Block I that corporate communication can be broadly classified into two, depending on the scope of communication being done. Sometimes, the communication stays inside the organization, i.e. all communicating elements are affiliated to the organization. Such a communication is known as internal corporate communication. For

example, meetings, conferences, presentations, internal promotion interviews, orders, manuals, guides, confidential reports, official emails etc. Corporate communication can also happen with an element/s that does not belong to the organization. Companies often need to publish mandatory reports to government, sustainability reports for public, corporate social responsibility information etc. Besides these, companies advertise their products, organize marketing events, promotional activities, broadcast advertisements, place newspaper ads etc. All such communication can be referred to as external corporate communication.

However, if we are trying to understand the patterns of flow of communication, there are two other types of communication i.e. the formal communication and informal communication. Both of these can be explained in terms of the directions of information flow and the structure they possess.

1.5. Formal communication networks

Formal communication networks are networking patterns of communication that are recommended and monitored by the organization. Formal communications are communicated through formal channels. For example, communication in a meeting, in a conference, in a presentation are all formal communication. Even a phone call concerning an official issue that is carried out in formal tone is considered formal communication. Most communication in a formal channel is transparent and the information that flows through it is relied upon by the people concerned. The flow of formal communication is pre-determined hence, the information between sender and receiver can be traced for discrepancies as it involves accountability. There are a few drawbacks to formal communication networks. Although confidentiality can be maintained, the speed of movement in formal channels is slow as information has to move from along designated levels. Formal communication networks can take up the following forms as necessitated by purpose:

A. Vertical communication network: This type of communication happens in vertical direction. Now, there could be two directions of vertical communication, viz. downward communication and upward communication.

- **Downward communication:** Downward communication are the ones that convey orders, instructions, programme, messages, and policies from higher to lower levels in a business organization. Downward communication

network helps the higher levels transmit information for functioning of various business activities. Downward communication should be receiver oriented so that the message is rightly delivered.

- **Upward communication:** This communication goes from subordinates to their respective managers or higher levels. This network is often used to provide feedback and address grievances. Bypass of hierarchical levels in this type of communication often leads to disharmony. This channel is less used than its downward counterpart. Personal interactions, debrief sessions, feedback systems etc. are examples of upward communication.

B. Horizontal communication network: Horizontal communication is also known as lateral communication. This communication happens between individuals at the same rank, position or status in the same department or other departments. People with similar roles, functions and responsibilities but different designations need to discuss issues that encompass organizational concern and operation. For example, communication that happens between finance, marketing, production, human resources, stores and sales is definitely horizontal communication. Individual departments can thus put forth their own views from effective coordination and collective achievement of objectives. Distortion in this communication could be due to departmental favoritism, societal features, personality etc. Horizontal communication could be in the form of departmental meetings, email communication, co-sanctions, direct discussions and telephonic conferences.

C. Consensus communication network

Although similarities can be drawn to between this and horizontal communication, it is very different in its nature and functioning. Consensus communications are also featured by meetings and conferences for decision-making. But, it has a rigid format that needs to be adhered to. Consensus communication network can be participated by diverse representatives but the decision making powers rest on a person, usually a presiding head or a nominal head, who calls up the meeting. Specific problems are taken up as pre-determined to be discussed. The head is supported with information collected by assigned subordinates. The problems are transparently discussed and opinions are invited from representatives towards specific problem solving or decision-making exercises. Finally, a consensus is drawn, noted and accepted for execution or record. Although members in such a network offer opinions, they may be considered passive compared to the policy adhering

decisions taken by the end of such meetings. It does create harmony among members who have the privilege to be a part of the decision-making process.

1.6. Informal communication networks

Many of us might have come across the word "grapevine" being used in relation to communication. All sorts of informal communications are summarily referred as grapevine, due to the undefined pattern that play out by probability. The information transmitted does not follow a designated path. It could reach anyone who is participating or is already a part of the grapevine. Grapevine communications can occur anytime but they are also triggered by some situations. In times of uncertainty, employees lack direction. The need for interpretation of complex formal information necessitates peer communication and exploration of informal channels. By such communication, people boost their confidence regarding the knowledge of crucial information. Information travels very fast in a grapevine. This channel is frequently used for reliable feedback that is not biased by insecurity of identity revelation. People use a grapevine to derive emotional security for things that they don't understand by themselves. Grapevines can also carry rumors that can compromise integrity cause chaos. Grapevine communication/informal communication are often seen to take the following forms:

A. Single chain: In this form, communication flows between two persons at a time and in a straight line. The communication is done with an intention of maintaining low participation which does not happen in the end. Thus this communication flows from one person to another with an attempt for maintaining secrecy in information.

B. Star chain: Here, the source of information to others in the chain is a single individual i.e. the other members get the information from the same source. The type of information in this chain is mostly unofficial but intriguing for the members interested. This sort of communication can also be called a gossip.

C. Cluster chain: In a cluster form of grapevine, a person passes information to a few favoured individuals. These individuals later transmit information to other selective individuals. The chain goes on spreading in this manner with a secondary source at each branch. There is much distortion of information in such a chain as it frequent hands frequently.

D. Probability chain: This form of informal communication involves transfer of information from individual to individual at random. Every other person in the probable chain has an equal opportunity of getting the information without any guarantee. The information travels in random with a lot of distortion which does not serve anyone's intended purpose.

Check your progress

1. What happens in a cluster chain of communication?

2. How many sources of information exist in a star chain network?

3. What does a consensus network operate?

1.7. Let us sum up

Communication strictly defined by business is known as corporate communication. Corporate communication could be of two types, internal and external. Corporate communication can be further subdivided into formal and informal communication networks from the patterns of flow of communication. Formal networks help the organization maintain its daily operations and provides an authorized and reliable channel for passing various information. Informal networks, also known as grapevines are much faster, but the information traveling in those channels is questionable. Rumours are often noticed to traverse informal channels causing disruption in operations. Informal channels are helpful for providing emotional relief when there is lack of adequate information or uncertainty in direction.

1.8. Terminal questions

1. What do you understand by corporate communication?

2. What are formal communication networks?

3. When does informal communication happen?

4. What is a star type communication network?

5. How does communication happen in a cluster network?

6. What are the features of formal communication networks?

1.9. Suggested readings

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UNIT 2: PREVALENT PRACTICES IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Structure of this unit

2.1. Learning Objectives

2.2. Unit Introduction

2.3. Practices in employment communication

2.4. Practices in use of ICT

2.5. Practices in oral communication

2.6. Practices in written communication

2.7. Practices in group communication/interpersonal communication

2.8. Let us sum up

2.9. Terminal Questions

2.10. Suggested readings

2.1. Learning Objectives

This unit shall introduce readers to

- Broad areas of business communication
- Prevalent practices in oral communication
- Practices in written communication
- Practices in use of ICT in business communication
- Practices in group communication

2.2. Unit Introduction

Communication is a wide topic. From the standpoint of business its scope of applications till date are definable. The term prevalent practices cover all practices of business communication that are in present use. Practices in turn means the specific tools and methods used for business communication. Listing these practices in a random order is time consuming and has the risk of omission of significant practices. There is a better way to

look at these practices if we identify the broader areas of business communication. Some of these areas have been discussed and a majority of them shall be introduced to readers in later units. The concerning areas are written communication, oral communication, group communication, use of ICT and employment communication. Oral communication employs presentations and talks. Written communication includes reports, memos and allied written communication tools. Use of ICT includes audio visual aids, software applications, interactive aids etc. Group communication consists of meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences and other forms of interpersonal communication. The prevalent practices of business communication are distributed in the mentioned areas. The following sections shall introduce them to the readers with respect the areas they exist in.

2.3. Practices in employment communication

Resume: Resumes are also known as Course Vitae (C.V.). Resumes are written documents created by job applicants and professionals to summarily inform about academic qualifications, achievements, employments and career plans. These documents accompany candidates to interviews and serve as an document for initial screening. Resumes contain contact information of the candidate, residential address, interests and declarations.

References: References are obtained by a candidate from those persons who are willing to support the claims of the candidate in his/her resume. They can be previous employers, peers, educational institution heads, faculty members, managers and other professional acquaintances etc. Employers may communicate with the referees to validate information before selection of a candidate.

Group discussions: Group discussions are common recruitment techniques for testing communication abilities of candidates. Candidates are divided into groups, that have to interact and discuss on a selected topic for a limited time while being monitored on articulation skills, initiative, competitive spirit, member coordination and listening ability. Many qualities can be assessed through this tool. The willingness to communicate and the capacity to do so are tested under the pressure of competition to impress the evaluators.

Interviews: Interviews are the core tools in employment communication. The setup of interviews along with formal invitation calls for candidates, scheduling dates for interviews, selection of interview/interview panel and related affairs are only some

components of interviews. Interviews are done for promotions, appraisals, recruitment, information, job exits etc. In employment communication, interviews mostly refer to the personal interview of candidates for recruitment & selection. These interviews could be stress interviews, telephonic interviews, task based interviews, psychometric interviews, panel interviews, in depth interviews etc.

2.4. Practices in use of ICT

Communication networks: Usually communication networks mean informal and formal networks at work between people. With the use of Information & Communication Technology (ICT), networks mean the ones that connect people at workplaces through ICT. These networks refer to two kinds i.e. the intranet and the internet. The former one connects computer systems within the organization where communication networks are established within a restricted corporate group. The information flows within the organization in such networks. These networks are hosted by use of Local Area Networks (LAN) in most cases. The latter one connects the computer systems of an organization with all other computers in the world having access to internet. There is communication flow in numerous directions. It has the risk of data interception.

Instant messaging: The instant messaging services are popular due to their mobile nature. The devices serving for this communication tool are portable and can be carried as personal digital assistants. Messages can be transmitted at any time saving cost and time in doing so. Such communication is only limited by availability of service networks. Examples of such services are Short Messaging Service, Hike, WhatsApp messenger, Hangout, Facebook messenger etc. Services provided in these are evolving every moment leading to service diversity.

Teleconferencing: Messages communicated through short messaging services can be misinterpreted. Teleconferencing allows people in different locations to communicate in audio using this technique. It is a favoured technique in communication through ICT as the verbal messages are superior to instant message that compromise on explanations.

Videoconferencing: When communication is limited by distance, obstruction in transportation and lack of time, this technique is referred. This is true to the condition of equipment availability at all ends of communication. It needs the

senders and receivers to be stationary to a point to make communication convenient. The limitation of absence of non-verbal communication is eliminated here. The only demerits are the technical faults in communication, network availability and communication equipment availability.

2.5. Practices in oral communication

Presentations: This is the most widely used practice in oral communications. Let us not be judgmental in the limited variety of practices here. Presentations themselves can be of diverse forms. They can be of the following types:

- Informational presentations
- Training presentations
- Persuasive presentations
- Interactive presentations

Induction presentations, presentations about organizational changes, evaluative presentations for organizations etc. are a common sight in oral communication. Whenever there is a need to sensitize employees about anything that can be considered as generic for the audience, presentations are used.

2.6. Practices in written communication

Business letters: Business letters are a common formal communication practice within business organizations that also connects the outside world. There is a wide variety of these written documents in use. They can conveniently be identified as groups of official letters, demi-official letters, memos and forms. The official letters are addressed to government offices. The second group i.e. Demi-official letters are addressed with specific attention markers to offices concerned. Memos are short communication documents of reminders circulated internally. They are preferred as a swift mode of communication as a follow up reminder to accepted decisions.

Forms are those business letters that are routinely circulated at specific intervals of time. Their format can be standardized due to the routine nature of the purpose.

Reports: Reports are comprehensive statements on selected topics prepared with a deadline for submission. Reports are formal mostly formal in nature. They can be categorized as statutory and non-statutory, periodic and special, individual or committee reports, technical or informative etc. They contain facts, figures and arguments put up are supported by validation. Cover, acknowledgement, declarations, certificates, executive summary, table of contents, introduction, methodology, analysis, findings, conclusion, references and appendices are standard parts of a report.

Memos: Memos are for internal reminders and are very direct in nature. They contain reference numbers for record and tracking but no salutation or closing remarks. Signature of sending authority is essential to authenticate such a communication. They are convenient, quick, saves cost and hold capacity for future reference.

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                    Check your progress
1. Why are memos preferred in business?
2. What are the essential parts of a report?
3. Do business letters circulate for outside communication?
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2.7. Practices in group communication/interpersonal communication

Corporate meetings: The most prevalent practice in corporate houses are meetings. It is a common interactive communication technique. The features of this technique are the agenda for discussion that directs the discussion; the recording of significant proceedings as minutes of meeting; and the subsequent communication of a brief report to communicate to higher levels of hierarchy. There is a flexible exchange of ideas in meetings through verbal words and non-verbal communication. The objectives of meetings are to inform, to discuss problems, to obtain feedback, to resolve issues and to make decisions. Meetings can be structured, semi structured with informal post meeting networking or completely unstructured. The usual sequence of events for meetings followed is publish of notice informing about the scheduled meeting to concerned members, preparation

of agenda for the meeting, recording the proceedings along with details of members present (as minutes of the meeting) and post meeting communication.

Press releases & Press conferences: Important developments that the business wants to share to the public can be done by press releases. The news piece so developed must be simple, precise and comprehensible in first reading. The content must be true, newsworthy and brief. Press conferences are used when the business house needs a greater discussion and provide explanation on the news to be released. The press is invited for an interactive session. Press conferences allow answering multiple questions for clarification of the news which are alter released as formal statements. Like any other conference, a structured programme is created and it is followed to manage the conference.

Workshops: Workshops differ in nature from symposia, meetings, conferences etc. Workshops are more of technical content with trainings delivered by specialists that include demonstrations, task based exercises and hands on training. These are more focused on applications than in theoretical discussions. There is noticeably greater involvement of audience in workshops than other forms of group communication.

Seminars: Seminars are informative communications in groups of small members. The content communicated in seminars is composed of results from research and review of research that relates to predetermined subject areas for the seminar. The aim of seminars is to share contributions in knowledge. Resource persons are technically said "to chair" or supervise a session with necessary feedback after evaluation of individual presentations. Proceedings from seminars are sometimes published as an edited book for further sharing of knowledge.

