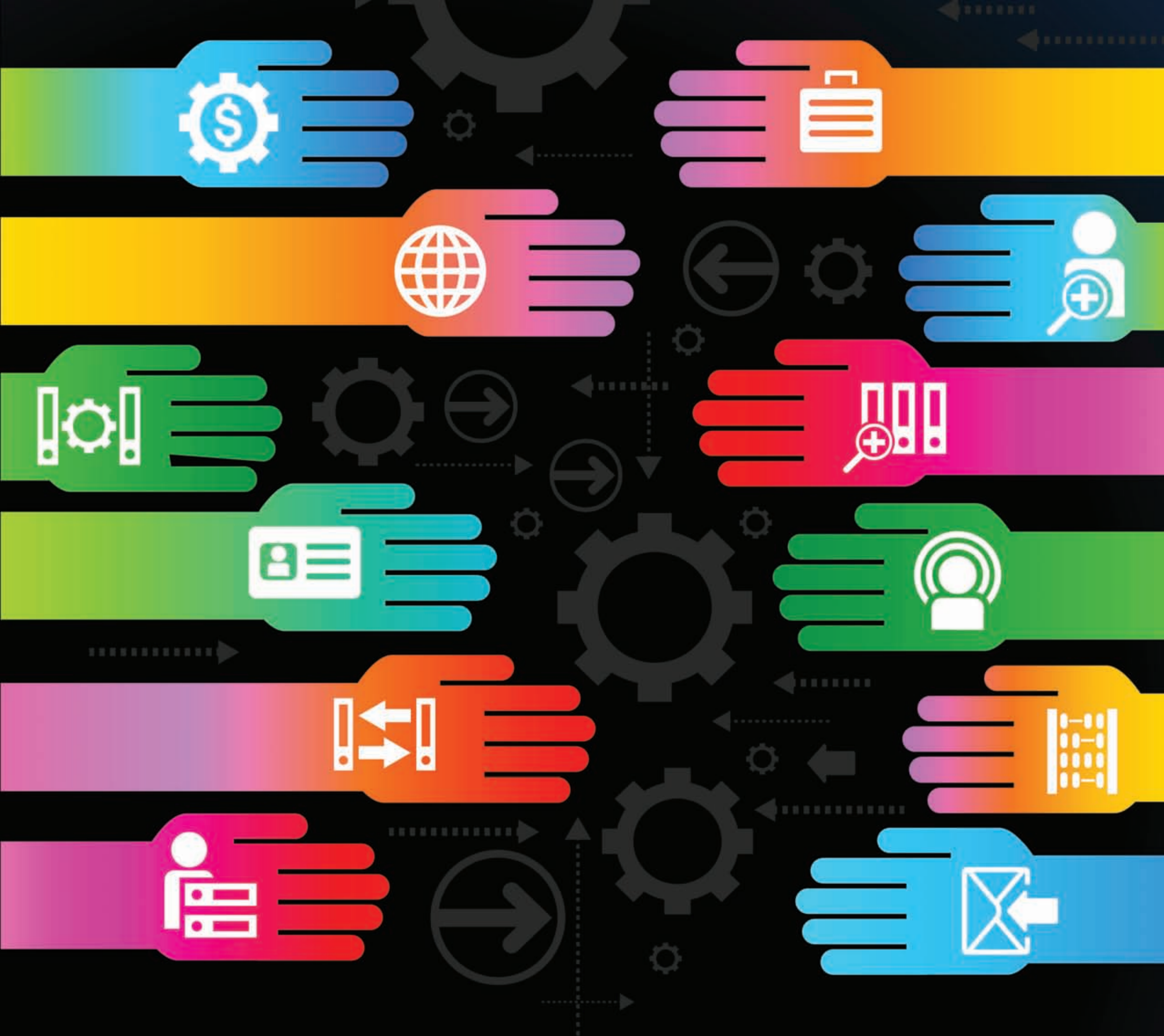


Business Communication

Skills, Concepts, and Applications

Third Edition

P. D. Chaturvedi | Mukesh Chaturvedi

ALWAYS LEARNING

PEARSON

Business Communication

Skills, Concepts, and Applications

Third Edition

P. D. CHATURVEDI
Former Professor and Head
Department of Languages
Birla Institute of Technology and Science
Pilani

MUKESH CHATURVEDI
Professor
Birla Institute of Management Technology
Greater Noida

PEARSON

Delhi • Chennai

ISBN 9788131775585
eISBN 9789332517592

Head Office: A-8(A), Sector 62, Knowledge Boulevard, 7th Floor, NOIDA 201 309, India
Registered Office: 11 Local Shopping Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110 017, India

To the ever-loving memory of

Mrs Pramilla Chaturvedi

Brief Contents

Contents

Preface

There are two types of text book—one that follows a given syllabus; the other that defines syllabus. This edition is an attempt to do the latter.

After having tested the first edition for over five years, and the second for over two, we were convinced that the book had established very well the pedagogy—teaching of Business Communication by case method, but the question, "What exactly to teach in Business Communication to make students corporate-ready?" still remained incompletely answered. Thus, this edition has taken a very different approach to the content of a Business Communication course.

PREAMBLE

What is communication? Communication is what it does—bringing people together. How does it do that? By establishing a commonness among people. The message (the verbally/non-verbally developed idea), the medium (the carrier of the message), and the environment (the surroundings in which communication takes place) bring about this commonness, a situational relationship for a (common) purpose. This is how we would like to explain *communis*, the Latin origin of the word communication.

If communication is a social need for an individual, it is the lifeblood of an organization. If we, as individuals, communicate 70 per cent of our waking time, an organization communicates 90 per cent of its working time. If individuals communicate for their personal purpose, communication in an organization is for business purposes. Thus, communication plays a crucial role in an organization, bringing all aspects of the business together—employees, customers, suppliers, intermediaries, the public, and so on.

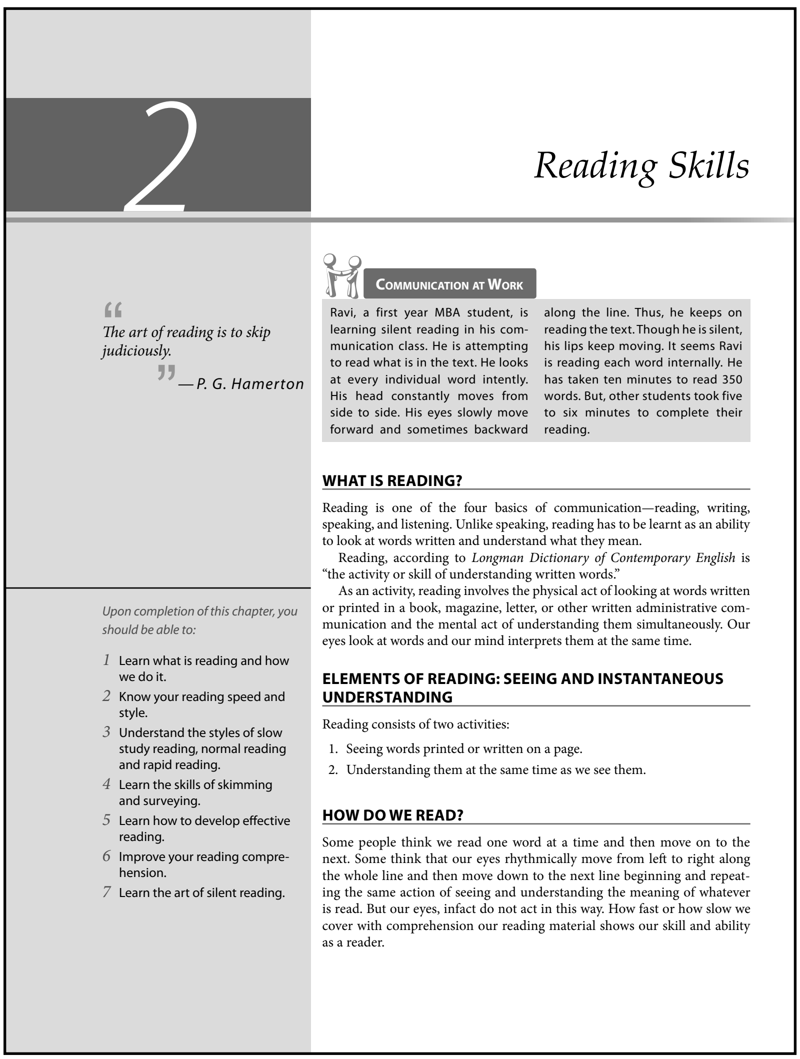
Working people communicate at three levels—personal, social, and professional. We could also call these the three spheres of communication. We have a natural ability to adapt to the communication requirements of each of these spheres. However, with time, some of us become more and more fixed in our style of communication and tend to use the same style across the three spheres. What does our tendency to be flexible or rigid across the three spheres of communication depend on? Does it depend on how conscious we are at a particular level, and for how long? For example, if someone communicates more consciously for most of the time at the workplace, would they not become more formal in their style for the rest of the day and spheres as well?

Flexibility in our communication helps us adapt to the situational requirements faster, which results in efficient communication, and efficient communication translates into less time and effort in getting ready to communicate appropriately at a particular level. So, consciousness gives control, which, in turn, helps develop flexibility and makes our communication effective and efficient.

Our contention is that 90 per cent of us are not conscious of our communication 90 per cent of the time. And those of us who are conscious about our communication, are more conscious of *what* we communicate than *how* we communicate. *Business Communication* prepares students for effective communication at the workplace by focusing on *how to* communicate in business situations—how to recognize the techniques that help in communicating a message accurately, how to handle intercultural situations that require thoughtful communication, how to use appropriate words and an effective tone for writing effectively, and so on. The book helps students master the art of communication be learning to be more conscious of their communication and developing a flexible and effective communication style.

NEW TO THE THIRD EDITION

1. This edition incorporates four new chapters—Chapter 2, "Reading Skills", Chapter 3, "Speaking Skills", Chapter 12, "Social Media", and Chapter 16, "Communication for Conflict Management". These chapters have been included to keep pace with the evolving nature of business communication. Today's professionals need to work with clients and colleagues from different spheres. In addition to developing speaking skills, they need to hone their reading skills and communication skills to manage conflict situations effectively. The four new chapters discuss these issues in detail.
2. The focus on technology and upcoming areas is a crucial feature of this edition. Sections on topics such as the use of e-mails, video conferencing, cellular phones, phone conferencing, PowerPoint presentations, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc.) have been updated and enriched to empower employees in contemporary organizations.
3. The third edition also carries many new cases included in the last edition, such as the ones on report writing, non-verbal communication, and negotiation skills.
4. Continuing from the second edition, the third edition also follows a new learning design. The text's more interactive presentation includes many new pedagogical features:



2

Reading Skills

"*The art of reading is to skip judiciously.*"
— *P. G. Hamerton*

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Ravi, a first year MBA student, is learning silent reading in his communication class. He is attempting to read what is in the text. He looks at every individual word intently. His head constantly moves from side to side. His eyes slowly move forward and sometimes backward along the line. Thus, he keeps on reading the text. Though he is silent, his lips keep moving. It seems Ravi is reading each word internally. He has taken ten minutes to read 350 words. But, other students took five to six minutes to complete their reading.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1 Learn what is reading and how we do it.
2 Know your reading speed and style.
3 Understand the styles of slow study reading, normal reading and rapid reading.
4 Learn the skills of skimming and surveying.
5 Learn how to develop effective reading.
6 Improve your reading comprehension.
7 Learn the art of silent reading.

WHAT IS READING?

Reading is one of the four basics of communication—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Unlike speaking, reading has to be learnt as an ability to look at words written and understand what they mean.

Reading, according to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* is "the activity or skill of understanding written words."

As an activity, reading involves the physical act of looking at words written or printed in a book, magazine, letter, or other written administrative communication and the mental act of understanding them simultaneously. Our eyes look at words and our mind interprets them at the same time.

ELEMENTS OF READING: SEEING AND INSTANTANEOUS UNDERSTANDING

Reading consists of two activities:

1. Seeing words printed or written on a page.
2. Understanding them at the same time as we see them.

HOW DO WE READ?

Some people think we read one word at a time and then move on to the next. Some think that our eyes rhythmically move from left to right along the whole line and then move down to the next line beginning and repeating the same action of seeing and understanding the meaning of whatever is read. But our eyes, infact do not act in this way. How fast or how slow we cover with comprehension our reading material shows our skill and ability as a reader.

1

Each chapter opens with a vignette called **Communication at Work**, which provides an overview of the key issues and questions the chapter addresses.

2

Communication Snapshots and **exhibits** inside the chapters provide a wide variety of sample letters, e-mails and other documents; illustrations; and examples to prepare students for communication at the workplace.

30 | PART I COMMUNICATION SKILLS

5

Know when to choose oral communication instead of written communication.

Choosing the Form of Communication

The choice between using oral and written communication is guided by considering the suitability of oral or written form for the purpose and nature of the subject of communication. Both written and oral forms have advantages and limitations, which are listed in Exhibit 3.1.

Principles of Successful Oral Communication

There are three communication situations in which oral communication takes place:

1. Face-to-face
2. Intercultural
3. Via electronic media

Oral communication is indispensable in any group or business activity. Here are some of the characteristics and principles of effective oral communication:

- *Purpose:* The purpose of talking effectively is to be heard and understood by the listener.
- *Lively rhythm:* Oral communication should, first of all, have a lively rhythm and tone.
- *Simple words:* It is important to use language that is free from long-winded sentences, clichés, and old-fashioned words and phrases. It is best to employ commonly used words and short and simple sentences.

Exhibit 3.1
Comparative Advantages and Limitations of Oral and Written Communication

Oral Communication	*Written Communication*
Advantages	
More personal and informal	Better for complex and difficult subjects, facts, and opinions
Makes immediate impact	Can be read at the receiver's convenience or pleasure
Provides opportunity for interaction and feedback	Can be circulated
Helps the speaker correct himself or herself (and his or her message) according to the feedback and non-verbal cues received from the receiver	Provides opportunity to refer back to a more permanent record
Better for conveying feelings and emotions	Better for keeping records of messages exchanged
	Can be revised before transmitting
Limitations	
Demands ability to think coherently while speaking	Immediate feedback is not available for correction on the spot
A word once uttered cannot be taken back	Many people do not like reading, especially official or business messages
Hard to control voice pitch and tone, especially when stressed, excited, or angry	More impersonal and remote
Very difficult to be conscious of body language	The reader is not helped by non-verbal cues that contribute to the total message
	Do not know if the message has been read
	Is more time consuming[2]

SPEAKING SKILLS | 29

WHAT IS ORAL COMMUNICATION?

4

Understand the nature and importance of oral communication in business transactions and personal interactions.

Oral communication, also known as verbal communication, is the interchange of verbal messages between a sender and receiver. It is more immediate than written communication. It is also more natural and informal.

In human development, speech precedes writing. Children first learn to speak, and then, much later, develop the ability to read and write. The ability to speak/articulate single words and later speak groups of words in meaningful sequence comes to children in the course of their growth. This ability develops from listening to verbal sounds (words). As compared to written communication, therefore, the ability to communicate through the spoken word (speech) is a naturally developing ability (barring medical abnormalities).

In business, oral communication is used more than written communication. A study of executive working hours showed that 70 per cent of an executive's time is spent on communicating. Forty-five per cent of this time is spent listening, 30 per cent is spent on speaking, 16 per cent on reading, and 9 per cent on writing. As 75 per cent executive communication is oral, it is advisable that executives develop their listening and speaking (oral communication) skills.[1]

A manager should be able to converse or discuss persuasively, effectively, and convincingly.

Importance of Oral Communication Skills

A manager's maximum time is devoted to oral communication. He or she is often engaged in one of the following tasks: meetings, discussions, negotiations, seminars, presentations, interviews, peer conversations, providing instructions, and telephone conversations. All these business activities, except telephone conversations, involve *face-to-face* verbal communication. A telephone conversation is one-to-one oral communication that requires skillful control of tone, voice, and pitch, and precise use of words.

In business transactions that involve face-to-face interaction between individuals or groups of individuals, it is not enough to be able to talk, discuss, converse, argue, or negotiate an issue. A manager should be able to do all these persuasively, effectively, and convincingly. But to be convincing, he or she must know and apply the skills of oral communication.

Managers face difficulties in resolving the problems of workers and influencing others through dialogue and personal discussions. They need oral communication skills that include being able to:

- Solve problems
- Resolve conflicts
- Influence people to work together
- Persuade others to be involved in organizational goals
- Be assertive without being aggressive
- Listen thoughtfully
- Negotiate effectively
- Make proposals

These skills include developing the necessary tact to work effectively for mutual satisfaction in complex situations. Broadly speaking, one has to know when to talk; when not to talk but to listen; how to talk (the tone, pitch, and modulation); how to interpret the listener's facial expressions, physical gestures, movements, and attitude; and how to be aware of one's own *body talk* (leakage), which consciously or unconsciously sends signals to the listener. It is said that it does not matter what you say, but rather, how you say it. This includes one's choice of words, level of confidence, and sincerity.

It is said that it does not matter what you say, but rather, how you say it.

3

The **margin notes** highlight important definitions and facts, in addition to drawing attention to the learning objectives addressed in key sections.

4

Each chapter ends with a **summary** of the key issues discussed in the chapter.

Watch the Eye Movement

Get your friend to hold the book and keep below his eye level. So that you can watch the movement of his eyes as he reads the page. His eyes do not make a continuous forward swell.

Record the movement of your friend's eyes.

SUMMARY

- Reading involves two activities, one of seeing words before our eyes and the other understanding their meanings.
- Reading styles depend on your purpose and nature of the reading material. Normal, skimming, and scanning styles of reading.
- You need to train your eyes to improve your reading speed from slow to fast.
- To improve your reading comprehension, you should learn to know the meaning of every word and the main idea of every paragraph and the subject and topic of the whole text.

5

Case studies at the end of relevant chapters present communication challenges and require students to apply their learning.

- Reading involves two activities, one of seeing words before our eyes and the other understanding their meanings.
- Reading styles depend on your purpose and nature of the reading material. Normal, skimming, and scanning styles of reading.
- You need to train your eyes to improve your reading speed from slow to fast.
- To improve your reading comprehension, you should learn to know the meaning of every word and the main idea of every paragraph and the subject and topic of the whole text.

CASE: CHORUS READING

It was a large group of thirty foreign learners of English in an Indian college learning to read with proper stress, intonation and rhythm. They had been given first ten minutes to read the passage silently by themselves, understand every word, if needed with the help of the lecturer. Then the lecturer broke up the sentences into the groups of words which go together, and read them aloud to the class by groups of words, and then asked the students to repeat the passage group by group the way he had read. The suggested groups were separated by bars as given below: The sentences were written on the board as shown here: On Christmas Day, in the year 1642, Isaac Newton was born/at the small village of Wools Thorpe, in England./Little did his mother think/when she beheld her new-born baby/that he was destined to explain many matters/which had been a mystery/ever since the creation of the world.

Not the whole class read aloud at the same time. Only three students together read and rest of the class listened to them. Other groups of three students followed the activity and in this manner the whole class read the passage aloud. The teacher stood near each reading group to find out individual mistakes in pronunciation and stress and corrected them then and there. The students learnt through imitation and observation the aspects of stress, intonation and rhythm in English language through a systematic method.

14 | PART I COMMUNICATION SKILLS

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. What is reading? Discuss.
2. Explain the purpose of different reading speeds. Why do we need to know them as adult readers?
3. Discuss the way we read light fiction.
4. Explain and illustrate the skimming style of reading.
5. Why do we do survey reading of a text or volume? Discuss.
6. Discuss the method of surveying a chapter in a book.
7. How do senior executives read a long report?
8. Discuss some steps to improve someone's reading speed.
9. Discuss the ways of improving one's reading speed.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. In what sense is reading both a physical and mental activity.
2. Have you thought of knowing how you read a text? How would you do it?
3. What are the three reading speeds in general?
4. Think of the ways of training a young learner to improve his/her reading comprehension.
5. Comment on the usefulness of surveying as a reading skill.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. It is said that before we start reading a book or article, it is useful to ask ourselves why we want to read it, and what do I hope to learn from it. Comment on the statement with some specific examples of reading some books.
2. While reading a text, we are advised to develop the habit of not reading back. Why?
3. "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested", says Bacon. Discuss the light it throws on the art of reading books.
4. Why study reading speed is the slowest speed?
5. How do you do skimming reading?

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

Follow the steps given below to self-check your reading skills:

1. Set a time limit for reading a text according to the number of words it has. You can fix different time limits for the same passage for practising different reading speeds. For example, you can begin with 60–80 words per minute, then increase it to 120–150 and finally to 200–250 words per minute or more.
2. Do not allow your head to move.
3. Check that your eyes jump back and forth from word group to word group, not from single word to a single word.
4. Note the time taken to read and complete the text. Try to do it in less time next, until you achieve a speed of 200–225 words per minute at least.
5. Always answer the following or any other set of questions to test your reading comprehension.
   (a) What is its main idea?
   (b) What is its purpose?
   (c) Have you got the relationship between different ideas read by you?

6

Review Your Learning questions are meant to help students revisit the key concepts discussed in a chapter, **Reflect on Your Learning** questions require them to critically analyse and discuss various issues in communication, and **Apply Your Learning** questions test the students' ability to apply their learning to real-life situations. In addition, each chapter ends with a section called **Self-check Your Learning**, which is a series of multiple-choice questions that can be used as a quick test of the students' overall retention and understanding. The answers to multiple-choice questions are provided at the end of the book.

5. In a nutshell, the third edition builds on the strengths of the first and the second editions, and provides a more comprehensive coverage with rich illustrations, practical guidelines, and a more user-friendly design.

ORGANIZATION

The third edition of *Business Communication* is a result of our experience in teaching, training, and consulting with the help of the first two editions over the last eight years. This includes areas such as language skills, report writing, technical writing, communication skills, presentation skills, negotiation skills, personality development, and marketing communication. Most of the skills, concepts, and applications presented in this edition are thoroughly examined and tested with groups of students, executives, and academics.

The book is divided into three parts/courses. Part/Course I, **Communication Skills**, introduces the Case Study: Profile of an Effective Communicator (Chapter 1), and goes on to deal with Reading Skills (Chapter 2), Speaking Skills (Chapter 3), Conversation Skills (Chapter 4), Listening Skills (Chapter 5), Writing Skills (Chapter 6), and Non-verbal Skills (Chapter 7).

Part/Course II, **Business Communication**, discusses the main aspects of communication in a business context, like Nature and Process of Communication (Chapter 8), Organizational Communication (Chapter 9), Cross-cultural Communication (Chapter 10), Business Letters, Memos and E-mails (Chapter 11), Social Media (Chapter 12), Business Reports (Chapter 13), Effective Presentations (Chapter 14), and Business Etiquette (Chapter 15).

Part/Course III, **Structured Applications**, brings together most of the relevant areas of application in business communication—Communication for Conflict Management (Chapter 16), Communication for Effective Negotiations (Chapter 17), CVs, Personal Interviews, and Group Discussions (Chapter 18), Summer Project Report (Chapter 19), and Written Analysis of Cases (Chapter 20). These chapters cover topics that are becoming an essential component of business curricula in leading business schools the world over and are also important for job aspirants, like Chapter 18.

The appendix on grammar, English usage, and style addresses some important aspects of business communication, such as the rules of grammar, common errors in English, and documentation styles. By practicing the exercises in this appendix and spending time on the rules and styles, students can produce impeccable written reports and documents.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PACKAGE

A full range or resources that support teaching and learning are available on the companion Web site of this book, www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi. These include:

- **PowerPoint lecture slides** that provide an overview of the key concepts, figures, and guidelines in each chapter.
- An **instructors' manual** that provides a chapter summary, teaching notes, and hints to the end-of-chapter questions in each chapter.
- **Bonus material**, including a sample report and a chapter on research methods, which can be downloaded by students for additional reading.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our sincere gratitude to our students, colleagues, and the executive participants of numerous management development programmes, who have helped us clarify our concepts of business communication. We are also thankful to the distinguished scholars and authors whose works we have used over the years in our teaching, research, and training. Their works have become an unconscious part of the ideas and thoughts discussed in this book. We appreciate the assistance of those, without whose help, this book could never have been possible—Manisha Chaturvedi and the editorial/production team at Pearson—Raza, Rahul, Vipin and Abhinav.

We thank our prospective readers in advance, for they would be a source of improvement and further development of this book.

Finally, we would fail in our duty if we did not acknowledge the most loving care and support enjoyed by us, all through the work on this book, from our dear family—Roli, Akbar, Ritushree, and Milky.

P. D. Chaturvedi
Mukesh Chaturvedi

About the Authors

Dr P. D. Chaturvedi, former Professor of English and Head of the Department of Languages at Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani is an advisor at DAV Institute of Management, Faridabad. He was the head of the English department at NAS College, Meerut, from 1952 to 1965. Between January 1981 and August 1982, he was on Government of India's Foreign Assignment Service Deputation at the University of Al-Mustansiriyah, Baghdad.

A specialist in modern literary criticism, Dr Chaturvedi has been researching the nature and process of communication as an expression of personality for a long time. His books—*University Essays* (1949), *Principles of Applied Grammar* (1954), and *Language Through Reading* (1989)—and his numerous other contributions to national and international journals are known for their lucidity of thought and expression.

Dr Chaturvedi's name appears as Piyush Dhar Chaturvedi (1928), an academic, in *Marquis Who's Who in the World* (5th edition, 1980, and 6th edition, 1981).

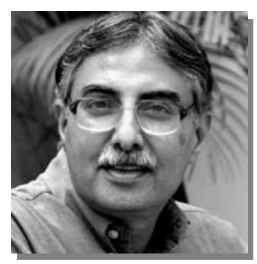
P. D. CHATURVEDI

Dr Mukesh Chaturvedi, Professor, Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Greater Noida, has been with MDI Gurgaon; XLRI Jamshedpur; and BITS, Pilani. He has been Founder Director of the Amity Centre for CRM, Amity Business School, Noida; Director, Asia-Pacific Institute of Management, Delhi; and Acting Director, IMT Ghaziabad. Dr Chaturvedi has also been a visiting faculty at Rouen Business School, France, IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Ranchi.

Dr Chaturvedi received his MMS degree and Ph.D. from BITS, Pilani. He is also an alumnus of the prestigious International Visitor Program of USIA, Washington, D.C. Dr Chaturvedi received MDI's coveted *Award for Excellence in Teaching* in 2005.

Dr Chaturvedi's areas of interest include business communication, case writing and teaching, integrated marketing communications, customer relationship, direct marketing, corporate reputation, sales management, presentation skills, and negotiation skills. He has rendered training and consulting services to a large number of multinational, private-, and public-sector companies.

His publications include *Fundamentals of Business Communication*, *Managing Innovation and New Product Development*, *Business Communication Today*, *Managing Global Business: A Strategic Perspective*, *Buying Research*, *New Product Development*, and *Welcome Back!? Coca-Cola*. He has contributed more than 100 papers, articles, and cases to leading books, journals, periodicals and newspapers, and has presented papers at several international/national seminars and conferences.



MUKESH CHATURVEDI

This page is intentionally left blank.

1 Case Study: Profile of an Effective Communicator

It's not what you say; it's how you say it—because personality always wins the day.
–Arthur Miller

[Sunday, 11:40 a.m. The showroom of Devox Sports Shoes & Sportswear in a posh market of a metro. Mr and Mrs Oberoi walk towards the showroom from the parking lot holding a box of Devox shoes. Mr Oberoi is an HR executive with a multinational company. He is dressed in a red t-shirt, a pair of long khaki shorts, and sandals. Mrs Oberoi is wearing a plain, light blue salwar kameez. She is holding a shopping bag and a small purse. Mr Oberoi enters the shop first as Mrs Oberoi decides to linger outside to look at the display windows. On entering the shop, he is greeted by Rahul, a young sales executive trainee who is on a visit to the showroom from the company's headquarters.]

Rahul: Good morning, sir! May I help you?

Mr Oberoi: Oh, yes. Well, I bought this pair of shoes from this shop last Sunday. I have just worn them twice. I have a feeling that they are from a seconds lot. (*Tries to hand over the box, but Rahul has his hands behind his back.*)

Rahul: Sir, we don't stock seconds in this showroom.

Mr Oberoi: (*Opening the box of shoes*) It did strike me while I was buying the shoes but I was more keen on the colour; maybe that's why I overlooked it. (*He points to the toes of the shoes.*) There is a difference between the two shoes here. The stripes are not aligned the same way. It seems to be a manufacturing defect.

Rahul: (*Looking at the shoes but with his hands still behind his back*) Sir, this is the way they are designed. It is not a manufacturing defect.

Mr Oberoi: (*Getting closer to Rahul and trying to hand over the shoes so he could take a look*) This can't be the design. It is an alignment defect and it looks like a seconds pair.

Rahul: (*Still not taking the shoes*) Sir, I can show you other pairs. They are all made the same way. (*He asks one of the shop assistants to get a couple of pairs of the same shoes, and moves on to attend to other customers. When he returns after about six minutes, he finds Mr Oberoi trying on a different pair.*) See, I said that they were all made the same way. It is the design, not a manufacturing defect.

Mr Oberoi: Then I have a feeling that this showroom is selling defective pieces. They are not from fresh stock.

Rahul: Sir, as I have informed you, we do not keep any seconds in this showroom as a policy. In fact, we don't have much seconds stock because our production line is most modern.

Mr Oberoi: (*Picking up his pair of shoes*) Anyway, I want to return them. I don't want to wear a defective pair.

Rahul: I am sorry, sir. We can't take these back. Our policy is not to take back goods that have been sold.

Mr Oberoi: What! (*Raising his voice*) First you do not accept that this is a defective pair. And then you tell me that I can't return it. What kind of shop is this?

Rahul: (*Looking grim but speaking steadily*) Sir, they are not defective. Secondly, you have already used them. How can I take them back?

[At this moment, Mr Sharma, the manager of the showroom, comes out from his office, notices them, and walks up to Mr Oberoi.]

Mr Sharma: May I help you, sir?

Rahul: This is Mr… (*trying to introduce Mr Oberoi*)

Mr Oberoi: (*Interrupting Rahul*) I'm Sunil Oberoi. I bought this pair of shoes (*showing him the shoes*) last week from your showroom. I find that there is something wrong with the design (*points to the toes*). In fact, a couple of my friends pointed it out.

Mr Sharma: Did you notice this when you made the purchase?

Mr Oberoi: I noticed it but didn't bother about it then.

Mr Sharma: May I know why?

Mr Oberoi: Perhaps because I was concentrating on the colour.

Mr Sharma: Well, Mr Oberoi, this is no design or manufacturing defect. On the contrary, this is the way these shoes are made to look. You can see that all of them (*pointing at the pairs lying on the floor*) have the same pattern.

Mr Oberoi: But they look old. And I don't want to wear something that looks like seconds.

Mr Sharma: Mr Oberoi, the company doesn't have a policy of…

Mr Oberoi: (*Interrupting him*) Then I am leaving them here (*drops the pair on the floor*). Please do whatever you want to do with them.

Mr Sharma: (*Looking down at the shoes for a while*) Do you have a receipt?

Mr Oberoi: (*Searches for a while in his wallet and checks the box of shoes*) Let me check with my wife. (*He turns to look for her; she is coming towards them.*) Do you have the receipt for these shoes?

Mrs Oberoi: No, I don't think you gave it to me. (*She checks her purse.*) No, I don't have it.

Mr Oberoi: I don't know. I may have left it at home.

Mr Sharma: Please give us a moment. (*He asks Rahul to accompany him to his office.*)

Mrs Oberoi: What did they say?

Mr Oberoi: They don't have a policy of taking back sold goods.

Mrs Oberoi: I told you; they won't take them back.

Mr Oberoi: Is that so? They will have to take them back; you wait and see.

[In the meanwhile, Rahul emerges from Mr Sharma's office and approaches Mr Oberoi.]

Rahul: Sir, we will have to refer the matter to our head office. You can check back with us after two days.

Mr Oberoi: I can't come back on a weekday.

Rahul: Next Sunday, then?

Mr Oberoi: But I have other things to do on Sunday.

Rahul: Then you can find out over the phone. (*Rahul gets him a card with the showroom's phone number.*)

Mr Oberoi: (*Instead of taking the card, he takes out his own business card from his wallet and gives it to Rahul.*) Why don't you call and inform me?

Rahul: (*Taking the card*) Sure, we will do that. But in case we are not able to get through to you, you could also try calling us.

Mr Oberoi: (*Reluctantly*) Okay (*takes the card and turns to exit*).

Rahul: (*Picking up the pair from the floor*) You may keep the shoes with you in the meanwhile.

Mr Oberoi: (*Moving back towards him*) What will I do with them?

Rahul: Sir, until I have heard from our head office, I can't keep them here. Secondly, in the absence of a receipt, they might get misplaced.

Mr Oberoi: (*Looking hard at Rahul and thinking for a while*) Okay.

But do let me know soon.

Rahul: (*Packing the shoes back in the box and handing it over to him*) Sure.

[On the advice of Mr Sharma, the next day Rahul speaks to Mr Khare, the general manager of sales at the company headquarters. Mr Khare asks him to fax the details. Rahul sends him the following communication:]

Dear Mr Khare, 12 June 2009

A customer, Mr Sunil Oberoi, wants to return a pair of shoes he bought from this showroom a week ago. He claims that there is a manufacturing defect in the design. In fact, he is accusing us of selling seconds from this shop. Mr Sharma and I tried to convince him about our policies, but all in vain. Finally, to prevent him from creating a scene, we promised that we would let him know our decision after consulting the head office. I have also been successful in convincing him to take the shoes back with him. But he will certainly want an answer from us within a couple of days.

Please advise us as to what course of action we should take.
Regards,
Rahul

[The following day (Tuesday), Rahul leaves town on an official tour. On Wednesday morning, Mr Sharma finds the following message from Mr Khare on the fax machine]:

> "If he is a ₹4,500 customer, don't ask any questions, take the shoes back, give him a new pair, and salute him. But if he is a ₹1,250 customer, then tell him clearly that it is not possible. Please remember that the customer is king, but kings are also big and small and rich and poor."

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CASE

Who is the most effective communicator in this situation, and why? This question was taken up and answered by over 1,500 participants in various communication workshops. Seventy per cent of participants considered Rahul to be the most effective communicator. Why?

Rahul is convincing, polite, calm, flexible, and clever. He uses proper gestures, gives options, and behaves as a professional salesperson—his communication is audience-conscious. He knows what, when, and how much to say.

An important dimension of business communication is the *you-attitude* of the speaker. The interest of the listener/receiver must be the informing principle of the message. Rahul observes this principle by eventually convincing the reluctant Mr Oberoi to keep the shoes till they hear from the head office.

Mr Oberoi would not have appreciated Rahul's first reason for not taking back the shoes—"We can't take these back. Our policy is not to take back goods that have been sold". But the other reason given by Rahul concerns Mr Oberoi's interest and hence motivates him effectively—"In the absence of a receipt, they might just get misplaced". If they did get misplaced, it would be Mr Oberoi's own fault for not producing the receipt. Rahul is successful in manipulating the whole situation effectively through his ability to communicate not just from his own point of view but from his listener's point of view too.

Rahul's *audience-directed communication* is also seen in his assurance that he would get back to Mr Oberoi over the phone. He also insists, "in case we are not able to get through to you, you could also try calling us". The phrase, "not able to get through to you" conveys that not being able to contact Mr Oberoi would be an unintended circumstance.

Reluctantly, Mr Oberoi accepts Rahul's suggestion, as it is in his own interest. An important requirement for communication to be convincing is a tone *of sincerity.* The message must be perceived by the audience as a true and reliable statement of the speaker's intentions. We find this ring of reassuring sincerity in Rahul's final "Sure" to Mr Oberoi.

The other central player in this case is Mr Oberoi. Mr Oberoi is confident and persisting. He has the air of a well-dressed, relaxed executive, but he is not able to keep his cool while pressing his point. He flares up. He is impatient. Instead of being a persuasive communicator, he tries to force the issue in a way that is not in good taste.

To some extent, Mr Oberoi's attitude is reflected in his dress and choice of colours (brick red and khaki), and the style of shorts (long) and sandals (casual). He is casual in his argument, which is not well-planned. He jumps from one argument to another. First he brings up the manufacturing defect, then the seconds issue, and, finally, his own desire to not wear something that looks old. Mr Oberoi's argument that he had noticed the "defect" at the time of making the purchase, but did not "bother about it much" is not very convincing.

Mr Oberoi's approach and attitude are marked by his sense of being a customer, a buyer who always enjoys the upper hand in a deal. However, he lacks the most important dimensions of communication—*coherence, logic,* and *a tone of persuasive reasoning.* He is not persuasive enough; he assumes that as a customer he is always right. His conversation with Mrs Oberoi, who claims to have predicted that "they won't take them back", shows that he believes that things can be forced. First, he questions the validity of the real situation; then he challenges the predicted end: "Is that so? They will have to take them back; you will see". These are words that suggest claims instead of negotiations.

Throughout the conversation, Mr Oberoi exhibits a sense of arrogance, which acts to hide his helplessness in the given situation. He says, almost like a helpless child, "Anyway, I want to return them!". Similarly, when he fears failure, he raises his voice and exclaims "What!", questioning the absurdity of the whole situation. Mr Oberoi becomes emotional and betrays his weaknesses. In sheer disgust, he gives up the argument and his goal of exchanging the shoes, simply dropping them on the floor and saying, "Please do whatever you want to do with them".

At this point, Mr Oberoi has completely failed as an effective communicator. Communication is successful only when its goal is fulfilled; the purpose of communication is to inform, persuade, or motivate the listener towards a desired action. In each situation/case, there is a positive change intended to be brought about in the audience or the receiver of the communication—a change of attitude, perception, or belief. So, in the ultimate analysis, all business communication is purposive and goal-directed. Therefore, the measure of effectiveness depends on the extent to which the final goal is achieved.

> The purpose of communication is to inform, persuade, or motivate the listener towards a desired action.

Does Mr Oberoi succeed in his purpose? Is he able to spell out what exactly he wants? Does he want to return the shoes and get his money back? Or does he want to get the shoes replaced by a different pair of the same quality and price? He is not exactly precise in his communication. He allows the issue of "seconds" to develop into the main concern, without getting to his real point. From his talk with Mrs Oberoi, it is possible to conclude that his purpose was to see that "they (the shop) take them (the shoes) back". In other words, he intended to return the shoes, as suggested by his exclamation to Rahul, "And then you tell me that I can't return it (the shoes)".

> In the ultimate analysis, all business communication is purposive and goal-directed. Therefore, the measure of effectiveness depends on the extent to which the final goal is achieved.

Mr Oberoi is also not consistent in his reasoning. He first points at the possible manufacturing defect, "The stripes are not aligned identically". Later, he shifts to another line of reasoning: "They look old". Mr Oberoi's arguments are not focused and range from the shoes having a manufacturing defect to being seconds stock to being old. He is not convincing in his argument. To convince, one has to state facts. Facts are objective and certain. They are not based on the feelings or wishes of the speaker or listener. Unfortunately, from the very beginning, Mr Oberoi gives subjective reasons. His reasons are always preceded by a qualifying, subjective statement. "I have a feeling…" or "It seems to be…". Now, "feeling" is not "thinking", just as "seems" is not "reality". They lack the logical force of an argument based on objective facts that are verifiable and demonstrable. The use of such modifiers may help the speaker sound polite, but it certainly weakens the logic and factual strength of the statement.

In contrast to Mr Oberoi's expressions, we see that Rahul makes categorical statements that are assertive in nature. "Sir, we don't have 'seconds' stock in this showroom", "Sir, this is the way they are designed. It is not a manufacturing defect". Throughout the exchange, Rahul is categorical and brief. We can appreciate the difference in the force of these two kinds of statements by looking at the following conversation between Rahul and Mr Oberoi:

Mr Oberoi:	Then I have a feeling that this showroom is selling defective pieces. They are not from fresh stock.
Rahul:	Sir, as I have informed you, we do not keep any seconds in this showroom as a policy. In fact, we don't have much seconds stock because our production line is most modern.

The difference is obvious and it lies in the nature of the language used by the two speakers. Hence, one of the very basic dimensions of effective communication is the knowledge and use of proper language for a specific purpose. Just as communication is always purposive, language is also purposive. The purpose can be to inform, persuade, create, or argue. One can use language by also combining some of these purposes.

Later, we shall examine the role of appropriate language in communication. Here, we should note that Rahul's use of spoken and written English is characterized by a certain style, which is simple, brief, exact, and professional in tone. His purpose is to convince Mr Oberoi that the company showroom was not dealing in seconds and that he would check with their head office regarding the possibility of taking back Mr Oberoi's used shoes. When speaking with Mr Khare, his purpose is to inform him about the incident and seek advice on the matter.

Some 20 per cent of participants in various communication workshops thought that as a communicator, Mr Sharma is more successful than others. He is clear, both about his role and his purpose. He is polite, firm, and a good listener. Listening is also an essential aspect of communicating. Not communicating deliberately is, as in Mr Sharma's case, also purposive. He is strategic in his intervention, helping out rather than joining in the argument. He is the manager and is conscious of his role in helping resolve the problem. As a strategy, he does not directly contradict Mr Oberoi's complaint.He does not begin by telling Mr Oberoi that he (Mr Oberoi) was wrong and that there was no manufacturing defect in the shoes bought by him. Instead, in a soft manner, he asks Mr Oberoi, "Did you notice this when you made the purchase?". This question puts forth a "why?" but only after first giving Mr Oberoi a chance to make his point. This shows Mr Sharma's ability to communicate by asking intelligent questions.

> One of the very basic dimensions of effective communication is the knowledge and use of proper language for a specific purpose. Just as communication is always purposive, language is also purposive.

Generally, the interrogative tone tends to make the speaker sound rude or offensive. Had Mr Sharma directly asked, "Why had you not noticed this at the time of buying the shoes?", his tone would appear to be more accusing and confrontational, changing its very nature and tone. Instead, Mr Sharma uses an indirect approach and asks Mr Oberoi, "Did you notice this when you made the purchase?" This does not question Mr Oberoi's skill as an observant, careful buyer. Such an implication would have hurt Mr Oberoi, who thought there was something wrong with the design of the shoes, even though he only realized this when his friends pointed it out. Mr Sharma questions Mr Oberoi's concerns and not his powers of observation. He does not embarrass Mr Oberoi as a customer and allows him to explain his distraction over the choice of colour.

Here, it looks like Mr Sharma knows the strategies of effective communication. He does not contradict the customer. Nor does he go about convincing Mr Oberoi that there was no design or manufacturing defect. On the contrary, he points out that the shoes had a deliberate pattern and shape. As a result, Mr Oberoi gives in and shifts to his next argument (that the shoes looked old). It is essential in such a situation to understand the psychology of the customer, who possibly rejects the shoes because he does not want to wear something that can be passed off as seconds.

Again, Mr Sharma's communication strategy is to be noted. He does not directly tell Mr Oberoi that it was not a seconds pair. Instead, he responds impersonally. He does not say "we do not keep..." or "our policy...". Instead, he politely informs Mr Oberoi about the company's policy. This impersonal communication is best suited to negative situations.

Another strategy used by Mr Sharma is diverting the topic of discussion or contention at a crucial juncture. When Mr Oberoi dumps the shoes on the floor and says, "Please do whatever you want to do with them", he is obviously frustrated and feeling helpless in the given situation. Here, Mr Sharma moves from the shoes to the question of the receipt. This is a psychological move. It heartens Mr Oberoi as a possible condition for returning the shoes. But as Mr Oberoi does not have the receipt with him, Mr Sharma withdraws from the scene and takes Rahul to his office. By doing so, he gives Mr Oberoi the impression that he is going to further discuss a possible way of helping him.

By creating a break in the conversation, Mr Sharma enables Rahul to return to Mr Oberoi with the final resolution. Here, Rahul involves Mr Oberoi a participant whose interest is being considered by the communicator—"Sir, we will have to refer the matter to our head office. You may check back after two days". The use of "Sir" directly involves Mr Oberoi. It acknowledges him as an understanding participant who is being persuaded that, if it were up to Rahul, he would have taken the shoes back, but because of the company's policy, he is unable to do so. However, he is ready to help him by referring the matter to the head office.

What about the other characters in this case? Ten per cent of participants considered Mr Khare to be the most effective communicator. He is brief, has clarity, and is humourous, decisive, and firm. Above all, he is prompt and unimposing in his role as the final adviser in the case. He offers specific guidelines to be followed by Rahul. Mr Khare is also professional in his advice. He communicates as a senior communicating with a junior and uses assertive sentences. His response to Rahul appears to be an order rather than simple advice. He uses an idiom to justify his discrimination between rich and poor customers ("the customer is king" is a common saying in retail services). Mr Khare's shrewdness is communicated through his application of common sense to this policy.

> Verbal communication is given its full force and meaning by the personality of the communicator, who also communicates non-verbally.

The final character in the case is Mrs Oberoi. She shares only a brief verbal communication with her husband, but we receive many details about her through her non-verbal communication. For example, Mrs Oberoi chooses to stay away from the scene of dialogue. Her silence is deliberate. It communicates her belief that the store would not take back the shoes (or that her husband's claim was not justified). "I told you; they won't take them back", she tells Mr Oberoi later in the negotiations. Her clothes and purse communicate her purpose in coming out with her husband—she had come with him to do her own shopping. Her decision to stay out initially appeared to be out of a desire to do some window-shopping. But in the context of the total situation, her staying away seems to be a deliberate decision to allow Mr Oberoi to speak for himself. It is significant that she joins Mr Oberoi only when he is left alone, and her opening words to her husband, "What are they saying?" show her inquisitive mind and cool understanding of the facts as they are. Perhaps she does not share Mr Oberoi's belief that "They will have to take them back; you will see".

Mrs Oberoi uses short, assertive sentences. Her words, "I told you" and "they won't take them back" have a tone of certainty. She is factual. She thinks and speaks more like Rahul than Mr Oberoi.

Rahul's ability to communicate in writing is seen in his fax toMr Khare. In this fax, the details of the incident, which was entirely oral, are put into written form. The message gives an accurate account of the incident. It is brief and to the point. Its language is simple and conversational. Its short sentences allow for the smooth flow of ideas. The use of connectives, such as "in fact", "finally", and "but", gives his writing coherence and logic. Thus, Rahul's written communication is a factual reporting of the incident. In a single chronologically organized paragraph, Rahul is able to convey the entire situation accurately.

What is important in Rahul's language, both spoken and written, is his use of assertive sentences and the choice of words. These characteristics show him to be a rational and cool-headed person. His professional training as a salesperson informs his communication with Mr Oberoi and Mr Khare. He remains conscious of his relationship with his customer. This is why he uses a courteous "sir" when addressing Mr Oberoi. He is impressive as an effective communicator because he is able to project his personality through language and comes across as a well-organized, clear-headed, smart sales executive.

All the characters in this case communicate both verbally and non-verbally. There are spoken and written forms of communication used to exchange thoughts, inform, argue, convince, advise, and instruct. The verbal communication is given its full force and meaning by the personality of the communicator, who also communicates non-verbally. The speaker's dress, gestures, body language, tone, clarity of approach, silence, humour, assertiveness, and aggressiveness all combine to constitute his or her personality and establish his or her relationship with the audience, determining the overall message communicated.

Further, the effectiveness of communication depends upon the kind of personalities that are involved—whether they are "I" personalities or "you" personalities or "it" personalities. Accordingly, the communication will be, in the words of Walker Gibson, "tough", "sweet", or "stuffy".[1] Gibson believes that when a communicator chooses certain words over others and chooses a certain organization or pattern of words over others, he or she projects a personality "with a particular centre of concern and a particular relation to the person he or she is addressing". Such dramatizations in language are known as style. The speaker or writer chooses a style of verbal and non-verbal communication to establish a particular centre of interest and relationship with the audience. In other words, the entire act of communication is the index of his or her mind, thoughts, and concerns, and attitudes towards the audience, himself or herself, and the subject. That is, a speaker's entire personality is at work when he or she seeks to communicate effectively.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Describe the important characteristics of a successful communicator with examples.
2. How do language skills contribute to the effectiveness of communication? Discuss.
3. Based on your study of the case, discuss the strong points of Rahul and Mr Sharma as communicators.
4. Discuss the importance of tone in oral communication.
5. Briefly discuss the part you think personality plays in communication.
6. Discuss what you have perceived about the characters in the case through their non-verbal mode of communication.

ENDNOTE

1. Walker Gibson, *Tough, Sweet and Stuffy: An Essay on Modern American Prose Style* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1966).

2

Reading Skills

> The art of reading is to skip judiciously.
>
> — P. G. Hamerton

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Learn what is reading and how we do it.
2. Know your reading speed and style.
3. Understand the styles of slow study reading, normal reading and rapid reading.
4. Learn the skills of skimming and surveying.
5. Learn how to develop effective reading.
6. Improve your reading comprehension.
7. Learn the art of silent reading.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Ravi, a first year MBA student, is learning silent reading in his communication class. He is attempting to read what is in the text. He looks at every individual word intently. His head constantly moves from side to side. His eyes slowly move forward and sometimes backward along the line. Thus, he keeps on reading the text. Though he is silent, his lips keep moving. It seems Ravi is reading each word internally. He has taken ten minutes to read 350 words. But, other students took five to six minutes to complete their reading.

WHAT IS READING?

Reading is one of the four basics of communication—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Unlike speaking, reading has to be learnt as an ability to look at words written and understand what they mean.

Reading, according to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* is "the activity or skill of understanding written words."

As an activity, reading involves the physical act of looking at words written or printed in a book, magazine, letter, or other written administrative communication and the mental act of understanding them simultaneously. Our eyes look at words and our mind interprets them at the same time.

ELEMENTS OF READING: SEEING AND INSTANTANEOUS UNDERSTANDING

Reading consists of two activities:

1. Seeing words printed or written on a page.
2. Understanding them at the same time as we see them.

HOW DO WE READ?

Some people think we read one word at a time and then move on to the next. Some think that our eyes rhythmically move from left to right along the whole line and then move down to the next line beginning and repeating the same action of seeing and understanding the meaning of whatever is read. But our eyes, infact do not act in this way. How fast or how slow we cover with comprehension our reading material shows our skill and ability as a reader.

1

Learn what is reading and how we do it.

Some people think they read by moving their eyes from word to word. Others believe they smoothly and continuously move their eyes along the line from left to right and then go to the next line, and keep on doing so. But in fact our eyes do not act in this manner.

How Do Our Eyes Move and Pause and Move?

It is difficult to notice the movement of your own eyes. So video record your reading or you can see the movement of your friend's eyes while they read and notice it. You will see their eyes do not keep moving forward without breaks. They move forward along the line, pause and then again move ahead. It is a rhythmic movement of the eye. There is a pause between the two startings. The eye sees only when it is motionless. It cannot see while it is in motion. Every time, it pauses, it sees a group of words or even a sentence, and then leaps forward to another phrase or part of the sentence along the line and thus keeps moving forward-pausing-moving forward and so on. The start-pause-start is so instantaneous and continuous that we are not aware of its happening. We feel we see and read continuously, without breaks. To realize how we actually see and read, once again read the above para of HOW DO WE READ noticing how you have read the sentences. You have read them something like this:

> Some people think/they read by/moving their eyes/from word to word./ Others believe/they smoothly and continuously move their eyes along the line/from left to right/and then go to the next line/and keep doing so./But in fact our eyes/do not act in this manner./

Note the number of times your eyes pause and start. A good reader makes about three stops per line, a poor reader six or seven pauses per line.

2

Know your reading speed and style.

Know Your Reading Speed

Have you ever tried to know your reading ability? It is simple to do it. Read your material for five minutes. Count the number of words you cover. Divide the total number of words by 5. You get the number of words that you are able to read per minute. You must factor in the amount of understanding with which you have read the thing. Your reading speed will be something between 175 and 250 words per minute. You can improve it with training in reading skills.

3

Understand the styles of slow study reading, normal reading, and rapid reading.

ENHANCEMENT OF READING ABILITY/PURPOSE OF READING

As a manager, executive or a scholar, if you wish to improve your reading skills, the first thing is to know your purpose of reading—to have full details of the matter or just an overview of the whole thing. Accordingly you will choose your style. The reading style depends also on the nature of the material—serious or light, simple or difficult and complex.

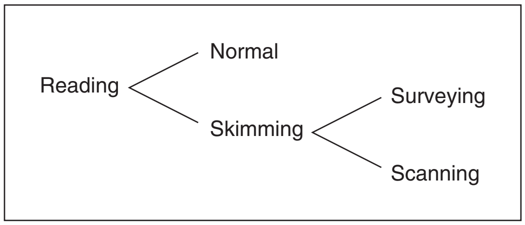
Thus, broadly speaking there are three reading styles or speeds.

1. Slow study reading style
2. Normal reading style
3. Rapid reading style

THE NATURE OF READING MATERIAL/THE READING STYLE

The nature of reading material determines the way the material is to be read. Francis Bacon, the famous Elizabethan essayist, says "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention. Some books may also be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled, flashy things”[1].

STYLES OF READING



Slow Reading Style

The slow style is also called the study reading style. It is the reading style that is slow and used for the careful reading of important material which is “to be chewed and digested”, and thoroughly understood. We use this style for understanding important text books, or complex written matter, or intricate arguments, or any serious content demanding careful attention.

As already pointed out, the study reading style/speed depends on the complexity of the written text and the subject knowledge of the reader. The study reading speed is slower than normal reading speed of educated adults for reading daily newspapers, and other light material such as magazines and fiction etc. The study reading differs from skimming which is a quick reading of something to find its main ideas and facts, not details, whereas the study reading style leaves out no portions of the text.

Normal Reading Style

When you read everything without leaving out any words, it will be normal reading style. You read important subjects only in this way. Of course you may find it time consuming, but you can increase your reading speed by widening the span of your vision. By practice you can train your eyes to include more words in one glance.

Rapid Reading Style—Skimming

This is the quick reading style. Skimming is called surveying when it is used to have general information or overview of the text book or written content. This form of skimming is distinct from its other style known as *scanning*, used to get specific information in the written content.

4

Learn the skills of skimming and surveying.

Surveying—Process of Reading a Book, Long Article, or Report

To do survey reading you need to be clear about your purpose of reading the book or the written text. Once you know your purpose of reading a text, you naturally find some parts of your reading to be more relevant than other parts. You naturally skim or leave out the less relevant portions. But you read the other parts in detail. This form of skimming reading is possible only when you know why you are reading something. This selective reading is active reading that means reading what is related to your purpose of reading something. Therefore, to ensure that nothing important or relevant is being missed in skimming have questions in your mind that your reading answers.

Use of Title and Heading

In rapid reading, we tend to skip portions that do not interest us. This is helped by the titles/headlines or subheadings used in the text. For example, every morning we all go through the newspapers. Our reading of the dailies is quite fast. We glance all the front page headlines, and move to other pages of the paper and in no time with the help of the titles/subheadings we decide to read them or just turn on to the next columns. In many cases we know the nature of the information contained in the columns by the page number and its titles such as TIMES CITY SPECIAL REPORT. Page titles and sub headings given below guide the rapid reading.

> Times NATION,
>
> Business By Bids, Deep Focus, Times Global, All That Matters, Inter Sections Open Space Africarnival Times Sport

These page titles help present the newspaper content in an organized and structured form. And they help its readers to skim read it by surveying or scanning the entire newspaper.

Titles of books/reports etc., heading of chapters, sub-headings used in the books, report or other long documents facilitate quick reading. Some senior executives read the business letters received or sent by looking at them for hardly a minute or two. They actually first see the opening sentence, then middle sentence and the concluding sentence and know what the letter says. Other parts of the letter like date, address, salutation/ greetings, subscription and other minor details are left out as familiar frills.

Surveying Long Business Reports

Senior executives read a report they have asked for on a subject or problem in parts only. Most business reports are first read for the recommendations and then findings. The reader turns to those two sections of the report. The executive already knows the problem, the background and to some extent the method of investigation. Of keeping in mind this reading approach of the senior executive the writer of such reports structures them by changing the normal order of the sequence of elements of the report as discuss in the chapter on *Business Reports*.

Surveying a Chapter in a Book

Often we are able to survey the chapter in a book by reading its opening paragraph and the concluding paragraph. The writer usually presents his purpose and theme in the opening paragraph, and summarizes all the major points in his concluding paragraph.

Scanning

This process means read something quickly or skim something for a particular something. For example "I scanned the book for that reference" or "My friend scanned through the result sheet for her name."

Both surveying and scanning are as already said, forms of skimming, which means we do not read every word of a text. We survey a written material for getting a general idea of what it is all about. But we scan book/chapter/report/ or text for a specific information which we think is there in that text. In the case of longer materials such as books, long formal reports, index and table of contents help us in scanning them. Here is a simple and short scanning exercise. You have 10 lines of words. In each line one word appears on the left hand side of the vertical dividing line, and the same word is repeated somewhere on the right hand side. You scan the repeated word and underline it. You have 20 seconds to the exercise, first is done for you.

1. Horse/mare, mule, ass, camel, elephant, <u>horse</u>.
2. Algebra/geometry, trigonometry, physics, chemistry, biology, history, algebra.

3. Abstract/executive summary precise glossary substance overview abstract contents.
4. Definition/role classification purpose process barriers universal elements definition major difficulties common problems.
5. Manager/human needs management formal communication informed communication manager structure corporate communication.
6. Concept development/analysis investigation problem statement conceptualisation bibliography appendix concept development narrowing down the problem conclusions.
7. Participles/gerunds/verbal nouns adjectives prepositions adverbs participle pronouns infinitive verbs.
8. Negotiation strategies/stages of the negotiation process need to negotiate third party role negotiating strategies part is affecting negotiation.
9. Business dinning/manners foreign language customer care business dinning business etiquette intercultural differences in social manners.
10. The art of writing/purpose of writing the audience clarity in writing principles of effective writing the art of writing written business communications.

KNOW THE TEXT ORGANIZATION

If you know the way the text is organized, you can read the significant parts without spending time to read the less important section. In all expository texts, usually one reads the opening paragraph for knowing the basic approach and point view of the author. He then moves to the concluding para that sums up giving the whole argument. You read for the meaning of the text; note the words of the text. For faster reading along with the training of the mind, you need training of your eyes.

Training of Eyes

Eye training involves three things:

1. Increase the span of your eyes. That is to say, the number of words you can see at one glance. Practice to widen your span of vision.
2. Instead of moving in a linear way, train your eye not to jump from one word to another. Develop a regular and rhythmic way of moving the eyes while reading.
3. Do not read back. Develop the habit of instant comprehension.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE READING

5

Learn how to develop effective reading.

To be able to use your reading time more effectively, you can focus on the following things and practice them whenever you read.

Do's

- Know your purpose of reading clearly, this will determine your reading style. The style suitable for your purpose and nature of reading material will help your concentration.
- Read by assimilating and understanding whatever you read. Do not read to memorize the content.
- Read by comprehending the content. Follow the thought of the writer. Follow the argument of the content and anticipate what the writer is going to say next. If you read actively in this manner, it will increase your understanding of the text.

- Know the organization of the text. This will help you read fast by focusing on the essential parts of the text. You will not miss significant points if you know how the content has been organized.
- Widen your visual span. Look at groups of words, not single words. To do this look at the middle of the sentence, and then try to glance sideways. First move your eyes on the left side of the centre of the line, then to the right side. By practice, you will begin to read 3 to 4 words at a time on both left side of the centre of the line and the right side. Then move the eyes downward and do the same left and right glancing. Learn to read the printed lines in a pyramidal shape. From top to bottom. Vertically, not horizontally. By continuous practice you can learn to look at the centre of the page and then move your eyes upward and downward by focusing in the middle of each line and grasping maximum number of words at each glance. This will increase your speed significantly.
- To practice rapid reading take up simple story books, novels or short stories, fairy tales, detective novels or any thriller. Read something that is engrossing and attention holding. You would like to move to the end of the story fast. So you will read it rapidly by skimming it and trying to know what happens next, and so go up to the end. Reading simple and interesting stories and fictions can help you learn and practice the skill of skimming the text. Your reading speed depends on your sense of haste caused by your keenness to know "who did it? or what next?" Difficult stuff needs attentive reading which is slow reading.
- Improve your reading comprehension. Remember that reading fast is not your aim of reading by itself. You should also comprehend and understand what is read. To improve your comprehension you should follow the following suggestions while reading something.

6

Improve your reading comprehension.

- Keep a dictionary with you when you read. Whenever you find a word you do not know or understand, do not read further. First check its meaning and then read further. By continuously doing so, you will increase your vocabulary, and gradually begin to read different words of texts, books, articles, newspapers with understanding. In the beginning this practice will be boring, but gradually you will develop the habit of consulting a dictionary for every new word you do not know and understand.
- You may need to understand the meaning of the whole sentence. You should analyse its parts by identifying the subject and predicate. In other words, try to understand what is said about whom. Then, follow the organization of sentences into a para. Identify the topic sentence of the paragraph. It will tell you the central idea of the para. The topic sentence is placed usually at the beginning of the paragraph. It can be placed in the middle or even towards the end of the para. All sentences in the paragraph relate to the topic substance as a sub set of the main idea expressed in the paragraph.
- Do a wide range of reading. This will improve your knowledge of variety of subjects, and widen your understanding of new ideas.
- After reading a full chapter, describe the author's view point. Analyse the inference that you have made about what the author has said about the subject you have read. Get the substance of what you have read.
- Summarise the entire reading in a few words in the form of a gist of what you have read.
- Ask yourself some questions about what, and how things happened? What was it all about?

Don'ts

7

Learn the art of silent reading.

- Do not allow your glance to regress, or go back to what you have already covered and read.
- The regressing of eyes hinders the reading speed. Hence, it is considered a negative feature in reading. Of course difficult texts do need going back to what has already been read. It is considered help to improve comprehension.
- Do not read aloud by mouthing words to help memorizing. It interferes with comprehension.
- Do not allow subjective reading of the text. Do not let your own bias a point of view prejudice the interpretation of the message.

READING EFFICIENCY

Good reader, poor reader

A good reader makes about three stops per line, a poor reader, six or seven.

Watch the Eye Movement

Get your friend to hold the book and keep below his eye level. So that you can watch the movement of his eyes as he reads the page. His eyes do not make a continuous forward swell.

Record the movement of your friend's eyes.

SUMMARY

- Reading involves two activities, one of seeing words before our eyes and the other understanding their meanings.
- Reading styles depend on your purpose and nature of the reading material. Normal, skimming, and scanning styles of reading.
- You need to train your eyes to improve your reading speed from slow to fast.
- To improve your reading comprehension, you should learn to know the meaning of every word and the main idea of every paragraph and the subject and topic of the whole text.

CASE: CHORUS READING

It was a large group of thirty foreign learners of English in an Indian college learning to read with proper stress, intonation and rhythm. They had been given first ten minutes to read the passage silently by themselves, understand every word, if needed with the help of the lecturer. Then the lecturer broke up the sentences into the groups of words which go together, and read them aloud to the class by groups of words, and then asked the students to repeat the passage group by group the way he had read. The suggested groups were separated by bars as given below: The sentences were written on the board as shown here: On Christmas Day, in the year 1642, Isaac Newton was born/at the small village of Wools Thorpe, in England./Little did his mother think/ when she beheld her new-born baby/that he was destined to explain many matters/which had been a mystery/ever since the creation of the world.

Not the whole class read aloud at the same time. Only three students together read and rest of the class listened to them. Other groups of three students followed the activity and in this manner the whole class read the passage aloud. The teacher stood near each reading group to find out individual mistakes in pronunciation and stress and corrected them then and there. The students learnt through imitation and observation the aspects of stress, intonation and rhythm in English language through a systematic method.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. What is reading? Discuss.
2. Explain the purpose of different reading speeds. Why do we need to know them as adult readers?
3. Discuss the way we read light fiction.
4. Explain and illustrate the skimming style of reading.
5. Why do we do survey reading of a text or volume? Discuss.
6. Discuss the method of surveying a chapter in a book.
7. How do senior executives read a long report?
8. Discuss some steps to improve someone's reading speed.
9. Discuss the ways of improving one's reading speed.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. In what sense is reading both a physical and mental activity.
2. Have you thought of knowing how you read a text? How would you do it?
3. What are the three reading speeds in general?
4. Think of the ways of training a young learner to improve his/her reading comprehension.
5. Comment on the usefulness of surveying as a reading skill.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. It is said that before we start reading a book or article, it is useful to ask ourselves why we want to read it, and what do I hope to learn from it. Comment on the statement with some specific examples of reading some books.
2. While reading a text, we are advised to develop the habit of not reading back. Why?
3. "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested", says Bacon. Discuss the light it throws on the art of reading books.
4. Why study reading speed is the slowest speed?
5. How do you do skimming reading?

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

Follow the steps given below to self-check your reading skills:

1. Set a time limit for reading a text according to the number of words it has. You can fix different time limits for the same passage for practising different reading speeds. For example, you can begin with 60–80 words per minute, then increase it to 120–150 and finally to 200–250 words per minute or more.
2. Do not allow your head to move.
3. Check that your eyes jump back and forth from word group to word group, not from single word to a single word.
4. Note the time taken to read and complete the text. Try to do it in less time next, until you achieve a speed of 200–225 words per minute at least.
5. Always answer the following or any other set of questions to test your reading comprehension.
   (a) What is its main idea?
   (b) What is its purpose?
   (c) Have you got the relationship between different ideas read by you?

READING EXERCISES

Now read the following passages and answer the questions that follow.

Read the text in 1 minute and 45 seconds.

(a) Interpreting Observation

Usually observations become important to us only when we can attach some significance to them. A footprint on a crowded beach would not normally arouse strong emotions, but to Robinson Crusoe on his desert sand, a naked footprint became tremendously important, because it meant (that is, he interpreted to mean) that there is someone else on the island, someone who could be a source of danger.

Basic to interpretation is inference making. An inference is a conclusion or judgement which expresses some significance or attitude suggested by what is seen, heard, or read. We see the sky clouding up and infer that rain coming, or we hear a noise outside the kitchen door and infer that some animal is at the garbage can. Sometimes a single observation may trigger a chain of inferences.

Thus Robinson Crusoe saw a footprint and inferred

- that somebody else was on the island,
- that there was a possibility of danger from that person, and
- that he should take precautions against that danger.

In all such instances the thing observed become a sign of something and the inferences interpret the sign.

(160 words)

Questions

1. What is a sign?
2. How do we infer or make a conclusion from our observation of something?

Source: M.C. Crimmon, *Writing with a purpose*, Hougton Miffin Company, 1957, USA, p. 25.

Read the text in 1 minute and 45 seconds.

(b) Growing More Food

It is very important to give crops the right amount of fertilizer and water but we can have even better crops if we choose the best variety of plant for each. At present many farmers are using different varieties of plant for each food crop. Some of these varieties are good, some are not. One way to improve our crops is by selecting the best variety that we know of a plant, and growing only from that way is to breed a new and better variety of plant from existing varieties. To do this, we choose varieties with different good qualities as parent plants, and then from these we can grow new plants which combine the good qualities of the parents. This means that we get even better plants. Such specially bred plants are called hybrids.

In India today, trials have shown that there is a hybrid maize which will yield twice as much dry grain as the old varieties of maize. In Ceylon, four new varieties of rice which give bigger yields have been produced. A rice from China has been found to give better yields in Uttar Pradesh, in India. Improved varieties of rice, maize, and jute are now ready in Pakistan. With the new variety of jute, two crops a year maybe possible. (220 words)

Questions

1. What things are important for producing more food?
2. What is a hybrid variety of plants and grains?

Source: Navin Sullivan, *Growing more food*.

Read the text in 1 minute.

(c) Interpreting Reading

Although all reading requires interpretation of printed symbols; some kinds of reading are difficult to interpret than others. Poetry is usually more difficult than non-fiction prose, partly because a poet is less interested than a prose writer in conveying one specific meaning. The essayist tries to convey information or control the reader's responses, thus limiting him to one clear interpretation. The poet often invites a variety of responses to the same symbols. For this reason the interpretation of a poem is not an unquestionable decision about what the poem means, it is a revelation of how the reader reads the poem. The same is true for much fiction. (110 words)

Questions

1. Point out the difference between the reading of an essay and a poem.
2. "The meaning of a poem is a revelation of how the reader reads the poem". Explain what you understand from this statement about interpreting reading.

Source: M.C. Crimmon, *Writing with a purpose*.

Read the text in 1 minute and 20 seconds.

(d) Kunwar Singh by Jim Corbett

Har Singh and I went out to shoot one day, last April, and all would have been well if a fox would have not crossed our path as we were leaving the village. Har Singh, as you know, is a poor *shikari* with little knowledge of the jungle folk, and when after seeing the fox, I suggested we should turn around and go home; he laughed at me and said it was child's talk to say that a fox would bring us bad luck. So we continued on our way. We had started when the stars were paling; and nearer a ruppa I fired at a chital stag and unfortunately missed it. Later, Har Singh broke the wing of a pea fowl but though we chased the wounded bird as hard as we could; it got away in the long grass, where we lost it. Therefore, though we combed the jungles we saw nothing to shoot and towards the evening we turned our faces towards home. (160 words)

Questions

1. When did Har Singh and Jim Corbett go out to shoot?
2. Was Har Singh a good shooter?
3. Did Har Singh believe in superstition?
4. Why did Jim suggest to go back without shooting?
5. Was Jim able to fire at a chital stag?
6. What was the other unfortunate thing that happened in the case of pea fowl wounded by Har Singh?

ENDNOTE

1. Francis Bacon, *Bacon's Essays* (London: MacMillan, 1951), p. 129.

3

Speaking Skills

> *Mend your speech a little,*
> *Lest you may mar your fortunes.*
>
> — *William Shakespeare*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Learn the different goals and styles of speaking.
2. Know the process of speaking.
3. Learn how to develop speaking skills.
4. Understand the nature and importance of oral communication in business transactions and personal interactions.
5. Know when to choose oral communication instead of written communication.
6. Learn key skills of oral communication.
7. Appreciate how intercultural situations require thoughtful oral communication.
8. Apply oral communication skills to new communication technologies.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

In the final year of their B.Com., Rakesh and Suresh decided to appear for the GMAT. One afternoon, they planned to go to the American Center to collect some information on the exam. But one of their seniors advised Rakesh that it would be better to go to the American Education Center on Hailey Road instead. Accordingly, Rakesh asked Suresh to meet him at "AEC" at 3 p.m. As they were talking over the phone, Suresh heard him say "AC" (for American Center), which is on Kasturba Gandhi Marg. When Suresh tried to confirm, Rakesh, repeated, "Yes, AEC." Rakesh reached the AEC at the appointed time, but did not see Suresh and waited for him till 4 p.m. at Hailey Road. Meanwhile, Suresh was waiting for him at the American Center on Kasturba Gandhi Marg. Incidentally, there was no way they could have checked with each other as Rakesh did not have his mobile phone with him that day and he didn't want to leave the spot lest Suresh miss him. It was only late at night in the hostel that they realized what actually caused the misunderstanding.

SPEAKING

The Art of Speaking

Speaking, like writing, is a mode of communication. In the sense of making a speech or giving a talk before an audience, speaking is considered to be an art worth developing. People consider this form of communication to be most effective in spreading one's ideas and influencing other people. Consider how great thinkers, political leaders and social workers, such as Swami Vivekanand, Martin Luther king Jr., Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, made a difference in the life of the people and the destiny of nations by spreading their ideas and influencing people with the power of their spoken words.

Goals of Speaking

There are three main goals of speaking: to persuade, to inform, and to delight. These are the very goals of communication as such. As a speaker you want to persuade people to accept to do or believe what you think is right, or you wish to make them feel better placed by informing them of things you consider important to know. And finally you seek to entertain people with your wit and interesting anecdotes.

Speaking Styles

Speaking has various styles. Some of these are formal, informal, polite, normal, blunt, tentative, and direct.

It is important to choose appropriate ways of saying things according to the situation you are in. In many situations it will be appropriate to use normal

1

Learn the different goals and styles of speaking.

or neutral language. In other situations, it is necessary to use language forms that are appropriate to special situations.

- We use ***tentative*** language when we are sincerely unsure of our facts or of how we feel. E.g. It's very kind of you to invite me, but I'm not sure if I can come.

We also use ***tentative*** language when we want to give the impression of being unsure in order to be tactful and diplomatic. For example, if we want to disagree with a superior, it would probably be too strong to say "***I can't agree with you***" and it would be more appropriate to be ***tentative*** and say ***I'm not sure if I'd agree with you***."

- ***Direct language*** is the opposite of *tentative* language; it gives the impression that the speaker is very sure. This impression is appropriate if, for example, we want to agree with someone. But, it can sound rude and inappropriate in many situations like inviting a superior to a party.

  For Example i. *No. You are mistaken the statistics just cannot be this high.*
  ii. *I see your point. But, we'll have to go ahead with our previous plan.*

- We use ***polite language*** when we want to sound particularly polite without being tentative.

  For Example i. *I'm sorry. But, I feel there is a mistake somewhere. According to my calculations, the statistics should not be so high.*
  ii. *You definitely have a point. But, I'm afraid this time we'll have to go ahead. Next time onwards, we'll definitely consider these points.*

- ***Formal language*** creates the impression of social distance between people. It occurs mostly in official situations e.g. business meetings, official receptions.

  For Example i. *I'd be delighted if you could make it to the party. We'll all look forward to it.*
  ii. *Forgive me if I sound curious. But, isn't this the same girl we saw him with yesterday?*

- ***Informal language*** is used basically between friends. It is generally inappropriate to use it with anyone else.

  For Example i. *Cut it out' Will you? I've had enough of this.*
  ii. *You're coming to the party tonight, aren't you? I just wont take "no" for an answer.*

- ***Strong language*** carries with it a strong sense of conviction. It usually sounds very direct.

  For Example i. *This is impossible! How could you ever promise without consulting me?*
  ii. *I'm gone without this project. I must get it, come what may.*

- ***Blunt language*** is extremely frank. It should be used with extreme care, as in most cases it will simply sound rude.

  For Example i. *I know you're lying. You can't fool me!*
  ii. *I must tell you. Your work was not up to the mark and we'll have to review your extension.*

In most cases we use normal and neutral language, but sometimes, depending on the situations we are in and also on the basis of our co-speakers, we use special language. The type of language we use shows our attitude.

Style of Speaking: Speaking requires formal language, jargon, slang and incorrect language have no place in speaking. The speakers have to raise the level of their language and polish their expressions for creating a favorable impression on the audience. Speaking requires a forceful and passionate delivery.

The Speaking Process

2

Know the process of speaking.

If you are speaking to inform or to persuade a group of people (regardless of whether in a stand-up presentation, a seated deck-presentation, a videoconference, or a webcast), use these techniques to structure what you say. Since, unlike readers, your listeners can't glance back or skip ahead, you'll need to be repetitive and exceptionally clear by including (1) an opening, (2) a preview of the main points, (3) clearly demarcated main points, and (4) a closing.

Use an Effective Opening

Openings are important in all forms of communication, when you make an oral presentation, however, your opening is even more crucial than it is when you write. Therefore, always use the first minute or so of your presentation for your opening, what many experts call a "grabber" or a "hook."

To decide what to say during your opening, think about the audience: Are they interested? Do they know how the topic relates to them? Do they know you well or not? Given your audience, choose from among the following techniques:

- **Tell them why you're speaking**. What they will learn in a tell presentation or what you hope they will do as a result of a sell presentation—so they can listen with these ideas in mind.
- **Grab their attention.** Why should they listen? Often, your audience will have other things on their minds or will not be especially interested in your topic, so you may need to open with a provocative question, a problem definition, a promise of what your presentation will deliver, a personal story that makes a business point, a vivid image, or a striking example or statistics.
- **Show them "what's in it for them (WIIFT)."** Why should they care? Why should they bother?
- **Build your credibility, if necessary.** If your audience doesn't know about you, introduce yourself and use any of the persuasion techniques to enhance your credibility by establishing a "common ground."
- **Use humor with caution.** Humor can be an effective grabber; however, use it only if it fits your personality and style, if it is appropriate and inoffensive for every member of the audience, and if it relates to the topic or occasion. Never use humor that might make anyone feel, put down, or trivialized.

Give a Preview

Without a doubt, the most important part of your presentation is a preview (also known as an agenda, an outline, or a table of contents) of what you will be covering. Always give an explicit preview at the beginning of your presentation.

Previews help your audience understand and remember what you say. Think again about the contrast between listeners and readers. Your readers can skim a document and read your headings and subheadings before they start reading. Your listeners, in contrast, have no idea what you will be covering unless you tell them.

Typical previews include a list of key points (such as reasons, examples, or recommendations), key questions, or a problem followed by a solution.

Examples of Previews

Longer and more formal: I will discuss sales in each of our four European regions: the Northern, Southern, Western, and Central.

Shorter and less formal: Let's take a look at the sales figures in our four European regions.

State Your Points Clearly

Your main points need to be organized and easy to follow, much more so than in writing. Readers can look over, slow down, and reread when they wish; listeners, of course, cannot. Therefore, remember these three guidelines when you're speaking.

Limit Your Main Points Experiments in cognitive psychology show that people cannot easily comprehend more than five to seven main points, so do not exceed that number when you're speaking. That means grouping all of your points in any section or subsection into no more than seven major areas.

Use Strong Transitions When you are speaking, you need longer, more explicit transitions between major sections and subsections than you do when you are writing. Listeners do not stay oriented as easily as readers do; they may not even remember what it is that you are listing unless you use these longer transitions.

> *Ineffective short transition*
>
> Second, . . .
>
> *Effective longer transitions*
>
> The second recommendation is . . .
>
> Let's move on to the second recommendation.

Use Repetitive Transitions In addition to stronger, more explicit transitions, you also need to use more repetitive transitions when you're speaking, because listeners may not remember information they hear only once. Although you may feel as if you're being too repetitive, your listeners will appreciate detailed reminders that reinforce your structure. Therefore, between each major section and subsection, use a backward look/forward look transition. The backward look refers to recapping what you just covered, and theforward look provides a smooth transition to the upcoming part of your talk.

> *Effective backward look/forward look transition*
>
> Example: Now that we have looked at the three elements of the marketing plan (backward look), let's turn to the financial implications of the plan (forward look).

Keep the Audience's Interest High Remember that your listeners' attention will decrease in the middle of your speech. Hence, consider the following techniques to keep up their interest, involve them, add variety, and wake them up:

- *Include stories*, case illustrations, analogies, and examples—not just numbers.
- *Incorporate their names* (e.g., "Pat in accounting and Wahid in human resources" instead of "people from different departments").
- *Change your personal energy* (e.g., your tone, pauses, or nonverbal dynamism),
- *Ask rhetorical questions* that relate to audience benefits (e.g., "So what does this mean for your business?").
- *Ask for a show of hands* (e.g., "How many of you think our current policy is effective?").
- *Tell them you'll be asking* for their input after the presentation.

Close Effectively

The Audience Memory Curve also shows that your listeners are likely to remember your last words. Therefore, your closing should be more than a mere "thank you" or the all-too-common "dribble" closing like "I guess that's about it."

Instead, use a strong, obvious transitional phrase—such as "to summarize" or "in conclusion"—to introduce your closing remarks. Here are some options for effective closings:

- **Give a summary.** Summarize your main points. Your audience will appreciate the wrap up.
- **End with the action steps.** Based on your communication objective. You might remind the audience "what's in it for them", if they take these action steps.
- **Refer to the opening.** A third kind of closing is to refer to the rhetorical question, promise, image, or story you used in your opening.
- **If you end with Q and A**, add a second closing, similar to your first one, so you get the last word.

Guidelines for Developing Speaking Skills

3

Learn how to develop speaking skills.

Nervousness and stage fright is natural for all beginners before a large audience. However, this feeling is gradually overcome by knowing that everyone who stands before an audiance feels like you. Remember the techniques discussed by Stephen E Lucas in his book, *The Art of Public Speaking,* (1989) to develop self confidence and skills of speaking.

1. **The importance of developing courage and self-confidence.**

   Courage to speak is the first requisite for a speaker. One who has stage-fright cannot face the public. He cannot have confidence in himself/herself. And one who has no confidence is bound to fumble. But, the fact is that at the beginning every renowned speaker had stage-fright. Born speakers are rare. George Bernard Shaw was a spell-binder. But, at the beginning his legs trembled and his voice faltered when he rose to speak. Stage-fright can be conquered. One can acquire perfect self confidence. Only one must do certain things.

   (i) **Desire:** One who wants to become a good speaker must have a strong desire to speak well and must have enthusiasm for speaking. And he can get desire and enthusiasm only if he remembers the benefits he can reap by becoming a good speaker. A good speaker can do well in interviews, selling his goods, influenceing the people and their leader. If one remembers all this, their desire will be whetted, their fear will gradually vanish, and they will acquire confidence.

   (ii) **Mastery of the subject:** One cannot have confidence unless one knows one's subject well. Hence, one must prepare the topic thoroughly, one must read some books, analyse the ideas, and take down points.

   (iii) **Act confidently:** A speaker must put on the appearance of boldness. He/she must dress well. He/she must not have any feelings of inferiority. He/she must always think that they are masters of their subject. And this will surely be able to impress the audience. This auto-suggestion will remove their nervousness and give them self-confidence.

   (iv) **Practice:** Practice is most important in overcoming stage-fright and getting self-confidence. A speaker must prepare his speech beforehand. He must read it several times. Then he must stand before a mirror and speak, as if before an audience.

2. **Develop self-confidence through preparation.**

   There are very few who can speak extempore. Most of the famous speakers of the world prepared their speeches in advance. Unless you go prepared, you can't have confidence in youself. And without self-confidence you are sure to feel nervous. And ultimately you may cut a sorry figure. Hence, one must prepare one's speech thoroughly. But, how to prepare a speech? A few points for preparing a speech are briefly given below.

   (i) **Thinking over the speech:** In preparing a speech external help is not enough. The speaker must think over the topic day and night. He must even dream of the speech. Gradually many points will evolve automatically. Gradually the logical order of speech will emerge. At this stage the speaker should make necessary changes in the rough draft. Then he should prepare a final draft.

(ii) **Discussion with friends:** Reading the speech again and again helps to memorize it. But, a quicker method to memorize the speech is to discuss it with friends. So discuss the points of your speech whenever you get an opportunity. Make the speech a topic of conversation with friends. All this will help you to remember what you are going to speak.

(iii) **Taking down points:** A speaker must take down the important points of his speech on a piece of paper. He can carry it in his pocket. If need be, he may consult it while speaking.

(iv) **Rehearsal:** Before going to speak, one must confine himself in a room and deliver this speech, as if before an audience. He must practise it until all the falterings disappear.

3. Improvement of memory.

To deliver a speech one has to remember a lot of things. Hence, for a speaker, good memory is an asset. But, very few possess good memory. And even those who have good memory cannot always depend on it. Memory is treacherous. It often plays tricks on its possessors. But, memory can be cultivated. By following certain methods, memory can be improved. There are three natural laws of remembering-impression, repetition, and association.

(i) **Impression:** You must have a deep impression of the thing you want to remember. And you can have a deep impression by concentrating on the thing, by observing it closely, and by associating it with something similar. Also, if possible get the impression through more than one sensory organ. For example, you can see and picture and hear about it.

(ii) **Repetition:** Repetition of a thing helps to remember it. It engraves the thing on the memory. But, do not repeat the thing continuously for hours together. Repeat at intervals. And before leaving home for delivering the speech go through it.

(iii) **Association:** Associate the thing you want to remember with something similar. Create a picture of the thing in your mind. For example, if you want to remember the name of a person, associate it with the special features of his face or associate the name with his business or profession.

One more thing, besides these three natural laws, is to be done. Arrange the points of the address in the logical order so that one point naturally leads to the next.

4. Hold the audience attention.

The aim of the speaker is to leave a deep impression on the minds of the audience. The audience must go deeply impressed and highly satisfied, but it is very difficult to achieve this end. The speaker must be able to captivate the attention of the audience. But, very few are born with this capacity. It has to be developed by following certain methods. Some of the methods are pointed out here.

(i) **Enthusiasm:** The response of the audience largely depends on the enthusiasm with which the speaker speaks. If the speaker is lukewarm, the response of the audience will be lukewarm. If he is mild and dull, the audience will remain unaffected. A gloomy speech can never get en enthusiastic applause. On the other hand, an enthusiastic speaker catches the attention of the audience at once. Enthusiasm is one of the most important factors in delivery. A speaker must speak from conviction. Every word must have the warmth of the heart. He must be sincere in what he says. He must say what he really wants to say. No beating about the bush. Say earnestly what you believe to be right. Be frank, honest, and straightforward, and the audience is captivated by you. Whatever you say, must be said with intensity. Enthusiasm, sincerity, frankness, conviction, and intensity go together. If you possess these qualities, you are sure to exercise a magnetic influence over the audience.

(ii) **Physical movements:** The speaker must be at ease. He must be calm and quiet and appear undisturbed. He must stand erect and look the audience in the face. Occasionally, he must use emphatic gestures. He must speak vigorously. His voice must be loud enough to reach the Iast row of audience. All this will deeply influence the audience. They will feel that the speaker has a good command of the subject. And they will listen to him attentively.

(iii) **Avoidance of "weasel" word:** A speaker must speak with conviction. He must use emphatic words. And he must avoid using "weasal words", such as "I think", "it seems to me", "in my humble opinion", "perhaps". For such expressions give the impression that the speaker lacks conviction. And the audience pays no attention to a man with no convictions.

(iv) **Love of the audience:** The speaker must have keen interest in the audience He must love them. He must have sympathy for them. Then only the audience will take interest in what he says. Abraham Lincoln won the heart of the audience by his sympathy and goodness to a great extent. One famous actress rightly said, "The secret of my success is absolute devotion to the audience. I love my audience."

5. Essential elements of speaking.

Speaking is an art. But, very few are born with this art. Like other arts, it has to be acquired by following certain essentials. There are many methods to acquire it. A few of them are pointed out here,

(i) **Patience and perseverance:** Almost every speaker has stage-fear at the beginning. He often cuts a sorry figure. He feels that he can never become a speaker. And he wants to give up speaking in public. This attitude is wrong. He must have patience. However great his failure, he must not lose heart. He must try again and again. And he is sure to win at last. Indeed, failures are the pillars of success. Success does not come at once. It has many obstacles to overcome. Nervousness, fear, shock are some of the obstacles. But, do not give up hope. Have patience and Perseverance. Keep on practising. And you are sure to progress. And at last you are sure to become a good speaker. John Brig at Gladstone, Wilier-force had such experiences of failure. But, they had patience. They persevered. And they became world famous speakers. Do not give up even if you cut a sorry figure a hundred times.

(ii) **Will and determination:** Will and determination play a very important role in making one a good speaker. You must will, and will strongly to become a speaker. You must have determination to become a speaker. A man becomes what he wills to become, if you are resolutely determined you are sure to become a good speaker. Will and determination can overcome all difficulties. Nepoleon rightly said. "Victory is will." An army's will enables it to win a war. A speaker's will and determination are sure to crown him with success. Fight and fight even when hope is out of sight.

It is easy to give up, but the glory is in keeping on. You need dogged determination. Those who keep on arrive at destination.

(iii) **Picturing success:** If you want to become a good speaker, you must picture yourself to be one. You must visualize that you are on the platform. You must visualize that you are applauded by the audience. This visualization will work miracle psychologically. It will give you confidence and fill your mind with hope.

(iv) **Enthusiasm:** Deliver your speech with enthusiasm. The applause of the audience will be in proportion to the enthusiasm with which you speak. You must speak with confidence. Every word you utter must have the spark of enthusiasm.

(v) **Four Gs:** In art of speaking and influencing in business, Dale Carnegie says that essentials for success in speaking are four Gs. He means four words beginning with "G"—grace, gumption, grit, and guts. Grace is the quality of being pleasing and attractive in your appearance, movement, and delivery. Gumption means common sense and initiative. Grit is the quality of courage and endurance. And guts is courage and determination.

6. The element of delivery.

In speaking delivery matters most. A speaker, therefore, must take care of his delivery. He must know the qualities of a good delivery. Some of these qualities are:

Three things matter in a speech—the speaker, manner of delivery, and matter. Of these, the manner of delivery is the most important. Edmund Burke's speeches contained admirable logic and reasoning. But, as an orator he was a failure, because he did not know how to deliver his gems.

(i) **A sense of communication:** When you speak the audience must feel that you are delivering a message to them. That is the first essential of good talking. To give the audience a sense of communication, you must speak to them intimately. You must look at the audience and talk as if they are familiar to you. You must not look over them at the wall and utter the words mechanically. That is soliloquy, not talk. Talk to the audience directly as if you are engaged in a conversation with them. Your tone must be natural, enlarged a bit. You must not imitate others. You must be your natural self. You must have individuality. As a speaker that is your most precious possession. Thus only, a sense of communication can be established. And once the sense of communication is established, you gain the confidence of the audience and you make a deep impression on them.

(ii) **Sincerity and enthusiasm:** Enthusiasm is one of the most important features of good delivery. The speaker must be honest, sincere, and straightforward. He must speak with conviction. In other words, he must put his heart in his talks. Every word must have the warmth of the heart. If his heart is in his work, his delivery is sure to be effective. A thing said with conviction and said enthusiastically is sure to deeply impress one and all.

(iii) **Stressing important words:** The speaker must put more stress on some significant words and hurry over the others. This is what we do in our daily conversation. Emphasis on the important words will convey your ideas vividly to the audience.

(iv) **Change of pitch:** The speaker's voice must not be monotonous. The pitch of his voice should flow up and down, Then only the effect will be pleasing. On the other hand, if the speaker's voice is always on the same level, it will become monotonous. And monotony will bore and even disgust the audience.

(v) **Variation of the rate of speaking:** The speaker must vary his rate of speaking This is a good method of driving a point home. Speak several words with great rapidity, and when you come to the words you wish to emphasize, let the voice linger. And then again rush to the end of the sentence like lightning. This method arrests the attention. It is natural. It is emphatic. Above all, it is pleasing.

(vi) **Pause before and after important ideas:** Pausing before and after an important idea attracts the attention of the audience.

This was Lincoln's method. He often paused in his speaking. This sudden silence has the same effect as a sudden noise. But, the speaker must practise this method. He must pause naturally. If pauses are judiciously used, they produce a tremendous effect on the audience. Silence becomes more eloquent than eloquence itself.

7. The importance of personality.

Personality of the speaker has a lot to do with his success. But, personality is an intangible and elusive thing. It cannot be clearly defined. And it is difficult to say how it can be developed. But, by following some suggestions the speaker can appear at his best. His dress and his behaviour on the platform etc count. By paying proper attention to this, one can favourably impress the audience.

(i) **Rest and food:** Before going to talk, you must take sufficient rest. Take light food. For, a heavy meal makes one uneasy. Do not do anything that dulls your energy. You must look fresh and energetic. Vitality has a magnetic power. It impresses the people around.

(ii) **Dress:** Dress neatly and attractively. You must appear cheerful. Never look gloomy. Good dress has a great psychological effect on the mind. It heightens one's, self-respect and increases self-confidence. Such is the effect of dress on the wearer. It also leaves a good impression on the audience. Shabby dress, on the other hand, makes one feel ill at ease. And the audience generally forms an unfavourable impression about a shabbily dressed person.

(iii) **Arrangements in the hall:** Surroundings count. The hall where you are going to speak should be spacious, well ventilated and well lighted. The audience should sit together, it is difficult to influence an audience that is scattered. Empty chairs between the audience dampen and have a chilling effect on the enthusiasm of the speaker.

(iv) **How to stand:** Stand erect. Do not hide yourself behind *a* table. Let the light fall on your face. Let there be no useless things on the table. Let there be no attractive things behind or on either side of you. There should be as few people on the stage as possible. The speaker's hands should not play with his clothes. Nor should they make any nervous movements. For, all these distract the attention of the audience. The speaker should stand still and control himself physically.

(v) **Gestures:** For gestures, no fixed rules can be laid down. For, if you follow rules for making gestures, the gestures become mechanical and repulsive. Gestures must be born on the spur of the moment. They must be the spontaneous results of your enthusiasm and impulses. Imitated gestures are like imitated smiles, which are not smites but grimaces. Gestures should be as pleasing as a spontaneous smile. In short, make only those gestures that come natural.

8. How to open a talk to capture the audience?

The manner of opening a talk is of great importance. The audience forms the first impression from it. And the first impression counts very much. But, the opening of a talk is difficult. It has to be carefully worked out in advance. Some hints as to how to open a talk are given here:

(i) **Introduction:** The introduction should be short and precise—a sentence or two. Go straight to the heart of the subject. Do not waste much time on introduction.

(ii) **Apology:** It is unwise to begin a talk with apologies. Do not be too modest. Do not emphasize that you are unprepared or that you are not a fit person to speak on the subject. Do not praise the chairman and other dignitaries too much.

(iii) **Humorous story:** It is bad to begin a talk with a humorous story. Very few can tell a humorous story interestingly. Such a story at the beginning of a talk embarrasses instead of entertaining the audience. It is difficult to excite laughter. If your story fails to generate laughter, the effect is tragic rather than comic.

(iv) **Curiosity:** You should begin your talk in such a manner that it can arouse curiosity. You can begin with a personal experience, a specfic illustration, or by asking a question.

(v) **Exhibit:** The easiest way to arouse curiosity is to show an exhibit. By holding up an exhibit you can at once draw the attention of the audience towards it.

(vi) **Question:** You can begin your talk by asking a question. By a question you make the audience co-operate with you. You take them into confidence. And they form a good impression about you.

(vii) **Quotation:** You can begin with *a* quotation from a famous man. It draws the attention of the audience at once to you. For, everybody is interested in what famous people say.

(viii) **Shocking facts:** Shocking facts easily capture the attention of the audience. Hence, it is good to open a talk with them. But, you must telI them the sources of these secrets. Otherwise they may not believe your statement.

(ix) **On-the-spot remark:** One can open *a* talk with an on-the-spot remark. That is to say, begin with a casual remark that is relevant in the circumstances. For example, you may refer to what the earlier speaker said. Or, you may refer to an incident that happened in the course of the function.

(x) **Capture the audience:** You aim is to capture the audience. Hence, open a talk with a statement with which everyone will agree. If you can do so, you get the audience on your side at the very outset.

9. How should one close a talk?

The manner of closing a speech is as important as the manner of opening a speech. Perhaps the close is more important. For, it is likely to be remembered longer! Hence, it must be planned, prepared, and carefully mastered in advance. Rehearse it, learn it by heart so that you can deliver it enthusiastically and convincingly. Famous orators like Webster, Bright, and Gladstone did it.

(i) **No sudden ending:** Do not end your talk abruptly. It should be natural. It should be closely connected with what you have discussed. You can end by summarizing the points you have talked about.

(ii) **Appeal for action:** If you want the audience to do something, end your talk with an appeal. The appeal should be emotional. You must touch the very depth of their feelings.

(iii) **Compliments to the audience:** You must pay sincere compliments to the audience. You want the audience to admire you. Naturally, you should please them. But, you must guard yourself against flattery and extravagance. Your compliment must be sincere. Then only they will be effective. If the audience think that you are false, the effect will be just the reverse.

(iv) **Quotation:** You can close your talk with a quotation from some authority. Quotations from religious books or poets have great appeal.

(v) **Climax:** A popular way of closing a talk is the climax. It is difficult to construct a climax, But, when well done, it produces a tremendous effect on the audience.

10. How to make your meaning clear?

Whatever you say must be clearly understood by the audience. Every word, every sentence must convey what you intend to say. Otherwise your talks will fall flat on the ears of the audience. Your efforts to win their hearts will be futile. Therefore, take care of the language you use. Also take care of the ideas you want to convey to the audience. Some hints as to how you can make the meaning clear are given here

(i) **Simple language:** The audience is generally composed of all kinds of people. Take care that your talk does not go over their heads. Always use simple language. In speech simple and direct language has great impact on the audience. The language of the Bible is simple, emotional and emphatic. Read the Bible as often as you can. Famous creators like, John Bright often read the Bible. Avoid technical language when you are addressing a lay audience. Abraham Lincoln always put his ideas into a language which could be understood even by a boy,

(ii) **Appeal to the sense of sight:** One can understand a thing more clearly by seeing it than by hearing about it. Eyes are better carriers of ideas than ears. Hence, you can use charts, maps, diagrams, etc.

(iii) **Repetition:** Important ideas can be repeated. But, do not repeat the ideas in the same language. Vary the sentences. Repetition in different language will make the ideas clear.

(iv) **Illustrations:** It is very difficult for the common people to grasp abstract ideas. So, whenever you deal with abstract ideas, give illustrations. Better refer to specific instances and concrete cases.

Limited points: Do not try to cover many points. Refer to only a few points. But, develop each point fully.

(vi) **Summary:** Give a brief summary of what you have dealt with.

11. How can the speaker create interest in the audience?

To impress and convince the audience is your aim. But, how to do it? It is an uphill task. But, if you cannot do it, you are a failure as a speaker. Follow the suggestions given here. You are sure to succeed.

(i) **Convince yourself:** If you want to convince others, you yourself must be convinced first. You must have a mastery of the ideas you are dealing with. And then deliver them with enthusiasm. The audience is bound to be convinced of what you say. And they will be interested in your talk.

(ii) **Common ground:** If you have something new to say, do not attack the beliefs and ideas of the audience. If you attack, the audience will become antagonistic. On the contrary, you should say that your ideas are similar to something they already believe. This will disarm their opposition. They will be impressed. And they will be interested in the talk.

(iii) **Restatement:** If the audience is not impressed by your ideas, repeat them several times. Daniel O'Conneil said that a political truth is taken up and adopted by the audience only if it is repeated again and again. Incessant repetition is required to impress truths upon the minds of the people. But, for repetition of the same thing one must have a command of the language. Language of restatement must vary.

(iv) **General illustrations and concrete instances:** General illustrations and concrete instances can impress the audience. They help to prevent the audience from putting forth opposite ideas. General illustrations and concrete instances make the ideas clear. Hence, they impress the people.

(v) **Quote authorities:** If you quote from any author, you must quote the exact words. Also you must tell from whom you are quoting. The sources should be authoritative. Quote a popular man. Quote a local man. Quote one who is accepted as authority by all.

(vi) **Extraordinary facts:** People are always interested in extraordinary facts about ordinary things. So consult as many books as you can and dig out some unusual facts about the things you are dealing with. The audience will at once be impressed and take interest in your talk.

(vii) **Audience's interests:** Talk about things in which the audience are interested. Refer to the local people and local incidents. The audience will be keenly interested in such a talk.

(viii) **Mental pictures:** Use words which conjure pictures before your mind's eye. Such pictures are deeply impressed on the mind. Sprinkle them through your talks.

(ix) **Contrast:** Use of balanced contrasts creates interest. Good contrasts are the brick and mortar of a good speech. Macaulay used them often. One example—"The rules are meant to be observed in the spirit, not in the letter-for the comfort, not the discomfort of the passengers".

12. How can the speaker improve their diction?

Language is the medium through which we express our ideas. As the vehicle of ideas, it is the most Important element in speaking. Without having a good degree of command of the language, one cannot hope to have success as a speaker. On the other hand, one who is master of the language can command the audience. The manner is more important than the matter. But, how to acquire command over the language. There are several methods.

(i) **Company of great masters:** Your language will be largely a reflection of the company you keep. Therefore, keep company with the masters of literature. Devote several hours every day to reading Shakespeare and other poets and prose-writes. Gradually and unconsciously your mind will be enriched and your diction will have the stamp of these masters. This is what Lincoln did. This is what Jefferson did. Read the newspapers hurriedly. And devote the time thus saved to reading enduring books the Holy Bible is an excellent book. John Bright read it daily. Read it whenever you get time.

(ii) **Dictionary:** Make a dictionary your constant companion. Look up the familiar word: Find out its real significance. Find out how it is used.

(iii) **Derivation:** Study the derivation of the words you use. The histories and developments of words are not at all dull and dry; they are very interesting. Indeed, they are replete with romance. Enjoy the romance of words.

(iv) **Worn out words:** Do not use threadbare words. Take care to use words which express the meaning precisely. Do not beat about the bush. Say firmly what you want to say by using the appropriate words. If need be consult a dictionary or Roger's "Treasury of Words". Do not use the words that have become hackneyed by constant use. For example, use 'elegant' for 'beautiful'. Use adjectives sparingly and appropriately. An adjective is the enemy of a noun.

(v) **Trite comparisons:** Do not use trite comparisons, such as "cool as cucumber". Use fresh comparisons. Use the language boldly. Have the courage to create similes of your own.

WHAT IS ORAL COMMUNICATION?

4

Understand the nature and importance of oral communication in business transactions and personal interactions.

Oral communication, also known as verbal communication, is the interchange of verbal messages between a sender and receiver. It is more immediate than written communication. It is also more natural and informal.

In human development, speech precedes writing. Children first learn to speak, and then, much later, develop the ability to read and write. The ability to speak/articulate single words and later speak groups of words in meaningful sequence comes to children in the course of their growth. This ability develops from listening to verbal sounds (words). As compared to written communication, therefore, the ability to communicate through the spoken word (speech) is a naturally developing ability (barring medical abnormalities).

In business, oral communication is used more than written communication. A study of executive working hours showed that 70 per cent of an executive's time is spent on communicating. Forty-five per cent of this time is spent listening, 30 per cent is spent on speaking, 16 per cent on reading, and 9 per cent on writing. As 75 per cent executive communication is oral, it is advisable that executives develop their listening and speaking (oral communication) skills.[1]

A manager should be able to converse or discuss persuasively, effectively, and convincingly.

Importance of Oral Communication Skills

A manager's maximum time is devoted to oral communication. He or she is often engaged in one of the following tasks: meetings, discussions, negotiations, seminars, presentations, interviews, peer conversations, providing instructions, and telephone conversations. All these business activities, except telephone conversations, involve *face-to-face* verbal communication. A telephone conversation is one-to-one oral communication that requires skillful control of tone, voice, and pitch, and precise use of words.

In business transactions that involve face-to-face interaction between individuals or groups of individuals, it is not enough to be able to talk, discuss, converse, argue, or negotiate an issue. A manager should be able to do all these persuasively, effectively, and convincingly. But to be convincing, he or she must know and apply the skills of oral communication.

Managers face difficulties in resolving the problems of workers and influencing others through dialogue and personal discussions. They need oral communication skills that include being able to:

- Solve problems
- Resolve conflicts
- Influence people to work together
- Persuade others to be involved in organizational goals
- Be assertive without being aggressive
- Listen thoughtfully
- Negotiate effectively
- Make proposals

These skills include developing the necessary tact to work effectively for mutual satisfaction in complex situations. Broadly speaking, one has to know when to talk; when not to talk but to listen; how to talk (the tone, pitch, and modulation); how to interpret the listener's facial expressions, physical gestures, movements, and attitude; and how to be aware of one's own *body talk* (leakage), which consciously or unconsciously sends signals to the listener. It is said that it does not matter what you say, but rather, how you say it. This includes one's choice of words, level of confidence, and sincerity.

It is said that it does not matter what you say, but rather, how you say it.

5

Know when to choose oral communication instead of written communication.

Choosing the Form of Communication

The choice between using oral and written communication is guided by considering the suitability of oral or written form for the purpose and nature of the subject of communication. Both written and oral forms have advantages and limitations, which are listed in Exhibit 3.1.

Principles of Successful Oral Communication

There are three communication situations in which oral communication takes place:

1. Face-to-face
2. Intercultural
3. Via electronic media

Oral communication is indispensable in any group or business activity. Here are some of the characteristics and principles of effective oral communication:

- *Purpose:* The purpose of talking effectively is to be heard and understood by the listener.
- *Lively rhythm:* Oral communication should, first of all, have a lively rhythm and tone.
- *Simple words:* It is important to use language that is free from long-winded sentences, clichés, and old-fashioned words and phrases. It is best to employ commonly used words and short and simple sentences.

Exhibit 3.1
Comparative Advantages and Limitations of Oral and Written Communication

Oral Communication	***Written Communication***
Advantages	
More personal and informal	Better for complex and difficult subjects, facts, and opinions
Makes immediate impact	Can be read at the receiver's convenience or pleasure
Provides opportunity for interaction and feedback	Can be circulated
Helps the speaker correct himself or herself (and his or her message) according to the feedback and non-verbal cues received from the receiver	Provides opportunity to refer back to a more permanent record
Better for conveying feelings and emotions	Better for keeping records of messages exchanged
	Can be revised before transmitting
Limitations	
Demands ability to think coherently while speaking	Immediate feedback is not available for correction on the spot
A word once uttered cannot be taken back	Many people do not like reading, especially official or business messages
Hard to control voice pitch and tone, especially when stressed, excited, or angry	More impersonal and remote
Very difficult to be conscious of body language	The reader is not helped by non-verbal cues that contribute to the total message
	Do not know if the message has been read
	Is more time consuming[2]

- *Pitch:* The pitch of the speaker's voice should take into consideration the distance between the listener and the speaker.
- *Tone and body language:* The speaker's tone should be marked by sincerity and confidence. The listener, unlike the reader of a written communication, has the advantage of watching the speaker in the act of verbalizing his or her ideas and feelings, and is able to note subconscious body language that may contradict the intent of the spoken words. Therefore, in face-to-face communication, the message is both heard and seen. A speaker has to be very careful, both about his or her choice of words and the manner of speaking them. The manner of speaking is, at times, more important than the actual words, which communicate only 7 per cent of the total meaning of the message. Albert Mehrabian's research reveals astonishing facts about how exactly different factors contribute to a speaker's total message:[2]

  - Verbal factors (words): 7%
  - Tone of voice and modulation: 38%
  - Visual factors (facial expressions, body movements, and gestures): 55%

  Effective speakers learn to control and use their tone and body language to support their words. The role of tone and visual expressions and body language as contributory factors in oral communication will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.
- *Pace of speaking:* Unlike the written word, the spoken word is ephemeral and short-lived. Listeners cannot refer back to the spoken word as readers can in case they missed something. This is an inherent limitation of speech. To overcome this limitation, the listener has to listen closely and attentively and the speaker should converse slowly, with proper semantic pauses, to enable the listener to receive and register what is said. There should be a correlation between the pace of speaking and the rate of listening. Research has established that an individual speaks nearly 125 words a minute, but the listener can process the information nearly 4–5 times more rapidly than this. If the gap between hearing and registering is too wide or too narrow based on the pace of speaking, comprehension will to be adversely affected. Hence, an important principle of oral communication is to speak fluently, without long pauses or without rushing.

> Research has established that an individual speaks nearly 125 words a minute, but the listener can process the information nearly 4–5 times more rapidly than this.

- *Fluency:* Fluency is described in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the quality of being able to speak or write a language easily and well." A fluent speaker is one who is heard with ease. The listener does not have to strain his or her mind to receive, register, and interpret the message. Listening is activated and helped when the speaker delivers his or her words in an ordered manner. Each word is distinctly heard and easily connected with other words to form the structure of the message.

> Listening is activated and helped when the speaker delivers his or her words in an ordered manner.

Guidelines for Effective Oral Communication

Oral communication should provide a platform for fair and candid exchange of ideas. The communicator should keep in mind the following tips and guidelines:

> 6
> Learn key skills of oral communication.

- Consider the objective.
- Think about the interest level of the receiver.
- Be sincere.
- Use simple language and familiar words.
- Be brief and precise.
- Avoid vagueness and generalities.
- Give full facts.
- Assume nothing.
- Use polite words and tone.

- Eliminate insulting implications.
- Include some information that is interesting and pleasing to the recipient.
- Allow time to respond.

Barriers to Effective Oral Communication

Managers have to communicate individually with people at different levels—superiors, subordinates, peers, customers, and public figures. The oral mode of communication is easy, efficient, and functionally helpful in resolving issues. But oral communication demands great control and communicative competence to be successful. The foremost barrier to oral communication is poor listening. Listening is a psychological act affected by several factors, such as the speaker's status, the listener's receptivity and retention, language barriers, and so on. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

THREE ASPECTS OF ORAL COMMUNICATION—CONVERSING, LISTENING, AND BODY LANGUAGE

The ability to present and articulate one's viewpoint in a conversation is one of the most important components of oral communication. Effective conversationalists try to present facts, not opinions; they stick to the point; keep the listener's interest in mind; support their arguments with suitable examples; and ask for feedback and answer questions honestly. It is also important to know how to negotiate between opposing viewpoints and control the direction of conversation without being aggressive. These conversation skills are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The other side of oral communication involves careful listening. To be able to understand and appreciate others, one should allow them to express themselves freely, without being interrupted, and listen carefully. To improve your oral communication skills, you should know whether you are an effective or ineffective listener. By knowing your own characteristics, you can improve your listening skills as an important element of effective oral communication. Inconsiderate listeners may annoy and disturb the speaker by interrupting or showing little interest in what is being discussed. Effective listeners on the other hand try to encourage the other person via positive body language and expressions. They indicate that they feel interested and understand what is being discussed. Chapter 5 discusses listening in greater detail.

Body language is the third major aspect of oral communication, as it often reflects unspoken thoughts and emotions. The speaker should not be vague or unfocused, but instead, should make eye contact with the audience, encourage questions and interaction, show confidence, and get to the point without unnecessary talking. The nuances of non-verbal communication and body language are discussed in Chapter 7.

By practicing the basic skills of good listening, effective conversation, and positive body language one can become an effective communicator and be successful as a manager or negotiator, or in any situation involving conversation or discussion.

INTERCULTURAL ORAL COMMUNICATION

7

Appreciate how intercultural situations require thoughtful oral communication.

Today, interaction with foreigners for business, education, and social purposes has become very frequent. The cultural differences in social behaviour, values, language, and articulation pose difficulties for both sides. Communication Snapshot 3.1 illustrates some such difficulties. Intercultural interactions take place not only when people go abroad or receive visitors from another country, but even in the home country. This is because we live in a multi-cultural society and interact with people who speak a variety of languages and belong to different subcultures.

Communication Snapshot 3.1

Intercultural Communication

Besides language barriers, intercultural interaction is deeply affected by the lack of familiarity with business and social norms and conventions of the respective cultural groups. The advice that Sunil gives to his cousin Gopal, who has just arrived in the United States as a student from India, in Anurag Mathur's novel, *The Inscrutable Americans*, is valuable in this context.

> "Ah Gopal, that may not be the most accurate account of life here. You know I suggest that before you actually start socializing with people maybe you should first settle down a bit, get to figure out what's what, you know, check out the whole scene."

Sunil's advice is to view things as they are, and to not assume anything or pass judgment hastily in an unfamiliar culture. An example of Gopal's bafflement in his early days in the United States occurs in a grocery store and reveals how necessary it is to be familiar with the manner in which business is conducted in a different culture.

> "At the mall, Gopal felt totally helpless at the gentility all around and the effortless ease with which shopping could be conducted. However, he knew shopkeepers well and he felt he had no reasons to believe that their basic attitude to customers here [America] would be any different from what it was in India. So when the girl at the counter totalled his purchases for pots, sheets and plates and announced, "That'll be $37 and 52 cents, sir", Gopal was ready for her.
>
> "25 dollars," he replied firmly.
>
> "Sorry, sir", she replied, "that's 37 dollars and 52 cents".
>
> "27 dollars", Gopal suggested.
>
> "Er, no sir", she replied nervously, "if you've run short of cash we'll gladly accept all the major credit cards, cheques or traveller's cheques".
>
> "29 dollars", said Gopal firmly, "no more, or I am going to other nice shop. They are saying they are having sale but I am giving you chance first".
>
> The girl began to look around wildly. "Excuse me, sir", she pleaded, "I'll have to get the manager." She fled.

The girl felt exasperated. Gopal's conversation with her failed to convey what exactly he wanted. The parallel conversation made little sense to the American salesgirl, who was unfamiliar with the practice of bargaining, which is common in India. Even her manager could not follow Gopal's conversation correctly. Gopal was trying to bargain because he did not want to pay 37 dollars and 52 cents for his total purchase. This was not because he was short of money as the counter girl and her manager thought, but because he was used to bargaining when shopping. In that pleasant atmosphere, bargaining was unheard of, so when Gopal went on quoting different amounts in response to the fixed amount repeated by the counter girl, it made no sense to her.

When his friend Randy asked Gopal what was going on, Gopal replied that he was bargaining. Randy who knew about American business culture was amused at the prospect of the great fun to be caused by Gopal's bargaining.

> The manager arrived.
>
> "What seems to be the problem, sir?" asked the manager suavely. "Could I be of some help?"
>
> "Prices are too high," said Gopal firmly.
>
> "Ha, ha, ha," chuckled the manager, "isn't that the truth. I often say the same to the wife myself. Now I'll tell you what," he leaned forward conspiratorially, "if you've run out of cash, leave behind any one of these items, I'll reduce $5 and throw in free this packet of fine chewing gum. How about that? Is that fair or is that fair?"
>
> "Chewing gum rots teeth," said Gopal firmly.