Conferences: Conferences are featured by larger gathering of people than seminars. Participants are expected from a similar field that are identified by a selected theme of discussion. It is not necessary that the participants affiliate from the host organization. Interested participants from homogenous organizations can participate and exchange information. There are guest speakers, a guest of honor and a key note speaker, conventionally invited for a conference. The discussions so taken place are not bound for action after a conference. As it is a closed group interaction, there is no compulsory need to publish proceedings or other forms of

written communication. This increases the physical participation of a conference discussing a burning issue.

2.8. Let us sum up

Evaluating and listing of prevalent practices in business communication is a difficult task. Identification of those practices is possible by identification of broad areas in this field. Presentations are widely used for oral communication, group communication employs seminars, conventional meetings, seminars, conferences etc. apart from press releases & press conferences. Written communication is done primarily through reports, memos and business letters. Employment communication has world-wide use of resumes, group discussions, interviews and references for assurance.

2.9. Terminal Questions

1. What are the areas of business communication?

2. What are the practices in written communication?

3. What are the prevailing practices in group communication?

4. What practices are still practiced in the use of ICT in business communications?

5. What is employment communication? What are the practices involved in employment communication?

6. How are the most widespread practices in business communication?

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UNIT 3: PRESENTATION AND REPORT WRITING

Structure of this unit

3.1. Learning Objectives

3.2. Unit Introduction

3.3. What is presentation?

3.4. Elements of a presentation

3.5. Preparing for a presentation

3.6. Standard structure of a presentation

3.7. Report writing….purpose and features

3.8. Types of reports in business

3.9. Standard format of a business report

3.10. Preparing a good business report

3.11. Let us sum up

3.12. Terminal questions

3.13. Suggested readings

3.1. Learning Objectives

This unit exclusively deals with:

- Important elements of a presentation
- Preparing a presentation and preparing for a presentation
- Principles of a good presentation
- Purpose of business reports
- Standard structure of business reports and its types
- Rules for preparing a good business report

3.2. Unit introduction

There are a few tools that we need almost every day while doing business. The need for presentations arise without warning. There is however some predictability as to the need for some business reports. While ad-hoc and interim reports are now being demanded higher than consolidated and refined statements, the need to upgrade oneself on report-writing skills is on the rise as well. It is no longer a formality in business but rather a survival skill too. Reports are of diverse nature owning to their purpose. Although preparation time available may vary and efforts are mostly appreciated in business, there are certain standards that need to be met while giving presentations or submitting business reports. As sole trading concerns are a rarity compared to risk averse partnerships and company registrations, presentation and report writing skills have become mandatory for average operation of a business.

3.3. What is presentation?

A presentation is a rehearsed delivery of one's perspective on a selected topic. Presentations are for a precisely limited amount of available time and are given before an interested group of people. The purpose of presentation could vary. Oration skill, body language, persona, information technology skills etc. are under constant scrutiny during presentations. Presentations are commonly followed by queries from the audience that require further clarification or even for the simple purpose of testing the preparedness of the presenter. Presentation is a very formal way of communication although innovativeness is encouraged in specific promotional events, closing of business deals and related matter.

3.4. Elements of a presentation

By elements, we mean the individual parts that make a presentation whole. These elements are as follows:

- **Venue/place:** The place where the presentation is going to be given is important. A presenter feels at home in places that he/she is acquainted with. This increases the confidence and chances of better delivery. Presenters visit the venue to familiarize themselves with the surroundings as well as the equipment that they need to work with.

- **Organizer details:** Information about the organizer, the host or affiliating organization has to be handy for the presenter to use when necessary. Ignoring such

details have evidently led presenters to use great many fillers thus spoiling the presentation.

- **Occasion:** Apart from focusing on the content to deliver, the presenter has to be aware of the occasion where his/her presentation stands.

- **Time:** Time pursues a presenter intermittently when on stage. Respecting time limits to start and end a presentation never escape attention. It simply shows the level of preparedness and practice of the presenter. As time is precious for everyone, a presentation must not extend beyond tolerable limits.

- **Audience:** Many good presenters rarely leave a great memory. This is because the most presenters are so focused on impressing the audience, that they cannot modulate their level of communication according to the suitability of the audience. This does come by experience in presentation. A presenter has to be careful as not to hurt feelings of any member of the audience through a careless comment or overlooked phrase in his/her slide.

- **Presentation aid:** A presenter must be equally well-versed with ICT tools as with his/her verbal skills. Use of audio animations, attractive slide designs, interactive tools etc. have advanced presentations to a new level. Even the basic technical operation of mikes and speakers are now considered a desirable skill for presenters.

3.5. Preparation for a presentation

Presentation lacking preparation is evident during delivery. Sufficient time has to be allotted to preparing for a presentation. Systematically approaching preparation increases the chances of successful presentation. The following sequence can be followed for preparing a presentation:

- **Content development:** The topic of presentation assigned or selected sometimes favours the expertise of the presenter. New topics need to be familiarized before conducting deeper study. A diligent research on the topic yields fruitful information that the audience might anticipate in the presentation. Beginners face the problem of overwhelming information while preparing presentations. The initial step in content development is to collect relevant information on first sight that are easily accessible. Once the domain is understood, more specific studies previously done, published reports, on-going projects etc. can be explored to extract crucial information. Filtering out irrelevant information from initial collection leads to

workable content. The content so finalized need to be categorically placed in a logical sequence to converge towards clarification on the topic. The information contained in the presentation should be simple and indicative in nature only. The content provided in a presentation is not self- explanatory but requires supplementary clarification from the presenter.

- **Use of audio visual aids:** Once the important categories of information have been defined, the headings of the main body for the presentation surface. Depending on the level of audience and the availability of resources, audio visual aids are selected for use. Commonly used audio visual aids are flip screens, white boards, presentation slides, overhead projectors, LED screens, collar mikes and speakers. Projectors are used in some presentations where multiple projection screens are put up in different places among a larger audience for obstruction free engagement.

- **Presentation time:**

  Presentation times are usually pre-determined and implied for adherence. The presenter must keep maximum time for the main body of the presentation, sparring limited time for introductions and conclusions. Experienced presenters also time their slides for changes or progression. This can be achieved through intensive rehearsals.

- **Rehearsals**

  Repeat practices simulating real time presentations help the presenters identify flaws beforehand and adopt correction measures. Presenters have typical body languages that are undesirable sometimes. This can be revealed by rehearsals before a dummy audience and taking feedback for improvement from experts. The time switches during a presentation or perfect handovers in case of a group presentation can be achieved solely be rehearsals.

- **Presenter appearance**

  Formal attires are preferred for presentations. The colours worn by the presenter are not supposed to divert the attention of the audience from the presentation. Good colour contrast in formal dressing is appreciated. Body posture of a presenter attracts audience attraction as it tells about the involvement of the presenter.

- **Post presentation interaction**

  When queries following a presentation are well answered, it completes an effective presentation. There could be certain facts and information that few members of the

audience could not comprehend due to the time adherence of a presentation. These need to be settled for impactful presentation.

3.6. Standard structure of a presentation

A presentation could be for introducing a new product, presenting the financial status of a company, progress of sales in the year, trend analysis of consumer preferences etc. The structure of a presentation varies for different purposes. However, a standard format for any presentation is acceptable that has parts common to different occasions. Such a format has been provided below.

> **A. Introduction:** The speaker/presenter gives an introduction of himself/herself in brief in this part. It is customary to introduce the topic for the presentation after this. Some presenters also display a roadmap as to how the presentation is going to proceed. The purpose of the presentation is also stated in this section along with a title (if any).

> **B. Body:** This section follows the first diving into detailed information and pointing out important markers. The central idea for the presentation is divided into logically placed parts that are explained in consecutively. The presenter brings in supportive materials to assist the information placed in this section to convince the audience on facts and numbers stated therein. live researches, project reports, corporate data and analogies are drawn to substantiate the content. Technical details may be included in this part.

> **C. Conclusion:** Complex derivations from the body are explained by the presenter and critical points are highlighted as take away from the presentation. Conclusions are given in simple language and in points that can be retained by the audience.

> **D. Interaction session:** It is better to follow up a presentation with an interaction session for resolving queries. The criticism of the audience if provided, must be taken positively and queries addressed to satisfaction. Listening skill is necessary in this part.

3.7. Report writing…..purpose and features

Reports are written statements of prescribed formats that serve varied purposes as needed in bunisess. These may include information that is qualitative in nature, quantitative in nature or both. Reports are meant to assist in better decision making. Reports are always accompanied by a strict or else approximate deadline for submission. Although reports could be oral as well as written, the latter is more in use than the first.

3.8. Types of reports

Reports can be categorized according to their nature, frequency of use, number of people involved and topic.

A. Formal reports: These reports follow standard formats established by respective authorities that are prepared according to a definite procedure. Formal reports are the ones that are mandatory in business operations. Formal reports could be of two more types. i.e. statutory reports those prepared according to directions of law in format and procedure ; and non-statutory reports that are not directed by law but by management policies and practices of a business. Formal reports are mandatory for submission as and when assigned.

B. Informal reports: Informal reports do not follow an established format or procedure. Management decisions require information on ad-hoc basis for quick consultation of business issues. These reports are demanded where the information contained is given more importance than the procedure followed to make them.

C. Routine reports: These reports are submitted or demanded in regular intervals that have been pre-determined through consensus. Such reports could be on daily basis, in quarterly intervals, half-yearly periods or annual.

D. Special reports: Businesses work on predictability, assumptions and calculated risks. However careful the operation, businesses often face unforeseen

circumstances such as surprise product launches, innovative competitor strategies, technological changes, political imbalances etc. that test their survival tactics. Special reports are asked for in such scenarios to make informed decisions that help overcome unfavourable situations.

E. Status reports: Quite opposed to the one stated above, status reports are periodic reports that are submitted for a typical function of the business. They serve as surveillance on possible anomalous behavior of business operation so that counter measures could be devised in time. Examples of these are the annual financial reports, business growth statistics, market competition, technological advancements etc.

F. Project reports: The reports that are related to the factors concerning the operation of an on-going project or details of a completed project are project reports. In most offices, "DPR" or Detailed Project Report is a commonly used term. Such reports cover all angles from human resources, to project budget utilizations, to material purchases, to technology transfer, to time management in project operations.

3.9. Standard format of a business report

When we say a business report, we visualize a long from of a report with segregated parts inside that is contained in a well presented cover for the report. Although reports include informal reports, memos and statistics reports, we shall provide here, the structure of a long business report that is meant to provide a comprehensive view of a situation or topic. The format of such a report is as follows:

A. Introductory part: Please note that this part is very different from another part called "Introduction" explained later.

> **Cover page:** The over page serves as a protective cover apart from containing reference details of the report such as report reference number, title, date, source information and the type of report.

> **Preface:** This part contains a brief information on the content of the report.

Acknowledgement: Any help or assistance received for preparation of the report can be acknowledged in this part keeping with formal tone. It is considered to be a courteous gesture to do so.

Declarations: This part is used to declare the sincerity in preparation of the report with respect to the ethical and corporate policies of the business.

Certificates: Some reports have to be certified by concerned authorities before being submitted for necessary clearance.

List/table of contents: This is an indicative roadmap of what is contained in the report with information being categorically placed in sequence.

List of figures/diagrams and illustrations: A list is also on the figures/diagrams and illustrations contained in the report along with their location in the report.

Executive summary/abstract: This is a very important part of a report. Normally, it is created at the completion of a report but placed for quick glance of readers at the beginning of a report. It contains the summary of the entire report highlighting significant parts that a person might be looking for at the very start.

B. Main body

Introduction: This part begins the main content by building a background information on the topic which necessary to understand the technical aspects of the report. It familiarizes the reader on the background information. The scope of the report is also mentioned here. Possible limitations after completion of any study could be included in this part.

Methods and techniques: There are a few technical reports where the methods and techniques employed for carrying out a study needs to be mentioned. If a study involves people and surveys were carried out, we might need to explain how have we derived a sample scientifically. These parts make a report stronger and more convincing for better decision-making.

C. Description, discussion and analysis: We come down to the facts and figures in this part. Sales figures, financial ratios, investor position, review of marketing strategies etc. are placed here. The information is presented using tools that are comprehensible for the audience. Commonly used tools here are, cross tabulations, trend lines, bar diagrams,

histograms, pareto diagrams, run charts, maps etc. The data presented is also analyzed to point out specific variations from ideal figures or deviation in policy implementations.

D. Findings, conclusion & recommendations: The complex technical data is generalized and summarized as findings for general understanding. The findings could be multiple in number, each representing a particular section of a greater study. The conclusion is drawn from the findings and is of more simplified in nature. Although abstract the conclusions have to be concrete in business that can provide convincing recommendations. Findings, conclusion and recommendations can be included under a single chapter since they are comparatively smaller in spatial terms than the rest of the report.

E. Ending parts

References: Most reports must take the assistance of information contained in studies that were done previously, newspaper articles, books, archive data, on-going project reports, statistical information in order to be complete. A list of all references from which information has been used to draw ideas, figures, statements etc. must be scientifically listed and arranged according to an accepted guide (for example the APA style, the MLA style of referencing, the Chicago style of referencing)

Glossary of terms: Complex technical terms and jargons used in the report may be included for reader support.

Acronym list: All abbreviations used in a report should be separately listed along with their full forms, either towards the end or at the beginning of the report.

Appendices: Any format, company statement or list that need to be attached with a report can be attached towards the end of a report.

Indexing: In case, a report is so large, that searching of specific details may prove difficult, an indexing can be done towards the very end that can solve the problem.

Check your progress

1. What does a project report inform?
2. What is included in the ending parts of a report?
3. Name two styles of referencing in reports?

3.10. Preparing a good business report

Business report quality can deteriorate due to urgency in submission, lack of revision or proof readings, unauthentic sources of information, human errors etc. The following principles can be followed for writing good business reports.

Intensive research on topic: A sincere fat-finding research can build up a very strong report. This will also ensure that no significant sources of information have been overlooked. If permitted, a reasonable amount of time must be requested for quality report preparation.

Organization of data: If data is organized simultaneously upon collection, it reduces data loss and reduces work. As information is not in shortage these days, there are infinite chances of collecting redundant data. Hence, filtering of data using scientific parameters can lead to quality data generation. Using flags, markers, highlighting information etc. can be of great help in spite of being a small work desk tool.

Upgrading domain skills: Under normal circumstances, reports preparation is always assigned to people skilled in a specific domain. Keeping up with development is very necessary to make a good report. Relevant analogies, technical expertise and analytical skills are top priority for impressive report writing skills.

Upgrading writing skills: Some people do have good writing skills as a natural. But lack of practice always ends in a ditch. Any small piece of writing should be done as an improvement exercise for daily upgrade of this skill. Vocabulary can be developed by inculcating reading habits while composition can be improved by practicing to write original pieces of information taking up however small an opportunity one may come across, every day.

Tone: Even with written reports, the tone in which it is written matters. A report can live up to be aggressive in tone, biased in nature and inconsistent in parts. The tone in which reports are written should be neutral in nature leaving decision making and opinion to people who are reading it.

Proof reading, revision and feedback: Proof reading reports is mandatory to prevent human typing errors. Revision can help reduce unnecessary content and thus making report precise. Feedbacks are advisable but it depends on time

availability. A non-confidential report may be reviewed for improvement from a person without any possible benefit from disclosing the information before submission. Sensitive data must be handled carefully.

3.11. Let us sum up

Presentations are a common communication tool used in today's business. Venue, content, organizers, occasion, time, audience and technology used are important elements of a presentation. Good presentations depend on a many thing such as content development, technology used, oral skills, rehearsals, time management, feedback, preparation for interaction etc. Reports are another corporate communication tool that is inevitable in business. Reports may come in the form of project reports, financial reports, statutory reports, ad-hoc reports, informal reports, business statistics reports etc. Although different forms of reports have different structures, a standard report format is acceptable throughout every other business. A standard report consists of an introductory part, a main body and ending parts. All such parts contain many sub elements that should be looked at to present a complete report that follows standard format.

3.12. Terminal questions

1. What is a presentation?

2. How can we make a presentation successful?

3. How do you prepare for a presentation?

4. What is a business reports?

5. What are the various types of business reports?

6. Explain the format for a standard business report?

7. What are the rules for preparing a good business report?

3.13. Suggested readings

Bowman, L. with Crofts, A. (1991) *High Impact Business Presentations: How to Speak Like an Expert and Sound Like a Statesman*. London: Business Books.

Tropman, J.E. (1996) Making Meetings Work: Achieving High Quality Group Decisions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Turk, C. (1985) *Effective Speaking: Communicating in Speech*. London: E. & F.N. Spon.

Schriver, K.A. (1997) *Dynamics in Document Design: Creating Text for Readers*. New York: John Wiley.

Sharples, M. (1999) *How We Write: Writing as Creative Design*. London: Routledge.

Minto, B. (1991) *The Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing and Thinking*. London: Pitman.

Turk, C. and Kirkman, J. (1989) *Effective Writing: Improving Scientific, Technical and Business Communication*, 2nd edition. London: E&F Spon.

Cutts, M. (1995) *The Plain English Guide.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tufte, E.R. (1990) *Envisioning Information,* Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.

Bell, A.H. and Smith, D.M. (1999) *Management Communication.* New York: John Wiley.

BLOCK 3 : WRITING SKILLS

UNIT 1: STAGES IN WRITING AND RELATED SKILLS

UNIT 2: BUSINESS LETTERS AND MEMOS

UNIT 1: STAGES IN WRITING AND RELATED SKILLS

Structure of this unit

1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Unit Introduction

1.3. Introduction to stages in writing

1.4. Prewriting

1.5. Planning

1.6. Drafting

1.7. Reading and revising

1.8. Editing and proofreading

1.9. Communicating/presenting/publishing

1.10. Skills related to writing

1.11. Let us sum up

1.12. Terminal questions

1.13. Suggested readings

1.1. Learning objectives

This unit is aimed at

- Making readers understand the stages in writing
- Telling readers how to plan their writing
- Explaining the processes of drafting and revising
- Explaining the processes of editing and proofreading

1.2. Unit introduction

Writing is not a random process without any system involved. Writing requires sound understanding of the sub processes that make a good writing. Writing develops from a crude initial writing by constant revisions and improvements. Planning increases the probability of writing better. Follow up steps of organizing a writing, revising, editing, rewriting and proofreading are followed by good writers to deliver great pieces of writing. Writing skills develop over time and practice. Increasing one's vocabulary and drawing composition ideas by reading good literature can improve writing in time.

1.3. Introduction to stages in writing

Opinions differ when reporting the stages of writing. Different writers follow different sequences while writing. Thus, writings on similar topic may differ from person to person. The primary stages are always part of the process. Out of some models on the process of writing, a notable model was proposed by Williams in 2003. This model classified the process of writing into components as follows:

A. Prewriting

B. Planning

C. Drafting

D. Pausing

E. Reading

F. Revising

G. Editing

H. Publishing

The most significant parts of a writing process are prewriting, planning, drafting, reading, revising, editing and publishing. Publishing is also used synonymously to presenting and communicating, in this regard.

1.4. Prewriting

Prewriting is an activity that a writer undertakes before actually sitting down to write the piece of work. It involves activities such as discussions, free writing, journaling etc. These activities aim at generating ideas, gathering preliminary information and input for planning a written document. A writer comes out with outlines for a document through prewriting. Freewriting, outlining, talk-writing and listing can be found as sub process at this stage. Free writing is not bound by any rules and hence allows a writer to scribble his/her own ideas. Outlining help a writer have a rough plan for writing the document placing the important parts together to bring out an initial structure.

1.5. Planning

Planning works on the output of prewriting bringing clarity by framing the aim of the writing. This stage allows the writer to plan ahead what he/she wants in the document and how are they going to be placed. The boundaries of information are marked at this stage. The groups of information are organized so that they successfully connect to the aim of the document. The writer's claims must be supported by arguments placed in correct position in the text. This is also achieved through planning.

1.6. Drafting

A draft is the first completed version of any document. A writer tries to put in all of his ideas in a draft giving it shape for the first time. It is as much as one can get it right at the first time. The concentration at this stage is mostly to develop content rather than the mechanical aspects of writing i.e. grammar and punctuation. A draft should be complete in itself containing a proper introduction, main body and conclusion. The paragraphs denote a change in idea. A draft is not a document fit for publishing. It is the document that goes through a lot of necessary revisions and corrections before final communication or submission.

1.7. Reading and revising

A good writer pauses in between writing to read the content being developed. It leads to identification of overlooked areas or a necessary modification. Reading helps the writer to evaluate if the material is expressing the views correctly or not. Revisions make sure that errors have been corrected improving the document at every repetition. While writing the first draft, a writer uses words that come at random or the closest catch. While revising, the suitability of the words used can be tested and replaced if required.

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                      Check your progress
1. What is prewriting?
2. What is a draft?
3. Why is "revising", a step in writing?
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1.8. Editing and proofreading

Although editing and revising sound very similar, they are quite different in essence. Revisions improves content by leading to addition or deletion of information. Editing looks at the technical aspects of writing. Rephrasing, replacing synonyms, joining sentences, slicing long sentences into shorter more comprehensible ones, repositioning ideas, modifying document structure etc. are some common exercises at these stages. This stage requires careful observation of the use of language to convey meaning. Capitalization, punctuation, numbering, using abbreviations, citation styles, sentence construction etc. are some areas of editing. When the document is completed, a proofreading is necessary to identify the minute mistakes that might have been overlooked even in editing. Proofreading is a final reading or multiple readings that are done with careful observation to remove any flaws in order to make a document ready for submission.

1.9. Publishing/presenting/communicating

This stage is included in the process of writing but happens at the completion of the writing exercise. Only a document that is whole in content, language, punctuation, citations, abbreviations and supported by sound arguments, is considered ready for publishing, presenting or else simply communicating. A published, presented or communicated document later becomes a referable document that is used as a secondary source of information by other writers in the field.

1.10. Skills related to writing

Writing is not a solitary skill. It is complimented by many other skills in its domain. To write well, a person must also be equipped to read well, speak well, and do good research. In addition to that, the universal use of computers and the advent of internet resources have brought in the compulsory use of technological wonders that make writing so much easier. People well versed with computers can draft well with technologies assisting simultaneous proof reading and language improvement. Referencing and citations is easier too with search engines identifying and presenting relevant sources of information.

Some of the important skills related to writing are:

A. Communication skills: With growing connectivity in work, apart from writing, a writer must also be good in communicating with others. Be it in seeking collaborations, asking permissions, providing updates or negotiating deadlines, one must understand that the post writing stages require good communication for publishing.

B. Organizing skills: A well-organized idea is well communicated. Personality is reflected in writing. A person who is not organized has a high chance of losing important notes and drafts that could have made noticeable impact on his/her writing. A lengthy piece of work requires periodic pauses and resumes to completions. A writer must be able to mark his/her progress so that there is streamlined flow in the writing.

C. Research skills: Research requires critical observation of everything under study. Research skills are not only limited to researchers alone with growing need for preliminary investigations required for writing original and impactful literature. Thinking like a researcher allows a writer to systematically approach a subject obtaining information, analyzing data and drawing conclusions that make up valid written documents.