"All right", said the manager through clenched teeth, "what's the real problem here? Come on, spit it out. You broke or something?"

"No," said Gopal, "but this only worth $25."

"Oh, yeah", said the manager, "says who?"

"Who is setting these prices?" demanded Gopal coldly.

"How the hell do I know? Hey buddy, look, I just work here. I don't want no trouble, all right?"

"27 dollars."

"Hey jerko, what are you? Ralph Nader send you, hunh? He is an Arab too, isn't he?"

"I am Indian. 29 dollars."

"I don't believe this. What are you, nuts? Why don't you just take the whole damn thing free?"

"Thank you", said Gopal, gathering the package.

"Hey, hang on, wait up. Jesus, I get all the freaks. All right, 30 dollars, and that's it".

To facilitate intercultural interaction, it is necessary to ensure that the language, context, social and business practices, and values and norms are shared across different groups. Native speakers of English should remember what they themselves experience when they interact in a foreign language. To enable a foreign language speaker to follow them, native speakers should speak their first language (English) slowly and articulate each word as distinctly as possible. In addition, they should avoid the use of colloquial expressions that can cause difficulty for the other person.

Source: Based on extracts from Anurag Mathur, *The Inscrutable Americans* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 1991) pp. 23, 49–50. Reproduced with permission.

Indian speakers of English often face difficulty in conversing with Americans, the British, or other English-speaking Europeans. The foreign accent and speed of speaking sometimes make it difficult to follow what is being said. Even though the conversation takes place in English, two persons from different cultural backgrounds rarely speak English in the same way or understand it to the same extent.

8

Apply oral communication skills to new communication technologies.

ORAL COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

In business, the use of telephone, voice mail, phone conferencing, video conferencing, cell phones, and e-mail occurs in accordance with the need and purpose of the communicator. Since the communicators in these situations are not face-to-face, one has to have a high level of oral communication skills to be able to communicate effectively through these methods.

Phones

In business, for immediate information and response, the handiest mode of communication is the telephone. Though convenient for the caller, it is often viewed by top managers or very senior executives as a source of interruption. Hence, the phone is often received by an administrative assistant. After the caller explains the purpose of the call, he or she is put through to the concerned person.

Most organizations have a standard way of answering phone calls. The normal practice is for the receiver to greet the caller and then state his or her name and department. On picking up the phone, one should never say, "Yes—who is it—what do you want?" Instead, the receiver should sound polite by saying something like "May I know who is calling?" or "May I know in what regard you are calling?"

Nowadays, organizations have automatic exchanges that facilitate direct connections with the desired extension; alternatively, the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) may guide callers to the extension or ask them to wait for the operator. The operator usually begins by stating the organization's name, or by a greeting such as, "Good morning, IMT."

In business, courtesy counts. One doesn't automatically know how important the caller is for the company's business. So, every phone should be received with a standard sequence of phrases. If the intended receiver is not available, courtesy demands that a message be taken. But for that one has to be ready and equipped with a pen or pencil and paper. If the call reaches the receiver directly, generally, the response is just the name of the person, for instance, "Vinod".

Business telephone conversations should be only as long as is essential. If the other person starts going off-topic, the receiver may indicate that he or she wants to close the conversation by summarizing and repeating the intended/decided-upon action. The call should end with some expression of goodwill, such as "Thanks for calling", "Pleasure talking with you", or "I will get back to you."

Voice Mail

Voice mail facility is a common feature of an organization's phone system. It is a means of digitally recording voice messages that can be saved and forwarded, or skipped and deleted. It allows executives to attend to calls when they are free. When they are busy with meetings or work outside the office, they can transfer their calls to voice mail and check messages from any location at any time.

The voice mail message should sound as natural as possible and should be courteous. The caller should be able to recognize it as the intended receiver's voice. The recorded message may be something like "This is Pallavi Mehta in the R&D department. Please leave me a message. I shall call you back. Thank you."

Conference Calls

Telephones and cell phones have a conferencing system that allows several persons to talk with each other at the same time. This technology is now commonly used by companies across the globe.

There can be two types of business calls. The first is a one-way closed circuit communication that allows employees to tune in and hear an announcement; for example, daily/early morning progress reports, plant production reports, or other briefings are simultaneously heard by dozens of widely spread out persons via the phone and/or a public announcement system.

The second type of call is interactive. A number of persons can be on the same conference call. In this system, each participant can listen as well as talk. Through a conference call, different members of a team working on a project together are able to update themselves on the progress made by the team without conducting meetings face-to-face. Through the interactive conference call system, each team member can interact with others from their own work location. This saves companies time and transportation costs. Moreover, the interaction is real-time and can happen as and when required.

Conference calls are used by most organizations as a routine communication channel for planning, updating, coordinating, and monitoring activities without requiring employees to travel long distances for a meeting of a few hours.

Cell Phones

Cellular phones are a popular instrument of communication worldwide. Their utility for business executives has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of General Packet Radio Services (GPRS) technology. GPRS technology allows the radio transmission of small packets of data, especially between mobile phones and the Internet. Mobile handsets enabled with GPRS technology do the work of laptops/computers and voice recorders. They are more convenient than laptops, as they are smaller and easier to transport.

Video Conferencing

Internet-enabled video conferencing is an electronic version of face-to-face communication. Business meetings, interviews, and other urgent interactions among several distantly located individuals can be effectively conducted without requiring participants to move from their respective places of work. Video conferencing is more complex than talking on the phone. It involves the use of cameras for images and phones for speech and sound communicated back and forth over the Internet. As with face-to-face communication, video conferencing calls for a whole range of oral skills, such as clear and natural speaking, attentive listening, and positive body language. For successful video conferencing, the following points may be kept in mind:

- Choose a quiet place as this will eliminate background noise.
- Set sound/volume to an appropriate level.
- Ensure that the faces of the speakers are visible by checking the lighting in the room.
- Sit comfortably facing the camera. Do not move unnecessarily.
- Wait for the image of the other person and your own image to appear on the screen before beginning the discussion.
- At the beginning of the conversation, introduce yourself and your team to the other party.
- Wait for the transmission to complete before responding. Due to technical issues, there may be pauses between the two speakers.
- Always direct your message or question by specifying the person you are addressing.
- Treat video conferencing as an audio–visual medium of relaxed business and social communication connecting people in different locations.

SUMMARY

- Speaking is a mode of communication.
- Effective speaking skills are learnt and developed through patience and perseverance.
- There are advantages of oral communication over written communication, such as its immediacy and directness, the scope for immediate feedback and interaction, and the inclusion of non-verbal communication such as body language and gestures.
- There are also some disadvantages of oral communication when compared to written communication. These include the lack of a record that can be referred to later, the inability to rephrase or revise ideas and words once they have been expressed, the difficulty in controlling one's body language, and the inability to circulate the communication to a large group of people at a later time.
- The principles of effective oral communication include paying attention to tone and body language, modulating one's pitch, speaking naturally, listening thoughtfully, using simple language, and pacing one's speed when speaking.
- It is important to be careful and thoughtful when communicating in an unfamiliar culture.
- New electronic technologies call for skillful oral communication and should be thoroughly understood by business executives.

CASE: DEALING WITH OUTSOURCING BACKLASH

"I don't want to speak to you. Connect me to your boss in the US," hissed the American on the phone. The young girl at a Bangalore call centre tried to be as polite as she could.

With the increasing resentment over jobs lost to countries like India and the Philippines, hate calls and mails are a common occurrence, say call-centre executives and industry experts. According to them, many callers from the West refuse to speak to an Indian. When callers are unhappy with the fact that jobs are being outsourced to low-cost offshore destinations, their frustration often turns racist or sexist. A young girl at a call centre recalls how a Londoner unleashed himself, "Young lady, do you know that because of you Indians we are losing jobs?"

Call-centre employees are advised to "be cool" in such situations. They are often taught how to use neutral accents and say "zee" instead of "zed", and some call centres even try to educate their employees about American lifestyle and culture. Some call centres provide gyms and pool tables to help their employees counter the stress they experience as a result of irate or racist calls.

The furor raised by the Western media over job losses because of outsourcing has made many citizens resent the fact that their calls are answered by people in foreign locations. Angry outbursts are a reality that call centre executives are trained to deal with. "It's happening often enough, so let's face it," says a senior executive of a Gurgaon call centre, adding, "This doesn't have any impact on business."

Questions to Answer

1. Assume you are working as an operator at a call centre in India and are receiving irate calls from Americans and Western Europeans. How would you handle such calls? Imagine a situation and state what your response would be.
2. "Keep your cool." What does this mean in terms of business courtesy?
3. Do you agree with the view that such abusive conversations on the telephone do not have any impact on business? Give reasons for your answer.

Sources: Based on "Outsourcing Backlash Gets Abusive, Ugly," *Hindustan Times*, December 21, 2003, New Delhi; and Rama Lakshmi, "India Call Centres Suffer Sturm of 4-letter Words," *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2005.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Discuss five essential elements of speaking.
2. Give five reasons for choosing the oral mode of communication instead of the written form.
3. What skills does a speaker need to be successful in communicating with others? Give an example of difficulty or failure in oral communication.
4. Discuss some of the principles of effective oral communication.
5. In intercultural conversation, both how you talk and what you say is equally important for building good professional relations. Give examples and explain.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What determines your speaking style?
2. How would you improve a person's courage and self-confidence for public speaking?
3. What are the ways of holding your audience's attention?
4. How does a marked slowdown in the pace of speaking affect interpersonal communication?
5. What is the effect of electronic media on oral communication?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Romil and Sandeep had to go to Khan Market to run some errands. They decide to borrow a bike from one of their friends in college. When they asked him for the bike, he responded, "Normally, I do not lend my bike to anyone. A few days ago, I lent it to Arpan and the bike developed some problem—there was an overflow of petrol." Romil and Sandeep thanked their friend curtly and left without further conversation. Their friend was surprised. He wondered why they did not take the bike they had wanted to borrow.

Analyse the friend's response to Romil and Sandeep's request. What did he really intend to convey when he gave Arpan's example?

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. Speaking is
   (a) a silence
   (b) a mode of communication
   (c) an art
   (d) a skill
2. Goals of speaking are
   (a) to inform and persuade
   (b) to persuade and delight
   (c) to inform, remind, and delight
   (d) the very goals of communication
3. Oral communication is better than written communication for:
   (a) providing opportunity to refer back
   (b) conveying facts and opinions
   (c) conveying feelings and emotions
   (d) saving time
4. The limitation of oral communication is that:
   (a) it is irreversible—what is said cannot be taken back
   (b) it is not affected by the speaker's feelings or stress or excitement levels.
   (c) it is easy to be aware of our body language
   (d) it does not require on-the-spot thinking
5. In business, oral communication is face-to-face:
   (a) in all situations
   (b) in some situations
   (c) in no situation
   (d) in all but one situation
6. The foremost barrier to oral communication is:
   (a) poor listening
   (b) humility
   (c) interestedness
   (d) concentration
7. The effectiveness of oral communication depends on the speaker's ability to use:
   (a) complex words
   (b) long sentences
   (c) simple language
   (d) foreign words
8. In oral communication, what matters most is:
   (a) what you say
   (b) how you say it
   (c) when you say it
   (d) where you say it
9. Oral communication is also known as:
   (a) verbal communication
   (b) non-verbal communication
   (c) impersonal communication
   (d) face-to-face communication
10. In business, oral communication is suitable for:
   (a) recording things
   (b) discussing things
   (c) delaying the decision-making process
   (d) confusing workers

ENDNOTES

1. Rankin, P. T., "The Importance of Listening Ability", *English Journal* 17 (October 1928), pp. 623–630.
2. Albert Mehrabian, "Communication Without Words", *Psychology Today* (September 1968), 53–55.

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

4 Conversation Skills

> *A gossip is one who talks to you about others; a bore is one who talks to you about himself; and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself.*
>
> — *Lisa Kirk*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Know the meaning and social purpose of conversation.
2. Learn how to break the ice and start conversations.
3. Comprehend conversation control and its applications.
4. Identify and avoid parallel conversations, while developing sequential ones.
5. Appreciate the role of Transactional Analysis (TA) in interpersonal communication and the resultant behaviour.
6. Know how to control the direction of conversation in meetings, oral presentations, and negotiations, and how to influence or motivate the listener or audience.

Communication at Work

Communication researchers suggest that our communication style has more to do with whom we are talking to than who we are. Language experts say men and women have gender-specific communication styles. Studies suggest that men speak in a more "male" way when they are interacting with other men, and women tend to speak in a more "female" way when they talk with other women. But when men and women converse with each other, these differences are less pronounced as each person adapts to the other's style. Studies also show that women refer to emotions, use personal information, and make self-derogatory comments more frequently than men. Men do these less frequently and are more likely to express opinions and use insults.

To study if such conversation patterns extend to e-mails, researchers from the University of Otago in New Zealand recruited 22 psychology students and had them correspond by e-mail with a "net pal" for two weeks. Each participant had one "female" and one "male" pal (these "net pals" were actually one of the experimenters using female-preferential or male-preferential language). They found these patterns to hold true in the study. The research team found that, regardless of their own gender, the students used "male" language while communicating with the "male net pal" and "female" language with the "female net pal". The authors of the study, Rob Thomson, and his colleagues from the University of Otago, Dunedin, concluded that it is erroneous to assume that the language a person uses in a conversation with someone of the same gender is the "natural" style for that person. Each person is capable of using a range of styles, depending on whom they are talking to.

Source: Based on Rob Thomson, Tamar Murachver and James Green, "Where Is the Gender in Gendered Language?" *Psychological Science* 12, no. 2.

WHAT IS CONVERSATION?

The art of conversation is an essential interpersonal skill that helps build a pleasing personality. Effective conversation helps in getting friendly cooperation in social and professional situations. Conversation involves speaking and listening in a sequence. It is an oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions, and ideas. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines conversation in the social context, which is the ordinary context of everyday life, as "an informal talk in which people exchange views, feelings and thoughts". The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines conversation in the professional context as "an informal discussion of an issue by representatives of governments, institutions or groups".

1

Know the meaning and social purpose of conversation.

What distinguishes ordinary conversation from other forms of oral communication such as debates, public speaking, negotiations, or business discussions, is its informality, in the sense that it is relaxed and friendly without being restricted by the rules of formal behaviour. Conversation, in general, is spontaneous, friendly, and casual. The use of direct, informal, and commonly used phrases constitutes the conversational style.

2

Learn how to break the ice and start conversations.

SOCIAL CONVERSATION

Social conversation, also known as *chit-chat* or *small talk*, attempts to establish a sociable atmosphere. At a tea-party or social gathering, the conversation reveals feelings of togetherness, rather than communicating ideas or any specific meaning. Words are used in symbolic ways, as verbal social gestures. This social use of words is known as *phatic communion*.

The words and phrases used in phatic communion such as “It was a pleasure meeting you”, “Do come again”, or “How is your family?” can be best described as expressions of togetherness and camaraderie and an indication of the speaker’s culture and sensibility as a social being. Hayakawa points out that it is regarded as a social error not to say these things, even if the speaker does not mean them, and that it is completely impossible for us in society to talk only when we “have something to say”[1]. According to Hayakawa, “the *togetherness* of the talking is the most important element in social conversation; the subject matter is only secondary”.

Greetings and farewells, such as “Good morning”, used to greet someone in the morning; “Take care”, used to wish good luck while parting; or “How do you do?”, used when being introduced to someone, do not carry literal meaning and are phatic in nature. According to Bronislaw Malinowski[2], phatic communion is a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words. The words fulfil a social function and “that is their principal aim, but they are neither the result of intellectual reflection, nor do they necessarily arouse reflection in the listener”. The *Oxford English Dictionary* explains phatic communion by saying, “they [the words] are used to convey general sociability rather than to communicate a specific meaning; for example, *Nice morning isn’t it?*” Similarly, the phrase “How are you?” is not a question about the listener’s state of health, and “Take care” is not a warning against danger. Phatic utterances are used to break silence. Their purpose is to initiate conversation. This type of conversation does not aim at discussing an idea that may provoke disagreement. Instead, the conversation is usually about some common, shared feeling that can be instantly appreciated, such as appreciation of fine weather or natural beauty. Fuller communication can grow from small, ice-breaking remarks made upon making someone’s acquaintance.

Fuller communication can grow from small, ice-breaking remarks made upon making someone’s acquaintance.

Exhibit 4.1 illustrates how small talk and informal, friendly conversation about unimportant subjects creates a relaxed atmosphere for discussing business.

Social conversation in the form of chit-chat, small talk, or phatic communion is not bound by any rigid order or sequence of subject matter. Its order and nature depends on the extent of both parties’ desire to establish a relationship. People who are drawn to each other talk with the goal of reaching a stage where they have a better understanding and exchange of ideas. This is achieved by avoiding subjects that would lead to disagreements. With each point of agreement, no matter how commonplace or obvious, doubt and suspicion of the new acquaintance wear away and the possibility of friendship increases. And finally, when more intimate conversation reveals common tastes, opinions, and views, friendship replaces misgivings and communication in the real sense is made possible. Thus, social conversation is psychologically structured, beginning in casual chit-chat and developing into genuine communication expressive of friendship and cooperation. Exhibit 4.2 shows how one can make small talk and break the ice.

Exhibit 4.1
How Small Talk Facilitates Business Conversations

Divya Mehra, an architect and the owner of her firm, Interiors, has commissioned an advertising agency to create an ad brief for her new business plan. The plan involves creating modern office spaces for corporations and businesses. Daniel, who has been given the task of crating the brief and presenting it to Mrs Mehra, visits her to show her the draft and get her feedback.

Daniel: Good morning, Mrs Mehra. How have you been?

Mrs Mehra: Good morning, Daniel. Very well, thank you. Did you have a nice weekend?

Daniel: Yes, indeed. I met a couple of old friends, so we had a good time. How was your weekend?

Mrs Mehra: Not bad at all, thank you. A friend took me to see some of the beaches close to Mumbai. It all looks so lush green during the rains!

Daniel: Yes, some of the beaches in Maharashtra are very pretty, aren't they?

Mrs Mehra: You don't come from this part of the country, do you?

Daniel: No, I'm from Delhi. But I like it here very much.

Mrs Mehra: I'm glad to hear that. Well now, back to work! How's the brief coming along?

Daniel: I thought I'd show you the draft I've created. Would you please take a look at it and let me know what you think?

Mrs Mehra: Sure, I've been waiting to see the draft. Let's see the text first:

> "Interiors creates spacious and comfortable workspaces for you…easy-to-install fittings, employee-friendly workspaces, all at an affordable price…cut your costs by half…"

That last one's a bit of a tall claim, isn't it? Should we retain something so far-fetched?

Daniel: You're right, Mrs Mehra. I shall delete that part, go over the whole thing once more and show it to you in a couple of days.

Exhibit 4.2
Tips for Successful Small Talk

The ability to connect with others through small talk can lead to big things, according to Debra Fine, author of *The Fine Art of Small Talk* (Hyperion 2005). A former engineer, Fine recalls being so ill at ease at networking events and even the 10 minute coffee break during a meeting that she would hide in the restroom. Now a motivational speaker, Fine believes the ability to develop relationships with people through small talk is an acquired skill.

Fine offers the following tips for starting—and ending conversations:

- Come up with three things to talk when preparing for a function along with a couple generic questions that will get others talking.
- Be the first to say "hello." Smile first and always shake hands when you meet someone.
- Take your time during introductions. Make an extra effort to remember names and use them frequently. Exhibit host behaviour by introducing others that join the group to each other.
- Get another person talking by leading with a common ground statement regarding the occasion or location and then asking a related open-ended question. For example, you can also ask them about their trip in or how they know the bride or groom.
- Show interest in your conversational partner by actively listening and giving verbal feedback. Maintain eye contact.
- Listen more than you talk.
- Be prepared to have something interesting to contribute. Staying on top of current events will provide you with great conversation builders, leading with "What do you think of?" Have you heard?"

Exhibit 4.2
(Contd.)

- Be aware of your body language. People who look or act ill-at-ease make others uncomfortable.
- Have a few exit lines ready, so that you can gracefully move on. For example, "I need to check in with a client over there," or "Who do you know at this meeting that could help me with …?

Source: Extracts from Debra Fine, "Tips for Making Small Talk Success", available at http://www.debrafine.com/art_tipsForSmallTalkSuccess.html, accessed 15 September 2010.
Debra Fine is the author of *The Fine Art of Small Talk* (Hyperion). She presents keynotes and seminars on conversational skills and networking techniques internationally. Contact Debra at 303-721-8266 or visit her Web site at www.DebraFine.com.

In their daily interactions, people are constantly involved in the exchange of facts and opinions. In these conversations, it is important to avoid what is known as the *binary mode* and adopt a *multi-valued* approach. Sometimes, people tend to present facts and opinions in a binary manner, in which they try to prove that what they are saying is correct and what the other person has to say is totally wrong. This view tends to antagonize both participants and can lead to arguments. In some conversations, there may be a visible attempt at what Stephen Potter calls "one-upmanship"—an attempt to make oneself seem better than other people. A valuable part of a conversation is wasted when the participants want to prove that they are correct; instead, they should use the opportunity more profitably to exchange facts and opinions.

Rational human beings should follow what Karl R. Popper says, "Faith in reason is not only a faith in our own reason but also and even more in that of others. Rationalism is therefore bound up with the idea that the other fellow has a right to be heard and to defend his arguments". According to this view, no person is wholly wrong even if we do not accept him or her as correct. Rationally speaking, reality cannot be truly categorized into an "either–or" system of thinking. Reality is not simply right or wrong, or good or bad. This perception is further refined when truth is viewed in terms of a scale of values, such as 0 to 5 or 0 to 100. To value reality as 0 and 1 is to miss the vast design of reality that consists of numerous shades, not just black and white. Conversation should be inspired by the multiple possibilities of truth/reality and be characterized by tolerance and positivity.

EFFECTIVE CONVERSATION

Humans begin conversing from the time we begin to prattle as children. From infancy, we develop the basic tool of conversation that is language. Gradually we become familiar with complex uses of language suited to our purpose: to inform and to persuade. However, even though we naturally pick up the ability to converse, we may lack the skills of a good conversationalist, which include knowing how to speak as well listen. Conversation is not a monologue, it's a dialogue. Good conversation is characterized by the following features:

Conversation is not a monologue; it's a dialogue.

1. It has natural directness and spontaneity.
2. It is live in the sense that it takes place face-to-face, and the participants can see and hear each other at the same time. The live presentation of conversation is enriched and made effective with the added power of body language—a great source of communicative effectiveness.
3. It is sensitive and flexible in that it can change quickly according to the participants' reactions.

These characteristics are clearly illustrated in Communication Snapshot 4.1, which is a conversation between Catherine and Linton in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights.*

Communication Snapshot 4.1

Effective Conversation: An Example

Linton sat in the great arm-chair half asleep. Walking upto him, Catherine began in a serious tone: "As you don't like me, Linton, I'll not come any more. Let us say good-bye and tell Mr Heathcliff that you have no wish to see me and that he mustn't invent any more falsehoods on the subject." "Sit down and take your hat off Catherine", he answered. "You are so much happier than I am. Believe me, if I could be as happy, I would also be like you; but Papa talks of my defects so much and shows such scorn for me that I believe I am worthless, bad tempered, bad in spirit and I cannot help showing my nature to you, though I regret it and repent it till I die!"

Catherine is strong-willed and passionate. She talks to Linton in an impulsive, vehement way. "As you don't like me… let us say good bye." Linton on the other hand is cool, sad, and bares his heart, which is filled with remorse. He changes Catherine's negative thoughts and feelings by his moving self-expression. This is seen when Catherine tells Ellen, "I felt he spoke the truth; and I felt I must forgive him, and though we should quarrel the next moment, I must forgive him again."

Linton's words are full of genuine feelings of love and remorse for Catherine. When he narrates how scorn and bad temper were driven into his nature by his father's constant treatment of him as a worthless fellow, he sounds very earnest and convincing. Catherine is persuaded to change her opinion by the touching facts of Linton's helplessness, everlasting regret, and repentance.

CONVERSATION CONTROL

3

Comprehend conversation control and its applications.

Conversation control refers to the skills of listening and talking in a positive and meaningful way at an appropriate time. It calls upon the ability to listen with concentration and respond well. It includes:

- the techniques of changing the direction of conversation smoothly, and
- the ability to allow a discussion to develop along key issues in an uninterrupted way towards the desired end.

Conversation control refers to the skills of listening and talking in a positive and meaningful way at an appropriate time.

Broadly speaking, conversation control helps the participants conclude and conclude their conversation (dialogue/discussion) effectively and satisfactorily with mutual understanding and agreement.

In business, the following situations require the application of conversation control skills:

- Selling and buying
- Negotiating
- Interviewing
- Participating in meetings
- Disagreeing without being rude
- Protesting without offending
- Complimenting/praising
- Responding to personal criticism

How an individual listens and talks in such situations shows the extent to which he or she is able to exercise conversation control. Charles J. Margerison in *The Art of Effective Communication* points out, "Conversation control does not mean that you can control someone's conversation. What it does mean is that with practice you can control your own conversation, and in time be able to influence others and encourage them to respond in a positive and relevant way."[3]

The following are situations where effective conversation skills are useful:

- Interacting with people in meetings in a convincing way
- Handling objections to a proposal

- Being able to react to criticism in a confident manner
- Developing skills in interviewing
- Learning how to get correct information quickly

Controlling the Direction of Conversation

All conversations contain facts and opinions. The real purpose of conversation is to exchange feelings and facts. In positive situations, where the facts and opinions being discussed converge, the conversation is smooth and both the parties are in relative accord with each other. In such situations, agreement is not difficult to reach because there is not much divergence of opinion between the two parties involved. The real problem is when one participant finds that the conversation is directed against him or her and there is a distortion of facts. This distortion could be deliberate or it could be a misunderstanding in which a fact is unknowingly changed into an adverse opinion. The skill of the conversationalist lies in realizing the reasons for divergence, tensions, and complications. Empathy and real understanding help disentangle the conflict between opinion and fact. A skillful conversationalist is always able to separate facts from opinions to his or her advantage.

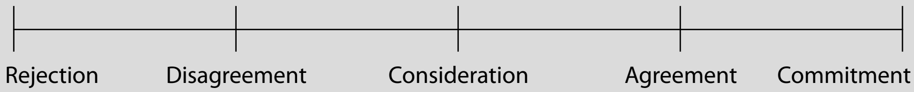
There are three possible directions a conversation can take. It can move against you, towards you, or away from you. The other person could disagree with you and wholly reject your viewpoint (i.e., the conversation moves against you) or he or she could agree with you and support your statement (i.e., the conversation moves towards you). He or she could also, without rejecting what you say, suggest changes before accepting your statement (i.e., the conversation moves away from you). A skilled conversationalist knows in which direction the conversation is moving. In *The Art of Effective Communication*, Charles J. Margerison suggests assessing the other person's reactions on the conversation direction chart shown in Exhibit 4.3.

Managing Negative Responses

Disagreement and rejection tend to disturb a person's cool. When this happens, it is important to be patient and try to persuade the other party of your argument by showing an understanding of their viewpoint and by responding to the specific reasons for disagreement or rejection. To some extent, a negative response shows a failure to convince the other person of the validity, soundness, or correctness of one's idea or proposal. Do not attribute rejection or disagreement to deliberate or personal reasons on the part of the disagreeing person. With a positive mind, tackle negative responses as follows:

- Show that you do not doubt the positive intentions of the other person.
- Use expressions such as "You are right about that, but…". Avoid completely rejecting the other person's arguments.
- Do not use negative expressions. Instead of saying "Perhaps you do not know…" try "Perhaps, you know…". Using "perhaps" suggests possibility but not certainty.
- When the signs and cues of doubt, disagreement, or rejection become obvious, pause and summarize whatever has been discussed so far and ask the other person whether the summary is correct. Their acceptance of the summary is the first act of agreement.
- Use this psychological breakthrough for further agreement by asking what should be done next. This changes the response into a potential agreement.
- Assure the other person that you share their concerns and would keep their concerns in mind. Also elaborate on how you would meet their concerns.
- Finally, never get desperate, frustrated, or angry when confronted with rejection and disagreement. Emotional reactions affect your ability to convince logically.

Exhibit 4.3
The Direction of Conversation



The conversation could move either towards the left, in which case it is moving away from you and against you, or towards the right, from consideration to agreement and commitment. Conversation on the left tends to be parallel or sometimes divergent, whereas conversation on the right is sequential. Understanding what these reactions imply in the course of the conversation helps in knowing how to manage rejection and disagreement.

1. *Rejection:* If your point is completely turned down, it means that there is no possibility of further discussion on the issue. Hence the conversation has to end. For example, if a candidate asks an invigilator for more time to finish an examination, the request would be rejected summarily.
2. *Disagreement:* One should understand the subtle distinction between rejection and disagreement. Consider a discussion on whether children below fourteen years of age, who are legally disallowed from being hired as labour, should be permitted to work under special conditions of family hardship. Assume you hold the view that no specific circumstances should be considered for allowing child labour in our society. In other words, you reject the idea of allowing children to work, even under difficult circumstances. But suppose instead of rejecting the proposition, you disagree with it and say that perhaps on human grounds such situations should be decided on a case-by-case basis for each child. This indicates a willingness to continue with the discussion. (It is important to note that, in discussion, one should not say, "I disagree with you"; instead, it is better to say, "I disagree with what you are saying" or "I am not sure what you're saying is true". In this way, one does not disagree with the person, but with their point of view.)
3. *Consideration:* The point of consideration is when the other person does not reject your proposal and wants to further discuss or examine it in order to be convinced of its validity. At this point, you should offer more information to enable the other person accept your point or proposal.
4. *Agreement:* This is the positive expression of acceptance of the idea or proposal by both parties. It can lead to further action.
5. *Commitment:* This is the conclusion of a successful conversation. The opinions or proposals discussed are accepted and decisions are also made on how to implement them. This stage is the goal of all conversations.

Noticing and Recognizing Cues and Clues

Conversation consists of words as well as non-verbal gestures, and it communicates both stated and implied messages. Words communicate the stated message, while non-verbal signs and signals communicate the implied message. Cues and clues together with signs and signals point out what is important and what is not. A *cue* is a keyword or phrase a speaker uses when he or she wants to indicate that something is important to him or her. A *clue* is a word or a set of words that someone else says to us. Persons skilled in the art of conversation quickly recognize cues and clues and know what is of importance to the other party and could be the direction and basis of further conversation or discussion.

A *cue* is a keyword or phrase a speaker uses when he or she wants to indicate that something is important to him or her.

In written messages, the writer can draw the reader's attention by highlighting important words, phrases, and sentences by underlining, italicizing, or marking with a coloured lighter or by using qualifiers or modifiers—words such as *very*, *too*, *essential*, and so on, which indicate importance. In oral communication, the listener's attention

In oral communication, the listener's attention is focused by not only the choice of words but also by the tone of voice or other signals such as facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures.

The success of meetings, discussions, lectures, or oral presentations depends on the participants picking up verbal cues and clues.

In real life, people often do not express their thoughts directly and completely. It is for others to look for cues or clues to draw more information. Otherwise, the real intent may remain unstated.

is focused by not only the choice of words but also by the tone of voice or other signals such as facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures. These signals constitute cues and clues that emphasize ideas.

Cues and clues flow to and from the speaker consciously or subconsciously. They highlight the parts of the message that the speaker emphasizes. There are always some key words in any conversation. These key words act as cues to others, drawing their attention to what is important. For instance, if someone says, "Let us discuss the teaching–learning function of the case-study method in management studies", the key words are "teaching–learning function" and "case-study method." These words direct others to focus on the case-study method as a tool of teaching and learning.

Generally, people give the most important clues unconsciously, through what is called "leakage", body talk that involves non-verbal signals comprising expressions, gestures, and postures. The success of meetings, discussions, lectures, or oral presentations depends on the participants picking up verbal cues and clues.

Unfortunately, it is common for one side to fail to pick up the cues given by the other party. Here is an example. The director of a college went to the university's registrar to ask for permission to add a certain course to his college's curriculum. To support his proposal, the director spoke at length highlighting the overall achievements of the college in terms of its infrastructure, growing student population, and consistently excellent results. He said to the registrar, "I want you to send a team to inspect our college and to recommend the opening of the new course." The registrar replied, "But the university wants all colleges to improve their facilities and results, not just one college." The director went on to defend the existing facilities and academic results of his college. However, the meeting failed because the registrar ignored the key words that the director had used to support his request. The director, meanwhile, got the clue that the registrar was not interested in his proposal for the new course. When the conversation ended, the director left the registrar's office disappointed.

In this example, the key words used by the director were "to inspect", "recommend", and "the new course". The registrar did not pay attention to these key words. The clues in the registrar's response were the words "but", "all colleges", "improve", "facilities and results". These words indicate his priorities. What the registrar implied was that the university was not interested in adding further courses and its priority was an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. But he communicated the priority of the university obliquely. The director's proposal for starting a new course was, in fact, intended to increase the intake of students. However, the communication failed because he failed to provide cues about this or state the purpose directly.

In real life, people often fail to express their thoughts directly and completely. It is for others to look for cues or clues to draw more information. Otherwise, the real intent may remain unstated. For example, consider a case where in a welfare meeting with workers, a manager was told by an employee: "I have been working under a lot of tension." The manager replied, "Yes, we all have to work under tension. Targets have to be met." This response suggests that the manager missed the clue underlying the word "tension". The employee may not have been talking about tension at work. He may have been facing some serious personal problems, such as his spouse's health or his child's education. The manager should have instead asked him, "What kind of tension are you under?" This would have encouraged the employee to talk further about the nature of his problem. Instead of a skillful, controlled conversation, we have here a worker's general statement about his tension, met with another general statement made by the manager in response. There is no attempt to draw out more information about the problem.

Let us see a case of skillful control of conversation. Film actor Dev Anand, a recipient of the Dada Saheb Phalke award, had a long TV interview. One of the questions the anchor asked Dev Anand was: "It is said that as a film director you always insisted on working with new faces." Dev Anand at once shot back, "It is not a question of insisting. You should think deeply. It is a very different pleasure to encourage young talent to develop, to help them [new people] express themselves, to get established as celebrities. It is a creative joy. And I have always been creative in my choice of characters and my themes. I have always experimented, I have always enjoyed that." *You should think deeply.* These words of Dev Anand's are significant. The message lies in these words. In this case, the word "insisted", used by the anchor, was important. Dev Anand caught the clue. He tackled the hidden meaning of the general statement (the allegation that he always "insisted" on working with new faces) by bringing out his pursuit of creative joy as a film director and actor in moulding talented newcomers into accomplished actors.

We can identify clues during a conversation by taking note when people use the following types of expressions:

- When people use the first-person pronouns, "I", "me", and "my", they are talking about themselves, the person of greatest importance to them.
- When people strongly qualify their statements with adjectives indicative of deep emotions or great enthusiasm, they give clues as to their state of mind. Watch out for words such as "pressured", "concerned", "angry", "worried", "annoyed", "unhappy", "disappointed", or "enthusiastic", "keen", "excited", and "inspired". For example, when a person says he is under pressure to finish a task, he is giving a strong clue about action that needs to be taken within the shortest possible time.
- We should listen carefully when people use words that indicate that they are under pressure to act in a certain way. For example, when somebody makes a statement like the ones given here, it indicates that they are under pressure:
  - "The whole plan went wrong! There was so much confusion and such little time. I think I failed in my responsibility to organize the event."
  - "I should have changed my strategy and approach, as I had planned to. The whole thing was a disaster."
  - "I am determined not to let it happen again."

  Here, the words "there was such little time", "as I had planned to" and "not to let it happen" act as key words. The sentences show that the speaker is under pressure to act in a certain way.
- When someone uses words that suggest doubt and concern, it is a clue to the speaker's personal problems. You can help the other person if you find out exactly what these issues are. By asking what he or she proposes to do or whom he or she is planning to consult, you can find out different ways of helping with the problem.
- Finally, listen and notice the natural pauses that people use after saying something important. It is at this point that you show the speaker that you have understood the key issues raised by him or her, by accurately and sympathetically talking on those issues. You can thus continue the conversation in a controlled way and convince the other person of your understanding of the real issues.

Interpreting Signs and Signals

Conversation is composed of verbal and visual indicators. *Verbal indicators* involve cues given and clues received. *Visual indicators* consist of signs given and signals received. Non-verbal messages flow through signs and signals. While in conversation, people unconsciously move their hands, eyes, head, legs, and other parts of the body or engage in other non-verbal behaviour, such as the frequent gulping of water. These non-verbal acts reflect the state of their minds. Body movements, gestures, and actions communicate in a visible manner what lies concealed in the mind.

> Conversation is composed of verbal and visual indicators. *Verbal indicators* involve cues given and clues received.

Signs consist of visual indicators such as frowns, smiles, eye movements, and so on. Signals are behavioural indicators others give us. For example, drinking water every 10 to 15 minutes during a speech is a sign of thirst. However, to the audience it may also signal the speaker's nervousness.

We will analyse gestures and expressions as modes of non-verbal communication in Chapter 7. Here, you should be able to identify from your own experiences those signals that encourage or discourage you during the course of communication. Also try to know which signs you habitually give to others when emphasizing important points.

4

Identify and avoid parallel conversations, while developing sequential ones.

Avoiding Parallel Conversation

People engage in conversations to explore something—such as facts, ideas, opinions, or solutions. This aim can be fulfilled by taking in an interest in what the other party says, especially at the beginning when the goal of the discussion is clearest. Both sides must seek further information on what is originally stated by asking questions and exploring the meaning of clues and non-verbal signals. But if both parties do not do so and just counter the original statement with another statement parallel to it, the conversation will not reach a satisfying resolution. Two parallel statements cannot meet and, therefore, cannot be linked together to resolve the issue or add more information on the original statement. In a situation of a series of parallel statements, there is no dialogue, but, instead, just statements shot at each other. There is no attempt to get to the meaning behind the words used by the other person.

Consider the following example of a meeting at a garment export company.

X: It is necessary that we increase our exports.

Y: I think it is most important for us to reduce our manpower immediately.

X: By increasing our exports we can build our brand image.

Y: By reducing the number of workers we can cut down our costs.

X: I always look to build our company image in a positive way by promoting its sales abroad.

Y: Cost reduction is the only way we can manage our company. And that can be done only by reducing the number of workers.

Here, X and Y are engaged in parallel conversation, where in each is trying to prove himself right and the other wrong. Neither is interested in exploring the true meaning of what is being said by the other person.

Practising Sequential Conversation

When two people converse in a skillfully controlled way, they do by making statements that are in sequence with each other's statements. There is a logical link between the statements made by the two sides. The listener carefully receives what is being said and waits for the appropriate time to join in and state his or her position clearly. The listener carries forward the conversation in a connected and sequential manner. In this way, within a short time, ideas and thoughts are developed in a structured pattern.

Sequential conversation between two persons is always fruitful. But it is possible only when the other person attaches some value to what is said by the speaker. The listener can then reflect on what is said, know more about the important ideas in the speaker's initial statement, and contribute to further exploration of the issue.

In verbal communication, the most important skill is to demonstrate a genuine interest in the other person.

Using Reflection and Empathy

In verbal communication, the most important skill is to demonstrate a genuine interest in the other person. To do so, both participants should be able to pick up cues and reflect upon their meaning. For instance, suppose Anuj says to Bharat, "I am not sure if I am required here any longer." If Bharat reflects on this initial statement, he would note an underlying frustration and a sense of rejection in Anuj's words. To give Anuj a chance to express himself further, Bharat could say to Anuj, "You feel your contribution is not being recognized. What can be done to change this?" This would allow Anuj to explore his own feelings with greater clarity and understanding.

Reflecting on someone's statement needs to be done most carefully. One must first understand the other person's underlying feelings exactly and accurately. Then, one must demonstrate empathy and understanding when responding to the person. This includes the use of positive body language to support one's words.

The purpose of reflecting on something is to help the other person understand his or her feelings with greater clarity and precision. Therefore, one may repeat the feelings expressed by the other person—this should be done objectively, without changing, adding, or altering their statements. One should not criticize or question their words.

The purpose of reflecting on something is to help the other person understand his or her feelings with greater clarity and precision.

One's body language should show real interest in the other person. Thus, it is important to make eye contact, lean forward, and speak with genuine concern for the other person.

Cultivating a Sense of Timing

In oral communication, the speaker should always keep in mind the time taken to communicate. To be able to observe the time limit, the speaker should plan out his or her words judiciously to reach a properly evolved end. The listeners should not feel rushed through any part of the conversation or presentation. One's pace of conversation or presentation should generally not exceed 110–120 words per minute. The speaker should not speak too quickly or gloss over explanations in order to reach the discussion of the solution. The analysis of the problem is equally important, and the speaker should not assume that the listeners are fully aware of the problem. Such an assumption affects both the pace and direction of the discussion. The other persons may feel uncomfortable and rushed, and may begin to lose interest and concentration. To be meaningful, conversation has to be lively and participative.

The speaker should have a sense of time while discussing something even in less formal situations. In different business situations, the speaker should remember the purpose of communicating with the listener. The listener should never be made to feel like a passive, captive audience. Meetings should be interactive and should have controlled transitions from issue to issue. In one-to-one conversations/discussions, the desire should not be to monopolize the conversation. On the other hand, passive listening generates disinterest and boredom. In the case of lectures, seminars, and presentations, the audience can be saved from boredom and monotony by introducing humourous anecdotes or illustrative cases.

In one-to-one conversations/discussions, the desire should not be to monopolize conversation. On the other hand, passive listening generates disinterest and boredom.

Summarizing

In oral communication, especially conversation, it is necessary to convey an understanding of the other person's point. You may agree or disagree, but the first requirement of skillful communication is that the other person has the assurance that you have understood the facts as presented.

Before expressing an opinion or responding to others' opinions, you should be able to recognize, analyse, and evaluate what the other person has said. This will help you in comprehending facts in terms of their significance and importance for the other person. This understanding is a critical summary of the ideas expressed by the other person.

Before expressing an opinion or responding to others' opinions, you should be able to recognize, analyse, and evaluate what the other person has said.

Summarizing is the best form of expressing comprehension. It is not just the repetition of what someone has said. To summarize is to pick out the central thought—the main theme or the essential idea—at the core of the whole argument. It is a most difficult exercise to do successfully, and it needs a lot of practice.

In written communication, we have the full text before us and can re-read it when required. First, we try to understand what the document is about. Next, we re-read closely to understand the logical relationship between ideas. Finally, we can see the central idea to which all other ideas are related as cause, effect, or illustration. The summary is the statement of understanding of the central idea and its relationship with other ideas.

In oral communication, summarizing involves recognizing the leading cues and clues during the course of communication and making them the basis of a considered response after appreciating and understanding the underlying sentiments. It is a process of mental abstraction of the most central idea in the argument. Summarizing is, thus, of great value and is the skill most needed for negotiating or solving a problem.

We have frequent examples of crises faced by people when they are ordered to complete an assigned task within too short a period of time. The worker may feel that it is impossible to complete the given task by the deadline. They have to then convince their supervisor that the deadline is unrealistic. If the supervisor remains adamant and insists that in business orders and deadlines must be respected, the communication would end on a note of frustration. The supervisor would have failed to exercise conversation control in such a case.

All the skills of oral communication, whether they relate to the ability to speak personally, face-to-face, or at meetings, depend basically on the key skill of conversation control, which enables one to receive and understand the true meaning of the other person.

However, the situation would be different if the supervisor did understand the employee's point of view and attempted to understand his or her problems and constraints. This would allow the supervisor to motivate the employee by helping him or her express their concerns. This may also give the supervisor the chance to state why the deadline must be met. One way to sum up the conversation is by telling the employee that his or her personal conditions are understandable, but the project in question is a top priority. Thus, by recognizing, appreciating, and understanding the concerns of the employee, the supervisor could successfully summarize the problem and resolve it.

All the skills of oral communication, whether they relate to the ability to speak personally, face-to-face, or at meetings, depend basically on the key skill of conversation control, which enables one to receive and understand the true meaning of the other person.

5

Appreciate the role of the Transactional Analysis (TA) in interpersonal communication and resultant behaviour.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (TA)

Transactional analysis has of late become important for analysing, interpersonal communication and social behaviour. The tool of transactional analysis belongs to psychiatry. It was created by a Canadian psychiatrist Eric Berne Stein in 1950s. Berne relates interpersonal relationships and social behaviour of individuals to three ego states of the individuals involved in the act of communication. These three ego states are parent state, adult state, and child state. Berne believes that individuals act as victims of their dominant ego state present at the time of interaction. By investigating the interpersonal transactions, (communication) Berne seeks to help individuals to interact freely, and not act as victims of their ego states. They can contribute to pleasant, conflict-free social interactions when they are no more victims of unconscious, uncontrolled compulsions to exploit, that is to treat someone unfairly or be exploited.

Ego states are the states of mind. They direct and control psychic functioning and social behaviour of all human beings. According to Eric Berne, an ego state is "a coherent system of feelings", and "a set of coherent behaviour patterns." And in actual practice an ego state is "a system of feelings which motivates a related set of behaviour patterns." [4]

Psychological Characteristics of Ego States

- *The Parent:* The parent ego state is an exact copy of the body movements, facial expressions and emotional attitudes and social behaviour of parental figures. The parent figure represents authority, control, desire to direct and the sense of concern and anxiety. Parent uses the language of command.

- *The Adult:* The adult ego state is manifested by a sense of objectivity and understanding of the outside world of reality and awareness of the thoughts and feelings of other people. Objectivity sense and reality characterize the maturity of adults.
- *The Child:* The child ego states are reflected as revival of fixated ego states from earliest years of one's life. A child has its own organized view of the world and its own will and innocence.

The Three Aspects of Human Personality

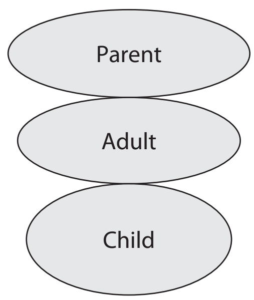
These above discussed ego states compose the personality of all human beings. According to Berne, these ego states are real and well organized patterns of feelings, attitudes, and behavioural patterns of actual child, adult, and parent (present in every individual).

They represent real people who live and interact with us in social organizations and at work places. These ego states are "phenomenological social realities." They constitute the three aspects of human personality.

The Structure of Human Personality

The three aspects of human personality are diagrammatically shown in Exhibit 4.4.

Exhibit 4.4
Human Personality



It is observed that the same individual speaks differently at different occasions while discussing about different things with different persons. As a therapist Eric Berne records one of his significant observations illustrative of the interplay of three ego states in an individual. He narrates the behaviour of Matthew, a new member in a group of well-educated psychos. "The group soon noticed that Matthew, a new member, exhibited three characteristic of ego states at the meetings. When he was discussing his wife, he spoke in loud deep, dogmatic tones, leaning back in his chair, with a stern gaze and counting off the accusations against her on his upraised fingers. At other times, he talked with another patient about carpentry problems in a manner of fact tone, leaning forward in a companionable way, on still other occasions, he taunted the other group members with a scornful smile about their apparent loyalty to the therapist, his head slightly bowed and his back ostentatiously turned towards the leader. The other patients correctly diagnosed these three ego states as parent, adult, and child respectively".[5]

How to Identify the Ego States of Interacting Individuals

We can identify each ego state by noticing the facial expressions, language, and behaviour of a person. These characteristics are usually as follows:

- *Parent:* The parent ego state is a replica of parent attitudes behaviours. It is manifested by the language marked by expressions such as it, this, never do this, always right, must, should, raised voice and dominating tone. It could also be characterized by words of anxiety, concern, fear and wishes for good luck in situations of threat to the other person if he or she happens to be emotionally close to the person.
- *Body movements:* Raised finger or pointing fingers, gestures like stern expression and rarely smiling, showing a sense of reserve and aloofness.
- *Eyes*: Usually looking at you.

All these are clues to the structured mental state of a person in the parent ego frame of mind.

- *Adult ego state:* It is reflected from the logical and self controlled language of the individual. The choice of words such as "possibly", "may be", "perhaps', "may", can indicate that the person is objective and realistic. There is a good scope for mutual understanding between both the persons.

Gestures are related movements of hands and eyes.

- *Child ego state:* This state is essentially characterized by the sulkiness of a child, impatience to get things done, and desire to be stroked through endearing behaviour of the other.

Need to identify the ego states of each other

By recognizing these ego states, we promote effective interpersonal communication and create properly structured relations.

Conflicts and misunderstanding arise between individuals in society and work organizations when they interact with cross mental states. In such situations of communication if one person's attitude is parent (ego state) and the other is an adult (ego state), the interaction is bound to be unpleasant. The parent will speak in an authoritative and domineering manner which would be resented to by the other person of adult mental state, who loves to be objective and mature in being aware of the psychological reality of the other person. Therefore, to improve our interpersonal transactions (communications) we should know the following transactional scheme.

In the act of communication, which is transaction between two persons, one speaks first and provides a stimulus from one of the three ego states, and the other responds from her/ his ego state as shown below. There are three schemes of transactions (communication)—complementary, crossed and ulterior.

Complementary Transaction

As shown in Exhibit 4.5, in this situation, stimulus and response lines are parallel. The transaction is harmonious. Both A and B speak from the same parent attitude and state of mind. For example:

A asks his wife: Where have I kept my glasses? I am sorry, not remember it.
B replies: Here they are. At our age, we just tend to forget.

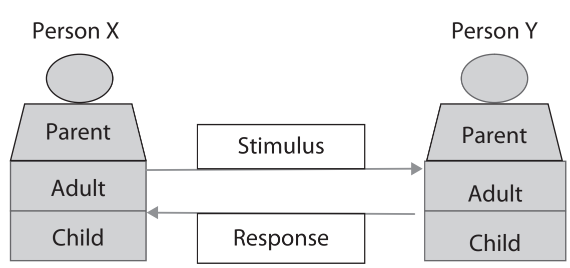
The question and response, both are direct; hence, no conflict.

Second example of direct complementary transaction is when two persons communicate with the parent and child attitudes. Let us remember that when we speak of an ego state, we talk about the attitude and the frame of mind of the speakers, and not their actual age or relationship. As shown in Exhibit 4.6, the transactional stimulus is parent to child (in terms of ego states and not of actual relationship).

X: "Never give up. It is Cowardice."

Y: "Yes, Sir. I will try."

Exhibit 4.5
Direct Transaction
Type 1



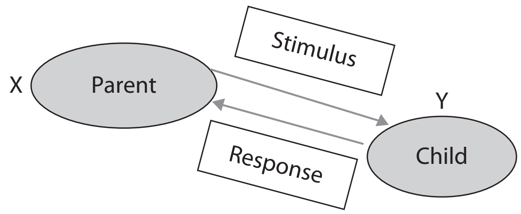


Exhibit 4.6
Direct/Complementary Transaction

Here, both the stimulus ego state and response state are of the complementary nature of parent and child. Therefore, the transaction is smooth and psychologically properly structured.

Crossed Ego State Transaction

But suppose in the same situation X patronisingly speaks to Y as parent and Y reacts as an adult, for example:

X says: "Never give up; it is Cowardice"

Y replies: "It is easy said than done".

Here X speaks as parent but Y treats him as adult and responds accordingly.

In this situation, the transaction is crossed. The two ego states, of the stimulus and response are not parallel. They cross each other; the transaction is not smooth. The communication may grow into a conflict between the two persons. This crossed ego states' scheme of transaction is diagrammatically shown in Exhibit 4.7.

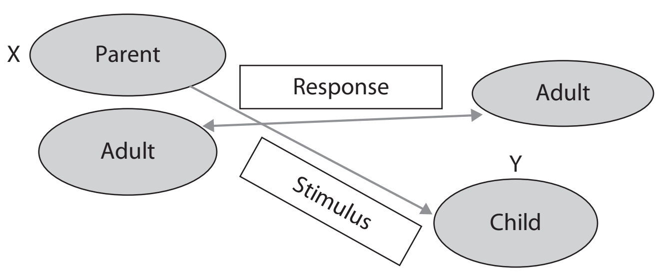


Exhibit 4.7
Crossed Ego State Transaction

The response represents adult state.

$$\text{From } A \rightarrow A$$

In this example X speaks with parents' feelings and attitude to encourage Y, treating him as a child but Y responds with the factual attitude of an adult who knows the difficulties of life and its challenges. Y responds with a sense of reality and objectivity. Therefore the stimulus and response cross each other. The transaction is therefore not well structured and would fail.

In life, this form of crossed transaction is the most common cause of bickering and misunderstanding in personal relationship between friends, couples, and other social and work situations. The stimulus from parent to child is not properly perceived by the receiver and is responded as one adult to another adult with a sense of resentment.

Ulterior Transactions

Ulterior transactions are "those which take place at two levels simultaneously. At the superficial social level they usually appear to be adult to adult while at the deeper psychological level they involve parent to child."[6]

Himstreet and Baty call it "Stroking" aspect of human communication. "Just as a baby requires coddling, patting, and loving (stroking); an adult requires communication. A simple "Good Morning is a stroke", the reply "Same to you" is another stroke".[7]

Himstreet and Baty point out the great psychological significance of this commonplace adult exchange of greetings between two persons. As transaction it may not seem very important, but imagine the feelings of two friends if they met and no exchange took place. "A pat on the back from the boss, a congratulating phone call, and taking the time to listen to another's problems are examples of everyday stroking that occur in business."[8]

"We all require stroking for our mental health, and attention to strokes can greatly improve communication and people's feelings about their work."[9]

6

Know how to control the direction of conversation in meetings, oral presentations, and negotiations, and how to influence or motivate the listener or audience.

APPLICATIONS OF CONVERSATION CONTROL

Conversation control is particularly applicable in certain business situations. Note that detailed discussions on interviews and negotiations are given in Chapters 18 and 17, respectively.

Meetings

One often hears the chairperson of a meeting saying, "We are drifting away from the point" or "Let us keep to our agenda". Sometimes at the end of a meeting, it seems that nothing has been gained and everyone's time has been wasted. Such feelings arise when there is no conversation control. According to Charles J. Margerison, "Conversation control is concerned with ensuring that people communicate clearly to resolve problems and make the best of opportunities."

The Agenda As a Control

For formal meetings, the first requirement is to prepare a complete agenda of the issues to be discussed in the order of the sequence of discussion. The agenda indicates which issues will be taken up when and how much time will be devoted to them. To enable attendees to understand the issues and present their viewpoints, it is desirable to circulate the necessary agenda in advance, so that participants can read the supporting papers before the meeting.

Agendas create the necessary framework for holding discussions. They also provide cues to keep the discussion to the point.

Agendas create the necessary framework for holding discussions. They also provide cues to keep the discussion to the point. A carefully prepared agenda is the first step to control the proceedings. The chairperson can always use it to draw the attention of speakers who drift from the relevant points.

An agenda also helps in fixing the duration of the meeting by allotting appropriate time for discussing each item at the outset. As a precaution, the agenda should include a provision for raising/discussing any other matter with the permission of the chair. The agenda is usually sent along with the notice/invitation for the meeting with the proposed date, place, and time.

The Chairperson

The chairperson should be able to control the direction of conversation by focusing on important issues and creating conditions for sequential, linked, and meaningful discussions aimed at finding solutions and not confrontations.

A meeting is chaired by a person whose role is to direct and conduct the proceedings in an orderly manner. During the meeting, the ruling of the chair is to be taken as the final word to be followed and respected by all those attending. The chairperson should be fully conversant with the rules of conducting meetings. He or she should know the rights and privileges of members, non-members, invitees, and observers at the meeting. He or she should also know the voting rights of members and also how voting is conducted, if required. Above all, the chairperson should be able to control the direction of conversation by focusing on important issues and creating conditions for sequential, linked, and meaningful discussions with the aim of finding solutions and not confrontations.

The chairperson begins the meeting on schedule and conducts business by first reading out the complete agenda or, in case of a long agenda, the first item on the agenda, which is invariably the confirmation of the minutes of the earlier meeting. If no objections are received, the minutes are taken as approved and are signed by the chairperson.

It is customary to assume that all papers have been read if they have been circulated among the members before the meeting. The meeting then takes up issues that require discussion. It is at this point that communication skills are required to make the discussion meaningful and controlled. During the meeting, members may enter into irrelevant conversations in which all kinds of non-issues or off-topic matters are raised. The discussion may degenerate into personal criticism too. Sometimes, objectivity may be lost, which can result in the meeting slipping into confusion and unproductive argument. This can be avoided by observing clues and cues and by exercising conversation control.

The chairperson has a significant role regulating the discussion by drawing attention to the main issue being discussed. He or she can summarize what is being said and then ask how it relates to the point under discussion. In a meeting, each person should follow the cues for the important topics being discussed.

The chairperson can also bring the discussion from the past to the present, by asking for the implications of all that has been said about the past in relation to the present situation. He or she should have the skill of changing the direction of conversation by providing transitions, such as from the past to the present and to the future or from problem-centered to solution-centered themes. Above all, the skills of avoiding parallel conversation, ensuring linked, sequential conversation, disagreeing without offending, and asserting without being aggressive are basic for the smooth conduct of business in a meeting.

> The skills of avoiding parallel conversation, ensuring linked, sequential conversation, disagreeing without offending, and asserting without being aggressive are basic for the smooth conduct of business in a meeting.

Being Assertive Without Being Aggressive

At the workplace, hierarchy may make some individuals submissive. Sometimes, asserting one's point of view runs the risk of being perceived as rude. In such a situation, the skills of assertive conversation become useful.

To be assertive is to be confident. An assertive person does not say "yes" when he or she means "no". Assertive individuals can say "no" in a positive and firm manner; being firm requires stating one's point of view clearly and without hesitation. This is the key to being assertive. It is important not to fumble or be indirect when conveying one's concerns.

An assertive and firm person should be able to analyse the situation as he or she sees it, and should indicate relevant concerns by drawing the attention of seniors to the consequences. Firm communication with seniors or supervisors compels them to evaluate their assumptions, even if there is to be no change in the line of action to be taken.

In business, you have to be assertive when you strongly believe that someone's course of action involves risk and danger and may have undesirable consequences that you might be held responsible for. In such situations, say what you must say.

Negative thinking results from a negative attitude or negative perception, which, at times, is part of a person's personality. Some persons always focus only on the dark side of a situation. They say things such as "This is impossible", "It is too difficult", or "This is useless".

> Negative thinking results from a negative attitude or negative perception, which, at times, is part of a person's personality.

When negative consequences are foreseen as a result of an expert's critical thinking, their assertion is valuable to discussion. Sometimes, even pointing out loopholes in assumptions is necessary. For example, take the case of the Bhopal gas tragedy that took place on 2 December 1984. The internal reports of the U.S.-based undertaking, Union Carbide, show that the officials were aware of the growing safety and maintenance problems since 1982 when management cut staff at the methyl isocyanate (MIC) facility from twelve to six operators and reduced the number of maintenance workers. Faulty safety devices remained unattended for weeks. In fact, a 1982 report by a group of Carbide's U.S. engineers had listed the problems, but the parent corporation made no effort to ask the Indian executives responsible for running the plant to correct them.

Obviously, the U.S. engineers failed to assert the need for safety. The Indian executives, also responsible for day-to-day operation of the plant, failed to point out the loopholes in the management's extensive cost-cutting plans. The management was attempting to reduce losses by cutting maintenance costs. The failure of engineers and executives to be assertive on the subject of safety measures led to one of the worst disasters of the twentieth century.

Controlled Response to Conversational Attacks

When an individual is charged with negative feelings, it is natural for him or her to attack and say unpleasant things. If the other person happens to be a client, customer, or supervisor, a controlled response is necessary because larger business interests and long-term personal career interests are at stake.

In such situations, it is best to answer emotion with cool facts and to try to change the direction of conversation if possible; strong, abusive language that will complicate the situation should be avoided. One way to respond is to listen thoughtfully to the other person so that they know that their words are being heard. When responding, speak in a level tone and avoid harsh, strong, or abusive words. Do not react emotionally because by being calm, understanding, and rational, one can draw the other person's attention to objective facts and focus on constructive solutions.

Remember that in business, rudeness and discourtesy should never be allowed to creep into your communication. Neither a client nor a supervisor should use rude words, whatever be the provocation; nor should you respond without courtesy. Conversation control teaches us self discipline. It trains us to convey to others that we really believe, understand, and appreciate their feelings, views, and grievances. Listen with full attention to grievances so that the other person feels that you are genuinely interested in his or her feelings. Conversation control will help manage situations of aggressive communication successfully.

Negotiating Through Conversation Control

The entire verbal exercise of give and take to reach a win–win end is skillfully managed by conversation control.

Negotiation is an important activity in communication and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 17. Effective negotiation requires the skills of managing and controlling the interaction between two sides. Both sides try to present a case tactfully and achieve their goals. The strategy of using conversation control for negotiation basically involves showing an understanding of the other party's position without necessarily agreeing with it. The entire verbal exercise of give and take to reach a win–win end is skillfully managed by conversation control.

SUMMARY

- Conversation is the lifeblood of social life. It creates a sense of togetherness. It is the primary form of face-to-face communication and is live, as it is done in person.
- The chief characteristics of good conversation are naturalness, simplicity, spontaneity, sensitivity, and responsiveness to the listener's reactions.
- Conversation shares elements of visual communication such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures.
- Effective conversation needs conversation control to make it a fruitful dialogue.
- Speakers skilled in conversation control are able to link their conversations by avoiding parallel conversation.
- Smooth transaction requires identification of the ego states of each other.

CASE: DISCUSSING VANDALISM

Meera was the group leader of a discussion that included Ritu, Amit, Chawla, Priti, Hema, and Reema. The group had been requested by the school board to make some recommendations on how vandalism could be reduced in their school. Here is a transcript of their discussion:

Meera: We're trying to formulate some recommendations on what can be done to help reduce vandalism in our school. So far, our group seems to have different opinions on whether vandalism is a serious enough problem that merits really strong action. Some of us feel the problem is large and growing. Others say that a few childish pranks have been exaggerated out of all proportion by the school board. Can we, as a group, reach some agreement on whether vandalism is really a serious problem?

Ritu: Frankly, I feel that any amount of vandalism is too much. Vandalism not only destroys school facilities and property, it also lowers the quality of our education. At the high school I attended last year, some students who were mad at the librarian set fire to the library. The entire senior class, who were working on their term papers for English, had to go across town to use the public library for the rest of the semester.

Amit: And if you've…

Chawla: Ritu's experience really opens my eyes about vandalism. I never thought of it that way before. We're losing out on educational resources, which will hurt us all in the long term.

Meera: Amit, were you going to say something?

Amit: I just wanted to add that this incident shows that vandalism has spread beyond the stage of childish pranks. There's big difference between soaping windows and burning libraries. The damage done to the library cost the school ₹1,000 per student. I'm sorry to say that vandalism has become a real economic problem in our school as well. In 2000, the cost to replace school property destroyed by students was ₹30,000.

Priti: You know, it really makes me sad to think about kids who are vandals. Psychologists say these kids cause all this destruction just to get some attention, even if it's negative.

Meera: You're right, Priti, it is sad but let's get back to our original question. Do the rest of you feel, then, that vandalism is a serious enough problem in our school to require serious action? Since no one seems to disagree, let's move on to consider what can be done to reduce vandalism. We might consider this question in two parts: what can the school board do about it and what can the students do about it? First, let's discuss what the school board can do.

Amit: I talked to the security officer in the neighbouring district, and she said security guards had been hired to patrol the schools with the highest vandalism rate in her district. What do the rest of you think of recommending this to our school board?

Meera: I've always hated the idea of guards patrolling the school! School should be a place to learn, not a prison!

Chawla: I don't like the idea of security guards either. Most of the students aren't vandals, and they are naturally going to resent being patrolled. Besides, having security guards during the day may not help the problem at all, since all the vandalism this year has occurred at night.

Amit: Chawla, you've always got something bad to say about every suggestion! All you ever do is criticize!

Meera: Wait a minute! I think Chawla has just contributed something really very constructive. He's reminded us that most vandalism occurs at night. Maybe the best action the school board could take would be to hire a security guard to patrol the school grounds at night.

Hema: That sounds like a good idea to me. Let's make it one of our recommendations.

Meera: Does everyone agree that asking the school board to hire a security guard to patrol the school grounds at night is a worthwhile recommendation? Since there's no disagreement, go ahead and add that to our list, Priti.

Priti: Okay, I have got it down.

Meera: Are there any more ideas about what the school board can do? Since there don't seem be any at the moment, let's move on. What ideas can we come up with for how the students can control vandalism in our school?

Chawla: One school solved its problems when the school board agreed to give the student council the money that had been budgeted for vandalism but ended up not being used because students found ways to reduce the damage done to the school.

Priti: That sounds like the students were holding up the board for protection money. It shouldn't be necessary to pay off students to get them to stop tearing apart their school.

Meera: Chawla, you say the students found ways to reduce the damage done to the school, but you don't say how. Who has some concrete ideas about what students can do to reduce vandalism?

Reema: I belong to the senior class service club, the Olympians. Our group could be divided into teams that could take turns monitoring the empty halls and classrooms during lunch. Even though we haven't had any daytime vandalism yet, this would be a good deterrent.

Priti: That's a great idea, Reema! And economical—the board will like that.

Hema: I'd like to expand on Reema's idea. If the Olympians patrol the grounds during school hours, there will be money for regular security guards from when school lets out at 3:00 until the time the night security comes in. We have had some vandalism during those hours.

Questions to Answer

1. How does Meera guide the group's conversation?
2. During the discussion, one of the group members becomes more concerned with expressing ideas about the causes of vandalism than with helping the group think of ways to control it. What does Meera do to get the group back on the right track?
3. Why is it important for the group leader to refrain from imposing his or her views on the group? Why do you suppose that in parliamentary procedure the chairperson is not allowed to participate in the discussion of a motion? Discuss why such requirements for group discussions in small and large groups are important for maintaining an atmosphere in which participants feel free to express themselves.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Explain the nature and purpose of "phatic communion". Describe an example of such a conversation in your personal life.
2. What is conversation control? Discuss with examples.
3. "A key conversation skill is to know the difference between opinion and fact and to use it to your advantage". Discuss.
4. Discuss the important characteristics of conversation as a spontaneous form of communication?
5. Discuss the structure of social conversation. Give some examples.
6. What is parallel conversation? Illustrate with an example you have encountered.
7. What is "one-upmanship" in conversation?
8. Explain and contrast the nature of the binary and multi-valued approaches to conversation.
9. What are keywords in the context of conversation control?
10. What are the benefits of identifying the ego states of the interacting persons?

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What is the role of conversation in our business and personal lives?
2. How important is informality in conversations?
3. According to Hayakawa, "The togetherness is not merely in the talking itself, but in the opinions expressed." Do you agree with this assessment?
4. As rational human beings, what should be our attitude towards others' opinions and beliefs?
5. Reflect on the difference between rejection and agreement in conversation. How would you behave if your suggestion as a manager is turned down by the vice-president of your company in a high-level meeting?
6. Reflect on the importance of noticing clues and cues in negotiations.
7. Do you believe one can be assertive without being aggressive at the workplace? Give reasons for your answers.
8. "We all require stroking for our mental health." Do you agree?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Analyse the following conversation[10] with respect to the psychological structure of conversation and the element of empathy.

> "We have two weeks before we leave," I said. "They have agreed to let us stay till then."
>
> "You think that is good of them?" Selvan said, his voice hard and sharp like crystals. He lifted his eyes to mine. I saw they were black and smouldering, as if some deep flame of anger or hatred burned in him. Nathan replied for me.

"It is better than being sent out at once as others have been."

Selvan turned on his father.

"You have accepted it? You have made no protest?"

"What options have I, my son! Naturally, I have protested but it has availed me nothing."

"It is not just," Selvan said. "It is not right."

"Yet there is no law against it," said Nathan wearily. "We may grieve, but there is no redress."

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. Conversation, in general, differs from other forms of oral communication with respect to its:
   (a) structure
   (b) informality
   (c) purpose
   (d) technique
2. Social conversation is also known as:
   (a) gossip
   (b) idle talk
   (c) chit-chat
   (d) meaningless communication
3. Phatic communication uses words to express and share:
   (a) togetherness
   (b) meaning
   (c) beliefs
   (d) fear
4. The structure of social conversation is basically:
   (a) psychological
   (b) emotional
   (c) logical
   (d) moral
5. The underlying assumption of binary communication is that reality is:
   (a) multi-valued
   (b) black and white
   (c) personal
   (d) based on self-assertion
6. A conversation is successful when its direction is:
   (a) divergent
   (b) parallel
   (c) sequential
   (d) opposite
7. Our endeavour in effective business conversation should be to arrive at:
   (a) consideration (b) agreement
   (c) commitment (d) acceptance
8. At the workplace, to be a successful conversationalist, you should be:
   (a) submissive (b) aggressive
   (c) rude (d) assertive
9. An emotional outburst should be answered with:
   (a) facts
   (b) strong language
   (c) tolerance
   (d) humour
10. Conversation control means that, through practice, you can control the conversation of:
    (a) someone else (b) your own self
    (c) the whole group (d) your opponent
11. A "cue" is a key word or phrase used by a person to:
    (a) show that what is said is not important
    (b) hide his or her real intentions
    (c) mislead the listener
    (d) indicate to the listener that something is important for the speaker
12. Summarizing given facts is an act of:
    (a) comprehension (b) repetition
    (c) shortening (d) hiding
13. To be assertive is to be:
    (a) firm (b) loud
    (c) indirect (d) aggressive
14. Conversation control teaches us:
    (a) self-control as speakers
    (b) control of listeners' responses
    (c) how to prevent others from speaking
    (d) the use of strong, authoritative language
15. Complementary transaction takes place when the stimulus and response lines are:
    (a) cross each other
    (b) run parallel to each other
    (c) part from each other
    (d) stand vertical to each other

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

ENDNOTES

1. S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), 72.
2. As cited by S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), 69.
3. Charles Margerison, *The Art of Effective Communication* (New Delhi: Excel Books, 1996).
4. Eric Berne, "Principles of Transactional Analysis", *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 1996. 38 (3), 154–159 (First published in *Indian Jounal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 1, 1959).
5. Ibid., p. 155.
6. Ibid., p. 157.
7. William C. Himstreet and Wayne Murlion Baty, *Business Communication*, Fifth Edition. (Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc., Belmont, California, 1977), p. 13.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Kamala Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve* (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1955) 136.

5

Listening Skills

"Are you listening?"

— R.G. Nichols and L. A. Stevens

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand how listening is an essential component of communication and management.
2. Know the internal and external causes of poor listening.
3. Know some guidelines for improving listening skills.
4. Understand how to craft reflective and clarifying responses that demonstrate good listening skills.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Picture yourself teaching a class on business research methods—not an equally interesting subject for all students. During the course of the lecture, you see that a girl in the last row is busy writing in her notebook, not even once looking towards you. Next to the wall, a student is reading silently from a book. In the middle row, a half-asleep boy struggles to keep his eyes open. Only in the front two rows do you find students paying attention to what you have been discussing. They have been looking towards you and have been also taking notes from time to time.

You have explained the causal relationship between two variables, A and B. You have given a few examples of this relationship from actual life. Now, to ascertain how much of what you have been discussing has been followed by the class, you ask some students about the causal relationship between variables A and B. The last-row girl, the silent reader, and the dozing boy have no idea what your question is about. The front row students are ready with answers and answer you correctly.

Why is this so? They all have attended the same lecture. You were loud enough to reach everyone, clear enough to be understood, and logically ordered in your discourse. Then how did some students miss your point so completely? It seems as if they were not even present in the lecture.

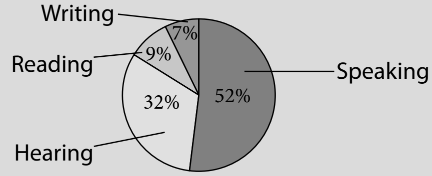
The fact is that those who failed to answer you heard you, but did not listen to your exposition of the variables and their relationships. They heard you, for they could not fail to hear you. They were not deaf. But their minds did not absorb what you said.

WHAT IS LISTENING?

To listen is to pay thoughtful attention to what someone is saying. It is a deliberate act of attentively hearing a person speak. It is the mental process of paying undivided attention to what is heard. Listening is more than hearing, which is just the physical act of senses receiving sounds. Hearing involves the ears, but listening involves the ears, eyes, heart, and mind. It is rightly said that listening is an essential component of communication. Without this element, fruitful communication is not possible. Listening occurs when the receiver of the message wishes to learn, or be influence or changed by the message. When someone is interested in actively hearing, they are listening. Exhibit 5.1 shows the importance of listening in our daily lives.

Exhibit 5.1
The Importance of Listening

Studies conducted since the 1930s reveal that 70 per cent of our waking time goes into communication. The pie chart below illustrates the activities that take up various portions of this 70 per cent:



Note that this break-up reflects the norms. The figures would differ from group to group. For example, for a group of young students, "speaking" would be lower than "hearing" (or listening), and their "reading" and "writing" figures will also be higher. For a group of teachers, "speaking" would be high.

Listening is more than hearing, which is just the physical act of our senses receiving sounds. Hearing involves our ears, but listening involves our ears, eyes, heart, and mind.

How Do We Listen?

Listening is not passive. It is a deliberate act of concentrating on sound waves that the auditory nerve sends to the brain. As a first step in the listening process, the listener focuses his or her attention on what is essential in the communication. At the same time, he or she tries to understand, interpret, and register what is received. It is not easy to pay undivided attention to a speaker, and without giving proper attention to developing listening skills, many people remain poor listeners.

An Indian saying draws attention to the natural fact that we have two ears but one tongue. Hence, we should listen twice as much as we speak.

Listening, like speaking, reading, and writing, is a skill that can be dramatically improved through training. In this chapter therefore, we will discuss some basic things about listening such as the complete process from hearing to conceptualizing, causes for poor listening, and some techniques of improving listening as a voluntary behaviour.

1

Understand how listening is an essential component of communication and management.

Listening As a Management Tool

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines listening "considering what someone says and accepting their advice". In this sense, far-sighted business heads and senior executives use careful listening to benefit from the valuable views, perceptions, and experiences of junior and middle level workers of the company. They often owe many an initiative or cost-cutting measure to suggestions given by juniors in informal sessions. By listening to what others say about a specific situation, that is by considering and accepting the advice of others, the company succeeds in taking the best possible decision and effectively implementing it.

An example of successful "Management by Listening" is the case of Maruti Udyog, which has flourished using former Managing Director Jagdish Khattar's innovative methods of seeking suggestions from employees.[1] Maruti's decision to showcase a concept car at Delhi's annual Auto Expo was born out of an event called "Tea with the MD". Almost every fortnight, Khattar used to get together with a group of young Maruti engineers and managers in an informal meeting that encouraged them to articulate their ideas for the company's growth. Khattar's purpose was to elicit valuable suggestions for Maruti's growth by holding informal tea-sessions with his engineers and managers or by walking around at dealers' conventions, urging his dealers to make suggestions for improving sales and distribution. This was how he hit upon a formula that saved the company nearly INR 4 million.

Realizing that dealers hesitated to express themselves in an open forum, Khattar urged each of them to put down three of their suggestions on a piece of paper. He said, "On the five-hour flight back from Bangkok to Delhi, I went through each and every sheet.

Our dealers had made several suggestions on how we could de-bottleneck distribution. I realized that increasing the sales force and opening small dealership extensions in rural and semi-urban areas could easily cut down on investments."

Khattar would routinely talk with and listen to youngsters before walking into his office. His example demonstrates how providing opportunities to others to express valuable suggestions holds the key to the successful management of problems.

THE PROCESS OF LISTENING

Listening is an integrated process, which consists of the following phases: undivided attention, hearing, understanding, interpreting, evaluating, empathizing and conceptualizing.

An explanation of these aspects of the process of listening would be helpful before proceeding. These phases do not occur in succession, but instead operate concurrently and in tandem. All aspects of oral verbal communication require one to focus on what is being said, understand it, and register it as part of one's body of knowledge and experience.

- *Undivided attention:* Effective listening requires a certain frame of mind. The process of listening is rooted in attentively hearing the message. Undivided attention admits no distractions and no intrusive thoughts or ideas that are unrelated to the message. To concentrate on what is being said, an earnest listener would focus on the message and not let other things compete for his or her attention. The listener in this phase discriminates between thoughts, ideas, or images that belong in his or her focus of attention and those that float on its margin and must be kept from entering into conscious consideration.
- *Hearing:* Listening involves hearing distinct sounds and perceiving fine modulations in tone. The receiver recognizes the shape of words and intonation patterns. Familiarity with the sound of words and the spoken rhythm of speech contributes to the attentiveness of the listener. Pitch, voice modulations, and the quality of sound are equally important for hearing with the right attention.
- *Understanding:* A listener can hear words but must listen to know their intended meaning. Perfect communication is when the full meaning of what is said has been understood. This includes words, tone, and body talk. A good listener hears words, observes body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and eye movements, and notices variations in tone and pitch of voice. If the listener attends only to words without paying close attention to how they are said, he or she may be missing the real, intended meaning of those words.
- *Interpreting:* Understanding and interpretation follow the phase of hearing. The listener attempts to comprehend what is heard. Understanding the language may not be enough for fully comprehending the message and successfully participating in the act of communication. It should be accompanied by the ability to interpret what is communicated, which occurs when the listener takes account of his or her own knowledge and experience.
- *Evaluating:* Communication requires that the listener have the critical ability to see for himself or herself the value of what is being discussed or heard. It is only then that the listener can closely follow the argument. The evaluation of content is closely related to the listener's own interest in what is being communicated.
- *Empathizing:* A sympathetic listener sees the speaker's point of view. He or she may not agree with what is said, yet such a listener allows the other person to say what he or she wants to say.

- *Conceptualizing:* Conceptualization occurs when the listener finally assimilates what has been heard in the context of his or her own knowledge and experiences. This is why listening is not only important but also indispensable for perfect communication.

2

Know the internal and external causes of poor listening.

FACTORS THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT LISTENING

Listening is a voluntary behaviour that can be easily affected by internal or external factors that can act as barriers to good listening.

Lack of Concentration

Many times listeners are not able to concentrate on what is being heard. There may be several reasons for this. There could be external factors responsible for the inability to listen properly. For example, there may be noise inside the room or loud music being played nearby. This external noise can be shut off in several ways. But the internal factors within the listener's mind that interference with concentration are more serious and difficult to avoid or manage. These can be overcome through practice once the listener is made aware that they are problematic.

Reasons for not concentrating include:

- *Hearing faster than speaking:* Humans normally talk at nearly 120 to 125 words per minute, but the brain is capable of receiving 500 to 600 words per minute. The listener's brain, therefore, must deal with gaps between words, and this gap tends to be filled by other thoughts and images. This phenomenon interferes with concentration. For example, some political leaders or religious preachers deliver t heir speeches with prolonged pauses every few words or sentences. They may be using the pauses as a rhetorical device to emphasize their point. However, these pauses may instead break the listener's attentiveness by letting him or her mentally wander away from the topic to thoughts about the speaker's fluency or halting speech, or altogether unrelated issues such as what he or she ate for breakfast. In such situations, there may not be much a listener can do to remain attentive. However, if he or she keeps looking at the speaker with steadfast eyes, the mind's tendency to wander could be significantly controlled.
- *Paying attention to the speaker and not the speech:* Many times listeners fail to listen properly because they are distracted by the speaker's face or dress or manner of delivery, just as if a dancer is very beautiful, we may be distracted by his or her beauty and miss the beauty of the dance. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the speech and its contents rather than focus on external factors that are not relevant.
- *Listening too closely:* The purpose of listening is to get the full meaning of what is said. The speaker's point is understood by looking for the central idea underlying individual words and non-verbal signs and signals. So when the listener tries not to miss a single word or detail of what the speaker is saying, he or she may get lost in the details and may miss the point.

Unequal Statuses

In organizations, there are formal and informal status levels that affect the effectiveness of face-to-face oral communication. A subordinate would generally listen more and speak less while interacting with his or her superior. The exchange of ideas is blocked by diffidence on the part of the subordinate because of the superior position of the speaker. Upward oral communication is not very frequent in organizations. Fear of the speaker's superior status prevents free upward flow of information. This limits free and fair exchange of ideas.

The Halo Effect

The awe in which a speaker is held by the listener affects the act of listening. If the speaker is greatly trusted and held in high esteem as an honest person, his or her statements are readily taken as true. Oral communication is thus conditioned by the impressions of the listener about the eminence of the speaker. The listener's impressions and not the intrinsic worth of the message determine the effectiveness of such communication. For instance, due to the halo effect, buyers may go by a trusted seller's view rather than by their own judgment of a product's quality.

> Oral communication is conditioned by the impressions of the listener about the eminence of the speaker. The listener's impressions and not the intrinsic worth of the message determine the effectiveness of such communication.

Complexes

Lack of confidence or a sense of superiority may prevent proper interaction between persons in different positions. Sometimes an individual may suffer from a sense of inferiority and therefore fail to take the initiative or involve himself or herself in conversation, dialogue, or other forms of oral communication. Similarly, some persons consider themselves too important to condescend to talk with others. Often, these are misplaced notions of self-worth, but they do block oral communication.

A Closed Mind

Listening, to a large extent, depends on one's curiosity to know things. Some individuals believe that they know everything in a field or subject. Their minds refuse to receive information from other sources. In addition, some persons feel too satisfied with their way of doing things to change or even discuss new ideas. A closed state of mind acts as a barrier to oral communication, which demands a readiness and willingness on the part of the listener to enter into dialogue.

> Listening, to a large extent, depends on one's curiosity to know things.

Poor Retention

In dialogue or two-way oral communication, a logical sequence of thoughts is essential for successful communication. To speak coherently and comprehend completely, one has to understand the sequence of ideas. The structure of thoughts must be received and retained by the listener to understand arguments. The cues that signal the transition from one set of ideas to another must be retained by the listener to be able to grasp the full sense of the message. In case of poor retention, the listener fails to relate what he or she hears with what he or she had heard earlier. Moreover, if the listener fails to remember previous discussions, the whole conversation is likely to be lost in the absence of any written record.

> The cues that signal the transition from one set of ideas to another must be retained by the listener to be able to grasp the full sense of the message. In case of poor retention, the listener fails to relate what he or he hears with what he or she had heard earlier.

Premature Evaluation and Hurried Conclusions

Listening patiently until the speaker completes his or her argument is necessary for correct interpretation of an oral message. The listener can distort the intended meaning by pre-judging the intentions of the speaker, inferring the final meaning of the message, or giving a different twist to the argument according to his or her own assumptions or by just picking out a few select shreds of information. These mental processes may act as a block to listening, affecting accurate exchange of information.

Abstracting

Abstracting is the mental process of evaluating thoughts in terms of the relative importance of ideas in the context of the total message. This is possible only by listening to the whole message. Abstracting acts as a barrier when a listener approaches a message from a particular point of view and focuses his or her attention on selected aspects of the conversation. This acts as a barrier to a full understanding of whatever is exchanged between two persons.

Slant

Slant is the biased presentation of a matter by the speaker. Instead of straight and honest communication, the speaker may adopt an oblique manner that could verge on telling a lie. When a matter is expressed with a particular slant, important aspects of the message are suppressed, left out, or only indirectly hinted at. Well-informed listeners usually do suspect the cover-up/slant. But uninformed listeners may accept the slanted message.

Cognitive Dissonance

At times listeners fail to accept or respond to assumptions deriving from new information as they may be unprepared to change the basis of their beliefs and knowledge. In such a discrepancy between a listener's existing assumptions and the position communicated by the speaker, some listeners try to escape from the dissonance by reinterpreting, restructuring, or mentally ignoring the oral interchange. Cognitive dissonance interferes with the acceptance of new information. It may also lead to several interpretations of a new message or view. In the absence of cognitive dissonance, a listener has the skill, ability, and flexibility of rational thinking, promoting effective oral communication. For business executives, the skill to move from one mental frame to another is essential for efficient oral exchange of ideas, beliefs, and feelings.

> Cognitive dissonance interferes with the acceptance of new information.

Language Barrier

The language of communication should be shared by the speaker and the listener. In business, English is widely used in most parts of the world. The ability to converse in English is essential for executives in a multi-lingual country like India. English is now the global medium for conducting business, and the lack of knowledge and practice of spoken English acts as a barrier to verbal communication.

The listener should also be familiar with the accent of the language in use, as a new accent can often be difficult to follow for those unfamiliar with it. For instance, in India, even those who speak English fluently need special training to work in call centres so that they can understand what overseas callers say over the phone. Workers involved in outsourced businesses tend to overcome their initial language barrier.

The effects of most of these barriers that interfere with the proper response to oral messages can be reduced or even removed through effective listening. In order to develop good listening skills, we must first identify and understand the characteristics of effective listening.

Besides the barriers in listening discussed in this section, there may be other factors that affect listening, as shown in Exhibit 5.2. For instance, many studies show that men listen mostly with the left side of the brain while women tend to use both sides. Further, studies also suggest that left-handed people may use a part of the brain to process language that differs from their right-handed counterparts. Such differences in brain dominance and lateralization could affect listening, either positively or negatively.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE AND INEFFECTIVE LISTENERS

To improve our listening skills, we must know the characteristics of effective as well as ineffective listeners and identify our own weaknesses as listeners. Exhibit 5.3 contrasts the characteristics of effective and ineffective listeners.

Good listeners try to encourage the speaker by their body language and expression. They indicate interest and understanding regarding the subject of discussion. Poor listeners, on the other hand, annoy and disturb the speaker. They may have the habit of interrupting or showing little interest in what is being discussed. Unnecessary interjections such as "yes", "but", and "ifs" should be avoided when they disturb the speaker.

After knowing how effective and ineffective listeners differ in their listening behaviour, try to recognize your own behaviour and attitude.

Exhibit 5.2
Differences in the Listening Process

Left-sided Listening in Men

Our brains are divided into four parts, and each part performs different functions and has different abilities. The *right frontal* part is best at creative tasks and ideas; the *right basal* part is responsible for feelings, intuition, compassion and interest for others. Logic and reasoning are governed by the *left frontal* part, which is responsible for abilities such as problem solving, strategic vision, leadership, and decision-making skills. The *left basal* part is best at organizing the world; sorting, arranging and filing; and keeping order and maintaining routine.

Each of us possesses the abilities governed by the four parts of the brain to some extent, but there are differences in *how much* we use each part. About 95 percent of us use some part of the brain more than others (only 5 percent of us use all the parts equally). Studies show that men tend to use more of the left part of their brain while women usually use more of the right.

Studies also suggest differences in listening in men and women. According to some research studies, men listen with only one side of their brains while women use both. Researchers have compared the brain scans of men and women and found that men mostly use the left side of their brains, the part long believed to control listening and understanding.

The question is: which is normal? Maybe the normal for men is different from the normal for women. Could this be the reason why men don't like to listen to what doesn't interest them, and listen repeatedly to something they like?

Listening in Left-handed People

Right-handed people are many more in number than left-handed people on earth. But, when it comes to processing language, a higher proportion of left-handed people process language effectively, as compared to right-handed people.

Normally, people use both sides of the brain to process language. The dominant hemisphere deals with articulation and calculation, and the non-dominant part is used for abstract thinking. According to the findings of the American Academy of Neurology in Philadelphia, the United States, left-handed people may use a (dominant) part of the brain to process language which differs from their right-handed counterparts. As a result, left-handed people could have different types of intelligence. For example, a person could be the CEO of an organization and yet not have good road sense.

Sources: Information from "Men Do Hear—But Differently Than Women, Brain Images Show," *ScienceDaily*, 29 November 2000, http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2000/11/001129075326.htm, accessed October 2010; and Steve Smith (ed.), "Be Your Best! Readymade Tools for Personal Development", 1st South Asian edition (Cogan-Page India Ltd, 1999).

Exhibit 5.3
Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective Listeners

Effective Listeners	*Ineffective Listeners*
Do not interrupt	Take a "Yes, but…" approach
Remain patient	Do not give their full attention to the speaker
Make eye contact	Look away from the speaker
Show interest	Display impatience to talk
Look attentive	Are very critical
Concentrate	Have poor concentration
Ask open questions	Are over-talkative

3

Know some guidelines for improving listening skills.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS

Effective communication is associated with the power of speaking well, but without good listening, successful communication is not possible. The spoken word fulfils its purpose only when it is carefully heard, understood, interpreted, and registered in the listener's memory.

The effectiveness of communication is the function of both effective speaking and effective listening. To communicate successfully, the speaker's words should be well articulated and, at the same time, they must be well received. The guidelines given here should be helpful in improving one's listening skills.

When two people are talking simultaneously, neither can listen to the other. To have a successful dialogue, it is necessary that when one person wants to speak, the other person keeps quiet and listens. No one can talk and listen at the same time. In classrooms, it is common for teachers to ask students to stop talking to ensure that they are able to listen to the lecture. Similarly, the teacher stops talking when a student wants to say something.

1. *Speak less, listen more:* The purpose of listening is to know what the speaker wants to say or to learn from the speaker. Listening is an act of cooperation in the sense that it takes advantage of others' knowledge and experience. Therefore, devoting time to listening rather than speaking is in our self-interest.
2. *Do not be a sponge:* It is not necessary to concentrate on every word of the speaker's. Instead, it is more important to get the main point, theme, or central idea and concentrate on it. Minor details are not as important.
3. *Observe body language:* Effective listeners do not pay attention only to what is being said, but also notice how it is said. They observe the feelings, attitudes, and emotional reactions of the speaker based on his or her body language.
4. *Focus on the speaker:* Facing the speaker and making eye contact make the speaker feel that the listener is interested in what he or she is saying.
5. *Separate the ideas from the speaker:* Good listeners do not allow themselves to be overly awed by the speaker's status, fame, charm, or other physical and personal attributes. They separate the person from his or her ideas. Effective communicators are not conditioned by their personal impressions and prejudices, but are able to focus on the content of what is being spoken.
6. *Listen for what is left unsaid:* Careful attention to what is not said, in addition to what is said, can tell the listener a lot about the speaker's feelings and attitude towards the subject of discussion.
7. *Avoid becoming emotional:* Good listeners remain calm and do not become emotionally charged or excited by the speaker's words. Becoming too angry or excited makes it difficult for the listener to respond or express himself or herself objectively and rationally.
8. *Do not jump to hasty conclusions:* Listeners should allow the speaker to conclude his or her point. Only then should they try to interpret and respond to it. Hasty inferences may not represent what the speaker intended to communicate.
9. *Empathize with the speaker:* Effective listeners keep in mind the speaker's point of view by focusing on the big picture, background constraints/limitations, and special needs and the emotional state of the speaker.
10. *Respect the speaker as a person:* It is important to listen with respect for the other person. Do not allow the speaker to feel hurt, ignored, or insulted.

Step1: *Keep quiet*—as much as possible.

Step 2: *Don't lead*—unless you want to hear the opposite of what is being said.

Step 3: *Don't react defensively*—if what you hear bothers you.

Step 4: *Avoid clichés*—to make meaningful statements.

Step 5: *Remain neutral*—no matter what you think of others.

Step 6: *Resist giving advice*—until asked for directly.

Source: Based on Michael Purdy and Deborah Borisoff (eds), *Listening in Everyday Life: A personal and Professional Approach* (University Press of America, 1997).

Exhibit 5.4
Effective Listening—Six Steps Away

There may be nothing new in these guidelines. However, a reminder of the ways of improving listening, as illustrated in Exhibit 5.4, can be of great value for improving the effectiveness of communication.

RESPONSIVE LISTENING

4

Understand how to craft reflective and clarifying responses that demonstrate good listening skills.

Distortions in communication take place because of the nature of its three elements: the sender, the receiver, and the message. In earlier chapters, we have seen how messages get filtered and mixed with the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of both the sender and the receiver. Moreover, the message itself is subject to distortions resulting from the limitations of language as an adequate vehicle for communication.

Lynette Long, in her book *Listening/Responding: Human Relations Training for Teachers*[2], questions the possibility of appropriate communication between the speaker and listener. She defines the communication process as one in which:

1. What the speaker feels and what s/he means to say are not the same,
2. What s/he means to say and what she/he actually says are different, and
3. What s/he says and what the listener hears are also different. It's a wonder, then, that what the speaker thinks is ever what the listener hears.[3]

However, Long suggests a course of training to enable a listener to respond to what the speaker thinks and not what the listener hears.

In light of their value for teachers, managers, and interpersonal communicators, Long's two basic concepts of responses, *basic reflective response* and *basic clarification response*, are briefly discussed here.

Basic Reflective Response

Listening should be facilitative. The speaker should feel encouraged to speak out.

Listening should be facilitative. The speaker should feel encouraged to speak out. He or she should feel that he or she has been heard and rightly understood. According to Long, the easiest way to show facilitative listening is reflection, "which requires that the listener accurately paraphrase the essence of the speaker's message. This paraphrasing lets the speaker know that you have accurately heard him/her." A reflective response should not, however, have any new information based on the listener's own thoughts or views.

As an example of a reflective response, consider the following example in which Manisha accurately paraphrases Abhinav's thought:

> Abhinav: I'm feeling so stupid. I expected it to be a most entertaining movie. The way you described it, I thought it would be a fun. But the whole thing makes no sense. Like most Indian movies, it's just so lousy.
>
> Manisha: The movie does not meet the expectations I had raised on the day of its release.

Manisha's response rephrases the essential disappointment Abhinav expresses about the movie, and thus it makes him feel that he has been correctly heard and understood by her.

But suppose, Manisha responded as follows:

> "Yes, most Indian movies turn out to be boring".

Abhinav would have felt that Manisha missed what he wanted to convey—his disappointment. He was led to believe the movie was highly entertaining, but it turned out to be quite boring.

In crafting a reflective response, the listener responds only to what is presented by the speaker. For example, if only feelings are presented, the listener must respond to those feelings; if a cognitive matter is presented, he or she must respond to those components of the thought alone. The listener just repeats (mirrors/reflects) what the speaker communicates. He or she adds no new material while responding reflectively.

A message can have three component elements. The first is the experiential component, which answers the question, "What happened?" The second is the cognitive component, describing what the speaker thinks about what happened. These two components form the content of the message. The third component is the affective element of the message, which reveals how the speaker feels about what happened—this is more emotional than analytical. Most messages contain at least two of these three components. The listener must identify experiential, cognitive, and affective components and then decide which of these components to respond to. He or she also has to decide whether to respond with reflection or with some other listening technique.

As an example, let us break the following statement into its three component parts.

> Ankit: Sometimes only luck saves us. Today, while driving to my office, I happened to get delayed, and, therefore, I reached the office parking lot just after the blast.

1. *The experiential component:* What happened? While driving to his office, Ankit happened to get delayed and reached the parking place after the blast.
2. *Cognitive component:* What is Ankit's cognitive reaction to this happening? He explains what happened by attributing it to luck ("Sometimes, only luck saves us.").
3. *Affective component:* How does Ankit feel about what happened? No feelings are explicitly expressed in his statement, but it is implied that Ankit feels lucky to have been delayed while driving to this office.

Here, I may point out that many of you may not agree with Ankit's sentiment "sometimes, only luck saves us". It is indeed hard to differentiate between thoughts and feelings. Many times, we use the expression "I feel" to convey what we think about someone. For example, we might say "I feel he is a good person". In fact, this is a thought, not a feeling that we are talking about.

We can now see that the listener should respond to all the components of the message: the experiential, the cognitive, and the affective. Of course, all the three parts may not always be present in a message. But whenever the affective component is present, the listener must respond reflectively to it because this part communicates the speaker's feelings and is therefore most important from the speaker's point of view.

Now, assuming yourself to be a listener, analyse the following conversation and try to respond reflectively to the speaker's message.

> Abhishekh: I mostly go out for an evening walk with Juhi, but this evening when I reached her house, she had already left. She knew that I was on my way to her place. She is really so inconsiderate.

To respond to Abhishekh, first break the statement into the following three components:

1. What happened to Abhishekh?
2. What does Abhishekh think about what happened?
3. How does Abhishekh feel about what happened?

In your response, you may repeat the gist of the event, but you should reflect on the affective part by restating it completely. You can therefore respond by saying: "You were delayed on your way to her place, but Juhi should have waited for you." Another possible response is: "You were late. But Juhi's going out without you must really be so irritating".

Basic Clarification Response

A clarifying response is more refined than a reflective response. The clarifying listener tries to understand the thoughts and feelings of the speaker by placing/projecting himself or herself in the speaker's situation. Such a listener "assumes the internal frame of reference of the speaker" according to Long. It is important to note that clarifying listeners do not identify their own experiences with the speaker's. Instead, they focus and elaborate on the speaker's thoughts and feelings.

The clarifying listener tries to understand the thoughts and feelings of the speaker by placing/projecting himself or herself in the speaker's situation. Such a listener "assumes the internal frame of reference of the speaker".

The reflective listener repeats the content of the message, whereas the clarifying listener "amplifies the stimulus statement" by elaborating on the unstated thoughts and feelings underlying the speaker's expression. Both what is said as well as what is left unsaid (but is implied by non-verbal body language) are together analysed to understand the finer workings of the speaker's mind.

According to Long, clarifying listeners integrate verbal and non-verbal messages to gain a full understanding of the message and bring into focus and "attend to details of the communication that might otherwise go unnoticed." In clarifying what the speaker has told them, they expand on both the feeling and content expressed by the speaker. Many times speakers may not be aware of the full meaning of their statements. Clarifying listeners help speakers better understand themselves.

A clarifying response responds to what is not said as well as what is said. Clarifying listeners amplify and elaborate on the comments of the speaker. They add deeper feeling and meaning to the expressions of the speaker by responding to his or her underlying thoughts and feelings.

Some of the words in this elaboration may need to be explained. Let us see how *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines these terms. Amplify means "to explain something that you have said by giving more information about it". Elaborate means "to give more details or new information about something". Clarify means "to make something clearer or easier to understand."

Difference Between Clarifying Listeners and Interpretative Listeners

The focus of clarification is on the speaker. The listener is engaged in interpreting the speaker's feelings and thoughts, which may remain incomplete or unexpressed. It should be noted that the clarifying listener adds no new information to the speaker's statement. The listener's comments expand—but do not interpret—what has been said. Clarification is done in terms of the speaker's thoughts and feelings. It starts by referring to the speaker. For example, it could begin with phrases such as "It seems you…" or "Perhaps you feel…". The exercise of clarification is done with the purpose of helping the speaker understand his or her own feelings more fully.

According to Long, an interpretative listener on the other hand adds "new content and feelings to the expressions of the speaker—content and feelings that are not contained in the previous expressions of the speaker but are based on the listener's projections concerning the speaker as a person"[4]. Interpretations are based on the listener's knowledge of the speaker, on the ways human beings act in similar situations, or on the listener's personal biases and opinions, with which the speaker may or may not agree. Incorrect interpretation shows lack of understanding on the part of the listener. To be helpful as a listener, one should first listen to what is said and not ask why it is said. The listener should develop the ability to clarify rather than interpret what others say to be able to respond successfully.

Consider the following example:

> Divya: I do not like oral reports. May I submit a written report, instead?
>
> Mr Chakrapani: I know speaking before the whole class is difficult. You feel nervous. It seems everyone is looking at you and you become self-conscious.

Mr Chakrapani responds to Divya in a clarifying way. He focuses on her and her feelings. He gives his response in terms of Divya. He projects himself in the situation and feels what she feels. He uses the phrase "You feel…", which communicates empathy. Finally, he amplifies her dislike of oral reports by bringing in her feeling of nervousness in standing before the whole class. Of course, this amplification is based on what Mr Chakrapani assumes about Divya's preference for a written report. And it may not be absolutely true. She may also be thinking that a written report could result in a better grade. One can be certain about the correctness of his clarification only when Divya nods "yes" in response to Mr Chakrapani.

Now, here is an example of interpretive listening:

> Divya: "I do not like oral reports. May I submit a written report, instead?"
>
> Mr Chakrapani: "I know it's easy to get a report written by a senior and submit it."

Mr Chakrapani responds to Divya's statement not in not in terms of what is said, but in terms of what he believes or knows about the practice of submitting reports. His listening is conditioned by his knowledge/information about student practices that Divya may not be aware of. In this case, the listener responds to what he assumes, not what he hears.

Recognizing Unexpressed Feelings and Thoughts

It is most important to understand the feelings in a message. Even the speaker may find it difficult to express his or her feelings properly and fully. The listener should help the speaker express his or her feelings more freely. This can be done by amplifying the speaker's feelings, which may be implied and not openly expressed. By listening to verbal expressions and non-verbal clues, the clarifying listener can get an idea of the problem that is bothering the speaker. The listener puts together the clues provided by the speaker's tone, choice of words, pace of speaking, and intonation pattern to sense the underlying feelings of the message. Non-verbal clues such as gestures, facial expressions, body movement, and eye contact and movement, in combination with verbal clues, affirm the unsaid feelings and thoughts of the speaker. The clarifying listener then conveys to the speaker that he or she has recognized the feelings and thoughts he or she has not openly shared. This encourages the speaker to open up and talk about suppressed feelings and thoughts.

To understand clarification further, let us analyse the expressed and implied feelings in the following statement:

> Monica: Of late, I have started feeling very distant from my family. I am unable to talk with anyone. I do not know what has gone wrong. Even when I talk to my brother or sister, I feel as if I am talking to some unknown person.

Expressed feeling: Feeling of distance

Implied feelings: Loneliness, worry, and anxiety about the loss of family ties and closeness

Now analyse the following statement for the speaker's expressed and implied thoughts:

> Surbhi: I tried hard to become the Indian Idol. I thought as a singer I was as good as anyone else. But, in the finals when I heard the other contestants, I realized I could not make it.

Expressed thought: I thought as a singer I was as good as anyone else

Implied thought: I did not estimate my singing ability correctly

We have now discussed some of the characteristics that help a speaker express his or her thoughts and feelings freely. Broadly speaking, a good clarification response has the following characteristics:

1. Encourages disclosures by the speaker
2. Pays close attention to the speaker's feelings
3. Communicates understanding of expressed as well implied feelings and thoughts
4. Helps the speaker understand his or her problem

To test your understanding, choose which of Meera's responses to Nidhi is a clarifying response and give reasons for rejecting the other three responses.

> Nidhi: I have lot of problems with my finance professor. She does not like me. Can you do something about this?
>
> Meera:
>
> A. I do not know your finance professor.
>
> B. You believe your finance professor dislikes you and you want me to do something to help.
>
> C. When I was getting my MBA, my marketing teacher hated me. I was always scared about my grade in marketing because of our personal relationship.
>
> D. You are worried about your relationship with your finance professor. You believe she does not like you. You fear you may not get a good grade in her course.

If you chose D as the clarifying response, you are correct. Here are the reasons for rejecting statements A, B, and C as clarifying responses. Response A does not reflect a deeper understanding of the problem of personal relationships in professional settings. Nor does it identify Nidhi's fear of not getting a good grade. Instead, it seeks to know more about her professor. Response B just reflects the feelings of the original statement; it does not amplify them or help Meera understand her feelings better. Response C is an example of the listener identifying with the speaker's experience. A clarifying response, however, should focus on Nidhi's experience and her feelings about it. Response D, on the other hand, is a correct clarifying response. In this response, Meera focuses on Nidhi's worries and concerns about her relationship with her professor and her grade in the course. Nidhi did not directly state these concerns, but Meera perceives them as fears hidden in Nidhi's mind. The original statement talks only of the teacher's dislike of Nidhi and asks for some help in this regard. Meera elaborates on this and helps Nidhi understand her worry more clearly. The speaker can get a lot of satisfaction and fulfillment from knowing that he or she has been heard, understood, and accepted by someone.

SUMMARY

- This chapter explains how listening means paying thoughtful attention to what someone is saying.
- Listening carefully is an important skill for managers, and the skills of thoughtful listening should be cultivated by managers.
- The listening process includes giving undivided attention to the speaker, hearing, understanding, and interpreting the words, evaluating non-verbal expressions, empathizing with the speaker, and conceptualizing.
- There are various factors that adversely affect listening: lack of concentration, unequal statuses of the speaker and listener, a halo effect or complex, a closed mind, poor retention, premature evaluation, abstracting, biases or slant, cognitive dissonance, and language barriers.
- Some guidelines for improving listening include speaking less and listening more, observing body language, and focusing on and empathizing with the speaker.
- There are two basic concepts of responses: the basic reflective response and the basic clarification response. A reflective response paraphrases the speaker's words and lets the speaker know that the listener has accurately heard him or her. A clarifying response "assumes the internal frame of reference of the speaker" and elaborates on the speaker's thoughts to draw out the speaker's unsaid thoughts and emotions.

CASE: TOO BUSY TO LISTEN?

There are times when teachers are too busy to listen to their students' difficulties. Students find them preparing the next day's lecture, correcting scripts, or discussing college problems with other teachers.

Geeta, a BBA student, finds herself approaching her program coordinator, who seldom encourages students to discuss their personal problems or any course-related questions or concerns. The teacher brushes her off saying she is too busy.

Geeta: Madam?

Ms Srivastava: Yes?

Geeta: Can I talk to you just for a minute? I need your help.

Ms Srivastava: Not now, Geeta. I am marking papers.

Geeta: Can I see you after my class, please?

Ms Srivastava: Not today. I have to attend the faculty meeting and then I have to prepare tomorrow's lecture. And I also have to enter these marks in the grades sheet. Today, I am too busy. Why don't you go to Rita madam?

Geeta: Madam, I had actually first gone to Rita madam. She also told me she was not free. She was very busy with the college's Annual Day function preparations.

Ms Srivastava: Yes, Geeta, we all are very busy till the end of this month.

Questions to Answer

1. Discuss the barriers to sympathetic listening as shown by the responses of the teacher to Geeta.
2. What, according to you, is the real reason for the teacher's inability to listen to Geeta? Are they really too busy to listen to students' problems?
3. "I am too busy." What does this statement show about the nature of the responses of some teachers?

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. "Listening is hearing with thoughtful attention." Discuss.
2. What is the advantage of being a good listener for a business executive?
3. Describe in detail the process of listening.
4. Describe some internal factors that act as barriers to proper listening.
5. "Premature evaluations and hurried conclusions distort listening." Discuss.
6. Describe some methods of improving the listening ability of a person.
7. Explain how a reflective response facilitates listening.
8. Bring out the difference between "clarifying' listeners" and "interpretative" listeners.
9. What do you understand by the term "responsive listening"?

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Consider the reasons for one's occasional lack of concentration on what is said.
2. How would you evaluate yourself as a listener on the basis of the listening characteristics described in this chapter?
3. In this chapter, there are some guidelines given for improving listening. Which of these would you find suitable for improving your listening?
4. Do you believe that proper training can improve one's listening skills?
5. Do you agree with the view that it is not possible to have appropriate communication between a speaker and a listener?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Identify the nature of listening/responding given in the example below and give reasons for your choice:

Gaurav: I don't believe I can complete this project report. I'm so frustrated. I have no background information.

Prasant: You feel discouraged because you feel you do not have the skills to write the project report.

Prasant's response is:

(a) Interpretative
(b) Reflective
(c) Clarifying
(d) Responsive

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. Most of our waking time goes in:
   (a) hearing
   (b) speaking
   (c) writing
   (d) reading
2. Listening, like speaking, reading, and writing, is:
   (a) a skill
   (b) a gift of nature
   (c) an art
   (d) a habit
3. A serious listener concentrates on:
   (a) the speaker's physical appearance
   (b) the speaker's body language
   (c) the message
   (d) other thoughts
4. As a sympathetic listener, you should consider the message from the point of view of:
   (a) the audience
   (b) yourself
   (c) the speaker
   (d) others
5. When a listener abstracts partially, listening is:
   (a) helped
   (b) distorted
   (c) obstructed
   (d) slanted
6. Good listeners concentrate on:
   (a) the speaker's main thought
   (b) the speaker's every word
   (c) important words
   (d) minor details
7. A reflective listener:
   (a) thinks about the speaker's message
   (b) appreciates the message
   (c) ignores the details
   (d) repeats the message's essential parts
8. A clarifying listener:
   (a) explains the message
   (b) repeats what is said
   (c) illustrates the message with examples
   (d) elaborates the speaker's underlying thoughts and feelings

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

9. Listening and hearing refer to:
   (a) the same thing
   (b) different things
   (c) a specific act versus a general act
   (d) mental and physical acts, respectively

10. Listening, to a large extent, depends on a person's:
    (a) desire to know
    (b) interest in others
    (c) taste for gossip
    (d) closed mind

ENDNOTES

1. T. R. Vivek, "Strat Talk", *The Economic Times*, April 20, 2007.
2. Lynette Long, *Listening/Responding: Human Relations Training for Teachers* (California: Thomson Brooks, 1978), p. 16.
3. Ibid., p. 18.
4. Ibid., p. 88.

6

Writing Skills

"True ease in writing comes from art, not chance, as those move easiest who have learned to dance."

— *Alexander Pope*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the basic difficulties in writing clearly, simply, and correctly.
2. Identity the different purposes of writing.
3. Learn to plan written communication by paying special attention to the needs and expectations of prospective readers.
4. Know the essential principles of effective written communication.
5. Develop an effective tone in written communication.
6. Use appropriate words and language for writing correctly and effectively.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Shalini is an MBA student. She is required to write a paper on decision-making. After jotting down her ideas on the decision-making process in a notebook, she settles down to write her paper. She stares blankly at the white sheet of paper in front of her for a couple of minutes. Then she picks up her pen and starts by writing at the heading on top of the sheet: "decision-making".

Once again, she pauses, questioning the wording of the heading. Should it be *decision-making* or *decision-taking*? Do we *make* decisions or *take* decisions? To resolve the issue, she consults a dictionary. The white sheet continues to lie before her, blank. The dictionary tells her that *making* is correct, not *taking*.

She resumes writing. After writing a few sentences describing her upbringing by her father and how he had never allowed her to choose anything or do anything freely on her own, she slumps back in her chair. She stops writing and re-reads what she has written. She decides that she does not quite like the beginning.

After taking a short break, she begins to write afresh. The initial lines are struck off the white sheet of paper. She wonders how to begin correctly. At that moment, her elder brother enters the room. He tells her that the only way to write is for her to first put down whatever thoughts she has. Only after writing down her ideas, should she re-read, revise, and polish the language. He explains to Shalini that every creative act, whether of writing or speaking, has a painful beginning.

THE ART OF WRITING

Writing is a mode of communicating a message for a specific purpose. It reveals one's ability to think clearly and to use language effectively. A manager is responsible for a variety of written communications such as replies to clients, enquires, memos recording agreements, proposals for contracts, formal or informal reports to initiate action, and so on. A manager should be able to convey information, ideas, instructions, decisions, and welfare proposals in written form, in keeping with the level of the people who receive and read them. However, a manager's objective in writing a particular document is only met when readers understand exactly what is intended to be communicated to them. A manger, therefore, should be able to write down his or her thoughts simply and concisely.

THE SKILLS REQUIRED IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Effective writing does not come by chance. It does not just happen. There is a set of skills required to write simply, clearly, accurately, and concisely.

1

Understand the basic difficulties in writing clearly, simply, and correctly.

Writing skills are as essential as the other knowledge and skills that form an executive's professional qualifications and requirements. The skills required for business writing are essentially the same as those required for general written communication. Business writers should carefully check the grammar, punctuation, and spellings; ensure that sentences and paragraphs are structured logically; and follow the principles of sound organization—clarity, simplicity, and directness.

THE PURPOSE OF WRITING

2

Identity the different purposes of writing.

The first task for writing effectively is to identify the purpose of the communication. There are mainly two goals of communication in business situations—to inform and to persuade.

Writing to Inform

When the writer seeks to provide and explain information, the writing is called *informative writing*. It is also called *expository writing* because it expounds on or expresses ideas and facts. The focus of informative writing is the subject or the matter under discussion. Informative writing is found in accounts of facts, scientific data, statistics, and technical and business reports.

Informative writing presents information, not opinions. Its purpose is to educate and not persuade. It is written with maximum objectivity.

Informative writing presents information not opinions. Its purpose is to educate and not persuade. It is, therefore, written with maximum objectivity. For example, consider the passage in Communication Snapshot 6.1.

Exhibit 6.1 presents a list of questions that must be answered in the affirmative to determine if a piece of writing is effective.

Writing to Persuade

Persuasive writing aims at convincing the reader about a matter that is debatable; it expresses opinion rather than facts. This writing is also called argumentative, as it supports and argues for a certain viewpoint or position. The matter at hand generally has

Communication Snapshot 6.1

Informatory Writing

The passage in Exhibit 6A is a piece of informative or expository writing. It successfully transmits a message about ants to readers. In the passage, the writer's opening sentence expresses the main idea. The subsequent sentences give information that supports the main idea, namely unusual facts about the social lives of ants.