D. **Word processing skills:** A great number of applications can assist writers who have adapted to the present times. Proof reading, editing, referencing, font changes, document alignment, text manipulations etc. are easily achieved by such writers with the use of word processing software.

```
                        Check your progress
1.  Why  is  word  processing  skills  becoming  important  in
writing?

2.  What  do  you  understand  by  proofreading?

3.  How  can  organizing  skills  serve  in  writing?
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1.11. Let us sum up

Writing is a process that occurs in stages of development. A writer prewrites his/her ideas by outlining, free writing, talk writing and listing. Planning the ideas before actually writing, helps to structure the ideas and arrange them in sequence. A draft is the first complete written document of the writer. A draft is only meant for the writer to further edit and revise. Editing looks into the technical alterations of the document like language changes, rephrasing, punctuation and structural modifications. Revisions improve content through addition, alteration or modification of ideas. Reading the document is important for the writer to predict the document's impact on reader's understanding. Proofreading is the last step before finalizing the written document as ready for publishing or submission. Writing is assisted by other skills such as research skills, word processing skills, organizing skills and communication skills.

1.12. Terminal questions

1. What are the various stages in writing?

2. Explain drafting. Why is it important in writing?

3. Is editing and revising similar?

4. What is proofreading?

5. What are the skills related to writing?

1.13. Suggested readings

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

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Williams, J. D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing: Research, theory, and practice (3rd ed.).* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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UNIT 2: BUSINESS LETTERS AND MEMOS

Structure of this unit

2.1. Learning Objectives

2.2. Unit Introduction

2.3. Business letters and their types

2.4. Standard structure of a business letter

2.5. Memorandums or Memos

2.6. Format of a business memorandum

2.7. Let us sum up

2.8. Terminal questions

2.9. Suggested readings

2.1. Learning objectives

This unit aims at:

- Defining business letters and memos
- Explaining the types of business letters
- Providing the standard format for a business letter
- Providing the format of a business memo

2.2. Unit introduction

Businesses have to communicate with the external elements like customers, government and even competitors. Business communication internally happens with the help of orders, circulars, notifications, memos etc. All of these written documents are called business

letters that serve different purposes. Business letters are more useful than telephones where important messages have to be retained by the receiver or maintained for record. Memorandums are instruments to communicate internally. Memorandums are also known as memos in short. Literally, they mean to short notices to help remember something important.

2.3. Business letters and their types

Business letters are written documents circulated inside and outside of an organization. They serve for future record as backtracking of documents is very common in businesses. Business letters can be considered as a legal document that contains the authorized signatures and seals of the source. They are a professional tool for written communication. We understand that letters could be both personal and non-personal. For business, only formal letters hold good as it is not preferable to indicate relations in business communication.

There are numerous types of business letters. We come across orders, complaint letters, status enquiry, bank correspondence, letters of applications, government correspondence, letters of appointment, resignation letters, press releases, circulars etc. To understand business letters, it is better to study them in categories according to their purpose and destinations. The categories of business letters as such can be studied as follows:

A. Official letters: These letters are addressed to government bodies and semi-government agencies.

B. Demi-Official letters: These letters are never addressed to a person but always to a designation. Such letters are used for subjects that require urgent attention of a particular office and which must be treated quickly.

C. Forms: Some tasks in an organization are of routine nature that are required to be done usually in the same time every year. Owing to the repetitive nature, specific formats are designed and accepted for use for such communications. Notices, interview letters, appointment letters, appraisal forms, information requirement, disclosure form etc.

D. Memos: Memos or memorandums in full are a common instrument circulated within businesses as well as government offices. Memos are short statements of reminder for the addressee.

2.4. Standard structure of a business letter

Business letters vary in format but there is a standard format or structure followed for writing a business letter. The standard structure is as given below:

A. Letterhead: The papers used for business letters mostly come printed with the name, address, telephone number and fax number of the business organization. Normally, this information is contained within the top margin of the letter.

B. Date: The date is indicated in the top right hand corner below the letterhead information. The date follows different formats as follows,

<div align="center">

19 May, 2020

May 19th, 2020

19th May, 2020

</div>

C. Reference information: Referring back to business letters is very common. Every letter must have a unique identifier. The reference number is a coded information that is understood by the sender and which indicates the archive location of the letter once its communication is done. The reference number also helps the receiver revert back to the sender using the same number. For example, a letter of appointment for Sales executive recruitment done in May 2020 can be identified by a *Reference no. SE Recruitment/2020/2nd Quarter/Appointment/24.* The position of the reference number is on the top left hand corner below the letterhead information and on the same line as the date.

D. Addressee information: The complete address of the receiver should be mentioned after a line space below the date and a line space above the subject or attention line.

E. Subject indication: The subject matter is written in a very brief statement below the addressee information. This must not exceed more than two lines as far as possible.

F. Salutation: The salutation is based on the comparative designation of the sender and receiver or else on the personal relationship between the two parties. In case, we send a single business letter to multiple addressees working in the same organization, it is customary to provide salutation as *"Dear Sir's".* The salutation *"My Dear Sir/Madam"* is avoided as it more informal in nature.

G. Letter body: A brief self-introduction may start the body if necessary. The matter must be briefly introduced here to some previous official conversation can be highlighted to initiate the message. In case of a correspondence, the reference no. of the previous letter may start the message. The matter should be stated in very limited but sufficient words. The message can be closed by stating the expected response or further action of the receiver.

H. Ending: Formally business letters are no different than other letters. They are also ended with a courteous compliment. For example, Yours faithfully, Yours truly, Yours sincerely etc. The compliment must be followed by a comma (,).

I. Signature: The sender signs the document between the space provided between a courteous compliment and the name of the sender typed within parenthesis as given below.

Yours faithfully

(Donald Cooks)

J. Enclosures: Most business letters have additional documents that are attached as separate enclosures with the business letter. Such are indicated below the signature line as shown below:

Yours faithfully

(Donald Cooks)

Elcls: 1. Letter of acceptance as vendor dated 10th May, 2020

2. Pro forma for bank correspondence

Check your progress

1. What are demi-official business letters?

2. Are memos also a type of business letter?

3. What are letterheads in business letters?

2.5. Memorandums or Memos

Memos are short notes that are circulated within the organization to convey reminders of important tasks to be performed or actions to be taken. Memos act as a quick reminder for scheduled events and periodic reports. Memos also notify temporary handover of responsibility within an organization. Sometimes to request specific information that does not require authoritative sanction, memos are used. This is an important feature about memos. Even though memos are for quick information, they still officially stored to serve as a future reference. Due to its convenience in use and ability to secure swift responses, memos are preferred for frequent usage in businesses.

2.6. Format of a business memorandum

A memo is stored for official record. Hence, it must contain the name and designations of the sender as well as the receiver. All memos have a reference number as well. Complimentary closing and salutations are not required in memos. But signatures are mandatory for authenticity. Date is also mentioned in this document. The style of writing is direct but has a sense of formality involved. The main content is as brief as possible. A general format for a business memorandum is shown below:

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                                    Company's name
                                    Inter office memo
Date: …………………………
Reference no. ………………………………….
To: ………………………………….
From: ………………………………….
Subject: …………………………………………………………………………………………..

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Copies to
…………………………………..
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2.7. Let us sum up

Business letters are legal and official written documents for communication inside an organization as well as to connect with the outside environment. Business letters are professional way of communication that can be traced from source to destination which helps future reference. Business letters could be official, demi official, form type or memos. A standard business letter is written on a letterhead and contains other mandatory parts like salutation, sender and addressee information, complimentary close, enclosure information, reference number, date, subject title, main content and signature. Memos are a type of business letter for quick communication but circulated exclusively within the organization. They are a convenient way of inter-personnel communication due to their brief content, traceability and swift transfer. A Memo does not include a salutation or a complimentary close. Name and designation of the sender and receiver are important information required. Signature is mandatory to give authentication to the document.

2.8. Terminal communication

1. What is the purpose of business letters?

2. What are the types of business letters?

3. Explain the format for a standard business letter.

4. What are business memorandums?

5. Why is memo more preferred over telephonic or verbal communication?

6. What are the contents of a memo?

2.9. Suggested readings

Bell, A.H. and Smith, D.M. (1999) *Management Communication*. New York: John Wiley.

Bargiela-Chiappini, F. and Nickerson, C. (eds) (1999) *Writing Business: Genres, Media and Discourses*. Harlow: Pearson.

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BLOCK 4 : REPORT WRITING

UNIT 1: REPORTS AND ITS TYPES

UNIT 2: ORAL PRESENTATION – PRINCIPLES, FACTORS AND SKILLS

UNIT 3: SOME COMMON PRESENTATIONS IN BUSINESS COMMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: REPORTS AND ITS TYPES

Structure of the unit

1.1. Learning objectives

1.2. Unit introduction

1.3. Reports by legality

1.4. Reports by frequency

1.5. Reports by purpose

1.6. Reports by nature

1.7. Let us sum up

1.8. Terminal questions

1.9. Suggested readings

1.1. Learning objectives

This unit aims at:

- Stating the purpose of reports
- Introducing the different types of reports

1.2. Unit introduction

Reports are a prevalent practice in written communication. It is a formal way of communicating information that is circulated for internal use and also for external communication. The essential features of a report include a formal layout of writing, unique reference number for future tracking and correspondence, addressed to a specific office or person, contains subject indication and used for formal communication. Varieties of reports

are circulated in different offices. They inform about the status of progress, information of an organized event or activity, requirement assessment for organizing an event etc. Reports can be identified by a peculiar nature, or the purpose they serve. An elaboration of such diversity has been included in this unit.

1.3. Reports by legality

The nature of reports demanded is governed by the source of authority. It is not always the internal authorities that mandate preparation of reports. Based on this, there are two types of reports:

A. Statutory reports: There are some reports that have to be mandatorily prepared for submission by organization following directives of government. Such reports have to adhere to the formats suggested by the government authority demanding it. The period of requirement of such reports are also decided by the government. Examples of such reports are public reports on corporate sustainability, corporate social responsibility, annual financial reports etc.

B. Non-statutory reports: Such reports are not demanded by the government. These reports are a mandate of the authorities inside an organization. Even though they are not monitored by the government, these reports are formal in nature. The internal authorities may demand routine reports on project progress, employee performance, resource utilization and budget reports for taking managerial decisions.

1.4. Reports by frequency

This category of reports are featured by the frequency of requirement. Some reports are routine in nature and have to be submitted in pre-determined intervals. There are reports that are of special nature which may be required by the management for a particular purpose not routinely occurring. Thus, these reports may be of two types,

A. Routine reports: These are the ones that needs to be delivered in fixed intervals. The frequency of their requirement may range from daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly to annual intervals.

B. Specially prepared reports: Reports that investigate unique situations, collect and present data on one-time events, are known as special reports. They are not recurring in nature. Hence, these reports have a unique structure suited to needs of

the topic. Unseen circumstances call for special reports. For example, reports on sudden fall in sales, noticeable rise in attrition, report on technical workshop conducted in year 2020 etc. are special reports.

1.5. Reports by purpose

The aim of a report also defines its category. Sometimes reports are made solely to inform. There are also reports that are investigative in nature to find out the reasons of a problem. Other reports are prepared to analyze situations that allow improvement in policies. In this way, reports can be of the following types,

A. Informative: Informative reports collect and present existing information or researched information for increase in knowledge of the audience only. These reports present facts, statistical information, manuals of procedure etc.

B. Investigative: An enquiry or investigation is a common thing for businesses. Such practices can be triggered by unacceptable human behavior, critical change in business statistics, special issues, labour unrest, variation from policies etc. Such investigations have to communicate their findings post enquiry along with necessary recommendations for decisions. Such reports are called investigative reports.

C. Analytical: All issues may not pose immediate threat to a business existence. The trend of customer preference, the perception of employees, the effectiveness of a strategy employed, needs to be analyzed to obtain the real picture in the industry. These reports do not simply produce collected information. The information so collected during preparation are analyzed to find crucial observations that are presented as findings to the decision makers in the form of analytical reports.

D. Solution reports: Problems are a part and parcel for business. A scientific approach is followed for problem solving in business. This approach includes definition of underlying problem, devising methods for investigation, analyze

situations to find curable problem dimensions and then design problem solving measures. The entire work is reported as literature for communication as solution reports. These reports are also called problem-solving reports.

1.6. Reports by number of members

There are two types of reports on the basis of how many members are involved in preparation of the report.

A. Single reports: Reports that are prepared by single person under the supervision of a single individual are single reports. Single reports are prepared on topics that can be investigated by single individuals. Multiple opinions are not required in these issues.

B. Committee reports: When the topic of report is a broad area that cannot be handled by the expertise of a single individual, committees are formed to do so. Committee reports are also preferred when single individual reports have the risk of biased opinion of domain specific areas.

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                    Check your progress
1. When are committee reports demanded?
2. What are analytical reports?
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1.7. Let us sum up:

Reports are of various types. The nature, number of people involved, purpose of the report, legality of the report and frequency of use defines the classification of reports. Reports serve as official records of communication. Reports can be sent across organizations as well as the outside world. Reports typically consists of introduction, analysis and findings. Statutory reports provide mandatory information requested by governments. The purpose of reports may be informative, analytical, problem-solving and investigative. Single member reports as well as committee reports exist. Committee reports are required for broader topics where different perspectives may be necessary.

1.8. Terminal questions

1. Why are committee reports required?

2. What are statutory reports? Explain with example.

3. Why are routine reports prepared? What are their features?

4. What are informative reports? Explain with example.

5. What are the various types of reports?

6. How are investigations communicated in business organizations?

7. How are special situations reported in business?

1.9. Suggested readings

Williams, J. D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing: Research, theory, and practice (3rd ed.).* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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UNIT 2: ORAL PRESENTATION – PRINCIPLES, FACTORS AND SKILLS

Structure of the unit

2.1. Learning objectives

2.2. Unit introduction

2.3. Oral presentation and its types

2.4. Principles and factors for effective oral presentation

2.5. Skills in oral presentation

2.6. Let us sum up

2.7. Terminal questions

2.8. Suggested readings

2.1. Learning objectives

This unit shall introduce the readers to

- The different types of oral presentations
- The principles of effective oral presentation
- Factors affecting oral presentation
- Skills required for oral presentation

2.2. Unit introduction

Oral presentations are formal communication techniques in business. It involves both verbal and non-verbal communication. These communications are used in organizations to train employees, instruct employees on policy changes, sensitive people on operating procedures and simply inform too.

2.3. Oral presentation and its types

Oral presentations take different forms. People introduce speakers using oral presentation. The communication can be for internal as well as external communication. Both formal and informal styles of communication are used. The types of communication differ depending on the delivery types.

A. Extempore speeches: These are oral presentations that are delivered from notes and pre created outlines. In case of small audiences, interaction is possible. When communicating to a larger audience, communication is usually one way. The style of delivery is natural and allows the speaker flexibility to relate freely with an audience. Advance preparation time can be availed in such presentations.

B. Impromptu presentations: The name suggests that the speaker has no time to prepare. The speaker is invited without with an element of surprise in most cases. There is hardly any room for organizing detail or collecting information. Impromptu presentations are effectively utilized by speakers without anxiety, who can interact with an audience on short notice. These presentations have a free structure and can be improved by regular experiences alone.