As indicated, the purpose of the writer is to inform a reader objectively, with little bias. The information is logically arranged and clearly written.

Exhibit 6A
Ants

Ants have strange social lives. Like mediaeval feudal lords, some ants keep slaves to do their work. They attack other ants' nests and capture them. The victorious ants bring back the defeated groups of ants to their own nests and force them to work as slaves. Surprisingly, ants do not live alone in their nests. Hundreds of other small creatures, like beetles and crickets, dwell with the ants in their houses as inmates. Some of these small creatures do useful work for the ants. They serve the ants by keeping the nests clean and performing other duties. However, others seem to live without doing anything in return. Why the ants allow them to stay in their nests is a puzzling question. Is it just benevolence or is it the feudal spirit of keeping a large retinue of servants?

Exhibit 6.1
Informative Writing:
A Checklist

1. Does the write-up focus on the subject under discussion?
2. Does it primarily inform rather than persuade the reader?
3. Does it offer complete and precise information?
4. Can the information be proven?
5. Does it present information logically and clearly?
6. Does it flow smoothly?

two or more sides to it. The writer seeks to influence and convince the reader to accept the position he or she has put forth.

Persuasive writing focuses on the reader. The writer attempts to change the reader's thinking and bring it closer to his or her own way of thinking. Persuasive writing is found in opinion essays, editorials, letters to editors, business and research proposals, religious books, reviews, or literature belonging to a certain political party.

Persuasive writing is found in opinion essays, editorials, letters to editors, business and research proposals, religious books, reviews, or literature belonging to a certain political party.

Persuasive writing does more than just state an opinion—that is not enough. The opinion must be convincing. There must be supporting evidence or facts to back the writer's opinion or point of view. Moreover, the writer's point of view should be well argued, meaning his or her reasoning should be logical and clearly arranged. Let us consider the example of "Alternative Sources of Fuel" shown in Communication Snapshot 6.2.

Exhibit 6.2 presents a list of questions that must be answered in the affirmative for a passage to be considered persuasive.

Communication Snapshot 6.2

Persuasive Writing

Exhibit 6B
Alternative Sources of Fuel

The case built in Exhibit 6B for considering alternative sources of fuel is well argued. The final paragraph clinches the argument for finding substitutes for fuel oil by convincing readers that, although it is not easy to solve the energy problem, the real need is "to find substitutes for fuel oil" and "replacement energy forms are available to fill that need".

Faced with today's high energy costs and tremendous consumer demand, we need to find alternative energy forms. During the past five years, consumers have tried conservation as a means of defence against high fuel (petrol and home-heating) prices. They purchased smaller, more fuel-efficient cars and insulated their homes with storm windows and doors. While these conservation measures improved the efficiency of oil consumption, they had no effect on continually increasing oil prices. Since conservation alone is not the answer, what alternatives are available now?

One readily accessible substitute energy form is solar energy, produced by the sun. Solar collectors—made of insulation, serpentine tubing filled with water, and glass—absorb heat from the sun and distribute it to radiators or baseboard heaters. Hot water for bathing is available through this same process.

Gasohol is another alternate fuel. Gasohol is a mixture of 10 per cent alcohol and 90 per cent gasoline. Cars travel more efficiently on this fuel due to its high octane content. In fact, Henry Ford designed the Ford Model-T to run on pure alcohol. Gasohol should be carefully considered as an alternate fuel, because the alcohol needed is easily derived from just about anything, such as corn, wood, or organic garbage.

We could also look to another natural resource: the wind. Some experimentation is being conducted in the Midwest using windmills to generate electricity. As a matter of fact, at least one major store sells windmills across the country.

Coal and wood should also be considered as substitute fuels. People heated their homes with wood stoves and coal furnaces long before oil was available as a home-heating fuel.

Although there are no easy or comfortable ways to get around our energy problems, comfort has to be placed after our real need, which is to find substitutes for fuel oil. Replacement energy forms are available to fill that need."

Source: Based on Diana Hacker and Betty Renshaw, "Alternative Source of Fuel", *A Practical Guide for Writers*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982) 183–184.

Exhibit 6.2
Persuasive Writing: A Checklist

1. Does it focus on the reader?
2. Does it basically seek to convince rather than inform?
3. Does it support its argument by providing facts or valid reasons?
4. Does it follow a logical arrangement of thought and reasoning?
5. Does it evoke the intended response from the reader?

3

Learn to plan written communication by paying special attention to the needs and expectations of prospective readers.

CLARITY IN WRITING

An important requirement for effective writing is to recognize the needs, expectations, fears, and attitudes of the audience or receiver and the reader of the written message. Written communication is one-way—from the sender to the receiver. The receiver cannot immediately clarify doubts or confusion if the message is unclear. Therefore, communicating clearly is especially important when it comes to written communication.

A manager works out schemes and projects, a scientist or engineer solves a technical problem. As the "doer", he or she is clear about what is in his or her mind. But the moment someone takes up a pen and starts writing to communicate ideas, he or she must keep in mind that the structure of his or her thoughts has to follow the structure of language, that is, the format of sentences, paragraphs, and the composition as a whole. Writers must follow the principles of unity and coherence that bind words into sentences, sentences into units or paragraphs, and paragraphs into essays (the full composition). When this transformation of thought into language is not effected under the guiding principles of language, the muddy clutter hides the meaning and makes it difficult to understand the writer's thoughts.

When the transformation of thought into language is not effected under the guiding principles of language, the muddy clutter hides the meaning and makes it difficult to understand the writer's thoughts.

Although the letter has remained the most common means of written communication for a very long period, its importance is frequently overlooked. Authors often dictate or write down a few scattered sentences in the hope that the reader will get the message. However, the message may be buried under a mountain of unnecessary words, or an unnatural style may conceal the writer's true intentions. Instead of letting business letters be friendly, interesting, and persuasive, such writing makes them overly formal and dull.

Although the letter, for a long time, remained the most common means of written communication, its importance is frequently overlooked. Authors often dictate or write down a few scattered sentences in the hope that the reader will get the message.

Exhibit 6.3 shows a well-written sample letter that has the flavour of easy conversation. Notice the use of everyday words such as "hope", "remember", "regret", "send", "says", "provide", "charge", "believe", "make", and so on that give the letter the simplicity of the spoken word.

The written word often gets cluttered with complex construction of sentences. Communication Snapshot 6.3 presents an example of a paragraph whose meaning is

Exhibit 6.3
A Well-written Sample Letter

12 August, 2009

The Service Manager
Customer Satisfaction Division
Samsung India Limited
Nehru Place
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

I hope you remember our discussion last Monday about the servicing of the washing machine supplied to us three months ago. I regret to say the machine is no longer working. Please send a service engineer as soon as possible to repair it.

The product warranty says that you provide spare parts and materials free, but charge for the engineer's labour. This sounds unfair. I believe the machine's failure is caused by a manufacturing defect. Initially, it made a lot of noise, and, later, it stopped operating entirely. As it is wholly the company's responsibility to rectify the defect, I hope you will not make us pay for the labour component of its repair.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Roli Chaturvedi

Communication Snapshot 6.3

Examples of Clear and Unclear Writing

After reading Exhibit 6C, the only facts that a reader can be sure about are that the owners of the land were contacted on July 25 and that the president will be returning on August 25. The important information about the possible sale of the block is completely concealed by the excess of words. It is likely that the writer wanted to say something along the lines of Exhibit 6D.

Exhibit 6C
The Original Paragraph

When the owners were contacted on July 25, the assistant manager, Mr Rathi, informed the chief engineer that they were considering ordering advertising Block 25 for sale. He, however, expressed his inability to make a firm decision by requesting this company to confirm their intentions with regard to buying the land within one month, when Mr Jain, the president of the company, will have come back from a business tour. "This will be August 25."

Exhibit 6D
The Revised Paragraph

The chief engineer contacted the owner on July 25 to enquire if Block 25 was on sale. He was informed by the assistant manager, Mr Rathi, that the company was thinking of selling the block. He was further told that decision would not be made until the president, Mr Jain, returned from a business tour on August 25. Mr Rathi asked the chief engineer to submit a written proposal for sale.

lost because of complex sentences. It also shows how this paragraph can be rewritten to bring clarity.

The purpose of business writing is to achieve the understanding and reaction needed in the quickest and most economical way. To do this one must follow the principles and structure of effective writing.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

4

Know the essential principles of effective written communication.

Effective written communication is achieved by following the principles of (a) accuracy, (b) brevity and (c) clarity, in addition to others. As we have already discussed clarity, let us focus on the other important principles of effective writing here.

Accuracy

To achieve accuracy, the writer should check and double-check:

- All facts and figures
- The choice of words
- The language and tone

For example, whether a communication is formal or informal, one should always write "between you and me", not "between you and I". In this case, the choice is simple as it is guided by the objective rules of grammar. But in other cases, word choice may not be as clearly indicated. The correct choice of words is determined by the appropriateness of the word for the subject, audience, and purpose of a particular piece of writing.

A message should be communicated correctly in terms of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Of course, it is not always easy to be accurate in expression; however, some obvious pitfalls can be avoided by being alert to the following:

A message should be communicated correctly in terms of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

- Follow the rules of grammar.
- Pay attention to punctuation marks.
- Check words for spelling and usage.

Only a few samples are given here to indicate the danger of overlooking the technical aspects of writing. Detailed study of the grammatical rules will be discussed in Appendix 1.

To avoid incorrect usage, it is important to check the suitability of the words used. Exhibit 6.4 presents a list of words that are often confused or used incorrectly.

Exhibit 6.4
Some Commonly Confused Words

Accept, Except. *Accept*, a verb, means to agree to something, to believe, or to receive. *Except* means "not including" or "other than".

Advice, Advise. *Advice* is a noun, and *advise* is a verb.

Affect, Effect. Most frequently, *affect*, which means to influence, is used as a verb, and *effect*, which means a result is used as a noun.

Ain't. This is a non-standard way of saying "am not", "has not", "have not", and so on.

All Right, Alright. The phrase *all right* has two words, not one. *Alright* is an incorrect form.

All Together, Altogether. *All together* means in a group, and *altogether* means entirely or totally.

Alot, A lot. *Alot* is an incorrect form of *a lot*.

Among, Between. *Among* is used to refer to three or more nouns and *between* is used for two nouns.

Amount, Number. *Amount* is used for things or ideas that are general or abstract and cannot be counted. *Number* is used for things that can be counted.

Anyone, Any One. *Anyone* means any person at all. *Any one* refers to a specific person or things in a group.

As, As If, Like. *As* is used in a comparison when there is an equality intended; *as if* is used when a supposed situation is there; and *like* is used when similarity is intended.

Assure, Ensure, Insure. *Assure* means to declare or promise; *ensure* means to make safe or certain; and *insure* means to protect with a contract of insurance.

Awful, Awfully. *Awful* is an adjective meaning "extremely unpleasant". *Awfully* is an adverb used in informal writing to say "very". It should be avoided in formal writing.

Beside, Besides. *Beside* is a preposition meaning "at the side of", "compared with", or "having nothing to do with". *Besides* is a preposition meaning "in addition to" or "other than".

Breath, Breathe. *Breath* is a noun, and *breathe* is a verb.

Choose, Chose. *Choose* is the present tense of the verb, and *chose* is the past tense.

Compared to, Compared with. Use *compared to* to point out similarities between dissimilar items. Use *compared with* to show similarities and differences between similar items.

Data. This is the plural form of *datum*. In informal usage, *data* is used as a singular noun.

Different from, Different than. *Different from* is always correct, but some writers also use *different than* when a clause following this phrase. (For example, "This book is *different from* the others." and "That is a *different* outcome *than* they expected.")

Farther, Further. While some writers use these words interchangeably, dictionary definitions differentiate between them. *Farther* is used when actual distance is involved, and *further* is used to mean "to a greater extent" or "more".

Fewer, Less. *Fewer* is used for things that are countable (for example: fewer trains, fewer trees, fewer students). *Less* is used for ideas, abstractions, or things that are thought of collectively, not separately (for example: less gain, less furniture), and things that are measured by amount not number (for example: less tea, less money).

Good, Well. *Good* is an adjective and therefore describes only nouns. *Well* is an adverb and describes adjectives, other adverbs, and verbs.

Got, Have. *Got* is the past tense of "get" and should not be used in place of *have*. Similarly, "got to" should not be used as a substitute for "must". "Have got to" is an informal substitute for *must*.

Imply, Infer. Sometimes these two words are used interchangeably. However, *imply* means to suggest without stating directly. *Infer* means to reach an opinion from facts or reasoning.

Its, It's. *Its* is a personal pronoun in the possessive case. *It's* is a contraction for "it is".

Kind, Sort. These two forms are singular and should be used with the words "this" or "that". Their plurals, *kinds* and *sorts* should be used with the words "these" or "those".

Exhibit 6.4
(Contd.)

Lay, Lie. *Lay* is a verb that needs an object and should not be used in place of *lie*, a verb that takes no direct object.

OK, Okay. These can be used interchangeably in informal writing, but should not be used in formal or academic writing.

Such. This is an often overused word in place of "very" or "extremely". It should be avoided.

Sure. The use of *sure* as an adverb is informal. In formal writing, the adverb "surely" is used.

That, Which. Use *that* for essential clauses and *which* for non-essential clauses.

Their, There, They're. *Their* is a possessive pronoun; *there* means "in", "at", or "at that place"; *they're* is the contraction for "they are".

Theirself, Theirselves. These are incorrect forms that are sometimes used in place of "themselves".

Use to. This is incorrect; "used to" should be used instead.

Who, Whom. *Who* is used for the subject case; *whom* is used for the object case.

Who's, Whose. *Who's* is a contraction for "who is"; *whose* is a possessive pronoun.

Your, You're. *Your* is a possessive pronoun; *you're* is a contraction for "you are". (*Your* feet are cold. *You're* a great writer.)

Yours, Your's. *Yours* is the correct possessive form; *your's* is an incorrect version of "yours".

Brevity

Brevity lies in saying only what needs to be said and leaving out unnecessary words or details. Being brief does not mean saying less that what the occasion demands. Brevity is not to be achieved at the cost of clarity. Nor is brevity to be gained by sacrificing proper English.

Brevity lies in saying only what needs to be said and leaving out unnecessary words or details.

To achieve brevity, avoid wordiness. This can be done in the following ways:

1. Do not use four or six words when one or two will do. It is not necessary to qualify one word with another word that basically means the same thing. For instance, in the phrase, "worldwide recognition by all", it would suffice to say just "worldwide" or "by all". Exhibit 6.5 lists phrases that are examples of wordiness; they can each be reduced to one or two words.

Exhibit 6.5
Examples of Wordy and Concise Constructions

Wordy Constructions	***Concise Constructions***
Along the lines of	Like
In the event of	If
For the purpose of	For
In the neighbourhood of	About
For the reason that	Since/Because
With a view to	To
In the event that	If
Inasmuch as	Because
With reference to	About
In the case of	If
With regard to	About
With the result that	So that

2. Wordiness can also be avoided by changing long clauses into phrases. Here are a few examples:

Wordy: The vast majority of farmers in India are poor in a greater or lesser degree.

Concise: Most Indian farmers are quite poor.

Wordy: The special difficulty in my case arises in relation to the fact that I live so far from my institute.

Concise: I am specially handicapped by living so far from my institute.

Wordy: In this connection, it is not without interest to observe that, in the case of many states, no serious measures have been taken with a view to putting the recommendations of the HRD minister into practice.

Concise: Most states have done little to implement the HRD minister's recommendations.

Wordy: Mr Singh, who was a newcomer to the city mentioned earlier in this report, proved to be a very able administrator.

Concise: Mr Singh, a newcomer to the above-mentioned city, proved to be a very able administrator. (Here a clause has been reduced to a phrase and a phrase reduced to a single word.)

Wordy: She is so honest that she will not tell a lie.

Concise: She is too honest to tell a lie.

Wordy: The wind is so cold that we cannot go out at present.

Concise: The wind is too cold for us to go out at present.

3. Drop "which" and "that" clauses when possible. For example:

Wordy: I need cards that are of formal type.

Concise: I need formal cards.

Wordy: She received a shirt that was torn.

Concise: She received a torn shirt.

Wordy: She cleared the debts that her husband had taken on.

Concise: She cleared her husband's debts.

Wordy: I am sure that I shall be able to help you.

Concise: I am sure I can help you.

4. Do not overuse the passive voice. For example:

Wordy: Technology can be used by children also.

Concise: Children also can use technology.

Wordy: The post of Prime Minister of India is held by Dr Manmohan Singh.

Concise: Dr Manmohan Singh holds the Prime Ministership of India.

Wordy: Many great lands had been seen by Ulysses.

Concise: Ulysses saw many great lands.

Communication Snapshot 6.4

Rewriting a Letter

Exhibit 6E
A Wordy Letter

Dear Sir,

We are in receipt of your letter dated June 25 and have pleasure in informing you that the order you have placed with us will receive our best and immediate attention and that the fifteen ACs you require will be provided to you as soon as we are able to arrange for and supply them to you.

We are, however, very sorry to say that our stock of these ACs is, at this moment of time, quite short. Owing to the extremely hot summer and the consequent increase in demand, we have been informed by the manufacturers that they are not likely to be in a position to supply us with further stock for another three weeks or so.

We are extremely sorry not to be in a position to satisfy your requirements immediately, but we wish to assure you that we will always try to do everything we possibly can to see that your order for fifteen ACs is met as soon as possible. If you are not able to obtain the ACs you need from elsewhere, or if you are able to wait for them until the end of the next of month, you are requested to inform us in a timely manner.

Once again expressing our sincerest regret at our inability to fulfil your esteemed order on this occasion with our usual promptness and trusting you will continue to favour us in the future,

Yours truly,

PAhuja

Prem Ahuja

Exhibit 6F
The Rewritten Letter

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your order of 25th June, but regret that due to the exceptional demand for ACs thanks to the prolonged hot spell, we are currently out of stock of the brand you ordered. The manufacturers, however, have promised us further supply by the end of this month, and if you could wait until then, we would ensure the prompt delivery of the fifteen ACs you require.

We are sorry that we cannot meet your present order immediately.

Yours truly,

PAhuja

Prem Ahuja

Communication Snapshot 6.4 illustrates a wordy and tedious business letter and one way to make it more concise.

The letter in Exhibit 6E can be rewritten in a brief and concise form, as shown in Exhibit 6F.

Language, Tone, and Level of Formality

5

Develop an effective tone in written communication.

To ensure that a piece of writing is understood by the target audience, it is essential to use language that is commonly understood. The tone used should also reflect the appropriate level of formality for a particular context.

Standard English

"Standard English" includes the most commonly used and accepted words. It is considered "standard" because it follows the norms laid down by the rules of grammar, sentence construction, punctuation, spelling, paragraph construction, and so on. It is the language used in formal writing, such as books, magazines, newspapers, letters, memos, reports, and other forms of academic writing. For example, *ain't*, a contraction of "I am not", "is not" or "has not", is usually considered unacceptable in written (and also spoken) English. It can, however, appear as slang or in informal writing.

Tone refers to feelings created by words used to communicate a message.

Tone

After determining the purpose and audience of a piece of writing, one has to then choose the appropriate tone in terms of formality. Tone refers to feelings created by words used to communicate a message. The tone of a piece of writing basically depends on the relationship between the writer and those who receive the message. As discussed earlier, communications in an organization can be classified as upward, downward, or horizontal. It requires skill and competence on the part of the writer to use the appropriate tone based on the status of the reader or receiver. It is obvious that something written for one's superiors will have a formal tone, whereas something written for one's peers will be more informal.

According to Muriel Harris, "The level of formality is the tone in writing and reflects the attitude of the writer toward the subject and audience".[1]

The tone can be:

- Informal
- Semi-formal
- Strictly formal

6

Use appropriate words and language for writing correctly and effectively.

Informal Tone

A writer uses an informal tone for social or personal communication and for informal writing. Deviations from standard English change the tone of writing from formal to informal or very formal. The informal tone includes the use of slang, colloquialisms, and regional words. The writer may also include contractions and incomplete sentences. An example of informal tone is: "The guy was damn annoyed because he couldn't get a hang of the mumbo-jumbo."

- **Colloquialisms**: Colloquialisms are casual words or phrases used in informal writing. Some examples of colloquialisms are "guy" for a person; "ain't" for *am not*, *is not*, or *are not*; "kids" for *children*; "hubby" for *husband*; "flunk" instead of *fail*; "wannnabe" for an avid fan who tries to emulate the person he or she admires; "whopping" for *huge* (for example, "a whopping success").

Slang consists of informal words, phrases, or meanings that are not regarded as standard and are often used by a specific profession, class, and so on.

- **Slang**: Slang consists of informal words, phrases, or meanings that are not regarded as standard and are often used by a specific profession, class, and so on. Slang words, like colloquial words, are non-conventional. They are used in some special sense, but they exclude jargon and dialect-specific words. If a slang word acquires greater respectability, it moves into the category of colloquialism and may even reach the acceptability of standard English. For instance, "whodunit" is a colloquial word that appears in the critical writing of Northrop Frye, an eminent contemporary critic. It is gradually acquiring acceptability and is used to refer to modern murder mysteries. Some slang words and phrases are shown in Exhibit 6.6.

The richness of English lies in its openness to words from other areas and countries.

- **Regional words**: Regional words, as the term suggests, are used primarily in a particular geographic area. The richness of English lies in its openness to words from other areas and countries. Words such as "porch", "verandah", "portico", "gherao", "hartal", "bazaar", "bag", "sack", "tote", or "phone" form part of spoken and written English, sometimes as standard usage.

Words such as *hype* and *ad* are gaining wider acceptability among professionals and writers.

Slang and regional words constitute the texture of language and give colour and tone to communication. In the world of business, the main concern is to communicate with sincerity, courtesy, and a sense of mutual respect. The aim is to write or speak in simple and clear English using the language of everyday speech. The aim of business writing is to earn the goodwill of the reader. The writing should sound friendly and cooperative.

Exhibit 6.6
Examples of Slang

Slang	*Meaning*
Pot	Marijuana
Get one's act together	Prepare/properly organize
Hip	Trendy/stylish
Pie-eyed	Drunk
Pig	Derogatory use for a police officer
Pig out	Eat (food) greedily
Brass	Money
Brass tacks	Essential details
Hype	Extravagant or intensive promotion of a product
Ad	Advertisement (contraction)

For this purpose special care should be taken to create a friendly and pleasant tone in business writing (letters/memos) by avoiding harsh and rude words.

Semi-formal Tone

The semi-formal tone lies somewhere between informal and academic. It is expressed mostly through standard English and is written according to the accepted rules of grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling, with a few contractions that add a sense of informality. The following sentence also has a semi-formal tone: "Much to their embarrassment and Mammachi's dismay, Chacko forced the pretty women to sit at the table with him and drink tea."

Strictly Formal Tone

The strictly formal tone is scholarly and uses words that are long and not frequently spoken in everyday conversation. The construction of the sentence and paragraph is also academic and literary in its tone.

The strictly formal tone is scholarly and uses words that are long and not frequently spoken in everyday conversation.

Positive Language

Business letters and memos should accentuate positive thoughts and expressions while stemming negative ones. Some tips to do so are:

- Avoid using words that underline the negative aspects of the situation.
- Write with a cool frame of mind. Do not write out of anger of excitement.
- Do not allow anger or harshness to creep into the writing.
- Focus on the positive when possible.

The following are examples of how, by substituting positive-sounding words and phrases for negative ones, the general tone (effect/impact) of each sentence can be changed without changing the message.

Negative: We have received your complaint.

Positive: We have received your letter.

(We receive letters. No one can mail a complaint.)

Negative: Your faulty fan motor will be replaced.

Positive: We are sending you a new fan motor with a one-year guarantee.

Negative: The delay in dispatching your order because of our oversight will not be longer than a week.

Positive: Your complete order will reach you by July 24.

To eliminate the accusing and insulting tone of the original sentence, substitute neutral words for words that are insulting or make the reader feel dishonest or unintelligent.

Insulting: Don't allow your carelessness to cause accidents in the blast furnace.

Neutral: Be careful when you are working in the blast furnace.

Insulting: Because you failed to inform the members of the board about the agenda in time, the meeting had to be postponed.

Neutral: The meeting had to be postponed as the board members did not receive the agenda in time.

Remember that negative language regarding the situation is bound to distance the reader. To win the reader's cooperation, one must emphasize solutions instead of criticizing the situation.

You-Attitude

In all writing, the author has a point of view. You-attitude refers to the reader's point of view.

In all writing, the author has a point of view. *You-attitude* is the reader's point of view. In good business writing, especially letters, the author should write from the reader's point of view, by viewing things as readers would. He or she should be able to see and present the situation as the reader would see it. Writers should try to convey an understanding of the reader's position and present the information by visualizing how it will affect the feelings of readers.

In the following examples, the focus is shifted from the author's point of view to the reader's point of view by emphasizing the benefits and interests of the reader in the given situation.

Author's emphasis: I congratulate you on successfully completing the task.

Reader's emphasis: Congratulations on successfully completing the task.

Author's emphasis: To reduce office work and save time, we are introducing a new system of registration for you.

Reader's emphasis: To facilitate the registration process, we are changing our system of registration.

Author's emphasis: We are sending out interview calls next Monday.

Receiver's emphasis: You should receive the interview letter by Thursday, August 12.

The change of emphasis in these examples is psychological. By giving importance to the reader's concerns (his or her point of view) and benefits, one can develop a friendly tone.

Some guidelines for reflecting the "you" point of view in business correspondence are:

1. Empathize with the reader. Place yourself in his or her position.
2. Highlight the benefits to the reader in the situation.
3. Adopt a pleasant tone as far as possible.
4. Avoid negative words and images. Do not use words that insult or accuse the reader.
5. Offer helpful suggestions if possible.
6. Use words that are familiar, clear, and natural. Avoid old-fashioned expressions or jargon.

Hackneyed Language	*Natural Language*
The undersigned	I/We
We beg to advise	We can say
Prior to receipt of	Before we/I received
As per your request	As you requested
Attached herewith	Attached is
Pursuant to	In accordance with
Hoping for the favour of your kind reply	We/I hope to
Yours to hand of 20th	Received your letter of July 20

Exhibit 6.7
Old-fashioned Expressions

Natural Language

Letters and memos should be written in the language of everyday speech. They should avoid using clichés and hackneyed expressions. Archaic expressions will make the message dull and uninteresting for the reader. Exhibit 6.7 lists some examples of phrases that should be rewritten.

Consider the naturalness of the following sentence. Do we normally talk like this?

> As per your request, we beg to inform you that we have booked a single room for you at our lodge for 4 days from 18 July to 21 July, 2003.

This sentence lacks the spontaneity and liveliness of a natural response. It should be revised as:

> As you desired, we have booked a room for you from 18 July to 21 July, 2003.

The message should be brief. The specification of the room, single or double, need not be given here. Simply confirming the dates is sufficient.

Active Voice

There are two parts of a sentence—the subject and the predicate. The subject is that about which something is said; the predicate is whatever is said about the subject. In a sentence the subject is the main focus, the doer of an action. It is frequently positioned at the opening of the sentence.

Choose the active voice to help the reader understand the main message at the very beginning of the sentence. Passive voice is long-drawn because the "to be" form of verb is used with the preposition "by" and is then followed by the doer of the action. In passive voice, the main focus of the sentence, the subject (in the writer's mind), is mentioned at the end of the sentence—by then the reader may become impatient and lose focus. For example, read the following sentences closely:

> Choose the active voice to help the reader understand the main message at the very beginning of the sentence.

> Active: Packaging often describes the product's look and feel to the buyer.
>
> Passive: The product's look and feel are often described to the buyer by its packaging.

Read both the forms of the sentence together. You will find that the passive sentence reads slowly and moves heavily. It tells you about "packaging" only at the end of the sentence. It first speaks about the product's look and feel. Technically, the two sentences are talking about two different things. The passive-voice sentence tells the reader about a product's look and feel and how they are described for the buyer through packaging. It indirectly talks about packaging. The active-voice sentence speaks more directly about packaging and its functions of describing a product's look and feel to the buyer. The sentence is short and it grips the reader's attention. Readers therefore usually prefer active voice for its directness, faster pace, and clarity.

Here are a few problems readers often face because of the use of passive voice:

- *Passive voice in issuing instructions:* Instructions should be clear, direct, and complete because passive voice may confuse the reader. The instruction may omit the "by" preposition phrase and thereby leave the question "who should do it" unclear. The doer of the action is left implied and is not clearly stated.

  Unclear: The strike should be called off. [By whom? Not stated]

  Clear: The strike should be called off by the union.

- *Dropping the "by" phrase:* Often, the writer attempts to shorten the length of the passive-voice sentence by leaving out the "by" phrase after the verb. This makes it difficult for the reader to understand the full process of the action as the sentence does not offer complete information.

  Incomplete: To make these allocations, marketing managers use sales response functions that show how sales and profits would be affected.

  Complete: To make these allocations, marketing managers use sales response functions that show how sales and profits would be affected by the amount of money spent in each application.

- *Confusing use of dangling modifiers*: The reader is often confused by the misplaced modifier in the passive construction. Therefore, avoid this form of passive construction and write in active form.

  Unclear: Besides saving on mailing expenses, a double-digit response will be achieved by a customer database system.

  Clear: Besides saving on mailing expenses, a customer database system will achieve a double-digit response.

Sexist Language

Sexist expressions and ideas should be avoided in business communication. Sexist language consists of words or phrases that show bias against the competence or importance of women. In today's gender-sensitive age, business writing should scrupulously leave out all words that question women's dignity, competence, or status.

Often the use of sexist language is unconscious—one may fail to realize that a certain phrase or word is an unfavourable reference to the abilities of women. However, such expressions are not acceptable to modern readers.

Often the use of sexist language is unconscious—one may fail to realize that a certain phrase or word is an unfavourable reference to the abilities of women.

Consider the following guidelines to avoid sexist words and phrases:

1. Do not use "he" as a generic pronoun. In the past, it has been customary to refer to people in general, or a group of persons, as male. "He" is grammatically correct, but should be avoided in generic situations, especially job descriptions.

   Sexist: A manager writes to his peers in an informal or semi-formal tone.

   Revised: Managers write to their peers in an informal or semi-formal tone.

   In this example, the number of the subject has been changed from singular to plural, and "their" has been used as the pronoun, thus avoiding any hint of sexism.

2. In job descriptions, do not use words which suggest that all employees are of the same gender.

   Sexist: An experienced professor is needed. He should…

   Revised: An experienced professor is needed. He or she should…

   Or

   An experienced professor is needed. The person should be…

   Sexist: The policeman should listen to the common man's complaints.

   Revised: The police officer should listen to the common man's complaints.

   Sexist: The stewardess explained the safety measures before take-off.

   Revised: The flight attendant explained the safety measures before take-off.

3. Do not use words that lower the dignity and status of women. Also never use slang words to refer to women.

   Sexist: The girls in the central office will endorse these papers.

   Revised: The office assistants in the central office will endorse these papers.

   Sexist: Do bring the little woman (*slang for one's wife*) to the party.

   Revised: Do bring your spouse to the party.

Do not use words that lower the dignity and status of women. Also never use slang words to refer to women.

4. Always refer to women and men in the same way.

   Sexist: Denise Samrat, Dr Ian Campbell, and Dr Philip Kotler were members of the CRM panel.

   Revised: Ms Denise Samrat, Dr Ian Campbell, and Dr Philip Kotler were members of the CRM panel.

   Sexist: Women of this sector were represented by two doctors and one lady lawyer.

   Revised: Women of this sector were represented by two doctors and one lawyer.

   Finally, writing business letters clearly and accurately requires that the following points be kept in mind:

- A sentence is the smallest unit of a complete thought.
- Each sentence should have only one thought.
- Sentences and paragraphs should be constructed according to the principles of unity and coherence.

For instance, consider this sentence: "This activity makes no attempt to be a comprehensive test of accurate writing, but offers a valuable chance for you to test your own skill and identify areas of weakness." This sentence talks about only one topic—"a test of accurate writing". Other ideas are related to the main subject.

In contrast, examine the following sentence: "I hasten to inform you that your complete order has been shipped on April 10, the invoice will reach you with the goods." This sentence is not correctly constructed. It has two separate thoughts, which should be expressed in separate sentences. A better version would be: "I hasten to inform you that your complete order has been shipped on 10 April. The invoice will reach you with the goods."

SUMMARY

- This chapter shows that the ability to communicate information in a simple, concise, and accurate written form reflects a manager's professional competence.
- It discusses in detail the essentials of effective written communication—planning, identification of purpose, consideration of audience, choice of appropriate language, and use of effective tone.
- This chapter also provides tips and guidelines to help readers develop a good grasp of grammar, the use of words, and the construction of sentences, with the goal of strengthening their written communication skills.

CASE: ON WRITING WELL

In his famous book, *On Writing Well*, William Zinsser cautions potential writers about some common pitfalls of writing. Zinsser maintains that if the reader is unable to keep pace with the writer's train of thought, it is not because the reader is lazy or dumb. Rather, this difficulty can be attributed to the author, who, because of the many forms of carelessness, has failed to keep the reader on the right track.

The "carelessness" Zinsser alludes to may be of many kinds:

- Writers often write long-winding sentences and switch tenses mid-sentence. Also, a sentence may not logically flow from the previous sentence, although the writer knows the connection in his or her head. This makes it hard for the reader to make sense of what is being said, and they lose track.
- Sometimes, writers don't take the trouble of looking up a key word, and end up using the wrong word. For example, the word "sanguine" (confidently optimistic and cheerful) may be confused with "sanguinary" (accompanied by bloodshed), which changes the meaning of a piece drastically.
- Surprisingly often, writers do not know what they are trying to say. So, they should always question themselves about what they are trying to say, and if they have said it. They should re-read the piece and ask themselves: "Will it be clear to a person who reads it for the first time?" If the answer to this question is "no", it means that some "fuzz" has crept into the writing.

Says Zinsser, "The clear writer is a person who is clear-headed enough to see this stuff for what it is: fuzz."[2] He further adds that thinking clearly is an entirely conscious act. It's not as if some people are clear thinkers and, therefore, clear writers, and others are born fuzzy and can't hope to write well. The ability to write well comes from clear thinking and logic, which a writer should constantly aim to inculcate.

Unless Zinsser's list of potential obstacles to clear writing is kept in mind, a writer runs the risk of turning in a piece where the reader is left wondering who or what is being talked about.

Questions to Answer

1. What is fuzz? Explain Zinsser's notion of fuzz with a few examples.
2. Do you believe that some people are born writers? Give reasons for your answer.

Source: Based on William Zinsser, *On Writing Well* (New York: Harper, 1998).

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Give at least three reasons for knowing and following the conventions of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
2. What is the difference between unity and coherence?
3. What is the relationship between brevity and clarity?
4. Give some important characteristics of effective writing in business.
5. What is "you–attitude" in business writing?
6. Explain the function of tone in making communication truly effective.
7. Define the role of the reader in determining the form and style of business letters.
8. How do we make our writing natural?
9. To what extent does clarity of writing depend on the clarity of thinking?
10. Why should we avoid using jargon and clichés in business letters or memos?

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Why do most of us find it difficult to convey our thoughts in written form? How can we overcome these difficulties?
2. Do pre-writing thinking and post-writing revising help the writer? Please discuss.
3. "It is simple to be difficult, but very difficult to be simple while writing." Elucidate.
4. How does extensive reading help in writing effectively?
5. Reflect on the value of short and simple sentences in creating a lucid style.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. Change the following expressions into more natural language:
   (i) Pursuant to
   (ii) Prior to the receipt of
   (iii) It has come to my attention
   (iv) The undersigned will
   (v) Hoping for the favour of a reply
2. Rewrite each of the following sentences to reflect more positive thoughts:
   (i) To avoid further confusion and delay, our Assistant Engineer will visit your place and try to rectify the problem.
   (ii) I was not invited to the party, so I did not come.
   (iii) The company will not hold the wages you have earned.
   (iv) He left no plan untried.
   (v) Do not let carelessness cause an accident when working on the machines.
3. Change the following sentences from passive to active voice:
   (i) I am sorry to find that you were not promoted this year.
   (ii) This is a suitable time for the new project to be started.
   (iii) I am extremely astonished at your behaviour.
   (iv) It is now time for the applications to be invited.
   (v) The idle candidates were selected.
4. Write the correct form of the verb given in brackets in the blank space.
   (i) On _______ the news, the meeting was postponed. (receive)
   (ii) We were surprised to ______ our boss there. (find)
   (iii) By _______ early, they avoided traffic jams. (leave)
   (iv) Do not let me prevent you from _______ what is right. (do)
   (v) He was charged with _______ into a house. (break)

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. To complete the function of the written word, we require:
   (a) three persons
   (b) one person
   (c) two persons
   (d) four persons
2. In business, the purpose of writing is mainly to:
   (a) entertain
   (b) inform
   (c) persuade
   (d) Both (b) and (c)
3. Informative writing focuses primarily on the:
   (a) reader
   (b) subject under discussion
   (c) latest news
   (d) writer
4. In writing business letters, one has to be:
   (a) formal
   (b) dull
   (c) conventional
   (d) friendly

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

5. Technical accuracy of language means:
   (a) direct narrative
   (b) active voice
   (c) correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation
   (d) simplicity
6. The principles of effective writing include:
   (a) brevity
   (b) clarity
   (c) accuracy
   (d) all of the above
7. In a sentence, the verb agrees in number and person with its:
   (a) object
   (b) subject
   (c) adverb
   (d) preposition
8. How many kinds of articles are there in English?
   (a) Three: *a*, *an*, and *the*
   (b) Two: *definitive* and *indefinitive*
   (c) One: a
   (d) Both a) and b)
9. "There", as an introductory subject:
   (a) requires the verb to agree with its unreal subject
   (b) requires the verb to agree with the real subject that comes after it
   (c) requires the verb to agree with the object
   (d) is always singular
10. In issuing instructions, one should avoid the:
   (a) passive voice
   (b) active voice
   (c) imperative form
   (d) subjunctive form

ENDNOTES

1. Muriel Harris, *Guide to Grammar and Usage* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002).
2. William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*, New York: Harper, 1998.

7

Non-verbal Skills

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone"

—John Keats

Communication at Work

In his first week at the Indian Institute of Management, Ravindra had a misunderstanding with one of his classmates. One fine evening, Rishi stormed into Ravindra's room when he was studying. He asked Ravindra for a book, the work of a Nobel laureate, that Rishi had borrowed from the library. Giving Rishi the book was not an issue, but the way Rishi asked for it surprised Ravindra. Rishi came into the room and said rather abruptly: "What the hell are you going to do with the book? Why not hand it over to me?" This sounded a bit insulting to Ravindra; he felt that for some reason Rishi thought he could not read or understand the book. He was hurt. Still, he gave Rishi the book as he was not studying from it at that time.

Though Ravindra did not tell Rishi that he did not like his language and tone, Rishi could tell something was wrong from Ravindra's face. Before leaving, he told Ravindra that that was the usual way he spoke with his friends and he should not be offended. Initially, Ravindra was not satisfied by this explanation, but after interacting with Rishi for a few weeks, he no longer minded his brusque style.

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Know the meaning and characteristics of non-verbal communication.
2. Understand the function of body talk in fully interpreting the underlying message of words.
3. Learn positive gestures, body movements, and facial expressions.
4. Recognize different cues and clues indicated by facial expressions, gestures, postures, body movements, and eye contact.
5. Understand silence as a mode of communication.
6. Learn how to build rapport.

WHAT IS NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION?

Non-verbal means not involving words or speech. Thus, non-verbal communication refers to the wordless messages received through gestures, signs, body movements, facial expressions, tone of voice, colour, time, space and style of writing, and choice of words.

Animals communicate their deepest feelings of love, anger, joy, hunger, and desire for mating through gestures, cries, whistling, body movements, and many other signals known through instinct. Of course, the exact interpretation of such signs and gestures does vary, but they are mutually understood within their species.

It is human beings alone who have evolved the language of words to convey our thoughts in a structured manner. Still, in moments of excitement, we tend to convey our feelings and emotions of joy, love, anger, and hatred by smiling, shouting, frowning, or using other wordless clues. Such non-verbal expressions of feelings come spontaneously. However, at times, we can deliberately lace our words with expressive tones, gestures, and facial expressions to heighten and modify the meaning of our words.

Some non-verbal message usually accompanies a verbal message. The verbal and the non-verbal together form the total meaning of the message communicated. In addition to the words uttered by the speaker, there is also usually something unsaid and implied, so to fully understand the message, the listener should pay attention to body language and non-verbal signals.

1

Know the meaning and characteristics of non-verbal communication.

Unspoken messages are transmitted by non-verbal clues and signs (body movements and gestures). They exist in the form of meta-communication and kinesic communication (body talk). The receiver's response to them influences the interpretation of messages received through words. Body language is not mind-reading. Rather, it involves instant revelations—flashes that are communicated from one subconscious to another. There is no deliberate attempt to give or receive non-verbal messages. The exchange happens spontaneously.

Meta-communication is an implied meaning conveyed by the choice of words, tone of voice, fumbling, silence, or omission. It is a message communicated not by words, but along with words.

Meta-communication

Meta-communication is an implied meaning conveyed by the choice of words, tone of voice, fumbling, silence, or omission. It is a message communicated not by words, but along with words. Meta-communication can be intentional or unintentional. For example, consider the following statement: "Try to reach the airport well on time." The remark offers sound advice. But the sentence, without stating it explicitly, implies that the listener is not punctual or is habitually late. Similarly, when someone wishes another person "best of luck", it generally conveys good wishes, but also implies a sense of anxiety or fear that something untoward may happen.

Paralanguage includes pitch, loudness of voice, and speech breakers such as "er", "ah", and "uh", which can show hesitation.

Meta-communication also occurs through the use of paralanguage. *Paralanguage* includes pitch, loudness of voice, and speech breakers such as "er", "ah", and "uh", which show hesitation or caution. Just as a normal or low pitch of speaking shows calm and control, a loud voice communicates displeasure or anger. Prolonged gaps, pauses, or silence are also forms of paralanguage. When a leader speaks slowly with many uses of "er" and "uh", he or she is usually being very careful and suspicious.

Kinesic communication is the message conveyed through non-verbal acts in the form of body movements such as gestures, winking, smiling, posture, or style of dressing and grooming, which send out a message that supports or contradicts the verbal message.

Kinesic Communication

Kinesic communication is the message conveyed through non-verbal acts in the form of body movements such as gestures, winking, smiling, posture, or style of dressing and grooming, which send out a message that supports or contradicts the verbal message.

Kinesic communication is also known as body language or body talk. It includes the entire non-verbal behaviour of the communicator. A non-verbal act is often subconscious. It transmits unstated feelings and attitudes and hidden intentions. Non-verbal signs offer clues to the receiver, and help the receiver understand and correctly perceive the total meaning of the message.

A non-verbal message conveyed through body movements is known as *leakage*. A successful receiver is able to observe and interpret the leakage. Though it is not possible to have an exhaustive account of all leakages and what they signify, a few examples that illustrate the modifying effect of body movements on communication are given in Exhibit 7.1.

Exhibit 7.1
Some Examples of Kinesic Communication

Non-verbal Acts	***Possible Unspoken Idea***
A senior looks at his watch while you are talking	"Your time is over, go away."
A person winks after saying something	"Do not believe what I just said."
An executive is always late for meetings	"I am always very busy." "I am not bothered about your time."
A speaker prefers to speak from the floor rather than the dais.	"I want to show my sense of equality with you (the audience)."

CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

2

Understand the function of body talk in fully interpreting the underlying message of words.

A writer's style or a speaker's tone of voice and facial expressions indicate his or her attitude and feelings beyond what is being expressed through words.

- Non-verbal communication occurs via instrumental body movements. When someone moves their hands to perform some function, such as wash their face, it is an instrumental movement and not a symbolic clue. Most body movements, with the exception of instrumental movements, have meaning and communicate something. Communicative movements act as non-verbal clues. For example, wiping one's mouth when confronted by an authority figure communicates nervousness and using the hand gesture to wave goodbye communicates courtesy and friendship.
- Non-verbal cues may be conscious or unconscious. They reveal the speaker's state of mind and inner feelings and emotions, which may be real or affected. Trained actors and orators intentionally use gestures, facial expressions, body movements, and postures to create the intended impact on their audience. Effective writers use stylistic devices to convey hidden feelings and attitudes.

  However, in real-life, most people betray their inner thoughts and feelings through unconscious signs. The speaker may not realize that he or she is conveying these feelings. For example, consider the following statement on bilateral talks between two unfriendly countries made by the representatives with tense facial expression or without a smile: "The meeting has made history."
- The interpretation of non-verbal clues differs from person to person. For example, if a listener maintains continuous eye contact, the speaker may take it as a sign of perfect attention and full acceptance, but to someone else it could be a sign that the listener feels helpless or trapped.

  The visible is usually more convincing than what is heard as it may support or contradict the verbal message. Non-verbal clues are often taken as indicators of reality. For example, the pale face of a person in danger contradicts his or her claim of fearlessness. The trembling of a speaker indicates nervousness even though the speaker may say, "I feel encouraged and inspired to stand before such a learned audience." Dress or language can also reveal the communicator's status or education.

Dress or language can also reveal the communicator's status or education.

- The same gestures may also be interpreted differently in different circumstances. For example, consider two colleagues, A and B, who are good friends. When A pats B on the back endearingly to congratulate her on a successful project, the pat is taken as a friendly gesture. Now, suppose A is the chairperson of a promotions committee and B is a candidate for promotion. To create a misunderstanding between A and B, someone tells B that A, as chairperson, opposed her promotion. When, on meeting her the next evening, A congratulates B and as usual pats her on the back, she recoils. This example shows that the relationship between two people also determines how they interpret each other's gestures.

CLASSIFICATION OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The symbolic meaning associated with different body movements, gestures, and expressions is only suggestive and not specific in its import.

Non-verbal forms of communication include the following modes—paralanguage, meta-communication, kinesics, grooming, proxemics, and time language. The symbolic meaning associated with different body movements, gestures, and expressions is only suggestive and not specific in its import.

Ekman's Classification of Communicative Movements

Let us consider Ekman's classification[1] of communicative movements into five types:

- *Emblems:* When the movement of body parts represents ideas visually, the communicative act is emblematic, meaning it reflects the meaning non-verbally through a physical image. For instance, a circle made with the thumb and index finger, with the rest of the fingers stretched out straight, acts as an emblem for the "okay" sign in America. This sign is meaningful for those cultures that use the English alphabet. The circle is an image of the letter "O". But in a different culture, the same circle "O" can represent a coin, just as it does in Japan. Another instance is that of the arbitrary gesture of holding up the thumb, which in Japan refers to a "boss", and in India, means "perfect."
- *Illustrators:* Illustrators are movements of hands and arms for representing the size, shape, frequency, or speed of something. For instance, widely stretched arms show enormity of size. According to Ekman, a speaker uses illustrators when he or she is enthusiastic or fully involved in the subject being discussed. In such a state, the speaker involuntarily dramatizes ideas by using the movements of arms to focus on an idea or an event.
- *Body manipulators:* These are acts of touching one's own body or an object for no reason. Examples include fidgeting with jewellery or touching one's buttons. These are unintentional acts. However, some consider them to be clues of nervousness, anxiety, or boredom.
- *Facial expressions:* The most expressive part of our bodies are our faces. Our faces reflect our thoughts and feelings. Smiling, frowning, blushing, paleness, and so on reveal positive and negative feelings. These are emotional expressions that show on the face. The most fundamental emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, surprise, and fear are involuntarily marked on our faces.
- *Regulators—eye movements:* Eye movements such as squinting, winking, and staring are called regulators. Eye contact, a smile, or a frown is a strong message of interest, involvement, acceptance, rejection, or annoyance. Other people notice these and form impressions about the person communicating based on these. While communicating, remember the popular saying: the face reflects the mind; the eyes reveal the heart. For example, eye contact shows attentiveness and interest. On the other hand, rolling one's eyes is associated with restlessness and contempt. Staring can communicate threat. Wide open eyes show wonder or shock. A wink following a statement negates the seriousness of the statement made. Similarly, raised eyebrows or a wrinkled forehead symbolizes objection and questioning. Avoiding eye contact shows nervousness or evasiveness.

A favourable impact can be created by using eye contact, natural facial expressions and eye movements, and a smile that reflects a pleasant state of mind.

3

Learn positive gestures, body movements, and facial expressions.

Face Facts

A smile shows that an interaction has been pleasant for the participant in a conversation. Perhaps, it would not be wrong to say that in most face-to-face communications, the most positive impression is made by a smiling face. The situation may be an interview, a negotiation, or a one-on-one meeting. Even in telephone conversations, one is able to feel the impact of a smiling voice. Unlike smiling, frowning is uninviting. It might suggest to other people that the person wants to be left alone.

By practising positive body language, one can gradually develop positive feelings. Body language can induce a state of mind that can act as a positive shield against negative feelings. One can learn to communicate sincerity and concern in business dealings by using positive body language to support words of greetings, courtesy, and customer care. Avoid negative leakage. Learn to look confident, assertive, and positive. Avoid appearing nervous, aggressive, rude, pompous, indifferent or overbearing, and superior to others.

As discussed earlier, most people are not aware of the non-verbal messages they give out to others. Therefore, it is important to develop awareness about various body movements and gestures and their possible interpretations by others. The associated messages of some significant body movements and gestures are discussed in this section.

Most people are not aware of the non-verbal messages they give out to others. Therefore, it is important to develop awareness about various body movements and gestures and their possible interpretations by others.

Positive Gestures

When a person speaks, his or her hands move freely to indicate the meaning of his or her words. Such gestures are natural. They cannot be avoided. They give strength to the speaker's words. But gestures should be seen in terms of whether they have a positive or negative message. Although gestures are spontaneous, we can learn to monitor and use positive gestures and minimize, if not avoid, the negative ones.

Positive gestures are body signals that make the communicator look relaxed, confident, and polite. Positive listening gestures include leaning a little towards the other person, tilting the head, making eye contact, and gently nodding as a sign of agreement or understanding. Such gestures encourage the speaker to a great extent. Positive speaking gestures include keeping the hands open and avoiding clutching or folding them across the chest.

Positive gestures are body signals that make the communicator look relaxed, confident, and polite.

When walking, keep your head upright. Hands should swing freely by the sides. Eyes should look straight in front. Steps should be well measured and steady. Many people carry books, files, and documents held against the chest. This makes the person look nervous and defensive. To avoid being perceived as a nervous person, one could carry them on one side. We can use our gestures to politely communicate what we want when we are unable to speak or are interrupting someone. For example, during a serious, formal conversation, if you are offered water or tea, you may politely hold up your palm to ask the other person to wait or to decline if you do not want to interrupt the conversation. Similarly, if you are on the phone and someone asks you something, you can politely request him or her to wait a minute by holding up one finger or some other symbolic gesture. This ensures that you do not ignore the visitor.

4

Recognize different cues and clues given by facial expressions, gestures, postures, body movements, and eye contact.

Gestures can be adequate substitutes for words. We should develop the skill of using them effectively. Equally importantly, we should recognize our negative gestures and learn to hide them.

Negative Gestures

Negative gestures involve certain body movements, postures, gestures, or non-verbal activities such as shaking, tapping one's feet, looking at the watch, and so on. Putting one's hands in the pockets is also a negative gesture. If you put one hand in your pocket, it usually suggests arrogance. If you put both, it might show nervousness. However, if you want to look confident, but not nervous or arrogant, thrust your hands in your pockets, then keep the thumb out, so that you do not fully insert your hands inside the pockets.

Take note of the clues in Exhibit 7.2.

Lateral Gestures

Besides non-verbal gestures that convey wordless messages through body language and facial expressions, there are other wordless signs of power, position, taste, and culture such as decoration and size of one's office, dress, grooming, and so on. These are called lateral gestures and include the following broad categories: (a) physical setting, (b) dress—clothes and shoes, and (c) personal space.

Besides the non-verbal gestures that convey wordless messages through body language and facial expressions, there are lateral wordless signs of power, position, taste, and culture such as decoration and size of one's office, dress, grooming, and so on.

Exhibit 7.2
Non-verbal Clues

Signs of nervousness include the following:

putting hands in one's pockets, covering the mouth with the hand while speaking, scratching, nail biting, sideways glances, finger-drumming, clearing the throat too often, foot tapping, hand-wringing, crossing arms or legs, a slumped posture, sitting on the edge of the chair, rocking one's legs, looking at the ceiling, straightening one's tie, fixing one's hair, speaking too fast or too haltingly

The following are the loudest gestures of nervousness:

adjusting one's glasses; blinking excessively; fidgeting with jewellery, watches, or cuff-links; clicking a pen; frequently sipping water; playing with a paperweight; smoking

Gestures showing aggression are as follows:

staring, pointing at someone, showing one's fist, folding both arms, bending over someone

Gestures showing rudeness include the following:

shaking hands too firmly or too limply; standing too close; whispering at a social gathering; talking, checking e-mail, or sending text messages on one's cell phone or BlackBerry in meetings or social situations; working while someone is talking; yawning; smirking; glancing at the clock frequently during a conversation; making "tut-tut" sounds; grooming, specially fixing one's hair, when listening or speaking; gathering and folding papers before the meeting is over

Gestures that show self-importance and should be carefully avoided in situations that demand solutions and negotiated settlements are:

keeping one's eyes closed while talking, tilting one's head backwards while talking, looking at the tip of one's nose while talking, pursing the mouth, steepling the fingers, peering over the top of one's spectacles, waving a glass or key while talking

Gestures showing lack of good sense include:

banging the table instead of laughing at a joke, chewing on the end of a pen, using air quotes and making a "T" in the air when asking for tea, waving one's hands around excessively while talking, wringing one's hands, opening or closing buttons or fidgeting with one's watch strap while talking, wiping one's hands on the face, touching the nose time and again

Some authority figures, without saying anything, can make one feel subordinate by behaving in the following ways, which display a sense of superiority:

not responding to or acknowledging the other's greeting, staring, shouting orders, standing too close, leaning or sitting on someone's desk, standing behind someone's seat and watching over his or her shoulder as he or she works, smoking in someone's space, attending to one's cell phone during meetings, making any unwanted or unwarranted physical contact, continuing to work when others address you, having a crushing handshake or holding the other person's hand for too long, reclining in the chair with hands folded behind the head

Creating a feeling of subordination and hierarchy adversely affects good working relationships and makes others uncomfortable. Therefore, executives should avoid such power posturing.

Creating a feeling of subordination and hierarchy adversely affects good working relationships and makes others uncomfortable.

Physical Setting

An executive's position of power may be gauged from the size and furnishings of his or her office. The quality of furniture adds to the impression created by the setting of the room.

In an office, the executive's table is usually placed a few steps away from the door. This compels visitors or subordinates to walk up to him or her and feel his or her presence. Space is one of the factors involved in indicating the proximity of a relationship.

Dress

Clothes can define a person. It is one of the first things people notice. A person's clothes—their texture, colour, design, style, and stitching—reveal their taste and aesthetic sense.

In business, it is important to pay attention to one's clothes, especially at an interview or presentation. While one should look impressive, it is important not to be overdressed. Instead of highly fashionable and trendy designs and styles of suits, business executives should favour elegant, conventional styles. Clothes should not distract from the conversation.

In business, it is important to pay attention to one's clothes, especially at an interview or presentation. While one should look impressive, it is important not to be overdressed.

In addition, one's clothes should be neither too loose nor too tight. It is important to feel comfortable in one's clothes, particularly in a high-stress situation such as an interview or presentation. Never try a new set of clothes for such occasions. New clothes may not sit comfortably, and they may distract the wearer from time to time. So, the first rule to follow is the principle of comfort.

Shoes should also be formal and in keeping with the colour of the clothes. Business bags, briefcases, handbags, or portfolios also indicate one's status as a professional. An overstuffed handbag is not as impressive as a sleek briefcase or a smart handbag.

Personal Space

The personal space between two interacting persons indicates the level of formality, informality, intimacy, or distance between them. Business executives should observe the personal territory that each individual wishes to enjoy. Breaking into someone's personal territory is likely to make him or her feel uncomfortable. When placed under such an intrusion, an important person is bound to show displeasure and signs of withdrawal from the interaction. Thus it is also important to understand the non-verbal message of displeasure and correct the space-relationship to have a fruitful interaction.

Two interacting parties have a zone of invisible space between them, which is delineated by the nature of their relationship. A public figure for instance, would be used to more space around him or her, whereas one would maintain a smaller distance with a friend or relative.

Two interacting parties have a zone of invisible space between them, which is delineated by the nature of their relationship.

According to the nature of relationships, there are four distinct zones: (i) the public zone, (ii) the social zone, (iii) the friendly zone and (iv) the intimate zone.

The *public zone* is the widest territory between the speaker and audience. A public speaker addresses a large gathering of persons. He or she needs to speak from a raised platform at a distance of 10 to 15 feet from the audience. The distance and elevation of the speaker provide visibility and a sense of isolation and superiority for the speaker. An example of the public zone is seen in the armed services, where it is normal practice for army officers to issue commands from a distance of 8 to 10 steps from the troops.

A *social zone* is the space maintained between people who are known to each other in a formal way. All business transactions are to be treated as social interactions. An executive should keep a distance of 4 to 10 feet from his or her audience. This space will ensure the comfort of the listeners, especially if they happen to be seniors, customers, or clients. At this distance, one can observe the body language and facial expressions of the other party closely. The social zone will be applicable for new colleagues at work, new acquaintances, and small group training situations.

The *friendly zone* is the distance observed at business parties, seminars, and other informal business gatherings and get-togethers. In such situations, people remain close to each other, but not close enough to jostle against each other. The gap maintained is nearly 1½ to 4 feet. At this distance, people can comfortably chat, laugh, and joke with each other without invading each other's space.

The *intimate zone* is the distance between an individual and those he or she loves, such as close relatives and family members. This zone is not appropriate in a professional environment.

The *intimate zone* is the distance between an individual and those he or she loves, such as close relatives and family members. This zone is not appropriate in a professional environment. In this zone, people tend to be near enough to whisper, about 6 to

18 inches. This nearness signals closeness among those involved in the conversation. However, this close distance is possible only when one is sure of the relationship because it is a zone in which one can touch the other person. In all other zones, including the friendly zone, one should not risk touching the other person. Touching can be strongly offensive.

Within the intimate zone, there are, according to the level of intimacy, further zones/bands. They are:

- *Near intimate sphere (up to 6 inches):* The zone for lovers, partners, children, family members
- *Distant intimate sphere (6 inches to 18 inches):* The zone for close friends, close colleagues and relatives

Both these spheres are sensitive. The difficulty lies in knowing how close is too close. When our intimate zone is intruded upon, we may feel embarrassed and, at times, threatened by the unwanted approach. We may have a "flight or fight" response, either confronting the intruder or removing ourselves from the situation. If our friendly zone is violated, we hide our discomfort by smiling or raising questions.

There are times when one cannot help having personal and intimate spaces violated, such as when travelling in a crowded compartment or entering a packed lift. In such situations, people are not usually resentful of others because body language indicates their helplessness. Moreover, to avoid discomfort to anyone, it is best to avoid eye contact with others in such situations and to try to stand straight to avoid physical contact with anyone.

RESPONDING TO POWER POSTURING

Knowledge of non-verbal skills strengthens the communicative competence of professionals. But these skills do not give one the power to control others.

Knowledge of non-verbal skills strengthens the communicative competence of professionals. However, these skills do not give one the power to control others. Understanding others' body language does not mean having control over their responses or actions. It only means understanding them and their meaning better, which is helpful in fulfilling one's purpose.

One situation where understanding non-verbal communication can help a business executive is if he or she encounters power posturing by superiors or colleagues, which may lead to a sense of being subordinated or dominated. Consider a situation in which your boss, known for his arrogance and strictness, quietly enters your room from his side office and stands behind you. He keeps watching what you are working on for a few minutes. There is silence. You feel deeply nervous and upset. Finally, he says, "So, what's on?" in a stern voice. In such a state of nervousness, your body talk should not reveal nervousness. Nervousness can indicate that you were doing something wrong. Blurting out "Nothing" in a shaky voice could imply that you were wasting your time. Instead, you should reply with confidence by standing up and facing him, greeting him, and calmly saying exactly what you have been doing.

Power posturing makes its victim feel upset and nervous. It is the deliberate use of body language and behaviour to make the target feel inferior.

- Power posturing makes its victim feel upset and nervous. It is the deliberate use of body language and behaviour to make the target feel inferior. The person responsible for it may shout, bully, not respond, interrupt, or pretend not to notice the target by continuing to work. Some interviewers choose to make interviewees nervous by using some of these gestures. For instance, when the interviewee asks permission to enter the room, they give a loud response, "Come in!" Upon entering, the interviewee stands before the interviewer, but he or she continues to work, completely ignoring the interviewee. After a few minutes, the interviewer asks the interviewee his or her name, but by this time the interviewee's confidence is already drained.

- When encountering power posturing, it is best to remain calm and not feel hurt. The power posturer's goal is to bully the victim into such a state of mind. It is important to remember that the rude behaviour is not personal, but is directed by the particular professional situation at hand. The victim should not begin questioning his or her worth and should avoid nervous gestures such as wiping the mouth, biting one's nails, or looking lost in thought. Instead, the victim should analyse the technique used by the other person. It is difficult but possible to confront power posturing skillfully and allow yourself to remain comfortable.
- If the victim is sitting when confronted by power posturing, he or she should not sit at the edge of the seat. This will make him or her look nervous and ready to run away. Instead, for comfort's sake, he or she could cross his or her legs, but not the arms at the same time. The "double cross" looks very defensive.
- The victim should use comforting gestures, such as touching the earlobes or the back of the neck or stroking the hair, skillfully. These acts restore confidence. But they should be done sparingly so that the bully does not take them as signs of nervousness or anxiety.
- The victim should maintain a reassuring standing posture. He or she can keep nervousness away by standing in a relaxed manner, with the arms down by his or her sides and feet apart by 9 to 10 inches. This posture gives a firm, balanced footing.
- The victim should be assertive. Most people tend to respond to an adverse situation by either fighting or fleeing. An alternative way of responding to unpleasant behaviour or negative situations is by being assertive. Assertiveness should not be taken to mean imposing one's own will on others. It means understanding others' points of view while putting one's own point forward objectively. The victim should state what he or she thinks is right without being influenced by emotional considerations. In both fight and flight responses, one is affected by emotions. In being assertive, one should express facts as they are and say what should be said. The ultimate goal is to convince the other person that the assertion is correct.

> Assertiveness should not be taken to mean imposing one's own will on others.

To be assertive, one has to learn the skills of discussing and negotiating. However, negotiation is a time-consuming process and requires patience. Impatience makes one react aggressively and fight or run away (flight). Both these reactions—aggression and passivity—have negative effects. Aggression negatively affects the other party by hurting their feelings and provoking them to react with similar behaviour (anger). Passivity, on the other hand, is frustrating. It results in the feeling of failure and suggests that others take you for granted. Hence, the proper way to respond is to say what you want to say, with the firm conviction of being right.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Most verbal communication is laced with emotional overtones expressed through body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and modulations of voice. These non-verbal elements indicate what is intended but not verbalized by the speaker. Those who pay attention to these non-verbal gestures can find something additional in their understanding of the message; the ability to do so can be improved.

1. *Watch and read non-verbal clues:*
   - Interpret non-verbal clues in relation to the situation and culture accurately.
   - Be careful about false non-verbal clues deliberately given to deceive you.

- Consider the non-verbal message, along with what the speaker's words say, to know the total message.
- Respond with self-control, but do not react to non-verbal signals.

2. *Know your body language:*
    - Develop self-awareness by visualizing yourself as others see you and interpreting your body movements and gestures.
    - Try to develop positive gestures and expressions to present yourself as you wish to be seen by others—as a confident, pleasing, well-meaning team worker.
    - Do not give conflicting non-verbal cues.
    - Convey sincerity through your tone of voice and facial expression.
    - Use symbols, non-verbal cues (gestures, posture, and so on), intonation (volume, pace of delivery, and enunciation), expressions, and so on to reinforce and clarify the meaning of the message.
    - Maintain eye contact with the audience.
    - Smile genuinely.
    - Avoid power posturing.
    - Remember that the first impression is the most important and lasting impression. Hence, present yourself well to make a positive and lasting impression.

Culture, like language, lays down rules for accepted social behaviour of people sharing a set of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and ideas.

3. *Know about culture-specific body language:* Though body language is a universal phenomenon, its meaning differs across cultures. Culture, like language, lays down rules for accepted social behaviour of people sharing a set of knowledge, beliefs, practices, and ideas. In present day multi-cultural workplaces, communication between persons of different nations and backgrounds requires an understanding of non-verbal acts such as eye contact, touch, and the sense of time in different cultures. People attach great significance to what they learn from non-verbal clues in addition to what they hear through words. Non-verbal clues are taken as true indicators of the speaker's subconscious mind. They are, therefore, considered more reliable than words. Be careful not to use non-verbal clues that violate the cultural norms of other countries. Persons who travel and work abroad or in multi-cultural environments must realize that gestures may not mean the same thing they do in their own country. Some of those gestures might even be unwelcome or offensive.

Touching has limited communicative symbolism. It primarily conveys intimacy and closeness and also love. But the act of touching has its meaning in relation to its context.

4. *Know about touching and its context:* Touching has limited communicative symbolism. It primarily conveys intimacy and closeness and also love. But its meaning is very closely linked to its context. Take the case of a doctor, who can touch a patient of the opposite sex when medically necessary, without offending the patient. In this context, the doctor's body movements, touching, and so on are instrumental acts, performing certain tasks. They are not communicative body movements that reflect the doctor's state of mind, emotions, or attitude. The context characterizes the nature of a body movement and determines whether it is a communicative or instrumental message.

5

Understand silence as a mode of communication.

Among lovers, parents, family members, and very close friends, touching is a normal gesture and goes unnoticed, but between strangers it is at once marked and may be objectionable. Even among those who share the zone of intimacy, only some parts of the body can be touched while communicating.

Touch usually communicates intimacy. However, which part of the body can be touched by whom and when depends upon the culture of the people involved. In western countries, men and women can walk freely holding each others' hands in public. But in India, Pakistan, and other conservative countries, men and women generally do not do so in public.

To refer to themselves when speaking to someone, Americans may place one hand on their chest, whereas the Japanese may place a finger on their noses. But some psychologists consider nose touching to be a Freudian symbol of sexuality.

Like other emblematic body movements, eye contact is also culturally decoded in different ways. Eye contact is an important clue of attentive listening. In most western countries, it is considered polite to maintain eye contact when speaking to someone. On the other hand, in Japan and India, subordinates often do not make eye contact when speaking and listening to their supervisors. It is possible that an American may consider a Japanese person to be impolite if he or she keeps his or her eyes lowered during a conversation. In India, this may speak of humility, not shame.

Similarly, silence is communicative, but it may say different things to people of different cultures. For instance, in Japan, one may prefer to remain silent when one does not know much about the matter being discussed. In India, silence may indicate agreement. In the United States, silence may be seen as a sign of withdrawal and non-participation. An American usually looks for involvement and participation through raising questions or doubts.

Silence is communicative, but it may say different things to people of different cultures.

No one can make an exhaustive study of all possible cultural variations of every body movement. However, this is an attempt to highlight the importance of context and cultural differences in the interpretation of body movements and gestures.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

6

Learn how to build rapport.

In life and in business dealings, communication can sometimes break down. This can happen when one party is too keen to talk about its own point of view without regard for the other's interest or understanding. Sometimes, discussions become heated and argumentative and reach no satisfactory conclusion. Or a meeting might become boring because the same point is being repeated by the speaker without involving other members in the discussion. Such communication breakdowns do happen. No one wants the discussion to fail, but communication often does fail, mainly, because of two reasons:

1. There is no rapport between the speaker and the listener.
2. There is no balance between speaking and listening.

The purpose of all communication is to be useful and harmonious. Harmony is the key word in personal and business communication. Harmony between the ideas of the speaker and the listener is the final aim of communication. The first step in achieving this is establishing a rapport between the non-verbal languages of the speaker and listener, which is reflected in the pace of the conversation.

The purpose of all communication is to be useful and harmonious.

Harmony is the key word in personal and business communication.

For a fruitful discussion or dialogue, both the speaker and the listener should be on the same wavelength. This means that the two persons should use similar body language, particularly speed, tone of voice, pitch, words, gestures, eye contact, and timing. The non-verbal language used by the speaker should reflect the body language of the other person. You may notice that the word *listener* is being avoided in this context. This is because communication usually fails when the speaker treats the other person only as a listener. The speaker should not spend most of the time speaking and forcing the other person to listen without an opportunity to respond. A guideline regarding how time should be split between speaking and listening is a 30/70 ratio, which means that one should spend approximately 30 per cent of the time speaking and 70 per cent listening.

When one devotes 70 per cent of conversation time to listening, it gives one the time to study the body language of the other person and observe his or her state of mind and true feelings. To help the other person know how we perceive his or her response, our own body language should hold a mirror to his or her non-verbal language. This does not mean our body language should imitate the other person's. It means that our behaviour, verbal and non-verbal, should reflect an understanding of the ideas and feelings of the other person. The two behaviours should be complementary.

If two people speak at different speeds, pitch, and volume, neither would be able to keep pace with the other. Consider the following example:

Sonali, a senior HR executive, sat slumped in her chair, disappointed. She had come to office very happy. She had prepared a long document on how to reduce the company's costs without cutting the number of employees working in core departments of the organization. She had approached the general manager to discuss her proposed plan before formally submitting it for the management's consideration.

When Sonali stood at the door of the general manager's office and asked him, "Can I discuss something with you? I have a very exciting plan to show you regarding how to cut costs without reducing the number of employees. I think you will like it", the general manager did not look at her. Instead, he kept on typing. After a few minutes of silence, without turning his gaze from the screen, he said, "I have to finish this report first. Maybe later."

Communication in this case definitely broke down. There was no rapport or understanding between Sonali and the general manager. Understandably, Sonali was frustrated.

Now, suppose the general manager had responded to Sonali differently. If he had stopped writing, turned to Sonali, made eye contact, and said, "Wonderful! Let me first finish this report. We can meet in an hour. I will call you as soon as I am free. Will that be fine?" Sonali would have felt satisfied. Such a response would have matched her own enthusiasm and she would have felt valued for her ideas and validated as a colleague. This exchange would have satisfied both parties, as the general manager would have had time to complete his report undisturbed, and Sonali would know her proposal would be given attention. What is significant in this second response is that the GM shows appreciation for Sonali's enthusiasm and her keenness to discuss her plan. He therefore uses the word "wonderful" to communicate his own excitement about the plan. He fixes a time to discuss it. He also lets Sonali know that the plan would be discussed without any disturbance when both parties were free. This exchange demonstrates a rapport between Sonali and the GM.

A simple non-verbal act in everyday life may make someone feel unhappy. For instance, if someone calls their supervisor's cell phone to ask an urgent question twice, but does not get a response either time, he or she will be disappointed. The person may feel belittled because their supervisor knows their mobile number but choses to ignore it. The lack of rapport can be frustrating until the next time they communicate.

Some steps to establish rapport include:

- Develop the habit of talking less and listening and observing others more.
- Do not dominate the discussion.
- Maintain a natural pace of conversation.
- Recognize the pace of others and match it as closely as possible.
- Try to establish rapport during the first few minutes of the conversation.
- Do not introduce any controversial issues before creating this rapport.
- Avoid harsh criticism. Try to see reasons for differences of opinion and be tolerant of them.
- Focus on similarities of ideas.

These steps will help gradually overcome differences. Conflicting opinions will find resolution in the common understanding gained by both parties. In life, as in business, it is necessary to focus on those aspects of communication, verbal and non-verbal, that are shared.

SUMMARY

- Non-verbal communication involves the sending of messages through body movements, gestures, facial expressions, and other wordless channels such as space, time, and personal appearance. It works in tandem with the messages communicated by words.
- Non-verbal communication basically includes two types of communication: (i) meta-communication and (ii) kinesic communication.
- Meta-communication is effected through changes in pitch, tone of voice, and choice of words. Kinesic communication is via movement of body parts in certain ways, not to perform certain tasks but to involuntarily communicate subconscious feelings along with whatever is expressed by the spoken words.
- Communicative movements symbolize meanings. To be successful in knowing what others mean when they say something, listeners should pay attention to the communicative meaning of the speaker's body movements, facial expressions, eye contact, space, distance, and other non-verbal clues such as dress, hair style, and sense of time.
- To act and respond correctly in an intercultural context, one should know that different cultures interpret body language differently.
- Non-verbal communication is natural and spontaneous. One cannot control it, but it is possible to have good relationships with others by paying close attention to cues and clues that accompany words.
- Finally, it is also essential to develop skills of mutual understanding by creating rapport with the other person.

CASE: EVEREST TEXTILE MILLS

During the days of recession and growing unemployment, a job is considered a God-sent opportunity. There is not much choice in terms of place of work, position, or salary. The very first reaction is the decision to a job offer is to accept the opportunity of being employed.

Soon after completing his four-year program of B.E. (Civil) with a high first division, Sohan applied for the position of Assistant Engineer in response to an advertisement by the Building & Construction department of Everest Textile Mills. The mill was owned by the Kashiramkas, a well-known business family of Rajasthan. It was situated in Tipli, a semi-modernized village on the border of Haryana and Rajasthan. The village was connected only by roadways.

Nothing could dampen Sohan's enthusiasm to attend the interview and, if selected, accept the offer. At the interview, Sohan was a bit surprised to see the members of the selection committee. They all looked old, conservative, and semi-literate. The chief estate supervisor, the chief engineer, the project manager, and the mill owner himself were all either diploma-holders or non-matriculates. Sohan was able to sense their uneasiness whenever he answered their questions in English.

The committee members were all undoubtedly highly experienced persons with practical knowledge of construction work, design, material quality, soil integrity, and so on. The chief estate supervisor asked very searching, technical questions on structure and load, but in Rajasthani. When Sohan answered in English, the interviewer kept nodding and looked towards the other panelists when Sohan finished talking. The behaviour of the chief engineer was similar. He framed a project in broken Hindi, with a Bengali accent, and kept on saying "yes yes", and "thank you", when Sohan discussed the answer; he too turned towards Mr Kashiramka when Sohan finished talking. Finally, Mr Kashiramka asked Sohan if he would be able to live in a village and adjust to the rural life of the countryside. Sohan told him that he was a person of simple living and would have little difficulty in adapting. Mr Kashiramka appreciated Sohan's positive attitude and asked the chief engineer to show him the construction site.

Sohan toured the mill, which was spread out over a large distance, with hundreds of workers engaged in various sections. He was also taken to the Building & Construction department, which was located in a big, open area of the mill. It included the offices of the estate supervisor, the chief engineer, and four supervisors, the materials room, the fire brigade station, the power house, and the generator room.

The size of the mill and, especially, its Building & Construction department left Sohan highly impressed, and he decided to join the mill if offered the position. Before Sohan left, Mr Kashiramka told him about the close-knit relations of the workers. The mill was nearly 30 years old, and most of its employees were men who had been working there since its beginning. The workers had grown up together in the mill and had become family to each other. They had learnt their work through experience and looked down upon modern technical education and engineering degrees. They believed in practical knowledge and valued the expertise of their chief engineer, who was just a diploma-holder. They especially admired the insights and management skills of their estate supervisor, who could not even sign his name in English, but knew how to plan and get things done and helped the workers in times of need. During the conversation, Mr Kashiramka was intently studying Sohan, a newly graduated engineer hailing from an urban background. In fact, he would be the first university-educated engineer to join the homogeneous group of self-taught workers with no formal qualifications. On his first day, the workers looked at Sohan indifferently as he went around introducing himself as the new assistant engineer. Later, whenever he approached any group of workers and tried to start a conversation, they would remain tight-lipped. Gradually, he found that the supervisors would just shrug their shoulders whenever he suggested any change in their way of doing a particular job. Sohan was increasingly realizing that it was never easy to be accepted into a well-knit clan of people having their own idea on modern, technical education.

One day, in a meeting with contractors, supervisors, and senior workers from different sections, when Sohan wanted to support the plan of the chief engineer, the workers and the supervisor did not allow him to speak. When he tried to speak, they would interrupt and make distracting background noises. At the end of the meeting, the supervisor sitting next to Sohan deliberately stood up in such a way that Sohan's cup of tea fell onto his lap and hot tea spilled all over him. The casual way in which the supervisor swung around and left the room gave the impression that he had not even seen what he had done.

Questions to Answer

1. What conclusions do you think Sohan, the new assistant engineer, and the mill's employees reached about each other on the basis of non-verbal clues?
2. It seems that Mr Kashiramka, the owner of the mill, was not sure at the interview that Sohan, an urban, university-educated engineer, would be able to adjust to the rural mill work environment and culture. Was he right? What could be the reason for this skepticism?
3. Sohan does not respond or react to the workers' non-verbal expressions of their attitude towards him. Would his approach have been more effective if it were supported by some verbal communication?
4. Could this situation be avoided? If no, why? If yes, how?

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. "When you lack confidence in a situation, your body language will shout out to others that you are unsure of yourself." Discuss some of the ways in which body language can betray lack of confidence.
2. Discuss the difference between communicative and instrumental body movements. Give some examples of communicative gestures.
3. What is "leakage" in non-verbal communication?
4. How would you act when a power-posturing superior confronts you?
5. Does our culture influence our interpretation of the behaviour of those from other cultures? Give examples to support your answer.
6. Explain the process of meta-communication as an intentional form of communication.
7. Discuss the main classifications of non-verbal communication.
8. Besides non-verbal gestures and facial expressions, there are lateral gestures, which communicate without using words. Discuss some of these lateral non-verbal gestures with examples.
9. What does personal space signify in interpersonal communication at different levels? Discuss with examples.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Reflect on the guidelines for developing communication skills and the extent to which you are able to interpret non-verbal clues accurately.
2. How would you know if your communication with your colleagues is breaking down? Why do communication breakdowns happen?
3. What is "rapport"? How would you establish rapport between yourself and your audience?
4. (a) How would you interpret silence during a discussion between a Japanese businessman and your Indian colleague?

   (b) If a worker requests his supervisor for an increase in his salary and the supervisor remains silent, what should the worker gauge from his silence?
5. Consider the modifying influence of culture on non-verbal modes of communicating feelings and relationships in similar social contexts.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. Interpret the following postures. What do they signify?
   - Arms folded across the chest while discussing a problem with a friend
   - Staring with half-closed eyes
   - Pointing at someone with the index finger
   - Leaning over the desk of a subordinate while talking to him
   - Looking at the clock while someone is talking

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. Non-verbal communication does not involve:
   (a) silence
   (b) gestures
   (c) space
   (d) words
2. Meta-communication conveys a meaning that is:
   (a) implied
   (b) directly stated
   (c) incompletely conveyed
   (d) graphically communicated
3. Grooming is a form of non-verbal communication that is:
   (a) conscious
   (b) subconscious
   (c) arbitrary
   (d) hierarchical
4. Positive gestures are body signals that make you look:
   (a) arrogant
   (b) hurtful
   (c) nervous
   (d) relaxed
5. Between a speaker and a listener, the closest zone of personal space possible is:
   (a) friendly
   (b) social
   (c) intimate
   (d) public
6. The percentage of working time business executives spend in listening is:
   (a) 30 to 70 per cent (b) 40 to 50 per cent
   (c) 40 to 60 per cent (d) 20 to 80 per cent

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

7. By choosing to speak from the floor instead of the dais, a speaker can show the audience a sense of:
   (a) respect
   (b) closeness
   (c) equality
   (d) informality
8. If a speaker winks after saying something, it suggests to the audience that the subject is:
   (a) serious (b) non-serious
   (c) true (d) incredible
9. Paralanguage is a kind of action language that refers to:
   (a) actual words
   (b) body language
   (c) personal space
   (d) the tone of voice, speed of speech, and hesitation
10. Giving non-verbal messages is:
   (a) deliberate
   (b) spontaneous
   (c) tutored
   (d) a dramatic skill

ENDNOTE

1. Paul Ekman, *Emotions Revealed* (New York: Times Books, 2003).

8 Nature and Process of Communication

For communication to be effective, there has to be both information and meaning. And meaning requires communication.

— *Peter F. Drucker*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Know the principal concepts of communication.
2. Understand the communication process and its elements.
3. Know why communication succeeds or fails.
4. Recognize the techniques that help in communicating a message accurately.
5. Understand the universal elements in communication.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Mr Dutta's supervisor assigned him the task of meeting two of the company's most important clients on a given day. One of the meetings was more urgent, so Mr Dutta decided to see that client first. However, the meeting took much longer than expected and, as a result, he was quite late for his meeting with the second client.

As soon as the meeting with the first client ended, Mr Dutta had tried to contact the second client, but was not able to speak with him or leave a message. In the meanwhile, Mr Dutta's supervisor had spoken with the second client and was informed that Mr Dutta had not reached there.

At the end of the day, when Mr Dutta reported back to the office, his supervisor was furious with him. He tried his best to explain why he had been delayed, but the supervisor refused to listen. Mr Dutta thus failed to convince him that it was not his fault at all. He felt frustrated by the close-mindedness of his supervisor. He realized that one of the most difficult aspects of communication is to explain and convince, especially if the other person is already conditioned by some negative or contradictory communication from another source.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION

The skills of effective communication do not come automatically to most people. As a result, human beings are often poor communicators. Many people rarely realize that failure to achieve one's objectives in relationships, negotiations, or decision-making processes, is, to quite a large extent, owing to a failure in communicating one's purpose and ideas accurately to others. This may be a failure to communicate the content of the message, the form of the message, or both. Instances of such failures in communication are common in personal and organizational communications. It is common to hear colleagues or friends say something like, "Sorry, I did not realize that you wanted me to…", "I would have changed the arrangement, but nobody told me...", or even, "Well, I did not know you were to leave so soon…" and "But what was the point of this discussion?" Each of these remarks indicates the regret and disappointment felt by the speaker for having failed to live up to what was expected of him or her. Such remarks indicate a failure in communication. And when communication fails, the intended result is adversely affected. For instance, consider a situation in which the vice-president of a company asks his secretary to call an urgent meeting of all the managers, but, to his surprise, learns that the meeting has been scheduled for the next morning instead of the same day as he had expected. The secretary thought the "urgent" meant "serious" and not "immediate". In this instance,

Communication Snapshot 8.1

An Instance of Unclear Communication

Ritushree is a regional sales manager with Titan in Chennai. She reads about an upcoming B2B international trade conference in Mumbai. She is interested in attending it and immediately writes to the national sales manager, Sumit Chakraborti, at the head office in Bangalore, describing the conference and its relevance to their work. Her note is given in Exhibit 8.1.

Exhibit 8.1
Ritushree's Note

Sumit Chakraborti
National Sales Manager
Titan India Limited
Bangalore 560001

Dear Mr Chakraborti,

An international conference on B2B trade, which would be of great importance for us, is being held in Mumbai. The enclosed brochure shows that the business information to be shared at the conference would be of great value in expanding our corporate sales business. The registration fee is only ₹5,000, and the cost of travel and stay is about ₹8,000. Hence, ₹13,000 will be required per person. I am informing you about the conference now so that you can take a decision in time for me to make the necessary arrangements for train/flight bookings and hotel accommodations.

Ritushree

The national sales manager was thrilled to receive the memo and wrote back immediately to Ritushree. His response is given in Exhibit 8.2.

Exhibit 8.2
The Response to Ritushree's Note

Dear Ritushree,
Thanks for informing me about the B2B conference in Mumbai. I will certainly attend it. Please make all the necessary arrangements for me as suggested in your memo.

Sumit Chakraborti

This response left Ritushree feeling quite frustrated. She was perplexed about her supervisor's decision to exclude her and instead attend the conference himself. Unfortunately, she did not realize that her message to him was not precise and clear. It was ambiguously worded, using phrases such as "importance for us" and "expanding our business". She was looking for permission to attend the conference herself, but she had failed to clearly say so in her memo. She started her communication by praising the conference, but instead, she should have begun by directly asking for permission to attend the conference.

the receiver missed the purpose of communication because the vice-president did not clearly and precisely specify the time of the meeting. The secretary must have regretted that the vice-president's intended purpose was not accomplished because of this miscommunication. Sometimes, the failure to communicate successfully can be very disappointing, as can be seen in Communication Snapshot 8.1.

> The word *communication* is derived from the Latin *communis*, meaning "common". It refers to a natural activity of all humans, which is to convey opinions, feelings, information, and ideas to others through words (written or spoken), body language, or signs.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

The word *communication* is derived from the Latin *communis*, which means "common". It refers to a natural activity of all humans, which is to convey opinions, feelings, information, and ideas to others through words (written or spoken), body language, or signs. George Vardman defines effective communication as "purposive symbolic interchange resulting in workable understanding and agreement between the sender and the receiver". [1]This interchange of information, ideas, and thoughts may occur via different modes: words (oral and written), signs, and gestures.

Emphasizing the processes of telling, listening, and understanding involved in the act of communicating with other people, Keith Davis[2] says that communication is "the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others with facts, ideas, thoughts and values. It is a bridge of meaning among people so that they can share what they feel and know. By using this bridge, a person can cross safely the river of misunderstanding that sometimes separates people."

CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION

1

Know the principal concepts of communication.

One way to classify communication is according to the number of persons who receive the message.

- *Intrapersonal communication* is talking to oneself in one's own mind. Examples are soliloquies or asides in dramatic works.
- *Interpersonal communication* is the exchange of messages between two people. Examples are conversations, dialogues, or interviews in which two persons interact (others may also be present as audience). An author communicates *interpersonally* with his or her reader, who is always present as a silent audience in the author's mind while writing. A letter is also an example of interpersonal communication between the writer and the person to whom it is addressed.
- *Group communication* can be among small or large groups, such as an organization, club, or classroom, in which all individuals retain their individual identities.
- *Mass communication* is when a message is sent to large groups of people, for example by newspaper, radio, or television. In this process, each receiver is a faceless individual with almost no opportunity for response or feedback.

Communication can also be classified on the basis of the medium employed.

Any communication that involves the use of words—whether it consists of speaking, listening, writing, reading, or thinking—can be classified as *verbal communication.*

Non-verbal communication includes the use of sign language, action language, or object language. It is present in all acts of speaking and writing.

- *Verbal communication* means communicating with words, written or spoken. Verbal communication consists of speaking, listening, writing, reading, and thinking.
- *Non-verbal communication* includes the use of pictures, signs, gestures, and facial expressions for exchanging information between persons. It is done through sign language, action language, or object language.

  Non-verbal communication accompanies the acts of speaking and writing. It is a wordless message conveyed through gestures (signs), movements (action language), and pictures/clothes (object language). Further, non-verbal communication is characterized by personal space (proxemics), body language (kinesics), touch (haptics), eyes (oculesics), sense of smell (olfactics), and time (chronemics).

  All these aspects of non-verbal communication need to be understood as they affect and, at times, contradict verbal communication. We shall discuss them in detail in Chapter 7.
- *Meta-communication* is when the speaker's choice of words unintentionally communicates something more than what the words themselves state. For example, the remark, "I've never seen you so smartly dressed" could be a compliment, but could also mean that the regular attire of the listener needs improvement.

THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

Broadly speaking, in business, we communicate to: (a) inform and (b) persuade. These two goals are usually present in the mind of the person initiating the communication, as is seen in sales letters and advertisements. However, he or she may at times seek only to inform—as scientific writings do. Conversely, the person initiating the communication may aim more to persuade the reader, as journalistic writings and opinion editorials do.

Communication to Inform

Communication to inform (expository communication) is directed by the desire to expose, develop, and explain the subject. Its focus is the subject of the communication. For example, consider these short, expository pieces of writing:

1. Farming provides most of the food we eat. Our chief food crops are cereals or grains. Cereals include maize, rice, and wheat. We also grow barley and gram.
2. Flies are our deadly enemies because they feed on dirt and rubbish. When they crawl over meat, sweetmeats, and cakes with their dirty legs, they leave all kinds of germs behind and, thus, poison our food.

Clearly, in these two passages, the focus is on the subjects "our food" and "flies, our deadly enemy". The logical presentation of facts informs us about the topics being discussed, and the danger associated with flies in the second passage is clearly conveyed.

Communication to Persuade

A communicator may seek primarily to persuade the reader ore receiver of the message. In such a form of communication, the focus is on the receiver. Essentially, all communication is a deliberate and intentional act of persuasion. A persuasive communicator wants the reader to understand the message and to be influenced by it.

> Essentially, all communication is a deliberate and intentional act of persuasion. A persuasive communicator wants the reader or receiver to understand the message and to be influenced by it.

Consider HDFC's "Savings/Current Account" advertisement in Exhibit 8.3, which says: "Now opening a Savings/Current Account with HDFC Bank is extremely rewarding." This handbill is reader-centric. The purpose of the message is not just to inform readers about a new savings and current account, but to persuade them to open such an account with HDFC Bank. Note how different adverbs and adjectives are chosen to draw the reader's attention. The adverb "now" is placed at the head (beginning) of the advertisement. This is the most important position in the structure of the sentence or paragraph. In the subject position, the adverb "now" seeks to persuade readers that until now no bank offered the convenience, benefit, and satisfaction of HDFC Bank's savings/current account. Similarly, the phrase, "extremely rewarding" aims at impressing the reader with the extraordinary operational convenience, monetary benefit, and personal satisfaction HDFC Bank offered its savings and current account holders.

Exhibit 8.3
The HDFC Advertisement

Exhibit 8.4
A Persuasive Business Letter

Journal of Indian Literature
Established in 1954
Editorial Office: Centre for Language and Learning
University of Delhi
Delhi 110007

Dear JIL contributor:

Attached is a set of reprints of your contribution to the most recent issue of JIL.

We are grateful to you for your contribution and look forward to more such submissions from you.

If you need additional reprints or information regarding the full issue in which your contribution appeared, or subscription prices, please contact Ms Agatha Luiz, Managing Editor, at the editorial office, whose address is given above.

Again, let me reiterate my thanks to you for your contribution.

Best wishes,

SChatterjee
Somnath Chatterjee
Editor

Uses style and typical format of formal letter: no date, no personal salutation (by name)

Opens with a statement of the main point

Expresses gratitude and appreciation

Persuades for the next contribution

Urges to subscribe to JIL

Includes contact details for action

Closes on a personal note of appreciation

As one can gather from the HDFC advertisement, business communication often needs to be persuasive. Exhibit 8.4 analyses an example of a persuasive business letter.

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

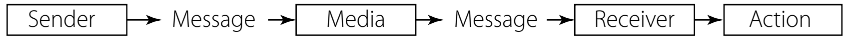
The process of communication begins with a person's desire to share or exchange an idea, thought, or feeling with another person or persons. It basically involves a sender, a message, a medium, and a receiver.

The Linear Concept of Communication

The earliest conceptualization of communication by Harold Lasswell involved the following five basic questions:

1. Who?
2. Says what?
3. To whom?
4. In which channel?
5. With what effect?

Exhibit 8.5
The Linear Model of Communication



> Communication was considered a one-way process marked by the flow of information from a sender to a receiver.

Early ideas of communication considered it a one-way (linear) process marked by the flow of information from a sender to a receiver (see Exhibit 8.5).

According to this linear view, the receiver passively receives the message and acts as directed or desired by the sender. Communication is intended to control/manipulate the receiver. It is assumed that the message, while passing through the medium chosen by the sender, reaches the receiver without any distortion or change.

> **2**
> Understand the communication process and its elements.

The Shannon–Weaver Model

C. E. Shannon and W. Weaver[3] were the first to point out that in actual practice, messages can be changed or blocked. Shannon's model of communication was first published in the *Bell System Technical Journal*. It was based on the mathematical or mechanistic view of the communication process, in which the basic problem is that the message received is not the same as the message sent. He attributed the loss to noise. The Shannon model, co-authored with Weaver, was brought out later in *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* in 1949. Weaver introduced the idea of feedback as a corrective counter to noise. However, in the Shannon–Weaver model, feedback was not considered to be an integral component because the model conceived the communication process as a linear act and feedback as a new act of communication. This is why in the Shannon–Weaver model shown in Exhibit 8.6, feedback is represented by dotted lines.

The model is based on the idea that communication occurs only when the message has been received and that it should be received unchanged, as far as possible. This is, of course, a theoretical concept of perfect communication. In real life, filters in the minds of both the sender and the receiver affect the content of the message. To an extent, feedback corrects the distortions and helps complete the cycle of communication (see Exhibit 8.7).

The Shannon–Weaver model comprises the following basic elements:

> The communication process begins with the information source.

- *Information source (ideation):* The communication process begins with the information source. The sender has some raw information in the form of outside experience. His or her intent changes that information into a message to be communicated. The source of a message, therefore, is the information source of the communication process.

Exhibit 8.6
A Diagram Based on the Shannon–Weaver Model
Source: Based on C. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 5.

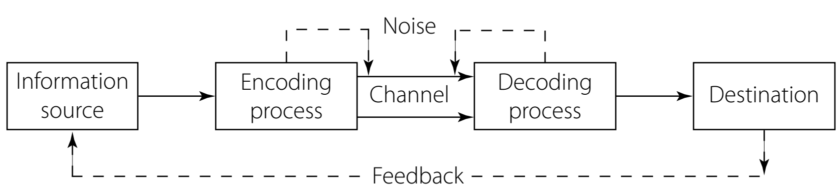
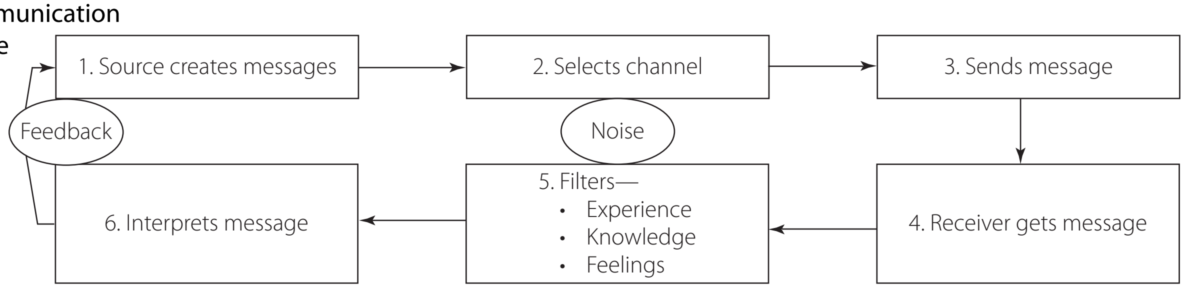


Exhibit 8.7
How Communication Takes Place



- *Encoding (transmitter):* After having thought about the message, the sender puts it into words (verbal symbols or any other symbolic form of expression). This process is called encoding.
- *Channel (transmission):* An appropriate medium—oral, written, or electronic, in code, or a signalling system—chosen to send the message is known as the channel.
- *Receiver (decoding):* The receiver gets the message through decoding—by receiving, understanding, and interpreting the message.
- *Acting:* The communication process ends with the receiver putting the interpreted message into action, as intended by the sender.

We see that communication completes a full circle, bringing together the sender and the receiver to become two aspects of a single purpose. It is this unifying process and role of communication that has made modern management organizations consider communication as an essential skill for successful managers. According to Davis[4], "The only way that management can be achieved in an organization is through the process of communication."

- *Noise:* The process of communication is, however, open to "noise", which prevents or distorts communication. Noise may be described as any distortion or hindrance that prevents the transmission of the message from the (mind of) the sender to the (mind of) the receiver.

  For some communication theorists, noise basically refers to any external disturbance in the physical environment surrounding the act of communication, or noise in the machine used for communicating the message, such as telephone disturbances, poor print, or bad handwriting.

  Communication distortions caused by subjective factors, such as the mindset of the sender or the receiver, are attributed to filters.
- *Filters:* Filters are mental in nature. They include attitudes, beliefs, experiences, consciousness of personal status, and the ability to think clearly. Misunderstandings and different problems may arise as the message is transmitted through the filters of both parties, such as low interest or involvement in the message or distraction and fatigue causing loss of concentration.

The Two-way Communication Process

More recent conceptualizations of the communication process look at communication as a two-way process. A group of people are involved in completing the cycle of communication, in which the receiver also acts as the sender of feedback to the original transmitter (sender). Thus, both the sender and receiver play reciprocal and reversible roles, as in telemarketing or call-centre communications. Consider the two-way flow of communication illustrated in Exhibit 8.8.

> A group of people are involved in completing the cycle of communication, in which the receiver also acts as the sender of the feedback to the transmitter (sender).

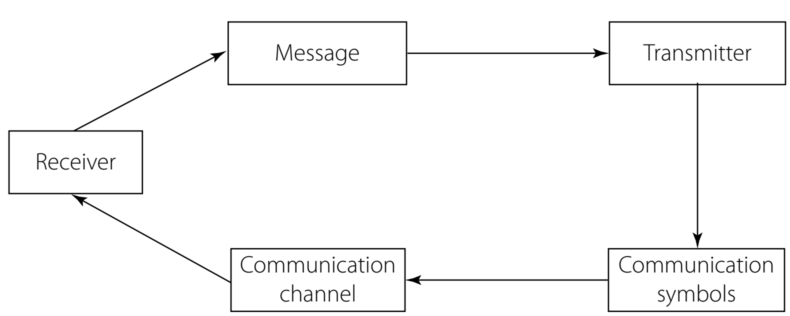


Exhibit 8.8
Two-way Flow of Communication

Exhibit 8.9
Transactional Communication

Communication source	An organization's news bulletin containing a policy to be circulated among all employees
Encoder	The editor/person who writes the policy
Message	The content (policy details) and the words/pictures used to convey the policy to employees
Channel	The medium—in this case the news bulletin
Decoder/receiver	The audience of the message—those for whom the policy is intended and who read the bulletin
Feedback	Impact/effectiveness of the communication in achieving its objectives

The two-way concept of communication is more contemporary. It considers communication essentially to be a reciprocal process and a mutual exchange of messages.

The two-way communication process is also known as *transactional communication*.

The most important characteristic of a message as an element of communication is that it is organized, structured, shaped, and selective—a product of the pre-writing or pre-speaking stage.

The two-way concept of communication is more contemporary. It considers communication essentially to be a reciprocal process and a mutual exchange of messages. It makes no sharp distinction between the roles of the sender (source) and the receiver, because the same person plays both roles, often simultaneously.

The earlier linear view treated the sender as the determiner of the message and its meaning. The two-way concept involves the receiver as an active agent in constructing the meaning of the message. The meaning of the message is perceived in the context of the receiver's experiences, beliefs, and feelings. The intended and received meanings may result in common interpretations of situations, ideas, schemes, and events to the extent that people live and work together and develop common attitudes and viewpoints with regards to their organization or society. The two-way communication process is also known as *transactional communication,* which has been explained in Exhibit 8.9.

Communication is purposive in nature. It achieves success by manipulating the target audience through information and persuasion to effect the intended action.

THE ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

The various elements of communication are briefly described to explain the process of communication.

- *Message:* The message is the information, written or spoken, which is to be sent from one person to another. Here, the word *person* represents the two ends of a system and may represent an individual, a group of individuals, or even electronic machines.

  The most important characteristic of a message as an element of communication is that it is organized, structured, shaped, and selective—a product of the pre-writing or pre-speaking stage. It exists in the mind of the sender (communicator).
- *Sender:* The person who transmits, spreads, or communicates a message or operates an electronic device is the one who conceives and initiates the message with the purpose of informing, persuading, influencing, or changing the attitude, opinion, or behaviour of the receiver (audience/listener). He or she decides the communication symbols, the channel, and the time for sending the message after carefully considering the total context in which communication takes place.
- *Encoding:* Encoding is the process of changing the message (from its mental form) into symbols, that is, patterns of words, gestures, or pictorial forms or signs. In short, it means putting ideas, facts, feelings, and opinions into symbols, which can be words, actions, signs, and pictures. The communication symbols are selected by the sender keeping in mind the receiver's ability to understand and interpret them correctly.

- *Channel:* This is the vehicle or medium that facilitates the sending of the message to the receiver. The medium of communication can be written, oral, audio-visual, or live. Again, the written medium can be in the form of letters, memos, reports, manuals, notices, circulars, questionnaires, minutes of meetings, and so on. Similarly, the oral medium can be in the form of a dialogue, a face-to-face interview, a telephone conversation, a conference recording, and so on. The channel (medium) can also be visual, such as hoardings, posters, slides, documentary films, television programmes, and advertisements.

The written medium can be in the form of letters, memos, reports, manuals, notices, circulars, questionnaires, minutes of meetings, and so on.

The channel (medium) can also be visual, such as hoardings, posters, slides, documentary films, television programmes, and advertisements.

- *Receiver:* A receiver is the targeted audience of the message. The receiver understands, interprets, and tries to perceive the total meaning of the message as transmitted by the sender.
- *Decoding:* This is the act of translating symbols into their ordinary meanings. However, the total meaning lies in the meanings of the words (symbols) together with the tone and attitude of the sender as reflected by the structure of the message and the choice of words used by him or her (the sender).
- *Acting:* Communication manipulates the receiver to act in a desired manner. A receiver's response action shows that he or she has understood the message. Finally, the receiver completes the chain of communication by responding to the message.
- *Feedback:* This is the loop that connects the receiver with the sender, who, in turn, acts as a feedback receiver and, thus, learns that communication has been accomplished. Feedback plays an important role in communication. It helps the communicator know if there are any corrections or changes to be made in the proposed action. It also ensures that the receiver has received the message and understood it as intended by the sender.

In management, the decision-making process is greatly helped by receiving feedback from those who are directly concerned with the changes proposed in the communication. The process of feedback assures the initiator of the action of its correctness and impact.

In management, the decision-making process is greatly helped by receiving feedback from those who are directly concerned with the changes proposed in the communication.

THE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION

The following are the main difficulties usually experienced by communicators:

- Ensuring that the interpreted meaning affects behaviour in the desired way
- Achieving accuracy in communicating the message
- Ensuring that the message conveys the desired meaning

The purpose of two-way communication is to establish understanding and rapport between the sender (speaker) and receiver (audience). However, the communicators (sender/receiver) generally experience the following difficulties:

- *No perceived benefit to the audience:* The receiver (listener) finds the message of no relevance or interest and, therefore, remains unresponsive.
- *Noise, outside disturbance:* To receive the message correctly, the receiver needs to remain attentive without being disturbed by any kind of physical, environmental, or psychological disturbance.
- *Variations in listening skills:* The ability to listen with comprehension is not equally developed in all persons. Some individuals, therefore, respond to communication by missing parts of the complete message.
- *Cultural differences:* The word *culture* refers to the entire system of an individual's beliefs, social customs, and personal values. It includes the individual's educational

background and family nurturing. The problem of proper understanding arises in situations of intercultural communication because of the differences in cultures across the world.

- *Complexity of subject matter/message:* A difficult and involved message acts as a barrier to a smooth understanding of the message.
- *Time restraints, real or perceived:* Both the sender and receiver lose organized exposition and reception of the message if they are pressured by a lack of time.
- *Personal biases or hostility:* Prejudice and resentment towards the speaker condition the understanding of the message.
- *Difficult questions:* Questions regarding personal behaviour and management policies and practices may not be easy to answer. They are to be responded to with carefully considered honesty and frankness if the questioner is to be satisfied with the answer.
- *Sensitive issues:* A situation or subject that involves the other person's feelings and problems needs to be dealt with sensitively and carefully, because the matter may upset people. However, it may sometimes be difficult to avoid such sensitive issues entirely.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

In communication, a psycho-semantic process, the word *barrier* implies, mainly, something non-physical that keeps people apart or prevents activity, movement, and so on.

In communication, a psycho-semantic process, the word *barrier* implies, mainly, something non-physical that keeps people apart or prevents activity, movement, and so on; examples are social, ethnic, and language barriers or lack of confidence. These negative forces may affect the effectiveness of communication by acting upon any or all of the basic elements of the communication process and the sender/receiver/channel. The more commonly experienced communication barriers are lack of planning, incorrect assumptions, semantic difficulties, and cultural differences. Some other barriers of communication are:

- Socio-psychological barriers
- Emotions
- Selective perception
- Information overload
- Loss by transmission
- Poor retention
- Goal conflicts
- Offensive style
- Abstracting
- Slanting
- Inferring

Broadly speaking, some of these barriers can be attributed to the sender and some to the receiver. Barriers attributable to the sender are:

- Lack of planning
- Vagueness about the purpose of communication and objectives to be achieved
- Poor choice of words, resulting in a badly encoded message
- Unshared or incorrect assumptions
- Different perceptions of reality
- Wrong choice of channel

Barriers attributable to the receiver are:

- Poor listening skills
- Inattention
- Mistrust
- Lack of interest
- Premature evaluation
- Semantic difficulties
- Bias
- Different perceptions of reality
- Lack of trust
- Attitudinal clash with the sender
- Unfit physical state

A common barrier for the sender and the receiver can be created by the absence of a common frame of reference affecting the smooth interpretation of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes from the sender to the receiver in a specific social situation.

> A common barrier for the sender and the receiver can be created by the absence of a common frame of reference affecting the smooth interpretation of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes from the sender to the receiver in a specific social situation.

Identification of a well-defined social context in which communication takes place helps both the sender and the receiver perceive the content of the communication in a similar way, with similar implications and meaning.

The physical noise and other faults in the surroundings and the instruments of transmission of the message relate mainly to the channel, but they may not necessarily distort the overall meaning of the total message.

Many of the barriers listed here are easy to understand. But a few of them may still need further explanation.

Incorrect Assumptions

All communications from one person to another are made under some assumptions, which are not necessarily communicated to the other party. They may turn out to be incorrect and thus result in communication failure. For instance, we often assume that others:

- see the situation as we do.
- should feel about the situation as we do.
- think about the matter as we do.
- understand the message as we understand it.

All such assumptions may be incorrect; therefore, one should try to verify them whenever possible. That would help the communication to be more effective.

Psychosocial Barriers

There can be many types of psychosocial barriers to communication. The key barriers are discussed here.

Status

Consciousness of one's status affects the two-way flow of communication. It gives rise to personal barriers caused by the superior–subordinate relationship. A two-way vertical channel is present in most organizations, yet few subordinates choose to communicate with their superiors.

> Consciousness of one's status affects the two-way flow of communication. It gives rise to personal barriers caused by the superior–subordinate relationship.

Similarly, superiors may be unwilling to directly listen or write to their subordinates and seldom accept hearing that they are wrong. Though organizations are culturally changing and adopting flat structures, the psychological distance between superiors and subordinates persists.

3

Know why communication succeeds or fails.

The most important aspect of human communication is the fact that it takes place in the world of reality that surrounds us.

The objects that excite our five sense organs/perceptions—eyes, ears, nose, tongue (taste), flesh (touch)—are called *signs*.

Our perceptions—the mental images of the external world—are stored in our brains and form our viewpoints, experiences, knowledge, feelings, and emotions.

No two individuals have the same or similar experiences, emotional make-up, or ways of thinking.

Perception and Reality

The most important aspect of human communication is the fact that it takes place in the world of reality that surrounds us. This world acts as our sensory environment. While we are engaged in the process of communicating, our sense organs remain stimulated by the different sensations of smell, taste, sound, forms and colours around us. All these sense perceptions received by our brain through our senses recreate within each one of us the world that exists within our mind as its content. Thus, there are two aspects of the same reality—one that actually surrounds the communicator from outside and another that is its mental representation (in his or her mind) as he or she sees it.

The objects that excite our five sense organs/perceptions—eyes, ears, nose, tongue (taste), flesh (touch)—are called *signs*. Our senses respond to these signs and we receive sensations that pass into the brain through a network of sensory nerves. Our perceptions—the mental images of the external world—are stored in our brains and form our viewpoints, experiences, knowledge, feelings, and emotions. They constitute what we really are, how we think of something, or how we feel or respond to something. These stored perceptions colour and modify whatever our brain receives from any signs, data, thoughts, or messages. That is why these conditioning perceptions existing in the brain are called *filters*. The mind filters the message received from the signs and gives it meaning, according to individual perception.

It is obvious that each individual's filter would be unique. No two individuals have the same or similar experiences, emotional make-up, knowledge, or ways of thinking. Because filters differ, different individuals respond to signs with different understandings. The sign may be a word, gesture, or any other object of nature; each individual will respond to it in his or her own way and assign the total meaning to that sign according to his or her filter.

The presence of a unique filter in each sender and receiver of a communication causes a communication gap (distortion) in the message.

In face-to-face communication, this gap can be more easily removed. In most cases, the speaker does realize that he or she has not been correctly understood through the listener's facial expressions, gestures, or other forms of body language. Alternatively, the listener might say, "Sorry, I didn't get you". Of course, much depends on how formally/informally the two are related to each other in the office, workplace, or life.

But in situations in which the audience is invisible, as in written communications—letters, memos, notices, proposals, reports, and so on—the semantic gap between the intended meaning and the interpreted meaning remains unknown to the communicator and also to the unsuspecting receiver who misses the total meaning in terms of the tone, feelings, and seriousness of purpose of the sender. The feedback does help the sender, but it may be too late.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION

Essentially, to communicate is to share information in its widest sense with others, in an intelligible, participative form through the medium of words (spoken or written), gestures, or other signs.

Two basic things stand out here. One, the message is to be both "known" and "understood" by others. Two, communication is a symbolic act, whether it is verbal or nonverbal. These two aspects—the purpose and nature of communication—act as the two determining influences in the practice of communication in all contexts of speaking or writing.

Herein lies the crucial difference between effective and ineffective communication. If something is communicated and is not fully understood by the receiver, then communication has been ineffective, not fully serving the condition of being understood.

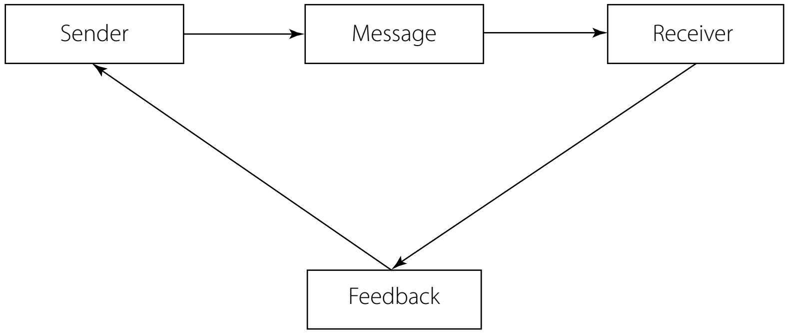


Exhibit 8.10
Successful Communication

If the message has been understood, the response of the receiver—the feedback—indicates this.

Keith Davis[5] lays down the *Rule of Five* to guide the receiver to be an effective element of the communication process. "In the communication process, the role of the receiver is, I believe, as important as that of the sender. There are five receiver steps in the process of communication—receive, understand, accept, use, and give feedback. Without these steps being followed by the receiver, no communication process would be complete and successful."

Thus, communication can be considered successful when:

- the message is properly understood.
- the purpose of the sender is fulfilled.
- the sender and the receiver of the message remain linked through feedback (see Exhibit 8.10).

THE SEVEN C'S OF COMMUNICATION

4

Recognize the techniques that help in communicating a message accurately.

Francis J. Bergin[6] advocates that there are seven C's to remember in verbal communication. These are also applicable to written communication. They are:

1. *Candidness:* In all business transactions, one's view of a matter should be honest and sincere and should reject prejudice or bias. The guiding principle should be fairness to self and to others involved in the situation. Phrases that qualify observations with the words "my honest opinion" or "frankly speaking" indicate an attempt to be candid, open-hearted, and sincere. Honesty implies consideration of the other person's (listener's) interest and his or her (the listener's) need to know objective facts. Thus, sharing of thoughts should be characterized by the "you" attitude.

   Candid talk also exhibits the speaker's self-confidence. In oral communication, confidence is a key element in creating an impact. When something is said without hesitation, it expresses a confident manner.

   In everyday life and in business, we may see persons in power doing things such as appointing relatives to important positions, neglecting merit in assigning jobs/functions, or becoming inappropriately close to an individual or a group of individuals. Such actions are bound to emotionally alienate others from that person. Out of consideration and concern for that person's long-term image and relationships in the organization, it is important to communicate one's view of such administrative unfairness in an unbiased manner.

2. *Clarity:* The principle of clarity is most important in all communications, especially in face-to-face interactions. It is not always easy to verbalize ideas accurately on the spot during conversations, presentations, or other oral forms of interaction.

It is not always easy to verbalize ideas accurately on the spot during conversations, presentations, or other oral forms of interaction.