C. Content reading: Such presentations are usually one-way. They are rigid as the primary function is reading developed content to a targeted audience. Such presentations are often seen from news readers, organizers, advertisements and narrators. This type doesn't allow the speaker to adapt to feedback from audience. Speakers do not encourage break in communication by questions and feedback.

D. Manuscript: Manuscripts readings are presentations where the speaker reads content from a prepared manuscript. This method is used for mass audiences as in broadcast media and political campaigns. It involves very less eye contact with the audience as a lot of concentration has to be given to reading from the manuscript. Preparation time for manuscripts is much longer than content delivery which takes a very short time. The content has to be carefully prepared to sound like a conversation.

2.4. Principles and factors for effective oral presentation

A. Purpose of communication: The content of a presentation must align to the purpose of the presentation. A presentation could be for information, persuasion, motivation or justification. The presentation to inform must result in increasing the knowledge of the participants. A persuasive presentation likewise must be able to make employees willing to take a suggested action. Motivational presentations must be able to boost employee morale through organizational changes. A presentation providing justification for actions taken must sound convincing to the audience.

B. Collect factual data: A statement alone cannot be relied upon by anybody, even if it is an impressive statement. Supportive information to strengthen statements is necessary. These support come in the form of published statistical information, public records, evidences, and even analogies. Establishing validity of the resources used for content building background research improve information reliability.

C. Content organization: Filtering information to include in a presentation is a start. But organizing the information finalized for inclusion in a way to logically establish the aim of the presentation should be the end goal. Size of the content is also looked at while organizing. The time allotted for and the transition in topics must be smooth for the audience to be able to digest it. Many good presenters keep additional information for a post presentation interaction adding explanation to the presentation.

D. Presentation aids: People can concentrate only so much to speech. Attention to detail can be retained by use of multimedia. Use of animations, audio-visual supplements and moving objects add variety to the presentation. These aids can emphasize a subject and make it vivid for the audience. Conventional tools are great but adding these will do no harm. We must be careful though not to overdo it when using presentation aids and avoid diluting the message.

E. The structure: A good sequence includes an introduction, main body and closing remarks. The introduction builds up the background and equips the audience to understand the main body. Historical details, conceptual information and motives are placed in this part. The main body contains the message. It includes significant information, evidences, facts, figures etc. The employment of storytelling can break the monotony of a long main body. The closing remarks must leave a lasting impression of the findings and suggestions from the presentation. They are precise details stated in simple language. Usually, the closing part includes an invitation for interaction from the speaker.

F. Rehearsals: Many people would not rehearse before actually presenting even when allotted time to do so. Rehearsals smoothen topic transition and makes a presentation streamlined. The speaker can familiarize with the equipment and the audio-visual aids to be used beforehand. Group presentation handovers can be practiced for relieving stage anxiety and increasing coordination. Time

management is a very critical element in oral presentations. Presentation performance reflects rehearsal quality when seen.

Check your progress

1. What are manuscript presentations?

2. Where are content reading presentations used?

3. What are extempore speeches?

2.5. Skills in oral presentation

Oral presentation weighs heavily on the speaker and his/her skills. An effective oral presentation can have a lasting impact on the actions of the audience to whom it reaches. Misconceptions about technological aids making an oral presentations impressive are widespread. The ability to control the pace, voice, pitch and vocal quality is one component. A presenter must be skilled in tuning these elements to suit a presentation. A presenter must also adapt to present upgrades in technology used for this purpose. Some of the important skillset required for making oral presentations effective are as follows:

A. Vocal skills: There are components of a person's voice that are inherited while there are certain other parts that can be controlled. Pitch means the level of one's voice being high or low. In general, women have a low pitch voice in contrast to a high pitched male voice. Adjusting the pitch for a pleasing voice is an appreciated skill. Volume is another component. Regulation of volume is necessary at various parts of a presentation. The pace of speaking affects voice quality. To move quickly through insignificant parts, and slowing down to emphasize important parts can provide impressive effects. Pronunciation and enunciations can be developed for communicating well. All of these components are developed as a part skill for vocal quality.

B. Presentable appearance: The non-verbal elements are communicated using the body as a medium. So it matters how one looks and carries himself/herself throughout a presentation. A right level of confidence is important that can be achieved through constant rehearsals and increasing experience. The speaker must convey his/her involvement in the presentation by showing enthusiasm, a friendly attitude and maintain good eye contact with everyone as far as possible.

C. Non-Verbal communication skills: Facial expressions, gestures, postures and related conscious movements work towards improving a person's non-verbal communication. Gestures help emphasize and compliment verbal communication through movement of head, hand and complete body itself. Posture are ideal or expected positions while sitting, standing, walking etc. Upright postures suggest good confidence and commanding authority. Drooping figures indicate loss of energy, tiredness, preoccupied mind etc. Carrying oneself with grace through a presentation impresses an audience and generates interest in the subject of discussion. Facial expressions are important too. A flat expression is unable to generate interest with just impressive content.

B. Listening skills: Interactive presentations can be interrupted by an active audience at intervals. The speaker should not discourage that. Being emphatic to others is necessary. If discouraged, an audience feels reluctant to provide feedback. As a result, the motive of the communication is lost. One must be allowed to finish before responding. A good speaker must also be a good listener. A one-sided communicator will try to dominate a discussion which is not an appreciable attitude. Opportunities to speak should be identified at the end of sentences and the change of topics to address a query.

C. Time management skills: Presentations that stick to time allotted are well heard too. As an audience is always pre-informed of the agenda for presentations along with a scheduled programme, people come prepared with an attitude to listen for the stipulated time. Violating time limits is considered as an indication of lack of rehearsals and poor time management skill. Due to technical obstructions, presentation time needs adjustment. The skill to skip to important content due to lack of time, is another skill that good presenters develop. The adaptation to a new pace can be developed by inculcating flexibility in delivery of content.

D. Interactive & emphatic skills: Good presenters sometimes prove to be unskilled in post presentation interactions. Some presenters seem to memorize and deliver content and are irritated by interruptions. Interactions do not satisfy the audience as queries are misunderstood by such presenters. At times, answers or responses are irrelevant. Interactions heat up due to disagreement. All such things must be avoided. A presenter must come prepared with sufficient background

research to clarify probable issues that were briefly stated in the content. Being emphatic is an allied skill where presenters see things from the audience point of view. Responses become more relevant in this way.

Check your progress

1. What are the sub elements for vocal skills?

2. What skills are required for a speaker during audience feedback?

3. How can time management skills be developed?

F. Technical skills: Having good vocal control, being emphatic, being a good listener with great interactive skills are not enough. To excel as a presenter, people are expected to be well-versed in technical skills as well. Word processing, using audio-visual aids, graphic skills, digital designing skills have upgraded many presenters to giving impressive outputs.

G. Psychological skills: Psychological skills including anxiety control, confidence boost, patience, calmness, presence of mind, intelligence etc. These kind of skills helps a presenter remain calm on stage and deliver remarkable presentations. The psychological skills have to be practiced for development. Once developed, a person loses stage fear, adapts to unseen situations, changes delivery based on audience evaluation and much more.

2.6. Let us sum up

Success in oral presentations depend on the skills of the presenter. An effective presenter has to develop good vocal skills that in turn comprises of tone, pace, pitch and volume. Vocal words are again emphasized by non-verbal skills of the presenter. Using gestures, postures and other paralanguage skills, good presenters successfully convey complete meaning of the content to their audience. Communicators must also develop a presentable appearance through acceptable formal dressing and an impressive attitude to go with it. Having an impressive presence with confidence, enthusiasm, empathy and involvement generates interest of audience towards the content. Psychological skills allow a communicator to be calm on stage, patient, emphatic and free of anxiety. Technical skills are becoming mandatory in contemporary times where word processing, audio visual aids and graphic designs are replacing conventional tools in presentation.

2.7. Terminal questions

1. A presenter needs to have a presentable appearance in an oral presentation. Comment.

2. What are the various kills required for an effective oral presentation?

3. Why should a presenter develop non-verbal communication skills?

4. How can we improve our non-verbal communication skills?

5. Developing interactive and emphatic skills are important in oral presentations. Why?

6. What are the types of oral presentations?

7. What are the factors affecting oral presentations?

8. Are rehearsals important for oral presentations? Comment.

2.8. Suggested readings

Turk, C. (1985) *Effective Speaking: Communicating in Speech*. London: E. & F.N. Spon.

Bell, A.H. and Smith, D.M. (1999) *Management Communication.* New York: John Wiley.

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UNIT 3: SOME COMMON PRESENTATIONS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Structure of the unit

3.1. Learning objectives

This unit shall introduce readers to:

- Informative presentations in business
- Analytical presentations in business
- Investigative presentations in business
- Problem-solving presentations in business
- Decision-making presentations in business

3.2. Unit introduction

Presentation is a form of oral communication used prevalently in business organizations and other institutions. There is a speaker or multiple speakers in sequence. The date scheduled for the presentation is always communicated beforehand by issue of a notice or advertised as needed. The audience for presentations are sometimes specific and general for most. The members of audience are invited to a space reserved for the presentation through formal channels. The speaker referred to as presenter prepares the content for a

presentation on a selected topic with necessary research. Audio-visual aids are employed in corporate presentations but using whiteboards and markers are still in use. Presentations are followed by an interactive session with the speaker where the audience is allowed to put up queries and get expert responses. The aim of presentations may vary depending on the purpose and the delivery styles employed. Broadly presentations common in business organizations can be categorized as informative, instructional, persuasive, problem-solving and decision making.

3.3. Informative presentations

Informative presentations are aimed at transmitting information. The information could be about new product launches, company practices, new appointments, service access, operating procedures etc. It transmits anything that is in the nature of informing.

3.4. Instructional presentations

Corporations use presentations as the first tool that introduces employees to anything new that requires employee action in a prescribed manner. The use of an equipment, the operation of a production process, using any resource portal etc. are explained in terms of correct operating procedure, dos and don'ts and problem solving mechanism. Presentations for training employees, hands-on technical presentations, workshop presentations fall in this category.

3.5. Persuasive presentations

A business concern has to face variety of issues that obstruct smooth operation. Those issues needs to be resolved. Decisions are taken through meetings and pushed for implementation. Before such decisions are executed, sensitive issues are discussed using persuasive presentations to ensure unbarred implementation. Concerned members are invited and logical explanations are put forward to resolve issues. Success rate of action implementation in increased by persuasive presentations as it clarifies undiscussed but existent issues.

3.6. Problem-solving presentations

These presentations discuss problems that are not critical at present, but has potential to develop into corporate bottlenecks. Issues are raised as topics of discussions and the sessions involve high levels of speaker-audience interaction. The aim of such presentations is to converge on acceptable suggestions on potential problem solving approaches by

pooling intellect o the matter. Such presentations raise awareness and lead to future presentations that can examine the matter more rigorously.

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Check your progress
1. What type of presentations are Trainings and workshops?
2. When are persuasive presentations used?
3. How does the business communicate operating procedures
to employees?
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3.7. Decision-making presentations

The decision-making presentations take up topics that involve audience in participative decision making. Most issues discussed in these presentations are intradepartmental with participants from a specific expert area. For example, the sales head calls up the entire sales team to participate in a decision making presentation. The sales head presents the historical statistics of sales, with individual contribution of the team towards organizational profits. The matter raised in to decide on the sales target for the year on the basis of resources available and capacity assessment. Interactions and arguments lead to fixing sales targets and related decisions which are under the decentralized control of the sales head.

3.8. Let us sum up

Common presentations in business include informative, persuasive, instructional, problem-solving and decision making. Informative presentations include policy information, product launch information, operating guidelines etc. Persuasive presentations are utilized by corporates to resolve issues by interaction and placing logical explanations. Instructional presentations include trainings, workshops, hands on technical exercises etc. Problem solving presentations are used to discuss issues of general nature affecting organizational culture that can develop as corporate obstacles. Decision making presentations involve participants of single business divisions that take decentralized decisions through participative decision making.

3.9. Terminal questions

1. What are informative presentations?

2. What kind of presentations do businesses use for instructing employees?

3. How does a company communicate decisions to employees through presentations?

4. How does a business resolve issues using presentations?

5. What are the common presentations seen in business communication?

6. What are decision making presentations?

3.10. Suggested readings

Turk, C. (1985) *Effective Speaking: Communicating in Speech*. London: E. & F.N. Spon.

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BLOCK 5: NON-VERBAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: BODY LANGUAGE

UNIT 2: LISTENING SKILLS AND EXERCISES

UNIT 3: INTERVIEW SKILLS – INTERVIEWER AND INTERVIEWEE

UNIT 4: CONTEMPORARY COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

UNIT 5: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

UNIT 1: BODY LANGUAGE

Structure of this unit

1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Unit Introduction

1.3. What is body language?

1.4. Kinesics

1.5. Proxemics

1.6. Paralanguage

1.7. Let us sum up

1.8. Terminal Questions

1.9. Suggested readings

1.1. Learning objectives

This unit aims:

- to bring out the importance of body language in oral communication
- to explain the use of movements in body language
- to explain the use social space in body language
- to explain the meaning of para language

1.2. Unit introduction

Communication can be broadly classified into oral and written communication. Oral communication further bifurcates into verbal and non-verbal communication. A major part of this non-verbal part of oral communication is body language. This subject covers all kinds of movements and body expressions that are an output of one's inner feelings and perception. Body language is a particularly observable area in oral communication where verbal communication is complimented by movements, gestures and other similar non-verbal expressions as displayed by the communicator or the listeners. We come across such things in our daily life, in schools, offices, by the bus stop, in a metro train, in a bazaar etc. This field is diverse and continuously evolving. We shall study the underlying dimensions of body language and explore their impact on the process of communication, especially looking at it from a business perspective.

1.3. What is body language?

People are social beings and they interact in various ways. This interaction is specifically intriguing in the case of communication. Even staying completely still in a meeting suggests something to others. It could be the sheer uninterested attitude, boredom, perplexity or even a lack of confidence to speak. The body expresses the feelings and state of mind of a person through movements that are conscious as well as unconscious. These very movements, gestures, postures, facial expressions, maintenance of distance etc. whether voluntary or not, suggest feelings of approval, denial, anger, boredom, frustration, concentration, terror and grief. Such things are known as body language. The study of body language can be organized into three areas as given below,

- Kinesics
- Proxemics &
- Para language

1.4. Kinesics

The study of movements of the entire body or parts of an individual's body that can be considered as a non-verbal communication is called Kinesics. Ray Birdwhistell is reportedly the first person to have even studied the movements that create non-verbal communication. The work of Birdwhistell is popular that used video analysis of the recorded movements of people placed in different situations. As physical movements seem to convey information about a person doing such motion, study of the phenomenon became important for non-verbal communication.

Kinesics involves the following principal areas:

A. Facial expressions

The facial expression is the first noticeable element in non-verbal communication. It is very difficult to hide one's state of mind by altering facial expressions. Even without words, a facial expression can express different attitudes of an individual. Facial expressions are very important to communicators who try to assess the reaction of the listeners to a talk through constant scrutiny of the facial expressions. They even modulate their voice, complexity of content, tone of delivery with respect to changes in facial expression of their audience. In contemporary times, facial make up as chosen by the wearer expresses their attitude in their lifestyle itself. It is interpreted differently by onlookers and peers who try to read the state of mind of the subjects. Examples of conventional facial expressions include, an enthusiastic face, a light smile, a disappointing frown, an encouraging face, an angry face etc.

B. Eye expressions

Although eyes are a part of the face, sometimes they show movements in contrast to the facial expression maintaining a separate identity. Happiness, sadness, attention, affection and many more feelings are well expressed just by eye movements. This area is highly important for both the speaker and the listener/s. Maintaining eye contact during an oral presentation is always recommended for a successful lecture. A part of the audience not in eye contact with the speaker may lose interest in the talk. However, staring is not advisable as it creates discomfort. People with strong self-confidence and clear conscience always maintain eye

contact during conversations. Avoiding eye contact are common indications of dishonesty, lying and keeping secrets.

C. Postures

By careful observation, one can realize that there are different ways in which human beings perform the functions of standing, sitting and walking. The typical ways in which a human being does the mentioned functions is known as posture. This includes the variation in ways for positioning one's hands legs and other parts of the body while sitting, standing and walking. Different postures express different states of a person's feeling. For example, an upright person, that looks robust while doing these things seems more active and participating. A person with a protruding stomach and drooping posture suggests of him being tired and quitting. People also change their posture when they are about to make a point or are steering a change in discussion. An ideal and correct posture is very important for effective speaking as postures send out uncontrollable signals of a person's state of mind to the audience.

D. Gestures

Gestures are what we might call an add-on to effective verbal communication. Gestures are those bodily movements that work in harmony with their verbal dialect by highlighting a part, suggesting a reaction or seeking audience participation. Examples of common gestures are, modding one's head, hand signs, shaking of head, patting someone's back, shrugging, frowning, blinking, yawning etc. One must be careful in using gestures as a gesture done at a wrong time, at a wrong place can lead to gender discrimination, cultural offensiveness or an immoral attitude.

1.5. Proxemics

Some people feel comfortable in a crowd while some others don't. People behave differently with respect to the surrounding population density they are in. In this context, it is interesting to note the use of space by people when communicating and the reverse impact of space usage on communication. Edward T. Hall is the most remarkable scholar in this field who has defined proxemics.

We see that people use distance or space to influence the outcome of communication. Just like animals, people have a concept of territory. This territory is smaller in public but still

well maintained. Any attempt at the threat of invasion of this territory (more suitably personal space) leads to change in interaction. When strangers visit a house, the owner is apprehensive of identity and hence maintains a safe distance from half open doors to communicate. This is more evident in the installation of voice controlled security system in homes to ward off uninvited guests.

We come across four kinds of zones or proximity areas in proxemics. These are:

A. Public zone: This zone is maintained at a distance of greater than and equal to 10 feet or 3 meters from the person. Such distance is preferable for public speaking. The distance chosen by various members of the audience tells about the attitude of the people towards the speaker.

B. Social zone: The social zone is maintained at a radial distance of 4-10 feet from the speaker. Such distance is maintained for people that are familiar to us and even strangers when arrangements are not under our control (e.g. in banks and hospitals).

C. Personal zone: Personal space is maintained at a distance of 1.5-4 feet around a person. At this distance, handshakes are feasible. We only let friends and trusted acquaintances to this zone.

D. Intimate zone: The intimate zone is marked by a radius of 0-1.5 feet from the person. People allowed in this proximity are very close ones, like relatives, selected best of friends, long term acquaintances and spouse. Access to this zone allows for intimate communication with very limited control measures and involves easily availability of touch. Whispering, touching and informally confiding information happens in this zone.

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              Check your progress
1. What composes kinesics?
2. How does use of space change communication?
3. What does Postures and gestures signify in body language?
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1.6. Para language

Para language is another area of non-verbal communication that helps to enhance verbal communication. It is hard to believe when we say that the verbal words could have non-

verbal aspects that are important for communication. These aspects are the pitch, volume, rate and quality of voice of the speaker. These factors can be controlled and used for making verbal communication more effective. The various aspects known as paralanguage are as follows:

A. Quality of voice: One of the aspect in this case is the hereditary nature of voice as programmed in us. But the quality of voice can be improved by controlling other aspects like tone, pitch and volume. Some people have a sweet tone that attracts the attention of audiences. This tone can be altered with practice. A very good speech is spoiled by a voice that is given in loud volume throughout. Volume of voice should be increased or decreased as necessary. The proper use of mike and mouth distance can achieve a well-balanced volume. Pitch is something that singers are very familiar with. A pitch when unregulated throughout leads to monotony. The pitch should be higher when stressing on important parts of a speech and artfully taken down to wrap up sentences.

B. Speed: We might have all come across people who speak very fast. Such speakers need repetition of sentences to make people understand. The speed here is also referred to as rate or pace. Variation in rate is good. Pausing is used by many good speakers to have breathers, rethink and adapt to unseen circumstances. Finishing early earns no respect in communication. But controlling the pace is necessary to finishes talk and speeches within stipulated time. Also, speeches that proceed very slowly end up in lesser involvement of the audience.

C. Pronunciation: Correct and clear pronunciations indicate that a speaker has command over the medium of communication and had come with preparations. Haphazard recitations and extempore deliveries are prone to errors in pronunciation until proven otherwise.

D. Accent: In these times, accent is a very talked about part of paralanguage. Accents are distinctive ways of speaking that develops in a person influenced by his/her geographical residence, strong mother tongue or instructor. Accents develop naturally and yet people try to develop an accent as a way to impress others. Accents are thus not compulsory to learn as a skill but it is something that gets instilled in a person through various factors.

E. Pauses: The use of this tool in communication creates impact when used properly. A well placed pause can highlight a word that comes next. The change of topics in discussions can also be preceded by well-timed pauses. At times, a query might pop up from the audience in the middle of a discussion. As most queries are novel in nature, a pause can help plan a response.

1.7. Let us sum up

Non-verbal aspects of communication increase the effectiveness of verbal communication. The various movements whether done voluntarily or involuntarily that impact the process of communication is termed as body language. The movements in body language are studied under an area known as kinesics. People often use space or simply distance to convey intentions in communication. This use of space for communication is known as proxemics. The third area of body language is para language. These are the non-verbal aspects like pitch, rate of speech, quality of voice, tone, pronunciation etc. that support verbal communication.

1.8. Terminal questions

1. Why is para language important?

2. How does gestures and postures help in communication?

3. What do you mean by kinesics?

4. Explain the aspects of para language.

5. How do people use space in communication?

6. Explain the various elements of body language.

7. How does body language help in communication?

1.9. Suggested readings

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UNIT 2: LISTENING SKILLS AND EXERCISES

Structure of this unit

2.1. Learning objectives

2.2. Unit introduction

2.3. Listening and oral communication

2.4. Hearing v/s listening

2.5. Process of listening

2.6. Principles of effective listening

2.7. Types of listening

2.8. Barriers to listening

2.9. Let us sum up

2.10. Terminal questions

2.11. Suggested readings

2.1. Learning objectives

This unit aims at:

- Explaining the importance of listening in oral communication
- Distinguish between hearing and listening
- Explain the process of listening
- Stating the principles of effective listening
- Presenting the barriers to listening

2.2. Unit introduction

Listening goes hand in hand with oral communication. As a speaker works towards making the audience understand messages, the audience must also make good efforts in decoding messages to understand in anticipated manner. Messages are not interpreted correctly

without effective listening. Most people also confuse listening with hearing. But there is a striking difference between the two. Although we perform the exercise of listening on a daily basis, it can be done more effectively if we understand it as a logical process. Listening is of different types based on the levels of involvement of the listener. Identification of barriers to communication will help a listener take measures to reduce or eliminate their impact on listening.

2.3. Listening and oral communication

Listening is not under constant examination as speaking. Teachers and experts try to raise enthusiasm by questioning their audience at random. Listening is the process of careful receipt of communicated messages that are retained for further interpretations and use. Skipping through lectures, paying attention on command, giving in to distractions etc. creates distortion in detail and misinterpretations. The purpose of oral communication is never fulfilled if the audience doesn't listen. The formality is achieved but intended results don't arrive. Listening is that part of oral communication which involves the receiver completely. People are always eager to provide feedback without listening to the whole message. Some people are impatient, some are distracted, some are biased and others are not attentive. All of these people have something in common. They are oblivious to the process of effective listening. Listening starts right at home from dinner talks, pep talks from parents, work shadowing from elder siblings etc. Good parenting can groom youngsters with effective listening. Such skills have long term retention.

2.4. Hearing v/s listening

Hearing is a physiological function that human beings can perform using their ears. The function of hearing helps in retaining information without interpretations. Hearing without listening can lead to partial recall of information or incomplete recall. People applying only hearing might not have any queries. The queries for these people arise once they sit down to implement any instruction or task.

Listening is a psychological phenomenon and an analytical process. This process helps people understand things that they hear. Listening allows retention of complete information. Listening identifies issues on spot that needs clarification. Thus listening may produce queries that resolve issues and improve one's understanding on a matter.

2.5. Process of listening

The process of listening involves steps arranged logically. If the listening is exercised as shown in these steps, it is expected to yield better results. The various steps involved in listening are shown below,
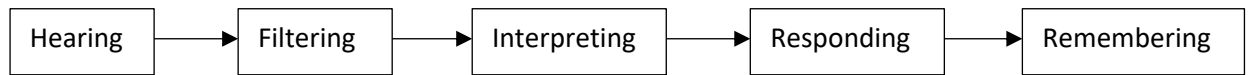
Hearing → Filtering → Interpreting → Responding → Remembering

Fig. Process of listening

A. Hearing: As previously mentioned, hearing is a physiological process. Hearing is an unconscious effort and a passive activity. We don't hear only when limited by a distant source or the obstruction of physical barriers. Hearing is the first step in listening but many people assume it to be the last. Hearing is the absorption of stimuli that occurs externally.

B. Filtering: There could be many sources that provide stimulus in the environment. There could be other factors too that stimulate internal senses. Verbal communication is not solely composed of words that the speaker speaks. It comes to a person mixed with surrounding noise, natural sounds, distracting sounds, internal thoughts as voices etc. To process a message, one has to filter out the parts of stimuli that are not relevant to him/her.

C. Interpreting: Stimuli is simply received in the first two stages. In the third stage, stimuli are given meaning by the receiver. The process of interpreting uses both verbal parts and non-verbal parts of any message. Interpretation as a process is also affected by previous experiences of the listener, their knowledge and associated beliefs. Correct interpretation is important to derive the intended message. This is known through feedback and post session interactions.

D. Responding: Reponses from the listeners provide the feedback towards reception of the intended message. Responses vary in the listening process. People respond by use of verbal communication. Some others prefer to use non-verbal responses like nodding one's head, hand signs, facial expressions etc. There are people that seek further clarification of the message that want elaboration. This stage is considered for the process of listening as responding has no purpose without

listening. A person who has not listened cannot raise a question or does not feel the need to do so.

E. Remembering:

This is the true test of listening. Recalling information from a communication that took place at a previous time is called remembering. People who have listened carefully during a communication, interpreted well and responded to increase their understanding, are able to remember complete information. The careless ones that consider a talk as a compulsory hearing session or a formal oral communication retain partial information only.

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              Check your progress
1. How is hearing different from listening?
2. How is filtering done in listening?
3. Why is responding included in the process of listening?
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2.6. Principles of effective listening

Listening is also an art. It develops over time through sincere effort. A few principles can assist in effective listening. In the end, it is the willingness to listen that matters the most.

A. Concentration on message

Consistent focus on the message being delivered is the first principle. The listener must not be swayed by distractions while listening. There are several things that stimulate a person. A strong focus allows one to overcome certain barriers that distort communication. A good listener is not overwhelmed by physical appearance of the speaker or striking vocal qualities. Some listeners rephrase messages in their own style to remember better.

B. Identifying the purpose of messages

Written communication has subject titles that are separately highlighted. Oral communication also has specific objectives of communication. By carefully listening, one has to identify the purpose of communication to understand well. Until they do so, they have half the motivation to listen. The identified purpose can be used to evaluate the usefulness of listening to the message.

C. Giving Feedback

Feedback keeps listeners in the game. Listeners providing feedback feel an involvement in the process of communication, a sense of importance and thus achieve motivation for further concentration. Feedback also helps the speaker know the effectiveness of his/her communication. This feedback during listening could be verbal, using non-verbal cues or paraphrasing the message for gaining further information. However, one must be careful as to understand the suitability oif feedback in different communications. For example, it is not customary to give feedback in between a video presentation, which is acceptable at the end of a presentation.

D. Taking notes

Some employees are so busy in taking messages during communication that they fail to interpret their own writing later. This is habitual and should be minimized to the level of necessity. Noting down everything is never the objective. The aim is to scribble important points to assist recall at a later stage. Taking down the outline for a later report preparation is advisable.

E. Analyzing messages

Analyzing messages is what differentiates hearing and listening. If we ask members of an audience to state a certain message communicated in a presentation, some people will report the exact words as delivered by the speaker. This does not tell that people have understood the message. To understand the complete message, the verbal words, gestures, postures and facial expression of the speaker during those parts of the message must be analyzed. This tells a lot about the things that were not spoken but were meant by the speaker.

F. Causing interruption and distraction

We must wait for a good time to interrupt communication and only if the rules allow us to do so. At the end of a completed sentence, in the pause between a change in discussion, one may interrupt if interaction time is not allotted at the end of communication. There are always some members of the audience who are not listening. They can quickly become a source of distraction taken by the frustration of compulsory participation. It is courteous to maintain decorum during

communication even if one loses interest in listening. People like different colours, different movies and different flavours. It is only natural that one might not be interested to listen to a particular talk. However, it does not give permission to them to disrupt on-going communication.

2.7. Types of listening

There are various types of listeners based on the type of listening they exercise. This is due to different interests, speaker preferences, personal experiences, social factors, level of compulsion, personal attitude etc.

A. Active listening: Listening by active participation to decode messages with good effort is called active listening. Active listening also facilitates the speaker in effective delivery of message by showing empathy, motivating them and participating with feedback. Active listening allows one to retain complete details of a message.

B. Passive listening: A pretentious listening exercise that gives the necessary impression of listening to the speaker but does not involve analyzing or interpreting the messages is known as passive listening. It is difficult to participate when passively listening. Important details are skipped and the purpose of communication is lost.

C. Selective listening: This type of listening involves listening to some parts of a communication and leaving out other parts. The complete message is not delivered to the listener. The selection of listening parts depends on judgement of the listener. The listener focus is unstable in such a case. Selective listening is practiced in most situations. Beginners are generally active listeners that move to selective listening after years of experience and the reduction of administrative fear.

D. Emphatic listening: Emphatic listening actually goes beyond active listening. While active listening concentrates on the content of the message, emphatic listening evaluates the non-verbal cues, body language, para language to understand the speaker's perspective on the situation. The listener shows acceptance to what is being said and encourages the speaker by providing summary responses like "I see", "I understand", "True" etc. Counter arguments and disputes are not put forth by listeners of this type.

E. Skimming: Skimming is used to derive the general content of the message without giving complete concentration. The listener does not retain the exact words or listen to them minutely. The listener attempts to draw out main ideas. The type of listeners are attentive as they try to identify the essence of a message.

F. Scanning: This involves a superficial listening exercise that is motivated by specific interest in parts of the whole communication. Listener does not tire by concentrating on everything. There is high probability of missing useful information.

Check your progress

1. What is the purpose of skimming as a listening type?

2. What is empathy?

3. Which type of listening is best for retaining complete information?

2.8. Barriers to listening

All barriers that obstruct listening are listening barriers. Understanding barriers is important. This will help a listener avoid them to effectively listen to a message. Some common barriers to listening are,

A. Physical barriers: Physical barriers are those that can be seen or felt. These barriers include, discomfort due to temperature, bad smell, presence of noise, distracting peers etc. There are ways to overcome these barriers. A person sitting in front can prevent distractions from peers. Discomfort due to temperature and smell can be avoided by change in sitting location.

B. Psychological and mental barriers: Personal thoughts and distractions always come in the way to effective listening. People are affected by mental distractions like anger, anxiety, depression, excitement apart from psychological distractions like work assignments, laziness, and personal biases. People tend to concentrate more on forming judgements about a talk rather than listening to it positively.