Clarity requires the use of accurate and familiar words with proper intonation, stresses, and pauses. Spoken language should consist of simple words and short sentences. Thoughts should be clear and well-organized. The speaker should know what to say and why. It is a clear mind that can talk clearly and effectively.

However, in case of doubt or uncertainty due to lack of clarity of thought or expression, the listener can, in a one-to-one oral communication, seek immediate clarification from the speaker.

3. *Completeness:* Clarity is ensured also by completeness of message. In conversations or oral presentations, one can easily miss some parts of the communication. It is, therefore, essential that oral presentations, discussions, or dialogues should be, as far as possible, planned and structured. Therefore, when the speaker begins the presentation, dialogue, or address, he or she should ensure that all the necessary information that listeners need or expect has been provided.

   The principle of completeness requires that speakers communicate whatever is necessary, provide answers to all possible questions that could be raised, and add additional information, if necessary, as footnotes. For example, in an interview, if an interviewee fails to answer a question completely, it could imply that he or she is deliberately sidestepping a particular issue. It could also raise doubts in the audience that there is something to hide regarding that matter. In a situation where the interviewee has no information or answer or is unwilling to discuss a particular question, he or she should frankly express their inability to answer.

In a situation where the interviewee has no information or answer or is unwilling to discuss a particular question, they should frankly express their inability to answer.

4. *Conciseness:* In business and professional communication, brevity is important. One should avoid being repetitive. It is a common but erroneous assumption that repeating whatever has been said in multiple ways adds emphasis to the message.

   The examples in Exhibit 8.11 are show that spoken language tends to become wordy. Fewer words should not mean less meaning. Rather, it is possible to achieve intensity and concentration without sacrificing essential meaning.

5. *Concreteness:* Concreteness means being specific and definite in describing events and things. Avoid using vague words that don't mean much. In oral communication, one cannot draw figures, tables, or diagrams to illustrate one's point. But one can choose precise words and speak with proper modulation and force to make sounds reflect the meaning. For example, in oral communication passive voice is avoided because active voice reflects force and action. It also sounds more natural and direct. For example, no one says, "you are requested by me to visit us". A more vivid way to express the same sentiment is, "I request you to visit us".

6. *Correctness:* In the spoken form of communication, grammatical errors are not uncommon. The speaker can forget the number and person of the subject of the verb if the sentence is too long. Sometimes even the sequence of tenses is incorrect. And most frequently, the use of the pronoun is incorrect, especially in indirect narration or reported speech (see Exhibit 8.12).

Exhibit 8.11
Examples of Superfluous and Concise Statements

Superfluous Statements	***Concise Statements***
At this point of time . . .	Now . . . , or at present . . .
As regards the fact that…	Considering . . .
Because of the fact that…	As . . ., or because . . .
Are in need of . . .	Need . . .
In due course of time . . .	Soon…
Not very far from here . . .	Nearby . . . , or close by . . .

Exhibit 8.12
The Necessity of Grammatical Accuracy for Effective Communication

Incorrect Statement	*Correct Statement*
He said to me that I will surely go there.	He told me that he would surely go there.
Kindly explain to me this poem of Keats.	Kindly explain this poem of Keats to me.
I consider her as my sister.	I consider her my sister.
She shut the TV and then opened the taps for her bath.	She turned off the TV and then turned on the taps for her bath.
The stars walk as if the whole world belongs to them.	The stars walk as if the whole world belonged to them.
Shahzad has also claimed that a Bihar-based former junior minister and prominent Mumbai politician helped him evade arrest.	Shahzad has also claimed that a Bihar-based former junior minister and a prominent Mumbai politician helped him evade arrest.
The dealer agreed to either exchange the shirt or to refund the money.	The dealer agreed either to exchange the shirt or to refund the money.
How long has it been since you had your last promotion?	How long is it since you had your last promotion?
The crowd cheered him making double century.	The crowd cheered his making a double century.
Being an experienced manager, we are sure you can resolve the conflict.	As you are an experienced manager, we are sure you can resolve the conflict.
Sohan and her are equally brilliant.	Sohan and she are equally brilliant.
His wife is taller than him.	His wife is taller than he (is tall).
She is looking for who?	Whom is she looking for?

7. *Courtesy:* In conversational situations, meetings, and group discussions, an effective speaker maintains the proper decorum of speaking. One should say things assertively, but without being rude. Courtesy demands not using words that are insulting or hurtful to the listener.

Courtesy demands not using words that are insulting or hurtful to the listener.

In business discussions, it is necessary to respect the other person by listening to him or her patiently and without interruption.

The speaker's tone should reflect respect for their listener or audience. The pitch and tone should be level and measured rather than aggressive; they should not suggest that the speaker is talking *at* the listener.

UNIVERSAL ELEMENTS IN COMMUNICATION

5

Understand the universal elements in communication.

There are some universal elements in all human communication:

- *The communication environment:* All communicators act within the sensory environment around them, from which their senses receive competing stimuli impinging upon the content of communication.
- *Use of symbols:* All communicators use verbal symbols and signs such as words, body movements, facial expressions, and so on, to encode (and to decode) messages.
- *The mental filter:* All communicators/receivers of a message have to register, organize, transmit, receive, and interpret through their uniquely structured minds that have varying "filters", which consist of their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Exhibit 8.13
An Example of Miscommunication

Mr Balakrishnan, a heart patient, was considering two medical procedures: bypass surgery and angioplasty. His surgeon had told him that the angioplasty would cost slightly more than the bypass surgery. The bypass cost ₹2.5 lakh. Mr Balakrishnan did not mind spending slightly more for the angioplasty, so he opted for it. But he was shocked to later get a bill for ₹6.5 lakh. He was left wondering what exactly his surgeon's "slightly more" meant.

To understand communication better, we should know the following basic facts regarding its process:

- *Perfect communication is impossible:* Human communication is essentially imperfect. All our communication encoding and decoding acts are conditioned by the fact that a common mental filter is not possible. Meanings differ because filters differ. Therefore, no two persons involved in an interaction will perceive the exact same meaning from a message. What they tend to have is a "workable understanding", as Vardman puts it in his definition of communication discussed earlier.

The fact that the symbols used for communicating are imprecise in their associative meanings further contributes to the imperfection of communication.

Besides the filters, the fact that the symbols used for communicating are imprecise in their associative meanings further contributes to the imperfection of communication. Choosing correct symbols to encode an idea, thought, or feeling is not an easy task. We tend to often pick up imprecise symbols for encoding. This tendency increases the chances of misinterpretation or miscommunication between the sender and the receiver (see Exhibit 8.13).

Even the same symbols put in a different order or sequence may change the overall meaning of the message (see Communication Snapshot 8.2). Therefore, both parties,

Communication Snapshot 8.2

How Sentence Structure Affects Meaning

Consider the following sentences:

1. The letter has been dispatched by me.
2. I have dispatched the letter.
3. The police chased the crowd.
4. The crowd was chased by the police.
5. What are you doing here?
6. Here, what are you doing?
7. The dog wagging the tail.
8. The tail wagging the dog.
9. Only you have to be there.
10. You have only to be there.
11. You have to be only there.
12. Also, Abhinav is going to Paris.
13. Abhinav is going to Paris also.
14. Manisha too is tired.
15. Manisha is too tired.

The first sentence answers the question "Has the letter been dispatched?", whereas the second is an answer to "Who has dispatched the letter?". There is a change in the emphasis: the first sentences emphasizes the act (of dispatching), while the second emphasizes the doer of the act (the dispatcher). To understand this subtle shift in the overall meaning of the statement, equal levels of linguistic competence are required by both the questioner and the respondent.

Similarly, in the third sentence, we are talking about the police, whereas if we change the sequence of the symbols, as we have done in the fourth sentence, the crowd becomes the subject of communication.

This can further be understood by considering the fifth and the sixth sentences. Though these sentences sound alike, they convey different meanings. The fifth sentence communicates the speaker's surprise about a *person's* presence, whereas the sixth is about the place where the person is present.

The seventh sentence indicates that the person is quiet, docile, and easily controlled. As opposed to this, the eighth sentence says that an unimportant thing/person is wrongly controlling a situation.

The ninth, tenth, and eleventh sentences show how meaning changes by changing the position of the word *only*. In the ninth sentence, the speaker talks about the *person* (you) who alone is required—meaning nobody else is required. In the tenth sentence, the speaker says that the person (you) would "do nothing" but simply be present; and, finally, in the eleventh sentence, the speaker wants the person (you) to be "there" only and nowhere else. The shift in significance relates to *who*, *what*, and *where*. (It may be noted that *only* modifies the word that immediately follows it.)

Similarly, the word *also* modifies the word that follows it or is placed next to it. In sentence 12, *also* is used to indicate that in addition to some other persons going to Paris, Abhinav too will go to Paris. In sentence 13, the change in position of *also* changes the meaning of the sentence. Here, *also* is used to indicate that Abhinav is going to Paris in addition to other places. In sentence 12, it signifies "in addition to the other persons"; in sentence 13, it means "in addition to other places".

In sentences 14 and 15, the shift in the position of the word *too* changes the meaning completely. Sentence 14 implies that Manisha is tired, like other people. But, sentence 15 implies that Manisha is overtired, or that she is so tired that she cannot do any work now.

Try to imagine real-life situations in which you would communicate a feeling of surprise or delight on unexpectedly meeting a friend when you did not expect to see them.

---

the sender and the receiver, should possess the same ability to interpret the meaning of symbols (words) and their structure (the order in which they are used).

- *Meaning is not out there:* By now, it must be obvious that the meaning of a sentence or paragraph is in the mind and not in the symbols. Symbols (except onomatopoeic words) are arbitrary. They have no intrinsic meaning. They stand for things, but are not the things themselves. Their meaning is conventional, commonly shared by the people belonging to a linguistic community. But the literal meaning is something that is printed in the pages of a dictionary.

  Communication is a living act, performed in specific contexts, in particular situations, and with a definite goal. Thus, an effective communicator creates new meanings of symbols (words) by structuring them in strings of images of his or her mind or mental landscape.

  Understanding this fundamental aspect of communication can help all receivers look for the meaning of the words (the message) that the sender thought of when choosing them. A receiver should not be satisfied with, "I think it means . . . ". Instead, he or she should search for what the words must have meant to the sender.

> An effective communicator creates new meanings of symbols (words) by structuring them in strings of images of his or her mind or mental landscape.

- *Personality communicates:* Walt Whitman[7], in his famous *Song of Myself*, poetically brings out the dimension of communication. Of his poetic process, which is an act of communication, he says,

  I celebrate myself,
  And what I assume you shall assume,
  For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

In fact, communication in its final analysis can be seen as a projection of "myself"—how I think, feel, believe, perceive, and respond to reality. If communication is anything, it is indeed a mental representation of reality. The symbols of communication represent the perceptions of the communicator.

In this regard, the complexity of communication further arises from a truth so aptly projected by O. W. Holmes[8] in his collection of essays, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*:

There are three Johns:

1. The real John; known only to his Maker.
2. John's ideal John; never the real one and often very unlike him.
3. Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.

The real problem in communication is caused by Thomas's ideal John.

In fact, it is difficult for people to communicate effectively unless they have a correct knowledge of themselves. Understanding how we see ourselves is the first step in improving our ability to communicate; we can improve this understanding by closely examining our own self-concept.

According to psychologists, there are three aspects of self-concept:

1. The me that I know.
2. The me that I wish I were.
3. The me that I want others to see.

Some people are so perfect in projecting images of themselves to others that the real person is never displayed.

Some people are so perfect in projecting images of themselves to others that the real person is never displayed. This art can be advantageous to a manager and his or her personal communication skills, but if practised to the extreme can prevent effective communication and understanding.

To be effective as the audience (receiver), one should follow Whitman's wisdom and practise "what I assume you shall assume". This process is also known as "empathy"—the power or the state of imagining oneself to be another person and sharing his or her ideas and feelings. Empathy is needed for listening and is also a necessary state of mind while encoding. It allows the communicator to realize the audience's (receiver's) expectations, fears, emotions, needs, level of learning/knowledge, and, above all, state of mind. It is only through reciprocal empathy that people can communicate effectively in different contexts of life and business.

COMMUNICATION AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The electronic media have made communication instantaneous and immediate across the world. The use of telephones, voice mail, phone conferencing, video conferencing, cell phones, and e-mail as preferred modes (channels) of communication has greatly accelerated the decision-making process at all levels. Their use connects the sender and receiver in a timeless and spaceless web of communication. In a way, the online message and its immediate feedback give distant communication the force and advantages of face-to-face communication.

In business, all these electronic modes of communication are used according to the need and purpose of the communicators. E-mail, however, is the most commonly used global medium of interaction today. Even within the same organization, managers and executives prefer to communicate via e-mail instead of phone calls. These modes of communication will be discussed in detail in Chapter 11.

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media, according to Dave Evans[9], "involves a natural, genuine conversation between people about something of mutual interest, a conversation built on the thoughts and experience of the participants. It is about sharing and arriving at a collective point, often for the purpose of making a better or informed choice." These emerging online social media, according to Susan Bratton, richly reward[10] "our innate desire to connect with each other at a human level."

Internet forums, weblogs, Twitter, message boards, Wikis, podcasts, picture-sharing sites, and other online media connect and share information in a collaborative manner. Examples of social media applications are Google (reference, social networking), Wikipedia (reference), MySpace (social networking), Facebook (social networking), Last.fm (music), YouTube (video sharing), Second Life (virtual reality), and Flickr (photo sharing).

As a social web participant, the channels one is likely to use today are SMS (texting), blogs and microblogs, video sharing, photo sharing, personal social networks, event services, e-mail, white label social networks, Wikis, podcasts (audio) and collaborative tools.

Social media are popular because they allow collaboration and creativity. The audience of social media can participate by adding comments or changing the stories themselves. The empowerment and freedom of the audience to add or create new content makes social media a process and not a static medium. Unlike direct mail or television advertising, social media are "a collaborative process through which information is created, shared, altered, and destroyed."[11] In business, politics, and personal life, social media act as a "feedback loop". As the audience, we listen to it, learn from it, and follow it. For example, in the purchase funnel of "awareness—consideration—purchase", social media influence the customer's consideration to quite an extent by offering the experiences of other customers of that product. Participants believe the social message because it is based on natural, genuine conversation informed by the experience and wisdom of the multitude.

SUMMARY

- This chapter deals with the key elements of the nature and process of communication.
- Human beings are poor communicators but our communicative competence can be improved by learning and practising effective communication skills.
- Communication has a symbolic nature and is an act of sharing one's ideas, emotions, attitudes, or perceptions with another person or group of persons through words (written or spoken), gestures, signals, signs, or other modes of transmitting images. The transmission of ideas always encounters barriers that reduce its effectiveness.
- The essential elements of the process of communication are the message, the sender, encoding, the channel, the receiver, decoding, acting on the message, the feedback, and the communication environment.
- Both the sender and the receiver play a role in making communication effective. The sender should encode the message accurately after considering the level, expectations, and needs of the target audience (receiver); the receiver should listen or read carefully to try to understand the intended meaning of the sender.
- The universal, common elements of communication are the communication environment, the use of symbols, and the presence of mental filters.
- Some basic facts about communication are that perfect communication is impossible; the meaning of a message is in the mind/perception of the receiver; and personality affects the effectiveness of communication.
- To communicate effectively, one should develop not only skills, but also a sense of empathy with others.

CASE: COMMUNICATION FAILURE

Mr and Mrs Basu went to Woodland's apparel section to buy a pullover. Mr Basu did not read the price tag on the piece he had selected. While making the payment, he asked for the price at the counter. The answer was "₹950".

Meanwhile, Mrs Basu, who was still shopping, came back and joined her husband. She was glad that he had selected a nice black pullover for himself. She pointed out that there was a 25 per cent discount on that item. The person at the billing counter nodded in agreement. Mr Basu was thrilled to hear that. "That means the price of this pullover is just ₹645. That's fantastic," said Mr Basu. He decided to buy another pullover in green.

In no time, he returned with the second pullover and asked the salesperson to pack both. When he received the cash memo for payment, he was astonished to find that he had to pay ₹1,900 and not ₹1,290 as he had expected.

Mr Basu could hardly reconcile himself to the fact that the salesperson had first quoted the discounted price, that is ₹950. But the original price printed on the price tag was ₹1,225.

Questions to Answer

1. Identify the three sources of Mr Basu's information about the price of the pullover.
2. Discuss the main filter involved in this case.
3. What should Mr Basu have done to avoid the misunderstanding?
4. Who is to blame for this communication gap? Why?

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Why is communication important for good relationships and effective management?
2. Why do we communicate?
3. Discuss communication as a two-way process of exchange of information.
4. Indicate the critical difference between successful and ineffective communication.
5. Discuss the important barriers in the communication process.
6. What is empathy? How does it contribute to the effectiveness of communication?
7. What is noise? Elaborate the elements of noise encountered by the receiver. How can they be minimized?
8. Do you agree that, in its final form, communication is a manifestation of the personalities of both the sender and the receiver? Discuss.
9. How does group communication differ from mass communication? Does this difference between these two forms of communication demand greater care on the part of the communicator (sender)? Discuss.
10. Do you accept that perfect communication is just an assumption and not a practical possibility? Give reasons for your argument.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Why have communication skills become an essential requirement for a successful career in any profession? Discuss with examples.
2. How does an interview/discussion conducted on television become an act of communication? Explain.
3. Show how feedback acts as an essential element in the communication process.
4. "The principle of completeness in communication requires that we answer all questions that may be put to us." Elaborate.
5. "All communication is manipulative in nature." Discuss.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Analyse the communication situation given here and compose a letter on behalf of the Ministry of Defence in such a way that the message causes no disappointment to the family of the late Prem Kumar.

Shopkeeper Gives Life to Save People, No Medal in Sight

22 September 2010, NewsLine

Prem Kumar—a shopkeeper in Gaffar Market—lost his life while trying to save the lives of fellow shopkeepers and shoppers who were trapped in a fire. Almost a year after the incident, he has been awarded the prestigious Shaurya Chakra. His family was informed about the award through a letter from the Ministry of Defence.

Prem Kumar's family, however, claims it has not received any further information about the award and all efforts to contact the government have proved futile. His aging mother recollects the family's sense of joy and pride when they received the letter. However, there was no more news following the letter, she laments. She adds that the family has been trying to contact the government at the phone numbers provided in the letter, but the call keeps getting transferred from one person to another all the time. In the end, they assumed that her son's name would be announced during the Republic Day parade. Much to their disappointment, they watched the entire programme on television, only to realize that Prem Kumar's name was not mentioned during the event. Prem Kumar's family is still holding on to the letter, wondering what their next step should be.

An official from the Defence Ministry later clarified that only Ashok Chakra awardees are called to the R-day parade. All recipients of the Shaurya Chakra will be intimated about the investiture ceremony to be held at Rashtrapati Bhawan. A medal and scroll will be handed over to the family, along with the compensation, if any, during that event.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. In general, human beings are:
   (a) perfect communicators
   (b) poor communicators
   (c) indifferent communicators
   (d) good communicators
2. The word *communication* is derived from *communis* (Latin) which means:
   (a) common
   (b) community
   (c) message
   (d) oral speech
3. Meta-communication relates to the speaker's:
   (a) intentional choice of dress
   (b) intentional choice of words
   (c) unintentional choice of words
   (d) unintentional choice of both words and dress
4. Generally speaking, in business we communicate:
   (a) only to persuade
   (b) only to inform
   (c) only to entertain
   (d) to both persuade and inform
5. Effective communication is essentially a:
   (a) three-way process
   (b) one-way process
   (c) two-way process
   (d) both a one-way and a two-way process
6. Filters that affect the content of a message are in:
   (a) the medium of communication
   (b) the mind of the speaker
   (c) the mind of the listener
   (d) the minds of both the speaker and the listener
7. Speakers usually experience difficulty in ensuring that the message is:
   (a) conveyed precisely
   (b) understood correctly
   (c) acted upon promptly and as desired
   (d) all of the above
8. As a process of sharing thoughts and ideas, communication suffers mainly from:
   (a) physical barriers
   (b) non-physical barriers
   (c) gender differences
   (d) both physical and non-physical barriers

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

9. ____ is not one of the 7 C's of communication:
   (a) conciseness
   (b) clarity
   (c) correctness
   (d) character

10. Human communication is essentially:
    (a) perfect
    (b) imperfect
    (c) short-lived
    (d) emotional

ENDNOTES

1. George T. Vardman. *Effective Communication of Ideas* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1973), p. 3.
2. Keith Davis and John Newstrom. *Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work*, 9th ed. (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1993), p. 399.
3. C. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 5.
4. Keith Davis and John Newstrom, *Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work*, 9th ed. (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 1993), p. 399.
5. Ibid., pp. 402–403.
6. Francis J. Bergin, *Practical Communication* (New Jersey: Financial Times Prentice Hall, 1981).
7. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1959), p. 25.
8. O. W. Holmes, "Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table", *The Atlantic Monthly* (1857).
9. Dave Evans, *Social Media Marketing* (New Delhi: Times Business Services, Wiley India, 2008), p. 31.
10. Susan Bratton, foreword to *Social Media Marketing*, by Dave Evans (New Delhi: Times Business Services, Wiley India, 2008), x, iii.
11. Ibid., p. 34.

9

Organizational Communication

"*The most important audience for a company's communications is not the customer, as is commonly believed, but the employee.*"

— *Pratt & Whitney*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the functional relationship between communication and management.
2. Identify new trends in organizational communication due to technological changes and developments.
3. Know why managers need strong communication skills.
4. Understand the elements that form the structure of an organization's communication network.
5. Understand the formal and informal lines of organizational communication.
6. Know what and how much should be communicated to employees at the workplace.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Apex Business Solutions had promised to deliver a report to one of its customers by a certain date, but was unable to meet this deadline. Since the customer was very important to the company, there was an internal meeting in the concerned department to resolve the issue.

During the discussion, Stephen, one of the youngest members of the department, came up with a suggestion to solve the problem. However, because Stephen was known for his non-serious, jokey comments and was relatively new in the department, nobody took him seriously. The meeting continued for two hours, and when no solution was found, it was dispersed.

Later, while reflecting on the proceedings, Mr Mahadevan, the head of the department, realized that what Stephen had suggested at the beginning was in fact the most sensible course of action, but because everyone was predisposed to take him lightly, they never considered his suggestion seriously. In fact, they had completely neglected his ideas during the discussion. Mr Mahadevan felt that if they had heard Stephen with an open mind, they would have reached a solution in the first fifteen minutes of the meeting.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT

Communication skills constitute an important aspect of effective management. Management is a complex process. In simple terms, it can be described as the organization of capital, labour, and material to achieve production and distribution of particular goods or services.

First, the management determines its objectives—what it must do and how it must do it. Then, there has to be a system through which the production and distribution processes can be guided, coordinated, and controlled to ensure that the management objectives are achieved. Communication is the system by which production and distribution operations are controlled and coordinated and the results correlated to the objectives.

Some Important Functions of Management

Exhibit 9.1 shows some important functions of management. The function of communication is to define and support the action involved in each of these functions.

- *Forecasting and planning:* Each function of management depends on effective communication for its success. For example, if the management fails to communicate its objectives, policies, programmes, procedures, and budgetary provisions to the concerned people at the proper time, an organization would fail to run in an organized and targeted manner.

Exhibit 9.1
Functions of Management

Forecasting	Determines organizational objectives and policies
Planning	Prepares programmes, procedures, and budgets
Organizing	Sets the organizational structure
Instructing	Provides the bedrock of organizational performance
Coordinating	Ensures all efforts are directed towards the organization's goals
Controlling	Checks the results and receives feedback

1

Understand the functional relationship between communication and management.

Communication is the system by which production and distribution operations are controlled and coordinated and the results correlated to the objectives.

Unity of purpose and commitment to a single organizational goal can be developed only through the persuasive power of communication.

When decision-making is transparent, employees understand the reasons behind decisions and accept and implement them, even if those decisions affect them adversely.

- *Organizing:* Organizing, as a management function, determines the formal and informal relationships within the organization and outside it. These relationships are developed and maintained through interpersonal communication.
- *Instructing:* The function of instructing depends entirely upon effective exchange of information regarding products, processes, and targets.
- *Coordinating:* Coordinating is perhaps the most demanding of all management functions. It requires excellent communication skills to ensure that all efforts are directed towards the achievement of a single organizational goal. To ensure that diverse activities are complementary, a manager should be able to relate with all the people involved, both formally and informally.
- *Controlling:* Finally, in order to control processes, a manager should be able to receive and interpret information and respond quickly.

How Communication Is Used by Managers

Management is a unified, organized, and cooperative system committed to the achievement of common goals. Unity of purpose and commitment to a single organizational goal can be developed only through the persuasive power of communication. To do this, a manager needs to have excellent communication skills, including the ability to structure information according to its negative/affirmative nature and use words and tones according to the purpose of the communication. A manager should be able to create the desired relationship with the audience or employees to produce the needed response. Thus, diverse strategies, verbal and non-verbal, of effective communication form an important part of management as a discipline.

From a small business to a multinational enterprise, every organization today needs an effective communication system to enable it to function and flourish. Communication is a means of:

- Increasing employees' job performance and effectiveness by updating their knowledge
- Promoting employees' sense of belonging and commitment
- Effecting changes smoothly
- Motivating employees and creating a sense of identification with the organization's goals
- Informing and convincing employees about decisions and the reasons behind them
- Helping employees develop a clear understanding of their roles and growth opportunities within the organization
- Empowering employees with information on development and activities

Hence, an active communication system is vital for the good health of an organization. If there is continual sharing of ideas and interactive meetings between the management and employees, an overall atmosphere of understanding and goodwill would prevail in the workplace. When decision-making is transparent, employees understand the reasons behind decisions and accept and implement them, even if those decisions affect them adversely. Thus, communication can help in management in the following ways:

- *Creating a sense of belonging:* An understanding of their roles and career paths in the organization makes employees feel a part of the whole setup.
- *Resolving disputes:* All disputes in organizations, which lead to huge losses of time, money, and good human relations, are caused by communication failures.
- *Providing a holistic view of the situation:* A great value of effective communication lies in making people not only know, but also perceive and understand the meaning of things happening around them. Through clear communication, employees not only "see" the realities of the business, but also develop a "feel" for it.

2

Identify new trends in organizational communication due to technological changes and developments.

In the changing business environment of multinational competition and globalization, communication has become an important component of an organization. Like the functional areas of production, marketing, and finance, communication too is evolving into a distinct discipline in the form of corporate communication.

Theoretically, corporate communication brings under a single umbrella all communication activities undertaken by different areas such as marketing and public relations, which are directed at image-building and developing human capital. In this integrated form, communication speaks to the world outside the organization and within it in a single voice that builds the corporate image.

Several changes in the modern technological age of information have made people pay more attention to communication as an important tool in successful management. These changes are:

- *Bigger organizations:* Organizations are getting bigger and bigger, either due to increased levels of production or through multinational collaborations. The large size of organizations today poses problems in communication.
- *New developments in information technology:* The modern age, the age of information, is not just an era of new media—telephone, radio, television, communication satellites, computers, and so on; it is also an era of a new attitude towards knowledge and the value of sharing it with others. In fact, communication is now looked upon as a source of empowerment of people. But the success of these new media depends on the skills of those who use them. It involves a new attitude towards the value and use of good communication.
- *The concept of human capital:* Employees and workers are now considered to be the human component of business and not just the source of labour. Their attitudes, interests, and welfare constitute an important aspect of management. Hence, there has to be a live channel of communication between the employees and the management.
- *Need to learn corporate etiquette:* Top corporate executives are increasingly being sensitized to the importance of conducting meetings, seminars, presentations, and negotiations effectively. They realize that management executives should learn the rules of etiquette if they are not already familiar with them. This includes knowing how to greet others, shake hands, dress for success, exchange business cards, listen, and converse with a diverse variety of clients.

The large size of organizations today poses problems in communication.

The success of new media depends on the skills of the people who use them.

Corporate etiquette training, which is a part of communication skills, focuses on the rules to be observed and practised for success in international and national business ventures. Good business manners speak of the culture of the organization, not just of the individual.

These contemporary changes suggest that organizations now need not only an effective communication system, but also executives and managers who are well equipped with effective communication skills.

COMMUNICATION CONCERNS OF THE MANAGER

In business, a manager spends most of his or her time either speaking or writing to colleagues, supervisors, subordinates, or clients. A manager's success depends largely on his or her ability to communicate what has to be done and why to colleagues.

To be able to do this, the manager has to devote his or her time to:

- Receiving and interpreting information from other managers and departments
- Sending information to other department managers
- Passing on information and suggestions on new plans or projects to senior/top management
- Transmitting information to subordinates
- Developing a positive attitude

The success of an organization requires an atmosphere in which there is a free flow of information—upward, downward, and horizontally.

To a large extent, the success of an organization requires an atmosphere in which there is a free flow of information—upward, downward, and horizontally. At the workplace, the primary goal is getting things done. For this, instructions, guidelines, supervision, monitoring, and periodic reporting are usually considered enough. But if the company wishes to achieve more than the set task, a real involvement of all employees, from the highest to the lowest levels, is required. This cooperation can only be secured by allowing every level of employee to suggest ideas, express their views, and share their experiences. Such a system of communication can only be established within the organization by the manager. In fact, the manager functions as the point of intersection for all communication channels. One of the most important concerns of the manager is to organize and ensure an effective information system across the organization.

One of the most important concerns of the manager is to organize and ensure an effective information system across the organization.

As analysed by Henry Mintzberg[1] of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, managers need effective communication skills to perform in the following interrelated situations:

3

Know why managers need strong communication skills.

- Interpersonal
- Informational
- Decisional

These situations, with their descriptions and examples, are clearly described in Mintzberg's book, *The Nature of Managerial Work*.

The interpersonal role refers to situations in which the manager acts as a figurehead, leader, and liaison officer. The informational role is when the manager is a monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson. In the decisional role, the manager functions as an entrepreneur, troubleshooter, resource allocator, and negotiator.

If interpersonal communication is effective, internal systems run smoothly.

- *Interpersonal role:* It is necessary to ensure the effective operation of the organization's systems and to maintain proper relationships within the organization and with clients, suppliers, and other functionaries. If interpersonal communication is effective, internal systems run smoothly. For example, personnel functions within the organization require managers to inspire confidence, win support, and guide workers. Managers are role models for others and must develop the skill of listening patiently and perceptively in order to understand the needs of their subordinates. This is essential for creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and goodwill within the organization and transparent sharing of its objectives, mission, and problems.
- *Informational role*: If the internal information-sharing system of a company is effective, other systems such as stock control, personnel functions, financial systems, and quality control operate smoothly. Shortcomings and problems can be quickly

identified and remedial action taken immediately. Proper maintenance of product and service standards can be ensured through timely monitoring and instructing. Through effective, interactive communication and a strong feedback system, high morale and satisfaction of workers can be secured.

- *Decisional role:* Decision-making is based upon receiving and interpreting all relevant and necessary information. Decisions that are based on guesswork and are made without access to all relevant information may turn out to be unrealistic and harmful. Managers need to possess the skill of receiving relevant and up-to-date information correctly and accurately to be able to take decisions and act rationally, fairly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

> Decisions that are based on guesswork and are made without access to all relevant information may turn out to be unrealistic and harmful.

All these functions require the manager to handle people and situations with a good knowledge of human needs.

Human Needs

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs[2], shown in Exhibit 9.2, suggests a succession of needs through which people move as they fulfil their wants and desires.

1. *Physiological needs:* These are the most basic needs of food, shelter, and protection from the elements.
2. *Security and safety needs:* Next come the need to be free from physical danger and the need of knowing that one's physiological needs are being met.
3. *Social needs:* This is the desire to be loved, to be accepted, and to belong.
4. *Ego needs:* Moving to a higher level of the pyramid, people feel the need to be heard, appreciated, and wanted. These needs of the ego are related to the status of the individual. Generally, the fulfilment of economic needs comes before the social expression of one's ego.
5. *Self-actualizing needs:* This is the desire to reach one's highest and complete potential through different forms of professional, social, intellectual, and cultural and artistic activities. It is the highest level of needs in the pyramid.

From the diagrammatic description of human needs shown in Exhibit 9.2, one should not conclude that any of these needs is absent from the human mind. The pyramid structure indicates that as the lower-level needs are satisfied, one feels the urge to satisfy other, higher needs. In such a situation the pressure of the lower-level needs is reduced, but they are always present.

Hence, a manager should be able to identify the needs of different individuals through close interaction with employees. By doing this, he or she can create a business environment in which individual needs are largely recognized and satisfied. It is common knowledge that a satisfied employee is more productive than a dissatisfied one.

Theory X and Theory Y

In highly developed countries like the United States, even those with an average income feel that their basic needs are satisfied. Hence, most people can pursue the satisfaction of their social and self-actualization needs: the need to be recognized and respected and, above all, to belong and be a part of a community.

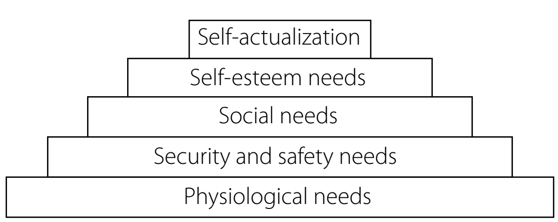


Exhibit 9.2
Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

In developing countries such as India, more people are primarily motivated to satisfy lower-level needs. Accordingly, this has been the focus of traditional management. The management usually assumed that employees were mainly working to collect their pay, to fulfil their primary needs of food, shelter, and security. Hence the management could simply tell people what to do, how to do it, and by when to do it. It was not considered necessary to explain why things had to be done a certain way. Workers were viewed as a source of labour that was not interested in the organization's general welfare. This view is no longer acceptable in most organizations, though in practice it still prevails at many places.

Douglas McGregor, in *The Human Side of Enterprise,*[3] discusses two styles of management: the traditional view of human capital and the emerging modern view that management increases productivity when it helps people satisfy their higher-level needs. McGregor calls these two styles of management *Theory X* (conventional) and *Theory Y* (modern). Theory X postulates that, traditionally, management functions through close control and concern for the job to be done and not concern for the doer of the job—workers' motivation was assumed to be imposed from outside through supervision, promise of reward, or fear of punishment.

Theory Y is the emerging style of management. It promotes a balance between control and individual freedom to actualize the individual's potential and help him or her evolve as a mature and responsible being. McGregor bases his concept on the maxim that freedom accompanies responsibility.

The new management style views people as humans and addresses the fulfilment of their higher-level needs.

Hence, the new management style views people as humans and addresses the fulfilment of their higher-level needs. Managers should consider their audience/receivers as adults capable of change and of controlling their own destinies. The communication focus in this context shifts from the language of control and information to that of motivation and persuasion.

COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR MANAGERS

In an organization, communication counts. It provides the network of sustenance essential for the growth and smooth functioning of the organization.

In an organization, communication counts. It provides the network of sustenance essential for the growth and smooth functioning of the organization. But how should it be implemented? What are the strategies of communicating effectively? How can one learn them? Can communication be taught?

Today, communication has become a buzzword. Accordingly, a great deal of emphasis is being given to training aimed at developing the skills of writing letters, memos, and reports, participating in seminars and group discussions, interviewing, making presentations, and so on. In the world of business, managerial success depends largely on the ability to present one's ideas before others. In fact, verbal (written/oral) and non-verbal (body language) communicative competence is an important aspect of one's personality. In fact, many advanced institutions have incorporated communication in specialized personality development programmes as an additional input for management graduates at all levels of undergraduate and postgraduate education. There are formal courses in business communication, human communication, or organizational communication almost in all universities. In addition, there are training courses and workshops specially designed for executives and bureaucrats at all levels.

These communication courses and training programmes are offered because it is possible to learn and develop interpersonal skills. Of course, there are individuals who are "born communicators", able to think clearly and express themselves effectively with little training. However, others can become successful communicators by learning and practising the strategies of effective communication. All communications courses and programmes are based on simulating real situations in the workplace as well as social situations. Their basic objectives include written and oral/verbal competence and understanding of non-verbal communication/body language. At the end of these courses, students can effectively write letters, memos, reports, proposals, and so on, deliver oral presentations and seminars, and participate in meetings, group discussions, and negotiations.

In business, it is crucial to create and maintain relationships. Effective communicators weigh relationships and develop desirable, long-term ones. One's communication skills help nurture cherished relationships within the organization and outside it.

COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES IN ORGANIZATIONS

4

Understand the elements that form the structure of an organization's communication network.

In business organizations, the effectiveness of a communication system depends upon the extent to which the necessary information (required for decision-making) reaches the concerned person (the person who needs that information) at the right time (when the information is needed). The network of information should support the overall functioning of management by integrating and coordinating the workforce for achieving organizational objectives.

Hence, every organization creates a network (channel) for information to pass through different levels of authority and functional heads and units. The flow of communication follows the structure of the organization. In actual practice, the information passes through the organizational pyramid such as the one shown in Exhibit 9.3.

Vertical Communication

In organizations, there are well-defined lines or routes for passing on communication. Policy decisions are taken at the boardroom level. From there, information is sent downwards to senior managers or a group of senior managers. They ensure that the policy decisions are easily understood, implemented, sustained, monitored, reviewed, and reported. Feedback (performance data or employee experiences or suggestions) is, in turn, sent upwards.

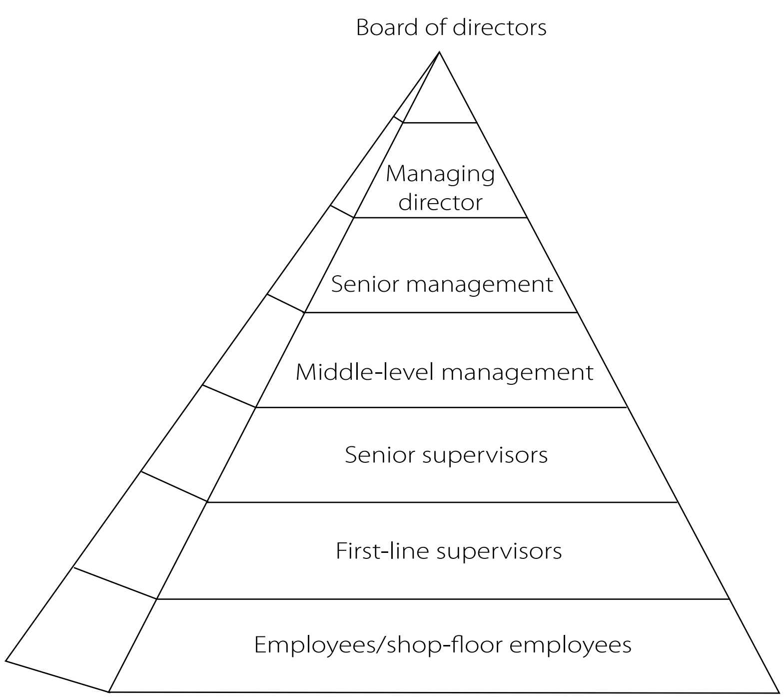


Exhibit 9.3
Organizational Pyramid

In this system of communication, the key links are the managers and supervisors. They transmit information both upwards and downwards. They are also responsible for following up on ideas and instructions. In all large organizations, the human resource or personnel department manages the circulation of information among employees. Personnel managers are in constant touch with all employees. They are able to identify needs, provide guidance on policy matters, and supervise infrastructural rearrangements.

When an organization has too many levels of hierarchy, managers may find it difficult to reach ground-level and shop-floor employees.

However, when an organization has too many levels of hierarchy, managers may find it difficult to reach ground-level and shop-floor employees. In such situations, communication tends to be slow in reaching and delayed in being absorbed and acted upon. The cost of this delay, caused by the sheer size of the organization, may sometimes be too high.

Hence, as Peter Drucker[4] holds, large organizations have more recently moved towards a "flatter structure" of information-based management and executives "walk down" the jobs. This is obviously to facilitate information flow downwards and to prevent employees from getting frustrated by their sense of isolation.

Horizontal Communication

Also known as peer communication, horizontal communication is usually needed within the organization due to:

- The geographical location of divisions
- The functional basis of division

Geographical Organization

In a large setup, divisions may be based on geographical areas. Such divisions may be known just by numbers or single letters. For example, at Tata Steel (Jamshedpur), the "G" blast furnace has its own division with a full-fledged hierarchy of employees and executives. There are other furnaces known by numbers, with their own divisions. They are all located on the vast Tata Steel site. There are also other divisions such as research and development, total quality control, and so on. Each of these divisions maintains close contact with the others through seminars, presentations, and executive meetings. These divisions communicate among themselves to share information and help each other as equal members of the same organization. Thus, communication helps sustain a sense of unity among the various divisions in the organization.

Functional Organization

Normally, business and industrial organizations are divided on the basis of different functions such as production, marketing, finance, personnel, and training and development. All divisions function independently and yet remain linked with each other through peer-group communication and workflow information. With the growth of technology and the increasing size of organizations, the widespread production of goods and services needs to be coordinated through the channel of horizontal communication. From the stage of selection of raw material to the finished product, numerous processes are involved in completing the given task of production. At each stage of the production process, the job of a workgroup depends upon the timing and form of work received from the preceding workgroup. Any interruption in the workflow adversely affects performance at successive stages of production. The workflow in a company can be steadily managed only through horizontal communication between the sections that are directly linked.

LINE AND STAFF MANAGEMENT

Line and staff management (LSM) is a system of management in large organizations consisting of line managers and staff managers. *Line managers* are responsible for the main activities of the company, such as manufacturing and sales, while *staff managers* control the support and service areas, such as accounting, distribution, and personnel. A network of relationships between those in line (functional) management and staff (support) management is created by means of an effective internal communications system. Without this, an organization can neither function properly nor thrive in the business world. As shown in Exhibit 9.4, the internal communication system can be divided into two categories—formal lines of communication and informal lines of communication.

A network of relationships between those in line (functional) management and staff (support) management is created by means of an effective internal communications system.

Formal Communication

Formal lines of organizational communication include:

1. Line relationships
2. Functional relationships
3. Staff relationships

5

Understand the formal and informal lines of organizational communication.

Line Relationships

Line relationships refer to the line of authority that sets down the path of communication from supervisors to subordinates and vice versa. All official communications, orders, and instructions move from seniors to subordinates. Similarly, all follow-up actions and compliance and execution information and reports move upwards, from subordinates to supervisors and executives. Usually, all organizations insist on following the normal chain of authority from one position to the next. If the communication is in the form of a letter, this respect for the chain of authority is indicated by writing the phrase "through the proper channels" in the beginning of the letter.

If the communication is oral, the message is conveyed to one's immediate supervisor.

Usually, all organizations insist on following the normal chain of authority from one position to the next.

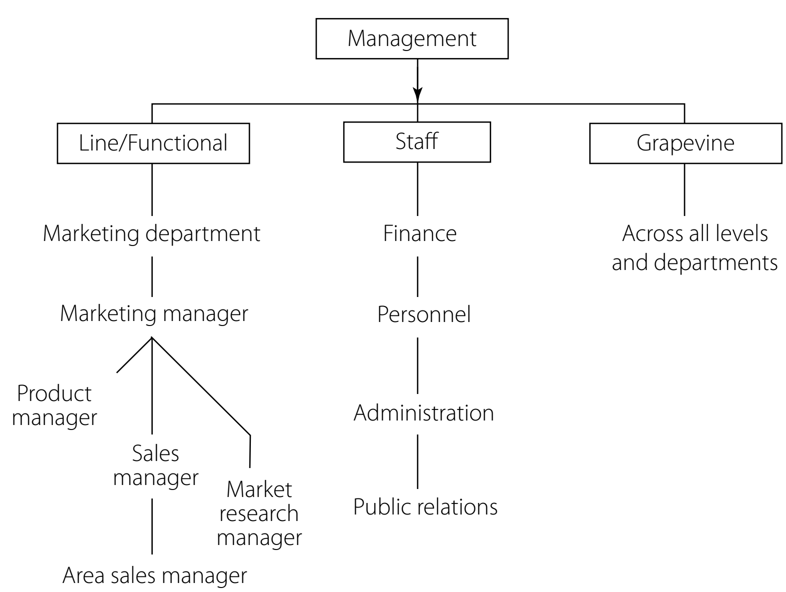


Exhibit 9.4
Internal Communication System in Organizations

Functional Relationships

Functional relationships are those between departments within an organization. Communication that occurs when departments share information regarding work and related organizational matters with each other is a formal line of organizational communication.

Staff Relationships

Staff relationships include the communication that supports line management, marketing, and production. They do not carry the executive authority of line relationships. Communications relating to personnel, public relations, administration, or finance are part of staff relationships.

Informal Communication

Informal communication in an organization usually flows through chat and the grapevine.

Chat

Horizontal or lateral communication is between managers from different departments or within the same peer group. Managers of the same level enjoy the same level of authority. Often, informal communication, which is usually in the form of a "chat", has to be confirmed in writing before it goes through the official channel.

The Grapevine

Theoretically, the network of formal communication may be adequate to meet the needs of exchanging information within an organization. But, in real life, this is seldom true. Often, employees feel inadequately informed in a formal system. They may suspect that the management uses formal channels to conceal rather than reveal the true message. They may thus accuse the system of lacking transparency. As a result, employees modify the formal methods of communication by bringing in an informal communication system, the grapevine.

Information obtained via the grapevine is always attributed to "a reliable source". "Learnt through a reliable source", is a common phrase used by the communicator to make the news sound authentic.

The grapevine may create complications for the information system of organizations.

However, the grapevine may create complications for the information system of organizations.

- The unofficial version of news, irrespective of its basis, is more easily believed by people.
- News through the grapevine spreads like wildfire, quickly and uncontrollably.
- Usually this version of information is somewhat distorted and exaggerated—a result of the vast chain of "filters" used in the process.

The grapevine exists in all workplaces. It is an informal adjunct or extension of the formal system of organizational communication.

The grapevine exists in all workplaces. It is an informal adjunct or extension of the formal system of organizational communication. In a way, it is a corrective to the management's system of information as it is timely and has a wide reach. It poses a challenge to management's MIS (Management Information System).

The presence of the grapevine shows that the management has missed an opportunity to share information of interest with their employees. The gap in formal communication is filled by informal gossip circulated among employees, who form relationships on the basis of their work or common social factors such as neighbourhood, language, culture, state, club memberships, and so on These relationships are formed on the basis of friendship and not official status.

Participants in the grapevine are non-official leaders who generally initiate and spread the gossip across the organization. As with formal communication, there is a sender and a receiver.

Normally, the management views the grapevine negatively as it undercuts confidentiality, secrecy, and guarded sharing of information with employees. However, sometimes the management itself may take advantage of the grapevine, for instance to learn in advance the reaction and response of employees to a proposed scheme or change. In such a situation, before officially announcing the change, the managers may deliberately feed the leaders of the grapevine with the concerned message and note employees' feedback and responses.

This managerial practice is not always on the sly. Some management scholars approve of this practice of supplementing formal communication with informal communication. Koontz and O'Donnell[5] observe, "The most effective communication results when managers utilize the informal organization to supplement the communication channels of the formal organization".

When using informal channels of communication, managers have to be very careful about the form of informal communication. For example, it could be very effective to "walk down the job"—move around the office, chat, and informally discuss formal matters. But, the effectiveness of this depends on the personal relationship between the executive and his or her subordinate and the image created by the executive by his or her official behaviour and personal attributes such as frankness, attitude, and sense of fairness. As Leland Brown says, "In using the grapevine, management must be able to pinpoint the leaders and work through them. It must feed in factual information, listen to the feedback response, and be discerning in not overloading the system and using it inappropriately. It is important that management be sure to follow up the grapevine message with official written messages and statements that will verify the accuracy of data obtained from the grapevine. This helps in building a mutual trust based on open communication followed throughout the organization or business."[6]

Merits of Informal Communication

The chief advantages of informal communication lines are:

- *Uniting force:* The grapevine brings together employees in matters of common interest.
- *Speed:* Informal channels of communication pass on messages speedily.
- *Creation of ideas:* Informal communication, through sharing of ideas and views or by spreading unofficial "grapevine", generates ideas and expectations that often prove of value to decision-makers and planners.
- *Good personal relations:* Public relations fail in organizations because of the lack of good personal relationships. Informal communication that promotes personal relations is, therefore, important for the success of public relations.

> Public relations fail in organizations because of the lack of good personal relationships.

Emphasizing the value of informal communication in management, especially via the grapevine, Myers and Myers[7] assert that field research and laboratory experiments indicate that "grapevine communication is fast; predictable in its course, directions, and membership; and also far more accurate than a casual observer might imagine. Grapevine communication is less heavily loaded with task information—how to do the job—than with information about people, attitudes, relationships, interpretation, prediction, values, norms, and needs"

Limitations of Informal Communication

The limitations of informal communication channels are:

- *Rumours:* Sometimes informal communication, especially grapevine, can prove very provocative and disastrous for the relationship between employees and management. By its very nature, grapevine is information that lacks solid evidence.

By exciting hopes or fears in employees, rumour mongering may result in a negative or misleading situation in the workplace.

Moreover, there is little accountability in spreading it. By exciting hopes or fears in employees, rumour mongering may result in a negative or misleading situation in the workplace. As a consequence, the management may be confronted with a wave of prejudice, emotions, biases, half-truths, and ambiguity.

- *Inadequacy:* Informal communication can only pertain to certain kinds of organizational information—that is, non-functional issues and matters. Secondary issues regarding staff and management relations are generally the subject of grapevine.
- *Changing interpretations:* When information is allowed to be spread through the grapevine, it tends to result in distortion and dilution of the main issue. The key person, the individual who starts spreading the news, is sometimes surprised by the final form in which that news gets back to him or her. Just as in the game of Chinese Whispers, the distortions are unintentional. Changes in interpretations happen owing to the different perceptions of the persons involved in the chain. The unlimited circulation of a statement can make it lose its original meaning and character. Great caution is, therefore, needed in using informal communication channels as a supplement to formal communication.

Changes in interpretations happen owing to the different perceptions of the persons involved in the whispering chain.

Finally, it is the responsibility of the formal communication system to ensure that opportunities for misinterpretation of information through the grapevine do not occur, by giving full and necessary information to employees in a timely manner. Therefore, besides interactions at the functional level, people should be able to talk to one another about formal matters informally on different occasions.

6

Know what and how much should be communicated to employees at the workplace.

INFORMATION TO BE COMMUNICATED AT THE WORKPLACE

To reduce the chances of misinterpretation or disinformation being spread by the grapevine, an organization should keep all its employees informed about certain facts regarding it. The content of the information is generally a mixture of facts, opinion, attitudes and interpretation. The purpose is to instruct, persuade, and ensure a routine first one-way transmission of information.

Broadly, all business communication can be divided into five types of information:

1. *Statutory information:* Information regarding terms and conditions of service should be communicated to all employees as a statutory requirement.
2. *Regular work-related information:* Information regarding normal work situations has to be regularly communicated through routine formal briefing sessions or through informal chat sessions between the manager and group members.
3. *Major policy or operational changes:* Any major changes in the organization's policies, which affect everyone or a large number of employees, have to be communicated to all by calling special meetings or by issuing notices.
4. *Information bulletin:* To keep people informed about events and happenings in the organization, periodic information in the form of a newsletter is disseminated to all employees. This helps create a sense of involvement in the working of the organization.
5. *Communication by expectancy:* Information regarding critical changes should be carefully and gradually communicated to those who are going to be directly affected by the decision. Before the decision is implemented, the people concerned must be prepared for it. This process aims at creating expectancy in the receivers, so that they are prepared for upcoming changes.

SUMMARY

- Effective communication plays a key role in enhancing the success of management functions in an organization.
- Communication helps management in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling employees, materials, and production.
- Effective communication creates a healthy organizational environment in which all employees feel motivated towards the fulfilment of organizational goals.
- Both formal and informal communication channels exist together in all organizations.
- Informal communication and "the grapevine" should be taken advantage of by the management when there is a free and open system of communication in the organization.
- The motivation and involvement of employees increases when they are given the maximum possible information regarding the organization. Essential information includes statutory information, work-related information, information on operational and major policy changes, periodic bulletins regarding organizational events, and information that sets expectations regarding future changes.

CASE: COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN AT CITY HOSPITAL

City Hospital was losing money, and the hospital's executive director knew action had to be taken to reduce expenditure. Since a major portion of the costs were labour-related, the choice was clear—reduce staff.

A natural target for staff reduction was the fifth floor. This unit generally served "observation" patients but had been less than half-full for some time. Fifth-floor patients could be easily reassigned to other units, and closing that floor would save a significant amount of money.

Approximately forty employees worked on the fifth floor, all of them reporting to Lily Joe, the nurse manager. Hospital management decided that since her floor was being closed entirely, Lily's services would no longer be needed.

There were, however, some complicating factors. First, the hospital had a policy of "reassignment" rather than "layoff" and thus had a commitment to place the fifth-floor staff in other open positions for which they were qualified within the hospital. While it was unclear how many of the 40 displaced staff could be moved to other areas, management knew that many could be accommodated.

Second, most of the employees on the fifth floor were long-term staff who had become somewhat "set in their ways", compared to the employees in other departments. Indeed, the fifth floor had developed a reputation for being an uncooperative group that consistently resisted even the most minor changes, and most managers felt that the quality of care provided by the fifth-floor nurses was marginal at best. Similarly, Lily was generally regarded as the least effective of the hospital's nursing managers. As a result of all of these factors, managers in other units were extremely reluctant to accept displaced fifth-floor workers.

A series of management meetings took place to plan the closing of the fifth floor. The meetings were conducted by the assistant head of nursing and attended by the hospital's nurse managers, as well as the director of personnel, director of public relations, and a communications/labour relations consultant. Initially, management had considered keeping Lily out of these meetings, but later decided that it would "look better" if she were included in the planning process. During every meeting, Lily cried openly, much to the discomfort of the others present.

Everyone who participated in the meetings was sworn to secrecy; no one was to mention the closing of the fifth floor until the plan was completely developed and announced. Nevertheless, rumours quickly began to circulate that something was "in the works" and that the fifth floor specifically had been targeted by the management.

Eventually, a plan was developed. On the following Wednesday morning, the deputy head of nursing and the director in charge of personnel would meet with the fifth-floor staff to tell them the news and provide them with details either about their move to other units (for those for whom other positions had been found) or (for those who would be laid off) about the strikingly generous severance package the hospital was providing. Immediately afterward, this same information would be announced at a general meeting of all management; simultaneously, the hospital's chief medical officer (CMO) would conduct a meeting of the medical staff. Individual letters, signed by the director general, would be couriered to all employees on Monday (so that most would reach by Wednesday), and departmental meetings for employees would be conducted on Wednesday afternoon to discuss the situation in detail with all the staff.

Finally, the news media would be contacted late Wednesday afternoon and provided with statements, which would appear on Thursday.

On Monday, two days before the layoffs were to occur, the group met with the CMO of the hospital, Dr Manoj Mehta, and the chief administrative officer (CAO), General Khurana, to review their plan. Much to their dismay, Dr Mehta and General Khurana both reacted extremely negatively to the plan. Both wanted to know exactly how many people would be laid off. The group was unable to produce exact numbers, since the number of vacant positions fluctuated almost daily due to resignations and new hires. "Nursing never gets its numbers right!" Dr Mehta roared in frustration. In addition, General Khurana strenuously objected to having the letter to employees come from the director general. "We've got to stop passing the buck and shoving the blame upward", he argued. Both demanded specific numbers and significant changes in the announcement letter drafted by the group before they would allow the plan to move forward.

At the same time, however, the organization's grapevine was functioning at full throttle. The fifth floor was going to be closed, probably this week, the rumour mill held. Indeed, the fifth-floor employees themselves had apparently gotten wind of the plan. On the hospital's computer system, one fifth-floor employee typed an announcement that was communicated throughout the hospital—"We're long-service, formerly loyal employees who are about to be kicked out onto the street by the hospital. If you would like to help, we are starting a fund to help support those who will be hurt by this. Please send your contribution to (name, address of fifth-floor employee)."

On Wednesday, fifth-floor employees came to work dressed in black and wearing black armbands. They covered the curtains in patient rooms with black sheets, much to the dismay and confusion of the patients in those rooms. When no one came to tell them their floor was being closed, they became all the more upset.

On Thursday, tension mounted. While senior management continued to debate the numbers involved in the layoff and the appropriateness of the communication plan, the fifth-floor employees waited for someone to tell them to go home. Eventually, the situation became unbearable. One nurse began to cry, and soon all were sobbing and hugging each other. The personnel director was called, and when she went to the fifth floor and saw what was happening, she told all of the employees to just go home. With the help of the deputy head of nursing, she oversaw the hurried transfer of fifth-floor patients to other floors.

On Friday, the hospital announced that the fifth floor had been closed.

Questions to Answer

1. Analyse the reasons for the spreading of rumours regarding the layoffs of the observation ward staff.
2. Was it correct to include Lily Joe in the initial discussion meeting?
3. Ideally, how should this situation have been handled?

Source: Based on Andrews and Herschel, *Organizational Communication,* "Case 2: Employee Layoffs," pp. 125–127, ©1996. Reproduced with permission of Pearson Education, Inc.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Discuss how communication is the lifeline of an organization's health.
2. Indicate the new trends in organizational communication due to technological changes and developments.
3. What are the main concerns of a manager? How should he or she fulfil them through effective communication? Discuss.
4. Analyse the corresponding relationship between channels of communication and the structure of an organization.
5. Discuss the formal and informal lines of organizational communication.
6. What is the grapevine? What gives rise to this communication phenomenon in organizations? How can the management prevent it from spreading?
7. Discuss the advantages of informal lines of communication in the workplace.
8. What kinds of information need to be communicated to an employee by the organization?
9. Discuss how staff relationships affect communication in the case of City Hospital.
10. Discuss the responsibility of senior management for establishing and promoting a sound communication system.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What are the ways in which organizations encourage or discourage "upward" communication?
2. "A flat organization is a myth". To what extent can an organization function without a structure with levels of authority?
3. How does training promote effective interpersonal behaviour?
4. In an organization, one learns new attitudes towards working with others. How does communication help an individual's learning behaviour?
5. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of having a clearly defined communication policy from a manager's point of view, especially in relation to employees' needs.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Choose an organization you are familiar with and prepare a diagrammatic presentation of its communications networks. Analyse and evaluate the strengths and limitations of the company's Management Information System (MIS).

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. Managing as a process does not organize:
   (a) labour
   (b) capital
   (c) goods
   (d) material
2. Forecasting determines organizational:
   (a) budget
   (b) performance
   (c) feedback
   (d) objectives and policies
3. To create a cooperative, understanding, and pleasant work environment in an organization, decision-making should be:
   (a) transparent
   (b) strong
   (c) flexible
   (d) quick
4. In an organization, the functional areas are:
   (a) communications, production, and marketing
   (b) marketing, communications, and finance
   (c) production, marketing, and finance
   (d) finance, production, and communications
5. In business, a manager spends most of his or her time in:
   (a) speaking
   (b) writing
   (c) meetings
   (d) planning
6. Managers need effective communication skills to perform the following roles:
   (a) personal
   (b) interpersonal
   (c) impersonal
   (d) decisional
7. There are ____ levels in Maslow's pyramid of needs.
   (a) four
   (b) three
   (c) five
   (d) six
8. In organizations, the flow of communication sometimes slows down because there are too many:
   (a) managers
   (b) channels
   (c) hierarchical levels
   (d) departments

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

9. Grapevine, as an information system, is:
   (a) informal
   (b) formal
   (c) predictable
   (d) personal

10. A limitation of informal communication is that it is:
   (a) inadequate
   (b) personal
   (c) unwarranted
   (d) false

ENDNOTES

1. Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York: Harper Collins College Division, 1973).
2. Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954).
3. Douglas McGregor, "The Human Side of Enterprise", *Adventure in Thought and Action* (Proceedings of the Fifth Anniversary Convocation of the MIT School of Industrial Management, June 1957), pp. 22–30.
4. Peter F. Drucker, *The New Realities* (New Delhi: Asian Books Pvt. Ltd., 1991), p. 210.
5. Koontz and O'Donnell, *Management—A System and Contingency Analysis of Management Function* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), p. 623.
6. Leland Brown, *Communicating Facts and Ideas in Business* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1982), pp. 428–429.
7. M. T. Myers and G. M. Myers, *Managing by Communication—An Organisational Approach* (McGraw Hill, International, Book Company, 1982), p. 138.

10

Cross-cultural Communication

> *In some ways, all people are like all other people; in some ways, like some other people; and in some ways, like no one else.*
>
> — *Clyde Kluckhohn*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the increasing need for clear and cordial communication with people from different cultures.
2. Understand how cultural context affects personal behaviour and business communication.
3. Know the main characteristics of low-context and high-context cultures.
4. Learn how to communicate across cultures with different concepts of formal and social behaviour, time, and space.
5. Understand e-mail etiquette for intercultural business communication.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

A group of French students, newly arrived in India on an exchange programme at Bajaj Institute of Management (BIM), Pune, faced some communication problems that they described:

"First of all, the difference in accents between French and Indian people is important. That is why it is sometimes hard for us to understand each other. We took time to adapt to this new accent, and it was sometimes difficult to be understood by Indians, who are unfamiliar with our French accent.

At the beginning, we often had to ask people to repeat themselves two or three times. Eventually, this would become embarrassing, so we would just say 'okay', even if we didn't understand that they had said. Likewise, in restaurants, it happened that after ordering a specific dish, we would get a different one because of pronunciation problems with the waiter.

To adapt, we quickly understood that it was better for us to speak in English without British or American accents that we learned at school. Indeed, it was better to adapt our accent to the Indian pronunciation, especially with the letter *r*. Moreover, we use very simple English and easy sentences such as 'You, okay?' instead of 'Do you agree with that?' to be correctly understood.

We, every day, face the difficulties generated by the difference in accents, but the major issue is communicating with non-English-speaking people. Not everyone in India speaks English and, unfortunately, we do not speak Hindi. We have faced many situations where it was difficult to be clear and to converse with the other side. For instance, when we want to bargain with rickshaws, it takes a long time and we often have to show numbers with our hands or by writing them on the floor or typing them on our mobile phones."

GLOBALIZATION AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

With increasing globalization, interaction between people from different societies and cultures has become unavoidable. More than just travelling as tourists, people now stay in foreign countries for business, higher studies, and employment. The new trend in international business is to "go local". This creates a work situation in which "locals" and foreign experts perform together as a team. This necessitates cultural orientation on the part of the visitors so that they are familiar with the host culture, specially the use of habitual expressions and expected behaviour in different situations. The process of acculturation is made possible by organizing specialized training of visiting teams in the language and work culture of host organizations. It is

Exhibit 10.1
Will Indian English Conquer the Globe?

According to Professor David Crystal, one of the world's foremost experts and author of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language,* English will fragment into "global dialects", forcing speakers routinely to learn two varieties of the language—one spoken in their home country and a new kind of Standard English. The latter kind of English will have pronounced Indian characteristics, says Professor Crystal.

The new Standard English could signify the end of the primacy of American English. "Future users of global Standard English might routinely say, 'I am thinking it is going to rain' rather than the British/American 'I think it is going to rain'", says Crystal. Because Indians tend to use the "present continuous"—*I am thinking*, *I am feeling*, *I am seeing*—where the British/Americans would use the "present simple"—*I think*, *I feel*, *I see*—the present continuous form may become part of global Standard English. A second factor in this change in the nature of English could be the fact that India has a bigger English-speaking population than the rest of the native English-speaking world. It will be interesting to see the form English takes if the new Standard English gains popularity.

Source: Based on Rashmee Roshan Lall, "Indian English Will Conquer Globe: Expert", *The Times of India*, New Delhi, March 7, 2008.

1

Understand the increasing need for clear and cordial communication with people from different cultures.

also necessary for those in the host country to be respectful and welcoming of their visitors' cultures, so that the interaction can be productive and cordial.

A prerequisite to setting up a business in a foreign land is being able to maintain cordial relations with the local people. One of the important ways to achieve this is to speak the language of the foreign land. For example, the representatives of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Latin America converse in Spanish and Portuguese. Similarly, the executives of Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) working in China undergo training in Chinese language, culture, and social customs in addition to picking up Chinese business etiquette in the course of their stay in China. Likewise, the local Chinese employees of M&M are given training in English so that they can follow and implement the company's new business processes.

The new trend in international business is to "go local".

Smooth cross-cultural presence in business, industry, or education is possible internationally or intra-nationally only by first developing knowledge and sensitivity of the other culture. Indian corporations seeking to establish businesses in foreign countries such as China, South Africa, Malaysia, Korea, and so on are preparing themselves by teaching executives foreign languages. This can facilitate easy intermingling with the people in these countries and help develop *cultural sensitivity*. According to a report published in *The Economic Times*, cultural sensitivity is increasingly becoming India Inc.'s "most important deal drill."[1] This is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Exhibit 10.1 provides an insight into some of the transformations the English language may undergo in an increasingly global world.

THE NEW GLOBAL MANTRA: GO LOCAL

To manage the cultural diversity they encountered in other countries, Indian multinational companies such as Tata, HCL, and M&M decided to go local in a big way. Consider the example of Tata Motor's Daewoo enterprise in Korea, wherein Koreans are employed to do most of the work and the small number of Indians who work with them speak Korean. Likewise, TCS in Latin America has in place a senior management team consisting mostly of locals, while a few Indians provide the support system. Bilt also believes in the "go local" mantra of globalization. Its decision to acquire Sabah Forest, Malaysia's largest paper and pulp company, without displacing people from their present jobs in the company is inspired by this philosophy.

The practice of absorbing locals into the workforce is ethically sound. It creates a cordial relationship between the hosts and the foreign employer and employees. But the visiting organization faces a number of challenges. For instance, consider the experience of SBI in China. T.C.A. Ranganathan had a great deal of experience managing bank branches across North India. But in Shanghai, he realized that he still needed to learn certain things about managing bank branches. Understanding and handling the Chinese staff was one of the major challenges. Another difficulty was codifying the local law in a manner that could be understood back in India. There was also the issue of building a brand for a bank that few in China had heard of.[2]

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Executives seeking global business shores often join formal classes to get a feel for local cultures. Sensitivity to local cultures is necessary to stay in business. For instance, dinner diplomacy in China is often more effective than boardroom meetings for securing business. Those who understand this, like M&M, often manage to clinch deals over less-sensitive rivals.

> **2**
> Understand how cultural context affects personal behaviour and business communication.

Awareness about a client's cultural sensitivities often results in a positive advantage in business relationships. The phrase "cultural sensitivity" was first used in the *Harvard Business Review* in 2004, in the context of the cultural intelligence quotient (CQ). Shital Kakker Mehra, founder of Soft Skills International, defines cultural sensitivity as "an ability to interpret unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures in the way compatriots of the same culture would." Here, the term *gestures* stands for the whole range of non-verbal cues that accompany verbal communication between persons from two different cultures. In interpreting gestures, one can consider the human body to be part of the code for communication of symbolic messages that reveal an individual's thoughts and feelings. Gestures are often expressive of cultural context.

Here, it is important to understand that culture is not just behaviour. Culture is the received and accepted set of rules guiding human behaviour. These rules are absorbed and eventually become engrained in each individual's mind to the point where they are second nature. Persons with similar sets of social rules tend to behave in the same manner, which then becomes the normal behaviour expected in different situations. It is interesting to know that an individual's behaviour is noticed only when it deviates from the norm and becomes a noticeable behaviour in a particular culture. Thus, cultural sensitivity, which is measured by the cultural intelligence quotient, helps us to understand cultural differences. It enables us to interpret different gestures according to the rules of normal behaviour in that culture.

For example, here is a scenario illustrative of significant differences between cultures: a man travelling alone in a cab in New York will sit in the back seat, but in Australia, if a man is travelling alone in a cab, he will occupy the front seat next to the driver. According to Beatty and Takahashi, most New York cab drivers hold that if a single male attempted to get in the front seat, next to them, they would get out of the cab. For them, such an act would likely mean that the entering passenger is a thief. Australian cab drivers, on the other hand, feel that a man getting in the back seat alone is rather unfriendly and distant.[3]

Cultural sensitivity is considered to be very important in helping a person adapt to a foreign culture. This is why most nations include questions about their culture in their citizenship tests, assuming that a person who is aware about their culture will be able to adapt to it successfully. Exhibit 10.2 shows a few sample questions that a person may be required to answer as part of a U.K. citizenship test.

Exhibit 10.2
Sample Citizenship Test

Several nations ask immigrants to take citizenship tests that examine their knowledge of the culture they hope to live in. Below is a sample citizenship test for the United Kingdom.

1. The United Kingdom has a vibrant popular culture. Which of the following is **not** a British musical group?
   - Westlife
   - Mis-teeq
   - So Solid Crew
   - Busted
2. Queen Elizabeth II, the head of state, celebrates an "official birthday", the date of which changes every year. What is her actual birthday?
   - 23 April
   - 14 June
   - 1 April
   - 21 April
3. You have a bought a kettle from a High Street electrical retailer. Under what circumstances can you demand your money back?
   - You changed your mind; you don't want it anymore.
   - It keeps switching off before the water boils.
   - You discover that a friend has already bought one for you.
   - All of the above.
4. The United Kingdom has a devolved government, which means there are special groups of elected officials who currently meet in both Edinburgh and Cardiff. Who is the first minister of the Welsh Assembly?
   - Rhodri Morgan
   - Jack McConnell
   - Peter Hain
   - Denzil Davies
5. Under working time regulations, after six hours of work, you are entitled to a break of how long?
   - 20 minutes
   - 30 minutes
   - 60 minutes
   - 90 minutes

Meetings and Social Visits

Differences in cultures are seen in the way people from different cultures behave on meeting someone for the first time.

People's behaviour at meetings and social gatherings is nearly a ritualized act in various cultures. At a formal meeting between two persons or groups from different cultural backgrounds, people might behave according to their own culture. For example, in English one may say "Pleased to meet you" or "How do you do?", whereas in Japanese one says "Hajimemashite" (it is beginning). Differences in cultures are seen in the way people from different cultures behave on meeting someone for the first time. Japanese executives first exchange business cards instead of verbally introducing themselves. The card is handed over to the receptionist, without an introduction. The purpose of giving or showing the card is to announce the visitor's arrival for the appointed meeting. No verbal exchange takes place because the Japanese believe that verbal exchange should be for prolonged interactions. The exchange of visiting cards involves no time as such. American businesspeople find this practice rather surprising. Americans and Europeans usually approach the receptionist and verbally announce, "I am so and so" and "I have come to meet so and so". On meeting the person concerned, they would greet them with a "Good morning/afternoon/evening" and "how are you doing?", which is followed by an introduction

Group Behaviour

Cultural differences are also noticeable in the way people in groups act when they are joined by a new person. In America, when a group of persons is talking and someone joins the group, the group drops the ongoing discussion as it is believed that the newcomer would have little interest in it or would fail to join in the discussion. In this matter, the Japanese follow the practice of continuing with the ongoing discussion and wait for the moment when the newcomer is able to join the conversation. Of course, if the newcomer has high status, the group drops the discussion to pay attention to the newly arrived person. Thus, one could say that "Americans regroup, whereas Japanese join an existing group."

Paying a Visit

Visiting is a formal act. Calling out the name of the host of a house is usually considered improper in most cultures. Ringing the door bell or knocking on the door is the normal practice. On entering a house, Japanese people (and those from some other Asian cultures) generally remove their shoes. People of western cultures do not normally do so.

Addressing Others

Different cultures have different ways in which people address each other. For example, in the United States, children address their parents or uncles/aunts by their relationship to them, such as "Mom", "Dad", "Uncle", "Aunt", and so on. Siblings or cousins use first names to address each other. Moreover, older adults who are not immediate family members are generally addressed by their first names, regardless of how old they may be. In some cultures, like in China, one can call a waiter in a restaurant by words reserved for relatives, such as for an uncle. Their use in such contexts shows politeness towards the person addressed. In India, there are specific terms for specific aunts and uncles—for instance, *tau* refers to one's father's older brother, whereas *chacha* refers to one's father's younger brother.

In the business context, greetings are more formal in Europe and East Asia than in the United States. Mr/Ms/Mrs (to be followed by the full name or the surname) and Sir/Madam are more common in Britain, Germany, France, China, and Russia. Japanese businesspeople avoid first names, and instead use Mr/Mrs/Miss/Dr, or they add *san* after the surname, for instance, "Shin *san*" if the name is Jin Boon Shin. Academics can be addressed as *sensei* (teacher). In China, the surname precedes the personal name; for example, Zhang Hua is Mr Zhang, not Mr Hua. Therefore, when addressing a Chinese person, it is best to use Mr/Mrs/Miss and the surname. The Chinese also refer to each other by their job titles, for example "Manager Li".

In Germany, even colleagues who have been working in the same office for 20 years, may use the formal form and address each other by their surname and title (*Herr* for a man or *Frau* for a woman). If someone has an academic title, it may also be added (for instance: Herr Dr or Frau Professor). The French also tend to be rather formal and do not use first names easily. They generally address each other by prefixing the surname with *Monsieur, Madame,* or *Mademoiselle* (for a young lady). Similarly, it is considered impolite to call an adult by their first name under any circumstances in Korea. Interestingly, titles such as Mr/Mrs/Miss are used to address juniors in Korea. On the other hand, Americans are more informal. They usually prefer to interact on first-name basis and may even greet each other with nicknames or shortened versions of their names, like "Bill" for William or "John" for Johnson.

Exhibit 10.3
Cultural Misunderstandings

On Arvind's first day as senior manager in a firm in Japan, he was asked if he would like to pick up his recruitment letter and other forms. "It seemed like a suggestion, so I said I would do so later." This casual remark lost him a lot of goodwill in the office. Suggestions are meant to be interpreted as commands in Japan, he learned later.

Preeti was preparing to receive her husband's Chinese boss for dinner. She ordered special Chinese lanterns to welcome him. But when he arrived, he took one look at the lanterns, bowed, and took leave. Preeti ruefully recalls, "The Chinese use different lanterns for different social occasions. I had decorated my house with funeral lanterns."

Deepa Sharma, a cross-cultural trainer who liaises between several Indian and American firms, says, "When doing business, many Indians, by and large, go on trust and goodwill. This creates an area of vagueness which can be problematic for Westerners who want everything on paper." She recalls a joint construction project between an Indian and American firm. The Americans were checking and cross-checking the modalities required to finish the project. "This irritated the Indian engineers who felt the Americans were questioning their competency, while the Americans felt they were being clear, thorough, and transparent," she says.

Cultural misunderstandings nearly derailed an Indo–Japanese project on a bridge. Ex-president of Turner Broadcasting (CNN) India and cross-cultural trainer, Bhaskar Pant, says, "An Indian firm sent a detailed list of technical questions to their Japanese counterparts. They panicked when no reply was forthcoming." What had happened? Was the deal off? A week later, the Japanese responded. "Unlike in India or the West, the Japanese take feedback from everyone. The queries probably went to heads of different departments, so when the Japanese finally responded, they were presenting as full a picture as possible. This concept is alien in India or the West where e-mail etiquette means a response is required the next day."

Source: Based on Ashwin Ahmad, "To the Manner Born at the Workplace", TNN.

For a non-Russian, the question of how to address a Russian person can be quite complicated. After 1917, the Russian words for Mr, Mrs, and Ms were abolished. The word *tovarisch*—meaning "comrade"—is used mainly in political meetings and is no longer common. Strangers use the word *grazhdanin* or *grazhdanka*—meaning "citizen" or "citizens". When strangers are introduced, they will use their first names and surnames.

In Spain, although *tu*, the informal form of "you", is used extensively, it is still the custom to use the more formal *usted* with strangers and older people. In Italy, when addressing others in business and professional contexts, one usually uses titles: *dottore* (doctor, but also anyone with a university degree), *ingegnere* (engineer), *ragioniere* (accountant), and *professore* (any teacher above elementary school level) are commonly used for male professionals. Female professionals are similarly addressed as *dottoressa*, *professoressa*, and so on.

A lack of awareness of the culture of the person one is interacting with may lead to serious misunderstandings, as evident from Exhibit 10.3.

3

Know the main characteristics of low-context and high-context cultures.

DEVELOPING CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Our attitudes, values, beliefs, social behaviour, and language crystallize in the crucible of culture. Therefore, to be able to act and respond correctly in intercultural situations, it is important to know the other individual's cultural background.

Verbal and non-verbal communication should be explained with reference to their cultural contexts. Edward T. Hall, an anthropologist, propounded the theory of strong linkage between culture and communication. While teaching intercultural skills to foreign service personnel in the 1950s, he developed the concepts of "high-context culture" and "low-context culture."

The kind of communication that dominates in a given culture relates directly to the type of the culture it is or, to be more precise, to the role of social context in that culture. Social context is interpreted as the network of social expectations that determine a person's behaviour. The rules act as social context and guide behaviour almost spontaneously, with little conscious effort on the part of the participants in the interaction. Context is a key factor in determining the effect of culture on communication. It implies consideration of the framework, background, and surrounding circumstances in which communication takes place.

High-context Cultures

In a *high-context culture*, there are many contextual elements that help individuals understand the rules. Much is taken for granted while communicating. A person who does not know the unwritten rules of the culture may find communication confusing. High-context cultures are found in many Asian countries and much of the Middle East, South America, and Africa. People from these countries are more likely to be relational, collectivist, intuitive, and contemplative. This means that people in these cultures emphasize interpersonal relationships. Developing trust is an important first step to any business transaction. According to Hall[4], these cultures are collectivist, preferring group harmony and consensus to individual achievement. People in these cultures may be less governed by reason than by intuition or feelings. Words are not as important as context, which might include the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and even the person's family history and status. A Japanese manager explained his culture's communication style to an American in the following words: "We are a homogeneous people and don't have to speak as much as you do. When we say one word, we understand ten, but here you have to say ten to understand one." High-context communication tends to be more indirect and more formal. Flowery language, humility, and elaborate apologies are typical.

In a *high-context culture*, there are many contextual elements that help individuals understand the rules. Much is taken for granted while communicating. A person who does not know the unwritten rules of the culture may find communication confusing.

4

Learn how to communicate across cultures with different concepts of formal and social behaviour, time, and space.

Low-context Cultures

In a *low-context culture*, very little is taken for granted. Therefore, explicit statements and explanations are required. The chances of misunderstanding by those outside that culture are minimized. Low-context cultures include those of North America and much of Western Europe. These cultures tend to value rationality, logic, action-oriented behaviour, and individualism. They emphasize reason, facts, and directness. Solving a problem means lining up the facts and evaluating them. Decisions are based on facts rather than intuition. Discussions end with actions. Explicit contracts conclude negotiations. Communicators are expected to be straightforward, concise, and efficient in explaining all actions literally. This is very different from communication in high-context cultures, which depend less on precise language and legal documents. Businesspeople from high-context cultures may even distrust contracts and be offended by the lack of trust they suggest. Knowledge of the culture of one's business associates helps set realistic expectations regarding the type of communication that is likely to happen. Exhibit 10.4 compares the characteristics of high- and low-context communication.

In a *low-context culture*, very little is taken for granted. Therefore, explicit statements and explanations are required. The chances of misunderstanding by those outside that culture are minimized.

Time As a Cultural Factor

According to Hall, another significant characteristic of a culture is how time is viewed in that culture. In his book *The Silent Language*, Hall coined the terms *polychronic*, to describe the ability to attend to multiple events simultaneously, and *monochronic*, to describe individuals and cultures with a preference for doing things sequentially. The main differences between the two are highlighted in Exhibit 10.5.[5]

Monochronic Time

M-time, as Hall calls it, means doing things in a sequential manner, one thing at a time. Monochronic people tend to carefully plan and schedule their work. They are known for

Monochronic time means doing things in a sequential manner, one thing at a time.

Exhibit 10.4
Communication in High-context and Low-context Cultures

Low-context Cultures
Examples: North-America, Germany, France

- More emphasis on accurate and correct information
- Detailed information and precise documents are crucial; the context is relatively unimportant
- Listeners try to gain as much information as possible
- The interpretation of the message should be unambiguous
- Decisions based on information and facts; objective data valued

High-context Cultures
Examples: Japan, China, Greece, Arab nations

- Seeks to appeal to emotions
- Lack of detailed information and precise documents, much information depends on the context
- Relaxed speaking and listening, no interference from listeners
- Listeners are free to interpret the message
- Decisions based on emotional factors; subjective relationships valued

their time management skills. A monochronic sense of time is more common in low-context cultures.

In a *polychronic culture*, human relationships are valued more than time. Polychronic people do not hurry to get things done, and they get things done in their own time.

Polychronic Time

In a *polychronic culture*, human relationships are valued more than time. Polychronic people do not hurry to get things done, and they get things done in their own time. They are high-context people in their overall attitude towards information sharing.

Within western cultures people have different attitudes towards time. For instance, Americans and Germans are highly monochronic, whereas the French tend to be largely polychronic. Hence, being late to a business meeting is a much bigger faux pas for a German or American executive than for a French executive.

Space As a Cultural Factor

Different cultures vary in their concern for space and social relationships within it. Hall calls the study of human concern for space *proxemics*. Concern for space primarily suggests personal body space. But it also relates to space in other situations such as in one's room, in traffic, and in the office.

People are extremely sensitive to any intrusion into their personal space by others. But the area of personal territory differs from culture to culture and relationship to

Exhibit 10.5
Differences Between Monochronic and Polychronic Cultures

Monochronic Cultures
Examples: North-America, Germany, France

- Do one thing at a time
- Concentrate on the job at hand
- Think about deadlines and when things must be achieved
- Put the job first
- Seldom borrow or lend things
- Emphasize promptness

Polychronic Cultures
Examples: France

- Do many things simultaneously
- Are highly distractable and subject to interruptions
- Think about what will be achieved
- Put relationships first
- Borrow and lend things more easily
- Base promptness on relationship factors

relationship. This concern for proper personal space will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7. However, here we will consider it as one of the cultural factors affecting human relations and levels of comfort. For instance, a Japanese person may need less space and may stand too close for an American's comfort without realizing it.

This concern for space may extend to the level of territorial possessiveness. In fact, perhaps all territorial feuds and wars result from an overzealous concern for space. This is often seen in offices, where some individuals with territorial tendencies fight for exclusive use of their office desks, behaving as if they possessed the desk and were not simply using it.

People of high territoriality tend to be from low-context cultures. People of low territoriality tend to have less of a sense of ownership of personal space and, accordingly, boundaries have less meaning for them. They readily share their territory and space. For example, in buses or trains some persons offer to share their seats with others with little hesitation.

This cultural analysis should help us understand an individual's actions in the context of the type of culture to which he or she belongs. For example, the reason for a person being late to a meeting may not be laziness or lack of respect, but, rather, his or her having a polychronic cultural background and a more flexible attitude towards timings.

Cultural analysis should help us understand an individual's actions in the context of the type of culture to which he or she belongs. For example, the reason for a person being late to a meeting may not be laziness or lack of respect, but, rather, his or her having a polychronic cultural background and a more flexible attitude towards timings.

SOME EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

An important prerequisite to understanding colleagues and acquaintances from other cultures is being able to accept various cultures on their own terms. It is important to guard against *ethnocentrism*—the practice of judging the behaviour of people from other cultures on the basis of what is considered to be "acceptable behaviour" in one's own culture. Ethnocentrism and stereotyping can be barriers to effective communication, so it is important to avoid such tendencies.

This section highlights the norms of four different cultures in an attempt to emphasize the need to be aware of cultural differences and to adapt one's style of communication when meeting people from different cultural backgrounds. However, one should always keep in mind that stereotyping can lead to incorrect assumptions, and individuals vary within cultures.

Japan

- *Culture:* Saving face is crucial in Japanese society. The Japanese believe that turning down someone's request causes embarrassment and loss of face to the other person. If a request cannot be agreed to, they will say, "it is inconvenient" or "it is under consideration".

  There is great emphasis on politeness, personal responsibility, and working together for the universal rather than the individual good. Facts that might be unpleasant are expressed in a gentle and indirect fashion. Since the Japanese strive for harmony and work well in groups, they often rely on facial expressions, tone of voice, and posture to understand others.
- *Business relationships and communication:* The Japanese prefer to do business on the basis of personal relationships. One way to build and maintain relationships is with greetings and seasonal cards. In general, being introduced or recommended by someone who already has a good relationship with the company is extremely helpful as it helps them know how to place others in a hierarchy relative to themselves.
- *Business meeting etiquette:* Greetings in Japan are very formal and ritualized. While foreigners are expected to shake hands, the traditional form of greeting is the bow. How far someone bows depends upon their relationship to the other person as well as the situation. The deeper someone bows, the more respect they show.

Since this is a group society, foreigners should be prepared for group meetings. The most senior Japanese person will be seated farthest from the door, with the rest of the people seated in descending order of rank; the most junior person is seated closest to the door.

The Japanese often remain silent for long periods of time. Others should be patient and try to determine if their Japanese colleagues have understood what was said. Some Japanese people close their eyes when they want to listen intently.

The Japanese seldom grant concessions. They expect both parties to come to the table with their best offer. Business cards are exchanged frequently and with great ceremony. Business cards are given and received with two hands and a slight bow.

France

- *Culture:* The family is the social adhesive of the country, and each member has certain duties and responsibilities. The French are private people and have different rules of behaviour for people within their social circle and those outside it.
- *Business relationships and communication:* The handshake is a common form of greeting. Friends may greet each other by lightly kissing on each cheek. First names are generally reserved for family and close friends; one should not address someone by his or her first name until invited to do so. Mutual trust and respect are required to get things done.

  The French like to use their own language; someone who does know speak French could apologize for not knowing the language as this may aid in developing a relationship.
- *Business meeting etiquette:* Business cards are exchanged after the initial introductions without formal rituals. In business, the French often appear extremely direct because they are not afraid of asking probing questions. Meetings are held to discuss issues, not to make decisions. The French are often impressed with good debating skills that demonstrate an intellectual grasp of the situation and all its ramifications. Discussions may be heated and intense. One should never attempt to be overly friendly as the French generally compartmentalize their business and personal lives.

Germany

- *Culture:* In many respects, Germans can be considered the masters of planning. This is a culture that prizes forward thinking and knowing what they will be doing at a specific time on a specific day. Business and personal lives are rigidly divided. In a culture where most communication is rather formal, the home is where one can relax.
- *Business relationships and communication:* Germans do not need a personal relationship in order to do business. They tend to be interested in others' academic credentials and the amount of time their business partners have been in business.

  A quick, firm handshake is the traditional greeting. Business cards are exchanged after the initial introductions without formal ritual. Germans do not have an open-door policy. People often work with their office doors closed. Visitors should knock and wait to be invited in before entering someone's office.

  German communication is formal. Following the established protocol is critical to building and maintaining business relationships. One can expect a great deal of written communication, both to back up decisions and to maintain a record of decisions and discussions. Letters should be addressed to the senior-most person in the relevant functional area and should include the person's name as well as their proper business title.

- *Business meeting etiquette:* Punctuality is taken extremely seriously. If one is delayed, it is important to call immediately and offer an explanation for the delay. It is extremely rude to cancel a meeting at the last minute and it could jeopardize a business relationship.

  Meetings adhere to strict agendas, including starting and ending times. Germans prefer to get down to business and only engage in the briefest of small talk. They maintain direct eye contact while speaking. Business is hierarchical, and decision-making happens at the top of the company. Once a decision is made, it will not be changed.

Brazil

- *Culture:* Brazil is a mixture of races and ethnicities, which has resulted in rich diversity in the population. Unlike many other Latin American countries where there is a distinct Indian population, Brazilians have intermarried to the point that it sometimes seems that almost everyone has a combination of European, African, and indigenous ancestry. Families tend to be large (although family size has been diminishing in recent years) and the extended family is quite close.
- *Business relationships and communication:* Businesspeople usually shake hands when greeting one another, while maintaining steady eye contact. Women generally kiss each other on the cheek. Brazilians need to know who they are doing business with before they can work effectively. They prefer face-to-face meetings to written communication as it allows them to know the person with whom they are doing business. The individual they deal with is more important than the company. Communication is often informal and does not rely on strict rules of protocol. Anyone who feels they have something to say will generally add their opinion.
- *Business meeting etiquette:* In Sao Paulo and Brasilia, it is important to arrive on time for meetings. In Rio de Janeiro and other cities it is acceptable to arrive a few minutes late for a meeting. One should not appear impatient if kept waiting—Brazilians see time as something outside their control and the demands of relationships takes precedence over adhering to a strict schedule. Meetings are generally rather informal. One can expect to be interrupted while speaking or making a presentation. Business cards are exchanged during introductions with everyone at a meeting.

In a world where people from such varied cultures are required to communicate, Globlish—a simplified form of English—can be a great way of making our communication more effective. Exhibit 10.6 explains the concept of Globlish.

Exhibit 10.6
Globlish: A New Tool for Business Communication

To make communication in English easier in a world where professionals from different cultural and language backgrounds interact, former IBM vice president Jean-Paul Nerrier came up with the concept of a language of just 1,500 words: Globlish.

Globlish, or "global English", Nerriere maintains, is a tool of communication rather than a language. He feels that in the international context, speaking immaculate Oxford English is unnecessary, and can even be detrimental at times. In such situations, Globlish, which is a highly simplified and unidiomatic form of English, can be used to communicate with ease. It is important to note that Globlish is not "pidgin" or "broken" English. All the words are English, and so is the grammar. It's just that the sentences are kept short and words like which, who, whose, and whom are replaced with punctuation marks.

In a country like India, where the educated usually speak more than one language and English is a second language, Globlish can be of great use for communicating clearly and effectively.

Sources: Based on "Master Globlish, Use it for Business Communication," *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 27 July 2007; and S. Pathiravitana, "Superstitions in English Grammar", *Daily News*, 25 March 2008.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The following are some general guidelines for communicating with people from other cultures. Cross-cultural communication is about dealing with people from other cultures in a way that minimizes misunderstandings and maximizes the potential for strong relationships. Because one cannot know everything about all cultures, these are general guidelines that should be applied for clear intercultural communication.

- *Speak slowly:* Slow down. Be clear and intelligible in pronunciation.
- *Ask distinct questions:* In cross-cultural situations, one should realize that the listener may understand only one question at a time. Therefore, ask distinct and separate questions and not double questions such as "Do you want to carry on or shall we stop here?"
- *Avoid negative questions:* Many misunderstandings are caused by the use of negative questions and answers. In English, we say *yes* if the answer is affirmative and *no* if it is negative. But in India, people tend to say *yes* if they think a negative question should be answered in the affirmative. For instance, if someone asks, "Is Neha not coming?", one should say "No, she is coming" if Neha is indeed coming. But people tend to say, "Yes, she is not coming." This response is based on the thought "You are right that she is not coming", hence the answer begins with "yes". This can lead to confusion, so such questions should be avoided.
- *Take turns:* To enhance cross-cultural interaction, people should speak and listen by turns. This means that the person who is speaking should make his or her point and then listen to the response.
- *Be supportive:* Speaking a foreign language when expressing oneself and understanding others may not be easy. Effective communication is in essence about being comfortable. Giving encouragement to those with weak English gives them confidence, support, and trust in you.
- *Write it down:* If you are unsure of whether something has been understood, write it down and check with the other person. This can be useful when using large figures. For example, in the United States, a billion is 1,000,000,000, while in the United Kingdom, it could mean 1,000,000,000,000.
- *Check meanings:* When communication with someone from an unfamiliar culture, never assume that the other person has understood you. It helps to summarize what has been said in order to verify it. This is a very effective way of ensuring that cross-cultural communication has been accurate.
- *Avoid slang:* Even the most educated foreigner tends to miss the meaning of slang and idioms. Avoid using slang in cross-cultural communication situations.
- *Limit the humour:* In many cultures business is taken very seriously. Professionalism and protocol are constantly observed. Many cultures do not appreciate the use of humour and jokes in the business context. While using humour consider whether it will be appreciated and understood in the other culture. For example, British sarcasm often has a negative effect abroad.
- *Maintain etiquette and do some research:* Many cultures follow a certain etiquette when communicating. When interacting with people from other cultures for the first time, do some research on that culture. For instance, one can read about the country online, refer to travel guides, talk to other people who may know about that country, learn some key phrases in their language, and so on.
- *Be sensitive:* Be sensitive to other people's religious and dietary restrictions.
- *Be attentive to cues:* Be conscious of and sensitive to cues that others send out. One

cannot be prepared for every situation, but one can learn a lot by observing others. For instance, when visiting another country, one can observe and follow the host's lead (especially with regard to dining and greeting etiquette).

E-MAIL AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

5

Understand e-mail etiquette for intercultural business communication.

The globalization of business in the modern world demands that people of diverse cultures across the world communicate with one another. Physically, a manager and his or her team members may be located in far-flung locations. For example, a senior executive may be placed in the United States while his or her staff may be in India, Germany, or China. Similarly, an exporter in India may have associates in France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, and China. Their communication is an example of intercultural communication.

People across the world use e-mail as an instant means of communicating, transmitting messages, and receiving responses. Through the Internet people are able to send documents, information, and requests to colleagues, customers, clients, or suppliers across the globe. With e-mail as the preferred mode of international communication, two issues need to be looked into: language and culture.

Despite its many advantages, e-mail has an inherent difficulty for the receiver. E-mail communication is highly culture-specific with regard to language, idiom, and style. For example, an Indian who has lived in the United States for a few years may pick up American slang and inadvertently expresses himself or herself in an American manner. The cultural colouring of the language of such an e-mail may pose some difficulties to persons in India. E-mail is a spontaneous medium and its effortlessness sometimes makes it more casual.

E-mail communication is highly culture-specific with regard to language, idiom, and style.

Language

English is the most common language of business across all cultures. Although English is used as the language of global business, it is not equally understood and is often not used as native speakers speak it. This causes problems in international communication. Those for whom English is a second language may have problems in grammar, syntax, and choosing the correct words. In an e-mail, any error of vocabulary or grammar can present difficulties for the reader.

Although personal e-mails tend to have a more conversational tone and often use abbreviations, business e-mails are treated as formal, official documents. Thus, they should not be casually written. The sentences should be complete, grammatically correct, and abbreviations such as "u" for "you" are not acceptable. The format of e-mail communication is fixed with fields such as *from*, *to*, *subject*, *date*, and *time*. Other details such as the sender's and receiver's e-mail addresses are mentioned (sometimes along with mobile numbers which are part of the signature) to facilitate quick responses.

Culture

The actual format of an e-mail may differ from culture to culture. In some formal cultures, the normal practice is to begin by addressing someone by their name (and perhaps surname). Others may be less formal and go directly to the content of the e-mail. In either form, one may find an e-mail to be too formal or too informal. The content of an e-mail is also culture-dependent. Some cultures permit the use of slang and humour and some insist on the use of proper business expressions and courtesies.

The choice of words in an e-mail is also influenced by the culture of its sender. It is possible to get replies that say neither "yes" nor "no" in response to an e-mail, especially when corresponding with someone from a culture that is indirect in its communication style (such as India or Japan). For example, as discussed earlier, the Japanese believe that turning down someone's request causes embarrassment and loss of face to the other person. If the request cannot be agreed to, they may say "it is inconvenient" or "it is under consideration". In India, if a request is to be turned down, it is usually done by saying "we'll see". Sometimes, the use of a culture-specific phrase in an e-mail will be problematic for someone who is not familiar with that phrase. For example, the phrase "will touch base later" in Exhibit 10A in Communication Snapshot 10.1 has an implied meaning. In India, one would examine the meaning of each word separately. But when "touch" and "base" are put together in this phrase, it means "we shall speak later" in American and British English. This significance would only be understood by those who are familiar with its use.

The examples in Communication Snapshot 10.1 show some different types of e-mails and illustrate how they may be inappropriate or difficult to understand in a different culture.

Communication Snapshot 10.1

Sample E-mails

Exhibit 10A shows a business mail from Pallavi, an advertising professional, to her colleague, asking him to remind her client about providing feedback on a draft proposal. Note how she uses U.S.-specific words and phrases in her mail. The informal tone and abbreviations used in the mail are best avoided in a business mail.

Exhibit 10A
Pallavi's Mail

To... achaturvedi@adityabirla.com
Cc... p.gupta@innovate.com
Bcc...
Subject: road trip in the US

heellooo….
am writing this mail from North Carolina…so far we have covered 10 states from LA to here… the total distance from coast to coast is 3200 miles (5000 km approx)…we have already driven over 2700 miles…and its been lots of fun…
we stopped in Dallas, TX… really worth seeing… am def going there again… as we cud hardly see the town… its huge… probably bigger than LA… with 3 to 4 downtowns and really a busy city… it was nice being there as well…
We were then headed to North Carolina, … n crossed Atlanta and South Carolina on our way… now we are headed to Washington DC and will go through Virginia and a lot of other smaller states…
B4 I forget…did Mr Ramanujam write back about the draft proposal? It needs to be finalized by the end of this mnth, so will you plz remind him to send us his feedback? I plan to take a cuple of days once I'm back and finalise the proposal, so it wud be a gr8 help if you cud remind him about the feedback.
so much for now… have to hit the road … the forecast has some showers n thunderstorms so we need to be ahead of them…
will touch base later
take care n have fun

Pallavi
(714) 5189788
Keep smiling N remember ME

Office: +1 949780-6512
Mobile: +1 995 331-7826

Inappropriate subject for a business e-mail: does not state the purpose clearly.

In India, the word "downtown" may not be understood by everyone.

Although the sender may be familiar with the receiver, informal abbreviations like "plz" and "wud" are best avoided in a business mail. Sentences should be edited properly.

In India, one may examine the meaning of each word, "touch" and "base", separately.

Inappropriate and informal signature for business mails.

Exhibits 10B, 10C and 10D illustrate a series of e-mails exchanged between the project manager of an airport upgrade unit of Royale Airlines and an official from an information systems provider based in the United States. Note the tone of the mails and the intended humour, expressions, etc.

Exhibit 10B
Tej's First Mail to Richard

To... richard.davis@us.solutions.com
Cc... bclaus@airroyale.fr
Bcc...
Subject: URGENT/Progress on EMC Airlines discrepancy

Dear Rick,

Could you please provide me with a quick status update on the remaining discrepancies regarding the EMC Airlines aircraft?

Also, please tell me what jobs Solutions is still undertaking on-site currently and the expected timeframe, as well as what will be corrected later.

On the certification side, I understand all documents have been finalized and will be transmitted to FAA to allow STC processing. This would also mean that a date could be given to Weber for partial delivery to them.

Regards,

Tej
Project Manager
MT.MO – Aircraft Upgrade Unit

The use of first names in the norm in the United States, but in more formal cultures like India, Germany and France, the surname is preferred.

Note that the tone of this e-mail is very direct. A more indirect tone may be used in some cultures.

Exhibit 10C
Tej's Next Mail to Richard

To... richard.davis@us.solutions.com
Cc... bclaus@airroyale.fr
Bcc...
Subject: Progress on EMC Airlines discrepancy

Rick,

Unfortunately, recovery is taking much longer than expected, and is still not over. As you are aware, Air Royale is still struggling with FAA on some subjects and, as of this morning, we are still unable to provide a schedule to EMC on when our DER will come back for his final inspection. I will of course let you know as soon as I have more information.

We do not expect to need any Solutions manpower for this test. The IFE system will need to be fully operational, but I suppose EMC Airlines can also run this. Air Royale will of course send people back to Mumbai together with our DER.

Regards,

Tej

Exhibit 10D
Richard's Mail to Tej

Use of casual language is acceptable in formal situations in some cultures.

To... tejm@airroyale.fr

Cc... bclaus@airroyale.fr

Bcc...

Subject: Progress on EMC Airlines discrepancy

Tej,

Glad to see you've made a complete recovery and are preparing to come to Mumbai to take the bull by the horns. And there is a lot of bull being passed around…

I have submitted the following corrective action items to EMC Airlines for review. I'm sure they will have some other points to add, although I did tell them that individual LRU removal/replacement is handled via another document that is frequently updated, and not for this document. Beyond this, we have some software and application issues that were captured in another document during the Final System Acceptance Test, so these don't necessarily need to be added to this list.

None of the items identified by Solutions is reason to delay release into service. So, with submittal of the STC/PMA applications, we will be ready to go pending your regulatory compliance inspections and applications. I expect to receive feedback from EMC Airlines tomorrow.

We are using the time to work on these issues and replace LRUs with the available installation spares. However, we are reaching the point where we will reduce the on-site support to our in-service team and manage the corrective actions through the Field Service Engineers.

Thanks,

Rick

SUMMARY

- Cross-cultural communication is about dealing with people from other cultures in a way that minimizes misunderstandings and maximizes the potential for strong relationships.
- With increasing globalization, interaction between people from different societies and cultures has become unavoidable. This necessitates cultural orientation on the part of the visitors so that they are familiar with the host culture, specially the use of habitual expressions and expected behaviour in different situations.
- Cultural sensitivity is very important in helping a person adapt to a foreign culture. Cultural sensitivity is required to understand how to conduct oneself when attending meetings, visiting someone, joining a group or simply addressing someone.
- When working in different cultures, one should consider whether a culture is high-context or low-context by observing the actions of others. When one understands the prevalent culture, it is easier to understand the business atmosphere and increase one's influence.
- In the international business environment, e-mail has become a prevalent method of communication. One needs to be aware of cultural differences when exchanging e-mails with colleagues, clients and business partners from different cultures.

CASE: INTERCULTURAL LESSONS FROM *CRASH*

On the morning after the Academy Awards, I awoke with a question on my mind: "What do movies do best?" Do they help us understand the challenges others face? Do they teach us about other cultures and diverse backgrounds, or do they just make us feel good? While all of these are possible, consider this: movies allow us to work out our own emotional issues through the actions of the characters on screen.

When *Crash* won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 2006, I was thrilled. Why? Because the movie did what it was supposed to do. It made a whole lot of people "uncomfortable". For some, it evoked memories of their own discrimination experiences; for others, it calls to mind their own biased behaviour or that of someone close to them. But is that enough?

Of course it's not enough. Now, it's up to you and to me and to anyone left with emotional questions to answer after seeing the film to take action and expand their understanding. What do we do with unconscious fears and unspoken prejudices the movie uncovered? If we don't find them, understand them, and deal with them, we end up repeating behaviour that creates cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Fear-based behaviour comes up when we least expect it as we experience racism, ageism, wealthism, homophobism or any number of "isms" and can't believe it's happening to us, inside of us, around us, or, in the worst case, that it's actually perpetrated by us—even today.

Kenneth Turan, film critic for the *LA Times*, suggests that *Crash* is a "feel-good movie about racism…a film that could make you believe that you had done your moral duty and examined your soul when in fact you were just getting your buttons pushed." He used this as a reason that the "liberal" Academy voters chose *Crash* over *Brokeback Mountain* for the Best Picture award.

Both movies made people distinctly uncomfortable. My diversity partner, Dr Jo Ann Piata, and I submit that *Crash* pushed more buttons. More people identified with the discomfort of *Crash*. We ask, "What's wrong with a little button pushing if it pushes people out of their comfort zones and into change?" Now the job to be done is to bridge the learning and understanding we garnered from *Crash* and apply them to our lives and our businesses or the movie's mission has been wasted and we will prove Kenneth Turan's pessimistic view to be right. Button pushing can be manipulative or it can be healing; it's our choice.

What can you do now? Listen to the prejudiced voices in your own head—they create cultural blocks. Notice the way you interact with others. Who do you choose to be with? Are the people around you similar to you or different than you? If you sense discomfort when close to someone who you perceive to be different from you, take just a few moments to imagine what it would be like to live that person's life. How does that feel?

Look below the surface of behaviours to identify the values and beliefs that drive particular behaviour. Do this for a few days, and then write down the thoughts and feelings that make you uncomfortable. Now try to determine who influenced you to think and feel this way. Once you answer that question, you can make a choice to give that thinking back to its original source and change your own thinking, feeling, and behaving. This is an exercise you may use for the rest of your life—it will definitely keep you from *crashing*.

Questions to Answer

1. Mention one area of sensitivity that you are not able to handle while dealing with people.
2. Analyse a professional or personal experience that created cultural block in you.

Source: Judith Parker Harris and Jo Ann Piña, "Cross-Cultural Communication Lessons from the Academy Award Winner CRASH" (www.culturalblockbusters.com)

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Do you believe in Hall's theory of cultural context? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What factors should be kept in mind when conducting business in unfamiliar cultures?
3. If you and your spouse are in New York waiting for a cab, and if a friend driving alone offers you a ride, where will you sit?
4. Discuss e-mail as a preferred mode of intercultural communication.
5. What is cultural sensitivity? How will it help in making your intercultural communication effective?
6. Discuss how cultural differences are seen in group behaviour when the group is joined by a new person.
7. What is culture? Show to what extent our behaviour as social beings reflects our culture.
8. Discuss the broad characteristics of communication in a high-context culture.
9. Show how differences between monochronic and polychronic cultures affect the behaviour of individuals in certain situations.
10. How is space a factor in intercultural communication?

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Reflect on the essential difference between cultural sensitivity and cultural intelligence.
2. What points would you keep in mind when you visit a family member in a foreign country?
3. Do you believe that training in foreign ways of eating, dressing, and meeting people is helpful in intercultural interactions?
4. What should we do to retain our own cultural identity when we are communicating with people from different cultures?
5. What aspects of one's interactions exhibit one's cultural context?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

In an intercultural situation, you receive a message saying "no" from someone's lips, but their eyes send a contradictory suggestion saying "yes". How would you decide what to do? Give reasons for your answer.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. In international business, the trend to "go local" has led to the local people and foreign experts performing as:
   (a) workers and employers
   (b) trainee and trainer
   (c) a team
   (d) hosts and guests
2. Culture is embedded in our:
   (a) minds (b) gestures
   (c) expressions (d) beliefs
3. Cultural intelligence helps us to know cultural:
   (a) similarities (b) differences
   (c) rules of behaviour (d) rituals
4. An individual's behaviour in a foreign society becomes noticeable when it ___________ in relation to the foreign culture.
   (a) deviates (b) conforms
   (c) overlaps (d) irritates
5. Culture refers to:
   (a) behaviour (b) attitude
   (c) thinking (d) rules of behaviour
6. People in high-context cultures make business decisions on the basis of:
   (a) reason (b) interpersonal relations
   (c) individual needs (d) competition
7. The exclusive centre of interest in low-context communication is:
   (a) information (b) emotional factors
   (c) context (d) individual perceptions
8. In *monochronic* cultures, the priority is:
   (a) relationships (b) the job
   (c) goal achievement (d) multiple tasks
9. The aim of cross-cultural communication training is to:
   (a) improve behaviour
   (b) create strong cultural ties
   (c) develop business etiquette
   (d) give social status
10. An e-mail's style is determined by a person's:
    (a) English (b) culture
    (c) communicative ability (d) status

ENDNOTES

1. Vivek Sinha and Nandini Sengupta, "Cracking the culture code", *The Economic Times,* New Delhi June 29, 2001.
2. Saibal Dasgupta, "SBI Fights to Survive in China", *The Times of India*, New Delhi, July 22, 2007.
3. Beatty and Takahashi, *Intercultural Communication* (New Delhi: Biztantra, 2003).
4. Edward T. Hall, *Hidden Differences: Studies in International Communication* (Hamburg: Grunder and Jahr, 1985).
5. Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York: Doubleday 1959).

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

11 Business Letters, Memos, and E-mails

If he [the person you are replying to] is rude, be specially courteous. If he is muddle-headed, be specially lucid. If he is pig-headed, be patient. If he is helpful, be appreciative. If he convicts you of a mistake, acknowledge it freely and even with gratitude.

—*Sir Ernest Gowers*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Identify business situations that require writing letters, memos, and e-mails.
2. Write simple, complete, and persuasive letters and memos.
3. Know the essentials of good business correspondence.
4. Plan written communication by first considering the needs, levels, and expectations of readers.
5. Acquaint yourself with different formats of letters, memos, and e-mails.

Communication at Work

The sales department of Luxor Writing Instruments receives an inquiry from Mr Mukherjee about the availability of a set of Exception Solid Gold Waterman ballpoint and fountain pens. The manager, Mr Sharma, knows that his response to the inquiry is an important first step in securing the order for the highly expensive writing instruments. He carefully considers Mr Mukherjee's letter of inquiry.

Mr Mukherjee wants to know the availability and the best price at which he can buy the set of pens. As the pens are not readily available, Mr Sharma writes to Mr Mukherjee to ask for some lead time and suggests that he select another set of pens from the wide variety immediately available. He dispatches a copy of the latest product catalogue along with the letter. He also mentions that the price will depend on the product selected, as the discounts ranged from 10 to 20 per cent and varied from product to product. He goes on to suggest that Mr Mukherjee visit one of the exclusive Luxor showrooms to see the full range of products at the location nearest to him and informs him that the full range could also be viewed at the company Web site, www.luxor.in.

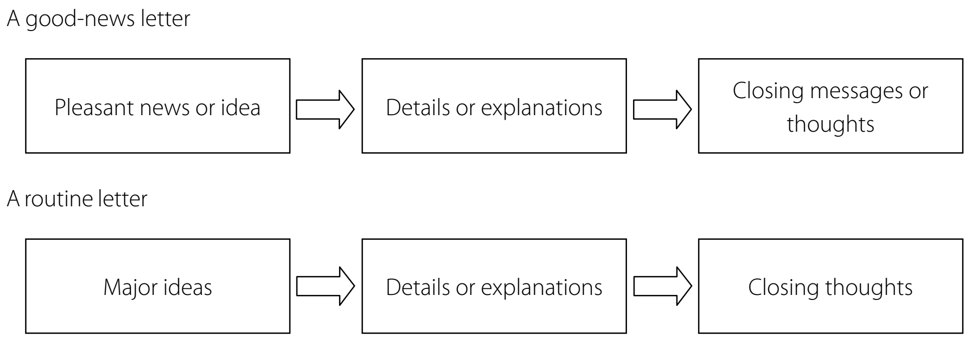
Mr Sharma concludes by thanking Mr. Mukherjee for his interest in Luxor's products and assures him of the company's best services. His entire effort is to convert the initial inquiry into a sale.

INTRODUCTION

Letters, memos, and e-mails are brief pieces of communication. They are so short that most people hardly think it necessary to spend much time planning them before writing. It is common to just jot down one's thoughts—the basic information needed to communicate. In fact, it is important to be careful when writing letters, memos, and e-mails, because these small pieces of communication are used in less formal contexts. They tend to affect the receiver's feelings and thoughts with great immediacy and power. Writers should, therefore, consider two questions before writing:

1. What is the exact message?
2. How will it affect the receiver? That is, what would be the receiver's reaction—would he or she be pleased or displeased, interested or not interested? These four kinds of reactions should guide the writer. They determine the sequence of information in letters.

Exhibit 11.1
Sequence of Presentation of Ideas in Routine and Good-news Letters



WRITING ROUTINE AND GOOD-NEWS LETTERS

Letters and memos are brief pieces of communication. They tend to affect the receiver's feelings and thoughts with great immediacy and power.

Letters that please the receiver are called *good-news letters*. Those that neither please nor displease but are received with interest are known as *routine letters*. Both follow the same sequence of presentation of ideas and have a deductive pattern, which is a direct organization of ideas (Exhibit 11.1).

The direct organization of ideas in good-news and routine letters follows human psychology. A pleasant or interesting idea will always hold the receiver's attention. Hence, good news can be given in the very first sentence, followed by details and the final message.

This basic plan of presenting ideas can be used in many business situations. These situations include:

1. Routine claim letters and "yes" replies
2. Routine request letters and "yes" replies
3. Routine order letters and "yes" replies

1

Identify business situations that require writing letters, memos, and e-mails.

Routine Claim Letters and "Yes" Replies

A *claim* is a demand or request for something to which one has a right. Examples are a refund, payment for damages, a replacement for something defective, exchanges, and so on. A claim letter is, thus, a request for adjustment. When a writer thinks that because of guarantees or other specified terms and conditions, the request for adjustment will be automatically granted without delay or without requiring persuasion, he or she writes the letter in the *routine* form. When the writer believes that a direct statement of the desired action will get a positive response without arguments, he or she can use the following sequence/pattern of ideas:

1. Request action in the opening sentence.
2. Give reasons supporting the request or action.
3. End by appreciating or thanking the addressee for taking the action requested.

The writer of the claim letter in Exhibit 11.2 obviously thought that his routine request for an exchange would be granted. He, therefore, stated his claim in the very first sentence without any complaints. Similarly, the person replying to a routine claim letter knows that the recipient will be glad to know that his or her request has been granted; therefore, the writer states an expression of willingness in the first sentence of the response. The details and closing sentence follow the opening. This is demonstrated in Exhibit 11.3.