C. Health issues: Health issues during listening are uncontrollable as they cannot be predicted. Although a person is aware of his/her health condition, it can worsen

during a particular communication. Due to health issues, people lose focus and find it even difficult to attend a session.

D. Non-verbal barriers: Listeners observe everything from words to expressions. Certain gestures like frowning, yawning, staring etc. gives out a negative feedback to the listener which has the capacity to affect listening. Some speakers look at their watch regularly, raising disinterest or distractions among the audience. The thing to note here is that a listener must not focus on these cues, rather the message.

E. Time urgency barriers: Everyone has a personal life and most have a work life. People are preoccupied by tasks that spread out across the entire day. Attending a lecture, meeting and conference does not relive anyone of his/her daily routine. While listening, the progress and estimation of time bothers the listener who is preoccupied by the things to be done next. Abrupt changes in communication time causes distractions in listening. A sudden announcement to shorten or lengthen a discussion should be appropriately placed so that the audience does not lose interest.

2.9. Let us sum up

Listening is not just hearing. It is an analytical process that involves interpreting, filtering, analyzing, responding and recalling. Effective listening requires careful concentration on the message to identify its purpose, interpret the message and provide participative feedback. There are different types of listeners. Some are selective, some skim messages, some scan messages for suitable parts and some are emphatic listeners. Listeners also exist as active and passive depending on their level of interest and involvement. One must learn how to overcome physical, mental, psychological, time, health and non-verbal barriers to effectively listen to a communication.

2.10. Terminal questions

1. Why is listening important for communication?

2. Distinguish between hearing and listening.

3. Explain the barriers to listening.

4. How can we listen effectively?

5. What are the various types of listeners?

2.11. Suggested readings

Cameron, D. (2000) *Good to Talk*. London: Sage.

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UNIT 3: INTERVIEW SKILLS – INTERVIEWER AND INTERVIEWEE

Structure of this unit

3.1. Learning objectives

3.2. Unit introduction

3.3. Interviews

3.4. Interviewer preparation

3.5. Interviewee preparation

3.6. Interview guidelines

3.7. Let us sum up

3.8. Terminal questions

3.9. Suggested readings

3.1. Learning objectives

This unit aims at the follows,

- To explain the purpose of interviews
- To explain the preparation areas of an interviewee
- To explain the preparation areas of an interviewer
- To introduce the different types of interviews
- To state the guidelines for an interview

3.2. Unit introduction

Interview is not a new word for anybody. Every one of us have faced an interview at this point. It starts from the time we apply for admission into an educational institution. With respect to businesses, interviews are very important. Interviews are important parts of businesses. Interviews are different in structure and purpose. Each of them have definite features. Interviews are not just about the candidates but also about the interviewers too. Interviewers and interviewees prepare in a different manner for the interview. Lack of preparation on the part of an interviewer can result in wrong selection of candidates or unsuccessful assessments. Interviews, like other areas in formal communication are governed by a few universal rules. We shall discuss to understand the purpose of interviews

better while exploring the different types practiced in businesses. Preparation areas for interview from both interviewee and interviewer perspectives shall be discussed. To complete the discussion, we shall introduce readers to certain guidelines for interviews. Understanding them shall allow aspiring interviewees to understand the do's and don'ts in an interview.

3.3. Interviews

A scheduled formal interaction between two parties for exchange of views to specific topics. The general aim of such interactions is evaluation of knowledge, performance and potential of individuals. The person or persons asking the questions and directing the interview are interviewer/s. The person/s answering questions, performing tasks and responding to queries are the interviewees or candidates. Interviews are of different types as per the need and have individual features. Some of the commonly known types are presented below:

> **A. Promotion interviews:** There is no pool of candidates for such an interview. Even without any competition, an individual whose promotion is due, is interviewed to assess their suitability for the higher position/post. Such interviews have an informal element as the candidate is familiar with some of the interviewers. Such interviews also bring out the career plans of a candidate and their level of organizational commitment.

> **B. Appraisal interviews:** Employees do not try to work ideally as expected by businesses for salaries alone. The avoidance of erratic behavior, sincerity in following guidelines and adhering to good work culture is also triggered by the awaiting appraisal interviews that assess the performance of employees through that period. It is a periodical assessment tool used in business and government houses alike. The primary goal is to discuss career plans, resolve issues and revealing areas where the candidate needs improvement. It is a usual practice to raise salaries after satisfactory year end appraisals in corporate houses. Career confusion, change in departments and work life issues can also be discussed freely in appraisal interviews. Interviewees have some mount of control in these interviews as their opinion matters in the issues being discussed.

> **C. Exit interview:** Employees often apply for resignation from a present job owing to various reasons of personal or professional nature. It could be a better

opportunity, an unending dispute, mismanagement or simply the need for a change. In regular employments as well as employees working in contract/project mode, resignations must be placed before a standard period of time so that the management has time to take a correct decision along with the necessary formalities. Exit interviews are interviews taken for employees whose resignations have been accepted to know their reasons for exit. Exit interviews also inform the employee about reimbursements, transfer of provident funds, insurance and receivable dues. The employee's experiences, suggestions and any specific remarks are noted, which could prove beneficial for the organization in future.

D. Recruitment & selection interviews: Selection is a part of the entire recruitment process. Interviews are techniques used by recruiting personnel to examine the compatibility of a candidate with a specific job description. In terms of human resources management, it is finding a match between job specification of a candidate and job description of a specific job. There are different kinds of interviews that we come across in recruitment and selection. They are as given below:

- **Face-to-face interviews:** Such interviews are commonly known as personal interviews. The interviewee has to be present in person for this interviews. The length of the interview depends on the success of the interaction. Typically, potential selections are given more time for understanding their psychy and stability. Candidates are expected to know about the operation of organization concerned and their policies. These interviews are preceded by standard introductory sessions by the company.

- **Telephonic interviews:** Interviews that are conducted over the telephone are known as telephonic interviews. These interviews are used in preliminary screening before face to face interviews. Such interviews are very important to assess the telephonic communication skill of employees for specific roles that demand frequent telephonic conversations. Examples of such job roles are abundant in consumer tech-support services, business consulting and call centre jobs. Outsourced operations require individuals that are apt in this skill.

- **Stress interviews:** Candidates are tested for their ability to think logically under stressful situations in these interviews. Interviewers are interested to

know the specific reaction of candidates to artificially created stressful situations. This interview is quite practical considering the daily stress that employees have to face at work. The ability to control one's temper under such situation is very essential for a candidate who can become a future colleague.

- **Panel/committee interviews:**

    Panel interviews are favoured to reduce biased selections as in the case of personal interviews. A candidate can be tested diverse experts to find the overall rating as a potential candidate for the job. Responding well and impressing each individual member is essential in such interviews. Sometimes, intra panel discussions overwhelm such interviews.

- **Psychological test or interviews:**

    These type of interviews are becoming more useful owing to the rapidly inclining attrition rates in jobs. Interviewees have harnessed their nerves to give out stereotypical anticipated reactions that impresses conventional interviewers. Reading candidate thinking through psychometric test, behavioural scales and non-verbal assessment has become necessary. Unpredictable behavior from employees are on the rise. Opportunistic behaviours, underlying career motives and violation of company policies areas that can hide from conventional interviews.

- **Task based interviews:**

    A typing test, a software application test, a problem solving test, a logical test, a test of reasoning, a test for competitiveness, a test for team work compliance etc. are certain tasks that bring out crucial information about candidates. It facilitates quality candidate selections.

- **In-depth interviews:** A notch higher to personal interviews are in-depth interviews. A candidate's background, past experiences, achievements, educational track record, major decisions in life etc. are explored in depth in such interviews. These interviews go for long durations as interviewers are not in haste of completing by overlooking information.

E. Informational interviews: The aim of such interviews is extracting information on topics of interests and asking for guidance. Informational interviews are used for

increase in knowledge about an incident, a problem or develop one's own skill in a particular field.

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                    Check your progress
1. When are telephonic interviews useful?

2. What are the features of in-depth interviews?

3. What are the advantages of panel interviews?

4. Why are exit interviews conducted?
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3.4. Interviewer preparation

A. Scrutinizing applications: Before an interview begins, an interviewer has to finalize a list of candidates that match the job specification and who qualify for attending the interview. This is a time consuming task that requires careful examination of applications received. The output is a list of candidates that can be called for the interview for the scheduled dates available. The task is either performed by the interviewer themselves or assigned to office staff.

B. Interviewer/Interviewer panel selection: Interviewer selection is important as subject expertise matters in selection of candidate, or the person to be interviewed. Selection of panel members are done for panel interviews. Members are invited by formal communication and acceptance confirmation is awaited, before finalization.

C. Scheduling interviews: The dates for interviews are fixed taking into account availability of interviewer, logistic issues, availability of interview space, confirmation of supportive services and formal permissions as necessary. The dates so scheduled are communicated to the candidates well in advance to facilitate transportation arrangement and planning convenience for the interview.

D. Interview space setup: The room or hall where the interview would take place needs to be setup with required furniture, audio visual equipment for the interview. Candidate waiting spaces are also arranged with limited amenities for convenience.

E. Interview assistants: In some interviews where the number of candidates are large, assistants are employed for guiding the candidates through initial formalities, registrations and introducing them to interview etiquettes. These assistants help the

interviewer or the panel in paperwork necessary before and also in securing feedback after interviews.

F. Content preparation: The interviewer sensitizes himself/herself with the job specification and the job description before an interview. This helps find suitable candidates. Based on the job requirements, the interviewer prepares a set of structured questions and leaves a few cues for directing unstructured queries from the candidate. Interviewers also stock some introductory interview openings and closing remarks thinkable for the upcoming interview. Preparing for situations where the candidate might give in to stress created in an interview is a caution that interviewers can take.

3.5. Interviewee preparation

A. Appearance: Appearance gives the first impression to interviewers. Grooming for an interview includes formal dressing, hairdo, personal hygiene and formal accessories carried for formal meetings. The attire must be well fitting, sober in colour, acceptable contrast in parts and clean in all respects.

B. Posture: Posture is a part of non-verbal communication. It is a very important element in interviews. Habitual negative movements (like shaking legs while sitting down) can be restricted by practice. An upright posture in sitting, standing and walking reflects confidence. A drooping figure might lead to a negative impression and create disinterest.

C. Interview Etiquette: Greeting interviewers correctly with respect to time is important. A casual attitude here can lead to embarrassment. Abrupt movements should be avoided during an interview. Asking permission to sit down, a firm handshake, a courteous leave etc. are all signs of good interview etiquettes that an interviewee can impress on.

D. Subject preparation: Jobs relate to a particular area of education and expertise. People going for an interview should revise on related information in the field for gaining confidence. Recent developments in the area can provide an edge to candidates.

E. Knowledge on current affairs: It is not difficult to keep up with the current affairs for people who do so every day. This is one of the reasons why the habit of

reading newspapers are inculcated among students. Current affairs might come up at any moment in an interview. It is advisable to be always prepared.

F. Company background research: Knowing about the company that the candidate is aspiring to work with is expected by interviewers. There is no excuse to not knowing so. Products and services offered, geographical proliferation of operations, customers, competitors, competitiveness etc. should be researched in before attending the interview.

G. Keeping good health: Maintenance of a healthy lifestyle comes to use for candidates. A candidate must be careful to keep away from unhealthy eating habits, unacceptable social habits and risk taking situations before an interview. A healthy candidate has an unobstructed presence of mind to make a comeback and impress the panel.

H. Salary negotiation: A good market research reveals the current salary being offered for a particular position. Knowledge of this allows one to prepare counter arguments in support of a salary demanded. It is important to frankly discuss all basic queries about salary if asked for.

I. Personality and attitude: Interviewers are always looking for a positive attitude in candidates even in stressful situations. This can be acquired by tuning one's outlook to what a job demands. There could be certain traits of one's personality that are undesirable for a particular job. Self-assessment allows identification of those traits. With due care, a favourable personality can be displayed for excelling an interview. However, it is advisable to be honest and straight when facing an interview as concealing personality features could end a selected candidate in an unsatisfied work life.

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              Check your progress
1. How does an interviewer structure an interview?
2. Should one discuss about salary in an interview?
3. What are interview protocols?
4. What are the important areas of company background that
are researchable before interviews?
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3.6. Interview guidelines

We have explained the importance of interviews and how to prepare for interviews. The scene changes as soon as a person actually goes for an interview. Quick thinking and wits help but a person has to have a structured guide for certain acceptable rules for interviews.

We can learn these as two broad categories as given below,

Things to do

- The candidate or the interviewee should let the interviewer lead the interaction. Let the interviewer initiate the discussions.
- The candidate must not be the one to ask questions even when presented with opportunity. This gives out a negative message.
- The candidate should try to show preference for the job being offered and the eagerness to work if selected.
- Highlighting one's strength before interviewers is good. But such claims must be supported by substantial evidence and examples.
- A person must take a favourable opportunity to highlight one's skills that are relevant to the job.

Things to avoid

- A candidate should not make negative remarks about former employers or peers in an interview
- Answers should not be long, lacking confidence and vague in nature
- A person should not lack enthusiasm in responding
- One must not state unrealistic aims and overambitious goals in an interview
- An interviewee must not lack courtesy throughout the interaction
- The candidate must try to remain calm and avoid being aggressive, rude or short-tempered

3.7. Let us sum up

Everyone has to face an interview at some point of time or other. Interviews are formal interactions and are pre-planned with mutual consent of parties involved. Interviews could be for promotion, for appraisal, for selection, informational in nature, task oriented in nature, psychological in nature etc. The purpose defines the structure and nature of the

interview. Both the interviewee and the interviewer has to prepare differently for an interview. The interviewees prepare for an interview by taking care of physical appearance, mental preparation, company research and reading about current affairs. The interviewer has to shortlist candidates for interview calls, communicate those information, schedule dates for interview, select panel members, prepare interview structure, reserve and arrange interview space etc. There are a few general guidelines for attending interviews that increase the chances of selection or the chances of a successful interaction.

3.8. Terminal questions

1. What are recruitment & selection interviews?

2. Why are different interviews methods used?

3. What are the preparation areas for interviewees?

4. How does an interviewer prepare for an interview?

5. State the guidelines for an interview.

6. How can a candidate increase the chances of success in an interview?

3.9. Suggested readings

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UNIT 4: CONTEMPORARY COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Structure of this unit

4.1. Learning objectives

4.2. Unit introduction

4.3. Communication and advancement in technology

4.4. Contemporary networks in communication

4.5. Contemporary techniques in communication

      4.5.1. Email service

      4.5.2. Short messaging services

      4.5.3. Teleconferencing technique

      4.5.4. Video conference technique

4.6. Let us sum up

4.7. Terminal questions

4.8. Suggested readings

4.1. Learning objectives

This unit aims at:

- Exploring the development of communication alongside technological innovations
- Understanding the patterns of networks in communication
- Understanding some popular techniques in communication in recent times

4.2. Unit introduction

Until there was an innovation, discovery or revolutionary change in taste, people were with conventional techniques in communication. The development of new techniques goes through several trials before being adopted by people for use. The increase in availability of resources, quick access to sources and the speed of transmission are marvels of the recent times. Newer techniques for communication has developed hand in hand with these innovations. We shall explore a few important communication techniques in recent times that have affected operations in business. The role of internet in the advancement of

communication technology cannot be ignored. It has connected the workplace like never before. The services that are usable with the availability of internet brings in speed, convenience, resourcefulness and quality to communication. The contemporary techniques in communication have reduced the problem of distance among people. People can now work from home through these techniques. Drastic reduction in compromising deadlines has been achieved. The tracking, geo-positioning systems and artificial intelligence has revolutionized communication. We shall discuss how these techniques have developed communication.