The "yes" reply in Exhibit 11.3 grants the request but the writer does not use the word "grant". Moreover, there is no reference to the letter being answered as a claim, though these words are often employed for referring to such letters. Phrases such as "your request is granted" or "we are granting your request" may convey to the receiver "we see ourselves as superiors and in a position of power". Similarly, "we are adjusting your

Please send me another copy of *How to Communicate Under Pressure* to replace the copy returned herewith.

This is the latest edition, but this copy has four pages, from page 60 to page 64, wrongly sequenced, which is confusing and annoying.

The enclosed receipt was packed with the book sent to me.

I shall appreciate an early replacement.

Exhibit 11.2
A Routine Claim Letter

Directly states claim

Gives reasons

Ends with a confident repetition of action desired

claim" can also suggest "We are responding to your dissatisfaction". Therefore, words such as "grant" and "claim" are not used in such letters.

The recipient of a claim letter should always try to view the complaint positively. He or she should not be angered by customers, clients, or defective products. Business letters in all situations should be written with politeness and respect for the other party. Negative expressions should be avoided, though it is easy to react sharply when people complain about something one has done, said, or sold. Neither the writer nor the person replying should use expressions of accusation, such as "because of your careless packing, several pieces of the crockery set sent to me are broken" or "I have been cheated by you because the colour of the shirt, which was guaranteed to be fast, has completely faded". Instead of using the harsh language used in Exhibit 11.4, the writer can simply state the facts of the situation and the action desired. For example, it is more businesslike to say:

> Business letters in all situations should be written with politeness and respect for the other party.

> "I have received the sunglasses I ordered from your company. I find that there is a scratch on the right lens; perhaps it happened in transit. I would appreciate an early replacement of the sunglasses as I am going on a trip to Rajasthan at the end of the month."

Another example of a businesslike claim is,

> "I am returning the Easy Knit shirt that I purchased from your shop a week ago. Its colour has faded after washing by machine. The colour was guaranteed as long as the shirt was not exposed to the sun. I request you to exchange it with a new shirt of the same colour."

The "yes" reply letter in Exhibit 11.5 directly grants the request, reassures the buyer that he made a wise choice when he chose Easy Knit, and goes on to explain how to maintain the product. The reply avoids negative language. Through positive language, the customer is made to see his mistake. The letter also suggests ways to prevent future trouble and finally expresses hope for a continuing relationship by informing the buyer of discount sales. The "yes" letter is carefully written to guarantee customer

Exhibit 11.3
A "Yes" Reply to a Routine Claim

Date…

Dear…

A copy of *How to Communicate Under Pressure* is on its way to you. You will not be charged for its mailing.
You should receive it within a few days. Our catalogue for the latest arrivals in Communication Strategies/Studies is also enclosed.
Sincerely,

Exhibit 11.4
A Businesslike/Impolite Routine Claim

508, Sector 9
Faridabad

June 18, 2010

Agfa Company
531, Linking Road
Bandra, Mumbai – 400 052

Dear Sir,

I am returning a pair of Rayban sunglasses, which you sent me per my order of June 6, 2010.

You will notice there is a scratch on the right lens. As the lens is guaranteed against imperfections, I am returning it to you.

Will you send me a new pair of sunglasses as soon as you can? The enclosed receipt was packed with the sunglasses when they were mailed to me.

I shall appreciate an early exchange as I am going on a trip to Rajasthan at the end of the month.

Yours truly,

confidence in the product and full satisfaction in the transaction. The letter has a direct, positive approach.

Routine Request Letters and "Yes" Replies

Now that we know how routine claim letters and replies to them should be written, let us take a look at *routine requests*. A letter to, say a vendor, requesting information about a product, should state clearly and completely what information is desired. A request for information should not suggest that the writer wants to place an order. Exhibit 11.6 shows a sample routine request. Exhibit 11.7 shows how a "yes" reply to a routine request should be written.

Routine Orders and Their "Yes" Replies

Routine orders should be explicit and thorough. In addition, they should be very clear about what they expect by giving complete details of the desired product. This includes specifying the time of delivery and the mode of shipment. There should be no ambiguity or chance of confusion or misunderstanding. A sample of a routine order letter is presented in Exhibit 11.8.

Since the response to the letter in Exhibit 11.8 is positive, the "yes" response should follow the pattern shown in Exhibit 11.9.

Exhibit 11.5
A "Yes" Reply to a Businesslike/Impolite Routine Claim

Date…
Dear Mr…,

One long-lasting, pink Easy Knit shirt is being sent to you against the one you returned to us. Compared with other shirts, Easy Knit shirts do not normally fade in colour and remain wrinkle-free. But for best results, they must be washed by hand and without using any strong bleach.

Our Special Discount sales catalogue is being mailed to you separately.

Truly,

Exhibit 11.6
A Routine Request Letter

Pearls Repair Service

155, Kashmere Gate
New Delhi
"If they make it, we repair it."

April 30, 2010

Mr Abhishek Chaturvedi
Order Department
MML Electronics Suppliers, Inc.
135 C, Kolkata

Dear Mr Chaturvedi,
Re: Order No. 497; Shipment No. 246032

In our order of April 10, 2010, we included a request for an electron tube X518E. The shipment we received today does not include the tube we ordered but does include a proton tube. Upon checking your catalogue, I discovered that you intend this tube to be a replacement for the tube X518E, which you have discontinued from your product line.

The supervisor of our repair shop, however, says that he cannot use the replacement tube sent by you. Because of this, we are returning this item from the shipment.

Please credit our account for ₹ 2,000 for the tube we did not order and have returned.

Sincerely yours,

Ajay Saxena
Administrative Manager

Exhibit 11.7
A "Yes" Reply to a Routine Request

NEW INDIA TILE COMPANY
444, New Main Street
Charki Dadri – 120072

April 12, 2002

Ms Sonia Suri
General Manager
Escorts Medical Hospital
Neelam Bata Road
Faridabad, Haryana

Dear Ms Suri,

We will be more than happy to replace the Durafinish tiles in front of the elevators and in the lobby area of Escorts Hospital as you requested in your letter of March 28, 2002.

When we installed the tile (Model 520) in December 2000, we guaranteed the no-fade finish. The tile you selected is imported from Italy and is one of our best-selling products. Recently, the manufacturer added a special sealing compound to the tile, making it more durable.

Our sales representative, Mr Deepak Rai, will call on you in the next few days to inspect the tiles and make arrangements for replacing them, at no additional cost. I appreciate your calling this situation to our attention because we are always eager to know how our products are performing. We guarantee our customers' full satisfaction.

Sincerely yours,
Mokshit Sharma
MS:tk
cc: Mr Deepak Rai

Exhibit 11.8
A Routine Order Letter

Maria Interiors, Inc

12, Andheri West

Mumbai – 400 012

July 1, 2001

Silvania Office Products
B-27, Lajpat Nagar
New Delhi

Attention: Order Department

Dear Sir,

Please send me the following office supplies as listed and priced in your summer catalogue 91:

8 pkgs	D33E-886	Colour-coded files with heavy manila folders—letter size
4 boxes	D33E-276	Square box-files—capacity 2
24	D33E-3325	Large capacity 3-ring binders—letter size

Please charge these to the Maria Interiors account. I would appreciate quick delivery of these items. Please ship by the fastest freight available.

Sincerely,

Akshay Sharma
Office Manager

Exhibit 11.9
A "Yes" Reply to a Routine Order

Silvania Office Products

B-27, Lajpat Nagar
New Delhi

July 12, 2009

Mr Akshay Sharma
Office Manager
Maria Interiors, Inc.
12, Andheri West
Mumbai – 400012

Dear Mr Sharma,

The following items were shipped to you today by Worldwide Express, rush service:

8 pkgs	D33E	Colour-coded files with heavy manila folders—letter size
24	D33E-3325	Large capacity 3-ring binders—letter size

Enclosed is the invoice for ₹4,000, which includes sales tax. Your order for four boxes of square box-files—2 in capacity (D33E – 276) should reach you within 14 days, also by Worldwide Express. Because of the great popularity of these durable, high-capacity hole punchers, they are currently out of stock. A shipment from the supplier is due shortly, and when it arrives, we will fulfil your order immediately.

Thank you for your order, and please let me know if I can be of service in the future. For your convenience, I am enclosing a preview copy of the new catalogue, No. 107, which will be mailed to our customers in early December.

Sincerely,

Rajesh Bhatia

Sales Manager

RB:rb
Encl. : Catalogue No.107
: Invoice

Guidelines for a "Yes" Reply

The guidelines a writer needs to follow while drafting a "yes" reply to a routine claim, request, or order are summarized here:

1. The beginning should state the reason for writing the letter and the main idea.
2. The middle paragraphs should give details of the good news, reaffirm the guarantee if any, describe the product offered, and explain why the replacement would satisfy the receiver.
3. The end should draw the reader's attention to the conditions, if any, attached to the positive response. The letter should close on a positive note of thanks for the original order and hopes for continuing good relations with the buyer.

Guidelines for a "No" Reply

In business, at times we have to say "no". In some situations, it may not be possible to grant the writer's request or deliver what he or she has ordered. On such occasions the goal of the person who is responding should be to write a "no" letter inoffensively, while stating facts and giving reasons as convincingly as possible. A refusal is a refusal. It is bound to disappoint the reader. However, the goal is to reduce the negative emotions as much as possible. The writer of a "no" reply cannot convey an unfavourable decision in an unfavourable way if he or she wants to retain the customer's goodwill. Thus, he or she must be able to write "no" while minimizing the reader's disappointment. To achieve this objective, the information should be patterned as follows:

> The goal of the person writing a "no" reply is to reduce the negative emotions as much as possible. The writer of a "no" reply cannot convey an unfavourable decision in an unfavourable way if he or she wants to retain the customer's goodwill.

1. The letter should begin with a paragraph that describes the general situation as the context in which the reader's request was considered. It should indicate in a neutral or friendly tone the reasons that led to the negative information or a refusal.

   Some possible methods to do this are:

   - Assuring the receiver that his or her matter was considered with great understanding and care.
   - Making the reader believe that it is the circumstances or situation and not the merit of his or her request that is responsible for the "no" response. (For example: "This session, there are more than ten thousand admission requests from your country.")
   - Agreeing with the reader in some way. (For example: "You are right that the guarantee period is one year.")
   - Giving a sincere compliment. (For example: "Your CAT score is quite high…")
   - Showing (without raising false hope) that the possibility of fulfilling the request was there. (For example: "Your plan for opening a business school of international caliber sounds excellent.")
   - Mentioning good news of interest to the reader. (For example: "The government has passed a bill to open new credit banks for farmers.")
2. The "no" letter should give facts and provide reasons and factors for refusal. (For example: "The manufacturer's instructions have not been strictly followed.")
3. The refusal should be mentioned in the same paragraph. It is important not to highlight the refusal. Therefore, no separate paragraph should be given to this negative point; instead, it should just be stated at the end of the paragraph that mentions the reasons for it.
4. The end of the "no" response seeks to maintain good business relations with the reader by suggesting an alternative course of action or a better deal in the future.

Exhibit 11.10
A "No" Reply (to a Routine Request)

NEW INDIA TILE COMPANY
444, New Main Street
Charki Dadri – 120072

April 13, 2002

Ms Sonia Suri
General Manager
Escorts Medical Hospital
Neelam-Bata Road
Faridabad, Haryana

Dear Ms Suri,

You are certainly correct that we guarantee our tiles for 20 years after installation. We always stand behind our products when they are used according to the recommendations of the manufacturers and design consultants.

When I received your letter, I immediately studied the sales contract and checked the reports of the design consultant. Our records show that the consultant did explain on December 6, 2000 that Paloma Tile (Model 520) was not recommended for heavy traffic. Although another tile was suggested, you preferred to order the Paloma Tile, and you signed a waiver of guarantee. For your information, I'm enclosing a copy of that page of the contract. Because our recommendation was to use another tile, our usual 20-year guarantee is not in force in this situation.

For your needs, we recommend the Watermark Tile, which is specially sealed to withstand heavy traffic. The Watermark Tile is available in a design that would complement the Paloma Tile that is already in place. Our design consultant, Mr Ramesh Singh, would be happy to visit Escorts Medical Hospital and recommend a floor pattern that could incorporate a new Watermark Tile, without sacrificing the Paloma Tile that does not show wear. Enclosed is a brochure showing the Watermark designs. Mr Singh will call you for an appointment this week, and because you are our customer, we will be happy to schedule prompt service for you.

Sincerely,

Mokshit Sharma
Production Installation Manager
MS/dc

Encl.: Watermark brochure
Contract page

cc.: Mr Ramesh Singh

The aim of indirectly organizing a "no" response letter is to assure the reader that the bad news or the unfavourable decision was arrived at after careful consideration of the total situation and facts that could not be altered by the writer (the decision-maker). The purpose of indirect organization is to ensure that the reader does not believe that the refusal is based on arbitrary, subjective, or personal reasons.

Consider Exhibit 11.10, a letter of refusal written by New India Tile Company to the replacement request. Exhibit 11.7 is a "yes" response to the same request, but the factors involved in making the decision are different in this situation. Hence, the company's response to replacing the tiles is "no". The letter seeks to convey the negative message through indirect organization.

2

Write simple, complete, and persuasive letters and memos.

WRITING PERSUASIVE LETTERS

Persuasion is used when the writer suspects that the reader will not be interested in the message and the action to be taken. In such a situation, the writer may use the device of startling the reader by informing him or her about something unexpected at the beginning of the letter. This way, the reader is made to see right away why he or she should accept the letter's proposal. The letter goes on to show how the reader will greatly benefit by taking the suggested action. Such letters, which arouse the reader's interest and induce him or her to act as directed, are essentially letters that sell ideas to others. They are called *persuasive letters*. Writing them well requires skillful patterning of information. The persuasive pattern, also known as persuasive organization, involves the following sequence of ideas:

Letters that arouse the reader's interest and induce him or her to act as directed are essentially letters that sell ideas to others. They are called *persuasive letters*.

1. The opening sentence in a persuasive business letter (usually sales) catches the reader's attention by saying one of the following:
   - A startling statement of fact—"Every second, 6 children die of malnutrition in our country."
   - A remedial measure to a problem—"At last, you can build your own house."
   - An alarming question—"Would you like to die without providing for the safety of your children and spouse?"
   - A special product, scheme, or plan—"Within the next 14 days you should expect to receive important authorized mail from our sweepstakes manager."
2. The middle section of a persuasive letter gives details regarding the product or scheme that is being promoted. This section mainly describes the benefits to the reader. It explains why the reader should accept the proposal.
3. After arousing the reader's interest in the proposal, the letter then requests action such as a "yes" response to the proposed request.
4. The last paragraph acts as a reminder to the reader of the special benefits he or she would gain by acting as urged and requests action within the given deadline.

Such persuasive sales letters are also known as *form letters*. They differ from other business letters in the following ways:

1. They may not be dated: These letters can be used by the company for many months. Therefore, the date of the form letter (sales letter) may not be necessary and relevant.
2. There may be no personal salutation: The sales letter is not addressed to a specific individual. The receiver's name is superimposed as a mailing device.

   Dear Friend,
   Dear Reader,
   Dear Valued Customer,

   The opening sets a pleasant tone by saying that the reader is known for his or her interest in the kind of proposal made.
3. There is usually a postscript message to remind the reader of the action to be taken by the specified deadline or to highlight the benefits or any other important point.
4. Most persuasive sales letters include some mention of further material to be received by the reader. For example, the box with the word "important" in the sales letter shown in Communication Snapshot 11.1 highlights that two sweepstakes entry cards would be sent in the near future.

Most persuasive sales letters include some mention of further material to be received by the reader.

There is another style of formatting a persuasive form letter, which is shown in Exhibit 11.11. To look more informal, the letter leaves out the salutation completely. It also drops the formal ending "subscription". Instead, it closes with "best wishes" from the writer of the message.

Communication Snapshot 11.1

Writing a Persuasive Letter

The focus of the letter in Exhibit 11A is "be advised". The advice is in bold and is placed at the centre of the letter in an eye-catching position. The letter bears no date. It has no personal salutation. The expression "Dear Valued Customer" establishes a friendly tone at the very outset. It goes on to arouse the reader's curiosity by stating, "expect to receive important authorized mail".

The middle paragraph gives details of the reader's undoubted chance to win the ₹1,000,000,00 First Prize. This paragraph uses strategy to hold the reader's attention and interest by saying, "You already stand ahead of many…". This paragraph also gives details of how the reader is going to benefit from this message.

In a friendly tone, the writer calls this letter a "pre-disclosure". It motivates the receiver to act further by disclosing that "You already stand ahead of many…". The letter does not include the usual "Subscription offer", "yours sincerely", and so on. Instead, it ends on a sincere note of advice: "Be sure to reply as instructed". This sample letter is an actual letter written by the sweepstakes committee of the magazine Pottery Weekly. It is a good example of a persuasive sales letter. The organization, language, and sales strategies followed by the writer persuade and urge the reader to participate in the sweepstakes.

Exhibit 11A
The Letter

Pottery Weekly

Dear Valued Customer,

In the next 14 days, expect to receive important authorized mail from *Pottery Weekly's* sweepstakes manager. This mail will provide you with details on your current sweepstakes eligibility status.

You should know that as of June 2009, there is no doubt that you are enviably well positioned to have a shot at our ₹1,000,000.00 First Prize. You already stand ahead of many who have not been invited to participate in *Pottery Weekly's* 2-million-rupee sweepstakes.

Be advised that the sweepstakes documents that are due to arrive at your address have strictly controlled deadlines!

This is why you are entitled to receive this pre-disclosure—to provide you sufficient notice to reply on time. The post office has assured expedient delivery of the package to you.

IMPORTANT

Please watch out for a red envelope from *Pottery Weekly,* marked with the same package code as in this letter. It contains two sweepstakes entry cards. Then, reply in strict conformance with the instructions provided therein.

This is the only step required of you to secure your eligibility to enter the 2-million-rupee sweepstakes for your chance to win well over ₹1,000,000.00. Please do not discount the vital importance of this pre-disclosure. Be sure to reply as instructed.

WRITING MEMOS

Persuasive letters partly share the form and intimacy of memos, which are frequently written to persons within the office/organization to communicate routine matters. A memorandum, often referred to as a memo, is a form used by a person known to the receiver personally. Therefore, it is less formal in tone and does not have formal elements such as the salutation, subscription, greeting, or even a signature at the end. It directly states the subject after mentioning the following:

From ________ Subject ________

To ________ Date ________

Konnect Cellphone

Mr P. D. Apte
508, Sector 9
Faridabad, Haryana 121006
31 July 2010

You have been a valued member of the Konnect Cellphone family. As you may be aware, Konnect Cellphone is now a part of Konnect Telecom, one of the largest cellular operators in India and the third largest in the world. We have taken the leadership in launching new and exciting tariff plans in Delhi, thereby making cellular telephony more affordable.

As per the Honourable TRAI ruling dated 25 January 2001, an amount of ₹595.36 is refundable against your contract number 00124813301 and mobile phone number 9811071974. This refund is on account of a reduction in license fees. This amount will be refunded to you via an account payee cheque at the address mentioned above.

If you have any queries regarding the same, please feel free to contact us on our toll-free hotline number, 9811398133, and we would be glad to address the same.

Keep smiling!

Joydeep Chatterjee

Joydeep Chaterjee
GM—Customer Services
Konnect Telecom
Nariman Street, Fort,
Mumbai 400001

Exhibit 11.11
An Alternative Style for a Persuasive Letter

Alternatively, it can have the following format:

To ________ Date ________

From ________

Subject ____

How to Write a Memo

A memo addresses the subject under discussion immediately. It is short and written in a friendly tone. All business messages and information solicit a friendly, cooperative, and positive response from employees, clients, or senior or junior colleagues. For this purpose, the memo writer (manager) should write in a friendly and cooperative tone. A harsh or unfriendly tone will dishearten the reader of the memo and lower morale.

For example, consider the following memorandum from a works manager to the supervisors under his management:

> "Every Saturday morning all supervisors in my plant must meet and report on the clean-up of their individual shop floors. All reports must be submitted by afternoon."

In this memo, the tone is of distrust and authority. The works manager uses "all" and "must" twice. It shows that he does not consider any of his supervisors responsible. The use of "must" indicates that he doubts their sense of duty. The manager can direct his

A harsh or unfriendly tone will dishearten the reader of the memo and lower morale.

- Do not assume that everyone knows everything related to the issue discussed in the memo.
- Explain the causes of problems or reasons for changes being suggested.
- Be clear, concrete, and specific.
- Be pleasant rather than commanding or authoritative. Use you-attitude.
- Ask for feedback or suggestions.

supervisors without doubting their sense of duty. Further, the memo is vaguely worded. The reader will not know which Saturday the meetings begin and when they are to be held—*morning* is a long period of time and is not specific. In addition, questions such where the meetings are to be held are not addressed. No reference of place is made. Again, *afternoon* is a vague deadline. The manager should indicate the specific time by which the reports are due. Finally, the phrase "clean-up" does not completely convey all that is to be considered while inspecting the work. Such vagueness should be avoided by observing the following principles of writing memos:

In the case discussed here, show how the supervisors would benefit from the proposed change. Explain the need to hold a Saturday supervision meeting to discuss and report on the clean-up of the shop floors. Ask for feedback. It is necessary to know supervisors' ideas on the monitoring and reporting of the clean-up. If they are invited to give their views, they will have sense of participation and involvement in the decision-making and execution processes.

Uses of a Memo

A memorandum acts as a permanent record of whatever is communicated.

The various functions of memorandums are given in Exhibit 11.12.

As a written record of business decisions, policies, institutions, and so on, a memorandum acts as a permanent record of whatever is communicated. Therefore, it should be written with great care and skill.

The two versions of the memo in Exhibit 11.13 show the difference in the effectiveness of a well-written memo and a poorly written one. The revised memo is specific and friendly in tone. It gives adequate details and explains why the change is needed and how it would help the engineers.

3

Know the essentials of good business correspondence.

ESSENTIALS OF GOOD BUSINESS LETTERS AND MEMOS

Businessmen and women do not have time to read long letters and messages. They want to know facts, results, and important details. Therefore, business letters should provide only what is essential in the shortest space. The key is to keep to the point and be simple.

Simplicity, clarity, and conciseness are interrelated concepts. "Simple", according to *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1998), means, "(1) understood or done easily and without difficulty (2) not complicated or elaborate; plain (3) not compound or complex (4) absolute, unqualified, straightforward." Most writers want their written communication to be simple in all the four senses. In fact, clarity and conciseness result from simplicity.

Simplicity

Simplicity in writing essentially means plainness.

Simplicity in writing essentially means plainness and saying exactly what one means. The writer should not bring in irrelevant details or information. Instead he or she should be straightforward and choose just one word instead of many whenever possible.

Exhibit 11.12 Functions of a Memorandum

Function	*Example*
To provide information	I attended the meeting of the executive committee. The main points discussed were…
To issue an instruction	Staff members are requested to attend the orientation session to be held in the conference room at 11 a.m. today.
To convey a policy decision	The executive committee has decided to pay one day's salary for working on a Saturday.
To offer suggestions	I think in-house training should be a regular feature for all cadres.
To record/report an agreement	During the meeting held on August 5, it was decided that we buy 3 LCD projectors.

Exhibit 11.13
Ineffective and Effective Sample Memos

Part A: The Original Memo

TYC

May 12, 2008

To: Lab Personnel
From: Sushil Kumar
Subject: Final Report Requirements

Beginning Monday, December 19, *all* our final test reports must indicate:

1. Test results
2. Dimensions in metric terms
3. Photos in proper order—also identify each one on its reverse
4. The distribution list
5. Write the report immediately after the test
6. Be sure all terms are spelled correctly
7. Complete formulas

Part B: The Revised Memo

TYC

May 12, 2008

To: Laboratory D-66 Personnel
From: Sushil Kumar, Supervisor
Subject: Final Test Report Requirements

I've received some requests for changes in our test reports from the chemical engineers who use them. Therefore, beginning Monday, December 19, all final test reports must include the following:

1. Full test results at each stage of the testing process
2. Dimensions stated in metric terms
3. Photos in proper order and each identified on its reverse
4. The distribution list
5. Correctly spelt terms
6. Full formulas

Please write your reports immediately after completing the test while the data are fresh in your mind. I'm sure with these minor adjustments in report style, we can give the engineers what they need.

Unnecessary adjectives and adverbs should be avoided. Qualifiers, adjectives, adverbs, and other unnecessary words often creep in without the writer realizing their presence. It is commonly believed that to be clear, the writer should be elaborate and repetitive, using several words with the same meaning. However, this creates clutter in writing instead of providing clarity. The key to writing simply, clearly, and concisely is to tighten the writing. Hence, while writing business letters, memos, or reports, one should choose one from among several nearly identical possible words and only use those that convey the message exactly. This basic principle of choosing one word carefully is usually called the principle of "unity"—the unity of thought and expression. This basic principle is discussed here:

- *One main subject in one letter:* Practical wisdom tells us if we have to write about two different subjects to the same company, department, or office at the same time, we should write two letters discussing each subject separately. Why? Two separate subjects placed together may adversely affect each other's importance. The two subjects may belong to two different sections and after taking action on one of the subjects, the department may just file the letter, resulting in the other subject being forgotten.

Only when two subjects are related and are to be considered for action by the same person, should they be discussed in the same letter. In all other situations, it is better to write separate letters.

- *One thought in one sentence:* Each sentence should be formed so that it contains a single, complete thought. Complicated (complex and compound) sentences are confusing in a business letter. For example, compare the following sentences:

  Complicated: The benefits that he derived from his early training were soon lost and he began to do things as he was accustomed to doing them.

  Simple: The benefits of his early training were soon lost. He started doing things in his usual way.

Each paragraph should open with a sentence that summarizes the central idea of the paragraph.

- *One idea in one paragraph:* Each paragraph should open with a sentence that summarizes the central idea of the paragraph. The sentences that follow should support, illustrate, and develop the thought by providing additional information.

Clarity

The clarity of a business letter is two-fold:

1. *Clarity of message:* Ideas should be logically sequenced in a coherent way.
2. *Clarity of form:* Presentation of matter, format, paragraph divisions, layout, margins, and spacing between the lines should be done neatly. The letter should appear well organized and properly formatted.

Conciseness

It is best to be "short". This means writing short letters, choosing short words, forming short paragraphs, and constructing short sentences. The goal is to give only relevant information in the fewest possible words.

Besides simplicity, clarity, and conciseness, there are many other issues that need to be kept in mind while writing business letters and memos. These are discussed here.

Standard and Neutral Language

Writers of business letters should use standard, neutral language and should avoid jargon, technical terms, and slang. They should also eliminate hackneyed and old-fashioned expressions from their writing.

You-Attitude

Writers should keep in mind the point of view of their readers (customers and clients). All writing is for a specific reader, and it is at his or her level that the letter or correspondence should be written. In addition, the writer should know his or her readers' expectations, fears, beliefs, and feelings about the matter at hand. The writer should be able to visualize the readers' reaction to the message before writing.

Sincerity and Tone

The writer's tone and sincerity reflect his or her personality. These two aspects of a letter or memo are important to convince readers that the writer really means what he or she is saying. The tone of the letter should reflect the writer's personality. Today, good writers believe that a business letter should be characterized by confidence, directness, enthusiasm, and humanity.

- *Confidence:* Before writing a letter, the writer should have complete information on the subject and should be certain about the facts that will be discussed. If the writer is definite about what he or she is saying, the letter will not be evasive or vaguely worded with indirect expressions and passive verbs. Passive verbs are weak. They convey withdrawal in the writer's subconscious mind. In contrast, active verbs are strong. Expressions such as "it is recommended that" (I recommend), "it was considered that" (I considered), "it was felt that" (I feel), "it is an indication of" (it indicates), "conducted a survey of" (surveyed) show hesitation and should be replaced with their active forms, which show directness and confidence.

Passive verbs are weak. They convey withdrawal in the writer's subconscious mind. In contrast, active verbs are strong.

- *Directness:* Directness in letters results from confidence. One's letters should not only say what is intended, but should say so in a straightforward and courteous manner. However, while directness is desirable, one should not be abrupt.
- *Enthusiasm:* The writer should be enthusiastic in his or her sincerity. The letter should make the reader feel that the writer is genuinely interested in him or her. This cannot be done by just saying something like "Believe me I am really interested in solving your problem." Instead, the writer must choose words that show interest in the reader.
- *Humanity:* Business letters are generally written in a stiff, formal, and mechanical manner. They often lack personal warmth and the feeling of speaking to another living being. To counter this, writers should use the personal pronouns "we", "I", "you", "he", "she", and "they". These give a personal touch to business letters. For achieving the right tone, the letter and other forms of business correspondence should be written in a simple, formal, and friendly way. Remember that criticizing or apologizing should be done carefully, as should complimenting.

Write your letters in short and simple sentences. Use simple, familiar and short words. Avoid abstract words. Choose verbs that express forceful action.

Emphasis

In business correspondence, specially a letter or memo, ideas must be placed in order of their importance. The main idea must be stated at the beginning. Even in the case of a sentence or paragraph, the rule is to place the main idea first. Position reflects importance. Emphasis can be indicated also by repetition, use of punctuation, and the mechanical devices of using bold letters or underlining.

4

Plan written communication by first considering the needs, levels, and expectations of readers.

Planning, Writing, and Revising: The Three Steps of Successful Writing

The writers of letters and other forms of business communications are advised to follow the three steps of successful writing to communicate clearly and accurately: (1) planning, (2) writing, and (3) rewriting (revising).

- *Planning:* Writing a letter or memo is a one-way communication exercise. The words written on the page are all that convey the message. The reader does not have other non-verbal means to interpret the message. Usually, the reader is not in a position to immediately clarify something that is unclear. For example, suppose you write a letter to the Hill View Resort to make arrangements for a business meeting and lunch three days before the event. You would need to give complete information about everything the manager would need to know before making arrangements for the meeting and lunch. This includes the number of persons, the time, duration, and size of the conference, the hall desired, the number of collar microphones needed, the seating plan, the duration of the meeting, the kind of food needed, the number of vegetarians and non-vegetarians, the beverages and snacks required, and so on.

  Hence, to write a complete and short letter, plan before writing it. In addition, it is generally helpful to write a draft first.

  The writers should always consider:

  - The reader
  - The purpose of writing
  - The situation (context)

  These three elements determine the choice of the letter's/memo's/report's content, organization, and format.

Revision is a process of clarifying ideas, meanings, and purpose. It involves eliminating clutter that hides the writer's true intentions.

- *Rewriting and revising:* Writing is a mode of thinking. Rewriting or revising what has been written or dictated is a mode of improved thinking. Revising the first draft is not just useful for fixing grammatical errors. It is also an attempt to check if the writer has been able to say what was intended in the best manner possible. *Revision* is, therefore, a process of clarifying ideas, meanings, and purpose. It involves eliminating clutter that hides the writer's true intentions.

Very few of people are capable of expressing themselves accurately in the first draft. This is not due to poor command of the language. It is related to the process of accurate thinking. Writing is an act of transcribing ideas into words. The transcription will be accurate only when the thinking is accurate. Each revision sharpens the writer's thinking and thereby helps tighten his or her expression to a close transcription of what is in his or her mind.

How rewriting changes the thinking and message of a manager from verbiage to intent, eliminating wordiness, correcting the tone, and revising the policy itself can be explained with the help of the example discussed in Communication Snapshot 11.2.

Communication Snapshot 11.2

Redrafting a Memo

The management of Excel Corporation is concerned about the misuse of office telephones by its employees. In the past few months, expenses have soared because employees have been using their desk phones to call friends and relatives. In fact, employees have been making outstation calls for personal conversations. Lisa Christopher, the head of administration, drafts a memo (Exhibit 11B) to stop employees from misusing their office telephones, which has cost the company a lot of money and employee time.

Exhibit 11B
The Original Memo

Excel Corporation

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: All employees

From: Lisa Christopher, Head, Administration

Subject: Misuse of office telephones

We have noticed that, in the past few months, the company's expenses have been soaring because employees have been misusing their desk phones. Office telephones are being used for personal communication.

The use of office telephones for personal calls is against company policy. Employees are advised to use their desk telephones (and other office phones) for official purposes only. The use of office phones for personal calls must stop with immediate effect. The management will take strict action against anyone who is found guilty of misusing office telephones, and their employment may be terminated.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any queries about the issue.

Lisa Christopher

Before signing the memo, Lisa reads it a few times. She wonders if she will be able to change the behaviour of the employees by writing such a stern memo. She revises the memo a couple of times, until it is in the final form. The redrafted memo is shown in Exhibit 11C.

The revised memo is certainly better. The writing is simplified, the wordiness is removed, the tone of the memo is made courteous, and the revised policy is clearly stated. In short, the purpose is exactly and effectively communicated.

Exhibit 11C
The Revised Memo

Excel Corporation

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: All employees

From: Lisa Christopher, Head, Administration

Subject: Misuse of office telephones

In view of the soaring administrative costs, we have revised our policy on the use of office telephones. So far, our policy has been to discourage the use of office telephones for personal purposes because of the costs involved. We realize that this may not be a convenient solution, so employees can now use office telephones for personal calls by paying for each call.

The details of charges for local and outstation calls have been put up on the notice board.

Lisa Christopher

If you very carefully compare the first and final versions of Lisa's memo, you will discover a basic change in her thinking on the use of office phones. Lisa had first considered the use of phones for personal matters to be misuse of office phones (see the subject line of the memo). Now, she treats it as regular use of phones. This psychological shift in Lisa's perspective has improved the tone of her memo and her attitude towards other employees in the company, who now become part of "we". Her tone now is free of harshness and the threat of termination.

Work out the changes in Lisa's mind as she moves from a poor first draft to a final revision that has simplicity, brevity, courtesy, and the you-attitude. Notice the following steps in Lisa's process of revising and reaching the final draft, which are part of all successful revisions.

- Focusing on intent
- Eliminating wordiness
- Correcting the tone
- Revising the policy itself

For realizing how rewriting sharpens thinking and changes both content and form, you should trace each one of the above changes in the two memos. This exercise will improve the effectiveness of your written business communication.

FORM AND LAYOUT OF BUSINESS LETTERS

5

Acquaint yourself with different formats of letters, memos, and e-mails.

The appearance of business letters should be impressive. The stationery should be of quality that speaks to the status of the company and the individual writing the letter. The layout should be neat, with proper margins on all sides. The text should be carefully positioned on the letterhead. In addition, there should be a sufficient margin (at least half an inch) on the left side to allow for binding or filing. The typeface should be attractive and easy to read. Proper line spacing (double spacing instead of single) helps readability.

Business-letter Styles

A business organization usually selects one of the following formats for its business letters:

1. The full-block style
2. The semi-block style
3. The simplified style

Usually, the *full-block style* is preferred. It is convenient to set left-hand margins for paragraphs and other parts of the letter, such as the date, address, salutation, text, close, signature, and notations. It also looks simple and clear. Every line begins at the same distance from the left margin, which results in each paragraph looking like a distinct block. The convention of open punctuation further simplifies the use of the full-block style. Earlier, the address, salutation, and closing followed close punctuation and used a comma after each line and a full stop at the end. The full-block style has a disadvantage when following close punctuation, as it looks heavy on the left side. However, the trend now is to leave the choice of open or close punctuation to the writer, as long as the writer is consistent with his or her choice.

In the *semi-block style*, the beginning of the paragraph is not left aligned; only the lines are left aligned. The first line of each paragraph is indented. The date, closing, signature, name, and title are indented to the right half of the page.

In the simplified style, the letter neither has a salutation nor a closing. A subject line takes the place of the salutation.

In the *simplified style*, the letter has neither a salutation nor a closing. A subject line takes the place of the salutation. All lines begin from the left margin. Exhibit 11.14 illustrates each of these styles.

A business organization can use any of the styles, but it should use a consistent format for all business correspondence.

Layout and Formatting Guidelines

The following are a few guidelines regarding the layout and formatting of various elements of a business letter:

- *The attention line:* The attention line should be placed between the inside address and the salutation. It is no longer necessary in business letters. When used, it is generally found in letters addressed to the company as a whole, to draw the attention of a particular person to the matter discussed in the letter.
- *The subject line:* The subject line is positioned between the salutation and the inside address or the first line of the letter. For instance:

  Dear Ms Ray,

  Subject: Order No. 4567
- *The date line:* The month should be spelled out and the date placed one double space beneath the letterhead. The date line should be typed at the left margin in the full-block or simplified style. Place it at the centre if the semi-block style is used. There is no need for a comma between the month and year. One can separate the date from the year by using a comma as in June 21, 2003.
- *The second page of a letter:* The second page of a letter is usually plain and without the letterhead. Therefore the heading should come after leaving approximately six lines of space from the top. The heading should mention the addressee, page number, and date. This is done so that the second page is identified as a continuation of the first. The heading can be written in one of these ways:

  1. Mrs S. Uberoi ———— 2 ———— July 9, 2003
  2. Mrs S. Uberoi, July 9, 2003, page 2
  3. Mrs S. Uberoi

     July 9, 2003

     Page 2

  The first heading style is the simplest. The same form should be followed for subsequent pages, if any.

Exhibit 11.14
Business Letter Styles

Part A: The Full-block Style

BioLeather Pvt Ltd
Malkapet, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh 500036
Ph: 24545539 E-mail: info@bioleather.com Web site: www.BioLeather.com

Date	September 12, 2009
Inside address	Mr Henry James Marketing Manager Bioleather Products Corp. Sector 14, Gurgaon
Subject line	Subject: Bioleather Products Promotion
Salutation	Dear Mr James:

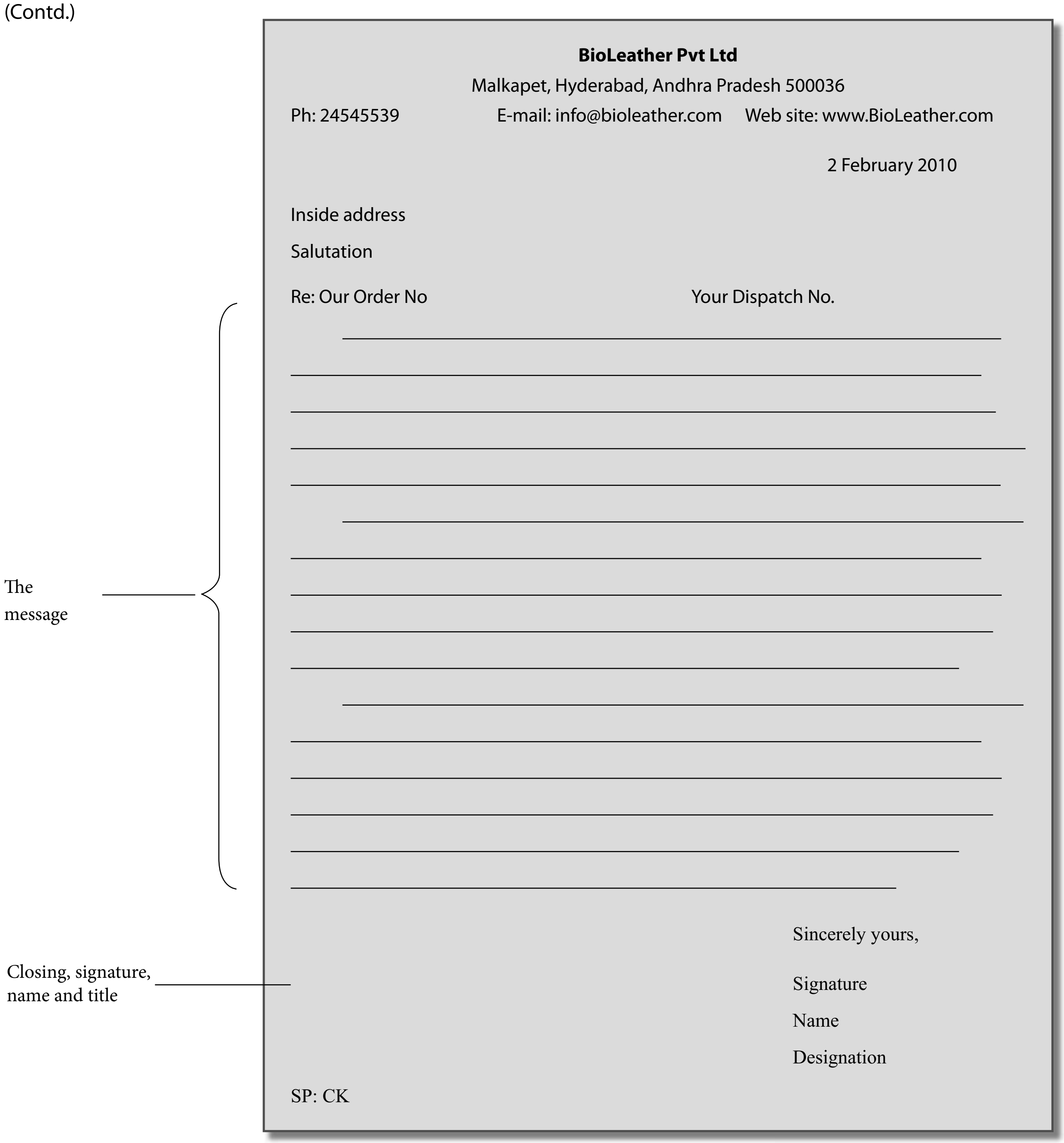
The message

Yours sincerely,
KMahajan — Signature
K. Mahajan
(Vice President of Marketing) — Name, title

KM/sk — Initials of the writer in bold and the typist in lowercase letters
CC: Name, Designation
Encl: — Other notations

Exhibit 11.14
(Contd.)

Part B: The Semi-block Style



Part C: The Simplified Style

Exhibit 11.14
(Contd.)

Letterhead

Date

Inside address

Subject line: Your order for washing machines

Subject line takes the place of the salutation

The message

Signature

Name, Designation

Wt

Enclosures

- *The letterhead:* If printed stationery is not available, white paper sized 8½" × 11" should be used and the company's name and address should be typed and centred at the top of the page.
- *The envelope:* The block form is best for the address. The standard official size for an envelope is 9½" × 4⅛", which is used for standard sheets and letters that include an enclosure. The commercial size envelope, 6½" × 3⅝", is used for letters typed on pages smaller than the standard size.
- *Punctuation:* Choose either open or mixed punctuation. In open punctuation, there is no punctuation after the date, lines of the inside address, salutation, and closing. Mixed punctuation also drops this punctuation except when a colon or comma is used after the salutation.

WRITING E-MAILS

E-mail is the most commonly used mode of interaction among executives and departments, and between a company and its customers, clients, distributors, retailers, suppliers, and vendors. It is the quickest channel of written communication. Any amount of information, documents, pictures, and so on, can be sent to the recipients as attachments.

Receiver's E-mail Account

For e-mail connectivity, one needs to have just the e-mail address of the intended receiver. Many persons have more than one e-mail account—an official account and a personal account. Therefore, the sender of the e-mail should know which address is appropriate to use. In addition, one has to be careful in typing the address. For example, in the address mukesh.chaturvedi@bimtech.ac.in, if there is any mistake, say an extra space, a spelling error, or a missing dot, the mail would not be delivered.

Subject Line

In an e-mail, the subject line is the first thing that is noticed by the receiver. Therefore, it should be composed as precisely as possible. The writer needs to carefully work out the wording of the subject line so that the title and context are clear and the reader gets the gist of the message. Examples of good subject lines are "Visit postponed to next Monday" and "Annual report to be ready this Saturday".

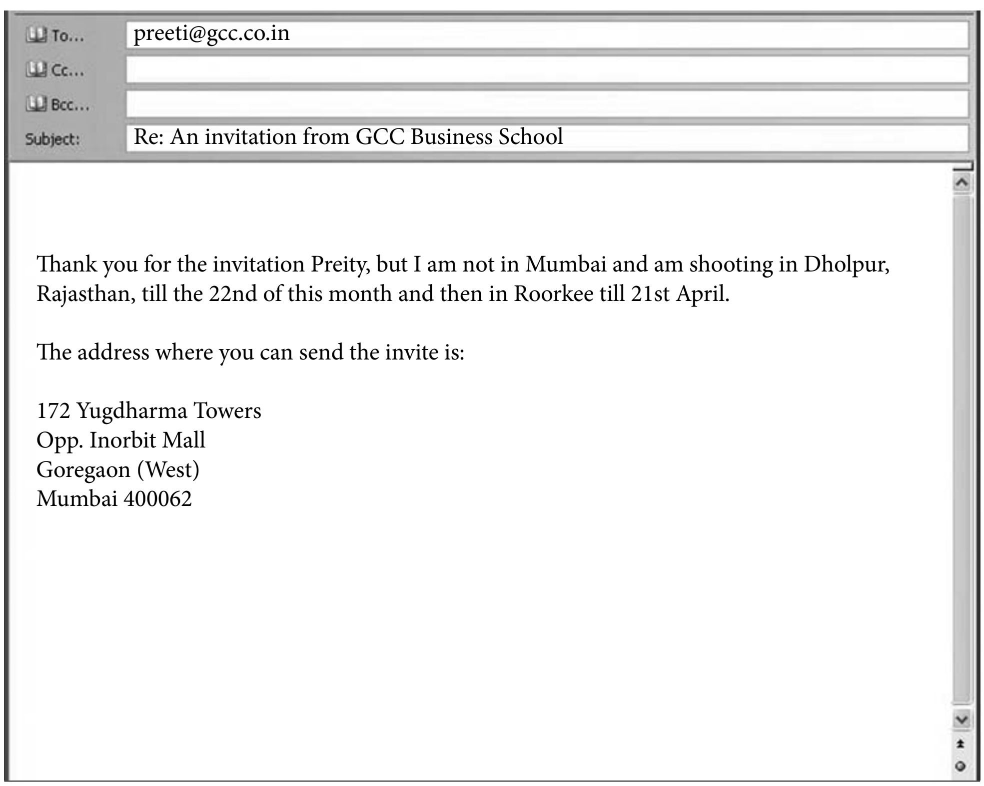
Sending Copies

The sender may need to send a copy of the e-mail to several persons at the same time. This is generally simpler if group e-mail IDs are provided. For example, if a company has internal group IDs set up, then by writing "marketing" in the "To" line, an e-mail can be sent to all the people in the marketing department. Usually, this is an internal facility. In external e-mails, the e-mail addresses of all intended receivers are listed in the "Cc" line. A "blind carbon copy" of the e-mail can also be sent to one or more persons without the knowledge of other receivers, by entering their addresses in the "Bcc" line. However, caution should be exercised in marking blind carbon copies as this can lead to difficult situations. For example, if the sender marks a copy to a person without the knowledge of the receiver and the person marked in the "Bcc" field hits "Reply All" in response to that mail, it places the sender in a difficult spot.

An e-mail is like a memo that needs neither a salutation nor a closing subscription. However, if the two persons are communicating for the first time and do not know each other personally, the sender may indicate a favourable disposition towards the receiver by being friendly. Exhibit 11.15 shows an example of a short, friendly, and clear e-mail written by a famous Bollywood actor and youth icon in response to an invitation from a business school.

Communication Snapshot 11.3 shows a series of e-mails between the COO of Time Industries and one of his former employees.

Exhibit 11.15
A Short, Clear E-mail



To... preeti@gcc.co.in
Cc...
Bcc...
Subject: Re: An invitation from GCC Business School

Thank you for the invitation Preity, but I am not in Mumbai and am shooting in Dholpur, Rajasthan, till the 22nd of this month and then in Roorkee till 21st April.

The address where you can send the invite is:

172 Yugdharma Towers
Opp. Inorbit Mall
Goregaon (West)
Mumbai 400062

Communication Snapshot 11.3

A Series of E-mails

The style of the e-mail in Exhibit 11D is businesslike, formal, and brief, but not brusque. It is written with conversational ease, in a pleasant tone. The closing sentence reassures Abhinav that the issues he raised in his e-mail (Exhibit 11E) would be addressed.

Exhibit 11D
Harish's E-mail to Abhinav

To... c.abhinav@hotmail.com
Cc...
Bcc... chrischacko@time.com
Subject: RE: An Urgent Appeal!

Dear Abhinav,

Many thanks for your message. May I request you to contact Chris Chacko? He will be your single point of contact in Time to resolve this matter. He will also advise you regarding whom you should meet to obtain clarifications relating to the various areas highlighted by you.

We are committed to ensuring that you obtain a full and fair response.

Kind regards,

Harish

Exhibit 11E
Abhinav's Original Message to Harish

To... harish.g@time.com
Cc... chrischacko@time.com
Bcc...
Subject: An Urgent Appeal!

Dear Sir,

This is with reference to Mr Chris Chacko's mail of 19 July regarding the issue of clearance.
Mr Chacko asked me to get in touch with OneCommercial. According to him, OneCommercial reported a mismatch of ₹38,000 for the WOT–TDI Mall project. As per his advice, I got in touch with the commercial team at OneCommercial on the 19th. However, on 27 July, I received a mail from Mrs Chopra stating that there was a shortage of ₹1,50,350, seemingly held against me. In addition, some stock reports were sent to Mr Aakash in OneCommercial by WOT–TDI Mall between 31 May and 21 June with some other figures altogether.
I sent a detailed message to Mrs Chopra regarding this, along with the necessary supporting documents. To bring to your notice the kind of ambiguity there is in the system, I have also sent you and Mr Chacko hard copies of the entire set of supporting documents, which should reach you in a day or two.
I am deeply pained because it seems that there is some intention to implicate me. I shall be very grateful if you could please advise me how I should proceed with the matter.

Regards,
Abhinav Chaturvedi

An e-mail should be written the way we talk. This makes the writing vivid. It should read like the sender (writer) and the receiver (reader) are conversing face-to-face. Exhibit 11F is an example of a conversational style of writing an e-mail; it is from Chris Chacko to Abhinav in response to Abhinav's e-mail (Exhibit 11G).

The opening phrase of Chris's e-mail in Exhibit 11F, "Hi Abhinav", sets an amiable tone. Further, the use of passive voice does not allow him to sound accusatory. In addition, Chris shares the chain of his thoughts in a candid manner with Abhinav. Chris's e-mail is written in a style that makes the official communication between a senior executive and a junior business manager more like a personal chat.

Exhibit 11F
Chris's Message to Abhinav

To... c.abhinav@hotmail.com
Cc... harish.g@time.com; saumya.shah@OneCommercial.com
Bcc...
Subject: Re: An Urgent Appeal!

Hi Abhinav,

There has been stock mismatch worth ₹38,000 that has been reported by OneCommercial for TDI Mall, which is being looked into.

I too do not know under what head the amount of ₹1,947 has been credited to your account. I am surprised to hear that you have not received any response regarding this from OneCommercial despite your follow-up. Could you tell me whom you spoke to? Saumya Shah, the Regional HR Manager, confirms that you have not spoken with her.

I cannot give any timeline regarding when your clearance will come through, as it is was clearly mentioned that clearance formalities need to be completed by you, and you have not obtained clearance from OneCommercial. Please take this up with OneCommercial directly as you need to get your clearance formalities completed to settle your accounts.

Regards,
Chris

Exhibit 11G
Abhinav's Original E-mail to Chris

To... chrischacko@time.com
Cc... harish.g@time.com
Bcc...
Subject: An Urgent Appeal!

Dear Sir,

It has been three weeks since I wrote to you about my clearance. On the 13th of July, I received an amount of ₹1,947 from Titan Industries Ltd, but I am unable to find out from OneCommercial what head this amount has been credited under.

Also, despite sending a reminder on 9 July, I am still waiting for my clearance. Could you please help me determine how long this will take?

Regards,
Abhinav

In fact, the success and popularity of e-mail in the world of global business is partly because e-mail has the speediness of a telephone conversation and the crispness of a well-written memo.

The following is a summary of the broad guidelines that need to be followed while writing business letters, memos, and e-mails:

- Consider the readers' (receivers') needs and expectations.
- Understand the purpose for writing the message and the total context in which it is being written.
- Put essential information first.
- State each point clearly and directly.
- Use conventional formats.
- Be courteous.

SUMMARY

- This chapter showed that the ability to communicate information in a simple, clear, concise, and precise written form is of great value for a successful manager and for the smooth functioning of his or her organization.
- It is extremely important to plan ahead before writing, as this is essential for achieving clarity of thought and expression. The writer must know his or her audience and purpose and choose the correct words and the appropriate tone to write effectively.
- Revision is also essential to the writing process as it helps the writer clarify or reconsider his or her thoughts.
- There are various types of routine, good-news, and persuasive letters, which all require a certain organization, tone, and content.
- E-mails have become popular in business communication because they combine the speed of telephone conversations with the crispness of a well-written memo.

CASE: A REPLY SENT TO AN ERRING CUSTOMER

In businesses, it is important to write tactful letters that promote good customer relations. This is particularly true for letters that refuse the customer's request for whatever reason, because these letters should try to retain the customer's goodwill. The writer should believe that the customer is king and that the customer is always right. Examine the following letter with this perspective and answer questions given at the end of it:

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 23rd, with a cheque for ₹ 25,000 on account, is to hand.

We note what you say regarding the difficulty you experienced in collecting your outstanding accounts, but we are compelled to remark that we do not think you are treating us with the consideration we have a right to expect.

It is true that small remittances have been forwarded from time to time, but the debit balance against you has been steadily increasing during the past twelve months until it now stands at the considerable total of ₹ 85,000.

Having regard to the many years during which you have been a customer of this house and the generally satisfactory character of your account, we are reluctant to resort to harsh measures.

We must, however, insist that the existing balance be cleared by regular installments of say ₹ 10,000 per month, and the first installment should reach us by the 7 April. Meanwhile, you shall need to pay cash for all further goods; we are allowing you an extra 3 per cent discount in lieu of credit.

We shall be glad to hear from you about this arrangement, as otherwise we shall have no alternative but to close your account and place the matter in other hands.

Yours truly,

Questions to Answer

1. Comment on the appropriateness of the sender's tone to a customer.
2. Point out the old-fashioned phrases and expressions.
3. Rewrite the letter according to the principles of effective writing in business.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Discuss the organization and pattern of ideas in "yes" letters.
2. Analyse the pattern of "no" letters. Give ideas on how to organize these letters.
3. What is the basic outline of a persuasive letter? Justify the structure of ideas in a persuasive letter.
4. What strategies can be used to de-emphasize a refusal to a customer?
5. How does a memo differ from a letter?
6. Mention three important characteristics of written communication that you would like to achieve in your letters and memos.

7. Bring out the basic relationship between clarity of thought and clarity of writing.
8. What causes wordiness in business letters? Give examples of wordiness and provide the concise forms.
9. Should a business letter necessarily be written in a formal and impersonal style? Discuss your viewpoint clearly.
10. "Many business letters don't produce immediate and/or discernible results." Give reasons for their ineffectiveness.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Formal, stiff letters, written in ceremonious language are a thing of the past in modern business transactions. Discuss whether this is true.
2. "Most letters written in the course of business are important to the writer as well as the reader." Show how this is the case.
3. Writing marketing and sales letters offers challenges to the writer. Discuss some of these challenges.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. "Last week, I paid my balance in full with a personal cheque. However, the enclosed statement shows a current balance of ₹300. Will you please correct my account balance to the correct figure—zero?" Write a "no" response to this letter explaining why the request cannot be granted.
2. Comment on each of the following sentences:
   (a) "Yes, we appreciate the reasoning behind your letter." (As an opening sentence.)
   (b) "Our policy is always to refuse such requests. We are sorry your request, therefore, is refused."

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. Business letters produce immediate effect because they are:
   (a) brief (b) formal
   (c) informal (d) interesting
2. Letters that please the receiver are called:
   (a) good-news letters (b) routine letters
   (c) invitation letters (d) "yes" letters
3. The purpose of a "no" response letter is to leave the reader with:
   (a) no future hope
   (b) minimum disappointment
   (c) unpleasant feelings
   (d) reasons for the rejection of the request
4. Form letters are also known as:
   (a) persuasive sales letters (b) bad news letters
   (c) formal letters (d) circular letters
5. A memorandum (memo) is considered a brief form of written communication for:
   (a) internal use (b) formal use
   (c) external use (d) legal use
6. Simplicity in writing means essentially:
   (a) the use of simple words
   (b) the use of simple sentences
   (c) the use of simple tense
   (d) plainness
7. Writing a letter with "you-attitude" means writing:
   (a) from the point of view of the writer
   (b) from the point of view of the reader
   (c) from the point of view of other persons not concerned
   (d) using the word "you" repeatedly
8. Good business letters are characterized by the following personal quality of the writer:
   (a) sincerity (b) seriousness
   (c) humour (d) formality
9. The simplified style business letter has:
   (a) a salutation (b) a complimentary close
   (c) a subject line (d) indentation
10. Modern business letters are usually written in:
    (a) full-block style (b) semi-block style
    (c) indented style (d) simplified style

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

12

Social Media

> *To get the most from social platforms we need to know what they do best.*
>
> —*Nandini Dias*
> COO, Lodestar UM

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the meaning of social media.
2. Know the use of social media as a universal phenomenon.
3. Learn different forms of social media.
4. Know how to choose the most suitable social media for your specific purpose.
5. Know how the concept of communication is changed by social media.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

In the London Games 2012, Holly Bleasdale, the British pole-vaultex, did nothing outstanding. She finished sixth in her event. But Bleasdale achieved a star's fame when on August 6, she took to a microblogging site to announce to the world that her boy friend had proposed to her. The papers and TV channels lapped it up.

Australian swimming beauty Stephane Rice was the subject of endless speculation about her proximity with US NBA star Kobe Bryant. While watching the games from the stands—their pictures, cosying up appeared across the newspapers. On August 10, Rice shot back at the media through Twitter "FYI yes Kobe and I are friends, but no we are not together and never have been. Can't guys and girls be just friends?" (Note: FYI is short form of *for your information*) The examples of the reach and influence of social media are numerous.

INTRODUCTION

People's longing for feeling the comfort of being connected with one another has always been there. So they communicate, using whatever medium they have—images or words. Even Caveman, our ancestors of Bronze Age used social networks. They can be considered pre-historic versions of the contemporary Facebook. Some British scientists "claim to have discovered a pre-historic version of Facebook" used by Bronze Age tribes to communicate with each other. "Studying thousands of images scrawled across two granite rock sites in Russia and Sweden, a Cambridge University team of scientists claimed the 'sites were like an archaic version' of the social networks where users shared thoughts and emotions and gave stamps of approval to other contributors—similar to the Facebook 'like.' "[1]

These Cambridge scientists believe that "there's clearly something quite special about these spaces".[2] According to Mark Sapwell, one of team researchers, people went there because they knew people had been there before them. Bringing out the similarities between the Bronze Age carved spaces and the modern Facebook platform Sapwell says, "like to-day people have always wanted to feel connected to each other—this was an expression of identity for those very early societies, before written language."[3]

The Sapwell group of Cambridge scientists have been investigating the sites, one in Zalavruga in Russia and another in Namforsen, northern Sweden. These sites contain about 2,500 images such as animals, humans, boats and hunting parties. Sapwell observes, "Like a Facebook status invites comment, the rock art invites addition—the way the variations of image both mirror and reinterpret act as a kind of call and response between different packs of hunters across hundred, even thousands of years."[4]

These scientists believe "ancient man continued to go back to the exact same locations to draw and communicate for thousands of years as it provided them with 'comfort' and a deep 'human connection' ".[5]

Like "ancient man", modern man constantly keeps visiting social media sites for comfort and deep human connection. Here's an insightful account of use of social media today. It is interspersed with valuable observations of Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Coe, who is also the chairman of the London Organizing Committee.

LET THE FIRST "SOCIAL MEDIA GAMES" BEGIN!

"It was a common sight till the turn of the archetypal millennium—a sports fan sitting at home, watching the action live on the TV, and, upon being overwhelmed by passion, hurling abuses at the screen in front of him. He didn't really have an alternative—Social Media was a term he had never heard of. " Would all that later on his whole experience as a viewer changed with "the creation of social networking sites such as My Space (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004)", which led to the great popularity of blogging and tweeting as, common modes of interacting across the social world of netizens, specially teenagers and young adults.

By Athens 2004 internet connections had became faster, mid-range cell phones came equipped with at least a VGA camera, and now, the derelict Orkut was a blip on the horizon. However, even by the time the quadrennial multi-sport extra vangoiza made its way to China for the first time, microblogging was virtually unheard of, and Facebook barely had 100 million users."

"Cut to the present, and technology has penetrated in more ways than was imaginable four summers ago—over half of Facebook 900 million users log in through their smart phones, and the half-a-billion netizens, who have something to share, instead of blogging, send out almost as many tweets or 140-character microblog."[6]

Sebastian Coe observes, "The fans are part of the action. They can comment on content, interact with the atheletes, create and publish their own content. Never before has there been such a channel to interact with the world, specially with the youth."

THE AGE OF INTERNET COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Today, we hear so many new technical terms, such as web, internet, serfete, blogging etc. Except for the younger generation, who are well advanced in the use of modern internet based electronic gadgets and applications, most of us need a brief introduction to the meaning of these terms.

- *The Web:* The system on the internet that allows us to find and use the information that is on computers all over the world.
- *Webpage:* All the information that you can see in one part of a website.
- *Website:* A place on the internet where you can find information about something, especially a particular organization, topic, or individual.
- *The Internet:* A computer system that allows millions of computer users around the world to exchange information.
- *Chat-room:* A place on the internet where you can write messages to other people and receive messages back from them immediately so that you can have a conversation while you are online.
- *Facebook:* A social networking website started in 2004.

1

Understand the meaning of social media.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL MEDIA MEAN?

The term social media was coined around 2004, after the creation of the Usenet (in 1979) and other social networking sites such as My Space (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004). To be able to understand social media, we should first talk of Web 2.0 (in 2004) and user generated content. Web 2.0 describes a new way of utilising the world wide web as a platform for continuously creating, publishing, adding, and changing the content in a participative and collaborative manner by all users; the individual initiator of the message (content) and the subsequent respondents to it.

The following essentials of social media extend the meaning and scope of the interpersonal communication as a quickest mode of collective opinion forming platform.

2

Know the use of social media as a universal phenomenon.

- Its key is interaction.
- The receiver also creates the content.
- The social message is the sum of all the ways in which the receivers contribute to the creation of the content by adding their own responses and comments which modify the content in its total form.

Technically, this process of continuous transactional communication and creation of content by the message readers, developed the idea of the user generated content (UGC), which can be regarded as a sum of all ways in which people use social media.

This view emphasizes the point that social media is a network site that organizes the participants who are already a part of an extended social network. In other words, its distinguishing feature is that people are not "net working" necessarily to connect with new friends, but to maintain the pre-existing networks to meet and talk with people who have similar interests and views as yours.

Open Diary

The present day use and concept of social media emerges from Bruce and Susan Ableson's, social networking, in 1959, called "Open Diary", which was an online diary writers' network. The "Open Diary" writers were connected together to form a community of net users sharing one another's semi public account of themselves. The same year, the term "weblog" was first used and subsequently changed into "we-blog", thus formed a verb "blog from the noun weblog".

Weblog

The growing number of younger generations and X-generation users of high speed internet has made the weblog widely popular. The creation of social networking sites such as My Space (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004) brought in the term "social media" in 2005. According to Keplan and Haenlein the term social media is usually applied to describe "the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users".[7]

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

To be considered as part of social network, the UGC, according to the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD, 2007), should have the following three characteristics:

1. It should be published either on a publicly accessible website or on a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people. Hence, UGC leaves out content exchanged in individualized e-mails or instant messages.
2. Second, it should indicate that some creative effort has gone into its generation. This means just a mere reproduction of already existing content for example, posting a copy of an article printed in a magazine or newspaper on a personal blog without any comments or changes would not be considered to be UGC.
3. Thirdly and finally any content that has been created from a commercial market point of view is not considered social content. It should be created outside of professional context of practices and considerations. For example, posting reviews to shopping

sites is a contribution to social media if it expresses your view of a product without considering its effects on its sale. It is an online contribution to the content generated by other consumers of the product.

CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Because of the multiplicity of existing forms of social media such as Facebook, You Tube, Wikipedia and emerging forms such as virtual social worlds like second life and virtual game worlds, for example world of war craft, it is considered better to classify social media theoretically on the basis of some key component related to media as such and the social dimension of social media. Thus the two bases of classification are:

1. Social presence
2. The concept of self-presentation

Social Presence

Social media differ in the degree of social (contact) presence they allow to be enjoyed by their users as two communicating partners. Media richness is closely related to the concept of social presence.

Social presence means the acoustic, visual and physical contact that can be achieved between the two interacting partners. For example, compare the richness of social presence in direct face to face communication with the mediated, through some medium, communication over the telephone, or an ordinary mobile. In face to face communication, both the communicating parties hear, see and, if desired also physically can touch one another. Face to face communication thus provides to the communication high degree of social presence. Now, compare it to the telephone conversation which provides only acoustic (voice) contact. Therefore, as a social medium, telephone helps achieve a low degree of social presence/contact. Social presence is influenced by the intimacy (interpersonal vs mediated) and immediacy (asynchronous vs synchronous) of the medium, and can be expected to be lower for mediated (e.g., telephone conversation) than interpersonal (e.g., face-to-face discussion and for asynchronous), (e.g., e-mails) than synchronous (e.g., live chat) communications. The higher the social presence, the larger the social influence that the communication partner's have on each other's behaviour.

"Media richness theory is based on the assumption that the goal of any communication is the resolution of ambiguity and reduction of uncertainty. It states that media differ in the degree of richness they possess—that is, the amount of information they allow to be transmitted in a given time interval—and that therefore some media are more effective than others, in resolving ambiguity, and uncertainty."[8]

The Concept of Self-presentation

The concept of self-presentation states that "in any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions other people form of them". They project themselves as they wish to be perceived by others. Therefore, such a self-presentation is done through deliberate disclosure of desirable aspects of yourself. The aim is to develop, close relationships with others. This is the purpose of people to create a personal webpage, for example, the wish to present themselves in Cyberpage[9] self-disclosure is a critical step in the development of close relationships (e.g., during dating) or between strangers on a journey.

Social media can be classified also on the basis of the "degree of self-disclosure it requires and the type of self-presentation it allows."[10]

There are three classifications in respect of social presence/media richness and two, high or low classifications in respect of self-presentation/self-disclosure. Text based as against content based applications such as blogs and wikipedia have lowest social presence and therefore provide only a relatively simple interaction. They are rated as low as applications which have content.

For example, YouTube/and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) allow, besides text-based communication, the opportunity to share pictures, videos and other forms of media content. To the highest level belong the virtual social communities and worlds of virtual games and wars. For example, Second Life, World Of Warcraft (WOW). These virtual sites create the illusion of real face-to-face interactions in a virtual environment of 3-dimensional reality.

In respect of self-presentation and self-disclosure, collaborative projects generally score less than blogs, because the former usually focus on a specific content area. Blogs can relate to any aspect of content. From the social-presentation and self-disclosure point of view "social networking sites allow for more self-disclosure than content communities".[11]

NATURE AND SCOPE OF SIX TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

3

Learn different forms of social media.

Collaborative Projects

As forms of communication, collaborative projects are most democratic in nature. Many end users can jointly contribute to the content creation. This category includes wikis and social book marking applications. The distinction between these two applications is that wikis are the websites which let users change and modify the text based content by adding or removing some part of the content whereas social book marking applications allow the group of users to collect and share the media content. The on-line encyclopedia, available in nearly 230 different languages, is the best example of wiki application. Delicious is the example of social book marking web service as collaborative project. The collaborative project websites tend to be considered more credible than the work of a single individual as sources of information. Though everything written on Wikipedia may not be correct, yet most internet users psychologically accept it as true because it is the world of several collaborators, not of a single user of the internet. For example, Pearson uses internal wikie platform Neo to share with its employees information on the current status of its on-going projects, new developments, projections and plans and suggest new ideas which a large majority of its employees use.

Blogs

Blogs represent the social media version of personal web pages. They are like personal diaries. A single individual or an organization or company writes on the webpage—something, some observation or some personal view on a specific content such as launching of a new product or plan to disband the group of social workers, India against corruption. Hundreds of blogs from other net users are posted in response to the single blog initiated by a single person or a single company or organization. The key point is that all blogs are on the same particular theme. The text based blogs are thus usually managed by one person only, but they offer free opportunity for interaction with other's through exchange of comments. Blogs are most frequently used by companies to inform customers, shareholders, and employees about the latest developments in their organization. But this communicating act may sometimes, embarrass a company by the negative blogs posted against the product/service by dissatisfied customers or employees. Of course, the negative feedback has a positive corrective role to improve the thing, but the fact that the negative comment is an the Cyberspace and therefore the damaging information is shared by many on customers or workers as well.

Content Communities

Content communities are used as platforms for sharing, other users media content such as books via Book Crossing, photos through Flicker, video via YouTube and PowerPoint presentations on slideshare. As communication channels content communities enable organizations to show videos of press announcements and key note speeches of important visitors to their employees and other visitors.

Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites are perhaps the most popular applications that users of internet use to create personal information profiles and share them with their friends and colleagues. Sites such as My Space and Facebook are frequently used to send e-mails and instant messages to each other. These personal profiles can have any type of information, including videos, blogs, audio files, and photographs.

Virtual Game Worlds

According to Kaplan and Haenlein "Virtual worlds are platforms that replicate a three dimensional environment in which users can appear in the form of personalized avtars and interact with each other as they would in real life". [12] This form is used in advertising and promotion media specially with the community of gamers.

Virtual Social Worlds

As in virtual game worlds the virtual social worlds, such as second life application allow the users to create content such as clothes, money, or furniture and choose to live freely a virtual life similar to their real life. Kaplan and Haenlein believe that virtual social worlds are source of varied opportunities for companies in marketing (advertising), communication, virtual product sales/v-commerce, marketing research and human resource and internal process management.[13]

4

Know how to choose the most suitable social media for your specific purpose.

PURPOSE/CHOOSING THE MOST SUITABLE SOCIAL MEDIA

To have maximum benefits from the use of social media, you need to know which of the online applications meet your purpose best. You should know which social platform you should choose when you want to do one of the following things:

- Meet new people
- Stay in touch with friends
- Promote yourself
- Make contacts for work
- Learn something new
- Share knowledge and experiences with friends and others
- Be creative
- Change opinions of others
- Express yourself
- Seek other person's opinions
- Know the social world around you
- Develop a sense of belonging
- Relax and entertain yourself
- Keep yourself up-to-date.

Therefore, choosing the right medium for a given purpose in the presence of a large group of social platforms is important. It requires a careful consideration of what they do best.

Target Group

For commercial purposes also understand and study the target group's preferences for certain media according to that age group and technology exposure. You should choose accordingly.

REVISITING THE COMMUNICATION THEORY

5

Know how the concept of communication is changed by social media.

Communication that has its birth in the human instinct to relate with one another has found its fulfillment through the use of internet across the world. Today, people stay connected with each other by one-way communication, two-way communication, and 3-dimensional virtual communication. The technological effort has been to enable cyber space communication to have intimacy and immediacy of live face-to-face communication. Facebook, blog and virtual social worlds redefine the act of communicating by enriching the medium and also changing it into a truly democratic content.

Today, a sender is no more the sole creator of message. The receiver(s) across the globe contribute to the communication content. In the modern age of democracy, this democratization of social media communication represents human desire to be free and equal in all respects of participation in the creation of meaning of message.

SUMMARY

- The chapter defines social media as a group of internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. The chapter discusses the following.
- Social media as tools of interpersonal communication are no more controlled by a single individual. Instead, this form of communication represents a collaborative process of creation of content by the sender and the endless respondents together.
- The classification of different types of social media depends on the intimacy and immediacy they allow to the communicators.
- To get the best from social media, know what each form does best.

CASE: WAS LONDON OLYMPICS 2012 THE "SOCIAL-OLYMPICS"?

Social media's popularity and influence is fast growing. Instead of depending on the traditional media for information and updates, people, specially teenagers are increasingly resorting to their favorite sites through computers, tablets or smart phones to immediately get latest news and status. Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube are allowing them to enjoy instant first-hand experience of the thrill, excitement or despair and richness of the event as a real spectacle taking place before them.

On the very first day of opening ceremony about 10 million tweets were sent. The heavy transmission of social media disrupted the GPS devices of London that interfered with the internet viewing of that day's mens' cycling event. IOC had to ask viewers to "take it easy" while blogging at the games venue. It also laid down guidelines for social media usage among althetes and fans, requesting them to post in "a first person, diary-type format and like a journalist".

It is evident that social media is rapidly growing in its reach and influence. It is changing the ways athletes, fans and the organizers interact and communicate their experiences of the events without any intermediaries instantly across the world. Their thrill of instant connectivity through social media is certainly being enjoyed by the athletes and their fans.

But social media is a double-edged weapon which cuts two-ways. It gives global visibility and acclaim but it can also damage you world-wide. Voula Papachriston, the Greek triple-jumper, became the first athelete in history to be banned from Olympics for posting a comment that was considered as a racist comment against African immigrants. Next to be thrown out was Swiss defender Michel Morganella after he posted a blog following a defeat against South Korea in football which was thought to be "discriminating, insulting and violating the dignity of the South Korean football team and the people."

Questions to Answer

1. Would you agree that social media should be used carefully because of its huge influence on people's way of thinking across the world? What care should be taken while using it as a social platform?
2. Comment on the content of social media, posting the London Olympics 2012 internationally.

Source: Adapted from "Was it the 'social olympics'?" by Seemoy Talkudar, *The Times of India*, New Delhi, Tuesday, August 14, 2012.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. In what sense pre-historic cavemen were using social media sites? Discuss.
2. Discuss the influence of internet on the nature of communication.
3. Explain the technological foundation of modern social media.
4. Define social media as an internet-based platform of communication.
5. Discuss the influence of the use of social media on the process of communication as a collaborative activity, not controlled by a single individual.
6. Discuss the two most important characteristics of social media which are perhaps responsible for its worldwide extra-ordinary popularity.
7. Discuss some of the inherent risks in using social media for promotional purposes.
8. Explain what is meant by the democratisation of communication by social media.
9. Write a note on the origin of the term "social media".
10. Discuss the main features of Facebook as a social network platform.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What is the primary purpose of social media users?
2. Elaborate your experience of blogging.
3. Bring out the basic difference between blog and Facebook.
4. Can you maintain privacy on social platforms? If yes, show how can you be social yet individual in sharing your personal information with others?
5. In what sense is social media a system of keeping an open diary?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. "Is social media just old wine in new bottles?" Comment and discuss.
2. Discuss the influence of social media on the control of content by the users (receivers) of media (message).
3. Why do collaborative projects such as Wikipedia and blogs score lowest as compared to Facebook and virtual worlds?
4. "Virtual game and social worlds replicate all dimensions of face to face communication". Discuss and illustrate.
5. Explain the negative and damaging aspects of social media for the corporate world, specially for marketing of products and services.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. All human beings need to feel the comfort of being
   (a) heard
   (b) connected
   (c) noticed
   (d) praised
2. Social media communication is controlled by
   (a) a single individual
   (b) no body
   (c) thousands of internet users across the world
   (d) a targeted audience

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

3. Social presence is influenced by
   (a) intimacy
   (b) immediacy
   (c) clarity
   (d) both intimacy and immediacy
4. The content exchanged in individualised e-mails or instant messages is
   (a) not included in UGC
   (b) modified in UGC
   (c) included in UGC
   (d) subject to the choice of the user
5. In a social presentation the people want to give others an impression that is
   (a) real
   (b) controlled
   (c) better
   (d) false
6. The goal of any communication is to be
   (a) clear and precise and certain
   (b) practical
   (c) ambiguous
   (d) uncertain
7. A blog is written on a single particular topic by
   (a) several persons
   (b) a single person or company on a single topic
   (c) on several topics
   (d) several writers on different topics
8. Virtual worlds replicate reality which is
   (a) four-dimensional
   (b) two-dimensional
   (c) three-dimensional
   (d) one-dimensional
9. Content communities are used as platforms to share content of
   (a) books
   (b) video
   (c) pictures
   (d) all the above (a)(b)(c)
10. Telephone conversation provides the communicators social presence contact whose degree is
   (a) low
   (b) medium
   (c) high
   (d) rich

ENDNOTES

1. "Even Cavemen Used Social Networks," PTI, London, reprinted in *The Times of India*, New Delhi, 22 May 2012, p. 17.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. 'Let the first "Social Media Games" begin' by Abhimanya, *Hindustan Times*, 2nd July 2012, New Delhi, back cover page.
7. Andreas M. Kalpan and Michael Haenlein, "Users of the World Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media", *Business Horizons* (2010) 53, 59–68, Keley School of Business, Indiana University.
8. Ibid., p. 61.
9. Ibid., p. 62.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 64.
13. Ibid.

13

Business Reports

“. . . *a report covers everything that has to be covered but nothing more.*”

—*H. A. Shearing and B. C. Christian*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand that a report and an essay are two distinct forms of written communication and be able to differentiate between their physical structures and the styles in which they are written.
2. Know the various types of reports and their essential elements.
3. Develop organizing and outlining skills.
4. Learn how to write both long and short formal reports in a clear, objective style, using the appropriate layout.
5. Know how to write abstracts and summaries, introductions, final recommendations, and conclusions.
6. Understand the role and use of graphics in reports.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Rajesh Tewari, a middle-level executive in the marketing department of Samsung, Noida, faced some difficulties when he was asked to submit a report on his plan to expand the company’s retail outlets in metropolitan areas he had recently visited. More than a week had passed since his visit, but he had not been able to begin the report. Something or the other kept happening to make him postpone writing the report. He felt that if he had been asked to write an essay on his business visits to Mumbai and Chennai, he could have easily written it. But writing a report, he thought, was a technical thing. He thought he did not know how a report was written. Finally, he searched the Internet to learn about the form and structure of short technical/business reports. Before it was too late, he hurriedly dashed off a report to his senior manager.

However, the report left the senior manager asking himself several questions that were not answered by Rajesh in his report. Moreover, Rajesh had presented the data in words that ran into several pages. He failed to include graphs and illustrations that would give the reader an idea of the overall picture at a glance, and this further affected the quality of his report.

WHAT IS A REPORT?

After the letter and the memo, the report is the most used form in business writing. A report can be defined as a communication in which the writer (or speaker if it is an oral report) provides information to some individual or organization because it is his or her responsibility to do so.[1] It is an assigned communication for a purpose and for a specific receiver/reader.

The common element in all reports is the element of responsibility. The writer is obliged to communicate what he or she knows to those who need this information, as a part of an assigned, clearly defined, time-bound task.

The differences between a report and other forms of writing are:

- Other forms of writing, such as essays, are subjective in nature. They reflect the writer’s personality.
- Reports generally draw on outside sources. They present facts, conclusions, and recommendations based on investigation and analysis of data obtained by observation of facts. Appendix 2 discusses the investigation process in a research study in detail.
- The word “paper” can mean several things, such as an article, a detailed report, or a project report. However, it most commonly refers to research writing.
- Reports have a highly structured format.
- Each part of a report is numbered and captioned with headings and sub-headings.

1

Understand that a report and an essay are two distinct forms of written communication and be able to differentiate between their physical structures and the styles in which they are written.

The common element in all reports is the element of responsibility.

- The language of a report is concise and concrete.
- Reports contain recommendations and conclusions.
- They make use of tables and graphs.
- Reports are usually preceded by a summary.
- Reports can be oral or written, but essays are always written.
- An essay can be factual, but it remains subjective in its treatment and presentation. The essayist does not usually offer evidence for his or her writing, nor does the reader look for it. The reader of a report, on the other hand, looks for facts and evidence.
- As a form of creative writing, an essay's purpose is largely self-expression for the author and providing entertainment or enjoyment for the reader.
- An essay is rooted in the writer's imagination, whereas a report is rooted in investigation and analysis. This is why an essay has a beginning, but may not have a report's logically derived conclusion. Moreover, it has no signposts, headings or sub-headings, or bullet points to indicate a coherent structure that moves from the beginning, through the middle, to the end.

Thus, a report is distinct from an essay or any other form of writing.

THE PURPOSE OF A REPORT

The basic purpose of a report is to help the management identify the reasons underlying a specific situation.

While collecting data, the investigator should remember that the report is not a descriptive statement of facts, events, or future possibilities. For example, the purpose of a report is not fulfilled if it speaks about "the possibility of change of work site". Instead, the report should explain the reasons for changing the workplace, discuss the need for doing so, compare the relative advantages of different choices available, and choose and recommend the best option. The basic purpose of a report is to help the management identify the reasons underlying a specific situation. The factors responsible for the problem, the alternatives available for solving it, and the best course of action to take emerge from a thorough study of all relevant facts and factors. The main purpose of report is to present specific conclusions regarding the problem's existence and solution.

2

Know the various types of reports and their essential elements.

KINDS OF REPORTS

Broadly speaking, reports are of two kinds:

- Formal reports that contain all essential elements of a report
- Semi-formal/informal reports

Reports are known by the names from which they get their purpose and form. They are usually identified as:

- Routine reports: reports made by filling in a printed form
- Letter reports: reports in the form of letters
- Memo reports: reports in the form of memos
- Progress reports: reports on the progress and status of a project
- Periodic reports: reports for keeping records, made routinely at regular intervals
- Laboratory reports: reports on the results of laboratory work
- Short reports: short reports that are like formal reports in tone and other general qualities, but are simpler in design because they do not have all the front and back matter, and have a shorter main body
- Formal reports: reports that are impersonal in tone, detailed, and fully structured

In the world of business, a report can vary from a short, informal account (essentially a memo) of the present state of a project to a long, formal, well-documented report of a corporation or government department. Each organization normally has its own in-house method of presentation, which its report writers will adhere to. The writer of a report in an organization is guided by the following:

- A specific layout—the sequence in which information is presented. For instance, recommendations and conclusions may precede the discussion.
- Its cover details and terms of reference—this includes the name of the organization, report code number, and other related information about the author, subject, and details of submission.

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

In an organization, the task of producing a report on a specific problem can be assigned to an individual or a team. The problem, purpose, scope, limitations, budget, cultural considerations related to the ethical values of the organization, and the date for submission (time limit) are clearly specified when the report is authorized. These specifications guide the report writer. They form what is called "the terms of reference". The person authorizing or sanctioning the writing of the report sets down these terms.

The process of writing a report is left entirely to the writer. Report writing involves research, analysis, and presentation. The writer has to first investigate the problem, search for facts, gather evidence, and then analyse the data before presenting observations, conclusions, and suggestions for solutions to the problem. The writer can choose from a variety of methods when studying the problem—visits, interviews, questionnaires, data banks, past records of the organization, and consulting existing literature and documents as relevant sources of information. The writer also needs to know the total context and background of the subject of investigation. Background study and data collection may sometimes pose difficulties, but without this effort, a report will not be authentic.

> The writer has to first investigate the problem, search for facts, gather evidence, and then analyse the data before presenting observations, conclusions, and suggestions for solutions to the problem.

THE OBJECTIVES OF A REPORT

A report is primarily a source of information that helps in decision-making. It can also be used to offer a solution to a business problem. Its objective can be:

> A report is primarily a source of information that helps in decision-making.

- To give information about a company's activities, progress, plans, and problems.
- To record events for future reference.
- To recommend a specific action.
- To justify and persuade readers about the need for action in controversial situations.
- To present facts to the management to help decide the direction the business should choose.

The study and report should be comprehensive. They should examine all aspects of a problem and the potential solutions. The recommended solution and its advantages or disadvantages should be analysed in relation to management as a whole, not just the entrepreneur. All groups—workers, staff, customers, and so on whose interests may be affected in different ways by a change should be considered.

The report writer should consider the objectives of the report from the point of view of its recipients and ask the following questions as guidelines:

- For whom is the report written?
- What is their level of information and education?

- How much do they already know about the problem?
- Why do they want the report?
- What do they want to know, and in how much detail?
- How does the report's result (conclusion) help them?

3

Develop organizing and outlining skills.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZING INFORMATION

The writer of a report should choose a method of data collection according to the nature and purpose of the proposed study. Before writing the report, he or she should evaluate the information collected for its relevance and usefulness, and should plan and organize the information. The findings should be logically grouped to form an outline of the report.

Planning the message before writing the report will make it clear and easy to follow.

Planning the message before writing the report will make it clear and easy to follow. Planning involves organizing the ideas already identified as important. In the case of a short, simple piece of writing such as a letter or memo, the material can be organized by deciding what points to include and how to arrange them. When the material to be covered is vast and complex, like in long reports, the writer must plan not just the sequence of presentation, but also the subordination and coordination of ideas and facts in relation to each other and to the text as a whole.

Organizing involves two parts:

- Sequencing information
- Outlining information

Sequencing Information

Information can be arranged in three different ways:

- Randomly
- Sequentially
- Hierarchically

Random Organization

Random organization, as the term suggests, indicates no visible relationship among the ideas and facts presented. The communicator (writer/speaker) expresses thoughts and ideas as they come into his or her mind; the document is just a string of ideas, not a pattern.

Sequential Organization

A sequence is a set of things relating to one another in sequential order. Each item has the same relationship to each of the other items. Examples are alphabetical, numerical, or chronological ordering.

Hierarchical Organization

Hierarchical organization is based on multi-level relationships.

Hierarchical organization is an ordering of items according to their relative importance. It is based on multi-level relationships. In this pattern, items have other items placed under them. Hierarchical organization is best shown as a tree-structure given in Exhibit 13.1.

This hierarchical relation among ideas/items is what an outline shows. This form of organization helps a reader understand the information more easily. Random and sequential organization, which are used in computer theory, are not as well suited to reports. A reader would feel lost in the maze of unarranged and unpatterned ideas. Hence, related ideas should be grouped together.

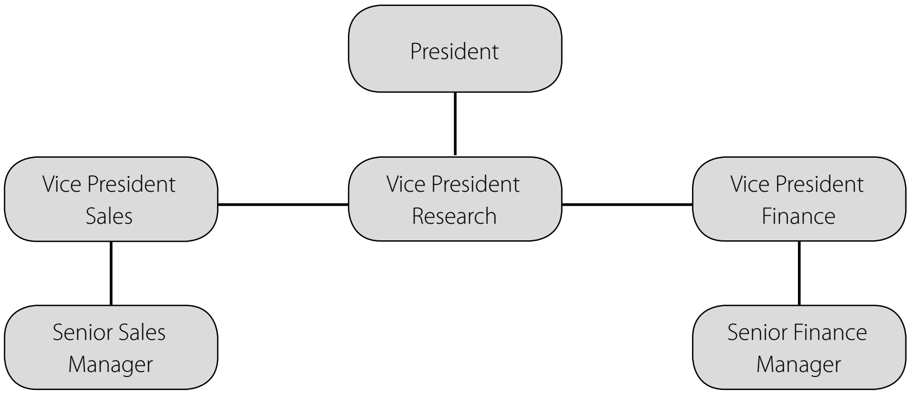


Exhibit 13.1
Hierarchical Organization

Grouping material for writing is done by considering levels of generality. Generality is a relative concept because each idea is to be viewed in the context of the whole set of ideas. One idea is more general than another if it represents a larger category. For example, "literature" is more general than "novel", and "communication" is less specific than "report". "Report" is more general than "progress report", which itself is more general than "third-term progress report", which in turn is less specific than "third-term progress report of XYZ".

Considering levels of generality is useful as both general statements and specific details are included in effective communication. For example, in informative and persuasive writing, general statements have to be developed with specific facts, reasons, arguments, and examples.

Outline As a Structuring Device

An outline is a shape-giving device. It is a valuable planning strategy. By making an outline, the writer structures the relevant ideas and groups them together on the basis of their generality. An outline can be used at different stages of report writing. For instance, before writing or presenting the report orally, an outline helps arrange and organize material; when revising, it can be used to see how far the first draft is logically arranged. An outline also points out any weakness in the written document, such as missing points or digressions from the main point.

An outline is a tentative plan or projection of what the final draft will say. It is possible for the outline to change somewhat during the actual writing. In that case, the writer should alter the original outline and ensure that the changes do not disturb the logic and order of the argument and ideas.

Formal Outline

In a formal outline, the content and format follow the conventions formed to show relationships among ideas clearly. A formal outline can be a topic outline or a sentence outline. A topic outline consists of a word or a phrase, whereas in a sentence outline each item is a complete sentence. The two methods are never used together in the same formal outline. However, a sentence outline is more helpful for writing. For example, "differences in the arts" is a topic outline, but a sentence outline such as "the arts differ in terms of objects, manner, and mode of imitation" provides more detail. A general layout of a formal outline is given in Exhibit 13.2.

> In a formal outline, the content and format follow the conventions formed to show relationships among ideas clearly.

Framing an Outline

Some guidelines for framing an outline include:

1. *Introductory and concluding sentences:* These do not form part of a formal outline. The *thesis* or the topic statement is placed before the first sentence.

Exhibit 13.2
Layout of a Formal Outline

Statement of thesis ____________________

I. First main idea ____________________
  A. First subordinate idea ____________________
    1. First reason or illustration ____________________
    2. Second reason or example ____________________
      a. First supporting detail ____________________
      b. Second supporting detail ____________________
  B. Second subordinate idea ____________________

II. Second main idea ____________________

2. *Numbers, letters, and indentations:* The formal outline begins with the capitalized Roman numeral I, which numbers the first main idea and is followed by the Roman numerals II, III, and so on, which are used to indicate major subdivisions of the topic. Indented capital letters (A, B, C, and so on) are used to mark the next level of generality, while small letters (a,b,c, and so on) indicate a further level of generality, if any. This arrangement is based on the principle that each subdivision is placed above the next level of specific detail given by the outline. It may be noted that in a sentence outline if an entry is longer than one line, the second line is indented by one word. That means that the second line begins under the second word of the first line.
3. *At least two entries at each level:* In an outline, there can be a topic numbered "I" only if there is "II" that follows it, and similarly, there can only be an "A" when there is a "B". Without at least two parts, no category can be divided. Where a category has only one subdivision, it should either be left out or reclassified, or expanded to include at least two subdivisions.

   For example:

   Incorrect
   I. Standards of hygiene in the canteen not satisfactory
      A. Food left over from lunches
   II. Fridge not defrosted frequently

   Correct
   I. Standards of hygiene in the canteen not satisfactory
   II. Safety issues regarding electrical sockets in the canteen

   Correct
   I. Standards of hygiene in the canteen not satisfactory
      A. Food left over from lunches
      B. Fridge not defrosted frequently
   II. Safety issues regarding electrical sockets in the canteen

4. *Levels of generality:* All subdivisions should have the same level of generality. A main idea and a supporting detail cannot be placed at the same level.

   Incorrect
   I. Starting an IT centre
   II. Conducting computer courses

   Correct
   I. Starting an IT centre
   II. Opening a health resort

5. *No overlap:* There should be a fresh point under each heading. The same idea should not be repeated in different places.

Incorrect

I. People move away from villages
A. The go in search of jobs
B. They go to seek their livelihoods

Correct

I. People move away from villages
A. They go in search of jobs
B. They often change their outlooks

6. *Parallelism:* All statements (divisions and sub-divisions) should have grammatically parallel construction. For example, if one item begins with the *–ing* form of the verb, other items should also begin with form *verb + –ing*.

Incorrect

I. Negotiating peace
II. Promote understanding

Correct

I. Negotiating peace
II. Promoting understanding

7. *Punctuation and capitalization:* Only the first word or a proper noun should be capitalized in each entry. Please note that a full stop should be used at the end of each entry only when it is a sentence outline. No punctuation mark is used at the ends of entries in a topic outline.

Outlining is the key to organization; it is essential for writing any form of business communication. To determine the sequence of ideas (or presentation) in any piece of writing, the writer has to consider the level of importance of the information and also the order in which it should be known. For instance, when writing a report, one could mention the problem first and then discuss the method used to solve it, followed by findings and conclusions.

Since the reader of a report is more interested in the findings and conclusions, it is better to give more importance to these elements. The details of the problem and the methodology used to solve it receive less attention as they are of less interest to the reader. However, they provide the necessary background for the findings and conclusions. One could have an outline including all the four elements of a report in the form shown in Exhibit 13.3.

As the statement of the problem and description of research methodology are of lesser interest to most readers, they can be put together as two elements under the same entry, *Introduction*. As the other two elements, *findings* and *conclusions*, are of greater interest, they are entered separately as item II and item III.

The effort and time devoted to forming an outline are rewarded by the gain in clarity and understanding of the levels of significance of different elements in the composition.

The effort and time devoted to forming an outline are rewarded by the gain in clarity and understanding of the levels of significance of different elements in the composition.

Exhibit 13.3
A Sample Outline

I. Introduction
A. Definition of the problem
B. Description of the methods used
II. Findings
III. Conclusions

Cultural Differences in Report Details

There may be some differences in the way people from different cultures write reports. Here are some broad examples of how different types of details are emphasized in different cultures:

- German report writers consider historical facts and in-depth explanations very crucial for a proper understanding of problems and their solutions.
- French reports tend to present more abstract concepts and theories. The French are theorists by nature and are known for their creative concepts in all forms of art and literature.
- Latin Americans sometimes leave out negative information, and potential problems may not be reported and discussed.
- Indian report writers prefer to follow the conventional structure and offer the expected quantity of details, but when guided by the psychology of the reader, Indians modify the form suitably.

WRITING REPORTS

A report presents facts, conclusions, and recommendations in simple and clear words and in a logical and well-defined structure. The elements (parts) of a full report, in the order of their sequence in a long, formal report are:

- Cover
- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Discussion/description
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Appendix
- List of references
- Bibliography
- Glossary
- Index

The first five elements (cover, title page, acknowledgements, table of contents, and executive summary) constitute the front matter; the next four elements (introduction, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations) form the main body; and the last five elements (appendix, list of references, bibliography, glossary, and index) constitute the back matter.

> Business executives are usually short of time and are, therefore, more interested in knowing the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Structure of a Report

In the *normal arrangement*, the conclusions and recommendations are positioned after the discussion. However, this is not the case in the *alternative arrangement* of a report. Business executives are usually short of time and are, therefore, more interested in knowing the conclusions and recommendations of the study. A detailed description of the discussion may, therefore, appear after the conclusions and recommendations in the alternative arrangement.

Summary Introduction	Non-technical
Conclusions Recommendations	Partly technical
Discussion Appendix	Fully technical

Exhibit 13.4
Order of Elements in a Formal Business Report

Basic Parts of a Report	*Subsidiary Parts of a Report*
Executive summary	Cover
Introduction	Title page
Discussion	Table of contents
Recommendations	Bibliography/references
Appendix	Glossary

Exhibit 13.5
Parts of a Formal Report

The order of elements in a formal business report may be as given in Exhibit 13.4. The researcher should also keep in mind the non-technical background of his or her readers and demarcate certain parts differently as shown in Exhibit 13.4.

Basic and Subsidiary Parts of a Report

The basic and subsidiary parts of a report are delineated in Exhibit 13.5.

Some subsidiary elements—the table of contents, the bibliography and references, and the glossary—are used only in long, formal reports. The cover and title page in short reports are replaced with the heading and other similar devices.

SHORT MANAGEMENT REPORTS

4

Learn how to write both long and short formal reports in a clear, objective style, using the appropriate layout.

A short report is usually written either in the form of memorandum (memo) or a letter. Usually, reports meant for persons outside the company or clients are written in letter form. The short report:

- Uses the title page or just the report's title as the heading or subject.
- Is usually in direct order, beginning with a summary or a statement summarizing the content.
- Presents findings, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.

Memos

Memos are used as internal messages in companies. They are informal and need very little introductory or background information. Their goal is to address and solve an internal problem. An example of a memorandum is given in Exhibit 13.6.

Letters

Letters are usually written to deal with smaller problems and are organized in an indirect order. They usually end on a note of goodwill. An example of a letter report is given in Exhibit 13.7.

Exhibit 13.6
A Memorandum as a Short Report

MEMORANDUM

To: All departments
From: Debasish Roy, HR
Date: 19 August, 2010
Ref: MR/ 02/ 06
Subject: **Pest-Control Problems**

On 17 August 2010, I inspected the company office as part of my routine monthly inspection. The inspection concentrated on two main aspects—hygiene and maintenance issues in the office.

1. **Hygiene:** Standards of hygiene in the office need to be improved. Cleanliness and pest-control are becoming difficult issues because:
   - Despite the fact that employees are allowed to carry only beverages to their desks, we constantly find food particles in the carpeted area. This attracts a lot of pests.
   - Food left over after team get-togethers is frequently stored in the fridge and left there for days.
   - Used coffee mugs and glasses left on desks and spilled sugar near the coffee machine attract ants.
2. **Maintenance Issues:** A little involvement on the part of employees can go a long way in helping reduce waste.
   - Lights are not switched off as employees leave the office for the day.
   - The printer is often overloaded because of multiple-page printouts. This also delays other peoples' work. There is also a lot of wasted paper around the printer.

Recommendations

1. Employees are requested to avoid carrying food to their desks. Used coffee mugs and glasses should be returned to the pantry at the end of the day. Food stored in the fridge should be consumed in a day, and the maintenance team should be informed if coffee/ sugar is spilled.
2. Employees are requested to switch off their cabin lights at the end of the day. To help save electricity, computer monitors can be switched off when not in use. Employees should not print more that 30 pages at a time using the common printer. Further, everyone is requested to take two-sided printouts if possible.

LONG FORMAL REPORTS

Some of the elements of a long formal report are discussed in detail in this section.

The Title Page

The title page includes the following:

- The heading (title of the report), which should be short, clear, and unambiguous
- The name and affiliation of the author(s)
- The department and date of issue

An example of a title page is given in Exhibit 13.8.

Acknowledgements

The writer of the report should thank everyone associated with the assignment and preparation of the report. He or she should be generous in expressing gratitude. An example is:

I thank my organization, PPL Feedback Packaging Limited, for giving me the opportunity to conduct this research project. A special word of thanks to

Exhibit 13.7
A Letter as a Short Report

Report on the Fall in Profits at *Mom and You*, Noida

30 August 2009

Terms of Reference

At the request of the General Manager, *Mom and You*, in his letter of 16 July 2009 (ref PO/ST/24/03), I was instructed to:

1. Investigate the reasons for the fall in profits at *Mom and You*, Noida, during the period 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2009.
2. Suggest corrective steps in light of the findings.

Procedure

1. The sales records for the period 1 January 2009 to 30 June 2009 were inspected and compared with those for the second half of 2008.
2. Two hundred customers were interviewed over seven days (2nd to 8th August).
3. The shop and its vicinity were carefully inspected.
4. The store manager, sales assistants and cashiers were interviewed.
5. Recent developments in Noida and the surrounding area were observed.

Findings

1. A study of the sales records show that profits fell from a monthly average of 8% in the second half of 2008 to an average of 6% in the first 6 months of 2009.
2. The factors responsible for the fall in profits can be divided into internal and external factors.

A. Internal

1. A new manager, Mr N.M. Shah, joined *Mom and You* in late 2008. Soon after joining, he went through a prolonged period of illness, which has clearly affected his efficiency in dealing with a new store.
2. Two of the sales assistants —Arun Sharma and Prem Kumar—have been uninvolved in their dealings with customers. A majority of the customers interviewed complained of their brusqueness and unhelpful attitude.
3. The cashier appointed between December and April to replace the previous cashier is inexperienced. The regional manager found that accounts books have not been maintained systematically, and there are gaps in some areas.

B. External

1. The prolonged construction of a flyover in Noida has affected the area. Customers prefer to avoid the dust and the traffic in this area and go to the new market that has opened in Sector 43.
2. The opening of Mother's Angels in GP Mall has diverted some of the customers. The new mall has a big food court, multiplex and parking space, and this seems to have attracted some loyal customers.

Conclusions

1. The decline in profits is because of external developments—competition from a children's store in the new mall and restricted access to the store because of ongoing construction activities.
2. The performance of the manager, along with the inexperience of the cashier and the discourtesy of some of the staff, is a factor that cannot be ignored.

Recommendations

1. Mr Shah should be consulted to help raise his efficiency and to provide him any support that may help him resolve his health issues. His performance should be reviewed again after six months.
2. Arun and Prem should be warned about their behaviour.
3. The cashier should be provided training.
4. The store and its offers should be given coverage in local newspapers. Special offers and children's activities should be organized to promote the store and increase footfall.
5. The viability of the store be reviewed in December 2009.

P. Misra
Regional Sales Manager
M&Y Group of Stores

Exhibit 13.8
Example of a Title Page

Identification of Market Potential and Entry Strategy for Consumer Paper Bags

Submitted to
Mr Suresh Kumar
Director and Chief Executive

By
Anil Gupta
Marketing Manager

PPL Feedback Packaging Ltd
Thane, Maharashtra
September 29, 2003

Mr Suresh Kumar (Director & Chief Executive), Mr Nitin Khanna (DGM), and the executives of PPL Feedback Packaging Limited for giving me the necessary guidance and help.

I also thank all the respondents of the survey, who gave me valuable information to carry out the study.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleagues in the marketing department, whose inputs were invaluable to the research.

Cover Letter

The cover letter is usually written by top management or project guides as a preface or foreword to a report, reflecting the management's policy and interpretation of the report's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It introduces the report and tells readers why it is being sent to them. The cover letter is usually placed between the cover and the title page. It is never bound inside the report. It can be written in the form of a memo, a letter, or a forwarding certificate.

Letter of Transmittal

Many times, a formal report is accompanied by a letter to outside readers. Although the letter of transmittal is usually placed after the title page, it functions as a greeting to the reader. The letter summarizes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations and gives an idea of what is in the report. It is best written in a direct, conversational manner.

1. It begins by directly talking about the subject of the report. For example:

   Dear Ms Singh,

   Here is the report you requested on August 20 regarding a plot of land for your proposed playschool in Greater Noida.

2. It then gives a brief review of the contents of the report.
3. It acknowledges the contribution of others to the study, if any.
4. The letter ends by thanking the person or body who authorized the report and expressing hope for future interaction. This letter should be written in the personal style of a business letter—that is, using personal pronouns, first person, and active voice. The tone should reflect sincerity. Nowadays, a cover letter is generally preferred to a letter of transmittal.

Table of Contents

Long reports must have a table of contents placed after the acknowledgements and before the executive summary. The table of contents is an important element in a long, formal report as it identifies the topics and their page numbers in the report (or any long document). The table of contents also indicates the hierarchy of topics and their sequence and mentions the main sections of the report exactly as they are worded in the text. An example is given in Exhibit 13.9.

The table of contents indicates the hierarchy of topics and their sequence.

Exhibit 13.9
Sample Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5

Know how to write abstracts and summaries, introductions, final recommendations, and conclusions.

Abstract and Executive Summary

An abstract or executive summary comes immediately after the list of tables in the table of contents or on/after the title page itself. Normally, a report has either an abstract or an executive summary, based on the length of the report and expectations of readers. A company practice may be to have both an abstract and an executive summary with long reports.

A summary:

- Should give the context of the report
- Should provide the most important findings, conclusions, and recommendations
- Should act as a time-saver for busy management executives

Usually, management reports use executive summaries instead of abstracts. An *abstract* is a summary of a report's most important points. It can be either descriptive or informative and is generally written in about 200 words and in one paragraph. An *executive summary* gives a more detailed overview of a report than an abstract does. It can run into one or two pages. It presents the reader with a preview of the report's findings, conclusions, recommendations, and impact on the company. Management executives sometimes need to know just the main contents of a report, specially its conclusions and recommendations, and a detailed synopsis in the form of an executive summary serves this purpose.

Descriptive Abstract

A *descriptive abstract* only mentions the topics discussed in the report. It does not give details on these topics. Busy executives have little patience with such a skeletal account of a report's important conclusions and recommendations.

A *descriptive abstract* only mentions the topics discussed in the report. It does not give details on those topics. For details, the reader has to go through the report. Busy executives have little patience with such a skeletal account of a report's important conclusions and recommendations. Therefore, descriptive abstracts are less popular with writers of business reports. For example, consider a descriptive abstract of the report "Identification of market potential and entry strategy for consumer paper bags". It would be as follows:

> The study finds that the market potential for paper bags is not picking up due to the price of paper bags when compared to polybags. It is recommended that the company PPL Feedback supply paper bags at a lesser cost to compete with polybags.

Informative Abstract

An *informative abstract* discusses the main subject and presents conclusions and recommendations.

An *informative abstract* discusses the main subject and presents conclusions and recommendations. Formal reports and scientific and technical articles often use an informative abstract. An informative abstract for the report "Identification of market potential and entry strategy for consumer paper bags" would read as follows:

> This report explores new ways to expand the company's (PPL Feedback and Packaging Limited) business, from industrial bags to consumer bags, to meet its growth targets.
>
> The objective of the study was to study the market potential of consumer paper bags for rice and to identify entry strategies for the company. It was found that the market potential for paper bags for rice is about 27 million bags per annum at present; there is an interested segment whose requirement is 27 million bags. The recommendation is that PPL Feedback should price paper bags lower than polybags.

This abstract provides more details of the report's contents than the descriptive abstract.

Executive Summary

An executive summary covers all the major elements of a report's content:

- Background of the problem
- Major topics
- Important details
- Main conclusions
- Recommendations
- Discussion of how implementation of the recommendations would affect the company.

An executive summary of the PPL report is shown in Exhibit 13.10.

Exhibit 13.10
Executive Summary of the PPL Report

Stiff environmental regulations have brought up new concerns in packaging. These concerns include hygiene, safety, disposability, and recyclability in a developed world. Paper, being eco-friendly and having a premium image, has replaced other packaging materials such as tin, plastics, and so on for packaging goods for export.

The export market is highly volatile and so is the demand for packaging material. Last year, that is, in 2009, exports were low in the first half of the year as compared to the second half. Also, in segments like carbon black where paper packaging is used, the demand is almost saturated.

Considering these factors, the company (PPL Feedback and Packaging Ltd) is exploring new ways to expand business from industrial bags to consumer bags to meet its growth targets. The more lucrative segments are shopping bags and consumer bags for rice, for which there is a steady demand.

The aim of this research was to study the market potential of shopping bags and consumer paper bags for rice to identify entry strategies for the company. To calculate the market potential, the consumer sample survey method, explained in Chapter IV, was adopted. Chapters I and II provide details about the existing business of the company. Chapter III provides details about the significance of the study for the company, the research objectives, the scope of the study, and data sources. Chapter V explains the design and methodology of the study. To estimate the market potential, the questionnaire approach was followed and the respondents were interviewed personally for relevant details about paper bags. Chapter VI provides details of the results and conclusions reached by the study. The market potential for paper bags for rice is about 27 million bags per annum at present. There is an interested segment whose requirement is also for 27 million bags. The main factor working against the popularity of paper bags is their price in comparison to polybags. However, PPL can supply bags at a lower cost as it has an existent idle capacity to manufacture bags and its machines are fully depreciated. The consumer paper shopping bags market has a potential of about 32.4 million bags per annum at present. If the company invests in mechanized operations at this stage, then the operations may not be profitable for the company in the short run as per the break-even capacity utilization for the machine (discussed on page 35). The operations, however, may be viable in the long run.

This study was for the corporate retail segment only; there is another segment of individuals and retail showrooms who also use paper bags. At the time of market testing for corporate retail segments, the company could also study this segment under the set conditions of product mix explained in Chapter VI, to calculate the size of the market for retail showrooms. At the time of test marketing, which is essential for entry-strategy finalization, the company should test the various possibilities identified in the marketing mix and specifications for the final product launch, which are explained in Chapter VI.

Introduction

The introduction of this executive summary states the details of the:

- Authorizing person or body requesting the report
- Author or group of authors responsible for investigation (and submission of the report)
- Purpose or reason for the report

Exhibit 13.10
(Contd.)

- Methods of enquiry (the research method used)
- Arrangement or grouping of data
- General background of the report's subject

Findings
The findings present the results of the investigation.

Conclusions
The conclusions of the executive summary:
- States the results of the investigation
- Offers answers to questions raised in the beginning of the report.
- Contains no new information

Recommendations
The recommendations of the executive summary:
- Are the action centre of the report
- State how the conclusions should be acted upon.
- Make clear and definite suggestions/proposals.
- Mention the need for further investigation as a condition for a more comprehensive study of the problem if required.

It is not possible to have a report without recommendations, even if recommendations were not specifically requested when the report was assigned. Recommendations flow from conclusions, as conclusions flow from the discussion.

Recommendations flow from conclusions, as conclusions flow from the discussion.

Discussion and Analysis of Findings

This is the main body of the report. It discusses findings and analyses results. The information is developed in one of the ways discussed here.

Chronological Development

The information can be arranged in the order in which the events happened. This is the simplest method of presenting information—as a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Chronological development requires relatively little planning and organizing. The writer selects and arranges the major topics in the order of their occurrence. Non-significant events are left out.

Chronological development requires relatively little planning and organizing.

This method is usually used for writing short reports, progress reports describing the status of a project, and investigative reports that discuss investigations conducted over a long time and at different places.

By discussing each event step by step, the cumulative effect of a variable (factor/thing) can be seen through the conclusions drawn at suitable intervals. The organization of information is easy to determine, as the report writer is guided by the order in which events actually took place.

Subject-wise Development

The information can also be arranged according to the subjects or topics discussed within the report. The subjects are grouped in a predetermined order. This arrangement makes the presentation of information coherent and logical.

When a report involves the study of two or more variables acting upon something, the writer has to arrange the discussion by subject. The writer could describe the effect of one variable on the subject and then proceed in chronological order to determine the cumulative effect of the variable on the subject. Then, in a similar manner he or she would study and describe the effects of the other variable, and record chronologically its cumulative effect.

The question that then concerns the writer is regarding the sequence in which each variable should be discussed if there are several variables of equal importance. The writer has to choose the sequence according to the variable he or she wants to recommend or emphasize. The report can move in increasing order of suitability or move from the most suitable to the least suitable. Before structuring the information, the writer should make the order clearly known by stating whether ascending or descending order is being followed.

Suppose an automobile dealer wants to recommend the most suitable model of luxury car to an executive. He or she will follow the descending order. After evaluating the price, fuel consumption, speed, automation, seating capacity, space, and after-sales guarantees for different models of luxury cars, the dealer would then recommend the model most suitable for the customer. In this case, the dealer has, in fact, made a comparative study of the essential parameters that determine a buyer's choice of a car and presented the information accordingly.

Concept-wise Development

The information can be organized "concept-wise". This means that the writer develops his or her argument and reasoning on the lines of his or her thoughts.

A report writer can arrange the report by following the logical sequence of the investigation. The writer can develop the topic by describing each step in sequence with the step that follows it, in a series of steps that builds up his or her argument. The logic of the argument guides the organization of the report. Each part or stage of the project is seen as part of a well-linked procession of ideas forming a complete concept.

> The logic of the argument guides the organization of the report. Each part or stage of the project is seen as part of a well-linked procession of ideas forming a complete concept.

In the concept-wise method, the writer tells the reader how he or she arrived at the results and why they are valid. This method should be employed when the topic is complex and reasoning and careful consideration are required to explain the various concepts used in reaching the conclusion. When the best result can be selected by a simple and direct analysis, for instance the choice of a car or a site for a new house, subject-wise development would be more appropriate than concept-wise development. Whatever the method of developing the main argument, the report should be logically organized and the narration interesting and convincing.

Glossary

The glossary is the list of technical or special terms used in a report or technical paper and is placed at the end of a report, before the index. It alphabetically lists words or phrases that need special attention. It explains the usage of technical terms peculiar to the industry. A glossary of usage includes rules for forming compound words, abbreviating technical terms, and writing unusual or difficult words. A glossary also acts as a dictionary for some select words that are often confused, misused, or wrongly spelled. These are:

> A glossary of usage includes rules for forming compound words, abbreviating technical terms, and writing unusual or difficult words.

- Words that are often confused because they are similar in meaning or spelling; examples are *diplex* and *duplex*, *ground floor* and *first floor*, *postpone* and *cancel*, or *imply* and *infer*.
- Common errors of usage such as *many a times* (should be *many a time*), *one of the best option* (in place of *one of the best options*), *comprised of* (for *comprises*).
- Words that tend to be wrongly spelled; examples are *agism* (correct spelling is *ageism*), *accomodation* (instead of *accommodation*), *seprate* (should be *separate*).
- Words having more than one acceptable spelling, such as *program* and *programme*. In case of words like *symposiums* and *symposia* where both versions are in use, both are given in the glossary and a choice is indicated for one of them.

In scientific, philosophical, and general use, *data* generally means a number of items and is thus regarded as plural, with datum as the singular.

- Words like *data*, which is often wrongly used as singular or as *datas* for the plural, are specially entered in the glossary and their usage is fully explained. *Data* is plural (but is also treated as singular, although the singular form is *datum*). In scientific, philosophical, and general use, *data* generally means a number of items and is thus regarded as plural, with *datum* as the singular. But in computing and related subjects, it is taken to denote a mass or collective noun and is therefore used with words like *this*, *that*, and *much* and with singular verbs (for example, "useful data has been gathered"). The glossary, like the *Oxford English Dictionary*, will draw our attention to the meaning as well as usage of the word *data* and point out that although some people consider the use of *data* with a singular verb incorrect, it is now in common use. It will also point out that *data* is not a singular countable noun and should not be preceded by words such as *a*, *every*, *each*, *either*, or *neither* or be given the plural form *datas*.

Appendix

The *appendix* is used to give a variety of information separately when its inclusion in the main body could interfere with the smooth reading of the report. It usually includes the text of questionnaires or other instruments of survey. Tables, flow charts, maps, summaries of raw data, and details of mathematical formulation are generally included in the appendix. Each appendix is numerically or alphabetically labelled to help the reader identify the material. Sometimes a descriptive title is given. The word "annexure" is sometimes used for the appendix.

The appendix may also include the distribution list. When a report is sent to several persons, it will contain a list of all the persons who receive a copy. The distribution list is placed according to its size or the customer's or company's practice. However, it seems proper to place it as a separate appendix if the list happens to be long. A short distribution list can appear at the foot of the table of contents.

Bibliography and References

All published and unpublished sources of information used in preparing the report are listed in the bibliography. All reference documents, previous reports, books, periodicals, and even letters written and received by the writer are mentioned in it. In using written material from secondary sources, report writers must always mention the source of the information by citing it as a footnote or endnote. Failing to document sources amounts to plagiarism.

Rules for bibliographies vary. In a report, the bibliography should conform to the style of documentation followed by the concerned company, just as a technical article or paper conforms to the form followed by the journal or society that is publishing the material. Though each organization usually has its own standard format of documenting sources, the general system followed is either that of the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the American Psychological Association (APA).

Documentation of cross-references should be done in a way that does not disturb the flow of the argument. The writer can provide references in footnotes at the end of each relevant page or can describe all references together in endnotes, which is the list of all references at the end of the report. In both cases, the reader can find all the details about sources mentioned in the report and can check the accuracy of facts by consulting the original sources. Endnotes are usually preferred as they are easy to refer to when desired. Also, footnotes create the problem of spacing the material on the page.

It is to be noted that each reference to be cited in the endnotes is numbered consecutively as 1, 2, 3, and so on. Each reference should have the same number when mentioned in the body of the discussion. The various styles for documenting the sources are discussed in greater detail in Appendix 1.

Index

An index (plural *indexes* or *indices*) is an alphabetical list of subjects, names, and so on, with references to page numbers where they occur in the report or book. It is usually placed at the end. It should not be confused with the table of contents, which always appears at the beginning of the report or book.

In long reports and voluminous works, an index helps the reader locate a subject easily wherever it has been mentioned or discussed in the text. For example, "Order refusals 115" entered in a report's index means one can find order refusals mentioned on page 115. In a book's index, the entry "Research questions 34 a — 675" means that the topic of research questions is discussed on page 675 under section 34 a.

Normally an author's note about the symbols used in indexing subjects appears at the beginning of index entries, which helps the reader follow the way entries are made. For more information, see Lynn Quitman Troyka's note on indexing in the *Handbook of Writers*.[2]

USING DIAGRAMS AND VISUAL AIDS IN REPORTS

Report writers use tables and graphics such as bar charts, line charts, and pictograms to explain ideas briefly and vividly. Diagrams, like all visual aids, communicate information clearly and effectively. For example, written instructions supported by illustrations to show how an eye-drop should be opened and applied would be far more effective than plain instructions in words alone.

Diagrams, like all visual aids, communicate information clearly and effectively.

Use of Tables

A table presents numerical or topical data in rows and columns. A report writer should know some of the techniques of preparing tables for clear presentation of content. The most important technique is to label each table in a manner that allows the reader to locate the desired table easily. Some tips are given here:

1. *Numbering all tables*: The writer should number all the tables in the report consecutively by calling them "Table 1", "Table 2", "Table 3", and so on. When referring to them, one can simply say, "as shown in Table 1, …" or "… in the following table". This makes cross-references simple and clear. The table number should be written at the top of the table.
2. *Labelling each table*: There should be a complete heading or title for each table that clearly describes the contents of the table for the reader. As headings, the table titles can be long as long as they completely describe the table's contents. The title can even run into two lines. It may mention sources of data, numbers included in the figures in the table, and the subject of the table. An example is: "Segmentation of market (5–20 kg) based on the usage of bags in the total market of 3,150 million". For emphasis, the title of the table can be written in bold letters.
3. *Column heads and sub-heads:* Column heads and sub-heads should be used to classify information when several columns are given. For example, if the column head is "Cities" and the column lists several cities, they may be segregated by sub-heads that classify the cities under various zones, such as "North", "South", and so on.
4. *Rows:* Similarly, the subject of each row should be indicated by identifying its contents. For example, in a column that lists various sectors of the economy, the subject of the row should be identified as "Economic Sector".
5. *Footnotes:* Footnotes are used to explain or qualify specific entries, if required.
6. There should be sufficient space between columns so that the data remain well separated.

Exhibit 13.11 is an example of a table with various parts labeled; it illustrates the layout, title placement, and headings for the vertical columns and horizontal rows effectively. Notice that if the table is taken exactly from some other source, the source must be mentioned.

Exhibit 13.11
A Sample Table

Table 1 Choke Points: Highest Pollutant Levels in Various Parts of Delhi on Diwali Day (2003)

Index

Column Heads

Row subject

Parameters	***Location***	***Permissible Levels (mg/m³)***	***Actual Levels (mg/m³)***
SPM	Meera Bagh	100	2,292
Respirable SPM	Meera Bagh	200	4,772
Carbon monoxide	Karawal Nagar	100	8,000
Sulphur dioxide	Vasant Kunj	80	201
Nitrogen dioxide	Meera Bagh	80	174.8

Source details ← *Source:* Delhi Pollution Control Committee

Notes ← Note: The data was collected at 11 p.m.

6

Understand the role and use of graphics in reports.

Use of Graphics in Reports

In reports, the following forms of graphics are commonly used:

- Bar charts
- Line charts
- Pie charts
- Pictograms
- Actual pictures
- Maps

These graphics are also used in oral presentations of reports. The writer or presenter of the report considers how the use of graphics helps in grasping the information conveyed through words. Sometimes, reports use graphics as a source of embellishment that makes the presentation colourful.

Bar Charts

A bar chart can be simple or complex. A simple bar chart is used to compare quantities that can be depicted on a scale. A bar chart can be broken up when the quantities are too large to be covered by the chart. In such a case, the chart is broken up to show that some quantities are not shown in the diagram.

A simple bar chart is most effective for comparing quantitative data. The layout for vertical bars is shown in Exhibit 13.12. The lengths of the bars, whether they are horizontal or vertical, show quantity. The quantitative scale should always begin at zero. The graduation space must be equal. Also, the width of the bars should be equal. Different colours, shadings, variations, and cross-hatchings are usually used to bring out differences in bars.

Segmented Bar Charts (Component Bar Charts)

Sometimes bar charts represent more than one item. They include several components, which are depicted by segmenting the bars into different parts shown in different colours

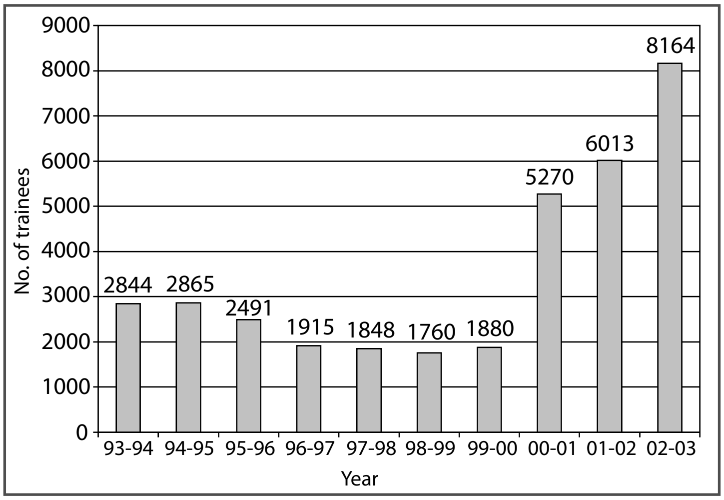


Exhibit 13.12
Growth in the Number of Trainees at NPTI Faridabad (1993)

or cross-hatchings. The labels to identify different parts can be given separately in the legend if there is inadequate space along the bars. The *segmented bar chart* is also known as the *component bar chart* or *subdivided bar chart*. For example, consider the segmented bar chart in Exhibit 13.13, which presents the creation of thousands of jobs in the Indian IT sector since 2000; the fastest growth is in call-centres, not software.

When negative quantities also are included in the data, zero can be placed at the mid-point on the scale and not at the beginning. By doing so, one can present both positive and negative bars.

Line Charts

Line charts are useful for showing changes in quantitative data spread over some time. Line charts also help in projecting trends (Exhibit 13.14).

Some guidelines for constructing line charts are:

1. Use the vertical axis to represent amount and the horizontal axis for time.
2. Begin the vertical axis at zero and divide the scale according to the size of the amount to be shown on it.

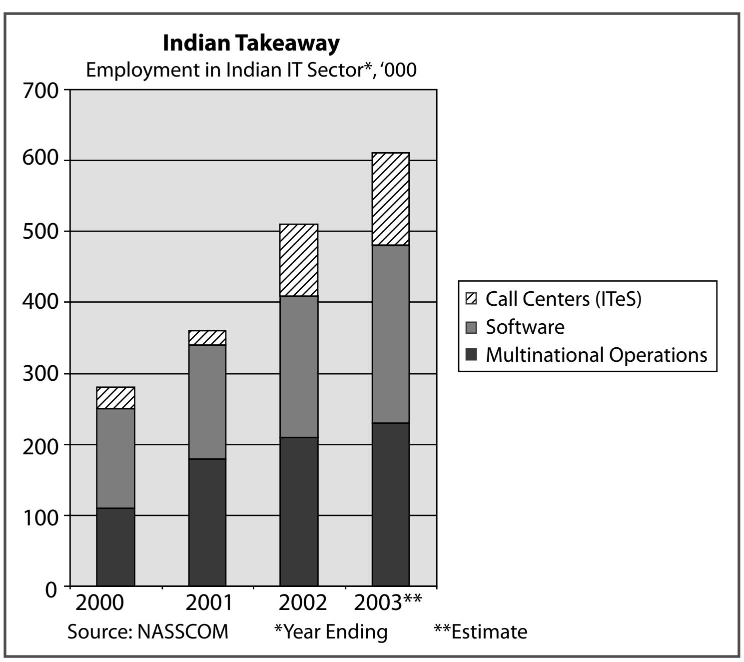
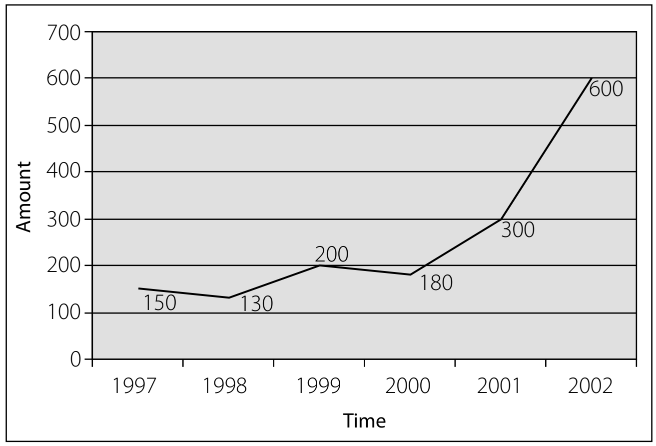


Exhibit 13.13
A Segmented Bar Chart

Exhibit 13.14
An Example of a Line Chart



3. Make both vertical and horizontal gradations equal. That is, all spaces on the amount (vertical) axis should be the same, and all time scales should be the same. But it is not necessary that the time space and amount divisions be equal.
4. Use proper proportions in the sizes of the vertical and horizontal measures so that the lines drawn are marked by natural slopes (see the line chart in Exhibit 13.14).

Pie Charts

A *pie chart* presents a whole that is divided into various parts.

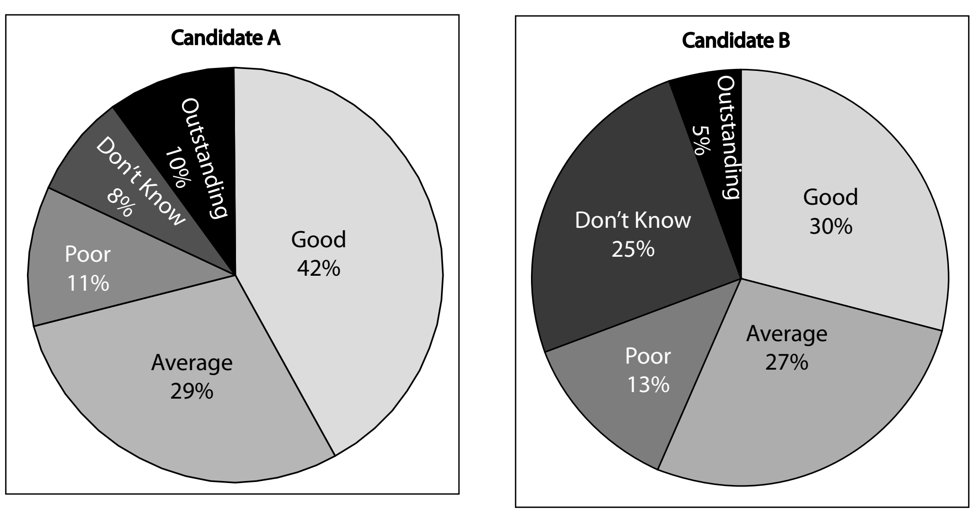
A *pie chart* presents a whole that is divided into various parts. The pie represents the whole, and its segments represent parts of the whole. A pie chart is used to show the relationship among parts only when there are more than two parts forming the whole. If only two parts are to be described, their relationship can be simply stated in the report. A pie chart should have three or more segments. The pie is cut clockwise, beginning with the largest part on the right side, with other parts following (clockwise). It is not necessary to cut the parts in descending order of size. The size of the pie chart should be large enough for its segments to have labels and unit values clearly written on them. Different colours are often used to emphasize and contrast the relationships among the parts. Exhibit 13.15 represents the popularities of two candidates for the position of prime minister.

Histograms

A *histogram* is a graph of frequency distribution.

A *histogram* is a graph of frequency distribution. A histogram consists of a series of rectangles, each of which is proportional in width to the range of values within a class and proportional in height to the number of items covered by the class, that is, the frequency. If the class size is the same, then each rectangle will be of the same width.

Exhibit 13.15
Examples of Pie Charts



Marks	*Students*
0–10	15
10–20	25
20–30	35
30–40	40
40–50	55
50–60	60
60–70	50
70–80	25
80–90	10
90–100	5

Exhibit 13.16 (a)
The Data for the Histogram

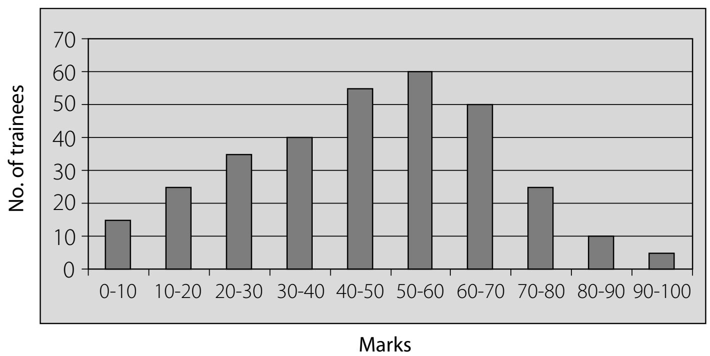


Exhibit 13.16 (b)
The Histogram

When drawing a histogram, the variable is always shown on the x-axis and the frequency is determined on the y-axis. A histogram consists of a series of adjacent rectangles, each having a class-interval distance as its width and the frequency distance as its height. The area of the histogram represents the total frequency distribution across the classes.

It is important to understand that a histogram is not just a bar diagram. In a bar diagram, only the length of the bar matters, not its width. But in a histogram both the length and the width are important. The histogram in Exhibit 13.16(b) shows the marks distribution of 320 students.

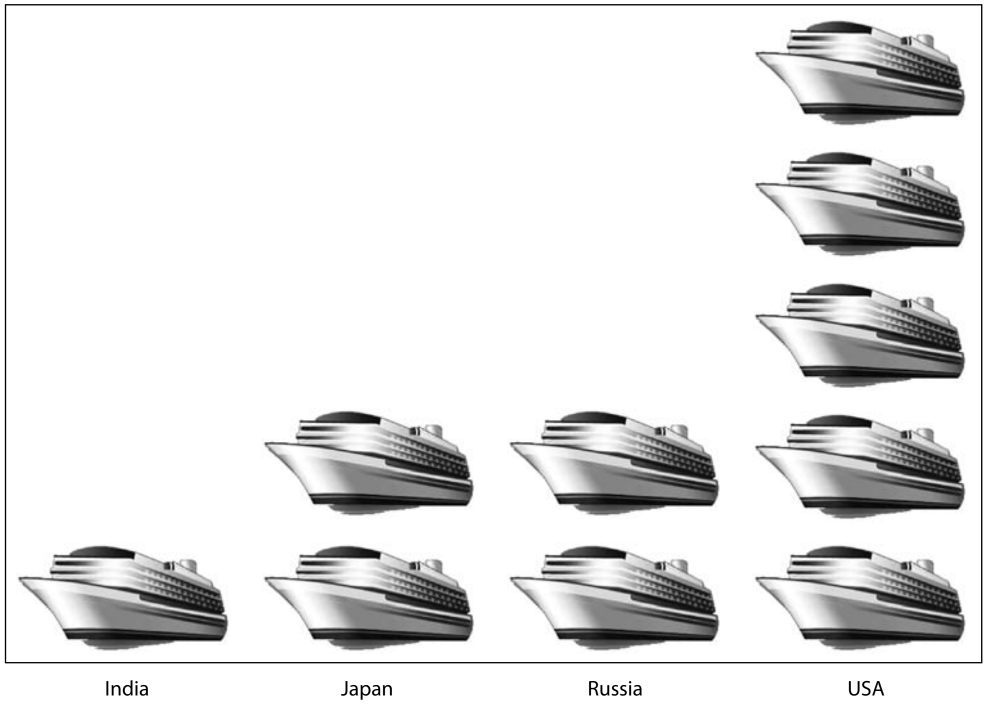
Pictograms

Pictograms illustrate numerical relationships by using pictures to represent quantities. In a pictogram, figures of the same size should be used to represent amounts and relationships clearly. For example, assume that the merchant tonnage of four different countries, say the United States, Russia, Japan, and India, needs to be pictorially represented. A picture of a ship can be used to symbolize merchant tonnage, with the value of say 1,000,000 tons assigned to each ship. Accordingly, this will depict the differences in tonnage using different numbers of ships in relation to different countries. For example, if the merchant tonnage of the United States is four times greater than that of India's, one can illustrate the numerical relationship between India's and the United States' tonnage by vertically placing four ships for the United States and one ship for India. Similarly, suppose Japan's and Russia's amounts are double India's, then one would use two ships each for both countries, and one ship for India. The increased amount is not shown by changing the height and width of the ship in the picture, as this would be misleading. The pictures are placed along the y-axis and the names of the countries are on the x-axis (Exhibit 13.17).

How to Use Figures and Diagrams in Reports

Figures and diagrams can be used in the text of the report if they are not very large. If they can be accommodated on a page within the running text without breaking the continuity

Exhibit 13.17
A Pictogram



of the text, they should be kept as part of the text. Otherwise, tables, charts, and other diagrammatic representations should be placed in an appendix. Each figure should be serially numbered throughout the report. First the data should be introduced, then the diagram should be explained, and finally, the reader's attention should be drawn to the diagram itself by specifying the figure number and the appendix number if needed.

SUMMARY

- The report is a distinct form of written communication involving investigation, analysis, and presentation to give its receiver the required information. There are various methods of enquiry, data collection, and analysis of information that the report writer should make use of.
- The terms of reference guide the report writer. They delineate the problem, purpose, scope, limitations, budget, cultural considerations, and deadline for the report when it is authorized.
- Planning and organizing information by outlining before writing helps in writing a clear and logically arranged report.
- A report writer should know the essential elements of reports and their normal or alternative sequences in different types of reports (short informal reports and long formal reports).
- There are several types of visual aids that a report writer can use; examples include tables, bar charts, pie charts, pictograms, and histograms.

CASE: SURVEY REPORT FOR INDIA REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE OF HRC BUSINESS SCHOOL, FRANCE

Objective

This project aimed at studying the interest of students in studying abroad. This primary survey was conducted for 200 respondents of different age groups and backgrounds. The survey involved some multiple-choice and open-ended questions, which were carefully interpreted and analysed. The personal and contact details of the students surveyed have also been maintained in a database for future reference. More specifically, the project had the following objectives:

1. To understand what potential candidates look for when applying to a university abroad.
2. To understand their country preferences.
3. To find the range of expenses they are prepared to pay for studying abroad.

Data Collection

The data have been collected through both primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been obtained through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire takes into account all the relevant variables required for research so that meaningful analysis could be computed at the end of the survey. Secondary sources of data, like the Internet and various books, were used for exploratory studies.

Results of the Primary Survey

1. According to our survey, 47% of students think that studying abroad is a better option than studying in India.
2. Results also revealed that the majority of the students would prefer to go to the United States—46 students chose the United States, 40 students preferred the United Kingdom, 30 students preferred Australia, and 4 students chose France.
3. There were very few students willing to spend INR 10,00,000 to 12,00,000 each year to study abroad. Most of them were comfortable spending around INR 5,00,000 a year.
4. From this survey, it seems a lot more would need to be done in terms of marketing and promotion for HRC Business School, France, as there was a lack of awareness among students.

Results of the Secondary Survey

1. According to the secondary survey, 1,53,000 students go abroad every year from India—the second largest group of international students in the world after China.
2. In 2007, 970 students went to France to study; in 2008, the number increased to 1,757.
3. The French government provides specific scholarships for Indian students, like the Eiffel scholarships sponsored by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are also scholarships co-financed by French companies or institutions. These scholarships are attracting many Indian students.
4. Indian students are highly cognizant of the fact that they need to learn French and studying in France gives students the opportunity to learn the language and add to their overall professional profile.

Challenges Ahead

Marketing and promotion barriers:

- Awareness of French universities is very low among Indian students, so very few students want to go to France for higher studies.
- Increasing awareness of HRC Business School is also a major challenge; only 4% of students were aware of HRC Business School in our survey.

Expense barriers:

- Indian students perceive that doing one-year, full-time MBA abroad would cost more than doing it from India.
- Indian students perceive that France is a more expensive place to live in.

Solutions

- Increasing awareness of HRC Business School among students.
- Promoting French education as world-class education.
- Taking part in various education fares for increased visibility.
- Forging good relations with our strategic partners for wider reach.
- Making strategic relationships with some financial institutions for loan facilities.

Questions to Answer

1. Give a very brief overview of this report.
2. Mention the reasons for taking up the survey.
3. Sum up the conclusions you draw from the report and give your recommendations.
4. Does the report contain all the necessary parts that help a reader understand it easily? Suggest the missing parts, if any.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Mention the points you would need to know if someone asked you to write a report and not an essay.
2. State the purpose and place (sequence) of the following elements in a report:
   - Summary
   - Introduction
   - Appendices
   - Table of contents
   - Recommendations
3. What part(s) of a report are most important to a business executive?
4. List the basic parts of a short formal management report in their preferred sequence.
5. Discuss the points covered by the introduction of a report.
6. Discuss the significance of graphics and diagrammatic representations in a report. Illustrate your answer with some examples.
7. Identify the elements of a long formal report.
8. Discuss the importance of planning and outlining in writing a formal report.
9. Define and discuss a report as a specially assigned task.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What is the difference between formal and informal reports?
2. Discuss the chief characteristics of a good business report.
3. Describe the difference between direct and indirect organization of a report.
4. Bring out the difference between "conclusions" and "recommendations" in a report.
5. If the basis of a report is a problem, what should be the first step necessary before moving further into the writing process?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. Prepare a title page of a report to be written by you as a management graduate at BITS Pilani on "Communication Needs of Business Management Executives". The assignment is to be submitted to the Dean, Instructions Division, BITS Pilani.
2. Write a formal report as a marketing manager to your company's vice-president of marketing on the reasons you have investigated for the sudden fall in demand for your product. You can create the details on the company, product, and location.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer.*

1. Reports present conclusions based on:
   (a) investigation (b) intuition
   (c) impression (d) belief
2. The terms of reference for producing a specific report are given by the:
   (a) writer (b) reader
   (c) organization (d) expert
3. The index forms a part of the:
   (a) front matter (b) main body
   (c) end matter (d) glossary
4. How many basic parts of a formal report are there?
   (a) Five (b) Four
   (c) Six (d) Three
5. Which of the following is not a subsidiary part of a formal report?
   (a) Table of contents (b) Appendix
   (c) Glossary (d) References
6. A cover letter is normally written by the:
   (a) report writer (b) top management
   (c) CEO (d) reader
7. The chronological development of information in the body of the report is done according to the:
   (a) choice of the writer
   (b) logical sequence of events
   (c) collection of data
   (d) order in which events occurred
8. The glossary is the list of:
   (a) subjects covered in the report
   (b) diagrams used in the report
   (c) technical terms used in the report
   (d) references
9. Business research gives information to guide:
   (a) scholars
   (b) stockholders
   (c) brokers
   (d) business decisions
10. A report can present the information in:
   (a) four ways
   (b) two ways
   (c) five ways
   (d) three ways

ENDNOTES

1. Theodore A. Sherman and Simon S. Johnson, *Modern Technical Writing* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 141.
2. Lynn Quitman Troyka, *Handbook of Writers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

14 Effective Presentations

> "In sports, you don't play a game with just one part of you, for example, your arm in tennis or hands in basketball. You play the game with your whole physical being. The same is true in presenting."
>
> —Anne Miller

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Know what a presentation is and how it differs from a lecture or a written report.
2. Learn how to design a presentation.
3. Select the proper medium of presentation and visual aids.
4. Understand the chief principles of delivering an effective presentation.
5. Know how to handle questions and give answers.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Ramesh is a first-year management student. He has to give a presentation before his class tomorrow. He is nervous. He has, until now, neither attended nor given a presentation. He has no idea whatsoever about the way a presentation is made or given. Is it like a convocation address or director's annual report at the college annual function—an oral essay to be read out? How long should it be? Is it some sort of a lecture based on questions and answers? What exactly should the presentation be given on? Ramesh's mind was full of unanswered questions. Moreover, he was unable to find a book on presentation skills. Then to make matters worse, he realized that he had to give the presentation in English. That thought made him very nervous, as he believed he was not very fluent in English. Would he be able to speak in English before the whole class and that too for about 10 minutes? He was up against two challenges: one, to prepare the presentation; the other, to give it in English. But as he had never allowed himself to be swayed by the feeling of helplessness, he finally decided to sit down and act.

He decided to write a long essay titled "What is modern management all about?" in English and read it out before the whole class He thought doing this would be better than doing nothing or telling the faculty that he did not know anything about presentations.

The next day, Ramesh went to his communications class, where he was asked to give the presentation. He walked to the dais, addressed the class, opened his essay, and read his essay clearly, loudly, and confidently. When he finished, the class applauded; however, the faculty did not say anything. Because of this, Ramesh was left wondering if he deserved all that applause!

INTRODUCTION

Today, it is necessary for students, researchers, job-seekers, and managers to know how to develop and make a presentation on a specific subject to a select audience. For instance, students may be required to deliver a presentation to gain admission to a postgraduate programme, to defend their research findings before examiners, to be shortlisted for a job opening, or to advocate a proposal. The ability to deliver a presentation effectively helps students in two ways. First, it helps in communicating information clearly and vividly. Second, it creates a good impression about the student as a speaker, scholar, or manager. The impact of a presenter is immediate. A presenter's confidence, fluency, and readiness of mind in conducting discussions and debate stand out as attributes of his or her personality.

A presentation is an oral activity that uses a visual medium (such as LCD projectors or PowerPoint slides) to discuss new ideas and information with a specific audience in a persuasive and convincing manner.

WHAT IS A PRESENTATION?

A presentation is a live mode of sharing information with a select audience. It is a form of oral communication in which a person shares factual information with a particular audience. To get a clear idea of presenting as a distinct communicative activity—different from lecturing or training—it is possible to define a presentation as an oral activity that uses a visual medium (such as LCD projectors or PowerPoint slides) to discuss new ideas and information with a specific audience in a persuasive and convincing manner.

Essential Characteristics of a Good Presentation

A good presentation has the following characteristics:

- There is a clear structure with an introduction, discussion, and conclusion.
- The presenter recognizes and matches the audience's needs, interests, and level of understanding, while discussing his or her ideas.
- Facts and figures are visually represented in tables, graphs, and charts, and different colours are used to make the presentation vivid and interesting.
- Humour and anecdotes may be employed to create a good relationship and connection with the audience.
- The presenter speaks clearly and logically and uses body language effectively.
- Questions are given serious attention and are regarded as an essential part of the presentation.

1

Know what a presentation is and how it differs from a lecture or a written report.

The Difference Between a Presentation and a Lecture

A presentation is not a lecture. Classroom lectures have well-defined educational objectives. The outcome and excellence of a lecture is measured in terms of its interactive and participative character. Effective lecturers generally encourage students to ask questions and continually put forth questions for the students to consider. The Socratic mode of teaching (the question-and-answer method) is considered highly effective. Thus, a classroom lecture is ideally a two-way communication process. But presentations are one-way, at least initially, when the audience listens, watches, and takes notes.

A classroom lecture is ideally a two-way communication process. But presentations are one-way, at least initially, when the audience listens, watches, and takes notes.

A presentation has a well-defined format. As a normal practice, the audience sits through the delivery without interrupting the presenter. It is only when the presenter completes his or her part that the audience is invited to ask questions or seek clarifications.

Another significant distinguishing feature of presentations is that the presenter acts as an advocate of the information shared with the audience. The focus is on persuading the listeners to buy the ideas that are shared. A teacher, on the other hand, is basically interested in imparting information as correctly as possible. The focus is on a clear understanding of the ideas by the students.

The Difference Between a Presentation and a Written Report

A presentation is often made on the basis of a written report. However, it is not simply an oral rendering of a written report, which usually uses formal language and has long explanations and several examples. Such features can be presented to a reader, but not a listener. In accordance with the nature of the spoken form, a presentation is delivered in everyday language, covers select information, and only gives a few examples. A presentation should use simple, concise, and clear language and be free of jargon and passive words and phrases. It should be delivered in a natural manner and be as close as possible to the rhythm and syntax of a conversation.

PREPARING A PRESENTATION

Presentations have three major elements:

- The presenter
- The audience
- The specific content and definite objective to be achieved

A trained presenter approaches a presentation with an awareness of all its elements and a fully planned strategy. He or she knows that just standing up and speaking to an audience for a given amount of time to show how much he or she knows on the topic does not imply that the presentation is good. A presentation is a particular mode of communicating with a group of people and conveying a message. It involves prior preparation and planning.

A trained presenter approaches a presentation with an awareness of all its elements and a fully planned strategy. A good presentation involves prior preparation and planning.

A presenter should undertake the following steps to prepare for the presentation:

- Identify the purpose and goal of the presentation
- Analyse the audience and their needs
- Collate the relevant information
- Design and organize the information
- Time the presentation
- Decide on the medium of presentation and visual aids
- Become familiar with the location of the presentation

Identify the Purpose of the Presentation

The presenter should ask himself or herself: *Why am I giving this presentation?* He or she may be giving the presentation to:

- Sell something or persuade people to follow a course of action that they may not be inclined towards.
- Inform people about an idea or describe a business opportunity to gain support for some course of action or to suggest a likely course of action for the future.
- Gather people's views on new plans, products, or proposals to introduce changes.
- Put across a problem to seek a solution or to minimize people's reaction to it.
- Create awareness by sharing information, without requiring any action or response.
- Motivate, educate, or impart training to promote a more productive work culture.

After identifying his or her objective, the presenter should outline it in a single sentence. For example, assume the dean of the BITS Distance Learning Programme (DLP) has to put forward a proposal to the board of governors to expand the institute's Distance Learning Programme by creating off-campus centres in Gulf cities such as Dubai or Muscat. He is required to make a presentation before the board members to justify the proposal. He knows exactly why he is giving the presentation; the purpose can be written in a single sentence that outlines the structure of his ideas: "To convince the board members of the viability and desirability of creating overseas (off-campus) learning centres in Gulf countries, in view of the growing demand for BITS courses abroad". This precise formulation of the objective will help him organize his ideas in a logical manner that will convince the board.

Before making a presentation, the presenter must know the audience he or she is going to address. The presenter should have an idea of the number, nature, needs, level of knowledge, and likely attitude of those who are going to receive the message.

Analyse the Audience and Identify Their Needs

Before making a presentation, the presenter must know the audience he or she is going to address. The presenter should have an idea of the number, nature, needs, level of knowledge, and likely attitude of those who are going to receive the message. These factors will determine the language of delivery and selection of inputs. Understanding the audience's needs will help the presenter focus the presentation on issues that would be of interest to his or her listeners. In addition, knowing about the likely attitude of the audience in advance would make the presenter feel more confident. All members of a group will not have a similar attitude and as individuals they are bound to respond differently. Also, presenters should keep in mind that different persons attending the presentation may be looking for different information based on their own interests or needs. Therefore, the presenter must define the focus and scope of the presentation at the very outset. Most importantly, the speaker must never consider the audience to be a hostile group. They may be opposed to one's ideas or message, but they are not the speaker's enemies.

Guidelines for analysing an audience include finding answers for the following questions:

- Who is the audience?
- Why are they attending the presentation? What are their needs?
- What is their background and level of knowledge, in relation to the subject of presentation?
- How many persons will there be?
- What is their attitude towards the subject and the speaker expected to be?
- What does the audience expect will be the outcome of the presentation?

The last question is the most important and needs to be clearly understood and answered. The answer to it will clarify and define the speaker's purpose. It will help the presenter understand the audience's expectations. For instance, in the presentation on creating overseas BITS DLP centres in the Gulf, the expected outcome will be: "After listening to the presentation, the board members will agree to approve, in principle, initiating overseas DLP centres and setting up a committee to work out the feasibility of opening two centres, one each in Dubai and Muscat". The presenter can visualize the audience's response as if the presentation has already happened. Positive expectations will give the speaker added confidence. In addition, if the speaker has too many ideas or too much information on the topic at hand, knowing the audience's needs and expectations will help him or her determine what information is most relevant and interesting.

The needs of the audience vary from category to category. For example, a student's content will change depending on whether he or she is making a presentation before fellow students, professors, local business people, or friends. In some cases, one would expect that the audience already has a high level of information, while in other cases, there will be little information known. The speaker should consider the audience's needs and tell them what they need to know without talking about everything.

2

Learn how to design a presentation.

Design and Organize the Information

By this point, the speaker has done two essential things to give shape to the presentation: he or she is aware of the purpose of the presentation and the audience's needs. These will guide him or her in gathering and systematically arranging the information to be presented. The speaker should structure and design the delivery to be effective, with the goal that the audience will ultimately accept his or her ideas.

The normal order of any exposition is to first list the main ideas and then elaborate on each of them.

Considerable thought should be given to how to start the presentation. What should be said first? This does not refer to how to greet the audience but, rather, to what main point the speaker should begin with. The normal order of any exposition is to first list the main ideas and then elaborate on each of them. This is the pattern that all written reports follow too. The sequence and timing of each part in a 30-minute presentation should be:

- *Introduction:* 3 minutes
- *Main body:* 15 minutes

- *Conclusion:* 2 minutes
- *Question–answer session:* 10 minutes

The presentation should be designed in such a way that it is logical, clear, and complete in the 30 minutes allotted to it. Let's use the BITS DLP proposal example to see how this can be done.

Introduction (3 minutes)

The introduction indicates the main idea of the presentation. It does only that, without giving details of what is to follow. This helps the audience know the subject and focus of the presentation. For instance, the objective in this situation is: "We propose that BITS should open Distance Learning Centres in two Gulf cities, Dubai and Muscat". Next, the presentation should explain why it is proposing overseas BITS centres by speaking about how popular BITS' educational programmes are nationally and internationally. This background provides the launching pad for more detailed information, which is covered in the main body of the presentation.

Main Body (15 minutes)

The main part of the presentation is devoted to informing the audience about the advantages of the proposal, both for BITS and the concerned countries in the Gulf (see Exhibit 14.1). This section would include findings of a survey and analysis of the data. This section of the presentation should generally be divided into sub-sections. As a general rule, the speaker should avoid having more than three sub-sections under the main point.

Exhibit 14.1
The Main Body of the Presentation

Benefits to BITS

- Will help the faculty develop new teaching strategies to promote BITS' academic rigour and excellence in a different climate where there is economic affluence but limited opportunities for higher education, specially in technology, science, and management.
- Will support BITS programmes in general and add opportunities for summer training and placements.
- Will increase financial benefits and foreign exchange earnings.

Benefits to DLP-associated Countries

- Will create good opportunities for Arab and non-resident Indian students to study engineering, science, or management at an international level.
- Will help Gulf countries use the research capabilities of BITS' faculty and postgraduate students to promote their technical know-how in the areas of construction, plant management, and human relations development.
- Will enable developing countries to learn new ways of social and intellectual growth through interaction and contact with India.

Viability: How Will BITS Centres Abroad Work?

An MOU can be signed between BITS and the partner countries. The BITS centre will be recognized as a centre for higher learning and education, duly approved by the Sultanate of Oman and the Emirate of Dubai.

- All physical facilities such as land, building, furniture, laboratories, and library are to be provided by the host country free of rent and cost for five years. Subsequently, rent and costs will be fixed through mutual agreement.
- Faculty provision: The teaching faculty and administration will be provided by BITS, Pilani (India).
- Syllabus and exams: The courses and evaluation systems used abroad will be the same as those used in BITS Pilani, India.
- Admissions system and fees: Admissions will be made on the basis of merit and will be determined through normalization of the marks of applicants (mostly NRIs).

Exhibit 14.2
The Conclusion

- BITS' experience of running three DLP centres in India has built confidence and expertise regarding its abilities to do so abroad, negating distance as a factor for excellence in education.
- The faculty is committed and ready to take advantage of this opportunity.
- There is a lot of faith in the promised support from the Gulf nations.

Generally, a presentation is delivered in an analytical and logical manner: the introduction leads to the main content, which in turn leads to the conclusions and recommendations. To integrate these parts into a continuous whole, there should be proper transitions from one section to the next and from one stage to another. The speaker should summarize what has been said in the previous section or stage before explaining how the next point is related. An example is: "So, you have seen how BITS overseas centres are feasible and viable. Now let's discuss some of the potential problems that we may face".

Conclusion (2 minutes)

The conclusion (see Exhibit 14.2) summarizes the speaker's main arguments and connects them to the objectives stated in the introduction and the larger picture.

To end the presentation, the speaker should do the following:

- Repeat the main idea of the presentation.
- Restate the most important points with supporting information.
- Thank the audience and invite questions.

Question–Answer Session (10 minutes)

This is an important opportunity for audience interaction. The speaker should encourage questions and answer each question seriously and with honesty. The speaker should not try to bluff; if he or she does not know the answer to a question, it is best to be frank and admit this.

3

Select the proper medium of presentation and visual aids.

Decide on the Medium of Presentation and Visual Aids

A presentation can be made more vivid by the use of statistical data, figures, diagrams, and so on, which can be displayed via transparencies or PowerPoint slides. Through visual display of ideas, the presenter can make the audience see what they hear. Graphics tend to garner and hold attention more easily than spoken words, so they also help keep the audience fully absorbed. Having visual projection of the message also enables the speaker to keep to the structure of the presentation. Moreover, often a greater amount of information can be communicated with a visual than lengthy verbal explanations. This saves time.

A presentation can be made more vivid by the use of statistical data charts, figures, diagrams, and so on, which can be displayed via transparencies or PowerPoint slides.

Often, a greater amount of information can be communicated with a visual than lengthy verbal explanations. This saves time.

When to Use Visual Aids

Visual aids should be used to:

- Present numerical and statistical data.
- Present topics related to art, design, or any subject that is visual in nature.
- Present comparative statements of facts and figures, specially graphic and diagrammatic forms. Visual presentation of comparisons always helps comprehension. For instance, if the presenter wants to demonstrate the comparison of two structures, the point of comparison can be better appreciated when shown rather than described.
- Present new interpretations of old data. If the speaker has discovered or noticed something new as a fresh interpretation of an existing phenomenon, showing it

makes the information look more concrete. By projecting the old information side-by-side with the new, the speaker can demonstrate how he or she has gone beyond the old data.

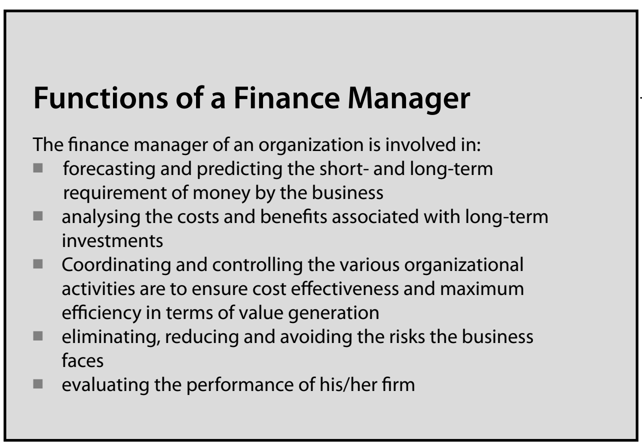
How to Use Visual Aids

Here are some guidelines regarding how to use visual aids:

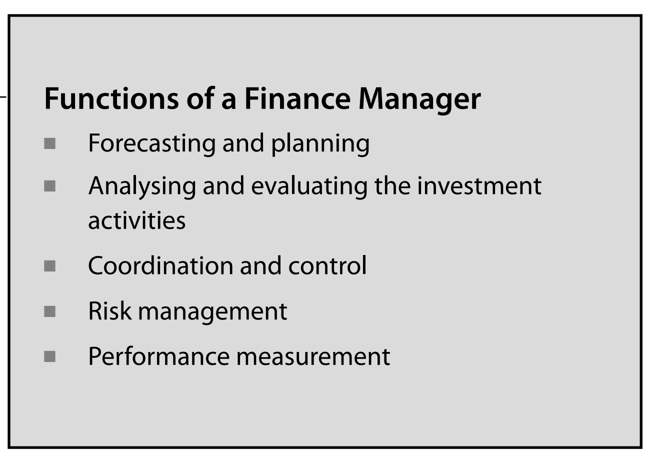
- One should not use too many images as this will lessen their impact.
- The speaker should plan the graphics according to the main points and make one graphic for each point.
- It is best to use bold, clear letters that can be seen from the other end of the room.
- The speaker should not fill a slide with too many words. As far as possible, one should write single words or short phrases to summarize concepts. See Exhibit 14.3 for an example.
- Different colours can help to distinguish different points.
- The presenter should reveal only one point at a time. This can be done by progressively exposing the hidden portion of the slide.
- The slides should be numbered and the presentation should be rehearsed with the slides. This ensures that the words match the visuals.
- The speaker should explain the purpose and content of each slide when it is shown. It should be displayed for sufficient time to allow the audience to read it and, if required, make notes from it.

One should not use too many images as this will lessen their impact. The speaker should plan the graphics according to the main points.

Exhibit 14.3
An Effective and an Ineffective Slide



A word-heavy, ineffective slide; the audience may find it hard to grasp the main points in a short time.



An effective slide that captures the main points in brief. If required, the presenter should explain these points in detail.

Different Mediums of Presentation

Some common mediums of presentation are boards (black or white), flip charts, overhead projectors and transparencies, and Microsoft PowerPoint slides.

Boards A board is a primary aid used in classrooms and can be black or white. The use of a board helps listeners concentrate, as it is used to note important words and concepts, or to do calculations. It is better to divide the board into different parts for noting down points, doing calculations, and drawing figures. Bold, clear letters should be used so that words are visible at a distance.

Flip charts A flip chart is a large pad of paper set on a stand. It is used for presenting information to a small group of 15 to 20 persons. The advantage of using flip charts is that they can be readily generated and added to during the talk. They can also be prepared in advance for presenting complex diagrams, bar charts, and graphs. The speaker can sketch outlines of a diagram in the presence of the audience. He or she can also use them for prompting and for creating and presenting the audience's feedback, suggestions, comments, or any other observations at the end of the talk. Flip charts that can be written over in water-soluble ink can be reused.

Overhead projectors and transparencies A frequently used medium of presentation is an overhead projector (OHP). Overhead projectors allow the presenter to speak while looking at the audience and also have a prepared transparency projected on the screen. An OHP can have typed or handwritten matter, but the best impact is made when the content is neatly and clearly typed. Tips on preparing transparencies and using OHPs are given in Exhibit 14.4.

PowerPoint presentations Computer-based Microsoft PowerPoint presentations have now become more widespread than transparencies and slides. These are projected with the help of multimedia projectors. Usually, a computer screen displays the information to a large audience. Pictures and photographs are all displayed as part of the presentation. The entire presentation is saved on a laptop (with a backup on CD, if possible). The laptop is then connected to the projection equipment so that the laptop screen is cloned on the projector. The whole operation is automatic and simple. The visual impact is impressive and absorbing.

Time the Presentation

The total presentation, including the question–answer session at the end, should be covered within the time allotted to it.

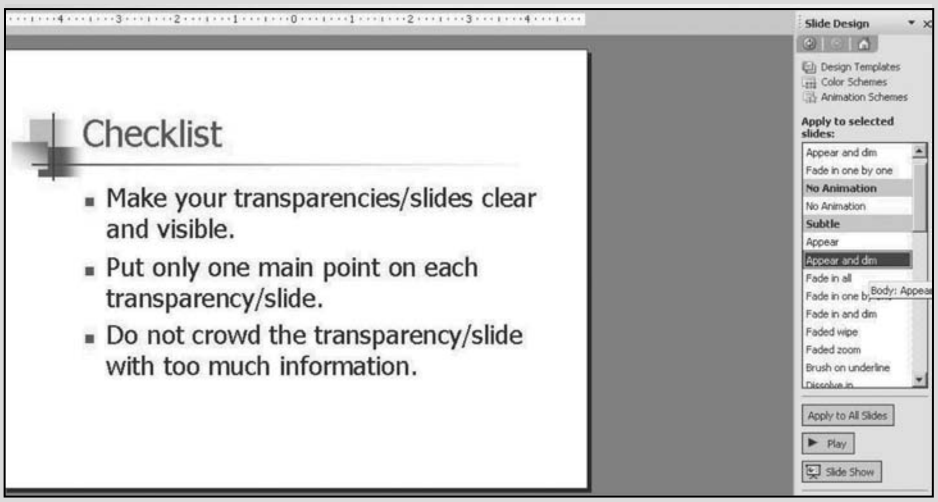
The total presentation, including the question–answer session at the end, should be covered within the time allotted to it. In actual practice, while speaking, many people tend to ignore the fact that the audience's interest and attention are affected by the time factor. An effective presentation is one that has a smart beginning and logically arrives at a conclusion without wandering off-topic or rambling, while providing sufficient explanation for tricky or controversial points. The speaker should not repeat his or her points excessively. In addition, he or should learn to change the pacing of the presentation in response to the non-verbal cues received from the audience's body language.

Become Familiar with the Location of the Presentation

Before presenting, the speaker should check the size, ventilation, and seating arrangement of the room. This helps position the screen according to the number of persons and the size of the room, ensuring it will be visible to everyone. The presenter should keep enough space between himself or herself and the screen so that he or she can refer to points on the screen with a pointer.

Exhibit 14.4
Tips for Preparing Transparencies and PowerPoint Slides

- Make your transparencies/slides clear and visible to everyone in the audience.
- Put only one main point on each transparency/slide.
- Do not crowd the transparency/slide with too much information. Place information at the centre, and do not crowd the margins.
- Avoid having more than eight lines on each transparency/slide, and use about six words in each line. Thus, try to limit each transparency to about 48 words.
- Mark sections and sub-sections with clarity to make the organization of information clear.
- Check before the presentation that the projector is working. In the case of PowerPoint presentations, ensure that the laptop is not low on battery and that it is connected to the projector.
- Clean the projector lens and surface if needed.
- Adjust the focus and projector position to obtain the brightest and largest image possible.
- Switch off the machine between visuals. In the case of OHPs, run the fan inside the projector when showing visuals.
- The projection screen should be clean. If the projection is made on a whiteboard or wall, ensure that there is nothing written or marked on the board/wall.
- Use a pointer to point to parts of the transparency and emphasize specific points.
- Show the points one by one. In the case of an OHP, one may hide the matter that has not yet been discussed with tracing paper. In the case of PowerPoint slides, this can be done by clicking on **Slide Show** on the tool bar, selecting **Animation,** and selecting the required effect (*fade in one by one*, *appear and dim*, etc.) from the right-hand side panel, as follows:



- Finally, one should remember that slides and transparencies are aids in presentations, and not a substitute for one's own words and explanations. So, it is important to face the audience while speaking and to make eye contact with them.

DELIVERING THE PRESENTATION

4
Understand the chief principles of delivering an effective presentation.

Regardless of how interesting or well drafted a presentation is, its delivery must be effective in order for the presentation to achieve its goals. Here are some guidelines on delivering presentations:

- Do not read aloud. A presentation is essentially an oral, face-to-face communication. Reading notes or slides aloud does not foster discussion of ideas. This is a common mistake: it does not hold the audience's attention as they can read the slide

Reading out notes or slides aloud does not foster discussion of ideas. This is a common mistake: it does not hold the audience's attention as they can read the slide themselves.

themselves. What the speaker should do is explain and expand on what is on the screen, pointing out what is important and how it relates to the point.

- Use the "you attitude" to ensure audience involvement; tell the audience how the information being presented is useful to them. What do they stand to gain from the presentation? Why should they listen to you? Answering this well shows how one's presentation is relevant to the needs and interests of the audience.
- Outline the content of the presentation in the beginning itself. This will help the audience follow the presentation and understand its structure and arguments.
- Use transitions. If the audience are told what comes next in the presentation, they will be able to follow it better and will know how one part relates to the others. The speaker know best when he or she moves from one stage or step to another. He ors he can help the audience know when a new point is being introduced so that they follow the sequence. Transitions must, therefore, be well indicated by using connectives and inferences. For example, phrases such as "Now we can consider", "So we can see that", and "The next step involves" are useful for this.
- Try to involve the audience and encourage their participation. Avoid doing things that reduce audience involvement such as speaking in too low a voice that cannot be heard and may be perceived as feeble, or shouting, which sounds angry and jarring.
- To arouse and sustain audience interest, the speaker should maintain eye contact throughout the presentation, ask interesting questions of the audience, use anecdotes if possible, invite volunteers to role-play, stand close enough to the audience to be fully visible and to feel less removed from them, and present material enthusiastically.

Rehearsal

To give a good presentation, the speaker should rehearse his or her full performance ahead of time. This helps to:

- Coordinate speech with visual projections
- Know if the information has been properly edited
- Check if the duration of the presentation is appropriate
- Minimize stage fright

It is best to rehearse before a discerning listener and in conditions as close to the actual presentation conditions as possible.

It is best to rehearse before a discerning listener and in conditions as close to the actual presentation conditions as possible. The listener should be able to evaluate the material in terms of its technical accuracy. He or she should also be able to provide objective criticism.

Some tips for rehearsing a presentation are:

- Rehearse using the microphone and visual aids and in the chosen mode of presenting to practice coordinating verbal delivery and visual projection.
- Practice using eye contact. This requires lifting one's eyes from the written notes and facing the audience for as long as possible.
- Practice voice modulation, proper intonation, correct pronunciation of the words, and proper variation in volume.
- Rehearse by recording the presentation and playing it back to observe your own voice and manner of delivery. It is possible to improve one's performance by analysing the recorded performance. A video recording would be most useful to help improve body language.

Body Language

Since a presentation is a live performance, the speaker's non-verbal cues will influence the audience and vice versa. We have already discussed the power of non-verbal body movements, gestures, and facial expressions in positively or negatively modifying the meaning of the message in Chapter 7. For presentations, the following aspects of non-verbal behaviour are particularly relevant:

Since a presentation is a live performance, the speaker's non-verbal cues will influence the audience and vice versa.

- Professional appearance
- Good/positive posture
- Eye contact
- Use of positive gestures and hand movements that reinforce the argument
- Appropriate movements. It is important not to stand fixed like a statue in one spot, but to move with ease between the projection screen and the podium or the area in front of the audience
- Smiling and looking relaxed while answering questions

Handling Questions and Debate

5

Know how to handle questions and give answers.

A good speaker treats questions as an important and necessary part of his or her presentation. Questions are an opportunity for the speaker to further explain his or her point. He or she can go back to the slides to further explain a point, or he or she can also add new evidence or examples to support the point. If a presentation is followed by a series of questions, it shows that the presentation was able to involve the audience and hold their interest. A genuine question reveals that the speaker's content was relevant to the audience.

If a presentation is followed by a series of questions, it shows that the presentation was able to involve the audience and hold their interest. A genuine question reveals that the speaker's content was relevant to the audience.

Questions help the speaker to:

- Further clarify what he or she has already said.
- Add new information. Some presenters deliberately leave out details that they propose to provide during the discussion session.
- Demonstrate his or her knowledge. The speaker's ability to answer questions shows that he or she is fully informed on your subject. It also increases the speaker's confidence.
- Prove the relevance of the presentation. A genuine question shows that what the speaker has said is relevant and interesting to the audience.

Questions can be motivated by different reasons, ranging from rivalry or jealousy to genuine curiosity. They can be classified as:

- *Genuine questions:* A question may be asked to get more information or to seek clarification regarding a particular point. This sort of question is not meant to embarrass the speaker but intends that he or she elaborate or explain what has already discussed.
- *Questions asked for the sake of questioning:* There are some questions that do not seek any answer. They are raised either to show off the knowledge of the questioner or to expose gaps in the presenter's knowledge and information. Such questions can be:
  - Attention-grabbing—asked to steal the limelight.
  - Unanswerable—no answer can satisfy the questioner.
  - Tangential—have no bearing on the subject discussed and posed to oppose the speaker's viewpoint.
  - Challenging—challenge the speaker's knowledge and raise doubts about the validity of his or her information.

In all situations, the speaker should exhibit a sense of honesty in answering questions. If he or she does not know the answer, it is best to admit this—nobody is expected to know everything. Everybody is, however, expected to be honest enough to acknowledge what he or she does not know.

Tips to Fight Stage Fright

Stage fright is a natural experience for all presenters. Some tips to deal with it include:

1. Always look for some smiling faces among the listeners and make eye contact with them; they will make you feel at ease.
2. Rehearse your presentation before friends.
3. Memorize opening lines to help get yourself started.
4. Do extensive research on the topic and be over-prepared.
5. Use it as a positive source of nervous energy for performing well.

SUMMARY

- This chapter concentrated on imparting the skills of effective presentation. These skills can be developed by paying attention to preparation and delivery techniques, and the handling of the audience's response.
- There is a difference between presentations and lectures and written reports.
- A presentation is a form of oral communication. Its success depends on the presenter's preparation, clarity of purpose, understanding of audience needs, ability to structure information, choose the proper medium of presentation and visual aids, and ability to appeal to the audience's interest and respond to their questions with ease and honesty.
- There are various mediums that can be used in presentations, such as boards, flip charts, OHPs, and PowerPoint, and these are helpful in projecting complex information visually.
- A good presenter uses the skills of non-verbal communication to reinforce his or her words.
- A good presenter must also be able to encourage and handle questions.
- Speakers can overcome stage fright and develop self-confidence by practising and rehearsing the presentation before a chosen audience/critic.

CASE: THE PRESENTATION EFFECT

Mr Jon Hauser, President of A&E Education in Germany, visited a management institute in Chennai. After an informal meeting with the principal director, they moved to a large seminar hall equipped with a multimedia projection system. Jon proposed to give a presentation on his Learning Management System model. He spoke for about 40 minutes, covering the worldwide processes of educational administration and e-management. His presentation used PowerPoint and was visually supported by graphic data—charts, graphs, and diagrams. At places, he was difficult to follow because of the unusual accent in which English is spoken by a German. However, the elaborate visual aids helped him put his point across successfully. The PowerPoint slides were in the form of bullet points outlining the structure of the presentation.

During the discussion at the end of Jon's presentation, the principal director opined that the international model discussed would need to be customized with specific local content, and went on to share his own software model of Learning Management System. Jon appreciated the new insight, and they agreed to collaborate and integrate the models for marketing the software to educational institutions across India.

Questions to Answer

1. Does the size of the venue affect the quality of the presentation?
2. Discuss the benefits of using PowerPoint and visual aids when giving a presentation to a foreign audience.
3. What were Jon's presentation objectives? Was he successful in achieving them?

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Suppose you have just made a presentation. There is a coffee break. People are standing around discussing the presentation. You are able to overhear what they are saying. What would you like to hear them say about you and your presentation?
2. What according to you is a presentation? List some characteristics of a presentation that distinguish it from a written report.
3. Discuss the difference between a presentation and a lecture/seminar.
4. Often it is difficult to know where to begin a presentation. What do you think is the first thing to consider? Why?
5. Why is the time limit important in the case of a presentation? Why do you try to plan a presentation? List at least two reasons for each answer.
6. How do you indicate what is next in your presentation to the audience?
7. Choose a topic and show how you would summarize its content for your audience at the beginning of the presentation.
8. Identify the main content of a presentation on a topic of your choice and break it up into different sections and sub-sections.
9. List the visual aids that would be most effective in your presentation. Mention some of the advantages of these aids.
10. Mention the characteristics of effective presentation language.
11. List the characteristics of your audience that are important to consider before giving your presentation.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. How does a young business executive benefit from success in his or her first presentation before peers and seniors?
2. Should a presentation be allowed to change into a group discussion at any stage?
3. A presentation is often the result of team work. How is the work of different team members coordinated and presented as a single, well organized presentation?
4. "The question–answer session is an integral part of a presentation." Do you agree? How much time should be kept for the audience's questions in a presentation of about 30 minutes?
5. Discuss the different kinds of questions one can face from an audience and how you would handle them.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

It is the audience that acts as the main factor in determining what your presentation contains and what it does not. Choose a topic for a presentation and briefly indicate how you would change the content of your presentation to suit the following audiences:

(i) Fellow students in your subject of study
(ii) Persons who have no knowledge of the subject
(iii) Professors and experts in your department

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. A presentation is a form of oral communication in which a person shares factual information with an audience that is:
   (a) large
   (b) small
   (c) specific
   (d) mixed
2. The presenter acts as the:
   (a) medium of the information
   (b) advocate of the information
   (c) supporter of the information
   (d) deliverer of the information

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

3. The three major elements of presentation do not include:
   (a) visual aids
   (b) specific content
   (c) an audience
   (d) a presenter
4. The audience for a presentation consists of people who:
   (a) are uniform in their level of information and purpose
   (b) vary in their level of information and purpose
   (c) are uninformed and lack a purpose
   (d) are confused in their purpose
5. To be able to give a good presentation, a full rehearsal is:
   (a) necessary
   (b) optional
   (c) useless
   (d) audience based
6. Reading out a presentation is:
   (a) allowed
   (b) not allowed
   (c) helpful
   (d) dull
7. To make a presentation effective and impressive, you should use:
   (a) complex sentences
   (b) jargon
   (c) passive sentences
   (d) a simple and active form of sentences
8. To select the content of your presentation, you should know:
   (a) your purpose
   (b) the audience's needs
   (c) the available material
   (d) the time limit
9. In presentation design, maximum time is given to the:
   (a) conclusion
   (b) introduction
   (c) main body
   (d) question–answer session
10. Initially, a presentation is a form of:
    (a) one-way communication
    (b) two-way communication
    (c) group communication
    (d) intrapersonal communication

15

Business Etiquette

> *Etiquette means behaving yourself a little better than is absolutely essential.*
>
> —Will Cuppy

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the general rules of business etiquette.
2. Learn ways of introducing yourself and others.
3. Know how to handle telephone and cell phone calls.
4. Learn the rules of appropriate behaviour at business dinners and lunches.
5. Learn how to interact with international clients.
6. Know the norms of behaviour for business-to-business interactions.

Communication at Work

Ramalingam is a vice-president in a multinational company in Noida. He is a Harvard graduate and lived in the United States for more than five years. He understands how Americans behave and expect to be treated abroad. He knows that they follow schedules punctually, dislike delays, and hate to be kept waiting or to keep someone waiting. Therefore, Ramalingam was very uneasy when Mr Rai, the CEO of his company, was late for their meeting with the American delegation visiting the company that morning.

Ramalingam kept the visitors busy by making small talk, but their restlessness was visible in the repeated glances at their wristwatches. Mr Rai arrived after about 20 minutes and was apologetic for the delay, which was caused by a huge traffic jam. Ramalingam introduced the visiting American group to him and without any further delay, Mr Rai took everyone to the boardroom for a presentation on the company—the past, the present, and the future—before holding a discussion on the proposed trade between the two companies.

Mr James Wright, the head of the visiting delegation, listened to the presentation with full attention. He noted down some points and clarified these with Mr Rai; however, he declined to stay for lunch, saying that they had to catch a 3 p.m. flight to Mumbai and did not have time. When leaving, Mr Wright said that he would get back to them. Ramalingam wished Mr Rai had not been late to the meeting, as they had lost valuable time that could have been used for discussing business opportunities.

WHAT IS BUSINESS ETIQUETTE?

Etiquette refers to conventional rules of social behaviour or professional conduct. These rules are unwritten and act as norms to be observed by all professionals who work as a team in a particular company or department. They help individuals identify what sort of behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate in a business environment.

Professional etiquette affects business deals. An intelligent business executive knows that visitors assess the status of a company not just from its balance sheets and inventory books but also from the manner in which they are received, addressed, taken around, and briefed in the boardroom. In business, as in life, etiquette is a self-rewarding trait. Successful professionals know how to conduct themselves at company meetings, parties, and dinners. They are aware of their company's culture and etiquette. Further, business etiquette means more than just being nice. It is fundamental to conducting business successfully. Those who ignore norms run the risk of being labelled as "unfriendly" or "inflexible". This may disrupt the smooth working of the team by causing misunderstandings or tension among fellow workers.

1

Understand the general rules of business etiquette.

Successful professionals know how to conduct themselves at company meetings, parties, and dinners.

Choosing to be habitually late for meetings, ignoring deadlines, indulging in character assassination during coffee breaks, or demanding (as a right) instead of requesting (as a favour) help are examples of ignoring, knowingly or unknowingly, the rules of good professional conduct, behaviour, and etiquette.

Every workplace evolves its own norms of behaviour and attitude. For example, if one were to undertake a survey of banks or hospitals during lunch breaks, one would notice that in some companies everyone resumes working without even a minute's delay after lunch, while in others taking an extra 10 to 15 minutes for lunch may be a general practice. In such cases, the etiquette is not governed by rules written down anywhere.

The business etiquette rules discussed in this chapter relate to the following:

- Introductions
- Telephone/cell phone calls
- Business dining
- Interaction with foreign clients
- Business-to-business etiquette

This chapter describes the behaviour and customs that would be considered appropriate and acceptable in most business organizations in modern, mostly westernized workplaces.

In an organization, the basic concern is to create a comfortable and productive work environment where each person helps others work with ease.

This approach to business etiquette assumes that each business setting has its own business protocols that an employee learns by working in that environment and observing others. But there are general rules of business etiquette that are based on the fundamental principles of organizational behaviour. In an organization, the basic concern is to create a comfortable and effective work environment where each person helps others work with ease. This is made possible by empathizing with others' concerns and priorities. Identifying with others is the best form of business etiquette.

Learning the rules of business etiquette helps professionals be comfortable in any business setting. Let us, therefore, consider some common situations in business and find out how to act appropriately.

2

Learn ways of introducing yourself and others.

INTRODUCTIONS

First impressions and meetings play a significant role in facilitating a business relationship. It is important, therefore, to make a positive impression when meeting someone for the first time.

Self-introductions

As a norm of business etiquette and the first step towards cordial business transactions, people greet each other by stating their full names and positions (in office) at the very outset.

A confident self-introduction always makes a positive first impression, but many people are reluctant to introduce themselves. This may be because they think it too bold an act or they feel too shy to do so. But when two people meet for the first time, they are bound to want to know each other's identity, affiliation, and purpose. Even when people meet the second or third time after a gap of some weeks, there is no harm in repeating introductions by saying something simple like, "Good morning, I'm Smita Sharma".

Suppose two applicants are waiting for an interview with the general manager of marketing of a company. They are sitting in the waiting lounge across the corridor leading to the general manager's office. A smart-looking middle-aged executive walks into the corridor moving towards the general manager's office. The candidates are not sure whether he is the person for whom they have been waiting. Now, suppose one of them stands up, walks up to him, and says, "Good morning, I am Reena Seth. I am here for an interview with Mr S. K. Nair". Hopefully, the person would respond, "Good morning! I am Mr Nair. Pleased to meet you. We shall have the interview shortly". Reena Seth's bold introduction to Mr Nair would give her an edge over the other candidate, who remained silent. Most likely, Mr Nair would have a positive and favourable impression of Reena Seth as a confident, assertive, and enterprising young individual.

If there is an advantage in introducing oneself at the first opportunity, why do people shy away from doing so? Some cultures, such as British culture, have a sense of reserve. Americans are more outgoing in general. Indians are traditionally more shy and, generally, would still consider it impolite to go up to someone and say "Hi, I am Amit Misra" (though this is now changing).

Introductions are standard protocol when two or more persons meet formally. Each person should introduce himself or herself in a clear manner, pronouncing their first names and surnames as well as stating their positions, which helps establish the purpose and direction of the conversation. For instance, one should say something like "Prafulla Misra, CEO, Sterling Gold Informatics", instead of just "Misra" or "Prafulla". Americans prefer to introduce themselves by their first names only, like "John" or "William". But the British use the first name and surname: "WB Yeats" or "Tony Blair". Names, specially foreign or unfamiliar ones, are generally only partially understood unless spoken distinctly. For instance, the name "Kanwal Jeet Singh Sidhu" has to be uttered slowly, so that the other person follows it fully.

During a conversation, one party may have forgotten the other's name or may not remember how to pronounce it. At such moments the other person should help them immediately by politely repeating their name — "I am Irfan Mohammad, I am sorry, I should have told you". Business etiquette seeks to make all concerned parties comfortable. This is why it is polite to apologize for forgetting to introduce oneself. If one simply says, "I am Irfan Mohammad", it suggests that the other person is at fault for forgetting the name.

Here are some rules for making introductions correctly:

1. In the case of a pre-arranged business meeting, if you are an expected visitor, you should introduce yourself by stating your name and the purpose of the visit: "I am Ramesh Bose and I have come here to meet Ms Divya Lahari in the marketing department". Only after introducing yourself should you ask for the name and position of the other party.
2. Do not use honorifics such as Sri, Mrs, Mr, Ms, or any other titles before your name while introducing or referring to yourself. Others can call you "Mr Chandra", but you should refer to yourself as just "Rajan Chandra" or "Chandra" or "Rajan". If you have a PhD, you may use "doctor" before your name and refer to yourself as "Dr Sharma". Surgeons and physicians usually do not add the salutation before their names when introducing themselves. Saying something like "I am Roopa Salwan, cardiologist from Escorts Heart Institute in New Delhi, India, I am here to attend the International Summit of Cardiologists as an Indian delegate" is a universally appropriate self-announcement. The point is that others may add titles or professional descriptions (such as "professor"), but the individuals themselves should not.
3. Speak your name slowly and clearly. As mentioned earlier, the listener may not catch an unusual or unfamiliar name. Therefore, articulate your name as distinctly as possible, and if required, help others by spelling it.

Speak your name slowly and clearly. The listener may not catch an unusual or unfamiliar name. Therefore, articulate your name as distinctly as possible, and if required, help others by spelling it.

In business, one encounters a variety of people, and it may be difficult to recognize or place someone one has previously met in a different context such as a seminar or conference. Before the other person detects this, you should ask for his or her business card by simply saying, "Could I have your latest business card for your telephone number and e-mail address?"

To be tactful in such situations is also good business etiquette. If you let the other person know that you have forgotten his or her name, it may make the person feel that he or she is not important enough to be remembered. Try to act as if you know the name but wish to have more details about the person.

Introducing Others

A clear and complete introduction of each person, both members of the visiting party and the host party, makes everyone feel relaxed and creates a congenial atmosphere for the meeting.

It is common to have to introduce others at business meetings. A clear and complete introduction of each person, both members of the visiting party and the host party, makes everyone feel relaxed and creates a congenial atmosphere for the meeting. In such situations, the person who is making the introductions should know the names and professional statuses of both parties before the meeting. The professional status refers to the role the person plays in the business transaction.

Normally, the senior-most person among the visitors or the host team introduces the other members of his or her group. The practice is that visitors are first introduced to the hosts. Then members of the host group are introduced. Usually a senior is not introduced to a junior, but instead, the lowest-ranked person is introduced to the highest-ranked person. Accordingly, avoid saying to the CEO of a company: "Mr Chopra, may I introduce you to Payal Muttoo? Payal is this year's first position holder and a gold medalist, working in our placement department". Instead, say "Mr Chopra, may I introduce Payal Muttoo to you? Payal is this year's university topper and gold medalist, working in our placement department".

Notice two things here. One, the polite form "May I introduce…" is appropriate and formal when speaking to a superior. But when introducing someone to others it is okay to just say, "This is Neelam Gulati. Neelam is a senior lecturer in finance". Also note that this introduction repeats the name so that it is duly received and remembered by the other person. To repeat the name naturally, the person who is making the introductions has to create a context by mentioning a significant detail about the person concerned—such as what work they do.

After introducing the junior person to the senior, introduce the senior person to the junior, for instance by saying something like: "Payal, as you know, Mr Chopra is our President. Mr Chopra will discuss our placement status and strategies with you".

Here, it may be important to point out that in India, and perhaps in other Asian countries, it is a usual practice to use *President* or *Chairman* as a title before the name, such as "President G. P. Chopra" or "Chairman Chopra-ji", or even "Chairman Mr Chopra". In the United States and other western cultures, this may sound a little odd. Americans refer to one another just by using "first name, last name", even in the case of very senior persons. However, in Asian countries, people observe social courtesies out of respect for age and position, even in the context of business.

Handshakes and Non-verbal Gestures

Most business meetings begin and end with a handshake. Shake hands after the introduction by extending your right hand and firmly holding the other person's right hand very briefly. In modern business, a handshake is a non-verbal clue of friendliness.

The handshake is so spontaneous that usually both parties simultaneously put forward their right hands to make the gesture. Nowadays, in business, as in society, there is no gender distinction and women shake hands in business situations too. Sometimes, while parting, people shake hands again or put their arm on the back or shoulder of the other person to communicate warmth.

As a winning form of non-verbal communication, handshakes must be accompanied by eye contact and a gentle smile.

As a winning form of non-verbal communication, handshakes must be accompanied by eye contact and a gentle smile. In some situations, you may express your feelings by saying, "Pleased to meet you". The other party would generally respond by saying, "my pleasure". These words are just pleasantries. They do not mean much as verbal communication.

As already indicated while discussing non-verbal forms of communication, there are, besides handshakes, other gestures that are culture-specific. For instance, even in business situations, Arabs often shake hands, embrace, and also kiss to communicate their warmth and respect for the other person. East Asians often bow to one another.

If you are not sure of the cultural and personal sensitivities of your visitor or host, it is best to shake hands, as this is the general norm across the world. However, in some culture-specific countries, such as India, many senior business heads, executives, and officers still prefer to receive or bid adieu to highly placed guests in the traditional form—with folded hands, slightly bowed head, and eye contact. As a visitor, follow your host's cue and greet accordingly.

TELEPHONE/CELL PHONE ETIQUETTE

3

Know how to handle telephone and cell phone calls.

In telephone conversations, the way we listen, respond, speak, or hang up is often as important as what is communicated.

Making a Call

Before initiating a call, be clear about the *why* (purpose) and *what* (content) of the call, how to begin the call, and what to do if the call is cut off.

Prepare Before Calling

For business calls, you must know exactly who you want to speak to and choose the most convenient time to make the call. You should also know whether you are calling to follow up on earlier communication or if it is the first step in the interaction.

- To be brief and concise, jot down the points you want to discuss and think about the order in which to discuss them. Always keep these notes at hand when making the call.
- Keep a notepad and pen ready to write down any information worth recording.
- Consider whether the call is important from your point of view or from the receiver's point of view. In the latter case, structure your information from the receiver's point of interest. Begin first with what is important for the receiver. Talk about your interests later.
- Keep the conversation as short as possible. The other person may not be able to spare much time for your call. During the office hours, call the landline number first, directly or through the assistant, depending on your familiarity with the person. Cell phones should be used in case of urgent matters or when the relationship is of a personal nature.
- Calling a cell phone from a landline number should be avoided as it may give the impression to the receiver that you are taking their availability for granted. In addition, the receiver may not recognize the number if it is not in their cell phone directory.
- Avoid calling a cell phone number through an administrative assistant. It might give an impression of discourtesy.
- Avoid the use of cell phones in movie halls, crowded restaurants, hospitals, fuel stations, and so on. Cell phones should be switched off or kept in the silent mode during meetings and important discussions. People whose calls you have missed in such a situation should be called back later.

How to Begin or Receive a Call

The first few words spoken by the caller or receiver are important for establishing identities and the purpose of the call. They create the context for further conversation.

As a caller, you may not be personally known to the receiver. The receiver may be familiar with your purpose and your company, but may not exactly know you unless you have met in person or spoken to each other earlier. Therefore, begin by introducing yourself—state your name, company, and purpose.

The first few words spoken by the caller or receiver are important for establishing identities and the purpose of the call. They create the context for further conversation.

In organizations, calls are generally routed through a receptionist. The usual practice at the reception is to attend to the call within five rings; if you have been kept waiting longer than that, the receptionist will usually greet you with an apology. If your call is not answered even after ten rings, it is advisable to disconnect and try calling later, or try another number, if any.

Greet the receptionist ("Good morning"); tell him or her your name and your organization's name, and then mention whom you want to speak with. When speaking with a personal assistant, use the same introduction and tell him or her the purpose of the call. He or she will connect you to the desired person only after checking whether he or she is free to talk to you at that moment. Remember to be patient and pleasant while dealing with the assistant, who is an important link between the caller and the desired contact person.

> Remember to be patient and pleasant while dealing with the assistant, who is an important link between the caller and the desired contact person.

If the receiver does not know you, you should first introduce yourself, for instance by saying something like "Good morning Mr Chaturvedi, I am Pallavi Mehta, marketing manager of Ferns n Petals. I want to know the details of your company's order for floral decoration…". As a caller, you should use the opportunity to make the receiver feel that the information you want can be acquired only from him or her and that it is required immediately. In other words, involve the receiver in a dialogue, instead of questions that can be answered just by saying "yes" or "no". Suppose you say, "Can I have the details of…", the receiver can respond by saying, "No, not now" and may hang up. Hence, use your conversational skills to establish a good relationship with the other person so that the call ends on a positive note.

In the case of a cell phone conversation, it is always better to check if you are clearly audible. You may be able to hear the other side clearly, but it is possible that the other side is not able to hear you completely because of a poor signal. During official meetings, it is always better to keep the cell phone on silent mode. If you are expecting an important call, you may like to inform the chair about it before the meeting begins and step outside after excusing yourself. It is also necessary to keep all such calls short.

The ring tone expresses a person's style. However, it should be in sync with the environment of the workplace. The volume of the phone's ring should not be too loud. Similarly, the volume of the person should also not be very loud. Sometimes, people discuss even confidential matters so loudly that the entire floor can hear them.

If the Call Is Disconnected

Sometimes, the call may be suddenly disconnected or dropped. In such situations, courtesy demands that the person who originally initiated the call should redial immediately and say, "Sorry, the call got disconnected". In case the receiver has to suspend the call to attend to some other more important call, it is the duty of the receiver to resume the call and give a satisfactory explanation to ensure that the caller does not feel slighted.

Common Telephone Courtesies

Always use the interrogative form for making a request, such as "Could I…?" or "May I…?" as Direct categorical statements may seem like an order. "I want to talk to…" is not a polite request. Instead "May I talk to…" is more polite. Even the statement, "I request you to connect me to so and so number/person" is not quite appropriate when ones does not know the other party well. Instead, say, "May I request you to…".

Telephone Etiquette Observed by Administrative Assistants

In business, telephone calls are mostly received by personal assistants. Sometimes, the assistant has to act quickly to find out whether his or her supervisor is free to talk. So they may say, "Please hold on" while they check. If their supervisor is present but does not want to speak to the caller for some reason, the assistant will choose any one of the following polite excuses:

"Sorry, she is busy in a meeting. May I have your number? She will call you back".

"He is busy with a foreign delegation. May I ask him to call you back as soon as he is free?"

These statements may not necessarily be true. However, they are intended to keep the caller satisfied even when the call is not successful. Personal assistants should never try to overhear the conversation between the caller and the receiver. After putting through the call to their supervisor, they should hang up.

Telephone Precautions

As a caller you do not know whether the person receiving your call is alone. Therefore, confidential matters should never be discussed over the phone. They can be overheard/tapped in transmission. However, if you have to discuss something personal that you do not want others to know, you should check with the person you are calling in a polite manner. For example, you may say, "Can we talk about the tender for the Golden Highway project?" or simply, "Are you free? Can we talk about the tender?" This would save you from causing any embarrassment to the receiver or risk being overheard.

Communication over the phone requires the use of non-verbal skills, such as pleasant tone, proper intonation, and clear articulation of words. You should be able to convey a large part of the message through your way of speaking rather than the meaning of the words alone.

Communication over the phone requires the use of non-verbal skills, such as pleasant tone, proper intonation, and clear articulation of words.

BUSINESS DINING

4

Learn the rules of appropriate behaviour at business dinners and lunches.

Business meetings with colleagues or clients can be before or after office hours and can be for formal occasions such as lunch or dinner parties or informal occasions such as social functions and festivals, religious ceremonies, weddings, or birthday parties. At such occasions, one should follow the cultural norms of the company, group, or organization. For instance, meals with colleagues, clients, or consultants have their own protocol and code of behaviour that must be followed for negotiating business deals. Keep in mind that such occasions are, in fact, business activities; therefore, act with a sense of responsibility. Do not consider these merely occasions for socializing. Some established norms regarding business meals are discussed in the following sections.

The Host

The host should invite the guests personally and confirm the date, time, and place in writing if possible. If the venue is new for the guest, the host should help him or her by giving directions. The invitation could also give information on who else is invited—for instance one can say: "My colleague Abhishek, who is looking after management trainees, will also be joining us". It is a good practice to confirm the scheduled meeting a day prior to the event. The host should plan to reach the venue a little ahead of the given time and personally check the seating arrangements. The host should also receive the guests personally outside the dining hall and move inside together. It is courteous to ask the guest to order his or her choice of dishes and drinks and it is only proper for the host to pay the bill. Similarly, the host should also arrange for taxis to take the guest back to his or her place of work or stay.

Business conversations are conducted in an informal manner that is free and relaxed. After some initial pleasantries, the host opens the meeting, starting with the background that provides the context for the specific matter to be discussed. If necessary, some points or conclusions can be noted down.

Business conversations are conducted in an informal manner that is free and relaxed. After some initial pleasantries, the host opens the meeting, starting with the background that provides the context for the specific matter to be discussed.

Business meals provide opportunities for easy give-and-take and negotiation. They bring together two complementary parties, such as employers and prospective employees, companies and clients, interviewers and interviewees, as equals at a social occasion.

The Guest

Guests should stick to their personal dietary preferences. If for religious or personal reasons a guest cannot eat something specific, he or should be able to refuse politely.

Similarly, teetotalers can decline the offer to drink alcohol. The guest should not talk about the harmful effects of others' dietary choices, but instead, should just say something like "Thanks, I would like to have some lime cordial or fresh lime soda".

It is considered best to avoid drinking at business dinners, but if a guest does accept a drink, he or she should avoid drinking too much. A good way to excuse oneself is by saying "I have an early morning flight" or "I have to drive back".

It is best to avoid drinking alcohol at business dinners.

Table Manners

Business dinners are formal occasions and forks, knives, and spoons are often used. Indian food is generally eaten with one's hands, which is also acceptable. But, one should know how to use a knife and fork. Some general rules of correct use of cutlery are given in Exhibit 15.1.

Exhibit 15.1
Cutlery Set for a Formal European Style Serving

Placed from Left to Right Away from the Diner

- A blunt butter knife placed on bread and butter plate
- Dessert spoon together with dessert fork
- Water glass, red wine glass or white wine glass
- Coffee cup and saucer

Placed from Right to Left Near the Diner

- Cocktail fork
- Soup spoon
- Tea spoon
- Dinner knife
- Dinner plate
- Dinner fork
- Salad fork
- Dinner napkin

How to Use a Knife and Fork

The rule for using a knife and a fork is quite simple — the knife cuts the food and the fork places it into the mouth. The knife is only for cutting food into small pieces be it vegetables, meat, or any other food. It should never be placed in the mouth. The knife is always held in the right hand. The fork is first held in the left hand with the knife in the right hand, to cut the food into small pieces. Then the knife is kept on the plate and in its place the fork is held in the right hand and used to place the food in the mouth. When not in use, both knife and fork rest on a side plate, never on the table.

The basic difference between Asian and European styles of eating is that in Asia, specially India and Pakistan, people often pick up a large piece of food with their hands instead of using a fork and knife. This is not done by Americans or Europeans who cut their food into small pieces. Generally, westerners eat with their mouths closed, whereas Asians may have their mouths partially open. These differences in styles of eating are only cultural. They are based on convenience and habits.

The best rule is to eat the way one is accustomed to eating. Use whatever cutlery you regularly use with elegance at formal business meals. If you are comfortable eating with hands, use your hand. If you need a spoon, ask for it.

How to Get the Server's Attention

Usually, waiters are watchful. A little signal from the diners catches their attention immediately. However, if someone needs to call the waiter, the best way is to establish eye contact and if necessary turn a little towards him or her. The best thing to say is "excuse me".

INTERACTION WITH FOREIGN VISITORS

5

Learn how to interact with international clients.

It is important to respect foreign clients' religious beliefs and cultural needs. In business, foreign visitors should not be allowed to feel like strangers in other countries. We generally believe that when we visit another country, we should behave according to the business norms and etiquette of the country we are in. Accordingly, we can assume that foreign visitors would observe our business norms such as trade practices, working hours, office culture, and so on. But there may be some social and religious beliefs that we should try to respect. It is the primary duty of the hosts to make the guests feel comfortable in every way. Respecting cultural needs, religious beliefs, and the attitudes of foreign visitors will go a long way in developing good business relations. Some tips for doing so are:

Respecting cultural needs, religious beliefs, and the attitudes of foreign visitors will go a long way in developing good business relations.

1. People can be easily put at ease by speaking to them in their native language. English is a global link language today. Yet many people prefer to conduct business in their own language. A foreign visitor may not know English, so use an interpreter, if necessary, for important business occasions.
2. Prepare documents in both languages, English and the foreign visitor's language.
3. Try to learn and use some words of greeting in the visitor's language as a gesture of friendliness.

BUSINESS MANNERS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

To be successful in business transactions one should know the chief differences in the business manners of people of different countries. When we are in a foreign country, or are hosts to a foreigner in our country, we should bear in mind the business norms of that country. The norms for business meetings and personal style followed by people in some countries are discussed here.

Americans

- Shaking hands during introductions is common.
- Business cards are exchanged only when there is a need to do so.
- Punctuality is an important form of courtesy.
- Americans prefer breakfast meetings to develop close business relations. They also have meetings over lunch.
- Americans prefer to refer to people by their first names. It is a common business practice and should not be considered offensive.
- Giving gifts as a memento is a personal act to be done only after considering the provisions of the respective laws with regard to the value of the gift given.

Europeans

- *British:* British businessmen share most of their culture and business manners with other Europeans. They are formal in meetings and personal style.
- *French:* French businessmen usually choose to speak in French with businessmen from other countries. They are very cordial and greet each other by shaking hands. Businessman and businesswoman may embrace and kiss each other on meeting and parting.
- *Germans:* German business meetings are highly formal and scheduled much in advance. Punctuality is of utmost importance. Germans can explain themselves in English too, if required. People are addressed by their surnames. Senior businessmen are shown respect by sometimes being referred to as "Herr Doktor". Similarly, businesswomen are always addressed as "Frau".

- *Italian and Spanish:* Both Italians and Spanish take business occasions as part of social life and may be less formal than other Europeans. Meetings are more informal, so discussion about personal welfare may precede the discussion.
- *Dutch:* Dutch businessmen speak English fluently. Most of them are polyglots (speaking or writing several languages). They can, therefore, conduct business in several languages. They are relaxed in their approach to business meetings and personal relations.

The Japanese

- Japanese businesspeople generally greet others by shaking hands, and not with a bow.
- It is polite to offer and accept the business card with both hands.
- The Japanese always like to maintain personal space, so physical contact is not desirable.
- Japanese business people should be addressed by using Mr or Ms, never by the first name.
- In Japan, saying "no" is considered impolite. Hence, one should not embarrass a Japanese business person by insisting on a point to the extent that he or she has to say no to the point/offer.
- The Japanese consider giving gifts to be an important part of business. A gift has to be in keeping with the status of the person. Gifts in pairs (like a pen and pencil set or cufflinks) are considered lucky, but not gifts in fours.
- Red cards in Japan are funeral notices, so red greeting cards are not used for business.

Arabs

Arab businessmen are known for their warm-hearted greetings. They stick to their traditional way of greeting, both as hosts and visitors, by saying "Salaam alaikum" (peace be upon you), accompanied by a firm handshake. To show greater warmth and closeness, Arab business-people may embrace each other while placing the right hand on the heart and the other hand on each other's right shoulders. They may also kiss on both cheeks. Do not reciprocate, unless you are also an Arab.

Arab business people are rarely under pressure of time. Meetings for business are preceded by social pleasantries. Discussions on religious and political matters are strictly avoided. Business meetings are conducted in a leisurely style. Therefore, the business session may get extended beyond your expectation. Arabs extend lavish hospitality as hosts. As visitors, they expect similar hospitality in other countries. To an Arab business-person, giving gifts is a part of hospitality. Therefore at dinners, small gifts are offered as a token of friendship. As tokens of gratitude for favours received, expensive gifts are presented, which are received as a part of the business culture. It is not looked upon as bribe. It is an accepted form of giving thanks. However, never give handkerchiefs as gifts, as they symbolize tears and parting. Arabs, like most Asians, eat their meals with their hand and do not drink alcohol.

Indians

As Indian businesses go global, business-people in India are realizing the need to prepare themselves to be good hosts to international visitors and considerate visitors in other countries via a judicious mix of modernity and tradition. Indian business culture is eclectic. Shaking hands at a meeting or parting is a common practice. Indians have always been known for their hospitality. Visitors are always treated with utmost attention and respect.

Business meetings are punctual, well-planned, and formally conducted, and protocol of seniority is observed. In matters of business discussion, juniors always give precedence to their seniors. Many times, juniors wait for a signal from their senior to contribute to the discussion. Business cards are exchanged while parting generally to indicate further contacts. Presentation of small gifts at the end of the meeting is considered to be a gesture of goodwill. Very important persons are received at the threshold of the meeting venue by senior executives and are usually presented with bouquets. They are also normally accompanied back to their vehicles and duly seen off.

INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL ETIQUETTE

6

Know the norms of behaviour for business-to-business interactions.

Individuals represent companies. Therefore, the norms for interpersonal behaviour apply to organization-to-organization communication as well. Each individual contributes to the organization's image and should know how to conduct himself or herself as a representative of the organization. Good business behaviour includes the following:

Individuals represent companies. The norms for interpersonal behaviour apply also to company-to-company behaviour.

1. Be loyal to your organization
   - Do not criticize your organization before colleagues from other companies.
   - Defend your colleagues' actions without offending the complainant. Promise corrective action on your colleagues'/company's behalf.
   - Always speak well of your company. You are a part of your company's activities.
   - Feel proud of your organization's achievements. Keep yourself fully informed of new developments and better prospects for the company. No company can be free from problems and setbacks, but highlight the positive gains and not the losses.

Feel proud of your organization's achievements. Keep yourself fully informed of the new developments and better prospects for the company.

2. Be careful about confidential matters
   - Keep confidential material in as few hands as possible. It can be used against the interests of your company.
   - Secure records and use code names if the information involves protecting the concerned persons.
   - Help others develop trust in you. Confidentiality requires mutual trust. Do not leak others' secrets to protect your own.
3. Maintain good relationships with customers

   A company's business sense and manners are best seen in how employees deal with their buyers or suppliers. To maintain good relationships with your customers and clients observe the following:

   - Handle the smallest of customers well. You cannot afford to ignore the biggest customers, but your company's reputation is built on how you treat small customers and clients.
   - Be prompt in your service to the customer. Respond to complaints and e-mails on time.
   - Keep track of the following:
   - Number of complaints received and responded to.
   - Number of clients revisiting your company.
   - Number of walk-ins every day.
   - Commitment of your suppliers to help in emergencies.

4. When you take a decision that will affect the interests of many people, look for mutual benefits for both parties and all stakeholders.

Good manners breed good understanding and the mutual respect necessary for good business relations.

5. Good manners breed good understanding and the mutual respect necessary for good business relations. Treat all colleagues with respect and recognize that others have positions above you. Similarly, when dealing with persons from other companies, inform them of your position through your business card and try to learn the other person's position in his or her company. Extend due respect to the person you are visiting.

SUMMARY

- This chapter explains why successful businessmen should understand the unwritten rules of business etiquette and that each workplace differs in terms of appropriate behaviour.
- There are general rules for introducing oneself and others, handling telephone calls, and attending business dinners as a host or a guest.
- One must follow the guidelines for courteous interaction with those from different countries and cultures.
- An employee should represent his or her company to other businesses with care.

CASE: CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

At UP Institute of Technology & Science (UPITS), a number of professors in the engineering and science departments and a chief librarian from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States worked as visiting faculty under the MIT–Ford Foundation–UPITS collaboration for two years. The Indian faculty and their families were happy to have the guests on campus. There were frequent parties and family get-togethers, which resulted in many friendships among the hosts and the visitors.

One day, professor and head of the mechanical engineering department, Dr Mathur, went to the central library to discuss the possibility of procuring certain international books and journals for UPITS with the visiting German library chief, James Wandel. Dr Mathur reached about a half hour later than the pre-arranged time. The door was shut, but he opened it and walked in, pulled up a chair to move it closer, sat down, leaned over the desk, extended his hand, and said, "Hi! How are you this morning, Wandel?"

Dr Mathur was surprised to see a frown on Mr Wandel's face and felt further confused to hear the question, "By the way, are you my boss?"

"No", said Dr Mathur.

"Then, please know my name is James Wandel."

"I am sorry, I didn't mean to be impolite or rude to you. I just wanted to address you in a more friendly way. I am indeed very sorry Mr James."

Mr Wandel was visibly annoyed. "Yes, what do you want?" he asked curtly.

"No, nothing. I am sorry", said Dr Mathur and left Mr Wandel's office completely puzzled and disappointed.

Questions to Answer

1. What went wrong in this exchange?
2. Was Mr James Wandel right in his reaction?
3. What can one learn from this case about business and professional interactions?

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. At a business lunch your host keeps you waiting for 50 minutes and you are getting very late for your next meeting. When your host arrives, do you:
   (a) Suggest rearranging the meeting for another day?
   (b) Try to postpone your next appointment?
   (c) Excuse yourself from lunch?
2. While introducing yourself to an American host and trying to shake hands you notice he is embarrassed

because he cannot move his right arm—it is an artificial arm. Do you:
   (a) Apologize and say "sorry"?
   (b) Greet him by shaking his left hand?
   (c) Give up the idea of shaking hands?
3. Why should the host always be at the venue of the business dinner 10 minutes before the meeting?
4. Discuss the attitude of the following cultures to the practice of giving gifts as mementos:
   (a) Indians (b) Japanese
   (c) Germans (d) Americans
5. Why are business etiquette rules unwritten?
6. What key cultural differences should you keep in mind while dealing with foreign businessmen and businesswomen?
7. Why are good manners necessary for good business?
8. Show how individual employees' manners reflect an organization's culture and etiquette.
9. Discuss some factors that may contribute to communication breakdowns in international business.
10. "Social behaviour and manners in one country may be considered rude in another". Explain with suitable examples.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What does the term "business etiquette" mean to you?
2. How far is it correct to view the manners and attitudes of people from other cultures in terms of our own culture? Why do we do so?
3. "Each individual contributes to the company's image". Reflect on the significance of this statement for a company's customer care management.
4. Like individuals, companies too have business etiquette rules. Give examples of some of these.
5. A handshake is a globally recognized form of greeting. How does one communicate feelings through a handshake?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. As a token of goodwill, you want to present your Chinese host an expensive Titan watch from India. When should you present it: on meeting, on parting, or never?
2. In India, the gift is usually presented to the lady of the house. What is the normal etiquette of presenting gifts in the Middle East?
3. It is acceptable in the United States to address a casual acquaintance by the first name. It communicates a sense of familiarity. How might those of other nationalities, such as Germans, respond to being addressed by the first name after a brief, first meeting?

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. The set of norms of behaviour and attitude in every workplace is:
   (a) internationally prescribed
   (b) nationally laid down
   (c) self-evolved
   (d) dictated by the board
2. When introducing ourselves, we should use:
   (a) only our first name
   (b) only the surname
   (c) only our designation
   (d) both the first name and the surname

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

3. In business, when you fail to recall the name of a person met earlier, you can ask him or her:
   (a) for his or her surname
   (b) for his or her initials
   (c) for his or her business card
   (d) to excuse you for forgetting his or her name
4. In business telephone calls, when making a request always use:
   (a) the interrogative form
   (b) direct categorical statements
   (c) the passive form
   (d) the imperative form
5. As a host, you would invite visiting foreign guests to a business dinner:
   (a) by writing an invitation letter
   (b) personally, face-to face
   (c) through a messenger
   (d) by announcing the dinner at a meeting
6. At an Arab business party, alcohol is:
   (a) served first
   (b) served last
   (c) served continuously
   (d) not served at all
7. In many parts of the world, such as Latin America and India, keeping the eyes lowered is a sign of:
   (a) respect
   (b) dishonesty
   (c) evasiveness
   (d) timidity
8. In different cultures, colors represent:
   (a) different things
   (b) the same thing
   (c) insignificant things
   (d) arbitrary things
9. In business, keep telephone calls very short because the other person may not be:
   (a) interested in talking to you
   (b) free to talk to you
   (c) paying attention to you
   (d) noting down what you say
10. People from other countries can be easily put at ease by speaking to them in:
    (a) English
    (b) your own language
    (c) their language
    (d) sign language

16

Communication for Conflict Management

> *One single minute of reconciliation is worth more than an entire life of friendship.*
>
> — *Gabriel Gracia Marquez*

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Understand the role of communication as a behaviour that helps in the conflict situation to create mutual understanding.
2. Learn about the intangible issues which cause inter-personal conflicts.
3. Understand the effectiveness of stop-think, listen and communicate system for conflict management.
4. Know how tangible issues lead to serious conflicts between neighbours, persons, states and countries.

Communication at Work

Vikram is a cyber techie. He is a former employee of a Mumbai based private company which works for maintaining the primary and back-up servers for the airport's common use passenger processing system (CUPPS) and baggage reconsideration system (BRS) at Mahatma Ghandhi International Airport at Indraprastha. On May 8, 2012, Vikram disrupted two key cyber networks that handled passenger processing and baggage system at the Indraprastha International Airport. The outage that lasted for nearly 18 hours caused lot of harassment to the incoming and the outgoing travellers as well as to the entire airport administration. Vikram, the engineer, expressed his inability to locate the fault. The chief engineer and other cyber seniors of the company flew down to attend to the problem. But nothing happened. When confronted Vikram frankly confessed to his boss that he had introduced the malicious software that made the system at the airport non-functional out of grudge against his employer company. He felt that his company had not acknowledged his contributions towards creating the CUPPS and BRS systems format. The chief engineer told Vikram that his work as cyber engineer had always been outstanding. He assured the dissatisfied techie that he would be soon rewarded for his work.

Thereupon Vikram removed the malicious software. The system was restored and once again became fully functional. Meanwhile, the police arrived and enquired into the matter. They charged Vikram with sabotaging a public electronic system and told that he was to be arrested under relevant sections of the Information Technology Act, 20A.

But the chief engineer intervened and pleaded with the police inspector that it was a system's failure and that Vikram had rectified the fault. Why should he be arrested? It is the company's responsibility to maintain the system effectively. The company could be sued for causing trouble to the travellers and damage to the airport's smooth functioning by the failure of their CUPPS and BRS systems for 18 hours. The chief engineer told the police inspector that Vikram was a cyber expert and had worked a lot for putting that system in place at Mahatma Gandhi Airport. But after all, a man is a man. There are human factors that sometimes limit the person's ability to work with the machines. He urged the inspector to hold the company responsible for the 18 hour outage on May 8, 2012, not Vikram who was only an employee of the company.

The inspector noted down the details of the contract signed between the airport and cyber company regarding the installation and maintenance of the CUPPS and BRS systems at the Indraprastha Airport in 2009, and left.

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Conflict is a state of disagreement, argument, and opposition, or hostility between groups, people, countries or sets of ideas, beliefs, interests and loyalties etc. Conflict can be professional, personal, social, political, ethnic or job related. For example, professional conflict/issues can be over the job related settlement of the minimum wage payment to the unskilled labour. Social conflict between age groups of people may be because of generation gap and the opposition between tradition and modernity. Kall Marx tells us about the potential conflict below the surface of society—the struggle between the haves and the have-nots. The political conflict between democracy against the rule of monarchy is witnessed across the developing world.

Armed Conflict

Conflicts can be armed and violent. For years, some parts of the world have been torn apart by armed conflict to end dictatorship or insurgency.

The word conflict is used also in the following situations.

Conflict of Loyalties

You face conflict of loyalties when you have a situation in which you have to select between two or more opposite needs of equal importance for you. For example, a conflict between the demand of one's family and one's work. A married lady may be faced with the demands of her family and her work. As both are equally demanding and influencing her life, a conflict of loyalties arises before her.

Conflict of Interest(s)

The conflict of interest occurs when you have a situation in which you feel unable to do what you think you should do because your decision to do it would affect your other aspects of life. For example, there is an increasing conflict of interest between the position as a minister of tourisim and the management of his son's chain of five star hotels.

The conflict of interests arises also in a situation when different people want different things.

For example, the HRD minister wants to have a single national level entrance examination to all the higher level engineering institutions in India, but the higher institutions want to retain their autonomy and freedom to choose their own method of selecting students to their respective institutions.

Conflict of interests between two adjoining states in South India over water sharing of a common river flowing through both the states may grow from the stage of negotiations to state strikes and interstate violence if the conflict is not resolved.

Conflict of Ideas/Opinions/Views

A situation in which two opposing opinions, views, ideas or beliefs crop up, but both cannot exist together or both cannot be held as correct.

For example, commenting on the recent railway accident in Bihar, the railway minister stated that the accident was an act of sabotage, but the Railway Board's chief described the accident as a human error of the driver. Thus, the two views of the disastrous accident conflicted with each other.

Inner Conflict

When we talk of conflict, we normally think of two opposing external entities existing outside us. But sometimes there is a situation in which we have two opposite feelings about something that causes inner conflict in us. The famous soliloquy of Shakespeare's *Prince Hamlet:*

> "To be, or not to be:
> That is the question;"

universally symbolises the modern age dilemma and the inner conflict in all spheres of life.

Again, political conflicts over the division of a state on the basis of language can change into a wider conflict over the issue of distribution/division of natural resource mines, minerals, and industrial belts.

From all the above descriptions of conflict, one thing about conflict should have been clear that conflict is a state or situation of opposition between two or more things related to the same thing. The two things which are thus interrelated become conflicting if they contradict or oppose each other.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICT

1

Understand the role of communication as a behaviour that helps in the conflict situation to create mutual understanding.

Dynamic Nature of Conflicts

Conflict as a state is dynamic. Its intensity usually grows, if left unresolved. For example, a discussion between two neighbours on car parking may change into a physical fight between them.

For instance, in a housing society young boys played cricket in the open space between the two blocks of flats. It was considered a nuisance by the inmates of the flats. Many times glass windows got broken. The affected inmates continuously objected to the cricket playing at that place. Sometimes when there was a strong protest by the society members, the boys agreed to change the cricket ball with a tennis ball. The nuisance of breaking the window panes appeared to be resolved. But the boys kept playing there itself, creating lot of noise and disturbing all the neighbours. Obviously, the residents had not discussed the problem with the concerned boys. They did not think of handling their problem through convincing the boys by communicating with them to find alternative solutions that would satisfy the residents as well as the boys.

Management of conflict through communication is a process of managing conflict by choosing the most suitable solution to the situation of conflict. It assumes that there are a number of possible solutions to the problem. But we should choose the most appropriate solution. And this whole process of conflict management is done through communication between both the parties involved in the conflict. For instance, the boys and residents could together choose a different spot for cricket, if persuaded by the inmates.

State of Tension

All tensions create emotional distancing between interrelated and interdependent beings. Conflict mentally and emotionally creates a gap between two persons by pulling them in two opposite directions. If held in tension for long, the link between the two conflicting beings may be permanently broken.

Emotional Residue of Conflict

Conflict is Like a Stain on Inter-relationship

It has an emotional residue, like a bad spot on your white linen sheet, conflict leaves a lasting stain on your emotional relationships. It keeps on hurting and embarrassing you.

MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT

Generally, we think of management of conflict as *resolving* it or *handling* it or reconciling it. That means we find some solution, one satisfactory way of dealing with a specific problem of conflicts by situation. It assumes that the conflict management is a problem solving process. It deals with each conflict as a problem and solves it by removing its immediate cause. But it does not ensure that the problem does not recur.

Negative Conflicts and Positive Conflicts

Know the nature of conflict to manage it better. Because conflict in itself suggests the presence of a negative situation, the term positive conflict sounds contradictory. However, conflicts are described as positive or negative on the basis of their favourable or unfavourable results for the conflicting parties. Conflicts are *positive* when they end in mutual satisfaction of both the parties. But a *negative* even when it is resolved leaves one or more conflicting persons dissatisfied with the result.

Characteristics of Negative Conflicts

The conflict is negative when the communication follows the "you-game plan". The focus of discussions is personalized. Instead of discussing the behaviour or idea of a person, the criticism is directed against the individuals as persons. It is rightly said that if you want to change something, then "hate the sin but not the sinner."

Me-centred Approach

Both the adversaries see only their side of the problem. They fail to realize that the other person also has some reasons to feel hurt or aggrieved.

Either or Neither Attitude

Both the parties insist on having either their way of deciding the issue or they will have no decision. No compromise attitude.

With such fixed minds conflicts can never be resolved or changed into positive situations.

Characteristics of Positive Conflicts

Positive conflicts are characterized by:

- Both parties are interested to resolve the problem.
- Looking for mutual satisfaction.
- Objectivity in understanding that each party has genuine reason for disagreement.
- Facts, not feelings form the basis of discussion.

What we propose to discuss here is the management of conflict through communication.

Interpersonal Conflict as a General State in Modern Life

Conflict is inevitable in our everyday interpersonal social and work place life. We see conflicts in all spheres of our life—personal, social, and professional. It is because, though modern technology has made us interrelated and interdependent, our societies remain deeply divided within them. Different kinds of ethnic, religions, cultural, social, political, economic, gender, and generation gaps separate us from one another as individuals and divide our goals, perceptions, beliefs and understanding, and thus affecting our interpersonal relations and mutual understanding.

Communication as a Bridge of Interpersonal Understanding

Lack of interpersonal communication, as pointed out by Martin Luther King (Jr) is the primary cause of conflict among people. He says:

> People don't get along
> Because they fear each other
>
> People fear each other
> Because they don't know each other
>
> They don't know each other
> Because they have not
> Communicated with each other.

As discussed in Chapter 8 on the nature and process of communication, Keith Davis describes the role of communication as "a bridge of meanings among people so that they can share what they feel and know. By using this bridge, a person can cross safely the river of misunderstanding that sometimes separates people."

In the context of conflict management Keith Davis's assertion about communication as a bridge of shared understanding among people that connects them is significant. Whereever there is a river of misunderstanding, we need a bridge. A safe bridge for crossing the barriers in interpersonal understanding is communication.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT THROUGH COMMUNICATION

This process requires you to have two sets of skills:

1. Management skills
2. Communication skills

Both of these skills are integrated into effective communication skills. But it would be better for us to first discuss briefly conflict management skills.

Management Skills

Identification of Problem and the Goal

Here, management is not used in the sense of managing as such, a process of planning, organizing, monitoring, controlling, forecasting, etc. In conflict management through communication, you need only to identify the problem and your goal. The approach, means of achieving the objective, is already decided—communication.

Problem Identification

The first step in conflict management is to understand the cause of conflict. Is it caused by conflict of ideas, or interests, or beliefs, or hurt egos, or fear of losing job, or opportunity due to someone's machinations or chances? There can be any reason of conflict between two persons.

The existing or present position is the problem position to start the process of management. Let us call it position P_1. Now we want to resolve the conflict and change it into position P_2. P_2 is the targeted goal of conflict management. And the change from P_1 to P_2 is the task to be achieved by communication. We should know clearly our existing relations and also exactly how we want them to be. And how soon. By understanding these two states, the existing and projected situations, we chart out the course of successful and effective communication.

Communication Skills

Communication Skills for Conflict Management

Communication does not mean saying whatever is in your mind. Specially in conflict the person should know what ought to be said and how it should be said. Similarly the other person involved as receiver in the communication process should receive, understand and interpret the statement correctly and objectively. Both speaking and responding need to be precise and exact. The communicators should have "communication competence", which according to Brian H. Spitzberg and Michael L. Hecht, is the ability that enables the communication to be effective and successful in achieving the goal of communication and makes the successful process repeatable.

Communication competence makes the communication act successful by resolving the conflict and establishing shared understanding between the conflicting parties. Communication is effective when

- Whatever is to be said is precisely stated, rightly and correctly understood.
- When the receiver acts as intended by the message.

To achieve this purpose, the communication should be

- *Clear:* In simple words and uncomplicated ideas.
- *Specific:* Exact, precise not vague.

- Or based on *generalizations.*
- *Factual:* Facts, not impressions or opinions, beliefs or assumptions convince the other person.
- *Sincere:* To be accepted by others, you should speak with sincerity, and honest conviction.
- *Credible:* Communication is successful only when it is credible, other persons are willing not only to understand it, believe it, accept it as true but also follow it in action.

Transactional Communication Process

Conflict can be resolved only by letting all parties participate in the interpersonal discussion. Both parties hear each other and respond interactively face to face patiently. The grievances are sympathetically heard. A common ground of understanding can emerge only when all the concerned minds freely interact and sort out the areas of differences. One-way communication is ineffective in conflict resolutions.

Limitation of Linear Model of Communication in Conflict Resolution

The linear model in conflict situation can be helpful in directly explaining the problem to the other person. But this explanation of the interpersonal conflict would be from a single point of view. Besides, the process of communication being a single person's speaking would suggest as if the interpersonal conflict is something one person has done to the other. The linear communication may end up as a fault finding process instead of acting as a bridge of understanding between the conflicting parties.

Of course, the linear model does have a feed-back loop in its interactional form, yet the channel of communication basically flows from the sender to the receiver.

It opens only on the side of the speaker of the message. Thus, the communication in the linear form would tend to sound like one way preaching or pleading for resolving the issue by removing the cause of the conflict.

As already said, the transactional communication is; therefore, the most effective process of communication for conflict resolution. It looks upon conflict as something that happens between two persons and it is a thing that primarily the concerned persons can work together to resolve and manage through developing common understanding of the issues and agreed upon solutions.

In fact, the conflict makes both the parties extra-sensitive to whatever one says to the other regarding cause of conflict or the persons, or the act responsible for the situation of conflict. Hence, communicating in conflict requires to be a well thought process of interpersonal communication.

The Language of Discussion

It is significant to note that the normal rule of using second person "you" before the first person "I" is changed in the conflict discussion. For example, normally we say, "you have done well, so have I". We praise the second person "you" first, then only praise ourselves, "I". In positive situations, grammar and culture go together in shaping the language structure. But in negative situations of blame or fault, the rule of grammar is reversed to follow the psychological and cultural norms of inter-relationships. Therefore, we speak of our fault first, then the fault of the other person. Accordingly, we say, "the fault is mine as well as yours".

The change in the position of "you" and "I" creates a corresponding change in the listener's perception of relative degree of responsibility of both the persons. The listener feels satisfied to some extent to hear that he is not the first to be blamed. Though it is a culture-based use of personalized "you" and "I", it has psychological effect on the other person's sense of blame.

Use 'I' Statements to Assert Your Responsibility in Conflict Creation

To resolve the conflict you should be willing to own the share of responsibility for the on-going conflict. And accordingly make clear, direct and personalized "I" statements which assert your confidence and frankness to fault yourself. This "I statement", "I ordered it" or "I did not like to do it" is a personal statement that states responsibility.

The language of discussion in conflict should avoid all words and phrases which blame and fault the other party exclusively first or personally. In order to establish better inter-relationship do not use negative words for your opponent. For example, if you want to express your disagreement with some point, do not say "I do not agree with you." Better say, "I do not agree with what you say."

The general rule in this regard is that you disagree with an idea of a person, but not the person who holds that idea.

By avoiding the language of personal disagreement, you tend to develop the possibility of personal agreement between two persons subsequently.

MANAGING THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT

2

Learn about the intangible issues which cause interpersonal conflicts.

The interpersonal transactional communication in conflict should be psychologically planned for a collaborative approach to conflict resolution. First of all, consider that the other person is sensitive to whatever is said, and non-verbally communicated. Therefore, to respond to conflict, we should follow the S-TLC system—before communicating we should stop, think, and listen. Ruth Anna Abigail and Dudley D. Cahn call this process S-TLC system of managing conflicts over intangible issues.

By following these four steps, we can generally resolve our interpersonal conflicts.

The S-TLC Strategy Conflict Management

3

Understand the effectiveness of stop-think, listen and communicate system for conflict management.

This system is based on the understanding that conflict is a creation by two persons and that its resolution can be done only by the combined efforts of both the persons. Therefore the communication skills discussed below are to be used by both the parties for managing the conflict. If only one of the parties uses communication competence, and the other remains a poor communicator, the gap of misunderstanding and conflict between the two may remain unresolved. Therefore the basic skills of communications discussed below may be followed as collaborative steps of communication in managing interpersonal conflicts:

- *Stop:* It is a common saying that when you are annoyed or angry, do not respond immediately. Before saying something count upto nine. It only means that wait, regain your self control, and cool down, only then you interact. Whenever you realize that you are in a situation of conflict with someone, tell yourself, "Hush! No more of that". Ask yourself to stop! To pause awhile, to give yourself time to cool down to think, listen and then communicate.
- *Think:* "Look before you leap" is a wise piece of advice for acting in a perilous situation. It says that it is sensible to think about the possible dangers or difficulties of something before doing it, or not doing it. You should think about the possibility of worsening the situation if you take the conflict personally. The conflict is about an issue, not a person. Also think about your larger goals of smooth relationships by not allowing the conflict to divide you from the other person. Also, think whether the other person also needs good relations with you. Think to develop an informed frame of mind before you communicate to resolve the situation of conflict. Consider the conflict as a whole. Analyse its background, your options, and the best time and way of raising it with the other person. Also think of the other person's possible arguments, options, and goals with regard to the conflict.

- *Listen:* To be able to have a meaningful and fruitful dialogue, you should first listen to what the other person has to say. Do not start speaking on the basis of your assumptions about the thoughts and feelings of the other person involved in the situation of conflict. Hear him/her out. Half of his/her grievance would be over if you listen to her/him patiently. Skill to listen actively is as effective in the resolution of conflict as competence to express yourself effectively. Remember, what the other person says is as important as what you say. Therefore, first listen.
- *Communicate:* Finally, you decide how you want to say it all. Persuasively, aggressively, or in a submissive way of reconciliation, and give and take attitude.

PURPOSIVE COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT

Communication is a purposive act. It always seeks to fulfil the communication goal. While thinking about the conflict one of the important subjects of thinking is what you want to do about the conflict situation. You want to change the other person, change your own self, change the situation or change nothing, and do nothing. It is possible that both the persons may not think alike. One person may think of resolving the conflict, while the other may like to leave it unchanged. In a situation of this kind your communication has to attempt two tasks, first to change the person and then change the situation by removing the cause of conflict.