4.3. Communication and advancement in technology

The evolution of communication in line of technological advancements can be outlined as below:

- **The advent of writing**- The moment people learned writing, they found a way to record what they think, what they saw and what they knew. This was the first milestone. There was a way to end and receive messages that can be referred on later as well.

- **The invention of printing-** Writing for a mass audience was difficult with just writing individual documents was difficult and time consuming. Printing gave a way to produce books, copy documents for distribution and sped up the process of mass media communication. Printing was a boon for spreading literacy and spreading information and still is.

- **The telegraph and the telephone-** Communication speed developed even further with the coming of telegraph and the successive invention of telephone. Passing on confidential information that was protected from information leaks was more guaranteed through these media.

- **Radio and television-** The ability to broadcast information, audio, visual information and videos came with radio and television. Live broadcasting or simply prompt communication came into existence. News, interviews and crucial information for public interest could be transmitted at ease.

- **Computers and the web-** Computers alone are considered to be the greatest innovation in communication. Combined with internet connections, the capacity of computers to connect and conduct communication made phenomenal progress in communication. Businesses are flourishing with their support and extensive use.

4.4. Contemporary techniques in communication

If we begin listing techniques in communication, we might end up with a long one. It will include oral presentations, written reports, memos, resumes, meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions, telephonic communication, messaging services, interviews, books, brochures etc. and many more. But when we look at communication in contemporary times, we can short list a few important ones that must be mentioned in this regard. They are as given below,

- E-mail mode of communication
- Short messaging techniques
- Teleconferencing techniques
- Video conferencing techniques

Each of the techniques mentioned above are in widespread practice for maintaining daily communication in contemporary times.

4.4.1. E-mail service:

Electronic mails or E-mails in short are messages transmitted with the use of internet between users of email, identified by unique email identities. A receiver must not be compulsorily connected to the sender for receiving the message and vice-versa. An email can be read in their own convenience by logging onto computer networks. The delivery information is reliable and the content of the message is saved for future correspondence or reference. E-mail content can be formal or informal as preferred by users. There is data transmitted is quite secured. It saves paper and speeds up communication. There is hardly any cost involved in communicating though E-mails. Although developed in 1971, this technique is still in vogue and practice. E-mails are not restricted by time. They can be sent and received at any time as long as one has access to internet. It is considered as a formal Technique of communication and hence demand a level of etiquette in communication.

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              Check your progress
1. Is development of communication related to advancement
of technology?

2. What are the demerits of E-mail communication?
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4.4.2. Short messaging services

These literally mean short message sent across a telecommunication network. As computers aren't easier to carry around, telecommunication is offered a more preferred way of communication considering the probability of greater response. Mobile device users exchange short messages at all times conveniently and with lesser effort. The devices involved are tablet assistants, digital assistants, mobile cellphones etc. Cellphone service providers have expanded this technique by introducing support for sending voices, video clips and documents through short messaging services. In recent times, the invasion of android operating systems and allied software applications like Whatsapp, Facebook messengers, Hangout etc. have revolutionized short messaging service communication techniques. It is no longer about short messages. People can send anything that can be digitalized with optimal size rules. People are marked as active or passive, online or offline, busy on another phone and even a constantly updated status are being provided now. Similar to the one above, this saves time and there is very minimal cost involved. There is obstruction of network traffic and short messages have a probability of being misinterpreted. Hence, it is advisable that such communication be followed up with a phone call for any clarification.

4.4.3. Teleconferencing technique

The shortcoming of the short messages is that they have a chance of misinterpretation. Some messages are so important that such a risk cannot be taken. Also, certain communications are not possible in short messages. Teleconferencing provides a platform for individuals located at different geographical locations, to discuss such issues. Multiple number of persons can communicate simultaneously in a teleconference. The audio conference provides the sensation of physically being in a face to face meeting. The chances of misinterpretations are far lesser in this technique. Simultaneous speaking and aggressive talking can spoil the communication. This technique saves time and cost in setting up real-time meetings. The concentration level and the involvement of participants cannot be well determined in this technique as members are not physically present. Similar to short messaging services, there is the risk of distorted network services that can interrupt communication.

4.4.4. Video conference technique

Video conferencing has eliminated most of the demerits experienced in the previous three techniques. It produces a live video meeting between participants connecting them by use of internet. The audio as well as video feeds are sent and received in real time. The barriers of geography are eliminated and it creates convenience in communication. Verbal as well as non-verbal aspects of communication can be easily observed by all participants which is absent in the previous techniques. This is an effective technique for communication. There is a cost of data consumption for conducting such conferences. But it is minimal as compared to real time setups that also involves transportation and accommodation costs for participants. Proper availability of equipment and internet access is necessary for success of such techniques.

4.5. Let us sum up

Communication has developed hand in hand with the progress of technology to communicate. Writing was the beginning that was succeeded by revolutionary inventions like the telegraph, radio, television and most importantly, the internet. Internet access has allowed networking the workplace. Communication to the outside world is no longer limited by time and distance. Various advancements in communication techniques are now being utilized for improved flow of information. E-mail communication is still prevalent event though its use is diminishing. Sort messaging services have taken with the use of portable communication devices. But teleconferencing techniques are limited by the inability to access non-verbal communication. Videoconferencing techniques have resolved this issue. But the availability of necessary equipment to avail the service and the connectivity issues have scope for improvement.

4.6. Terminal questions

1. Explain the popular communication techniques in contemporary times.

2. How has communication developed with technological advancements?

3. What are the advantages of using video conferencing techniques?

4. How is short messaging services superior to E-mails?

5. Evaluate the comparative effectiveness of teleconferencing techniques and video conferencing techniques.

4.8. Suggested readings

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UNIT 5: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Structure of this unit

5.1. Learning objectives

5.2. Unit introduction

5.3. Cultural factors in communication

5.4. Barriers in international communication

5.5. Strategies for international communication

5.6. Let us sum up

5.7. Terminal questions

5.8. Suggested readings

5.1. Learning objectives

This unit shall discuss,

- The impact of cultural diversity in international communication
- The barriers that are encountered in international communication
- Key strategies that can assist in effective international communication

5.2. Unit introduction

The very first step to prepare for international communication is to understand the impact of cultural diversity on communication at the workplace. Being open-minded to cultural differences ensure good communication. In a global workplace, people can speak different languages. People involved in international communication should be apt enough about offensive and acceptable communication both verbally and non-verbally. Many people are ethnocentric in a work place. Hence understanding their beliefs and social rules is very important. Skipping such detail can lead to easy stereotyping in judging others. Demography factors of age, ethnicity, race and religion must be cared for while communicating to an international audience. Abiding by general communication principles is advisable. But it is also necessary to adapt one's communication style considering the language needs and cultural diversity of the audience. Expert communicators utilize

cultural diversity to their own advantage by bringing in common phrases or popular idioms to sweeten his/her own communication. There are various things that have to be carefully planned in international communication. We shall explore and discuss some of the most important aspects in international communication.

5.3. Cultural factors in communication

We understand that people develop their own understanding of the world based on their cultural beliefs and past experiences. People use these to analyze and interpret messages. We must accept that cultural differences do affect the way people communicate. Effective communication requires expert understanding of cultural differences so that communication messages do not offend any member of the audience. Interpersonal communication also follows similar rules. There is yet another cultural dimension that is relevant to our discussion. It is the expectations of the organizations for employee behaviours, organizational values and mode of operation. This is known is corporate culture. The various factors in this context that are relevant in international communication are presented below:

A. **Ethnicity, race and religion:** The three things have been mentioned together because their impact on communication is somehow similar. Ethnicity and race define a group of people with similar descent, speaking a common language and having similar physical characteristics. These groups seem to follow similar rules that govern their social and cultural life. Ethnicity and racial identity is also carried to the workplace with pride. Although profession views every one as human, these factors cannot be ignored while communicating. People of different ethnicity and race seem to interpret messages differently by the same speaker. This is caused by the beliefs and cultural binding on these groups. Thus, profession may pose things that contrast the beliefs drawn from ethnic and racial concepts. Religion is another element that makes international communication as planned activity. Casual communication can let off unintentional remarks, analogies and cultural references that might offend a certain religious group. Care must be taken to regard the feelings of everyone while communicating in a global setting.

B. **Gender sensitiveness:** Gender classifications have produced many schools of corporate thought. Some scholars propose gender blindness, others gender sensitivity and some also propose gender equality. The discussions are never ending

and the corporate decisions can only reach the approximately best alternative in gender issues. Gender concepts like social interaction, work-life and distribution of roles differ from culture to culture. Communicators must be careful not to offend any gender group by stating a message that has a biased perspective. Understanding culture in this regard is helpful. For example, in the United states, India and the middle east generally accepted philosophies on gender issues are quite different.

C. Age: Age consideration in developing considerate content is applicable in all kinds of communication settings. As age progresses, so does understanding of information and accepted beliefs. Different stages of a person's life are characterized by different needs and choices. Age factor also defines how a person interprets and receives a message. In any organization the work experiences of people differ as per their engagements in the role. Their views and beliefs are very different from one another. A communicator must not forget this aspect while communicating to an audience that has a wide age diversity.

D. Corporate culture

The corporation also has expectations with respect to employee behavior, attitude, peer interactions etc. As the corporation respects the cultural beliefs of its employees, it expects the employees to respect the corporate culture in return. Employees are well groomed in corporate culture in due time of their employment through trainings and refreshers. While communicating with corporate employees, a communicator should learn about the policies, standards and guidelines of operation contained in formal statements of the business.

E. Physical disability

Persons with physical disability face favoritism, discrimination, avoidance and other such treatment at workplaces. It takes time for the peers to get adjusted with a peer with a disability. Solutions are found in time and most cases are resolved with sound management decisions. Considering this element in communications is crucial. Communicators usually overlook presence of such members of the audience unless present in front rows. Messages concerning them are analyzed differently by members who have physical disability.

5.4. Barriers in international communication

A. Ethnocentrism: It is common for people to think that their own culture or ethnicity is superior to others. This feeling gives rise to ethnocentrism that bars people from learning from other cultures. People find difficulty in accepting beliefs, traditions and social rules that have different cultural sources.

B. Language differences: We are all comfortable in our own mother tongues. Communication comes without effort and fluency comes with little practice. For communicating to a global audience that have different language groups demand for adaptability in this regard. A speaker but be versatile enough to learn even a few phrases that can make communication effective. The introvert attitude of audience members having trouble in understanding universal languages create barriers. Either a translator or an interpreter is necessary to overcome such barriers.

C. Cultural comparison: There are some people who compare cultural beliefs and opinions of others taking their culture as a standard point of reference. The decision made for correct or wrong is based on the variation of one's own beliefs. When the speaker and audiences differ by culture, communication in international setting can get difficult.

D. Lack of cultural knowledge

We devote lesser time to learn about other cultures than our own. This creates a cultural gap. The knowledge we possess is accidental in most cases and superficial in nature. We tend to assume that everyone out there has to be like us. By exposing ourselves to cultural differences and cultural studies, we learn to appreciate the differences. Lack of knowledge leads people into stereotyping quickly after brief observations of people from different cultures.

E. Discrimination

Discrimination is present in many areas of business. Discrimination in information distribution, opportunity distribution, allotment of significant job roles etc. are a common sight although many corporations will be in denial. Discrimination causes problems in business communication and makes people apprehensive of these facts. This practice questions trust, reliability and honest operations in business.

F. Language barriers: Observation of social behavior of people in workplaces reveal that people tend to make groups for socializing. Typically, groups are formed within people speaking similar languages. A person speaking a different language is screened with skepticism before allowing group entry. Similarly, in global communication, language barriers obstruct effective communication. Multiple language representations are used to reduce this barrier to involve various types of language speaking audience in a common presentation.

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                    Check your progress
1. What is ethnocentrism?

2. How can corporate culture effect communication?

3. How can lack of cross cultural knowledge affect
communication?

4. Why is gender sensitivity important in international
communication?

5. Ethnicity, race and religion is a factor in international
communication. Comment.
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5.5. Strategies for international communication

A. Expertise on business communication principles:

The principles of communication apply to all kinds of communication settings. The very first step in strategizing international communication is to hone the general communication skills. Encoding messages, simplifying things, bringing analogies, supporting theories by examples, research support etc. are the areas that must be studied before applying communication principles.

B. Analyzing audience

The audience is an important part of the complete communication process. Knowing the demography, culture, expertise areas of the audience allows the speaker to plan the content that will be suitable for such an audience. As previously mentioned, overlooking age, religion, race or physical disability could prove detrimental for a speaker. Once the content for communication is ready, it can be

adapted to acceptable level for an audience removing any content that is likely to be offensive to any member.

C. Openness to cultural differences

Understanding and learning about different cultures will open up the mind to acceptance of cultural diversity. The speaker shall no longer be limited by ethnocentric perspective or comparison of cultural values. By doing so, a respectful attitude is reflected in a communicator and thus the message is well received. The key is to remain patient, negotiate well, and ask for feedback.

D. Acquiring knowledge on cultural diversity

A good speaker learns about different cultures that the audience might be affiliated to. He/she attempts to install popular phrases, happy triggers and cultural symbols to impress upon the audience. A good amount of research is necessary for content development at such a level. Preliminary interactions with different cultural representatives to understand them better can improve communication at a global forum. This strategy can prevent the use of non-verbal gestures that may be unacceptable or misinterpreted.

E. Assessment of language differences

A communicator must assess his/her capacity to compensate differences in language of communication. If an interpreter or even a translator is required, the assessment must be done beforehand. A quick registration survey about the preferred language of communication can help in this context. As language training requires years in minimum, the strategy implementation to fill up language gaps must be a long term objective.

5.6. Let us sum up

International communication requires the willingness to adapt and a desire to make an effort towards communicating to a global audience. One must be open to differences in culture and beliefs while communicating. The acceptance that culturally different individuals will interpret differently is important in international communication. There are several barriers in international communication like language, culture, discriminations, unwillingness to learn, ethnocentric attitude and also gender issues. Barriers can be overcome if suggested

strategies to analyze the audience, to learn other cultures, to employ language assistants, to accept cultural differences and to learn communication principles, are adopted.

5.7. Terminal questions

1. What is the impact of culture in international communication?

2. Explain the barriers to international communication.

3. How can language gap be addressed in international communication?

4. What are the strategies to strengthen effective international communication?

5. What are the various cultural factors that affect international communication?

6. Cultural differences must be accepted for effective international communication. Comment.

5.8. Suggested readings

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