VERBAL SKILLS FOR COMMUNICATING IN CONFLICT

Use of Personalized Language

Personalized language uses "I" statements or "you" statements to discuss or criticise the people involved in the situation instead of talking about it in a more general way. Nothing consoles a grieving person more than the assertive. "I" statement of a person who owns his fault and responsibility for generating the conflict. The words "I feel or I think, I should must have acted like that", convey the person's upfront honesty and sense of implied regret to the other person.

Instead of attributing the cause of his behaviour to anyone else, or to the other party involved in the conflict, the speaker owns his responsibility for his feelings, his thought and his action. And that strengthens the basis for building up understanding between the two persons. Psychologically the other person would also be willing to accept their part of the responsibility for whatever has happened. And, that exactly is the beginning of the process of reconciliation between the disputing persons. "You statements" or "they statements", unlike "I statement" which fault the doer's responsibility, are statements which evade personal responsibility. They attribute the blame to others. The depersonalized statements show that you as doer want to hide behind someone for owning your fault. Such depersonalized statements show that you are trying to be defensive use of "you statements" in expressing disagreement.

Conflict Over Intangible Issues

Intangible issue relate to non-material or non-physical matters which concern human relations in terms of respect, values, love, self-esteem, attention, concern, caring, family ties, traditions and cooperative behaviour. They are though non-material in the sense that they do not exist physically, yet to several persons these values matter deeply. And often conflicts arise centred on such intangible, personality related issues. And the earlier these conflicts get resolved the better it is for both the conflicting parties. As these intangible issues generally involve friends, near and dear relatives, or close neighbours, they constantly disturb the peace of mind of both the persons.

Hence, one should try to manage these intangible conflicts through communication as a bridge of mutual understanding and good will.

Tangible Issues and Conflicts

Tangible issues relate to matters of land, concrete nature, such as a property, territory, natural resources, gas, water, minerals, mines, coal, or wages, promotions, rewards recognitions and things which are not personality or behaviour centred issues.

Conflicts caused by tangible issues require for resolution communication through negotiations, group discussions, meetings, formal interactions and agreements, sometimes with the help of a third party. Some of these issues, specially issues of territory, sharing of water, and other natural resources become the main issue of conflict threatening to change into hostilities between the neighbouring countries or states. They call for a dialogue between the concerned states or countries for a peaceful settlement of the contentious issues. The high level interaction in such situations exhibit subtlety of understanding and communication competence of the negotiators.

4

Know how tangible issues lead to serious conflicts between neighbours, persons, states and countries.

Trust Building

The communication act is a first step to create an environment of trust between both the parties. Past events of mistrust are acknowledged and also explained to pave a fresh path of understanding and goodwill. Remove the fear of competition or power abuse.

Build mutual trust by sharing the facts fully and asking for remedial steps for resolving the conflict with an attitude of understanding the other person's demands and needs. Be flexible.

SUMMARY

- Conflict is unavoidable but it is normally manageable. To be able to manage conflict you should first know the nature and reason for its occurrence. Then, you should select the best method for resolving the conflict or reducing it.
- Improve your communication skills to prevent the conflict from recurring in your personal, social, workplace and professional life. In the situation of conflict follow the system of stop-think-listen and then communicate.
- For conflict management, listening to the other party's views and grievances is as important as speaking out your thoughts and feelings.
- To be able to manage the conflict, argue facts, and not impressions or suppositions and assumptions and beliefs.

CASE: MHAI

The Mahatama Gandhi Highways Authority of India (MHAI) issued lease termination notice to the Basai-Nagpur expressway operator in June 2010 for violating terms of agreement. Violations included failure to decongest the expressway, taking one-sided financial decisions and increasing the number of accidents on the expressway because of wrong and inefficient tolling system at Badgaong Plaza, on way from Mumbai to Nagpur.

The relations between the two parties became bitter after the nodal authority of highways accused the e-way operator of fraud in the form of refinancing the project without its due approval.

The e-way operator changed financiers and took loan from them and used the money without getting approval from the government's Nodal Highway Building Agency.

The management of toll plaza was faulty. There were from both sides long lines of vehicles at the toll barrier. The daily commuters were put to lot of inconvenience and delay due to the traffic jams at the toll bridge.

The lanes were broken. And the delayed vehicles sped fast as soon as they were able to creep beyond the barrier. There were several public protests against the administration and the firm managing the toll plaza. The MHAI finally decided to change the firm and issued the termination notice of the contract between the government's e-ways building authority and the operator Mumbai Nagpur Expressway.

But instead of going to the court for challenging the termination notice, the firm approached the MHAI and both the parties held several meetings to sort out the issues.

A time frame was mutually decided to settle all the issues to the satisfaction of all concerned parties, through consultations, and meetings.

It was agreed that in future no financial or administrative changes would be made by the toll plaza firm without prior approval of the government's Nodal Highways Building Agency.

Questions to Answer

1. Was the termination notice to the toll plaza firm in keeping with the provisions of the contract between the two parties?
2. Can the change of financiers for taking the loan be termed as fraud?
3. Do you think that the fresh understanding between the MHAI and toll plaza company would solve the problem of the daily commutes between Mumbai and Nagpur.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Discuss the types of conflict that usually arise in interpersonal relationship.
2. Is there some common cause of conflict in all kinds of conflicts? Identify and discuss.
3. What are the characteristics of positive conflicts?
4. What is the basic difference between positive conflicts and negative conflicts?
5. What is meant by the conflict of loyalties? Discuss with examples.
6. How does conflict of interests differ from conflict of loyalties? Explain.
7. Discuss the role of communication in conflict management.
8. Discuss the communication skills you need to resolve a conflict.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Think of an occasion when you failed to resolve a conflict with your next door neighbour. What went wrong? Elaborate your answer with an example of the conflict you could not resolve.
2. Can you trace a pattern in the development of conflicts in your personal life. Do you think those conflicts could be avoided by you?
3. In the communication model (system) S-TLC, why does C (communication) come at the end, and S (stop) at the beginning?
4. Do you believe that some conflicts are inevitable? Why?
5. Have you ever used communication as a bridge of understanding between your brother and yourself in the situation of a complete break up between both of you? How did you begin the communication, and developed it successfully into reunion? Discuss the precautions you took in discussing the issue.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. How would you distinguish between tangible issues and intangible issues? Give some examples.
2. "I hate the idea of causes and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country," says E. M. Forster, in *Two Cheers for Democracy*. Comment on the statement of conflict.
   Give your comments on Forster's resolution of an assumed inner conflict.
3. Compare two conflict situations, one that grew worse and another that did not. Discuss their outcomes.
4. Why should we avoid use of personalised language in conflict?
5. Do you agree that silence is as important as speaking in managing conflict? Discuss.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. The best way to overcome conflict is through
   (a) confrontation
   (b) communication
   (c) accusation
   (d) self-defence
2. Communication for conflict management is
   (a) proactive
   (b) reactive
   (c) interactive
   (d) transactional
3. The conflicting parties are
   (a) unrelated to each other
   (b) interrelated with each other
   (c) unknown to each other
   (d) close with each other
4. Conflict of ideas is a situation in which two opposing ideas
   (a) can exist together and can be both true
   (b) can exist together but cannot be both true
   (c) cannot exist together but can be both true
   (d) cannot exist together or cannot be both true
5. Negative conflict's resolution needs the discussion to be
   (a) personalized
   (b) impersonalized
   (c) non-personalized
   (d) de-personalized
6. In me-centred approach to conflict both the adversaries see the problem from the point of view of
   (a) themselves
   (b) each other
   (c) others
   (d) no one
7. Communication is effective when what is said is
   (a) correctly heard but not rightly understood
   (b) correctly heard, rightly understood but not rightly acted upon
   (c) exactly said, rightly understood and correctly acted upon
   (d) exactly said and rightly understood
8. Interpersonal communication acts as a
   (a) river of understanding
   (b) gulf of understanding
   (c) sea-shore of understanding
   (d) bridge of shared understanding
9. In conflict situation communication means that discussion should be
   (a) aggressive (b) emotional
   (c) specific (d) general
10. Choose the LTCS in the correct order of sequence of communication strategy.
    (a) CSTL (b) TCLS
    (c) LTCS (d) STLC

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

17 Communication for Effective Negotiations

I'll make you an offer you can't refuse!

—*Vito Corleone in* The Godfather

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Explain the negotiation process.
2. Understand the factors affecting negotiation.
3. Know about the subjective factors that affect negotiation outcomes.
4. Understand the stages in the negotiation process.
5. Identify different skills of initiating, discussing, and concluding the process of bargaining.
6. Know how to handle deadlocks.

Communication at Work

Anil and Manav are friends. They are trying to decide whether to go to the cinema or watch a cricket match.

Anil: You are coming to watch the cricket match with me today, aren't you?

Manav: No. I really don't want to. There's a very good film showing at the Ritz. Come to that instead.

Anil: No, I don't think a film would be as interesting as the cricket match. Surely, you'd rather come to the match?

Manav: No. I think today's match will be quite boring. Don't you prefer the cinema to cricket?

Anil: I suppose so, but this is a crucial match for our team. You like cricket too, don't you?

Manav: Yes, I do, but the film is on only today. I think you should come with me to the cinema and watch the match tomorrow. How does that sound?

Anil: No. I'm not coming to the film.

Manav: You are, you know.

Anil: I really want to watch the match—I'm not coming to the film!

Manav: Oh yes you are. It's raining today.

Anil: Oh dear. So it is. Okay, you win but if the weather is good tomorrow, you'll come to the match with me, won't you?

Manav: Yes. Of course.

WHAT IS NEGOTIATION?

Negotiation is a process of bargaining in which two parties, each of which has something that the other wants, try to reach an agreement on mutually accepted terms. Everyday examples of negotiation are:

- A brother and a sister debating which movie to watch
- Two friends trying to settle the amount for which one wants to sell his old car to the other
- Two sisters fighting over how a box of chocolates should be divided between them
- An employee making a suggestion to her manager regarding her salary
- A salesperson trying to arrange a meeting with a prospective wholesaler/dealer

The *Oxford Dictionary of Business English* defines negotiation as:

(a) "a process of trying to reach an agreement through discussion",

(b) "a meeting where this discussion takes place".

1

Explain the negotiation process.

Negotiation is a process of bargaining in which two parties, each of which has something that the other wants, try to reach an agreement on mutually accepted terms.

The Winston Simplified Dictionary defines negotiation as, "the discussion and bargaining that goes on between parties before a contract is settled or a deal is definitely agreed upon". Alan Fowler defines negotiation as "a process of intervention by which two or more parties who consider that they need to be jointly involved in any outcome, but who initially have different objectives, seek by the use of argument and persuasion to resolve their differences in order to achieve a mutually acceptable solution"1. According to Bill Scott, "A negotiation is a form of meeting between two parties: our party and the other party"2. The objective of most negotiations is to reach an agreement in which both parties together move towards an outcome that is mutually beneficial.

THE NATURE OF NEGOTIATION

The following points make the nature of negotiation quite clear:

1. Negotiation takes place between two parties. Both the parties are equally interested in finding a satisfactory result.
2. Negotiation leads to agreement through discussion, not instructions, orders, or power/influence/authority.

When a manager deals with other managers or customers and suppliers over whom he or she has no authority, he or she tries to reach an agreement through discussion, persuasion, and argument. In other words, the manager must negotiate with the other party.

Suppose you are a manager in the marketing department of a company. You need the help of an analyst from another department to complete an urgent project report. The other department may not be willing to spare the services of the analyst you badly need. You would need to discuss the matter with your colleagues and make your case using convincing arguments, by negotiating with the analyst and the other department. Reaching an agreement is the objective of negotiation.

Reaching an agreement is the objective of negotiation.

Consider the following situation, which shows how negotiations work.

Mr and Mrs Rai wanted to sell their house. They had approached many property dealers in their area. Several agents had seen their property and knew their intentions, including the minimum price they would be willing to accept. The Rais quickly realized that in their area, nearly every property agent had come to know of their desire to sell the house as early as possible. This worked against them, and every time they were made an offer, it was lower than the previous one. They became desperate and began to believe that it would not be possible to sell their house for a reasonable price because they made the mistake of disclosing their keenness to sell. One day, they happened to mention this to one of their friends. He gave them the contact information of a very prominent builder, Mr Devraj, from another part of the city. Mr Devraj answered the Rais' call and immediately enquired about the location of the plot and the built-up area. Next, he asked them their asking price. He paused, and then said, "Think about the price again". This made the Rais feel a bit shaky. They had told him the price they wanted, not the prices the property dealers had offered them thus far. Not wanting to lose the chance of selling their house, they reduced their asking price by ₹5 lakh. Mr Devraj promptly asked, "Is that final?" With some trepidation, they said, "Yes". In a businesslike tone, he said, "Done" and promised to send them ₹10 lakh as an advance the next day. He also remarked that he would have the remaining amount sent within a week. The Rais wanted him to see the house, but he said, "There is no need for that; I am familiar with the sector".

At the time of the full and final payment, the Rais learnt that they were not able to get the desired price for the house from other, smaller property dealers because the house had an old-fashioned design and would need to be demolished. What these property dealers were offering was the price of the land only. However, Mr Devraj, being a builder, would be able to use the basic architecture and give the house a new look.

THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATION

The need to negotiate is defined by the situation. Some situations require negotiating, others don't.

Situations Requiring Negotiation

Negotiation is necessary when an issue involves more than one person and the problem cannot be resolved by a single person. Whenever two or more persons or parties are involved, they are bound to have different views or aims regarding the outcome. The way to overcome disagreement is by negotiating.

Negotiation can take place only when both concerned parties are willing to meet and discuss the issue at hand. That is, they both must want to reach a decision by discussion, not force or authority.

There are formal and informal situations in negotiation.

Formal Negotiations

- There is a prearranged meeting of the two parties.
- The agenda is already fixed, and both parties know what is going to be discussed.
- Generally, more than two persons are involved in the discussion.
- In formal negotiations, there is time to prepare and assign roles for each person in each party. For instance, one person can put forth their side's reasons and suggestions, another can explain the side's points more thoroughly, and the third can closely follow the flow of the discussion and point out anything that has been missed.
- A formal negotiation is simpler to handle than unannounced meetings. There is time to study the entire situation and find out the strengths and weaknesses of the other party.

A formal negotiation is simpler to handle than unannounced meetings.

Generally, a formal negotiation is for settling a dispute or a conflict between two warring parties, such as for a labour or workers' strike. Negotiations in such situations are formal; the meeting between the two parties is fixed beforehand and both parties have time to prepare their bargaining points.

Informal Negotiations

Informal negotiations are unannounced and casual meetings, such as when a staff member drops by a colleague's office and discusses a problem, which they attempt to resolve. This is an informal negotiation because:

- It is unannounced.
- It involves just two persons.
- It appears casual (although the colleague who initiated the discussion might have planned this approach deliberately).
- It does not give one time to prepare for the discussion, so one cannot study the strengths or weaknesses of the other side.
- Its friendly and informal approach is meant to influence the outcome.

Situations Not Requiring Negotiation

The following types of situations will not require negotiation:

- When one of the two parties/persons immediately accepts or agrees to what the other is suggesting. In such a situation there is no need for negotiating. The desired result is already achieved.
- Whenever one of the two parties refuses even to consider or discuss the suggestion or proposal. For example, suppose a supplier or a dealer completely refuses

to reduce the price or consider any suggestion of partial payments, there is no possibility for negotiation.

However, people often encounter situations in which there is neither direct acceptance nor complete refusal at the outset. In such cases, the two persons deal with each other by discussing the possibility of reaching a mutually acceptable end.

2

Understand the factors affecting negotiation.

FACTORS AFFECTING NEGOTIATION

The factors discussed in this section usually affect the outcomes of negotiations.

Location

The location of a negotiation can influence the level of confidence of one party. When the location is one party's office, for instance, that party has several advantages. They are on home ground, an area of strength. They can access whatever information or material is needed during the course of the negotiation. They can also extend social courtesies as a token of goodwill; this could move the negotiation towards agreement.

Timing

- The choice of time for holding discussions and the length of the discussion should be fixed according to mutual convenience.
- There should be adequate time for the smooth exchange of ideas through different stages of negotiation. The preparation time and the timeframe for implementing the agreement afterwards should also be carefully fixed.
- To be effective, negotiations should be timely. That means they should be carried out before it is too late to reach an agreement.

3

Know about the subjective factors that affect negotiation outcomes.

Subjective Factors

Often the outcome of a discussion does not depend wholly on objective factors such as logic and the facts of the matter under consideration. The final outcome may also be determined by subjective factors relating to influence and persuasion.

1. *Individual relationships:* The conduct of negotiations is influenced not only by the real situation of the matter but also by the relationship and rapport between the two persons/parties involved in the process of discussion.
2. *Fear of authority:* Often one side's bargaining power is conditioned by fear of authority, higher connections, and the other party's capacity to hurt their professional future.
3. *Future and practical considerations:* When personal relationships are at stake, the negotiators may not wish to win the argument at the cost of the relationship. Moreover, the fear of losing business in the future is a strong factor in bargaining/negotiation positions, as is the effect on the participants' reputations.
4. *Mutual obligations:* The memories of past favours by the other party may also influence the negotiation.
5. *Personal considerations:* Self-questioning helps the negotiator identify the factors influencing his or her bargaining position and strengths. Both formal and informal negotiations are influenced by questions such as:
   - "How does my position on this proposal/issue take into account the likely effect on our future working relationship?"
   - "Am I allowing myself to be unduly influenced by a sense of obligation? Am I hoping to achieve too much by emphasizing past obligations?"
   - "What are my goals for this negotiation?"

Persuasive Skills and the Use of You-Attitude

Persuasion includes a range of skills for convincing other people of the need to accept or agree to a course of action. It is an essential element of effective business communication. It helps in resolving issues on which there is a difference of opinion, but that need solutions that are in the interest of all. In negotiations, people are gradually persuaded to accept the other party's view to some extent.

Persuasion includes a range of skills for convincing other people of the need to accept or agree to a course of action.

As you must have seen yourself, persuasion is not one single thing. It is a mixture of skills—attitude, psychology, language, tone, body language, and so on—used to convince the other party to accept one's view despite their objections or alternate proposals.

"You attitude" is an essential aspect of negotiations. Nothing convinces more than facts. But in order to persuade people, the facts should be discussed from the other party's point of view. A skilled negotiator should be able to highlight how the other person stands to gain from his or her suggestions. He or she must understand the other party's needs and be able to reconcile what would be a good result for him or her with the needs of the other party. This allows persuasion to end negotiations and discussions with a satisfying conclusion for both sides (creating a win–win situation).

Persuasion is not just one single thing. It is a mixture of skills—attitude, psychology, language, tone, body language, and so on—used to convince the other party to accept one's view despite their objections or alternate proposals.

The range of persuasive skills can be classified under the following broad headings:

- Style: Being collaborative rather than confrontational
- You attitude: considering the other person's viewpoint
- Talking and listening
- Probing and questioning
- Taking breaks when necessary
- Concessions and compromises
- Summarizing
- Reaching an agreement

A skilled negotiator must understand the other party's needs and be able to reconcile what would be a good result for him or her with the needs of the other party.

At the end of the discussion, both sides should be sure that the final agreement covers all necessary points and they are clearly expressed and understood.

STAGES IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

4

Understand the stages in the negotiation process.

Generally, the process of negotiation moves from the stage of "offer" to that of "agreement" via the stages of "counter-offer", "concession", and "compromise". All discussions that progress successfully from opening differences to a final, mutually acceptable outcome/conclusion usually move through the same general sequence. During informal discussions this sequence may not always be obvious, yet it is there with respect to the most important aspects of negotiations.

According to Alan Fowler, the stages of an effective discussion are:

- Preparing and planning
- Exchanging initial views
- Exploring possible compromises
- Searching for common ground
- Securing an agreement
- Implementing the agreement

At the end of the discussion, both sides should be sure that the final agreement covers all necessary points and they are clearly expressed and understood.

These six stages can be grouped into three basic phases:

- A preparation phase before the negotiation begins
- The actual negotiating process—the interaction that leads to the final agreement and an outcome
- The implementation of the agreement

Negotiation implies that both parties accept that an agreement between them is needed (required or desirable) before any decision is to be implemented.

Negotiation implies that both parties accept that an agreement between them is needed (required or desirable) before any decision is to be implemented. The direction of the discussion is towards that desired agreement. Hence, it requires careful preparation and handling.

The Preparation Phase

Like all effective communication/discussion, negotiations have to be planned. Tim Hindle, in his book *Negotiating Skills*, says, "Bear in mind that it is almost impossible for a negotiator to do too much preparation".[3]

There are two respects in which the negotiator has to be prepared before the negotiation:

- Assessing the relative strength of the two parties
- Setting negotiating objectives. At this stage, the negotiator should try to answer the following two questions:
  - What are the real issues?
  - Which parties should be involved?

Knowing the real issues at hand helps the negotiator feel confident and fully prepared about two things:

- That he/she knows the subject matter well and is not likely to be surprised by the other party introducing unexpected facts or figures
- That he/she is clear about the desired goal of the discussion

Negotiators should be realistic about their objectives. If they fail to persuade the other side to accept their ideal solution, they should be prepared to lower their expectations. If the ideal is not achievable, they should be very clear and firm about the lowest outcome acceptable to them. It is important for the negotiators to know what points they are willing to concede and what their limits are.

In the preparation stage, negotiators should also plan the best way of arguing their case, considering particularly the other person's likely viewpoint and objectives. They should assess the strength of each party's bargaining position. To be well prepared before the actual negotiating process begins, negotiators should:

- Be sure that they know enough about the subject matter to be discussed
- Decide their objectives and limits
- Plan how best to argue their case

The Negotiation Phase

Most effective negotiations follow a set sequence:

- The parties begin by defining the issues at hand. They ascertain the scope of the negotiation.
- Each side then puts forward what it is seeking. First, the party that is making a claim presents its case, and then the other party gives an initial response—thus, both the parties define their initial positions.
- After that comes a more open phase in which the initial positions are tested through argument.
- The parties then move to discussing a possible solution that could result in a resolution.
- Firm proposals in more specific terms are then discussed and modified before both parties accept them.
- Finally, an agreement is spelled out and a conclusion is reached.

The Implementation Phase

Some scholars do not consider the stages of preparation and implementation to be parts of negotiation. But they constitute two basic phases of the actual process of negotiation—one before initiating the negotiation process and the other after concluding discussions.

Some scholars do not consider preparation and implementation to be parts of negotiation.

- The purpose of negotiation is to achieve a decision; the purpose of an agreement is to implement the agreed-upon decision/outcome.
- If due attention is not paid to the implementation of a negotiation, then the negotiation fails.

Three steps to prevent failure of implementation are:

- In all formal negotiations, confirm in writing all that has been agreed upon.
- As far as possible, mention an implementation programme in the agreement. This includes mentioning who is supposed to do what and by when. This matter, if left undefined, may become the subject of disagreement later.
- Ensure that every concerned person, not only those involved in t\he discussion, is told about the agreement, its implications, and the actions that are to follow.

NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES

5

Identify different skills of initiating, discussing, and concluding the process of bargaining.

Some of the elements listed as part of the negotiation process are strategic in nature. They are discussed here as strategies to be used at different stages of negotiation.

Initial Strategies

Before the negotiation, the negotiators must plan their strategies.

- A successful negotiation should plan the discussion according to the psychological needs of the other party and use appropriate strategies to maximize his or her advantage and gain information about the objectives of the other party.
- He or she should focus on the need to reach a mutually satisfactory conclusion by joint problem-solving.
- The negotiator should sell "sunny-side up". He or she should think about how the other person will see the proposal and should try to identify and "sell" the benefits of his or her case.
- The negotiator should be able to alter his or her position (within planned limits) if needed to achieve this approach.
- Instead of talking compulsively, a good negotiator allows the other party to say what they wish and develops a dialogue with them.

Instead of talking compulsively, a good negotiator allows the other party to say what they wish and develops a dialogue with them.

One can start the discussion with language such as: "The general point of our discussion is…, which I think has come up because of.... But before I go into details, it would be helpful if you first outline your view".

During the Discussion

The following are some strategies that should be used during the course of the negotiation:

- Neither side should state its entire case in the beginning of the discussion; this should develop as the discussion proceeds. If one side puts forth everything at the beginning, it leaves itself no chance to change position in light of the other side's arguments.
- It is important to listen carefully to the other speakers' arguments and notice their facial expressions, gestures, and body movements, in addition to the words. Non-verbal clues

The strategy should be to allow the discussion to move towards agreement. To do this, one must psychologically encourage cooperation throughout the discussion.

Both parties should use impersonal terminology to point out corrections, rather than making personal criticisms.

and cues will tell the listener how the other side feels—confident or nervous, irritated or calm.

- Neither side should interrupt the other. Interruptions annoy instead of encouraging cooperation.
- Good negotiators put forth searching questions to verify the correctness of facts offered by the other party, such as dates, figures, and so on, or of their logic. If a negotiator doubts the accuracy of the other side's information, he or she should not directly challenge them by saying, "You are wrong". Instead, the negotiator may ask further, probing questions, such as "Could you explain the connection between that point and what you said earlier about X?" or "I have not understood the logic of that. Could you put it in a different way?"
- One should not take on a confrontational tone. The strategy should be to allow the discussion to move towards agreement. To do this, one must psychologically encourage cooperation throughout the discussion.
- Both parties should use impersonal terminology to point out corrections, rather than making personal criticisms.
- It can be useful to take breaks. During the discussion, a short break of 10 minutes can be useful for two purposes: to have a chance to consider new points or proposals before deciding on final commitments and to change the mood of the discussion if it has become too emotionally charged.
- Both sides must use concessions and compromises. At times, it may be impossible to move further without making some concessions. Strategy is concerned partly with timing and partly with the way possible concessions are introduced into the discussion. When the participants realize that attitudes are hardening and the same points are being repeated without a resolution, the discussion could be changed to an exploratory phase.
- Participants can use conditional compromises such as by saying things like, "Since we now know each other's initial views, could you tell me what your response would be if I accepted this part of X, which you have suggested?", "Would you do X if I agreed to do Y?", and "Would you be able to agree to X if I am able to postpone taking action on Y?"
- It helps to emphasize what the other person stands to benefit from the compromise. The other side should not feel that he/she is losing by accepting the concession or compromise. Some tips include:
  - Commending and thanking the other party for a good suggestion.
  - Not allowing the discussion to go on for too long without bringing in concessions/compromises necessary for reaching agreement.
  - Introducing concessions/compromises on a non-commitment basis.
  - Seeing that the concessions made by each side match.

Be tactful and persuasive to ensure that the final outcome, which is of advantage to you, is also seen by the other party as a benefit to them.

Reaching an Agreement

Tips for reaching a final agreement are:

- After a long and difficult discussion, "final" should be taken as final. No further concessions or compromises should be allowed.
- Negotiators should be tactful and persuasive to ensure that the final outcome is seen as beneficial by the other party.

- The key strategy in any negotiation is persuasion.
- Negotiators should emphasize the other party's benefits and should be enthusiastic about the other party's cooperation and suggestions.

Summarizing

It helps to summarize the agreements and conclusions at the end of the discussion.

- The negotiators can suggest something such as, "I think it would be helpful if we could summarize all that we have discussed to reach this agreement".
- Alternatively, one party might suggest: "Let's note it down so that no point is later missed by anyone". It is a good strategy to use written summaries at the end of discussions. This leaves no scope for disagreement later about what has or has not been agreed upon.

Deadlocks

6

Know how to handle deadlocks.

Reaching a mutually satisfactory end is the basic objective of any negotiation. If there is no final agreement reached, even after a prolonged discussion, the strategy should be to:

- Instead of going round in circles on a contentious point, move on to the next point on the agenda.
- Point out that no further concessions can be made regarding the point of contention, as they would be of no benefit to either party.
- Explain and emphasize the consequences that would result from a deadlock, such as the need to refer the matter to those with greater authority or eventually to external arbitration or third-party mediation.
- Use the ethical aspect of agreement, such as upholding the organization's values, the greatest good of the largest number of people, and so on.
- Even in the situation of a deadlock, remain positive and hopeful of reaching a mutually agreeable solution.
- Finally, point out that third-party intervention in the form of legal arbitration or conciliation may not benefit either of the parties, for whom it is best to decide the matter through mutual understanding.

SUMMARY

- This chapter explains the process of negotiation with the help of examples of formal and informal situations that require skillful discussion to reach an agreement.
- Negotiation can take place only when both concerned parties are willing to meet and discuss the issue at hand. That is, they both must want to reach a decision by discussion, not force or authority.
- Factors affecting negotiation include location; timing; subjective factors such as the relationship between the two individuals involved, the bargaining position of each side, practical future considerations, mutual obligations, and personal considerations; the use of you-attitude; and the persuasive skills of each side.
- The three stages of the negotiation process are the preparatory phase, the actual negotiation, and the implementation of the agreement.
- Negotiators must be well prepared for negotiation, and should understand the various strategies of initiating, discussing, and concluding negotiations, as well as how to deal with deadlocks.

CASE: FARSIGHTED NEGOTIATION

Several years ago, when Rakesh wanted to build a house in Faridabad, a property dealer showed him a number of plots in different sectors. He liked a particular plot of 500 square yards in Sector 9. The owner of the plot, Mr Roshan Lal Sharma, was a non-resident Indian who had taken extended leave to be in India so that he could sell his plot.

Before going to Mr Sharma, Rakesh wanted to obtain more information about the owner of the plot to strengthen his bargaining power. Mr Sharma was an engineer, and had been abroad for more than 15 years. He had a house in Delhi. Rakesh believed that it would be easy for him to negotiate the deal with Mr Sharma if they could meet in Faridabad. However, Mr Sharma conveyed his inability to come down to Faridabad because of other commitments that day. The property dealer suggested that Rakesh go to Delhi and finalize the deal. Rakesh was very keen to close the deal the same day.

Rakesh, along with his two sons, the property dealer, and Mr Sharma's dealer, went to Mr Sharma's house in Delhi to meet him. Rakesh's dealer introduced him and his sons to Mr Sharma. After the introductions, Mr Sharma excused himself and went into the adjoining room with Rakesh's dealer, while Rakesh, his sons, and Mr Sharma's dealer waited in the living room. Mr Sharma enquired about Rakesh and his family and his interest in Faridabad. They spoke within hearing range of the others.

On returning to the room, Mr Sharma kept silent and seemed to want Rakesh to begin the discussion. Rakesh began by praising the plot, especially the location. He told Mr Sharma that he had decided on this plot after taking a look at many different properties. He also explained that he was leaving for Jamshedpur the same night and, therefore, would like to finalize the deal before that. Mr. Sharma was happy to hear this.

When Rakesh asked Mr Sharma about the price, he did not give Rakesh a straight answer; rather, he put forth a counter-question and asked Rakesh about the prevailing rates and what price he had in mind. Rakesh evaded the question by saying that the rates varied from sector to sector, size to size, and location to location. Mr Sharma said his dealer knew the price of the plot and should have informed him about it. Rakesh said that the dealer had indeed informed him about the price, but that was higher than the rate prevailing in Sector 9. Mr Sharma said that he would like to know what Rakesh's offer was. Rakesh consulted his dealer and quoted the price suggested by him. Mr Sharma, again, did not accept the price. Rakesh raised his offer by ₹500 per square yard, and, this time, Mr Sharma readily accepted the offer. Rakesh believed that the deal was completed.

However, while Rakesh was turned towards his dealer, Mr Sharma, rather suddenly, raised the issue of payment of the penalty charges for not constructing the mandatory percentage of the approved plan of construction within the stipulated time as prescribed by the Faridabad Municipal Corporation. He insisted that the buyer should bear the penalty charges on the plot. The penalty amount was for three years. Rakesh found the demand rather unreasonable. He tried to convince Mr Sharma that the demand was not logical. He failed to understand why he, as the buyer, should bear the penalty cost. Mr Sharma, however, kept repeating that this was his personal decision and his decisions were not subject to the questions of logic or correctness. Rakesh's sons also felt that they should not give in to this demand. The two dealers strongly objected to the demand and thought that Mr Sharma was behaving arrogantly and unreasonably. They suggested that Rakesh drop the proposal and said they would help him buy another plot. At this point, Rakesh excused himself and asked the two dealers to step out with him for a discussion. Mr Sharma also left the room.

Rakesh came back to the room with a smile and, to everybody's surprise, offered the amount he had brought with him to Mr Sharma as advance money, conveyed his decision to accept the penalty cost, and asked Mr Sharma to finalize the deal. Both his sons were surprised at the sudden change in his perspective. However, everyone was relieved that the deal was finally sealed.

Within three months of Rakesh's purchase, his plot's price rose to three times what he had paid for it. By considering the long-term advantages of buying the plot, Rakesh had made a smart decision when he accepted Mr Sharma's offer. Within a year, the house was ready on the same plot. Rakesh and his wife celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with their family, relations, and friends in their new house that year.

Questions to Answer

1. Discuss the strategy employed by Mr Roshan Lal Sharma to strengthen his position as the negotiator.
2. Was it impulsive of Rakesh to accept Mr Sharma's terms against the advice of the two dealers and his sons? Discuss.
3. What do you learn about negotiation strategies from this case?

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Is negotiation basically meant for resolving conflicts in the workplace? Does it have any place in our personal lives?
2. Discuss the subjective factors that influence the outcome of a negotiation.
3. Analyse the different stages of the negotiation process.
4. Comment on the role of a third party in the case of negotiation deadlock.
5. What is a win–win situation?
6. Is it wise to accept what you get, instead of rejecting it in the hope of what you may get? Give your own reasons for your choice in light of what you have learnt in this chapter.
7. "In a fundamental sense, every negotiation is for the satisfaction of needs." Discuss.
8. What is the correct approach and goal of negotiation?
9. "Negotiation is a way of behaving that can develop understanding and acceptance for achieving a shared purpose." Discuss.
10. "While negotiating, you listen more than you talk if you would like to have the final say." Explain how this maxim leads to a successful negotiation.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Consider the role of psychology in achieving success in negotiations.
2. Do you believe that you can negotiate anything? Point out any exceptions to this claim.
3. Analyse the power of legitimacy (authority) in garnering compliance with a request. Think of some examples from your personal experience.
4. "Never be judgmental about the intentions and behaviours of your opponents in a negotiation." Why?
5. To what extent should our negotiations be planned beforehand? What examples come to mind?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

1. A is eating in a restaurant and B is a waiter.

   A: Waiter!
   B: Yes, sir?
   A: Look, I've been sitting here for ten minutes and you still haven't even given me the menu.
   B: I can't help that. We're very busy. You'll have to wait.
   A: I'm damned if I'll wait any longer. Bring me the menu immediately.
   B: I'm sorry, sir. I've got those people over there to serve first.
   A: Right. I'm going then and I won't come to your blasted restaurant again.
   B: I'm afraid I can't help it if you are unwilling to wait for your turn!

   A and B do not seem to get along too well! What goes wrong? If you were A, how would you handle the situation?

2. A young man, Anoop, is trying to persuade his brother, Bala, to lend him his scooter.

   Anoop: I was just wondering if you were using your scooter this afternoon.
   Bala: Why?
   Anoop: Well, I promised Ravi I'd pop over and see him before he went to Delhi.
   Bala: How about going by bus?
   Anoop: It's more expensive than using a scooter and it takes longer.
   Bala: Oh, yes! It's more expensive than using my scooter, my petrol, my insurance, my road tax—much more expensive. Why not go by train? Oh yes! Too expensive!
   Anoop: If you're not using it, you could lend it to me. Why not? I'll put some petrol in it for you.
   Bala: Okay, I can't see any reason why you shouldn't have the scooter, then. Don't forget the petrol.
   Anoop: Thanks.

How does Anoop induce Bala to lend him the scooter? He makes suggestions and proposals. List these and also Bala's counter-arguments.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. As compared to unannounced negotiation, formal negotiation:
   (a) is simpler
   (b) is more difficult
   (c) requires less preparation
   (d) is more time consuming
2. Informal negotiation involves:
   (a) three people
   (b) four people
   (c) two people
   (d) any number of people
3. Persuasion is an essential element of effective negotiation because it helps in:
   (a) resolving disputes among people
   (b) settling issues between two parties
   (c) effecting agreements and solutions in the interest of all
   (d) achieving one's own interests
4. The final aim of negotiation is to:
   (a) reach an agreement
   (b) implement an agreement between two parties
   (c) win at all cost
   (d) end a dispute
5. A negotiation is discussed in a tone that focuses attention on the need to reach a satisfactory solution by:
   (a) force
   (b) joint problem-solving
   (c) setting conditions
   (d) making proposals
6. Negotiation strategy is partly concerned with:
   (a) ending the discussion
   (b) avoiding failure
   (c) prolonging the length of the negotiation
   (d) searching for a common goal
7. Negotiation implies that both parties accept that the agreement between them is:
   (a) conditional
   (b) final and binding
   (c) subject to further dispute
   (d) necessary
8. One's negotiation objective should be:
   (a) ideal
   (b) realistic
   (c) personal
   (d) social
9. In order to persuade others, facts should be discussed from the point of view of a:
   (a) third party
   (b) first party
   (c) second party
   (d) fourth party
10. In negotiations, the interpretation of a cue requires skill because it may be:
   (a) ambiguous
   (b) verbal
   (c) intentional
   (d) behavioural

ENDNOTES

1. Alan Fowler, *Negotiation Skills and Strategies* (Hyderabad: University Press, 1990), p. 3.
2. Bill Scott, *The Skills of Negotiating* (Bombay: Jaico Publishing House, 1995), p. 3.
3. Tim Hindle, *Negotiating Skills* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1998), p. 6.

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

18

CVs, Personal Interviews, and Group Discussions

"*What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.*"

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Write an effective CV.
2. Write job applications/cover letters properly.
3. Learn the art of handling interviews well.
4. Be an effective participant in group discussions.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Manisha is a brilliant MBA student with an outstanding academic record. She is specializing in international marketing and completed a three-month internship in Rouen, France, after her first year. She believes that she should take the initiative of searching for a suitable job with a reputed national or multinational company on her own rather than waiting for a job offer through campus placement.

Manisha prepares her résumé and decides to write the application (cover) letter only after she has chosen a particular company to apply to. She studies the profiles of various companies of interest on the Internet. She also gathers information on these companies from seniors who are currently working for them. After a thorough analysis of the data, Manisha decides to write to five companies that she is interested in. She writes a separate application letter to each of the companies emphasizing the reasons she is interested in that company. Also, she asks for an opportunity to visit the company. Manisha expects to receive an interview call from each of the five employers she has approached.

APPLYING FOR JOBS

There are several steps an individual needs to take to get his or her dream job. The process starts with preparing a good résumé or curriculum vitae (CV). After identifying potential employers and job openings, the applicant must prepare and submit his or her CV and an application or cover letter. Ideally, this will result in an invitation to an interview and/or a group discussion, upon which the final hiring decisions are based. Since there are multiple complex steps to the job application process, it is important to adopt good communications skills to be successful.

WRITING A CV

The *curriculum vitae* is known by several names such as résumé, personal profile, bio-data, personal data sheet, qualification sheet, and summary. In practice, it is a written statement of the job applicant's personal history, including biographical details, educational qualifications, work experience, achievements, and other strengths. In short, a CV is a self-introduction that promotes its author.

A résumé is usually attached to an application letter. It is, therefore, read after the application letter, but should be prepared first. It is common practice for job seekers to have their résumés written in advance, so they can then just mail a copy of their CV along with the application letter. This is not always the best practice because the secret of a good résumé is its ability to project its author as the most suitable candidate for a particular job; thus, it should be tailored for each individual application.

1

Write an effective CV.

A résumé is usually attached to an application letter. It is, therefore, read after the application letter, but should be prepared first.

The first thing to keep in mind when writing a CV is that it should be written specifically in terms of the job's requirements. The basic question to consider is what qualifications, experiences, or achievements should be highlighted for a particular position.

The résumé briefly communicates all relevant and important biographical information about an applicant. The application letter interprets the information.

The first thing to keep in mind when writing a CV is that it should be written specifically in terms of the job's requirements. The basic question to consider is what qualifications, experiences, or achievements should be highlighted for a particular position. For example, if an applicant has experience working as an HR executive and a marketing manager, and if he or she wants to apply for a position in HR, then it is better to highlight his or her HR experiences while showing marketing experiences under additional skills.

The arrangement of a CV should emphasize its author's strengths. There is no fixed order in which a résumé should be written. All résumés, whether short or long, cover the same points regarding an individual's background, achievements, and experiences. In longer résumés, the details regarding each point increase significantly, but the basic points remain the same in all résumés.

Before we discuss the techniques of writing a résumé, we should understand the relationship between a résumé and an *application letter* (also known as a *cover letter*).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A RÉSUMÉ AND AN APPLICATION LETTER

The résumé and application letter perform two separate functions. The résumé briefly communicates all relevant and important biographical information about an applicant. The application letter interprets the information. For the application letter, the job applicant selects the most important and relevant facts from his or her résumé and discuss those in the context of the job's requirements.

The résumé and application letter cannot be combined into a single document. No applicant can ignored the résumé and just write a long and detailed application letter giving personal details, as prospective employers find it too time-consuming to locate specific information in such a format. A résumé is formatted for easy access to important points. The reader finds it easy to relate to details placed in a matrix format. In addition, a résumé is brief as it does not use complete sentences. For instance, one does not write: "My name is XYZ" or "My age is 24 years". Instead this information is formatted in a simple, clear, and attractive way. Exhibit 18.1 illustrates how this can be done.

Exhibit 18.1
Sample Format for Presenting Information

1. Name: Sita Mathur
2. Age: 22 years
3. Nationality: Indian

THE RÉSUMÉ OF A RECENT GRADUATE

A résumé of a recent graduate lists:

- Personal/biographical details
- His or her educational background
- Details of his or her work experience
- References

A new college graduate's résumé is generally just one-page long. It includes the applicant's career objectives, education details, work experience, and school/college activities. It is attached with the application letter. Because it is a fresh graduate's résumé, educational qualifications are placed first and have a position of prominence. All information in the CV should be under bold, clear headings, so that the reader can easily find the desired information. Headings given in upper and lower case are easier to read than those entirely in capital letters.

There are several styles for writing a student résumé. For an example of a CV in the commonly used chronological format, refer to Exhibit 18.2.

Heading

The heading should include the applicant's name, address, date of birth (if age limit is mentioned), telephone number, and e-mail address.

Exhibit 18.2
Sample Résumé of a Recent Graduate

AKSHITA MEHRA
21/A, Amrita Shergil Marg, New Delhi 110 003
Phone: (011) 24620980, 9810455654
E-mail: akshita81@yahoo.com

JOB OBJECTIVE

To work as a management trainee in an industry that uses my education in management and marketing, with the opportunity to eventually be a senior executive in marketing.

The objective should not be vague.

SPECIALIZATION

- Marketing and sales
- Human resource management

EDUCATION

- Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Management from **Amity Business School, Noida:** 2004
- Bachelor of Arts, Sociology (Hons.), **Lady Shri Ram College** (LSR), New Delhi: 2002
- Senior Secondary (XII), CBSE Humanities, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi: 1999
- Higher Secondary (X), CBSE, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi: 1997

SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS

- Shri Ram Swaroop Ahuja Award for Outstanding Performance in Sports (1998).
- Shri Jaswant S. Pandaya Award for Outstanding Performance in Athletics (1996).
- Govt. of India Sports Talent Search Scholarship Scheme (1994–95).

All scholarships, prizes, and awards won in college are mentioned here.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- President of National Sports Organization 2001–02 at Lady Shri Ram (LSR) College.
- Awarded Certificate of Merit for contribution to sports.
- First-degree international black belt in Tae-Kwon-Do: 62 gold medals in domestic championships and 4 bronze medals as an international player.
- Organized sponsorships worth ₹ 1 lakh for LSR Sports Festival, 2001.
- Organized a cross-country run for "Green & Clean Delhi" on 24th August 2001, and other events at LSR as the president of the National Sports Organization.
- Master of Ceremonies for the following events organized by Amity Business School: Alumni Meet, Mentor Meet, Corporate Meet, Acumen 2003 (organized by *Business Today*).

STRENGTHS

- Team player
- Self-confident and goal-oriented
- Fast learner with an ability to excel

Highlight strengths that will help you in the job that you are applying for.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Worked as a Trainee in Enterprise Nexus Ad Agency in the Research and Planning department.
- Conducted research for General Motors as part of Enterprise Nexus.

Instead of writing "no experience", mention all activities with which you have been associated as a student.

REFRENCES

Available on request.

Exhibit 18.3
Examples of Effectively Revised Objectives

Vague Objectives	*Effective Objectives*
To seek a management position in the tourism industry.	To obtain a junior-level management position in a tourism company that gainfully uses my summer training and internship experience.
A sales position in a reputed and growing publishing organization, which uses my education.	Textbook sales requiring an academic background in marketing.
A challenging career in the field of event management that offers growth and advancement opportunities.	A position as an event manager for cultural and social programmes that incorporates my fluency in both English and Hindi.

Objective

In this section, the applicant should mention the specific, desired position that suits his or her educational qualifications and experience. The objective should be stated in practical terms, not in a vague manner such as "I am anxious to join a challenging position in a renowned organization where I can prove my ability." Employers want to know practical objectives, not the ambitions of the applicant. Exhibit 18.3 shows how vague objectives can be rewritten for specificity.

Education

Should the list of educational qualifications begin from the school level and end with graduate and postgraduate qualifications, or should the more recent degrees be mentioned first? The chronological order may not be very impressive, and the highest qualification is generally the most important and relevant. It should therefore be emphasized by placing it first and listing the degrees in reverse chronological order.

It is not necessary to include school certificates, but the résumé should mention any short-term training or special certificate programmes taken in addition to coursework if they are relevant. It is especially important to specifically mention those courses or skills that are particularly important for the kind of position the applicant is applying for. Overall grades, along with grade points in different courses, should be listed if they are significant. The applicant should also list any specializations or majors with the grade point average. Any honours or distinctions should also be listed under a separate heading, along with other details of educational degrees, such as year of graduation, name of university or college, and subjects taken.

Work Experience

Relevant work experience should be listed in reverse chronological order. This category can include all experience, part-time as well as full-time, if the applicant's experience is not very extensive. However, someone who has worked in their field for several years need not list part-time positions.

> There should be a brief description of the applicant's role, responsibilities, and accomplishments, particularly at those jobs that are most closely related to the applicant's career goals.

For each position listed, the following details should be provided: the job title, the company's name, the location, and the duration of employment. There should be a brief description of the applicant's role, responsibilities, and accomplishments, particularly at those jobs that are most closely related to the applicant's career goals. It is important to remember that descriptions of responsibilities become more powerful with the use of action words such as *designed*, *prepared*, *developed*, *coordinated*, *supervised*, *directed*, and so on. When mentioning the duration of employment, the exact day, dates, or months need not be given. The names of terms and vacations, with relevant years, are sufficient.

Applicants should remember that potential employers are not interested in simply reading a list of positions they have held. They want to know the specific methods, techniques, and processes used in different positions as well as any concrete accomplishments. Applicants should never write that they have no work experience. Fresh graduates may have had little opportunity to acquire professional work experience, but graduate students can gain some experience organizing functions, running student clubs, associations, and societies, managing events, undertaking industry visits, and so on. Graduates at management or technical institutes undertake summer projects or term/semester-long industrial training. In addition, some students earn money working part-time job(s) in their institutions. All such exposure forms a fresh graduate's "experience". Instead of writing that they have no experience, it is better for recent graduates to mention all activities in which they have been involved as students. And while explaining their student experiences, they should emphasize how these experiences qualify them for the job.

Awards and Honours

The résumé should include a mention of all scholarships, prizes, and awards won in college. School awards show that the applicant has been consistently meritorious. Professional prizes can also be mentioned.

Activities

In this section, the applicant should mention his or her college activities. For instance, he or she can highlight a position as president, secretary, or coordinator in a student organization. The applicant can also mention any significant hobbies such as playing a musical instrument or being an accomplished athlete.

References

Under references, the applicant should list the names of two or three persons who know that they are being listed as references. The full name, business address, e-mail address, and telephone number should be provided for each reference. References are expected to honestly speak about the applicant to the employer confidentially. Thus they should be familiar with the applicant and his or her work and are usually professors or previous employers. They should not be related to the applicant. Sometimes, under references, one can write: "references available on request". Exhibit 18.2 shows a sample résumé of a recent graduate in the chronological format.

Summary

Individuals with a lot of experience sometimes begin with a summary of their qualifications in place of a job objective. The recent practice is to place a summary of all major achievements and specializations below the name. The summary is supposed to help the reader of the résumé find the most relevant and important information about the applicant immediately. For the candidate, it acts as a strong preface or foreword to his or her experiences. For an example of a summary that accompanies a CV, see Exhibit 18.4.

> Individuals with a lot of experience sometimes begin with a summary of their qualifications in place of a job objective.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A GOOD CV

A good CV provides basic information to the recruiter in a systematic form. It enables the employer to evaluate the applicant's qualifications and strengths in just a few minutes and shortlist or reject the applicant based on this initial review. A good CV, by opening the door to an interview, can therefore mean a lot for one's career.

General "Do's" for writing a good CV include:

- Indicate a specific job objective or a summary of your qualifications.
- Highlight your accomplishments.

Exhibit 18.4
Example of a Summary Accompanying a CV

Dr M.N. Rao, ECE Chair Professor in Marketing and Dean, International Business School, has over twenty years' experience in teaching and consulting. He has been associated with IIM Kozhikode, Amity Business School and Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani.

Dr Rao studied marketing and went on to receive his Ph.D. from Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani. His academic interests and areas of expertise include integrated marketing communications, direct marketing, sales management, marketing strategy, and customer relationship management in India. He has rendered training and consulting services to organizations such as NTPC, ICICI Bank, Excel Telecommunications and Godrej Consumer Products.

In 2005, Dr Rao received International Business School's coveted Award for Excellence in Teaching. He has written over 50 articles in leading journals, and is the author of *Essentials of Marketing, Customer Relationship Management: An Indian Perspective, Direct Marketing,* and *Managing Global Business.*

A CV should begin with the category that the applicant wishes to emphasize. If an applicant has little work experience but a good education profile, then he or she should begin with education.

- Emphasize education/training/experience related to your job objective.
- Give details of professional activities that are supportive of your career objective.
- Proofread your CV and, ideally, also have someone else check it for typing errors.
- Ensure that all contact information is current and correct.

General "Don'ts" for writing a good CV include:

- Do not use first person or second person pronouns in the résumé.
- Do not use an uncommon format.
- Do not mention the expected salary.
- Do not leave any unexplained gaps in your experience.
- Do not give reasons for leaving earlier jobs.
- Do not use coloured paper.
- Do not send a handwritten résumé.
- Do not mention personal details such as the number of children, marital status, or other details that are not relevant to the job.
- Do not be too brief or too lengthy.

Suitable Organization

The conventional method is to begin with personal details and end with references. But a more practical method is to begin with the category that needs to be emphasized. For instance, if an applicant has little work experience but a good education profile, then he or she should begin with education. Conversely, if an applicant has extensive work experience, then he or she should begin with work experience and bring up educational qualifications afterwards. Personal details can then appear as the last category, to be placed before references. Employers will be more interested in an applicant's qualifications and work experience than in his or her biographical details.

Employers are more interested in an applicant's qualifications and work experiences than in his or her biographical details.

Appropriate Length

The CV of a fresh graduate should be neither too brief nor too long. One page is the ideal length. Experienced candidates have more information under each category. Hence, their CVs can be two to three pages in length. After several years of work experience, people do not list college activities and, instead, emphasize memberships in professional bodies and related professional activities. The résumés of highly experienced individuals may run into several pages, even up to 15 to 20 pages. There is no prescribed length; the length of such CVs is based on the needs of each individual candidate and job. These résumés may have more categories of information such as:

- Major qualifications
- Major achievements
- Activities and professional memberships

DRAFTING AN APPLICATION LETTER

2

Write job applications/ cover letters properly.

An application letter is planned like a sales letter: it gains attention and interest and asks for action. The application letter demonstrates the applicant's communication skills and functions as an interview request when it impresses the potential employer with the applicant's abilities and education. It needs to be written very skillfully.

An application letter is planned like a sales letter; it gains attention and interest and asks for action.

The First Paragraph

The first paragraph identifies the objective exactly. In the first paragraph, the applicant should specifically state the position/job he or she is applying for and how he or she came to know about it—usually through an advertisement or a contact. Sometimes, an applicant may apply without knowing that a position exists or is available. He or she can use the opening paragraph to show what kind of position he or she is qualified for and also state the reasons for his or her interest in that particular company.

The Second Paragraph

The second paragraph gives evidence of the applicant's ability/qualifications. In the second paragraph, the applicant should explain he or she is qualified for the position/job. It is important not to repeat has been written in the résumé. Instead, the application letter points out the particular facts relevant to the position applied for. It can highlight important courses or special projects that have enriched the applicant's preparation and enhanced his or her suitability for the position. It can also describe any extracurricular activities that show leadership or the ability to organize and coordinate. Lastly, it can also show how the various projects, industrial visits, and work experiences listed in the CV are related to the position.

It is important not to repeat has been written in the résumé. Instead, the application letter points out the particular facts relevant to the position applied for. It can highlight important courses or special projects that have enriched the applicant's preparation and enhanced his or her suitability for the position.

The Third Paragraph

The third paragraph asks for an interview. At the end of the letter, the applicant can suggest that he or she come in for an interview at the employer's convenience. The purpose of the letter is to convince the prospective employer to interview the applicant.

General Tips

While writing an application letter, the applicant should remember that he or she is selling those merits which the employer needs. The following principles are key to writing an effective application letter:

While writing an application letter, the applicant should remember that he or she is selling those merits which the employer needs.

- Coherence
- Concreteness
- Simplicity
- Emphasis
- Originality
- Sincerity
- Empathy
- Convention

Application letters should be brief. Like the résumé, they should be spotless, free of errors, typed, and well formatted on a standard white sheet. As far as possible, the application letter should be addressed to a specific person. Also, the applicant should sign the letter before mailing it. Exhibit 18.5 shows a sample application letter, and Exhibit 18.6 lists some pitfalls to avoid when writing an application letter.

Exhibit 18.5
Example of an Application Letter

Shri N. K. Varma
Sales and Marketing
LG Electronics India Pvt. Ltd.
Surajpur–Kasna Road
Greater Noida (U.P.)

6/102 East End Apts
Mayur Vihar Phase I
Delhi 110096
April 6, 2009

Dear Mr Varma,

Please consider me as a candidate for the position of Assistant Marketing Manager, advertised in the *Times of India* on 1 April 2009. The position is especially attractive to me because I feel that my education and work experience have prepared me to work with a company like LG, which offers a wide variety of household durables.

As my résumé shows, I received my MBA with a major in marketing from Bombay University in 2008. During my summer and final terms, I performed various duties in the marketing department of Samsung, including consumer research for new products.

In June 2007, I joined Samsung as a management trainee. While at Samsung, I gained a great deal of experience in marketing research and product design under excellent supervision.

I am a hardworking person who enjoys the challenges of marketing. I love travelling. Enclosed is my résumé for your consideration. I do hope that I shall have an opportunity to appear for an interview for the position of Assistant Manager Marketing at LG Electronics India.

Yours truly,

Arunav Chandra

Enclosure: CV

Exhibit 18.6
Some Don'ts for Writing Application Letters

- Don't use your present employer's stationery.
- Don't beg or ask for a favour.
- Don't be unduly humble, and avoid phrases like "I beg to state that…".
- Don't overuse the words *I*, *me*, and *my*.
- Don't sound casual.
- Don't boast about yourself.
- Don't criticize your present employer.
- Don't repeat information that is already in the résumé.
- Don't use vague or general terms.
- Don't just say you are qualified for the job/position; instead give evidence.
- Don't use hackneyed and worn-out expressions.
- Don't copy a letter written by another applicant.
- Don't forget to check the following before sending the letter:
    - The letter should be addressed to the appropriate person and, in the case of e-mails, the e-mail address should be correct. In case of multiple submissions, no other e-mail addresses should be visible.
    - There should be a proper subject line.
    - The letter should be precise and well formatted.
    - There should be no spelling or grammatical errors in the CV and the cover letter.
    - It should be signed with the applicant's full name and complete contact address.

INTERVIEWS

3

Learn the art of handling interviews well.

An interview can be defined as an oral tool used to test a candidate's suitability for employment or admission to an institute of learning. As it is an oral test, it calls for the skills of oral and non-verbal communication, which are necessary to impress the interviewers. There are different types of interviews, such as panel interviews, sequential interviews, academic interviews, personality interviews, and so on. Each type requires the careful application of a particular set of communication skills.

Types of Interviews

The types of interviews frequently encountered by job applicants are:

- *Panel interviews:* In a panel interview, each member of the panel is closely observing the interviewee. Hence, the interviewee's body language and eye contact are especially important. The interviewee should give the impression of speaking to all the members of the panel, not just a single individual, by making eye contact with all panel members.
- *Telephone interviews:* The interviewee should consider this a face-to-face interview and use proper modulation of voice to reflect his or her thoughts. The interviewee's voice should be clear, steady, and audible.
- *Lunch/dinner interviews:* This type of interview is conducted in an informal environment, but still requires that the interviewee be careful about his or her body language and manners. The interviewee should never drink alcohol at an interview, even if the interviewer does.
- *Preliminary interviews:* As a preliminary interview is a first-stage screening test, the interviewee should pay full attention to it. This stage must be cleared before moving to the final interview. The interviewee's communication skills express his or her confidence and ease.
- *Sequential interviews:* In this form of interview, the interviewee has to report to several people successively. He or she should be very careful about his or her behaviour, speech, and manners in each interview, as each interviewer is a prospective employer.
- *Skill-based interviews:* Such interviews require the interviewee to demonstrate skills that are relevant to the job. For instance, someone seeking to be an actor or a salesperson can be asked to act or read a script or demonstrate his or her pitch and skills of persuasive oral communication.
- *Academic interviews:* An academic interview is conducted in a question-and-answer format. The interviewee should be able to demonstrate attentive listening, eye contact, clarity of ideas, and depth of knowledge.
- *Personality interviews:* This form of interview evaluates the interviewee as an individual in terms of his or her response to certain situations. The emphasis is not on the answers themselves, but on *how* they are delivered. The entire range of non-verbal communication skills are brought into play to demonstrate a "well-rounded personality."

What Does a Job Interview Assess?

According to the employer's needs, interviewers look for the following attributes in candidates:

- *Clarity:* This refers to the candidate's clarity on academic subjects, his or her career objectives, the reasons for these objectives, long-term goals, national and global issues, and so on.

- *Depth:* Depth of knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects and issues, along with clarity, demonstrate the candidate's academic excellence.
- *Personality:* A candidate's attitude, honesty, and professionalism reflect his or her ability to work in an organization and with other people. In addition, the candidate's self-awareness and analysis of personal strengths and weaknesses are important.
- *General awareness:* This refers to the interviewee's level of general awareness about current issues of national and international concern.
- *Application of concepts to real-life problems:* The interviewee's initiative and capacity for independent thought are judged by responses to application-based questions, which asses how far he or she has moved beyond classroom learning.
- *Communication skills:* The candidate's ability to express his or her thoughts clearly and concisely is evaluated along with his or her listening and comprehension skills. In addition, his or her verbal and non-verbal communication and body language exhibit his or her personality as an individual. Assessment of individuals in a job interview is basically an effort to predict their behaviour in a particular job and in the environment of that job.
- *Integrity:* The candidate's integrity is important to prospective employers. Employers look for consistency in what is written in the CV and the interviewee's responses to questions during the interview. Since the résumé is the starting point of the interview, applicants should know their résumés thoroughly and be prepared to discuss and explain anything on them. It is therefore extremely important to be honest when drafting the CV.

Assessment of individuals in a job interview is basically an effort to predict their behaviour in a particular job and in the environment of that job.

Employers look for consistency in what is written in the CV and the interviewee's responses to questions during the interview. It is therefore extremely important to be honest when drafting the CV.

Since the résumé is the starting point of the interview, applicants should know their résumés thoroughly and be prepared to discuss and explain anything on them.

Focus of Job Interviews

Though each job has its own specific requirements, there are some elements that are common. Most interviews focus on three issues:

- Technical competence
- Motivation
- The candidate's ability to handle situations where he or she does not know the answer

Technical Competence

Technical competence is assessed by examining the candidate's academic background and previous job profiles. For instance, if someone is applying to be a salesperson, his or her knowledge of marketing and sales management and logistics will be tested. The questions asked are related to the candidate's specialization, but are usually of a general nature. They are generally application-based questions.

Suppose you are an applicant for a sales position at Godrej. The interviewers can assess your technical competence by asking questions such as: "What features of our Godrej mini-fridge would you highlight to promote its sale in rural markets?" Your answer would demonstrate your knowledge of the principles of selling in general as well as your ability to apply those principles to a specific, targeted group.

Motivation

All employers want to evaluate a prospective employee's level of interest in a job and how strongly he or she wants to fulfill his or her goals. For instance, in an interview for a sales job, the candidate's motivation can be judged by posing a complex situation (for instance, a transportation strike at the same time as an important meeting with a dealer) and then asking how the candidate would react to it.

Sometimes interviewers may deliberately ask stressful questions, such as "what would you do if you are not selected for this position?". The actual responses to such questions are not as important as how the candidate handles them.

Handling Difficult Questions

When an interviewee does not know the answer to a question, there are several ways to approach it:

- Admit it. He or she can say, “Sorry, I do not know the answer to that.”
- Make an educated guess. The candidate can guess and preface the answer with, “I guess/I think/Perhaps it could mean…”.
- The interviewee should not get flustered. Instead, he or should continue to communicate a positive state of mind by making eye contact and using positive facial expressions, tone, and volume of speech.

Interviewees should continuously reflect upon various aspects of their personality and goals in order to respond to different questions at job interviews with clarity and confidence. Since one’s style of thinking determines behaviour and personality to a great extent, it helps to consider, in some detail, how one thinks.

Strategies for Success at Interviews

A candidate’s success in converting an interview opportunity into a job offer depends on how well he or she has prepared for the interview. Most candidates falter during an interview only because they do not know enough about themselves, the company they are applying for, or the job profile. The secret of clearing the interview stage lies in preparing a game plan and developing a strategy to target what the specific organization is seeking. First, the candidate’s personality traits matter: is he or she motivated, mature, ambitious, and trustworthy? Second, the candidate’s level of competence and realism regarding job expectations matter: a candidate can impress prospective employers only when he or she demonstrates solid knowledge of the industry and the job.

As a practical step, job applicants can equip themselves with the following information and knowledge before an interview:

(i) Know yourself
(ii) Know the company
(iii) Know the job profile

Know Yourself

The candidate should ask himself or herself: “Who am I? What are my achievements? What are my skills and strengths? What do I plan to do five years from now?” He or she must be clear about his or her goals and consistent regarding past achievements and future career plans. In addition, he or she should be realistic—if his or her skills, career plans, and objectives align closely with the job’s requirements, chances are that he or she will be offered the job. Most interviews begin with a question like “Can you tell us something about yourself?” so it is important to have a clear response ready.

> The candidate should ask himself or herself: “Who am I? What are my achievements? What are my skills and strengths? What do I plan to do five years from now?” He or she must be clear about his or her goals and consistent regarding past achievements and future career plans.

Some ways to know yourself better are to:

- Identify your skills—concentrate on what you can do well.
- Determine what you value—things that are important to you and influence your behaviour.
- Be clear about what motivates you and what you are looking for—whether it is status, security, power, expertise, material rewards, creativity, autonomy.
- Describe your personality—your behaviour and mental characteristics.
- Find out how you think—if you are especially logical, intuitive, or creative, for instance.

Employers want to hire a good person, a competent worker, and someone with a well-informed and well-rounded personality.

An employer does not look for a set of ready-made answers to a volley of questions. Answers do count. But there is something else that matters a great deal: the personality that accompanies the answers. Employers want to hire a good person, a competent worker, and someone with a well-informed and well-rounded personality.

Know the Company

Job applicants must gather information and research the company they are applying to before the interview. They can learn about the work culture and norms of the company and read up on the company's products and other details through the company's reports and Web site. If possible, they should try to interact with company employees to learn more about the work environment. Then, they should assess the size and systems of the company in accordance with their own ambitions and career plan, and consider how far the company will offer growth opportunities. Reflecting on these aspects of the company prior to the interview will prepare a candidate for the employer's questions.

Know the Job Profile

At the interview, one should never be carried away by the salary or designation of the job; rather, the job should be considered in terms of its profile, scope for growth, and one's professional goals and ambitions.

At the interview, one should never be carried away by the salary or designation of the job; rather, the job should be considered in terms of its profile, scope for growth, and one's professional goals and ambitions. This also means that one should not accept a job, however lucrative, in a company that does not suit one's personal goals.

Answers to Some Common Interview Questions

Usually, the interviewers move from simple, personal questions to general and then technical questions. The questions put to new graduates focus more on their education and work experiences, current issues, and hobbies. The focus is on education and personality. In the case of candidates with more experience, the focus is on their recent projects, achievements, and what new thing they can do for the organization.

Exhibit 18.7 provides some common questions faced in interviews and explains how a candidate can tackle these questions.

Exhibit 18.7
Model Questions and Answers

Q: Tell us about yourself.
(Provide a brief answer describing your educational background and relevant work experience. A sample response follows.)

A: I was born in Pilani and completed my education there. After graduating from Birla Public School, I attended Birla Institute of Technology and Science and obtained a dual degree in MMS and Mathematics. I did my summer project at DCM Kota and six months' industry internships at USHA International Delhi in the marketing division, promoting a product line similar to your household durables. I believe I am motivated and capable of doing hard work.

Q: What are your strengths?
(Focus on your positive side.)

A: I think I am an intelligent, hard-working person who likes to take initiative and shoulder responsibility and complete my assigned tasks to everyone's satisfaction.

Q: What are your weaknesses?
(Avoid suggesting anything that could be perceived as detrimental to your working effectively and efficiently. You could talk about a weakness that's not central to the job you are applying for and then indicate how you are working on trying to overcome the weakness.)

Undesirable response:

A: "My greatest weakness is that I am a workaholic." (Most interviewers would say that this is not really a weakness, and this is probably the most common response they have heard.)

Exhibit 18.7
(Contd.)

Desirable response:

A: "I find public speaking stressful, so I have been attending a short course on public speaking for the past three weeks." (Make sure that the job does not require public speaking.)

Q: Why do you wish to work in our organization?
(Be objective, realistic, and rational.)

A: I know a number of persons working in this organization. I appreciate its work culture and concern for each individual employee. I like the flexibility that allows employees to move from one area to another within the organization.

Q: Why have you been changing jobs?
(Discuss how your past experience has helped you in developing skills that will be useful in your new job; it would be better not to answer as follows: "It is generally believed that if you want to grow vertically, you should not work at one position or place for more than four years.)

Q: Tell us how you can contribute to our company.
(Without claiming too much, state in specific terms what you are capable of doing for the company.)

A: Besides working to improve the sales figures of the division, I would develop the market for mobile editions of our publications.

Q: If the company could secure the National Highway Golden Triangle Project by bribing the concerned CEO, would you do it?
(Such questions are asked to judge your sense of morality. Always say no, and give your reasons by praising the organization's reputation for upholding ethical values and moral practices in all spheres.)

A: Keeping in view the reputation of the company, one should not even consider it.

Q: Could you tell us something about your current responsibilities?
(Describe those areas of work that show your initiative and organizing ability. Be factual, but project your own skills in handling your present duties.)

A: Presently, I am the business development manager at Shop-n-Shop. I am responsible for developing the retail business of the company's writing instruments division. This calls for opening company-owned retail outlets in organized setups like malls.

Q: What are your salary expectations?
(Justify your expectations in terms of your present package. The challenges of the new job are the reasons for your interest in it, not a better salary alone.)

A: My present package is ₹9.6 lakh per year. Keeping in view my desire to work for a professional organization like this, I would expect the protection of my current salary, at the least, and would like a raise of about 15 to 20 per cent.

The questions given here are representative of the types of questions you can expect at an interview, though of course the list is not exhaustive. The secret of facing interviews successfully lies in thorough preparation so that one can display a full understanding of content and a well-rounded personality in the interview. Aim at making a good first impression and remember that one has just three to five seconds to do so. Ninety per cent of people form a judgment regarding someone at a job interview in just that time. In 70 per cent of cases, these first impressions prove to be right. Decisive factors in making an impression are body language, clothes, status symbols, scent, and the person's voice.

PARTICIPATING IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

4
Be an effective participant in group discussions.

The group discussion (GD) tests inter-personal skills. It is most popular with public/private sector undertakings, government departments, commercial firms, and universities and other educational organizations, which use it to screen candidates after a written test. What does a group discussion evaluate? A group discussion primarily evaluates participants' ability to interact in a group that is discussing a given topic. An individual's behaviour in a group means much for his or her success as a manager or an executive responsible for coordinating and organizing activities. The evaluators, therefore, focus on group dynamics rather than the content of each participant's views.

In a group discussion, all participants are supposed to be equal. No one is officially chosen as the leader. However, a candidate, by his or her initiative, ability to direct the discussion, maturity, clarity of ideas, and understanding of group dynamics, might gradually begin to direct the course of the discussion and mediate between opposing views to evolve a comprehensive view.

The group usually consists of 8 to 10 candidates. No one is nominated as a leader, coordinator, or chairman. Normally, 20 to 30 minutes are given to complete the discussion. Each candidate has a roll number by which he or she is to be addressed. For easy recognition, the roll number is prominently displayed on a tag worn by each candidate. The candidates are seated in ascending order of roll numbers, usually in a circle.

Leadership

As group discussions start without an official leader, the atmosphere allows all participants free and equal opportunity to express their views. During the course of the discussion, a leader often emerges. No candidate should try to dominate the group to become the leader. Such an attempt is self-defeating, because in a group discussion all participants are supposed to be equal. However, a candidate, by his or her initiative, ability to direct the discussion, maturity, clarity of ideas, and understanding of group dynamics, might gradually begin to direct the course of the discussion and mediate between opposing views to evolve a comprehensive view. Such a candidate is implicitly recognized by all other candidates as the leader of the discussion group.

GD Protocol

Group discussions are "formally informal". There are rules of conduct to be observed by the participants. Some of these rules are discussed in Exhibit 18.8.

A group discussion is not a debate in which each participant either opposes or supports the topic. There are no clear-cut positions or stands required.

Discussion Techniques

A group discussion is not a debate in which each participant either opposes or supports the topic. There are no clear-cut positions or stands required. A group discussion is a continuous discussion, an ongoing interaction in which participants examine a

Exhibit 18.8
GD Protocol

- Ways of addressing other members of the group:

  "Sir/Madam": too formal

  "Mr/Ms": too colloquial

  "Excuse me": a bit rude

  By their roll numbers: a bit odd

  First name: ideal

  The problem is it may be difficult to remember the names of fellow participants in a short time. In this case, the best way is to address the whole group instead of an individual.
- Do not create sub-groups by referring to individual members. The tendency is to speak to one's neighbour, but this creates sub-groups and acts against the cohesive team spirit of the group.
- Gaining the entire group's attention:
  - To begin, speak to the person sitting diagonally opposite you. Alternatively, address the person who has just finished talking.
  - When you have the group's attention, use the opportunity to take the discussion forward. Do not let an opportunity pass by if you want to participate in the discussion.

Exhibit 18.8
(Contd.)

- Make friends by speaking to those who have been left alone by the rest of the group.
- Do not invite somebody who has been keeping quiet to share his or her views unless you have the formal authority to do so; everyone is equal in a group discussion.

• It is best to use language that is formal, simple, and correct. It should not be colloquial or flowery.
• One should dress formally for a group discussion. Men should wear business suits and women should be in sarees, *salwar kameezes*, or formal trousers and shirts.
• Body language is important:
  - Posture should be formal and must reflect enthusiasm (straight back; hands in front/ on the edge of the table).
  - Gestures and body movements should not be threatening or restrictive to other participants.
  - Excessive hand movements should be avoided.
  - Body language should be natural.
  - One should establish eye contact with as many people as possible.
• No one should attempt to be a leader by trying to sum up or conclude when the group has not clearly reached any conclusion.

subject or problem from different angles and viewpoints. Participants may disagree with or support others' points of view, or bring up a new point of view. But it is essential for all participants to always show respect for others, even if they disagree with each other. Courtesy in discussions indicates a level of politeness and maturity.

Good analytical abilities, critical assessment of arguments, and strong verbal and non-verbal skills of communication can give one a competitive edge over others. Exhibit 18.9 presents some guidelines for GD participants.

Good analytical abilities, critical assessment of arguments, and strong verbal and non-verbal skills of communication can give one a competitive edge over others.

Listening

In a group discussion, listening too is a participative act. Participants should listen thoughtfully to what others have to say, with the goal of assimilating and analysing

Exhibit 18.9
Guidelines for GD Participants

• To join in the discussion, the following phrases can be used:

  I'd like to raise the subject of …
  What I think is …
  I think it's important to consider the question of …
  If I could say a word about …
  May I make a point about …

• When supporting what another participant has said, remember that you should not say, "I agree with him/her". Instead, you should say that you support their *views*—not the person.) Phrases that can be used are:

  I'd like to support Renuka's point about …
  That is what I think too.
  I agree fully with what Rahul has just said.

Exhibit 18.9
(Contd.)

- When voicing disagreement, again remember that you are opposed to someone's *ideas* and not the person. You can disagree by using polite expressions instead of saying something curt such as "You are wrong". For instance, you can say:

  Please allow me to differ.
  I beg to differ.
  I think differently on this issue.
  I do not agree; in my opinion …

- To emphasize a point, one can say:

  I am convinced that …
  You can't deny that …
  It is quite clear to me that …

- To bring the discussion back on track, one can say:

  That's very interesting, but I don't think it is relevant to the point.
  Perhaps we could go back to …
  Could we stick to the subject please?
  I am afraid we are drifting from the original point.

rather than contradicting or refuting others. Instead of interrupting others, it is better to try to join the discussion tactfully and use words that demonstrate that you have been listening to others.

SUMMARY

- This chapter has demonstrated the application of written communication skills to prepare résumés; and the application of oral and non-verbal skills to attend interviews and participate in group discussions. The CV, interview, and group discussion constitute three major steps towards employment.
- A résumé is a self-introduction that highlights an applicant's strengths and experiences. It summarizes the applicant's education, abilities, experience, accomplishments, and personal details for the employer's consideration in an impressive, easy-to-read format. Its structure can vary to suit the professional status and experience of individual candidates, though the common elements of all CVs are generally: personal details, education, work experience, references, job objective/summary.
- The CV is attached to an application letter/cover letter, which acts as a preface for the CV. The letter generally ends by asking for an interview opportunity.
- A job interview is essentially a face-to-face communication activity requiring the use of good oral and non-verbal skills.
- Applicants need to prepare thoroughly before the interview to (a) know themselves better, (b) know about the company, and (c) understand the job profile. The secret of success in interviews often lies in the applicant's ability to create a positive first impression by dressing and behaving professionally.
- A group discussion primarily evaluates participants' ability to interact in a group that is discussing a given topic. An individual's behaviour in a group means much for his or her success as a manager. The evaluators assess the following traits of GD participants: initiative, group dynamics, analytical ability, ability to think on their feet, communication skills, attitude, and personality.

CASE: AN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

Mr Sinha has an MBA. He is being interviewed for the position of management trainee at a reputed company. The selection committee is chaired by the vice-president. Mr Sinha's interview was as follows:

Committee: Good morning.
Mr Sinha: Good morning.
Chairperson: Please take a seat.
Mr Sinha: Thank you [Sits down at the edge of the chair. Keeps his portfolio on the table.]
Chairperson: So, Mr Sinha, I can see that you have finished your MBA with a first division.
Mr Sinha: Yes, madam.
Chairperson: Why do you want to work in our organization?
Mr Sinha: Your company has a very good reputation in the industry.
Committee member: This job is considered to be quite stressful. Do you think you can manage the stress involved?
Mr Sinha: Yes, I think there is too much talk about stress these days. Sir, would you tell me more clearly what you mean by stress?
Committee member: What do you think are your strengths?
Mr Sinha: Sir, who am I to boast about my strengths? You should tell me my strengths.
Committee member: What are your weaknesses?
Mr Sinha: I become angry too quickly.
Committee member: Do you want to ask us any questions?
Mr Sinha: Yes, sir. I was wondering what future opportunities there are for someone who starts as a management trainee.

The committee member tells Mr Sinha the typical career path for those starting as management trainees. The chairperson then thanks Mr Sinha. Mr Sinha promptly says in response, "You are welcome", and then exits the room.

Questions to Answer

1. Do you find Mr Sinha's responses to the questions effective? Give reasons for your view on each answer given by Mr Sinha.
2. Write out the responses that you consider most effective to these questions.
3. Mr Sinha has observed the norms of respectful and polite behaviour, but do you think something went wrong in his case? Account for your general impression of Mr Sinha's performance at the interview.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Is it necessary to write an application letter (cover letter) with a CV? Why?
2. What is the function of the summary placed at the beginning of a CV?
3. Discuss at least three characteristics of a good résumé.
4. It is said that for converting an interview into an employment opportunity you have to do only one thing—prepare, prepare, and prepare. What should you prepare before the interview?
5. Comment on the importance of body language for success at an interview.
6. Do you think that the first impression is usually accurate?
7. What traits are evaluated by the panelists of an interview board? Elaborate with examples.
8. How does someone become the leader of a group discussion?
9. Does the résumé have to have an *Objectives* section in the beginning? How is this section written?
10. What does the group discussion test?

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. List your strengths and identify one main strength that can be used as your "selling strength".
2. At an interview, the chairman of the selection committee tells you that they will get back to you. What does this communicate to you?
3. If you are preparing for an interview, what should you consider necessary with regards to grooming?
4. What is the advantage of including a summary in your résumé?
5. The process of job hunting requires three steps: writing and sending a résumé to the target company, participating in the group discussion, and attending a personal interview. How would you prepare yourself for each of these?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

(i) Prepare a set of arguments on the following group discussion topics:
   (a) Politics and professional education
   (b) India—vision 2020
   (c) Promises and eggs are meant to be broken
   (d) India as a cricket superpower
   (e) Power of bullet or ballot
   (f) The phenomenon of outsourcing

(ii) Write an *Objectives* section for your résumé.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From among the given options, choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. The best way to apply for a job is to submit a résumé that is:
   (a) suitable for any job
   (b) specifically written for that particular job
   (c) full of personal information
   (d) self-recommending
2. The application letter and the résumé perform:
   (a) the same task (b) two different tasks
   (c) two opposite tasks (d) overlapping tasks
3. The résumé of a fresh graduate is generally:
   (a) one page long (b) three pages long
   (c) two pages long (d) half a page
4. The application letter is:
   (a) a summary of your qualifications and experiences
   (b) a statement of your job objective
   (c) a foreword
   (d) a description of your core strengths and suitability for the job
5. A summary placed at the beginning of the CV acts as a:
   (a) synopsis
   (b) preface
   (c) letter of recommendation
   (d) statement of objectives
6. Tease or stress questions are intended to judge:
   (a) the candidate's stress level
   (b) the candidate's intelligence quotient
   (c) how the candidate handles them
   (d) the candidate's technical skill
7. In an interview when you do not know an answer, you should:
   (a) bluff
   (b) remain quiet
   (c) admit you do not know the answer
   (d) keep guessing
8. The left part of our brain controls:
   (a) imagination (b) emotions
   (c) creativity (d) logic and reasoning
9. The group discussion evaluates the candidate's ability to:
   (a) control others
   (b) argue with others
   (c) lead others
   (d) confer with others on a given subject
10. The first objective in a group discussion is to:
   (a) catch the group's attention
   (b) prove your superiority
   (c) create sub-groups
   (d) act as a self-appointed leader of the group

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

19

Summer Project Report

> "*A project report is often students' only tangible evidence of their summer internship. If their efforts are to count in the judgement of their professors, the report must describe clearly what they have done. Often, their written reports are the basis of a strong recommendation for future employment.*"

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Compare a summer project report with a technical or business report.
2. Apply the skills of report writing to write summer project reports.
3. Learn the structure and essential elements of a summer project report.

Communication at Work

Dinesh, a second-year PGDM student at Sharda Peeth Institute of Management in Kolkata, is required to submit a report on his summer internship project at ANC, Allahabad. He is aware of the importance of the summer project report as evidence of the quality of his work and his investigation. He knows how to write a formal report—he studied formal reports in his course on business communication. However, his project mentor at ANC told him that the summer project report was not just a regular report, but had a particular form and format specified by the institute or company that sponsored the project. In the absence of a prescribed format, one can choose a structure that covers all the essential components of the project, like a project report in a company.

Dinesh had with him the data and the details of his investigation. He was to present the information in the form of a summer project report. Luckily, he happened to ask his batchmate Aparna, who had done her summer project at the same company but on a different problem, if she had completed her report. She said that she was still working on it and was consulting the guidelines provided by their university. For some reason, Dinesh was not aware of these guidelines. Aparna gave him the instructions, which Dinesh found quite elaborate and helpful in writing his report.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly all universities and management institutes require their postgraduate management and engineering students to do an industry-related project during their summer term as part of their curriculum. Institutes generally provide manuals with guidelines, procedures, and rules for the summer project reports. But there are institutions where students do not enjoy the benefit of guidelines, and it is for such students that a sample format for a summer project report is given here, although the principles and tips should be useful to all students.

Necessary variations can be made to the report format, according to the requirements laid down by the industry and institutions concerned. However, the overall design, form, and style generally remain unchanged.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUMMER PROJECT REPORTS AND BUSINESS/TECHNICAL REPORTS

The main differences between summer projects and business/technical reports are as follows:

- Business/technical report writing usually forms part of a course in communication/technical writing.

1

Compare a summer project report with a technical or business report.

The summer project report is written at the end of the summer term during which the live project is carried out and successfully completed.

The findings of the summer project report are often valuable to the organization as they are a result of the combined efforts of academic research and industrial guidance.

- A summer project report is an academic requirement. It is compulsory for the awarding of a postgraduate diploma/degree in management/engineering/information technology at nearly all postgraduate institutes of management or engineering. The summer project report is written at the end of the summer term during which the live project is carried out and successfully completed.
- A summer project report is based on a project completed in a business organization under the joint supervision of an industry expert and a faculty member from the student's institute.
- The summer project report is submitted to the student's institute for evaluation by the project supervisor (from the organization) and the faculty supervisor (from the concerned institution).
- The summer project report is preceded by a project proposal, which summarizes the background of the selected topic. This proposal is required of all students and is approved by the organization and faculty supervisors, usually within two weeks of the student joining the organization.
- The findings of the summer project report are often valuable to the organization as they are a result of the combined efforts of academic research and industrial guidance.
- A good summer project report earns not only an excellent grade, but also the possibility of future placement in the same company.
- Students often write business/technical reports on projects or data that has been provided to them. Such reports require students to write from the perspective of a manager or project engineer, even though they generally lack the actual experience of having worked on live projects in real companies. This lack of actual experience tends to result in the reports being more descriptive than analytical. However, because summer projects involve work on ongoing projects with real implications, they should reflect a more analytical approach to the organizational environment, systems operations, and data processing methods.
- Both summer projects and business/technical reports have a standard format and structure that consists of nearly the same parts—the introduction, discussion, and conclusion. However, the summer project report, like a research dissertation, carries a certificate of approval for its submission and evaluation.
- A business/technical report, if written by a manager/engineer, is submitted directly to the sponsoring authority who assigned the task to help management take a decision or find a solution to a problem. Summer project reports are submitted to the student's mentors in the organization or the university.

2

Apply the skills of report writing to write summer project reports.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING SUMMER PROJECT REPORTS

For a more detailed understanding of the essential features of a summer project report, here are some guidelines:

The summer project report should provide evidence of the student's ability to use and develop a research model and hypotheses, collect and interpret data, reach conclusions, and make recommendations for managerial practices.

Objective

Summer project reports help students present their experiences of working on live projects during their summer break. The student should report his or her goals, investigation, and findings, along with the methodology used for understanding and resolving a specific problem. The summer project report should provide evidence of the student's ability to use and develop a research model and hypotheses, collect and interpret data, reach conclusions, and make recommendations for managerial practices. The recommendations should be specific and concrete in terms of costs and benefits.

Selection of a Problem

Once a student finds a workable idea, he or she should consider it carefully.

- The objectives should be manageable in terms of length of time available, its scope, and the organizational resources required for completing the project.
- The project should have the potential for making a significant contribution to management theory and practice.
- It should offer scope for future in-depth exploration of the topic.
- It should be feasible to carry out in the sponsoring organization.

The Role of Summer Project Mentors

When working on a summer project, students generally have two guides—one is a faculty member and the other is from the sponsoring organization. The student should regularly consult his or her mentors at all stages, including the drafting of the proposal. The student should also discuss the feasibility of the proposed summer project before beginning his or her summer placement.

Thus, the role of the summer project guides can be summarized as follows:

- Help the student develop the project proposal and ensure its acceptability.
- Attend the presentation of the proposal and the final report.
- Supervise and guide the student and provide periodic feedback based on the student's progress.
- Give written feedback on the draft of the report submitted by the student.
- Ensure the quality of the report and compliance with guidelines before forwarding it to the academic programme office.

> The faculty mentor must ensure the quality of the report and compliance with guidelines before forwarding it to the academic programme office.

WRITING THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

The summer project proposal is based on a problem that is suggested and assigned by the organization in which the student will be working. The proposal enables the student to understand the context and scope of the proposed study within the framework of a managerial problem. It also helps the student outline his or her line of approach and method of investigation and data collection. The academic and technical inputs contributed by the faculty and industry experts enhance the research quality of the summer project report.

> The proposal enables the student to understand the context and scope of the proposed study within the framework of a managerial problem.

The proposal first gives a brief account of the organization, its business, and its work environment, and then has a survey of the literature on the subject. The proposal should clearly state the research objective(s) and relate them to the subject in a broader context. It should also develop a model or state the hypothesis, clearly and precisely describe the proposed research methodology, and show the possible contribution of the proposed work to management practices.

Generally, the summer project proposal includes a cover page, a title page, a proposed table of contents, a brief introduction to the industry, a description of the research problem, the methods of investigation to be used, the time frame, and a list of relevant references. These are discussed in detail later in the chapter.

The table of contents lists all the major topics and subtopics within the report. It is followed by an introduction to the subject. The introduction should provide a background of the organization—a short description of the company, its business, and its work culture. It is necessary to record the business environment and describe how it helped the student integrate and apply his or her academic learning. Then, the managerial or sectoral problem and the background of the problem—its genesis, consequences, current practices, and so on—should be described in detail. Next, the introduction should describe the rationale for the study and the benefits of conducting the study in terms of the gains in knowledge, skills, practices, systems, and business advantages. The next step is to delimit the scope of the project and specify the area of action of the project. The introduction should then continue with a sub-section titled "The Problem Statement". This sub-section should help the student clarify the objectives of the project and explain how it will be conducted. The introduction should end with a sub-section titled "Literature Survey", which surveys the existing literature and draws conclusions from it.

The introduction is followed by a description of the research problem. The research problem is a specific set of statements that describes the issue to be investigated and goes on to develop the hypotheses. It also describes the nature and possible output of the research if it is exploratory/qualitative. The research problem should refine the general problem statement into a specific form so that the problem statement may be tested and answered with a specific study. The expected results from such a research study should also be described, and, as far as possible, these should be in terms of the specific hypotheses developed. If possible, the operationalized hypotheses should also be defined at this stage itself, in order to have the advantage of the panel's inputs regarding the core area of study.

The research design contains five sub-sections, namely:

(a) The general methodology or procedure of study adopted—whether it is the case method, is based on secondary or accounting/financial data, sales data, or production data, or is survey-based
(b) The sample and sampling frame or data source and plans to acquire the data
(c) The data collection procedure
(d) The method of data analysis, qualitative analysis techniques, and the form of the output
(e) How the expected output may be arrived at by following the specified methodology

The time frame for the completion of the summer project, stagewise and eventwise, with details giving the expected day and dates of completion of each stage, should also be given. Lastly, there should be a list of references used in preparing the report. There are several ways of formatting this information. Appendix 1 has detailed information regarding how references should be listed.

3

Learn the structure and essential elements of a summer project report.

COMPONENTS OF THE SUMMER PROJECT REPORT

The primary purpose of a project report is to demonstrate the student's ability to make effective use of research methods appropriate to the problem and to develop and handle evidence satisfactorily. The summer project report should, therefore, contain sections on:

(a) the research procedure(s) employed,
(b) the extent, nature, reliability, and suitability of evidence gathered, and
(c) the conclusions drawn and recommendations made, to demonstrate skills in analysis and interpretation of research results.

The primary purpose of a project report is to demonstrate the student's ability to make effective use of research methods appropriate to the problem and to develop and handle evidence satisfactorily.

Clarity, conciseness, and orderliness of writing and presentation are required. It is necessary to include sufficient evidence to support the reasoning and conclusions made in the report. The basis of the conclusions and recommendations should be clear and should exhibit the analytical skill of the student. Further, the student's in-depth knowledge of the field of study should be brought out by the literature review and the model or framework used for the study. The length of the summer project report varies according to the topic and evidence required. The components of the summer project report should appear in the order given in Exhibit 19.1.

Cover and Title Page

The cover page and title page must conform to the samples shown in Exhibit 19.2.

Approval of Organization and Faculty Guides

As shown in the samples in Exhibit 19.3, certificates of approval are statements from the student's mentors authenticating the work done. They are located in the beginning of the report.

Exhibit 19.1
Components of the Summer Project Report

Cover i
Title page ii
Certificate of approval iii
Approval of organizational and faculty guides iv
Abstract v
Acknowledgements vi
Table of contents viii
List of figures ix
List of tables x
List of appendices xi
Abbreviations xii
Chapter 1 1

Chapter 6 44
References 45
Appendices 51

Exhibit 19.2
Sample Cover and Title Page for a Summer Project Proposal

(a) The cover page

Sources of Waste at ANC Ltd

by
N. Srinivas

Sharda Peeth Institute of Management
79, S. N. Bose Road, Kolkata 7110009

2 January 2010

Use a larger font for the title (say, 14 point Arial)

Use a smaller font for the name (say, 11 point Times New Roman)

Use a larger font for the institute name (say, 14 point Arial)

(b) The title page

Sources of Waste at ANC Ltd

A Summer Project Proposal
Post-Graduate Programme
in Management
Submitted by
N. Srinivas

Under the guidance of

Professor Jacob Cherian Sharda Peeth Institute of Management	Mr K. R. Mehta CFO, ANC Ltd

Use a larger font for the title (say, 14 point Arial)

Use a smaller or lighter font for the names (say, 11 point Times New Roman)

Exhibit 19.3
Sample Certificate of Approval

Certificate of Approval

The following summer project report, titled "Sources of Waste at ANC Limited" is hereby approved as a certified study in management, carried out and presented in a manner satisfactory to warrant its acceptance as a prerequisite for the award of **Post-Graduate Diploma in Management/MBA Degree** for which it has been submitted. It is understood that by this approval the undersigned do not necessarily endorse or approve any statement made, opinion expressed, or conclusion drawn therein but approve the summer project report only for the purpose it is submitted.

Evaluated by:

1. Faculty Guide (Name) Professor Jacob Cherian (Signature) JCherian
2. Industry Guide (Name) Mr K. R. Mehta (Signature) KRMehta

Certificate from Summer Project Guides

This is to certify that **Mr N. Srinivas,** a student of the **Post-Graduate Programme in Management,** has worked under our guidance and supervision. This summer project report has the requisite standard and, to the best of our knowledge, no part of it has been reproduced from any other summer project, monograph, report, or book.

(Faculty Guide) Professor Jacob Cherian	(Industry Guide) Mr K. R. Mehta
(Designation) Professor, Operations Management	(Designation) CFO
(Institute) SPIM	(Organization) ANC Ltd
(Address) 79, S. N. Bose Road, Kolkata 7110009	(Address) Plot no. 43, Sector 62, Noida 201309
Date: 26 December 2009	Date: 26 December 2009

Abstract

Each summer project report must include an abstract of a maximum of two pages in single space (about 800–1,000 words). It should state clearly and concisely the topic, scope, method, and conclusions of the project. The emphasis of the abstract should be on the conclusions and recommendations. The word limit should be strictly adhered to.

Acknowledgements

Students are advised to acknowledge help and support from faculty members, libraries, their computer centre, outside experts, sponsoring organizations, and so on.

Table of Contents

Every summer project report must contain a table of contents, which provides a view of the organization of the report as shown in Exhibit 19.4.

List of Tables, Figures, Appendices, and Abbreviations

If the summer project report contains tables, figures, and abbreviations, these should be listed immediately following the table of contents on separate pages, as shown in Exhibit 19.5.

Chapter I: Introduction

As in the proposal, the introduction should begin with a very brief summary of the company and its business, and should go on to discuss details of the managerial problem and the background to the problem, including its genesis, consequences, and current practices. The introduction should start with a broad overview and then move to the specific focus of the study. This should include the specific business or functional problem being faced by the organization.

Next, the first chapter should describe the rationale for the study and the benefits of the project in terms of gains in knowledge, skills, practices, and systems, and how these

Table of Contents

Page numbers

Exhibit 19.4
Sample Table of Contents

The abstract should not exceed two pages

The main headings and sub-headings in each chapter should be clearly listed using a different style for each heading level

List of Figures

Exhibit 19.5
List of Figures

Number the figures in sequence

will help the organization. The next part is to delimit the scope of the project and to specify the area of enquiry under the project.

This chapter should continue with a sub-section titled "Problem Formulation". This sub-section should describe the specific business problem and related issues in greater detail. The variables involved should be identified in order to clarify the focus of the project, what is going to be studied, and why it needs to be studied. This would clarify the objectives of the project.

The first chapter should end by surveying related literature and drawing conclusions from it in a sub-section titled "Literature Survey". Students should do a comprehensive library search on their project topic. This will help them understand past work on their subject as well as current, ongoing research in their chosen area. For this purpose, students may refer to earlier summer projects, books, journals, reports, magazines, newspaper reports, and so on. The survey should cover all the issues raised in the introduction and should help in creating a theoretical framework or set of assumptions that will define the research area under study in specific terms. This will help frame the problem in terms of variables under study. The theoretical framework or the model developed for this purpose will allow for proper operationalization of the research problem. Assumptions made in the study must be clearly justified, and the grounds or evidence used for the development of the hypotheses (i.e., the variables involved, their relationships, and so on) must be given in detail in this section.

Students should do a comprehensive library search on their project topic. This will help them understand past work on their subject as well as current, ongoing research in their chosen area.

Assumptions made in the study must be clearly justified, and the grounds or evidence used for the development of the hypotheses must be given in detail.

Chapter II: Research Design

On the basis of the literature review and discussions with the faculty and organization guides, the final research problem will be identified and described in the second chapter of the report. This chapter will draw on the model or framework developed earlier and should describe the development of the hypotheses or the argument for a qualitative exploratory study. It should build a set of constructive arguments for the research problem. Further, it should describe how the problem was operationalized for measurement and analysis, and end with a statement of the operationalized hypotheses. In case it is an exploratory/qualitative/case study, this chapter must state the variables under study and the nature and area of possible output from the research.

The expected results from such a research study should also be described in terms of the specific hypotheses developed. It must be explained how such results would be of use in the managerial context and for the business.

Chapter III: Results and Conclusions

This chapter should include all the tabulated data and descriptions of the results obtained in the study. It should be noted that all the tables and figures should be properly titled and numbered and listed in the table of contents.

Next, the conclusions and inferences that are drawn from the analysis of the results (in support of the hypotheses or against it) should be stated clearly and specifically. These should be relevant to the hypotheses and should be an answer to the research problem. Thus, the conclusions should be directly related to the various issues regarding the problem under study.

Chapter IV: Recommendations

The summer project report should conclude with recommendations based on the analysis and findings of the study.

The summer project report should conclude with recommendations based on the analysis and findings of the study. This is a critical section and should highlight the student's specific contributions keeping in view the purpose of the summer project. It should demonstrate learning and improved analytical skills in actual problem-solving. The last part of this section should describe the limitations of the study and suggest directions for further study.

References

References should be complete in all respects, as shown in Appendix 1. Moreover, all references (books, journals, magazines, newspapers, reports, proceedings) listed in the report should be cross-referenced in the text at appropriate places. Examples of cross-references are:

With the rapid changes in IT and manufacturing technology, firms are becoming increasingly interested in managing the strategy–technology connection to develop new ways of achieving competitive advantage (Porter, 1985). Firms are attempting to link manufacturing strategy with business strategy (Skinner, 1985; Wheelright, 1981) to examine the strategic impact of rapidly changing manufacturing and information technology (Jelinek and Goldhar, 1983).

Appendices

Additional information, such as a questionnaire, list of dealers, details of product portfolio, organization chart, manufacturing prices, and data sheets, are placed as appendices at the end of the report.

PROJECT PRESENTATION

Once the faculty and organizational guides approve the final draft of the summer project report, the student has to give a formal presentation on the report. Several copies of the abstract (around ten) must be brought along at the time of the presentation for ready reference of the audience. For more information and tips on how to make formal presentations, refer to Chapter 14.

SUMMARY

- This chapter offers a model format of a summer project report for the benefit of those who do not have a manual issued by their respective institutions for writing such a report. These reports are compulsory for almost all business management students.
- A proposal generally precedes the summer project. The proposal summarizes the background of the selected topic and discusses the goals of the project, the research problem to be investigated, the methodology to be used, and the student's hypotheses.
- There are generally two guides who oversee the project and act as mentors supervising the student. One is a company executive and the other is a faculty member.
- The summer project report has various components: the cover page, the certificate of approval, the abstract, a list of acknowledgements, the table of contents, a list of figures and tables if any, a detailed introductory chapter, a description of the research design, the results, the conclusions, the recommendations, and finally any relevant references and appendices.

CASE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF A CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR STUDY

An analysis of consumer behaviour is the foremost requirement for the successful formulation and implementation of marketing strategies. Marketing starts with the needs of consumers and ends with their satisfaction. Since everything revolves around the customer, the study of consumer behaviour becomes a necessity.

The first part of this report deals with understanding consumer behaviour and its importance. It includes a discussion of how Indian consumers are different from western consumers. The study also explores various aspects of the urban Indian consumer and differences in consumers within the country. The spending patterns of different socio-economic classes (SECs), their economic status, their social status, and so on are depicted in various tables and figures. Consumer behaviour models further help refine the study, bringing out the buying process and the various factors that influence a buyer when selecting a product for purchase.

Data are collected with the help of primary and secondary sources and the results are interpreted. The next section deals with competition tracking: *Global* is compared with its biggest competitors and other brands in terms of SKUs on the shop floor with respect to a particular product. The results are based on empirical studies and through analysis of the data collected. Areas left out by the questionnaires are covered through market visits.

One of our main findings is that a consumer is most influenced by his or her family when taking a decision. Recommendations from family are the most trusted.

When it came to choosing air conditioners, Samsung and LG led the race. Though LG is the market leader (by market reports), consumers gave equal preference to both brands. The report concludes that *Global,* as a brand, would need to work very hard to successfully enter and gain a respectable share in the Indian air conditioner market.

Questions to Answer

1. Discuss the scope of this executive summary as an overview of the report "A Study of Consumer Behaviour for Marketing the *Global* Brand of Air Conditioners in India.
2. Analyse the sequence of points discussed in the executive summary.
3. Does this summary act as a good example of executive summaries for summer project reports? Discuss.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. Bring out the chief differences between a summer project report and long, formal business reports.
2. Discuss the objectives of the summer project and the summer project report.
3. Give some guidelines for selecting the topic for a summer project.
4. What is the role of the summer project guides? Discuss.
5. How would you frame a proposal for your summer project?
6. What are the essential elements of a summer project report?
7. Is it necessary to include your guides' certificates of approval for submission and evaluation of the report?
8. What, according to you, is the advantage of doing a summer project in a company?
9. How does the host company benefit from the summer project and the reports of students from different institutions?
10. Discuss the different types of research design in a summer project report.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. Consider what you would learn about business communication from doing an industry-based summer project.
2. Reflect on the communication opportunities you would create for yourself by working in an organization.
3. To what extent would your classroom learning help in completing the summer project report?
4. Why should there be two guides, one from industry and the other from academia, to supervise summer training? Could it lead to communication misunderstandings?
5. Consider the value of an abstract or executive summary as a part of a summer project report.

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Choose a topic for your summer project and prepare the following for your report:

(a) Cover of the report (b) Title page of the report

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. The submission of the summer project report is:
   (a) optional
   (b) compulsory
   (c) on the request of the sponsoring organization
   (d) the faculty guide's choice
2. The summer project report is written:
   (a) upon completion of the project done during the summer term
   (b) at the beginning of the project
   (c) during the project
   (d) at any time
3. The summer project report is submitted for:
   (a) the record of the institute
   (b) evaluation by both the supervisors
   (c) purchase by industry
   (d) the use of other students
4. The topic/subject of the summer project report is assigned by:
   (a) the institute (b) the company
   (c) other students (d) outside experts
5. The summer project proposal is submitted by:
   (a) the faculty guide (b) the industry guide
   (c) the institute's director (d) the student
6. The findings of the summer project report are often valuable to the host company as they are based on:
   (a) actual work done on a live project
   (b) theory
   (c) work done in the summer term
   (d) the company guide's experience
7. The summer project is carried out in the:
   (a) sponsoring organization
   (b) classroom
   (c) institute's library
   (d) institute's computer lab
8. Written feedback on the draft of the summer project report is given by:
   (a) other students (b) the two guides
   (c) the company CEO (d) the placement head
9. The introduction to the summer project report begins with:
   (a) a description of the problem
   (b) the methodology to be followed
   (c) a description of the company's business and major environmental factors
   (d) the scope of the project
10. The table of contents in a summer project report:
   (a) indicates page numbers
   (b) lists the sequence of chapters
   (c) provides the location of various topics
   (d) presents an overview of the organization of the report

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

20 Written Analysis of Cases

> A single, well-designed case study can provide a major challenge to a theory and provide a source of new hypotheses and constructs simultaneously.
>
> —Donald R. Cooper and Pamela S. Schindler

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Know the nature and types of case studies.
2. Understand the process of case analysis.
3. Identify major problems/questions involved in a case study.
4. Know how to consider alternative solutions to the questions raised.
5. Write out the findings of the analysis—a statement of the problem, the logical framework, consideration of the alternative solutions, and final decisions.

COMMUNICATION AT WORK

The case study method of teaching management issues and solutions is a crucial component of the modern pedagogy of business schools. Students and faculty spend a lot of time finding the perfect answers to the issues raised in a case. Their concern for reaching a logically satisfying solution is genuine, but they should all be informed by Amartya Sen's description of a hypothetical situation in his book, *The Idea of Justice*. In his book, Sen describes three children's demands for a flute. One child claims that she deserves the flute because she made it; the second says she deserves it because she has no toys (while the others do); and the third claims she deserves it because she can play it best. The question of who should get the toy remains: its maker, its player, or the child who has no other toy? The decision-makers could decide to give the flute to any one of the children, but who can tell what the right solution to this problem is?

WHAT IS A CASE?

A case is a written account of real or simulated managerial problems, dilemmas, and situations calling for solutions. Case analysis is an exercise in critical thinking and understanding of concepts and causes of problems and events. Broadly speaking, a case can be divided into theoretical and factual cases.

1. *Theoretical cases:* Case studies that are meant for reading and clarifying theoretical concepts in a discipline such as management, marketing, human relations, communication, and so on are academic case studies. They are used as examples to concretize abstract concepts. The interplay of ideas is presented in the form of action, interaction, and conflict among persons involved in a life-like situation described by the case. The case study on the profile of an effective communicator discussed at the beginning of this book is an example of a theoretical case. It uses the principles of oral, non-verbal, and written communication to demonstrate the dynamics of effective communication.
2. *Factual cases:* Case studies that describe and illustrate an organization's experience and efforts to overcome different problems and situations are real cases. These cases are based on facts. They present critical management issues with full details of facts and figures. Their analysis requires a systematic approach to identification of the main problem, alternative solutions, and, finally, the best solution. Such factual case studies highlight corporate problems belonging to any functional area of management, such as marketing, production, or human relations. But the technique of analysing different cases does not vary. Analysis of factual cases follows the same technique of identification and evaluation of alternatives for documenting the strategic process of decision-making.

1

Know the nature and types of case studies.

An important characteristic of a factual case study is that it presents a problem/event in its entirety, explaining all relevant causal relationships. In life, nothing happens in isolation. Interlinked events offer a kind of intersection between causes. The case study requires the application of analytical reasoning to the main problem and its best solution. The case of communication breakdown at City Hospital discussed in Chapter 9 illustrates a problem of managerial protocol.

CHARACTERSTICS OF A CASE AND ITS ANALYSIS

Before we go into the actual process of case analysis, it is necessary to understand some characteristics of cases and their analysis.

1. A good case study is based on critical management issues faced by organizations. It does not focus on personal dilemmas.
2. The subject matter of a case can focus on different aspects of management. For instance, a case can illustrate the principles of effective communication and it can also demonstrate techniques in sales and marketing. The Devox case at the beginning of this book is an example of such a case.
3. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions raised by a case study. The proposed answers or solutions to the problem should be logical. The decision that is finally recommended should keep with the logical framework that is established at the outset of the analysis.

2

Understand the process of case analysis.

THE PROCESS OF CASE ANALYSIS

The process of case analysis requires methodical study. This section describes the various stages of case analysis.

Step 1: Study the Case

First, a case analysis requires an understanding of the case and its context. This involves a comprehensive study of all factors at the organizational level that may be responsible for affecting working conditions and performance levels. Therefore, the first step is to know the goals, objectives, and structure of the organization. One can start by quickly reading the important points of the case and understanding the general drift. This should be followed by re-reading all the material and slowly taking note of important issues, facts, and ideas.

3

Identify major problems/questions involved in a case study.

Step 2: Identify the Problem

After reading over the case, the next step is to identify the main problem and discover the relationships between the problem and the factors responsible for it. Critical analysis and insight should help the analyst distinguish between the problem and its symptoms. For example, frequent strikes in a company can be viewed as a problem, as they cause dislocation in so many ways. But strikes are actually symptoms of a deeper problem in the organization: its work culture, system of promotions and rewards, and its goals and objectives. Hence, the analyst should identify the real problem, as distinguished from its symptoms.

Step 3: Define the Problem

The problem should be formulated in precise words. For example, in the aforesaid case, the problem could be defined as, "Low productivity owing to frequent labour strikes in the factory".

Step 4: Identify the Causes of the Problem

The next step is to state the relevant facts of the case and establish logical links between them. Here one should remember that facts are not opinions. Facts are the basic data obtained through investigation and study of the work environment and other industry-related factors affecting the problem to be resolved. For example, in the aforesaid case, the facts could be that in the second quarter of the year, production was lower by 40 per cent, meaning it came down by 8,000 units when compared to the previous year, in which there were no strikes. This year, there were two major strikes in the second quarter alone. When linking facts in causal relationships, any assumptions that have been made must be stated clearly. These assumptions form a part of the hypothesis that will be tested for validity.

In linking facts in causal relationships, any assumptions that have been made must be stated clearly. These assumptions form a part of the hypothesis that will be tested for validity.

Step 5: Develop Alternative Solutions

The next step is to suggest various possible answers and solutions to the problem or questions raised in the case. According to experts, at least three to five alternatives should be generated, ranging from "most viable" to "least viable".

Step 6: Evaluate the Alternatives

Next, each solution must be evaluated in terms of its relevance to the organization's objectives and the decision to be taken. The analyst should compare the various alternatives and decide on the best course of action to recommend. The alternatives can also be scrutinized in terms of their utility over time, that is, in the immediate term, intermediate term, or long term.

4

Know how to consider alternative solutions to the questions raised.

Step 7: Develop a Plan of Action

Lastly, the analyst works out a plan to implement the recommended course of action. It is only when a plan of action is developed that one can check whether all the aspects of the problem have been addressed.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A CASE ANALYSIS

5

Write out the findings of the analysis—a statement of the problem, the logical framework, consideration of the alternative solutions, and final decisions.

To understand the requirements for a case analysis, let us go back to the Devox case: *The Profile of an Effective Communicator*. This case analysis has been deliberately placed at the beginning of the book because it introduces all the essential principles and characteristics of effective oral, non-verbal, and written communication—it is almost like a summary of the book. We can use this case to examine the requirements necessary for a thorough and insightful case analysis.

The following are the key requirements of a case analysis:

1. *Thorough knowledge of the concerned subject:* The first requirement for being able to write an analysis of a theoretical case is thorough knowledge of the subject. Since the Devox case is considered a communications case, its analysis needs application of the concepts of effective communication. If we take the same case as an illustrative situation in consumer behaviour, its analysis will require a thorough knowledge of consumer behaviour concepts.
2. *Analytical ability:* When attempting a case analysis, one has to go deeper into the situation described in the case. For example, in the Devox case, questions such as the following must be considered:

- Why does Mr Oberoi want to return the pair of shoes?
- How did this situation arise?
- Does Mr Oberoi leave the show room satisfied? If yes, why? If not, why not?
- How are the different aspects of this case related to one another?
- Can we explain the situation in terms of our assumptions and observations?
- Who is the most effective communicator in this case: Rahul, Mr Oberoi, Mr Sharma, or Mr Khare?
- Why does Mrs Oberoi keep away from the discussion?

To analyse means to break something down into its constituent parts. It involves more than just describing something. When ideas are taken apart, each component can be discussed separately. This results in connections being made among the components and new relationships and interactions being established. This allows us to examine the validity of the logic used to establish these relationships.

When ideas are taken apart, each component can be discussed separately. This results in connections being made among the components and new relationships and interactions being established.

3. *Ability to think critically:* The ability to think critically requires going beyond the obvious and looking for the truth underlying conflicts. It requires looking beyond what meets the eye and having a questioning approach in which one accepts an idea only after examining its basis.
4. *Ability to evaluate:* The ability to evaluate ideas and reasons is part of critical thinking. When evaluating, it is important to know the reasons for a particular judgement. For example, it is not enough to say "Rahul is the most effective communicator". One must also explain why and how Rahul is an effective communicator, for instance by comparing him to others and pointing out examples in which he demonstrates effective communication.
5. *Ability to infer:* From the given analysis of the Devox case, you should have noticed that the analysis is centrally related not to Mr Oberoi's purpose of returning the shoes, but to the way his skills to convince and persuade are outdone by Rahul's competence in communicating. You should be able to finally view the whole problem from a certain perspective. Here, the analysis takes the position that effective communication is an act of the total personality of the communicator.

Analysis of Communication Breakdown at City Hospital

Another example of written analysis of a factual case is *Communication Breakdown at City Hospital*, which is given in Chapter 9. This case was discussed by nearly 300 groups of executives at several executive development programmes. The candidates were given enough lead time to understand the case thoroughly and answer the following questions:

1. Why did the situation worsen with the widespread rumours of layoffs?
2. Was it correct to include Lily Joe in the initial discussion meeting?
3. Ideally, how should the situation have been handled?

Why Did the Situation Worsen?

Answers to the first question ("Why did the situation worsen with the rumours of layoffs?") include the following common points:

- Slow decision-making and poor coordination by the management.
- Lack of initiative by the management—it did not anticipate the confusion and protests.
- Excess attendees and too many meetings regarding layoffs.
- Inability of management to take the staff into confidence from the very beginning.
- Lack of proper planning and inept execution of the retrenchment process.
- Presence of a clear communication gap and increasing anxiety of concerned staff.
- Fear of the fifth-floor staff.
- Inclusion of Lily Joe in the initial meetings.
- Popular belief that management was behind the rumours.

Here are some examples of answers to the first question.

Example 1: Prima facie it seems that the inclusion of Lily Joe in the meetings was the primary reason for the spread of rumours. However, it cannot be said with certainty that other members in the meeting would not have spread the news, since the decision would affect a number of fifth-floor employees. The very fact that members were sworn to secrecy would be enough to fan the flames.

Example 2: The reasons for the worsening of the situation due to widespread rumours could be:

(a) Rumours were spread with the intent of generating fear and agitation among employees, in the hopes that they would do something illegal or untoward, which would help the management justify closure of the fifth floor.

(b) The hospital had a policy of reassignment, but talk of the layoffs must have been leaked. The crux of the matter is that the management did not involve the staff in the decision-making process and the staff was resistant to changes.

Example 3: The reasons for the rumours regarding layoffs of the observation ward employees could be:

(a) The series of meetings involved too many people and led to the rumours.
(b) There were differences among management regarding the process and procedure of decision-making. There were last minute objections put forth by the chief medical officer (CMO) and the chief accounts officer (CEO). Both demanded specific numbers and significant changes in the announcement letter drafted by the group before they would allow the plan to move forward.
(c) Negative news spreads very quickly via the grapevine.
(d) Lily Joe refused to accept the decision.
(e) The execution of plans was delayed, which led to the spreading of rumours.

The spreading of rumours via the grapevine suggests that the management missed an opportunity to share information that was of interest to employees. This poses a challenge to the management's effectiveness and the organization's human resource management system. Normally, management views the grapevine negatively because it tends to breach confidentiality and secrecy, and often results in the spreading of false rumours and negative information. However, sometimes the management itself may want to take advantage of rumours to gauge the likely reactions of the concerned employees to a proposed change or scheme. In this case, the communication gap happens because the decision was taken at the "top" and the implementation was desired from the "bottom".

Normally, management views the grapevine negatively because it tends to breach confidentiality and secrecy, and often results in the spreading of false rumours and negative information.

Was it Correct to Include Lily Joe in the Meeting?

Answers to the second question, "Was it correct to include Lily Joe in the initial discussion meetings?", can follow two directions. One view is that it was right to include Lily Joe in the initial meeting because the management was taking a decision affecting the staff of the fifth floor, so involving those whom the decision affected was crucial. Lily Joe, being their head, could contribute to the decision. Protocol demanded that she be involved in the meetings. In addition, including her would send her the message that her opinion was still valuable. According to this view, her attending the meeting is a perfect example of participative management, where employees are called to put forward their views. This approach helps the management obtain a holistic view of the situation.

However, an opposing view is that it was incorrect to include Lily Joe in the layoff meetings, even at the initial stage, because she was directly affected by the layoff plan. She did not contribute to the discussion. In fact, her participation created further problems because she herself was part of the problem, but made no contribution to the discussion.

How Should the Situation Have Been Handled?

A case study does not illustrate the dilemmas of an individual. It presents problems that an organization faces because of the failure of its systems.

A case study does not illustrate the dilemmas of an individual. It presents problems that an organization faces because of the failure of its systems.

The closure of the observation ward seems to be an easy solution to the problem, but it is misdirected. The executive director should have first prepared a plan to reduce staff across the hospital, instead of abolishing the fifth-floor unit. And after deciding on the number of employees to be dropped, after "reassignments" at the hospital level, general options should have been asked for from all the employees of the hospital and not of "observation ward" employees only.

The executive director should also have kept in mind that the hospital had a policy of reassignment rather than layoff, and thus had a commitment to placing the fifth-floor staff in other positions for which they were qualified. Just as fifth-floor patients were to be reassigned to other units, the staff of the fifth floor should have been reassigned too.

In addition, new recruitment should have been stopped for some time. The action plan should have involved the following steps:

(a) The executive director should have appointed a committee made up of the director of personnel, the director of public relations, the head of nursing, and the labour relations consultant to discuss the retrenchment plan. When the hospital management decided that, since her floor was being closed entirely, Lily Joe would no longer be needed, the management should not have included her in the planning process.
(b) This committee should have developed a report on the reassignment and layoff of the fifth-floor staff.
(c) Then, the plan of action should have been placed before the CMO and CAO for their approval.
(d) After its approval, the plan should have been shared with the nursing heads in a formal meeting.
(e) Finally, the heads of nursing should have met the staff of the fifth floor to announce the plan for reassignment and layoff; after this, the press should have been informed.

The two examples of case analysis discussed here are only suggestions of how cases analyses can be carried out and are not prescriptive. A case analysis should be a well-organized piece of analytical and evaluative writing that reflects the analyst's critical thinking on the relevant information and ideas.

THE STRUCTURE OF A WRITTEN CASE ANALYSIS

The writing of a case analysis follows a sequence of steps. Like a project report or an investigative report, a case report presents the process, findings, and recommendations of the analysis in an organized form, under distinct headings and sub-headings.

The main parts of the written analysis are:

1. *The title of the case:* The title reflects the central problem of the case.
2. *The statement of the problem:* The statement of the problem describes the objective of the case and what is to be achieved through the proposed solution.
3. *The case:* The case is a brief narration of the situation or problem. It provides the context for the various issues to be investigated.
4. *The scope of the analysis:* The scope defines the limits of the analytical study of the case clearly. It also describes the assumptions that have been made for the purpose of the analysis.
5. *The alternative solutions and their evaluation:* Each possible solution is an alternative answer to the problem and should be fully considered in relation to the company's objectives and goals and evaluated in terms of its merits and demerits. Sub-sections can be created for each solution, listing its merits and demerits. Here is an example:

   Solution 1: Fire the employees who engaged in violence during the strike.

   Merits: The company will be justifiably free of trouble-makers.

   Demerits/limitations: They might be some of the most productive workers otherwise; this might also further escalate the situation.
6. *The recommended solution:* The recommended solution is the final suggestion for action. It is backed by the principles of management that are relevant to the case under consideration. At this stage, the logical framework developed to interpret the case helps justify the decision to recommend a particular solution.
7. *The conclusion:* The conclusion gives a plan of action to overcome the problem by implementing the solution. The recommended action is fully analysed in terms of its viability, feasibility, cost, and benefit to the company. Any other inherent limitation or weakness in implementing the plan is also clearly discussed and indicated as a point for caution and further consideration.

8. *The executive summary:* The executive summary briefly includes the following:
   - A brief description of the background of the problem
   - The problem
   - The possible solutions
   - The best solution
   - The recommended plan of action
   - The benefits of the recommended solution to the company

The executive summary is for helping decision-makers understand the problem and its possible solutions without going through the entire case analysis. It is, therefore, placed at the beginning of the written analysis.

SUMMARY

- Case analysis is an exercise in critical thinking and understanding of concepts and causes of problems and events. This chapter discusses the nature of theoretical and factual case studies.
- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions raised by a case. An analyst's answer or solution should be logical and convincing and based on facts presented.
- The various steps involved in a case analysis are: studying the background of the case, identifying and stating the problem, analysing the various possible solutions, evaluating the options, and developing a plan of action based on the recommended solution.

CASE: ACCEPTING A CONTRACT

A computer services company was negotiating a very large order with a major corporation. They had a very good track record with this client. Five different departments in the corporation had pooled their requirements and budgets, and a committee that had representation from all the departments was formed. The corporation wanted the necessary equipment on a long lease and did not want to make an outright purchase. Further, they wanted all the hardware and software from one supplier. This meant that their supplier would need bought-out items from other suppliers, since no one supplier could meet all the requirements from its range of products.

The corporation provided an exhaustive list of complex terms and conditions and pressured the vendors to accept their terms. The computer company that was finally awarded the contract had agreed to the overall terms as far as their own products were concerned, but had also accepted the same terms for the bought-out items. In this case, the bought-out items were to be imported through a letter of credit. The percentage of bought-out items vis-à-vis the company's own products was also very high. One of the terms accepted was that the "system" would be accepted over a period of 10 days after all the hardware had been linked up and the software loaded.

The computer company started encountering supply troubles immediately. There were over a hundred computers connected with one another through software. For the acceptance tests, it had been agreed that the computer company would demonstrate, as a prerequisite, the features they had promised during technical discussions.

Now, when a Hero Honda motorcycle claims 80 km to a litre of petrol, it is under ideal test conditions, and if a motorcycle from the showroom were to be tested for this mileage before being accepted, it would never pass the test. In the corporation's case, due to internal politics, the representatives from one department—who insisted on going exactly by the contract—did not sign their acceptance since the system could not meet the ideal test conditions.

Further, in a classic case of "for want of a horseshoe, payment for the horse was held up", when the computer company tried to get the system accepted and payment released, they could not. The system was so large that at some point over a period of 10 days, something or the other always had problems. But the corporation took the stand that as far as they were concerned, the contract clearly mentioned that the system had to be tested as a whole and not module by module.

Questions to Answer

1. Comment on the terms and conditions put forth by the corporation.
2. What factors influenced the computer company's decision to accept the contract?
3. Was it a win–win agreement? Discuss.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

1. What are the academic benefits of a case study?
2. What abilities are required when analysing a case?
3. Discuss the process of developing a written case analysis.

4. What according to you is the most important characteristic of a good case study?
5. Do you agree that a case can be used to illustrate several different concepts? Give some examples of cases you have studied.
6. To what extent is a case study a problem-solving project seeking a correct solution?
7. "A written analysis of a case is an analytical and evaluative piece of writing". Discuss.
8. Discuss the main characteristics of theoretical cases. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.
9. Define a factual case and show how it differs from a theoretical case.
10. How do you arrive at the "best course of action"? Discuss.

REFLECT ON YOUR LEARNING

1. What is the essential difference you have found between your approach to real-life business problems and the approach of a working manager actually confronting these problems?
2. If there are no right or wrong answers to the questions raised by a case, then how do we evaluate the quality of a case analysis?
3. How would one distinguish a problem from its symptoms when analysing a case?
4. Reflect on the central importance of hypotheses in a case.
5. What do you understand by the phrase "analytical ability"?

APPLY YOUR LEARNING

Revisit the Devox Sports Shoes & Sportswear case and discuss what, according to you, would be the best way to satisfy Mr Oberoi as well as guard the company's policy. Give a strategic analysis of your solution.

SELF-CHECK YOUR LEARNING

From the given options, please choose the most appropriate answer:*

1. A case, in management studies, gives an account of:
   (a) a manager's personal problems
   (b) a manager's interpersonal problems
   (c) management problems
   (d) social events in the company
2. Cases dealing with an organization's experiences and efforts to solve problems are described as:
   (a) organizational cases (b) theoretical cases
   (c) functional cases (d) factual cases
3. All case studies involve documentation of the process of:
   (a) strategic decision-making
   (b) exploring alternative choices
   (c) storytelling
   (d) evaluating a problem
4. Logical links between two events/facts are established by discovering:
   (a) casual links (b) causal links
   (c) hypothetical links (d) traditional links
5. In the scientific study of a problem, opinions are not allowed because they are not:
   (a) facts (b) widely known
   (c) written (d) subjective
6. The executive summary helps the decision-maker:
   (a) avoid reading the case fully
   (b) learn about the problem
   (c) learn about various solutions to the problem
   (d) Both (b) and (c)
7. In a case study, the executive summary is placed:
   (a) at the end
   (b) at the beginning
   (c) with the recommendations
   (d) as part of the introduction
8. The first requirement for being able to write an analysis of a theoretical case is thorough knowledge of the concerned:
   (a) case (b) subject
   (c) objective (d) methodology
9. The ability to think critically reflects a:
   (a) questioning mind (b) thoughtfulness
   (c) sharp business sense (d) holistic personality
10. In the conclusions section of an industry-based case study, the recommended action plan is fully analysed in terms of its:
   (a) viability (b) feasibility
   (c) benefit to the company (d) all of the above

*For answers and self-evaluation, visit www.pearsoned.co.in/PDChaturvedi

Appendix 1: Grammar, Usage, and Style

> *Linguistic study no longer lays down rules for correct grammar, but studies the rules that are actually adhered to by particular cultural groups. The aim is not to give laws for human utterance, but to understand the utterances that actually occur.*
>
> —*Graham Hough*

INTRODUCTION

Lynne Truss has based the title of her popular book *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* on a joke about poor punctuation[1]:

> A panda enters a café, eats a sandwich, and starts shooting at the people in the café. When an amazed waiter blurts out a "Why?" in the ensuing confusion, the panda throws a copy of a wildlife manual at him. And sure enough, he finds the following description against the word "Panda" in the manual: "Panda: Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves."

This is a humourous account of how just one misplaced comma or, for that matter, any other minor punctuation error can completely change the meaning of a sentence. To write correctly, one doesn't need to specialize in grammer. One does, however, need to learn some basic rules of grammar and English usage. In addition, an eye for stylistic issues like punctuation, capitalization, and references helps. The focus of this appendix is on three broad issues—grammar, English usage, and style. These are issues that are often ignored, but can make a significant difference to the quality of a written document.

GRAMMAR

According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, a comma is "the study of the rules of a language's inflections or other means of showing the relation between words including its phonetic system"[2]. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* clarifies that "A dictionary lists the words, grammar states the rules"[3].

You are already aware of the various parts of speech, such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. The following sections discuss how these parts of speech are used, beginning with the rule of concord or verb–subject agreement.

Rule of Concord or Agreement

In a sentence, the verb must agree in number and person with its subject. A *verb*, as explained later, is a word that expresses action or presents the state in which a thing or person is. A *subject* is that about which something is stated in the predicate. It is a mistaken notion that a subject is the "doer" of the action. Action can be done upon the subject (e.g., *he* is killed). A sentence will be correct only when the subject and verb endings agree in number. A singular verb should be used with a singular subject and a plural verb with a plural subject.

> A sentence will be correct only when the subject and verb endings agree in number. A singular verb should be used with a singular subject and a plural verb with a plural subject.

Singular and Plural Subjects

The subject of a sentence is either singular or plural, and this determines the verb's ending. The ending of a verb is singular when it ends with *s* and plural when it has no *s* at the end. For example *comes* is a singular verb and *come* is a plural verb. It is correct to say, "She comes from Jaipur" but incorrect to say, "They comes from Jaipur".

Singular nouns, singular pronouns, and uncountable nouns (such as *happiness*, *news*, *time*, *life*, *love*) need singular verbs that end with *s*.

Ram plays.

She dances.

However, the following would be exceptions:

I pray.

You go.

Plural nouns and pronouns take plural verbs.

They play.

Girls dance.

You eat.

A good rule to remember is that a sentence cannot have two *s* endings, one with the verb and the other with the subject. Further, plural nouns have an *s* at the end, and they take plural verbs, which end without an *s*. Conversely, singular nouns are without an *s* at the end, and they take singular verbs, which have an *s*.

Bells ring.

The girl runs.

Everyone in my class, including our teacher, *has* donated blood.

Note that the following phrases are not part of the subject. Therefore, they should not be considered when determining the number of the subject:

- along with
- accompanied by
- except
- including
- no less than
- together with
- with

Compound Subjects

Compound subjects are two singular subjects joined by the conjunction *and*; they require a plural verb.

The boy and girl are…

The story and music are…

When the words joined by *and* stand together as a single unit and mean one single thing, they take a singular verb. For instance, it is correct to say "The horse and carriage has come".

Either/or Subjects

When multiple subjects are joined by *either, neither, nor,* or *not only…but also*, the verb agrees in number with the nearest subject.

Either he or his sisters are expected.

Neither the mother nor the children know about it.

It is not only the players but also the captain who deserves praise.

If one of the subjects is plural, the verb should be plural. Hence, the plural subject may be placed closest to the verb to make it plural.

Either he or his friends have done it.

If both the subjects are singular, the verb will be singular.

Neither he nor his brother is coming.

Phrase and Clauses as Subjects

When a phrase or an entire clause is the subject, a singular verb is used. For instance:

Forgiving faults is not easy.

To seek happiness is natural.

What he wants to know is why he is being punished.

In case the verb is a form of *be* and the noun placed after it is plural, the verb will be plural.

What he gave were letters.

(Here, what he gave = letters)

Collective Nouns as Subjects

When a collective noun (such as *committee*, *class*, *team*, *group*, *family*) is used in the sense of a single unit or as a whole, the verb used with it is singular.

Our class has won the match.

Sometimes, however, the collective noun refers to its members acting individually. In that case, a plural verb should be used.

The committee are divided in their opinion.

Note that even the (possessive) pronoun used here is plural (*their*), not singular (*its*).

***Plural Words That End in* S**

Words such as *news*, *economics*, *mathematics*, and *lives* are considered single units and need a singular verb.

The news says…

Physics is…

***Subjects That End in* S**

The list below includes words that refer to only one thing, but take a plural verb.

Eyeglasses are…

Clippers trim…

Jeans are…

Riches are…

Shears cut…

Thanks are due to…

Tweezers pull…

Scissors cut…

Amounts as Subjects

When the subject mentions an amount, the verb used is singular.

Anything more than 100 km is too high a speed.

Six bushels is…

Four hundred rupees is…

Company Names, Titles, and Terms as Subjects

Name of companies, titles of books, and words used as terms take singular verbs.

Hindustan Motors is changing its business model.

The New Realities is the latest book by Drucker.

Indefinite Words as Subjects

When words such as *each, every,* and *any* are used as subjects or placed before the subject in the singular sense, they require a singular verb.

Each has their own idea.

Every essay is marked by her.

Note that when *none, some, most,* or *all* are used as the subject, they take a singular or plural verb according to their meaning. For example, consider the following uses of *all* and *some*.

All is not lost.

All my pens are imported.

Some of the lecture is not clear. (In this case, the word *some* indicates a part of the lecture. It is therefore a single unit and needs a singular verb.)

Some of the guests are yet to come. (*Some* here refers to many guests and is therefore used in the plural sense. It takes a plural verb.)

The Use of* One of Those, Who(m), and Which *as Subjects

When the phrases *one of those, one of who(m),* and *one of which* are used, one should see whether the words *who, which,* or *those* refer to a whole group or only to one individual or thing. The phrase takes a singular or plural verb depending on this.

Manisha is one of those students who have the textbook.

Here, Manisha is only a part of a larger group of students who have the book. *Who* refers to *those students* and therefore is plural, Thus, it takes the plural verb *have*. One the other hand, consider the following sentence:

Manisha is the only student who is present today.

Here, the word *who* refers to Manisha as the only one student and not as a part of a larger group of students. Hence a singular verb is used.

Who, Which, *and* That *as Subjects*

The verb used with *who*, *which*, and *that* agrees in number with the number of the antecedent word (previous word) to which it refers.

She is the girl who sings well.

They are the people who suffer most.

It, There Is, *and* There Are *at the Subject Position*

It used as a subject always needs a singular verb, without considering the number of whatever follows the verb.

It was the songs that made the movie so popular.

Exercise A1.A
Correct Use of Verbs

Choose the correct verb from the options given in parentheses:
(i) Ten pieces of bread (is, are) too much for the two of us.
(ii) There (was, were) a whole pile of files before him.
(iii) Each of the students (was, were) awarded.
(iv) The quantity of the books presented (vary, varies).
(v) The most popular of the Indian epics (is, are) the *Ramayana*.
(vi) The cause for the delay (was, were) known to all.
(vii) The president, along with his bodyguards, (is, are) coming.
(viii) Politics (is, are) a subject for scoundrels.
(ix) It (is, are) they who wanted to go.
(x) He is one of the managers who (is, are) attending the training programme.

But the use of *there is* or *there are* depends on the complement placed after the verb.

There is an excellent book on this topic in our college library.

There are several books on this topic in our library.

Verbs

A *verb* is a word or group of words that express action or present a state in which a thing or person is. It may join the subject with the rest of the sentence. It is not possible to write or speak a complete sentence without at least one verb in it. Some characteristics of verbs are discussed below.

1. Verbs express action.

   I *read* poetry sometimes.
   She *plays* basketball daily.

2. Some verbs (known as linking verbs) show the relationship of the subject to the rest of the sentence.

   They *feel* happy.

   The child *is* hungry.

3. Verbs provide information regarding time.

   You *are* reading this book. (present)

   He *went* away. (past)

   I *shall* come tomorrow. (future)

4. Verbs indicate the number of the subject.

   Our English teacher *loves* her students. (singular: there is one doer of the action)

   They always *shout* in the class. (plural: there are multiple doers)

5. Verbs agree with the subject.

   I *like* to sing. (first person)

   We *study* together. (first person, plural)

   You *like* to sing. (second person)

   He/she *likes* to sing. (third person)

Exhibit A1.1
Verb Tenses

	Present	*Past*	*Future*
Simple	I run	I ran	I shall run
Progressive	I am running	I was running	I shall be running
Perfect	I have run	I had run	I shall have run
Perfect Progressive	I have been running	I had been running	I shall have been running

Verb Tense

Verb tense is the form of the verb that tells the reader the time of action. The verb tense indicates past, present, or future. There are four kinds of tenses each for present, past, and future:

1. Simple or indicative
2. Progressive or continuous: *be* + *–ing* form of the verb
3. Perfect: *have*/*has*, *had*, *shall* + *–ed* form of the verb
4. Perfect continuous: *have*/*had* + *been* + *–ing* form of the verb

Exhibit A1.1 shows how these verbs differ in usage.

Simple present describes things (situations or actions) which are present now and are habitually true.

Present tense There are four types of present tenses.

1. *Simple or indicative present:* The simple or indicative present tense describes situations or actions that are present now and are habitually true. At times, the simple present tense can express future time if there is another word in the sentence that clearly refers to the future.

   Here comes the train. (happening just now)

   He goes out on tour every month. (habitually true)

   The earth goes round the sun. (always true)

   The square of two is four. (always true)

   Tomorrow, Shweta goes abroad. (future)

2. *Present progressive (continuous):* This is used in two situations.

   (i) To mention a particular action that is taking place at the time of speaking and is in progress and unfinished.

   I am writing a letter. (an activity in progress)

   The train is running late.

   He is sleeping.

   (ii) To describe a situation—not an activity—that is temporary.

   He is sitting in the last row. (The present continuous form of the verb has two parts: *is* or *are* + *–ing* form of the verb)

   She is dancing.

   We are playing.

   The progressive form is not used to express what someone sees, hears, smells, feels, or tastes (the sense perceptions) on a specific occasion, bur rather, refers to perceptions that are in progress. Sometimes the simple present tense is used (e.g., I see a bus coming.). Note that this can also be written with the help of *can* (e.g., I can see a bus coming.). If the progressive form is used to express sense perceptions, it indicates something that is continuous over a much longer period.

   I am seeing much better since my operation.

The progressive present tense is generally used in the passive voice when it refers to the future.

The case is being discussed at the next board meeting. (not *The case is discussed or The case is to be discussed)*

In addition, when the interrogative form is used, the progressive present tense is used.

When are you going to meet them? (not *When do you go to meet them?*)

> The progressive present tense is generally used in the passive voice when it refers to the future.

3. *Present perfect:* The present perfect tense describes an action that began in the past and continues in the present.

   I have taught this class for three months.

   I have used a ball pen since I was in school.

   The present perfect tense can take the form: — *has* (or) *have* + third form (past participle) of the verb.

   They have gone.

   He has finished the letter.

   I have written a letter.

4. *Present perfect progressive (continuous):* The present perfect tense describes action that began in the past, continues in the present, and may continue into the future (as it has not yet finished).

   I have been writing the letter for an hour.

   We have been living here since 1997.

   The present perfect progressive tense can take the form: — *have* or *has* + *been* + *–ing* form of the verb.

   He has been reading.

   She has been dancing.

Past tense There are four types of past tenses.

1. *Simple past:* The simple past is used to describe actions or conditions of the past.

   We attended the summer training last year. (completed action)

   I was cold yesterday. (completed condition)

   Ancient people believed that the sun moved around the Earth.

   The train arrived before time.

   I studied for two hours.

2. *Past continuous (progressive):* The past continuous describes an action that took place in the past over a period of time.

   We were driving back when heavy rains came down.

   When we arrived, they were sleeping.

   The past continuous can take the form: — *was* or *were* + *–ing* form of the verb.

   She was dancing.

   He was eating.

3. *Past perfect:* This tense is used for an action or event completed before another event in the past.

   When we reached, the train had already left the station.

   The past perfect takes the form: — *had* + *ed* form of the verb (past participle).

4. *Past perfect continuous:* The past perfect continuous tense indicates a continuing condition in the past.

   My brother had been planning to come here when he fell ill.

Future tense There are four types of future tenses.

1. *Simple future:* The simple future tense expresses actions or events that will occur in the future. It takes the form: — *shall* or *will* + base form of the verb.

   I shall complete this letter tomorrow.

   I shall meet him.

   They will come.

2. *Future continuous:* The future continuous tense refers to future action that will go on for some time. It takes the form: — *shall* or *will* + *be* + *–ing* form of the verb.

   I shall be expecting your reply.

   He will be playing.

3. *Future perfect:* The future perfect tense indicates actions that will be completed by or before a specific time in the future.

   By Monday, the teacher will have covered this last chapter.

4. *Future perfect progressive:* The future perfect continuous tense is used to express actions or conditions that will continuously take place until a particular time in the future. It takes the form: *will* or *shall* + *have* + *been* + *–ing* form of the verb.

   In December we will have been doing this course for a year.

When *since* denotes time, it refers to a specific point of time in the past, up to and including the present moment. It connects a past action or situation with the present.

***Tenses with* since** When *since* denotes time, it refers to a specific point of time in the past, up to and including the present moment. It connects a past action or situation with the present. Therefore, the word *since* is normally preceded by the perfect tense of the verb.

We have not seen any movies since March. (not *did not see*)

We have stayed in this house since 1996. (not *we stay here*)

If the activity or process described has been going on since the specified point and is still happening, the perfect continuous tense should be used.

I have been studying since 4 o'clock this morning. (not *I am studying…*)

When the specified point of time in the past is expressed by an adverbial clause beginning with *since,* the verb of this clause must be in the past tense.

He has not met me since we left Delhi. (not *have left*)

We have lived with our uncle since our father died. (not *has died*)

Since the move to the new house, he has been happier. (not *has moved*.)

When using *since*, the verb in the main clause is in the perfect tense and the word *since* is followed either by a word or a clause in the past tense or by a phrase showing past time (such as *since the partition*, *since 1947*, *since last week*).

Two exceptions to this general practice are:

(i) When the main clause refers to the duration of time between a certain point in the past and the present, the present tense and not the perfect tense is used in this (main) clause.

It is twenty days since I met him. (not *has been*)

How long is it since you had been there? (not *has it been*)

(ii) When the point of time from which we consider the action or event in the past is the beginning of a situation that has continued and is still present, then the perfect tense is used in the *since* clause instead of the past tense.

They have never been to that place since I have been away.

In this sentence, *since I have been away* means "I am still away"; *since I was away* would have meant "I am no longer away".

The future tense in adverbial clauses In an adverbial clause dependent on the main clause, the simple present tense is normally used.

In an adverbial clause dependent on the main clause, the simple present tense is normally used.

I shall meet you when I come to Delhi. (not *when I shall come*)

We shall go on a tour as soon as the schools close. (not *will close*)

I shall not come if it rains.

You will miss the train unless you move faster.

I plan to buy a new car when the prices come down.

In reported speech, the verbs *shall* and *will* change to *should* or *would* in the main clause and the present tense of the subordinate clause is changed into the corresponding past tense.

He said he would wait until I come back.

My father told them that they should carry his umbrella in case it rained.

The helping verb *will* may be used in the subordinate clause, but not when referring to the future. Instead, it is used when referring to the present, for instance in the sense "if you are willing".

He will sing if you join him.

Again, it is possible to use future tense in the adverbial clause. In these sentences, the second clause is not a subordinate clause; instead, it is an essential and restrictive modification to the main clause.

You may come tomorrow, when I shall have more time to meet you.

Go to the main market, where you will find a bookshop.

Sometimes, it is possible to use the present continuous form of the verb in the adverbial clause if the condition or activity is in progress at the time of making the statement.

I shall stay in if it is raining.

Do not go to your class if you are not feeling better.

Inform us if you are going to have guests.

Tense in sentences with conditions In sentences with conditions, the tense of the verb has to be in accordance with the nature (kind) of the condition. There are three kinds of conditions:

In sentences with conditions, the tense of the verb has to be in accordance with the nature (kind) of the condition.

(i) Probable condition (may or may not happen)

(ii) Improbable condition (might have happened, but has not)

(iii) Impossible condition (a supposed condition that cannot happen)

1. *Probable condition:* A probably condition is one that is uncertain, meaning it may or may not be fulfilled. It is also called an open condition. For a probable condition that refers to the present, the present tense is used in both the main clause and the conditional clause.

   If it rains, I shall not go out.

   If water boils, it turns to steam.

   If I study for too long, I become tired.

   If it is only 6 p.m., we have a lot of time to pack for the trip.

   If the condition refers to the future, the present tense is used in the conditional clause and the future tense is used in the main clause.

   If I am free, I shall go to meet her.

   If I find a good book, I shall get it for you.

   If an instruction or order is expressed in the main clause, the imperative form of the word is used in place of the future tense.

   If you see him, ask him to call me.

   In the case of past events or actions, both the clauses (main and conditional clauses) take the past tense.

   If the director received any report about a student, he investigated it personally.

   On the other hand, if the sentence refers to a particular event or situation that was in the future when considered from a specific point in the past, then the past tense is used in the conditional clause and the future in its past form in the main clause.

   If I had some free time, I would spend it doing some social service.

2. *Improbable condition (a rejected condition):* An improbable condition is one that could have been fulfilled, but has not been fulfilled. To express this kind of condition, the past subjunctive (conditional mood) is used in the conditional clause if the verb is of the "to be" form. The past simple (indicative) is used if it is any other verb. The future in the past form is used in the main clause.

   If she were alive, we would reunite.

   If his marks were not so poor, he would be promoted.

   If we had money, we would go shopping.

   If these sentences referred to the past, then they would be written as:

   If she had been alive we could have reunited.

   If we had had money, we could have gone shopping.

3. *Impossible condition:* An impossible condition is a purely imaginary, hypothetical condition that could not be possibly true.

   If I were a king, I would rule by love, not by power or fear.

   If I had all the wealth in the world, I would still not be happy.

   If the sentence refers to the past, *were* changes to *had been* and *would* or *should* becomes *would have* or *should have*.

   I would have fought against this injustice if I were you.

   What would you have done if you had been caught taking a bribe?

Prepositions and Conjunctions

In English, the use of prepositions is by convention. There is no rule to explain why a certain verb, adjective, or noun is to be followed only by a particular preposition in a particular sense. Even native speakers of English sometimes have trouble sometimes choosing prepositions that follow certain words. Therefore, one should consult a dictionary for the correct use of prepositions when in doubt. Study the examples of idiomatic use of prepositions given in Exhibit A1.2.

In English the use of preposition is by convention.

Non-native speakers of English must learn the large number of two-part verbs, with their different meanings, such as:

add up: add
break down: analyse
bring on: cause
bring to: revive
burn down: destroy by burning
burn up: consume by fire
call off: cancel
call up: telephone
carry on: continue
carry out: fulfil, complete
come back: return
come over: visit
come to: regain
cross out: delete
cut down: reduce in quantity
cut off: interrupt, sever
cut out: eliminate, delete
cut up: cut into small pieces
get by: succeed with minimum effort
get out of: escape, evade
get through: finish
give out: distribute
give up: surrender
go over: review
keep on: continue
look for: seek
look into: investigate
look like: resemble
look out for: beware of
look up: search for
look over: examine
pass out: distribute, faint
pick out: choose
put off: postpone
put out: extinguish
run across: discover by chance
run into: meet by chance
run out of: exhaust one's supply
run over: hit by a car
show off: display
show up: appear
take down: record in writing
take off: remove, undress
take up: bring up for discussion
talk over: discuss
try out: test
turn in: deliver, hand over
turn off: put out of operation
turn on: put into operation
use up: consume

Idiomatic Use of Prepositions

Note the use of correct prepositions in some common expressions:

He was accused of cheating. (not *for cheating*)

I am afraid of rats. (not *from rats*)

She was afraid to watch the horror movie. (No preposition is used when *afraid* is followed by the infinitive form of a verb.)

Exercise A1.B
Pattern Practice

I. The following paragraph is in the present tense. Change it to the past tense by underlining the verbs and giving their past tense forms. Follow the example of the first sentence, in which this has already been done.

Gandhi ji's perception of his role in society as an upholder of the right and the rights of people inspires his social communication in the form of articles in *Indian Opinion*, *Young India* and *Navajivan*. [Gandhi ji's perception of his role in society as an upholder of the right and the rights of people **inspired** his social communication in the form of articles in *Indian Opinion*, *Young India* and *Navajivan*.] As a social communicator, Gandhi ji always aims at establishing an intimate and clean bond between the writer and reader. This is why he writes his articles most thoughtfully, after carefully putting a curb on his pen. His articles in *Indian Opinion*, from 1904 to 1914, are, therefore, read with great trust and acceptance of the facts about his Satyagrah Campaign in South Africa in the early decades of the 20th century. In *Auotbiography*, Gandhi ji calls his readers' letters, written in response to his articles, "outpourings of my correspondents' hearts".[4]

II. In the following paragraph, select the correct verbs from those given in parentheses. Remember that the form of the verb should be in accordance with the meaning of the sentence.

The next important element in the writing situation (are, is, will) the intended audience. On some occasions, your essay (will define, defines, is defining) how your readers (are, will) likely to respond. If you (will, have, are) writing an autobiographical essay, for example, readers (will, may, are) meet you on your own terms. On other occasions, however, you (will, must, have) accommodate your audience by knowing who they (is, are, have, will be) and what they (will, are, have) expecting. You (do, will, are) not want to bore your readers if you (will hope, have hope, hope) that they (will accept, accept) your proposal.

III. Complete the following sentences with the correct tense of the verb given at the end.

(i) They ________ nothing to drink or eat since 7 o'clock this morning. (have)
(ii) She has not ________ to our place since last Diwali. (come)
(iii) Ever since she ________ that fall, she ________ with a walking stick. (have, move)
(iv) Since my daughter ________ to that school, she ________ rapid progress. (go, make)
(v) I ________ three jobs since I ________ working three years ago. (have, start)
(vi) You will not pass the class unless you ________ harder. (work)
(vii) Do not write to her until you ________ from me. (hear)
(viii) We had better carry some food with us, in case the shops ________ closed. (be)
(ix) If you ________ him, he ________ your attention to two dangers that threaten the wildlife of the world. (ask, draw)
(x) If we ________ killing species after species of animals, we ________ left with nothing of life on Earth. (go, will).

IV. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with a verb to make them conditional sentences as indicated at the end of each sentence.

(i) If he ________ Mumbai, he will meet his brother. (probable/open)
(ii) If she ________ into my house, my dog will bite her. (probable/open)
(iii) If I ________ my grandmother I should recognize her. (improbable/rejected)
(iv) If the child ________ into a pond, he would drown. (improbable)
(v) If I ________ one minute earlier, I would have caught the bus. (improbable)
(vi) If I ________ eighteen, I would join the armed forces. (impossible/imaginary)
(vii) If I ________ you, I would have helped her. (impossible)
(viii) If I ________ you I'd nurture all these plants. (improbable)
(ix) If I ________ your exact arrival schedule I would have met you at the airport. (improbable)
(x) If she had fallen into the river she ________ drowned. (imaginary/impossible)

Exhibit A1.2
Use of Prepositions

Incorrect	***Correct***
accused for	accused of
afraid from	afraid of
apologize about	apologize for
boast for	boast about
capable to	capable of
comply to	comply with
excepting for	except for
in search for	in search of
independent from	independent of
outlook of life	outlook on life
similar with	similar to

The teacher was very angry with her students. (not *at* or *against her students*)

He was angry at what I said. (One is angry *with* a person but *at* something.)

We do not approve of her remarks.

We always arrive at the office on time. (not *arrive to the office*)

I arrive home at nine o'clock daily.

It was quite late when we arrived at my sister's home.

No preposition is required before the word *home*. However, if *home* is used as a possessive noun, as in the phrase "my sister's home", it is preceded by the preposition *at*.

A learned person should not boast of his knowledge. (not *for his knowledge*)

A learned person should not boast about his knowledge. (The use of *about* is also correct with the word *boast*.)

My father is very careful of his health. (not *for his health*)

He was careful not to fall ill. (When *careful* is followed by an infinitive, no preposition is used.)

He was careless of the consequences.

The medicine will cure you of your cold. (not *from your cold*)

She died of cancer.

He died from overeating.

They died from their injuries. (One dies *of* a disease but *from* doing something.)

He is different from his brother. (Not *than his brother*)

We disapprove of his conduct. (not *about his conduct*)

She was dressed in black.

The box was full of sarees. (not *full with sarees*)

I was glad of a break after my long journey.

I am glad to inform you that we plan to visit you soon. (No preposition is used before an infinitive.)

Your warning was very helpful to us. (not *for us*)

My grandson is interested in cricket. (not *about cricket*)

Goats live on grass.

He lived by robbing others. (If *live* refers to earning a living, then *by* is used to specify the method or means of living.)

Flour is made from wheat. (not *of wheat*)

The chair is made of steel. (not *from steel*)

When a new substance is made out of something, the word *from* is used, but when the original material is not changed in substance and is only given a new form, the preposition *of* is used.

I married my friend's sister.

As a verb, *marry* can be either transitive or intransitive. As a transitive verb it takes no preposition. But when used as an adjective, *married* is followed by *to*.

I am married to my friend's sister.

In these sentences, the second clauses is not a subordinate clause,; instead, it is an essential and restrictive modificationreally coordinate to the main clause.

Exercise A1.C
Idiomatic Use of Prepositions

The correct forms of several prepositions are given below. Frame sentences to bring out their correct meaning.

Pleased with

Prefer to

Proud of

Rid of

Sit at

Sit on

Sit in

Sorry for

Sorry about

Take care of

Useful to

Useful for

Useless to

Useless for

Write in

Write with (When *write* refers to the act of writing and the object (pen/pencil) is the instrument of writing, the preposition used is *with*.)

Words Followed by Prepositions

Particular words are followed by specific prepositions in different contexts, even though there may be several other prepositions that have the same meaning. For instance, out of the many prepositions or prepositional phrases signifying cause, the verb *die* takes only *of* for indicating an illness that was the cause of death. Thus we say, "He died *of* fever". We do not say, "He died *through* fever, or *by* fever, or *from* fever, or *owing to* fever, or *on account of* fever, or *with* fever". In other contexts, all of these prepositions may be used to denote cause. Though we always say "died of fever", we never say "sick of fever", but always "sick with fever", where *with* and *of* are both used to indicate causes.

Particular words are followed by specific prepositions in different contexts, even though there may be several other prepositions that have the same meaning.

The following examples show what the meaning of a verb is when it stands alone, and how its meaning is modified when a preposition is added to it.

Attend He attends (goes to) the meeting. He attends *to* the meeting (gives his mind to the business of the meeting).

Bear We must bear (endure, suffer) his reproaches. We must bear *with* (endure patiently, tolerate) his reproaches.

Begin Let us begin his song (start singing it). Let us begin *with* this song (sing this song before we sing any other).

Believe I do not believe this man (accept his statements to be true). I do not believe *in* this man (trust in his honesty).

Call I will call him (say his name out loud and ask him to come). I will call *on* him (visit him at his house).

Catch He caught (seized) the reins. He caught *at* (tried to seize) the reins.

Close This closes (finishes, concludes) the bargain. I cannot close *with* (accept) such a bargain.

Commence We must commence this work (begin to do it) today. We should commence *with* this work (do this work before doing any other).

Consult I must consult you (ask your advice) on this point. I must consult (take counsel) *with* you on this point.

Count Have you counted (added up) the money? I count *on* that money (depend on it).

Deal He dealt (distributed) the cards. He dealt *in* (sold or traded) cards and other kinds of games.

Dispense Dispense (distribute) your chores fairly. We can dispense *with* (we do not require) your charity.

Eat Do you ever eat cheese? The mice are eating *into* the cheese (making a hole in it by eating).

Feel Feel this table (examine it by feeling or touching it). The blind man is feeling *for* the table (trying to find the table with his hands).

Gain He finally gained the land (reached it safely). The sea is gaining *on* the land (washing it down) along this coast.

Grasp He grasped (seized and held tight) the money. He grasped *at* (attempted to seize) the money.

Guard Guard this man (protect him) from danger. Guard *against* (take every precaution against) this man.

Guess He guessed the facts (correctly hit upon the facts by guess or conjecture). He guessed *at* the facts (made a guess or conjecture concerning them).

Inquire He inquired about the reason for the delay (asked what was the cause). He inquired *into* the reason for the delay (investigated the reason for the delay by carefully examining the evidence).

Meet I met him as I was walking down the road. I met *with* him (set up a prearranged meeting) in the library.

Prepare He prepared (got the food ready) a feast. He prepared *for* the feast (got ready for the feast).

Repair Let us repair the house (fix the problems). Let us repair to (go to) the house.

Search Search that thief (examine his clothes and belongings). Search *for* that thief (try to find where he is).

See Do you not see (perceive) this danger? We must see *to* this danger (attend to it).

Send Send (despatch) the doctor at once. Send *for* the doctor (call the doctor).

Snatch He snatched the book (seized it by a rapid movement of the hand). He snatched *at* the book (attempted to seize it).

Strike He struck the dog. He struck *at* (aimed a blow at or endeavoured to strike) the dog.

Taste He tasted the salt. This water tastes *of* (has a flavour of) salt.

Touch He has not yet touched that point (come to the point under debate). He touched *upon* the point (briefly alluded to it).

Work He worked (managed) the machine. He worked *at* (was busily engaged with) the machine.

Sometimes there is no appreciable difference of meaning between a verb standing alone and the same verb followed by a preposition. Here are some such examples:

Join, or join *in*, a game	Know, or know of, a fact
Beg, or beg *of*, a person to do something	Penetrate, or penetrate *into*
Confess, or confess *to*, a fault	Enter, or enter *into*, a house
Succeed, or succeed *to*, some goal	Judge, or judge *of*, a person

Exercise A1.D
Correct Use of Prepositions

Insert the correct prepositions or prepositional phrases in the sentences below.

I. 1. I acquit you ________ all complicity ________ the crime and hope you will be compensated the ________ troubles inflicted ________ you ________ the groundless imputation.
2. I was horrified ________ the sight ________ so much distress.
3. He did not die ________ cholera, but ________ the effects ________ overexposure ________ the sun ________ an unhealthy time ________ the year.
4. This shopkeeper deals ________ grain, but he did not deal honestly ________ me, and I shall have no more dealings ________ him in the future.
5. You will have to answer ________ me ________ your misconduct.
6. Forty students competed ________ each another ________ a single scholarship.
7. I must consult ________ you ________ that matter.
8. Do not exult ________ the victory you have won ________ your rival.
9. He is not possessed ________ much wisdom, but is possessed ________ a very high notion ________ his own importance.
10. Will you entrust me ________ that letter? No, I will entrust nothing ________ you.

Exercise A1.D
(Contd.)

11. Always be prepared ________ the worst.
12. That motive prevails ________ me.
13. I prevailed ________ him to make the attempt, but he could not prevail ________ his adversary.
14. I rejoiced not only ________ my own success, but ________ yours too.
15. We must provide ________ our children.
16. All nations are trying to stop industry ________ polluting the environment.
17. Why do you stare me ________ the face? It is bad manners to stare ________ one in that manner.
18. The ship docked ________ Gibraltar.
19. He touched ________ the subject of tides.
20. He supplied money ________ the men; in return, they supplied his horses ________ provender.
21. He could smile ________ their threats for fortune continued to smile ________ him.
22. They proceeded ________ discuss the matters that had come up yesterday, before they proceeded ________ the consideration of new questions.
23. Do not live ________ riches, but whatever you live ________, live ________ honesty; and if you have to live ________ a small income, live ________ your means.
24. He is labouring ________ a misapprehension, but he thinks he is labouring ________ a good cause and ________ the public welfare.
25. He once helped me ________ an obligation, and therefore I am very unwilling to lay the blame of this affair ________ him.
26. He not only intruded ________ my property, but ________ my leisure, for I was engaged ________ that time ________ reading an interesting book.
27. The railway lines intersect ________ each other ________ this place.
28. Let me intercede ________ you ________ my friend.
29. I inquired ________ that matter.
30. He is impressed ________ that notion, and he desires to impress it ________ me.

II.1. The river ________ which I went fishing ________ my brother abounds ________ fish; we took a boat and rowed ________ the stream ________ the opposite bank.

2. He promised to abide ________ the contract, and they relied ________ his honour ________ its fulfilment. But they were disappointed ________ this decision and found they could never trust their work ________ him again.
3. He lives ________ very little and does so ________ abstaining ________ every kind of luxury and accustoming himself ________ humble fare such as is suitable ________ a person ________ small income.
4. The person who stood ________ the judge yesterday was accused ________ throwing a stone ________ his neighbour's window; but nothing more came ________ the matter and he was acquitted ________ the charge.
5. A man ________ integrity will adhere ________ his convictions and act ________ a sense ________ duty, even if men rail ________ him and think him weak ________ his understanding and common sense.
6. The intentions ________ that man admit ________ no doubt; we must agree ________ his terms, whether we approve ________ them or not, and there is no reason to be anxious ________ the result.
7. Aim ________ doing your duty ________ all risks, and do not be uneasy in mind ________ the consequences.
8. He was much alarmed ________ what he had just heard and alluded ________ it as soon as he arrived ________ my house and alighted ________ his carriage.

Exercise A1.D
(Contd.)

9. The ship stopped a little away ________ the shore, and an experienced man was at once appointed ________ the post of pilot ________ bringing her ________ port.
10. He had a great affection ________ his parents, but he had no taste ________ hard work and was not attentive ________ his studies.
11. One man complained ________ the magistrate ________ Ashish's dishonesty; another brought a complaint ________ Ashish that he had some debt; in fact, Ashish had made many enemies ________ himself.
12. When you are in school, attend ________ your studies. What has been the cause ________ your idleness hitherto? Surely there was no just cause ________ such laziness.
13. He took advantage ________ my ignorance, but he gained no real advantage ________ me in the end.
14. I am vexed ________ him ________ what he has done.
15. A man is adapted ________ any occupation that is adapted ________ his capacities.

Structural Use of the Infinitive, Gerunds, and Participles

The Infinitive

To + verb (to walk) A verb that is used with "to" does not have any number or person as it does not combine with any subject. This mood denotes an action, without referring to the doer.

There are four forms of the infinitive mood; two are in the present tense and two are in the past tense as shown in Exhibit A1.3.

An infinitive has no future form. However, the future can be expressed in the infinitive by a phrase such as "to be about to write" and "to be on the point of wiring".

***Use of the infinitive without* to** *To* is usually used with an infinitive verb, but it can sometimes be omitted.

(i) The word *to* is not used after the following main verbs: *please*, *hear*, *see*, *feel*, *watch*, *behold*, *know*, *let*, *bid*, *dare*, *need*, *make*.

(a) Please hear me.
(b) I hear you speak of a better future.
(c) I saw her take the oath solemnly.
(d) She feels the hot sand strike against her body.
(e) They watched us leave and come back.
(f) We watched the sun set.
(g) Let the past remain buried.
(h) She bade me tell her the whole story.
(i) I dare not say this to my father.
(j) The seniors made the juniors sit and get up a hundred times.

Exhibit A1.3
Forms of the Infinitive

	Form	*Active voice*	*Passive voice*
Present	Indefinite	To write	To be written
	Imperfect	To be writing	(not possible)
Past	Perfect	To have written	To have been written
	Perfect continuous	To have been writing	(not possible)

(ii) If *dare* is being used as an affirmative verb (without *not*), the word *to* is used after *dare*.

She dares to do it herself.

He dares to challenge his elder brother.

(iii) *To* is used after the adjective *better*.

Better to be late than absent.

Better to live on dreams.

(iv) *To* is not used after the verb *had* in phrases like "had sooner", "had better", and "had rather".

She had better not remain here.

I had rather read this book than that journal.

I had as soon walk as run.

(Please note that "had" here is used in a subjective sense "would have". "I had rather read this book than that journal" means I would prefer to read the book instead of the journal.)

(v) *To* is not used after the conjunction *than*.

I am better able to sing than dance. (than I am able to dance)

(vi) *To* is left out after the preposition *but* if it follows the verb *do*.

They did nothing but talk.

The sentences below use verbs that do not require *to* when used in the infinitive:

(a) Let us/go for a walk.

(b) Do not let his threats/stop you.

(c) She lets her students/read what they want.

(d) I felt the table/shake.

(e) He will not have his sons/spoil themselves.

(f) I heard someone/come in.

(g) I watched the train/disappear from my sight.

(h) She made her students/repeat the lessons.

(i) They did not notice anyone/come out of the door.

(j) Many people *saw* the thief/snatch her chain.

The words *help* and *know* can take the infinitive form with or without *to*.

A driver helped me start my car.

A driver helped me to start my car.

I felt the suggestion to be excellent. (Here, *felt* is used in the sense "to think".)

Two types of infinitives Infinitives are of two kinds:

(i) The simple infinitive, also called the noun infinitive

(ii) The qualifying infinitive or the gerundial infinitive

The noun infinitive acts as a noun and can be used as (a) the subject of a verb; (b) the object to a verb; (c) the complement to a verb; or (d) the object to certain prepositions.

(a) As the subject of a verb:

To *forgive* is to forget. (The noun is *forgiveness*.)

(b) As the object to a verb:

A brave man does not fear *to die*. (The noun is *death*.)

(c) As the complement to a verb:

The Supreme Court ordered him to be released.

She appears to be an intelligent student.

(d) As the object to the prepositions *about*, *except, but,* and *than*:

The train was about to depart. (The noun is *departure*.)

He aimed at nothing but to succeed (success).

She did nothing other than sing.

The gerundial or qualifying infinitive can be used to (a) qualify a verb, (b) qualify a noun, (c) qualify an adjective, or (d) introduce a parenthesis.

(a) It can qualify a verb by modifying its sense of purpose, cause, or result.

They came to meet me. (qualifies purpose)

She wept to see her ailing mother (qualifies cause).

I studied hard to be selected in the last round. (qualifies result)

(b) It can qualify a noun by modifying its sense of purpose. The infinitive can be attributive or predicative.

A house to let. (attributive)

This house is to be sold (predicative, complement to verb *is*)

(c) It can qualify an adjective by modifying its sense of purpose or respect.

She is quick to learn and quick to forget.

(d) An example of the gerundial infinitive being used to introduce a parenthetical statement is:

I am, to tell you the truth, sick of all these discussions.

Thus, a gerundial infinitive can work both as an adverb and an adjective.

It is generally used as the subject and followed by an infinitive, in apposition to "it" after the adjective. Study the basic pattern of this structural use of the infinitive as given in Exhibit A1.4.

The same structure may also be used with a noun in place of an adjective before the infinitive, as shown in Exhibit A1.5.

All the statements made in sentences with the form "adjective + the infinitive" are general. They can be applied to anyone. If they are to be applied only to a particular group of people, then a restrictive phrase beginning with *for* is used between the adjective and the infinitive. By doing this, the noun or pronoun that follows *for* becomes the subject of the infinitive. For example, see the sentences in Exhibit A1.6.

In some cases, *for* can be used even after a noun (not an adjective) to emphasize the doer and not the action. Examples are shown in Exhibit A1.7.

Exhibit A1.4
Structural Use of the Infinitive

Subject	***Adjective***	***Infinitive***
It is	wrong	*to kill*
It is	unsafe	*to cross* the road
It is	difficult	*to believe* a liar
It is	foolish	*to waste* your time
It is	selfish	*to consume* more than you deserve
It is	silly	*to talk* like that
It is	impossible	*to live* without water
It is	rude	*to interrupt* someone
It is	dangerous	*to swim* in a flooded river

Exhibit A1.5
Structural Use of the Infinitive

Subject	***Noun***	***Infinitive***
It was a	shame	*to insult* the parents
It was	fun	*to attend* the circus
It is a	pleasure	*to meet* a healthy old person
It is a	mistake	*to postpone* things for tomorrow
It is a	pity	*to neglect* historical buildings

Exhibit A1.6
Restrictive Use of the Infinitive with *for*

It + Adjective	***For***	***Infinitive***
It is impossible	for you	to live there alone
It is rude	for a child	to speak those words
It is difficult	for me	to forget the accident
It is easy	for anyone	to find that place
It is not safe	for you	to stay there.
It is absurd	for them	to expect so much
It is dangerous	for children	to play on the roof
It is early	for me	to go to office.

Exhibit A1.7
Use of *for* to Emphasize the Doer

It	***Noun***	***For***	***To***
It was	a chance	for us	to learn something new
It is	a pity	for us	that the programme was cancelled
It is	a pleasure	for us	to have you with us
It is	fun	for children	to play with fireworks
It is	a surprise	for me	to learn that

Exercise A1.E
Use of *It*

1. Rewrite the following sentences, using the introductory *it*.
   (i) To take what belongs to you is your right.
   (ii) To follow what he said was easy.
   (iii) To abuse someone is rude.
   (iv) To read your handwriting is impossible.
   (v) To go by road will be best.
   (vi) To miss this chance would be a pity.
   (vii) To cheat your parents is immoral.
   (viii) To postpone your programme is difficult.
   (ix) To miss your lectures is not easy.
   (x) To give such a big advance was a big mistake.

Exercise A1.E
(Contd.)

2. Complete the following sentences by using *for* followed by an infinitive verb.
   (i) It is wise ________.
   (ii) Will it be impossible ________?
   (iii) It is bad ________.
   (iv) It is easy ________.
   (v) Is it safe ________?
   (vi) It is a shame ________.
   (vii) It is a good thing ________.
   (viii) It is a hope ________.
   (ix) It is natural ________.
   (x) Is it fair ________?
3. Complete the following sentences by adding an infinitive with or without *to*.
   (i) You should not let him ________.
   (ii) As I entered the room I felt something ________.
   (iii) Most of them felt the idea ________.
   (iv) A change in weather enabled us ________.
   (v) No one heard them ________.
   (vi) I saw a person in black ________.
   (vii) The law requires all citizens ________.
   (viii) By chance I happened ________ there.
   (ix) I can, perhaps, persuade my father ________.
   (x) I never let any one ________.

A participle consists of two parts of speech combined in one phrase. For instance, in the sentence "An experienced teacher is required", a verb and adjective are combined.

The Participle

A participle is a double or two parts of speech combined in one: a verb and adjective combined. For instance, in the sentence "An experienced teacher is required", a verb and adjective are combined. The word *experience* acts as a verb here, for it is a form of the verb *to experience*. It acts also as an adjective because it qualifies the noun *teacher*. Therefore, a participle is a verbal adjective.

The forms of participles are as follows:

Transitive verbs

	Active Voice	***Passive Voice***
Present or continuous tense	Writing	Being written
Past tense	(X)	Written
Perfect tense	Having written	Having been written

Intransitive verbs

	Active Voice
Present or continuous tense	Rising
Past tense	Risen
Perfect tense	Having risen

As part of a finite verb, all the tenses of the passive voice are formed from the "to be" form of the verb and the past participle ("The letter is written", "The letter was written", "The letter will be written"). All the continuous tenses in the active voice are formed with the help of the "to be" form of verb followed by the present participle ("I was writing a letter", "I shall be writing a letter"). Again, all the perfect tenses in the active voice are formed with the verb "to have" followed by the past participle ("I had written", "I shall have written").

When a participle acts as an adjective, it is generally a descriptive adjective. Like any descriptive adjective it can (a) qualify a noun, (b) be qualified by an adverb, (c) change according to degrees of comparison, and (d) be used as a noun.

(a) Being tired of writing, I went for a walk.

(b) The injured were rushed to the hospital in.

(c) The colour of my shirt is more faded than that of his shirt.

(d) The witness could not recall the past.

When a participle acts as a verb, it can have an object, which can be of five kinds:

Having finished the work, he went home. (Direct object)

She stays there, teaching her friend's children English. (Indirect object)

Having been taught English so thoroughly, he was an effective teacher. (Retrieved object)

I saw Iraqis fighting a losing battle. (Cognate object).

Having sat herself down, she began to drink. (Reflective object)

The use of past participles in active or passive voice depends upon whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. In the case of a transitive verb, the past participle is always used with the passive voice, never in the active voice.

The use of past participle in active or passive voice depends upon whether the verb is transitive or intransitive.

The much-awaited news turned out to be disappointing.

If the verb is intransitive, the past participle is not used at all in most cases. But if it is used, it is placed before its noun and not after it. Examples are: the lost leader, the retired general, the fallen tower, a failed student, a departed friend, a faded lily, a withered plant, the dead soldier.

The past participle of verbs sometimes expresses some permanent habit, state, or character.

An outspoken person (a person who always speaks his/her mind).

A well-behaved boy (a boy whose habitual behaviour is good).

A well-read scholar (a scholar who has read a lot).

Gerunds

A *gerund* is a term that combines a verb and a noun.

I dream of becoming a great scholar.

In this sentence *becoming* is a part of the verb *become*, and it is also a noun as it is the object to which the preposition *of* refers. A gerund is called a "verbal noun".

Because a gerund is a kind of noun, it has to be the subject to some verb or the object to some transitive verb; or the complement to some intransitive verb; or the object to some preposition.

Subject of a verb: Walking is good for one's health.

Object to a verb: I enjoy walking early in the morning in the park.

Complement to a verb: His first interest was eating.

Object to a preposition: He was interested in eating.

A gerund is like an abstract noun or a noun infinitive.

Gerund: Walking is good for one's health.

Noun-infinitive: To walk is good for one's health.

Abstract Noun: An early morning walk is good for health.

As verbal noun, the gerund *to be* is preceded by *the* and followed by *of*.

I am busy in *the* writing *of* a new book.

I am busy in writing a new book.

When used as a part of a verb, a gerund can be followed by an object, which may be of the following kinds:

Direct (with transitive verb): He is good at teaching English.

Indirect (with transitive verb): He is good at teaching his sister English.

Retained (with passive voice): She is pleased at being taught English.

Cognate (with intransitive verb): We are ashamed of having fought a poor fight.

Reflective (with intransitive verb): He is fond of praising himself.

Some verbs can be used either with a gerund or an infinitive as an object. However, there is a difference in the way they are used. The infinitive refers to a specific occasion or a specific instance, whereas the gerund refers to something that is more general.

She does not like to write to the newspapers. (on a specific subject or point in time)

She does not like writing to the newspapers. (a general dislike)

We prefer to stay together. (on a particular occasion)

We prefer staying together. (general preference)

The infinitive used with *afraid (of)* refers to the thing that fear discourages one from doing.

The old man was afraid to cross the street.

Arun was afraid to touch the cobra.

The gerund indicates a possible result that causes the particular fear. In these examples, the old man was afraid of being run over by a vehicle when crossing the street and Arun was afraid of being bitten by the cobra.

The gerund is the only part of a verb that follows a preposition.

I was punished for disturbing the class.

The typical examples of this pattern are given below.

We locked the gates/before going out.

The thief entered the house/by breaking the door.

We cannot live/without sleeping.

She was congratulated/on winning the gold medal.

The magistrate fined/me for speeding.

She is very clever/at designing dresses.

Adjectives and verbs (*fond of*, *interested in*, *object to*) that are always used in a specific combination must be followed by a gerund, not an infinitive.

My son is interested in reading novels (not *to read novels*)

She objects to doing it. (not *objects to do it*).

Exercise A1.F
Selecting the Correct Form of Verb

Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb given in parentheses.

(i) No one can stop me from ________ what is right. (do)

(ii) Do not let me prevent you from ________ . (go)

(iii) We were surprised at ________ your father there. (find)

(iv) By ________ early, they avoided the heavy traffic. (leave)

(v) On ________ the news, they decided to postpone the meeting. (hear)

(vi) This milk is not fit for ________. (drink)

(vii) He was charged with ________ into a house. (break)

(viii) He fell ill by ________ stale food. (eat)

(ix) She was disqualified for ________ . (cheat)

(x) The whole class was punished for ________ so much noise. (make)

ENGLISH USAGE

In this section, we shall discuss some common pitfalls that need to be avoided in order to write correct and complete sentences.

Dangling Modifiers

Incorrect: Expecting a large crowd, extra chairs were provided by the management. (This is a dangling modifier because the modifier does not logically and sensibly refer to the subject of the main clause. It is not the "extra chairs" (subject) that are "expecting a large crowd".)

Correct: Expecting a large crowd, the management provided extra chairs.

Correct: Since a large crowd was expected, extra chairs were provided by the management.

Vague References of *This*, *That*, and *Which*

Incorrect: He wants to begin immediately and to make his first sale before the end of the year. As a result of this, he will probably become a successful salesman.

Correct: He wants to begin immediately and to make his first sale before the end of the year. As a result of this attitude, he will probably become a successful salesman. (*This* must not refer to a cause, sentence, or idea; it must refer to one specific word.)

Lack of Parallel Construction

Incorrect: The man liked meeting and to talk to people. (*And* joins one gerund and one infinitive construction here.)

Correct: The man liked to meet and talk to people. (*And* joins parallel infinitive constructions here.)

Correct: The man liked meeting and talking to people. (*And* joins parallel gerund constructions that express ideas of equal importance.)

Note that parallel construction is equally important in the enumeration of points in lists, as shown by the following example.

Incorrect:

1. The company should increase the price of all products.
2. Increase the variety of products.
3. Provide more services.
4. They should review their advertising programme.

Correct:

The company should:

1. increase the price of all products
2. increase the variety of products
3. provide more services
4. review their advertising programme

Inconsistent Use of Verb Tenses

The verb tense should be consistent within the sentence (as in the example below) and from sentence to sentence within the paragraph.

Incorrect: He usually makes sensible decisions although he frequently changed his mind. (Tense shifts from present tense in the main clause to past tense in the subordinate clause.)

Correct: He usually makes sensible decisions although he frequently changes his mind.

Choosing the Mood

Generally speaking, the imperative mood should be avoided in report writing. The imperative expresses a command or a strong request; a report should suggest or recommend rather than command.

Incorrect: Do this work carefully; you should also do it slowly. (Verb shifts from imperative to indicative mood.)

Correct: You should do this carefully; you should also do it slowly.

Correct: Do this work carefully; also, do it slowly.

Separation of Related Sentence Elements

Incorrect: I, hoping very much to find Mrs Singh at home and to sell her one of our new products, knocked at the door. (Separation of subject, *I*, and verb, *knocked*, is not necessary.)

Correct: Hoping very much to find Mrs Singh at home and to sell her one of our new products, I knocked at the door.

Incorrect: I only telephoned those men. (Separation of adverb *only* and *those men*, which *only* modifies, is not necessary.)

Correct: I telephoned only those men.

Lack of Subject–Verb Agreement

Incorrect: The price of the new products were reasonable.

Correct: The price of the new products was reasonable. (A singular verb is used to agree with the singular subject, even though a plural word intervenes.)

Incorrect: The advantage of Product A and Product B are the profits.

Correct: The advantage of Product A and Product B is the profits.

Incorrect: There are a man and some women waiting to see me.

Correct: There is a man and some women waiting to see me. (When a sentence begins with 'there', the verb agrees with the subject that immediately follows it.)

Incorrect: Everyone on the top three floors work for one company.

Correct: Everyone on the top three floors works for one company (A singular verb is used to agree with a singular subject, especially when the subject is "everyone" or "each".)

Incorrect: Only one of the girls who play the sitar came today.

Correct: Only one of the girls who plays the sitar came today. (A singular verb is used to agree with *one*, the singular word to which the subject *who* refers. This is important when the subject of the verb is *who*, *which*, or *that*.)

Incorrect: Neither the report nor its appendix were published.

Correct: Neither the report nor its appendix was published. (A singular verb is used to agree with singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor*.)

Note that if one subject is singular and one is plural, the verb agrees with the nearest subject. For example, it is correct to say, "Neither the report nor the books were published". Also, note that the plural subject is kept after *or* or *nor*, near the verb.

Lack of Pronoun Agreement

Incorrect: Everyone brought lunch to work.

Correct: Everyone brought his lunch to work. (One must use a singular pronoun to agree with *everyone*, the singular word to which the pronoun refers.)

Incorrect: He does not usually make those kind of errors.

Correct: He does not usually make that kind of error. (Singular pronoun is used to agree with *kind*, the singular noun that the pronoun modifies. This is important when *this*, *that*, *these*, or *those* modify *kind* or *sort*.)

Correct: He does not usually make these kinds or errors. (Here, a plural pronoun modifies the plural noun.)

Incorrect: Neither the manager nor his favourite employee could do their work alone.

Correct: Neither the manager nor his favourite employee could do his work alone. (A singular pronoun is used to agree with the singular words, which are joined by *nor* and to which the pronoun refers.)

If *or* or *nor* joins one singular word and one plural word, the pronoun agrees with the one nearest to it.

Neither the manager nor the workers were aware of their error.

Confusing Adjectives and Adverbs

The words *hard*, *hardly*, *late*, *lately*, *most*, and *mostly* need to be used carefully. As adjectives, *hard*, *late*, and *most* have two adverb forms, which should be clearly understood.

Hard, when used as an adverb means "strenuously" or "diligently". It is normally placed after the verb and is an adverb of manner.

I worked hard yesterday. (not *hardly*)

She worked hard to pass the examination. (not *hardly*)

Sometimes, for emphasis, *hard* can be used at the beginning of a sentence. However, this usage is relatively rare.

Hard as she tried, she could not get through.

Hardly, an adverb, means "not much" or "scarcely". It is an adverb of degree and is used before the verb. If the verb is used with an auxiliary, the adverb is placed between the auxiliary and the next part of the verb.

He sang so softly that the audience could hardly hear him.

He was so shrunken that I hardly recognized him.

This pen has hardly been used.

Hardly had he gone when his wife reached here.

The adverb *late* means two things:

(i) "after the expected time" or "after the time by which something should have happened or been done".

Every Sunday morning they wake up late.

Three times this week he has come to office late.

(ii) "towards the end of a specified period of time"

Doctors refuse to visit patients late at night.

I called her late in the afternoon.

She did not have a child until quite late in life.

Lately means "recently".

Have you seen any good movies lately?

Have you met your brother lately?

Most, as an adverb, means "to the greatest extent".

The thing that I admire most is simplicity. (not *mostly*)

He who boasts most is often one who does least.

Mostly means "for the most part".

The lecture mostly covered recent trends in politics.

The paper consisted mostly of old questions.

Exercise A1.G
Usage of Adverbs

Complete the following sentences with one of the words given in parentheses:

1. The student could ________ get passing marks. (hardly, hard)
2. She could ________ raise her arms. (hard, hardly)
3. The child can ________ lift the school bag. (hardly, hard)
4. It has rained ________ this year. (hardly, hard)
5. He had ________ entered the road when he was injured. (hard, hardly)
6. She studies ________ into the night. (lately, late)
7. The train arrived ten minutes ________ . (late, lately)
8. The examinations will be held ________ in April this time. (late, lately)
9. I reached home very ________ last night. (late, lately)
10. We have not heard anything from them ________ . (late, lately)
11. The great singers have been ________ women. (mostly, most)
12. Join the course that will help you ________ . (mostly most)
13. I have books that are ________ novels. (mostly, most)
14. It was ________ my elder brother who guided me to this position. (most, mostly)
15. In this computer course, the students are ________ girls from a renowned school. (mostly, most)

Adverbs Ending in –ly

Consider the adverbs formed by adding *ly* to an adjective: *gladly*, *slowly*, *foolishly*, *wisely*, *nicely*.

These adverbs are usually adverbs of manner. But if an adjective itself ends with *ly*, it cannot normally be changed into an adverb. Such words can act as both adjectives and/or adverbs.

If an adjective itself ends with *ly*, it cannot normally be changed into an adverb. Such words can act both as adjectives and/or adverbs.

1. Words that act both as adjectives and adverbs, without any modification, include *cowardly*, *daily*, *early*, *fortnightly*, *hourly*, *surely*, *nightly*, *only*, *weekly*, and *yearly*.

   She has arrived via an early flight. (adjective)

   She has come early. (adverb)

   There is an hourly change of classes. (adjective)

   The classes change hourly. (adverb)

   The Statesman is a daily newspaper. (adjective)

   The Statesman is published daily. (adverb)

2. Words ending in *ly* that are used only as adjectives include *brotherly*, *fatherly*, *motherly*, *friendly*, *gentlemanly*, *godly*, *goodly*, *homely*, *likely*, *lovely*, *manly*, *seemly*, *unseemly*, and *womanly*. These can be changed into adverbs by using a phrase such "in a brotherly manner" or "in a lovely fashion", or "in a manly way".

   He is a very friendly boss. (adjective)

   She received us in a very friendly manner. (adverb)

Note that the word *kind* (an adjective) has *kindly* as its adverb. But *kindly* is also an adjective.

My father had a kindly nature. (adjective)

My father always talked to us in a very kindly manner. (adjective)

Exercise A1.H
Words Used as Both Adjectives and Adverbs

In each of the following pairs of sentences, complete the second sentence by using an adverb or an adverbial phrase having the same meaning as the adjective in the first sentence.

1. She is an early bird. She rises ________ .
2. From here, there is an hourly bus service to Delhi. The buses to Delhi run ________.
3. That was a cowardly action. That was acting ________.
4. I have hired this car on a monthly basis. I pay the car charges ________.
5. The tutor held daily classes. The tutor holds classes ________.
6. Most magazines are monthly publications. Most magazines are published ________.
7. She is a very gentle person. She always behaves ________.
8. He gave us friendly advice. He advised us ________.
9. My friend noticed my fatherly smile at the child. My friend noticed my smiling at the child ________.
10. He is a very gentlemanly person. He always behaves ________.

Errors in the Use of Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectival complements

1. Study the following sentences:

The sky became bright. (not *brightly*)

This year good apples are rare. (not *rarely)*

She got angry. (not *angrily*)

The tea became bitter. (not *bitterly*)

The job is difficult though it appears easy. (not *easily*)

The price seems to be low. (not *lowly*)

In these sentences, the verbs *to be, to seem, to become*, and so on (*appear*, *feel*, *look*, *grow*, *turn*) need an adjective and not an adverb to act as a complement that qualifies the subject to complete the meaning of the sentence. No adverb is required to modify the verb. Note that when the verbs *turn*, *grow*, and *appear* are used in a different sense, they are followed by an adverb, not an adjective.

The ship appeared suddenly on the horizon.

These plants have grown quickly.

She turned and left unexpectedly.

In these sentences, *appear* means "come into sight", *grow* means "increase in size", and *turn* means "move in a particular direction".

On the other hand, an adjective, not an adverb, is used after verbs such as *feel*, *sound*, *taste*, and *smell*, to show a quality experienced by one of the physical senses.

This cloth feels smooth.

These pipes sound nice.

This orange tastes sour.

That rose smells sweet.

Exercise A1.I
Usage of Adverbs and Adjectives

Fill in the sentences below using the adjective or adverb given in parentheses.

1. It feels very ________ in this room. (cold, coldly)
2. The weather has turned ________ . (hot, hotly)
3. At her call, I turned around ________. (sudden, suddenly)
4. He seems very ________ at this result. (sad, sadly)
5. Some trees grow very ________. (slow, slowly)
6. She looks ________ in this dress. (pretty, prettily)
7. His story is to appear very ________ . (short, shortly)
8. Her signature does not appear to be ________ . (genuinely, genuine)
9. If you feel ________, remove the shirt. (warm, warmly)
10. The director congratulated the award winners ________ . (warm, warmly)
11. The girl was very ________ to catch the robber by herself. (brave, bravely)
12. The audience became ________ when the winners of the Best Film award came on stage. (excited, excitedly)
13. Her room smells ________ of sandalwood. (strong, strongly)
14. Our new teacher seems very ________ . (strict, strictly)
15. This food smells very ________ . (appetizing, appetizingly)

STYLE

In this section, we shall discuss some stylistic aspects that need to be considered in written communication—punctuation, capitalization, and footnotes and endnotes (documentation styles). The writer should have an eye for the finer nuances of style, without which a document may appear very informal and unpolished.

Punctuation

Of all punctuation symbols, the four discussed below are the ones most commonly misused.

The Comma

A comma is used to:

(i) Set off main clauses joined by *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, and *for.*

The first alternative certainly offered the company many advantages, but the second was probably more economical.

However, if the clauses are short, the comma separation is unnecessary.

She bought him a nice shirt but lost it.

(ii) Separate long introductory elements from the rest of the sentence.

When all the proposals had been fully investigated and discussed, we were able to make the final decision.

However, when the introductory element is particularly short, a comma is not required.

On Friday we were able to make the final decision.

(iii) Separate words in a series of three or more. The last comma in the series is optional and depends on the writer's preference.

The controller of accounts, vice-president and president took part in the investigation.

The last comma in the series may be required in some cases, for clarity.

The controller of accounts, vice-president and general manager, and the president took part in the investigation. (The second comma in this sentence indicates that one person holds the dual position of vice-president and general manager.)

(iv) Set off parenthetical expressions from the rest of the sentence.

A parenthetical expression is one that is inserted into a sentence; therefore, the latter must be grammatically complete without it. Unless it begins or ends a sentence, a parenthetical expression should be set off by two commas.

Ram, unlike his brother, was a good salesman.

Sometimes, if the expression does not cause an abrupt interruption, the comma separation is unnecessary (especially with the words *also*, *too*, *indeed*, *at least*, *perhaps*, and *likewise*).

Ram's personality was indeed more pleasing than his brother's.

When a parenthetical expression (particularly a lengthy one) causes an abrupt interruption, dashes or parentheses may be used instead of commas. Like the comma, dashes and parentheses must be used in pairs. However, they should be used much less frequently than commas.

Ram was a good salesman—he sold more than anyone else in the company—and had a pleasing personality. (emphatic.)

Ram was a good salesman (he sold more than anyone else in the company) and had a pleasing personality. (less emphatic.)

(v) Set off non-restrictive elements

Non-restrictive elements are parenthetical (see iv above) and are not essential to the meaning of the sentence. They must be set off by two commas.

Ram, who sold more than anyone else in the company, was awarded the salesmen's trophy.

(vi) Set off a direct quotation from the rest of the sentence.

The foreman replied, "I have done all I can" and left the room.

A comma is not used to:

(i) Separate the subject and the verb or the verb and the object.

Incorrect: The company with the best reputation in this area, was awarded the contract. (subject–verb separation)

Correct: The company with the best reputation in this area was awarded the contract.

Incorrect: The company knew last week, that it had been awarded the contract. (verb–object separation)

Correct: The company knew last week that it had been awarded the contract.

If words requiring punctuation (see points (d) and (e) above) intervene between the subject and the verb or between the verb and the object, the comma is then necessary.

ABC Company, which has a good reputation in this area, was awarded the contract. (Non-restrictive phrase intervenes between the verb and object.)

The company knew last week, probably by Wednesday, that it had been awarded the contract. (Non-restrictive phrase intervenes between the verb and the object.)

(ii) Join two main clauses unless *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, or *for* comes between them.

Incorrect: The salesman displayed his goods, then he talked about the newest product.

Correct: The salesman displayed his goods. Then he talked about the newest product.

Correct: The salesman displayed his goods, and then he talked about the newest product.

(iii) Separate two words or phrases joined by *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, or *for*.

Incorrect: I cannot remember whether the head office is in Calcutta, or in Bombay.

Correct: I cannot remember whether the head office is in Calcutta or in Bombay.

(iv) Separate an adjective from the noun it modifies.

Incorrect: We should choose an economical, flexible, plan.

Correct: We should choose an economical, flexible plan.

(v) Separate parentheses from the rest of the sentence.

Incorrect: Several miscellaneous items are included in the total expense, (see Exhibit I).

Correct: Several miscellaneous items are included in the total expense (see Exhibit I).

Incorrect: Although several miscellaneous items are included in the total expense, (see Exhibit I), they are not important.

Correct: Although several miscellaneous items are included in the total expense (see Exhibit I), they are not important. (Second comma is necessary to set off the introductory element.)

The Colon

A colon is used to:

(i) Introduce a list (often preceded by "the following" or "as follows").

The following men were nominated for the top honour: Singh, Jain, Basu, and Jha.

(ii) Separate two main clauses where the second clause explains the first.

The purpose of his speech was obvious: he wanted to present a concise outline of company policy.

The Semi-Colon

A semi-colon is used to:

(i) Separate two main clauses that are not joined by the conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor* or *for*.

At this time last year, Mr Singh was the company's general manager; he is now the president. (A full stop could be substituted for the semi-colon, but the latter is preferable when the clauses are short and closely related in thought).

(ii) Separate two main clauses joined by *however*, *therefore*, *moreover*, *consequently*, *also*, *furthermore*, *nevertheless*, *then*, *thus,* or *likewise*.

We thought that Ram would be the new president; however, his brother was chosen instead.

(iii) Separate two independent clauses when the second clause is preceded by "for example", "that is", or "namely".

We do not like the attitude of the new manager; that is, we resent his air of superiority.

(iv) Separate items in a series when the items within the series contain commas.

We called on Mr Singh, the president; Mr Jain, the vice-president and general manager; Mr Basu, the controller of accounts; and Mr Jha, the secretary.

We chose these people because they held responsible positions, both within the company and in organizations outside; because they had valuable experience; because they had the ability to work well with others; and because they all had the time for outside work.

A semi-colon should not be used to separate a main clause from a subordinate clause.

Incorrect: Mr Singh was named honorary president; because of his long association with the firm.

Correct: Mr Singh was named honorary president because of his long association with the firm.

Except in cases where it separates items in a series, the semi-colon always separates one main clause from another main clause.

The Apostrophe

The apostrophe is used to show possession in the following instances:

(i) For possessive singular nouns such as "manager's salary" and "man's character" (an *s* is added to the noun).

(ii) For possessive plurals of nouns, such as "managers' salaries" (only the apostrophe is used if the plural form of the word ends in *s*) and "men's salaries (where an *s* is added after the apostrophe as the plural does not end in *s*).

(iii) For the possessive form of the pronouns *one*, *someone*, *somebody*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *anyone*, *anybody*, *none*, and *nobody*. An example is *anyone's*, in which an *s* is added to the pronoun.

An apostrophe should not be used for the pronouns *his*, *hers*, *ours*, *yours*, *theirs*, or *whose* because they are already possessive.

Incorrect: It's meaning was clear ("It's" means "it is")

Correct: Its meaning was clear

The rules for the capitalization of words in English are simple and not especially numerous.

Capitalization

The rules for the capitalization of words in English are simple and not especially numerous. The first word in a sentence, the first word in any quotation included within a sentence, and the first word of any phrase that is used as a sentence should be capitalized.

The office building is fully air-conditioned.

She answered the telephone and said, "Good morning! May I help you?" (This is an example of capitalization in a sentence, a quotation, and a phrase used as a sentence.)

In addition, the following should be capitalized: the names of people; specific geographical locations; calendar indications such as the days of the week, the months of the year, and holidays; the names of organizations, including government bodies; and historical events and documents. When capitalizing the names of people, one may sometimes encounter parts of names that are not capitalized, such as Emil von Hoffman, Leonardo da Vinci, and Simone de Beauvoir. Generally, all parts of a person's name are capitalized, including any initials. If titles are used with the name, these titles are also capitalized.

Ram Chandra	Mrs Deepti Chaturvedi
John S Morgan	Mr H F Khan
Rev. Samel Wilkins	Senator William Kaufmann

In written English, only proper nouns are capitalized. It is incorrect to capitalize common nouns such as *woman*, *man*, *boy* or *girl*. Unless a specific person is named, capitalization is not required. The same is true for geographical locations. A specific location, site, or area requires capitalization. When a word such as *street*, *building*, *park*, *mountain,* or *river* is included in the name of a particular place, it becomes specific because it names a distinctive thing or place rather than a general location. When the location is mentioned in specific terms, it should be capitalized. When it is given in general terms, it should not be capitalized.

The *Times Building* was built in 1936. (specific)

The *building* that houses our office has been sold. (general)

The *southeast* part of the United States is known for its cotton production. (general)

South India has a temperate climate. (specific)

The river was muddy after several days of rain. (general)

The *Ganges* flooded last year. (specific)

All calendar designations and names of holidays should be capitalized, but the names of seasons are not.

July	Monday	Christmas
March	Friday	Teachers' Day
winter		Diwali

The names of organizations, companies, and government bodies should be capitalized, but if they are preceded by the word *the*, it is not capitalized unless it is a part of the official name.

the United Nations	the Bank of Korea
the Rialto Theater	the University of Delhi
the Advertising Council, Inc.	the Better Business Bureau
the Internal Revenue Service	the RAND Corporation

All names of continents, countries, states, and cities and the adjectives derived from these are capitalized.

> The western part of Russia is in Europe, but its eastern part is in Asia.
>
> Our company has branch offices in Seattle, Phoenix, Kansas City, Memphis, and Cleveland.
>
> I plan to study the history of the Spanish-speaking people in the West Indies.
>
> Cézanne and Renoir were French artists.

The names of commercial products should also be capitalized, but do not capitalize the generic name when it is not part of the brand name. For example, Esquire Boot Polish and Lipton Cup-A-Soup are the correct brand names, but Maxwell House Coffee and Van Heusen Shirts are not correct, although Maxwell House makes coffee and Van Heusen makes shirts.

Documentation

Any report or document that relies on other sources of information (books, journals, diaries, interviews, and so on) needs to identify its sources clearly. Ethical considerations and copyright norms make it essential to document the sources or references of a text, but the styles of documentation may vary.

Documentation of cross-references should be done in a way that does not disturb the flow of argument and reading. The writer can provide references in footnotes or can describe all references together in endnotes, which is a list of all references at the end of a report. In both cases, the reader can find all the necessary details about sources mentioned in the report and can check the correctness of facts by consulting the original sources. Endnotes are usually preferred, as they are easier to refer to when desired. Also, footnotes make it more difficult to space the material on the page.

Each reference to be cited in endnotes or footnotes is numbered consecutively, as 1, 2, 3, and so on. Each reference should have the same number when mentioned in the body of the discussion. The reference is documented in the body of the text as:

> "The marketing strategist described by Lovatt uses a computer to design his concepts of virtual markets for products".[3]

Here, the superscript *3* refers to the third endnote in the list of references. One way to format the reference in the list of endnotes is:

> 3. Lovatt, Frederick G. et al. *Management is No Mystery*, 2nd Ed. Ed. Robt B. Arpin. Trent, Ariz.: Bonus Books, 1975.

A writer may refer to a wide range of published (and unpublished) sources when writing a report or preparing a document, be it a book by one author, a chapter in a book by multiple authors, a magazine article, or a report. He or she may also use any of the wide variety of styles of documentation—the American Psychological Association (APA) style, the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, or the Chicago style, for instance.

Regardless of which style the writer chooses, the complete publishing details of the work should be documented. Such details include the authors' full names, the name of the article or book, the name of the publisher/magazine/journal, the year (or date) of publication, and the page numbers.

The APA Style

The APA style was developed by the American Psychological Association (APA).

In-text citation In the social sciences, the APA style indicates the source of information within the body of the report/paper by using parenthetical references mentioning the author, date, and page number in the parentheses placed immediately after the matter quoted or referred. This running method is now generally used in making references, as it allows for smooth reading.

When quoting material, the page number should be indicated with "p." for one page or "pp." for more than one page, immediately after the quotation. This should be done even if the sentence in which the quotation occurs does not end immediately after the quotation.

If the sentence mentions the name of the author and year, only the page number is given within parentheses at the end of the sentence.

> Schindler in *Business Research Methods*, 1998, says " -----------" (p. 14).

If the sentence mentions the author's name, then only the year and page number should be given immediately after the name.

> Schindler (1998, p. 120) says …".

In other cases, all three pieces of information should be given in parentheses.

> "(Schindler, 1998, p. 120)".

Note that a comma is used after the author's name and after the year of publication. The page number can appear separately as well:

> Schindler (1998) considers research "too narrowly defined if it is restricted to the basic research variety" (p. 12).

The purpose of mentioning all three details—author, year, and page—at the end of the quoted or referred material is to help the reader locate the material in the original source if required. Sometimes in survey reports, figures are inaccurate or exaggerated. In such cases, specific references to sources of information help readers check the information given in the report.

Reference list A list of sources arranged in alphabetical order is given at the end of the report, paper, or chapter. The entries are arranged according to the author's name. If the author's name is not given in the original source of information, the entry is put in alphabetical order according to the first significant word of the title, not including articles (*a*, *an*, and *the*). Exhibit A1.8 shows a few samples of the APA style of referencing and its in-text citations.

Exhibit A1.8
The APA Style of Referencing

SINGLE AUTHOR

Reference list
Caney, S. (2005). *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

In-text citation
(Caney, 2005, p. 6).

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

Reference list
Bhasin, Kamla, & Khan, Nighat Said. (1986). *Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.

In-text citation
(Bhasin & Khan, 1986, p. 56). [In works containing 3–5 authors, cite the last names of all authors/editors at the first instance; in subsequent citations, use *et al.* after the name of the first author/editor. In works containing 6 or more authors, cite only the last name of the first author, followed by *et al.*]

Exhibit A1.8
Contd.

CHAPTER IN EDITED VOLUME

Reference list
Matthew, K.S. (1992). Cuddalore in the Eighteenth Century. In I. Banga (Ed.), *Ports and their Hinterlands in India, 1700–1950* (pp. 77–87). New Delhi: Manohar Publishers.

In-text citation
Matthew, 1992.

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Reference list
Bassett, D.K. (1989). British "Country" trade and local trade networks in the Thai and Malay states c.1680–1770. *Modern Asian Studies*, 23(4), 625–43.

In-text citation
Bassett, 1989.

CONTRIBUTION TO A CONFERENCE

Reference list
Gwetu, Thando D. (2004, July). *Patterns and Trends of Urbanization in Botswana and Policy Implications for Sustainability*. Paper presented at 'City Futures: An International Conference on Globalism and Urban Change', held at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Retrieved from http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/cityfutures/papers/webpapers/cityfuturespapers/session3_3/3_3patterns.pdf

In-text citation
Gwetu, 2004. [In case of missing or unknown page numbers, use paragraph numbers: (Gwetu, 2004, para 7).]

REPORT

Reference list
Brunk, A.C. (n.d.). *Balodgahan Village* (Manuscript IV-17-21, Box 28, Charitable Institutions, fol. 1). Goshen, Indiana: AAMC.

In-text citation
Brunk, n.d.

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT

Reference list
Centre for Science and Environment. (2003). *Sacred Groves: Last Refuge*. *Down to Earth*, Electronic document. Retrieved from http://www.cseindia.org/dte-supplement/forest20031231/sacred_disconnect.htm. Accessed 26 June 2005.

In-text citation
(Centre for Science and Environment, 2003). [The organization becomes the author.]

UNPUBLISHED THESIS

Reference list
Iliffe, John. (1988). *The Socio-economic and Political History of the Herero of Mahalapye, Central District, 1922–1984* (Unpublished BA thesis). Department of History, University of Botswana.

In-text citation
John, 1988.

The MLA Style

The MLA style is similar to the APA style in that both styles use parenthetical citations in the text. However, while APA citations provide the author name and year within parentheses, MLA citations provide the author name and the page details [for example: (Caney 25)]. The list of references at the end of the document is usually titled *References* in the APA style and *Works Cited* in the MLA style**.**

Exhibit A1.9 shows a few samples of the MLA style of works cited and in-text citations.

Exhibit A1.9
Works Cited in the MLA Style

SINGLE AUTHOR

Caney, S. *Justice Beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. [In-text citation: (Caney 25).]

MULTIPLE AUTHORS

Bhasin, Kamla and Nighat Said Khan. *Some Questions on Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1986.

[In-text citation: (Bhasin and Khan 45). Note that no *et al.* is used; the last names of all authors are provided.]

CHAPTER IN EDITED VOLUME

Matthew, K.S. "Cuddalore in the Eighteenth Century." *Ports and their Hinterlands in India, 1700–1950*. Ed. I Banga. New Delhi: Manohar Publishing, 1992. 77–87.

[In-text citation: (Matthew 79).]

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Bassett, D.K. "British 'Country' trade and local trade networks in the Thai and Malay states c.1680–1770." *Modern Asian Studies*. 23.4 (1989): 625–643.

[In-text citation: (Bassett 625).]

CONTRIBUTION TO A CONFERENCE

Gwetu, Thando D. "Patterns and Trends of Urbanization in Botswana and Policy Implications for Sustainability." Proc. of 'City Futures: An International Conference on Globalism and Urban Change', July 2004. University of Illinois at Chicago. Retrieved from htp://www.uic.edu/cuppa/cityfutures/papers/webpapers/cityfuturespapers/session3_3/3_3patterns.pdf

[In-text citation: (Gwetu 3)]

REPORT

Brunk, A.C. *Balodgahan Village*. Manuscript IV-17–21, Box 28, Charitable Institutions, fol. 1. Goshen, Indiana: AAMC, n.d.

[In-text: (Brunk n.d.). In case there is no author, or the author is a government agency, mention both the name of the agency and the title in parenthesis.]

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT

Sacred Groves: Last Refuge. Centre for Science and Environment, *Down to Earth*. 2008. http://www.cseindia.org/dte-supplement/forest20031231/sacred_disconnect.htm. Accessed 26 June 2005.

[In-text: Follow the same style; if the source lacks page numbers, indicate para (par.), section (sec.), chapter (ch.) numbers.]

UNPUBLISHED THESIS

Iliffe, John. "The Socio-economic and Political History of the Herero of Mahalapye, Central District, 1922–1984." Thesis, Department of History, University of Botswana, 1988.

[In-text: Same as above.]

The Chicago Style

The *Chicago Manual of Style* suggests two styles of documentation: (1) the documentary-note or humanities style, which may or may not be accompanied by a bibliography, and (2) the author–date system, where the in-text author–date citations are amplified in a list of references. The humanities style is popular in literature, history, and the arts and provides bibliographic citations in notes. The author–date system is popular in the physical, natural, and social sciences and humanities.

In this appendix, we shall discuss the humanities system. The Chicago humanities style uses either endnotes (at the bottom of the document) or footnotes (at the bottom of the page) for citations. As mentioned earlier, endnotes are usually preferred.

Notes are numbered in sequence, beginning with 1. The superscript numerals used for note references in the text are usually placed *after* punctuation marks, except in the case of dashes. Here are some examples:

> Companies with reputations as good places to work (such as the companies that are included among the "100 Best Companies to Work for in America") have been found to generate superior financial performance.[1]
>
> These findings were published in *Personnel Psychology*[2]—and have since been substantiated by many other studies.

The superscripts guide the reader to the source details given in the endnotes (or footnotes). Exhibit A1.10 presents some sample endnotes in the Chicago humanities style.

Exhibit A1.10
Endnotes in the Chicago Humanities Style

ENDNOTES

Single author
1. Peter Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 64–65.

Multiple authors
2. Philip Kotler, Irving J. Rein, and Donald Haider, *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States, and Nations* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

Chapter in edited book
3. K. S. Matthew, "Cuddalore in the Eighteenth Century," in *Ports and their Hinterlands in India, 1700–1950*, ed. I. Banga (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992), 77–87.

Journal article
4. D. K. Bassett, "British 'Country' Trade and Local Trade Networks in the Thai and Malay States c.1680–1770," *Modern Asian Studies* 23 (1989): 625–643.

Contribution to a conference
5. Thando D. Gwetu, "Patterns and Trends of Urbanization in Botswana and Policy Implications for Sustainability" (paper presented at 'City Futures: An International Conference on Globalism and Urban Change', University of Illinois at Chicago, July 2004). Accessed from http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/cityfutures/papers/webpapers/cityfuturespapers/session3_3/3_3patterns.pdf

Online document
6. GoK, "Peoples' Participation in Community Development Programmes," August 2001, available at http://www.karnatakainformation.org.

Unpublished thesis
7. John Iliffe, "The Socio-economic and Political History of the Herero of Mahalapye, Central District, 1922–1984" (Ph.D. diss., Department of History, University of Botswana, 1988).

Personal communication
8. Praveena Kodoth, letter to author, 12 October 1989.

ENDNOTES

1. Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (London: Profile Books, 2003).
2. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
3. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Delhi: Pearson, 2009).
4. *Autobiography* (England: Penguin Books, 2007), p. 263.

Appendix 2: The Process of Research

If a man will begin with certainties, he will end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he will end in certainties.

—Francis Bacon

INTRODUCTION

A report involves three things: (1) research (investigation), (2) analysis, and (3) presentation. The reader's interest in the report is primarily in its well-documented presentation of facts and conclusions, but a report can never meet the expectations or needs of the reader unless the writer labours through careful research and provides a critical analysis of the data collected. Therefore, to write reports (for decision makers in business), you should first understand some research methods and hone your analytical skills.

STEPS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

In simple words, *research* is a search for facts—answers to questions and solutions to problems. *Business research* can be defined as a systematic inquiry that offers information to guide business decisions. There are two ways of searching for facts:

1. Arbitrary, based on personal judgment and hunches
2. Scientific

The scientific approach to research is a logical and systematic study of a problem, issue, or phenomenon in a step-by-step manner, following a logical process of reasoning. Research conducted in a scientific manner involves the following process of investigation:

1. Defining the problem
2. Formulating a hypothesis (or hypotheses)
3. Selecting/proposing a method
4. Collecting, organizing, and analysing data
5. Making deductions and arriving at conclusions

Defining the Problem

The problem or the subject of investigation should be outlined well so that the solution is correct. We should narrow down the problem to specifics—what exactly needs to be done. By delimiting the problem from general to particular and to more specific problems, you can recognize the real problem that needs to be answered. The well-known set of "what, why, who, where, and when" questions will help break down the general problem into specific ones. To know *why* something is wanted, we should first know *what* is wanted. So, we should first identify these two questions: the "why" and the "what". Once these two basic questions are isolated, the process of solution-finding has begun. At this point, you have to assume a tentative solution to the problem. The hypothetical solution will be subsequently tested for its validity and correctness.

Research is a search for facts—answers to questions and solutions to problems.

Let us see an example of how we can narrow down a problem from the general to the specific. Suppose we want to study the wages of women. It is a vast subject. Millions of women workers all over the country fall within the scope of this problem. It is not possible to study such a broad problem, so we should limit its scope by asking the questions—what, why, where, when, and who. Assume that you are at Tata Steel and are required to submit a report on this problem. To study the wages of women workers at Tata Steel, Jamshedpur, this is how you can approach your investigation:

- What [to study]: The wages of women workers
- Why: To determine whether their wages are fair and uniform
- When: Current time
- Where: Tata Steel, Jamshedpur
- Who: Women workers

You have now limited the proposed problem of your study to the current wages of women employed at Tata Steel, Jamshedpur. The delineation of the problem became possible by asking "why"—the purpose of the study. And once the purpose is well defined, the problem will accordingly become specific and exact.

Still, the subject/problem needs to be further clarified. The terms *fair* and *uniform* are vague. Women may be doing different work at different sites at Tata Steel. Jobs at Tata Steel may be different from jobs in Jamshedpur as a whole. So, when we talk of wages being "fair" and "uniform", do we mean the wages of women workers within various sites of Tata Steel or compared to the wages of women workers elsewhere? Or are we comparing the wages of women employees to those of men?

A hypothetical solution will be tested for its validity and correctness.

Defining Terms

The process of clarifying our concepts and terms is known as conceptualization. We conceptualize by defining our terms and stating them in specific terms with regard to the specific context of use. For instance, the term *wages* is vague unless we specify it by considering "hourly", "daily", "weekly"; if daily, then how many hours make a day; if weekly, then, how many days make a week (is Sunday included?); or if monthly, then, is a month the calendar month? Such questions help us to be exact about the concepts involved in our research.

Statement of the Problem

After clarifying all these questions, we can now state our problem thus—"This study proposes to survey the wages of women workers at Tata Steel, Jamshedpur, to determine whether the company wages are fair and uniform." The problem phrased in this way is limited in its scope.

Formulating Hypotheses

A *hypothesis* is a tentative statement about the possible cause and solution for a phenomenon. It is a tentative answer to the present question. It is tentative because it is assumed to be true but its validity is to be tested. A hypothesis is based on supposition and is to be proved or disproved as a result of research. For example, we may be interested in studying the percentage of savings in families with changes in family income. We may assume that the percentage of savings will increase if the income of families increases. It is just our supposition, not a proven fact. We can start with the hypothesis: "An increase in the income of the family leads to a rise in the percentage of income saved." This hypothesis is positive. Its validity is to be proved by testing it in our research.

Many researchers think that a positive hypothesis is framed by expecting a favourable "yes" result from the study. Therefore, they prefer to use a neutral hypothesis, called a *null hypothesis*, which is required to be disproved to prove what is valid. The null hypothesis is stated in terms that show no prejudice to the results of the research. We can state the problem of family income discussed earlier in the following null hypothesis: "There will be no increase in the percentage of income saved if the family income increases." In business research, we prefer to use the null hypothesis as it indicates an objective and unbiased attitude towards the result.

The null hypothesis is stated in terms that show no prejudice to the results of the research.

Selecting a Suitable Method of Data Collection

The next step after defining the problem and postulating a hypothesis is to select a proper method of collecting the required information from the following commonly used methods of research:

1. Library research
2. Normative survey research
3. Observational research
4. Experimental research

The main concerns of business research in the social sciences and management research are about finding solutions to problems such as unemployment, poverty, social unrest, human relations, and problems in organizations. Research attempts to establish factual data on the prevailing plans and schedules for development on a realistic basis. Research studies bring out necessary facts for making sound decisions before committing resources.

Research studies seek to help planners evaluate alternative strategies and select the most suited strategy for developing different sectors, such as education, agriculture, industry, health, and social welfare. Evaluations of ongoing projects and schemes such as lead bank schemes and integrated rural development programmes are undertaken to indicate whether the plans need any modifications or new implementation strategies. Keeping in mind the basic purpose of the study, the researcher usually selects one or two of the four research methods mentioned here.

Library Research

In every research study, we need to know what others have already done. For collecting this information and knowing other views related to our investigation, we should consult the existing literature. This kind of collection of information is known as library research and is a part of all other methods of research. It constitutes a study of the background and involves a survey of the existing body of knowledge in the field of the proposed study.

Library research is done for solving problems in business, and it relates to the study of an organization's records, annual reports, periodicals, account books, or any other documents recording business policies, decisions, and previous studies of the same or similar problems.

Library research helps in the following ways:

- It helps avoid unnecessary repetition and duplication of effort and waste of valuable research time and funds.
- It helps establish points of departure for new research work.
- It helps set out directions and areas for conducting research in the field proposed for study.

Library research is done for solving problems in business, and it relates to the study of an organization's records, annual reports, periodicals, account books, or any other documents recording business policies, decisions, and previous studies of the same or similar problems.

Because library research provides us with material already contributed by others, it is known as **a** *secondary source*, and the information collected is called *secondary data*. *Primary data* is what we gather through our own observations, surveys, and experiments.

In using library research for collecting data, you should be careful not to create a heap of information. Collect only relevant material. Also avoid piling up the entire data in one place. It will be better to note and record information on separate sheets/cards under different headings with exact details of their source—for instance, keeping separate files for books, journals, news bulletins, company-specific information, and so on. This will help you use the collected material properly at the appropriate places in your report. This will also help in preparing your bibliography.

Normative Survey Research

In business research, normative survey research is frequently used to know the prevailing status of the situation being studied. It uses survey tools—questionnaires, interviews, checklists, and "opinionnaires"—to obtain information that may add to information already collected through secondary sources or validate the findings of the library research.

> Normative surveys are called so because they lay down "norms" or "standards" or "what is", or determine the present status of a situation, or establish customary behaviour.

The surveys are called "normative" because they lay down "norms" or "standards" or "what is", or determine the present status of a situation or establish customary behaviour. The normative survey method is descriptive in nature. The limitation of this research method is that findings through such surveys are to be considered valid only for the present and not for the future, because the state of mind, attitude, or situation of the subject of study may change.

For example, suppose we want to conduct a study of the attitude of employees towards voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) in a company. The only way to do this is to conduct a survey (through personal interviews or questionnaires) of those employees who, at the time of study, fall within the age group indicated for VRS eligibility. The findings based on the responses given by this group of employees will be valid about the present employees only. The management of the company will not be deciding wisely if these findings are held valid and applied to employees after, say, five years, during which the company's economic situation or employees' attitude towards work may have changed drastically.

Reliability and Validity of Survey Results Surveys may be done through personal interviews or questionnaires. The findings are considered *reliable* when they are found to be close to what is generally accepted as true. And they are held *valid* if they measure what they are supposed to measure.

Reliability also results from consistency in findings. A simple example of a situation in which a result may be valid but not reliable is measuring a person's temperature with a thermometer. We may get a reading indicating fever, which is valid because the instrument measures what it should measure: a thermometer is meant to record human temperature. But suppose we doubt the accuracy of the reading and again, at that very moment, record the temperature with some other thermometer. We may get either the same reading or a different reading. If the reading is different, we will be confused. We do not know which reading is true. In order to determine which thermometer is reliable, we should again take the temperature with the first thermometer, first for one minute, then again for 2 minutes, and finally for, say, 3–5 minutes. If the readings are not close, then the thermometer is not reliable in its calibration. If it lacks consistency, which is the basic principle of the calibration of thermometers, the particular thermometer is unreliable.

> The principle of validity assumes that the results are true of not a specific group interviewed or questioned but of the total population.

Similarly, the principle of validity assumes that the results are true of not a specific group interviewed or questioned but of the total (in the VRS case all the employees supposed to be covered by the study). In order to get results that are both reliable and valid, we have to select a fairly representative sample or group (to continue with our VRS example) of the company's employees. *Population* is the total number of individuals (items) to be surveyed (interviewed or questioned through questionnaires). The whole population may be in the thousands (something unmanageable), so we select a smaller number of employees that represents the whole population (all the employees in VRS age). This process is called sampling.

In order to make the sampling reliable and valid, we follow the techniques discussed here:

- ***Random sampling:*** We need to sample to ensure that each individual member of the concerned population is studied by us. To make this possible, we use random sampling in which there is a "no-zero" chance for every individual to be included in the sample. This, of course, is a very difficult task. In order to achieve it, we should take a fairly large number at random from a population so that persons representing varying characteristics are included in the sample proportionately. Thus, the sampling group and the total population should possess the same characteristics in the same proportions. To illustrate this point, let us continue with the VRS example. Our sampling is valid if our sampling group has the same percentage of different age groups, different salary groups, different years of service, and different ranks that the total population of employees has.

  As the term *random* suggests, we do not choose, but allow an equal chance to all the members in a population to be chosen. One of the ways to do this is to first determine the size of the sample we want. Write down each name (in the population) on a piece of paper and mix them under a cover. Now, draw the number of slips you want for your sample group. The names thus drawn from the whole lot will be representative of the total population.
- ***Stratified random sampling:*** It is possible that the sample formed by following the steps just mentioned does not reflect the same percentage of various characteristics in the population. Therefore, we do what is called stratified random sampling. That is, we go on drawing the lots until we get, from each category, the sample group in the same percentage as exists in the total population.
- ***Systematic random sampling:*** Random sampling becomes systematic random sampling if we apply a system of picking out names in a definite sequence. For example, if we wish to take a sample of 250 from a population of 10,000, then 10,000 divided by 250 would be 40. Now, we can choose a number between 1 and 40, say, 4. Starting with 4, we need to select every 40th item. Thus, the series selected will be 4, 44, 84, and so on. This method ensures a no-zero chance for every individual in the population to get picked up for the sample. Such sampling techniques are useful to survey the preferences, habits, and attitudes of buyers for determining market trends or consumer behaviour.

Instruments of Survey A survey is usually done with the instruments of a written questionnaire or a personal interview. A *questionnaire* is a set of questions that are written in order to collect maximum factual information from the respondents about their habits, attitudes, views, ratings, liking, and so on of the object under study. An example is given in Exhibit A2.1.

The questions may be grouped and sequenced according to the nature of the data. For example, if personal data is important for the analysis of the information gathered, then questions on age, gender, family size, number of earning members, and number of dependents may be grouped together for easy analysis. The name is usually left out. A questionnaire is generally treated as anonymous.

Questions should be worded in simple, clear, and exact language. Enough space should be left between the questions if we ask open-ended questions such as "What effect will the attrition policy/VRS scheme have on the economy of the steel plant?" The questions can be objective-type questions, in which case the respondent has just to write "yes" or

Exercise A2.1
Sample Questionnaire and Letter

(a) The Letter

Destination India
Travel Guides Section

Dear Friend of *Destination India*,

Will you do us a favour?

In the past, *Destination India* has been able to produce many travel articles, magazines, guides and other products related to our readers' special interests only because friends like you have told us in advance what their preference are.

This survey is being mailed to a small, select group of *Destination India* customers. To ensure that replies truly reflect the opinions of all, it is important we hear from you. Your reply to this survey will help us plan future music collections designed to satisfy your particular needs.

If the music collections described on the following pages are more likely to interest someone else in your household, please pass along this questionnaire to that family member. Kindly spend a few minutes to consider each collection in turn. Then answer the questionnaire attached.

A pre-addressed postpaid envelope has been provided for your convenience. Your reply involves absolutely no commitment or decision to buy.

Many thanks for your help in this important project.

Yours sincerely,

Anuradha Joseph
For *Destination India*

P.S. By responding to this questionnaire, you become eligible for our lucky draw contest. Three lucky winners will get an all-expenses-paid 2 nights–2 days stay for two at the Corbett Game Resort.

(b) The Questionnaire

How to Answer This Questionnaire

Enclosed you will find descriptions of four categories of travel guides that *Destination India* is considering producing in the near future. Would you be kind enough to tell us if you would be likely to buy each of these travel guides, if it were offered to you with its repertoire as described here? Please consider each guide separately, and indicate your interest by ticking a box in the appropriate space below each description:

1	2	3	4
Definitely would order	Probably would order	Probably would not order	Definitely would not order

1. Weekend Getaways from Metros ☐
2. National Parks and Sanctuaries of India ☐
3. 50 Great Indian Spas ☐
4. Beaches of India ☐

About You and Your Family

For the purpose of tabulation, kindly answer the following questions.

Q 1. The following is a list of some categories of travel options available in India. Please indicate which types of destinations you are interested in visting in the next 12 months. (Please tick as many boxes as apply.)

Beaches ☐

Hill stations ☐

Spa resorts

Ecotels

National parks and sanctuaries

Religious destinations

Child-friendly hotels and resorts

Others

Q 2. Have you ever bought products from *Destination India* to give as a gift?

Yes No

Q 3. As a whole, how do you rate *Destination India* products on value for money? Is it

Excellent value Fair value

Good value Poor value

Q 4. Where did you purchase your travel guides and magazines in the past 12 months? (Please tick as many boxes as apply.)

Retail Store

Over the Internet

Direct mail offer

Local newspaper stall

Others

Q 5. Do you have access to the following? (Please tick as many boxes as apply.)

Personal computer

CD player

The Internet

MP3 player

Q 6. Your sex:

Male Female

Q 7. Your approximate age:

19 years or below 45-49 years

20-24 years 50-54 years

25-29 years 55-59 years

30-34 years 60-64 years

35-39 years 65-69 years

40-44 years 70 years or above

Q 8. Your education level:

Matriculate Undergraduate

Graduate Postgraduate

Q 9. Did you consult your family when you completed this questionnaire?

Yes No

Q 10. If you have any comments on our travel guides, please tell us.

____

____

____

____

____

"no" or mark the circles/squares against the options as directed. For example, a question can be put in the following form:

	Yes	No	No opinion
Your company should have a five-day week for all its employees to motivate them to improve production.	☐	☐	☐

Here are some guidelines for creating an effective questionnaire:

1. Ask objective and factual information. Opinions, likes, and so on cannot be avoided, but they should be inferred from the objective information.

   For example, instead of asking whether a person likes to buy a particular brand of soap, you can learn about his/her preference by asking how many times he/she has bought that soap. One rule to follow: Do not base your conclusions on opinions, because they may change from time to time. Rely on facts, not opinions.
2. Do not ask questions that would embarrass or bother the respondent. Examples are, "When did you last spend more than a few hours with your parents?" and "Have you stopped whistle-blowing or inside trading?"
3. Do not ask contradictory questions.
4. Avoid loaded questions that suggest built-in answers. An examples is "Would you like your wages to be increased?" Obviously, the answer cannot be "no".
5. Keep the number of questions to a reasonable limit. Normally, 10–15 questions should be set. Long questionnaires are usually ignored as they take too much of the respondent's time.
6. Assure the respondent that the information given by him/her will be treated confidentially if you are asking questions on secretive matters.
7. Sequence the questions from simple to difficult. Place easy-to-answer questions before the difficult ones.
8. Write a brief letter to be sent with the questionnaire. The respondent should know why he/she is selected to answer the questionnaire. Also, he/she should be persuaded to answer each question freely. Instructions for answering the questions may also be given in the covering letter. Otherwise, the instructions may be briefly written on the top of the questionnaire.
9. If the questionnaire is mailed, it should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. This will communicate your serious desire to receive the filled-up questionnaire.
10. Promise the respondents that the findings of the survey will be shared with them.
11. Mention the probable date by which you have to submit your study report or indicate the date by which the questionnaire may by returned. Remember that it usually takes time to respond and often the questionnaire remains unanswered. Hence, choose your respondents carefully and wisely.

Observation Research

In the observational method of collecting information, the receiver observes (inspects/monitors) the activities of a subject or a group of persons, a phenomenon, or the nature of an entity without communicating with anyone. It differs from the survey method, which involves an interrogation and response process and is a method based on communication. Observational study uses the process of monitoring. The researcher notes and records the results obtained from his/her observations of each case. This is why observational research is also called statistical research—it involves statistical analysis of one or more sets of data.

Suppose we want to know if there is any correlation between time and traffic jams at a traffic intersection on a particular road, we will monitor the flow of traffic, record the count of traffic flow in different directions at different hours of the day, and determine the statistical correlations between the two sets of data: the count of traffic flow and the time of day.

Usually, in business, we use both observational and survey methods to solve problems. For example, a market researcher may first use the survey method to understand the buying behaviour of certain income groups. Then he would employ statistical analysis to observe/determine the correlation between buying habits and income levels. A combination of the two methods helps us identify the right markets for products.

Experimental Research

Experimental research is a systematic and scientific approach to research in which the researcher manipulates one or more variables and controls and measures any change in other variables. We are familiar with experimental research from our school days. Rmember how we took two test tubes and filled them with exactly the same liquid? We then added a new material to only one of them. The content in the other tube was kept as it was (original). After adding the new material to one tube, we noticed changes in that tube. It was obvious to us that any change that had taken place was due to the new ingredient. We noted our observations. The experiment explained the phenomenon of cause and effect.

A laboratory experiment is done under controlled conditions. The two samples are identical. The addition of a variable to one of the two samples causes certain changes in that sample. We conclude that the change is due to the variable. Thus, we can determine the causal relation between a variable and the change in the state of something. Accordingly, if we wish to bring about a particular change in the state of something, we can take help of the related variable.

Although experimental research is used to determine the effect of variables in social sciences and management, there are limitations to its applicability to social sciences. Unlike in the physical sciences, the study of social behaviour and human nature cannot be controlled. Motivation, efficiency, or tastes and choices cannot be subjected to controlled observation of the effect induced by a variable in two otherwise identical groups of people. Although we keep repeating the phrase "other things remaining the same" as an essential condition for conducting experimental research in social sciences, it is largely an assumption and may not be, in fact, true.

In social sciences and management, experimental research is used to determine the effect of variables.

Experimental research is, however, commonly used in natural sciences like agriculture to determine the effectiveness of fertilizers or pesticides on crops. The study takes two plots of identical size, soil, fertility, quality of seeds, and irrigation facilities and adds a different quality of fertilizer to one of them or leaves it without manure. The yields of both plots of land are then recorded. The difference between the yields of two plots is due to the use of fertilizer.

Appendix 3: A Sample Report

A Report on an Integrated Marketing Communication Plan for Smriti

Prepared for
Otsira Gentics, Mumbai

by
S. Patel

1 July 2008

Contents

Introduction

Marketing communication is information, benefits, attributes, perceptual image/persona, feelings, and attitudes all bundled into one. Any product or service is available as such but marketing communication is what puts all the ingredients of life to it. Hence, it is both an interesting and a fascinating subject.

In an era of fast changes and cut-throat competition, where new products are launched every day as other products die even faster, keeping your business is becoming a bewildering task. The field of marketing communication is no exception. The advertising world in India has shown a growth of a dismal 14 per cent but is likely to grow at a 20 per cent average over the years.

As product differences begin to narrow with faster responses by the competition and as the competition sharpens itself, the most effective way to survive the times is through marketing communication. It is, however,, not as easy as it seems. As the consumer is continuously bombarded with advertising messages, meaningful, effective communication becomes imperative for business success.

MEDIA CLUTTER

Gone are the days when Doordarshan was the only television media and held sway in television viewership with a reach of 80 per cent during primetime. All this has changed with the introduction of liberalization in India. Today we have a range of local, regional, national, as well as global networks entering our drawing rooms. This has caused a media clutter, making it next to impossible to achieve advertising effectiveness. A similar trend is seen in magazine publishing. With a diminishing magazine readership, publishers have resorted to niche marketing, thus reducing the range and the coverage of target audience.

These changes have been accompanied by a spiralling cost in media advertising. Media rates for TV have risen by about 50 per cent. Advertising space in dailies and magazines are 45 per cent more expensive and hoardings in select cities are 33.3 per cent costlier.

Media clutter and rising costs have made it increasingly difficult for an advertiser's message to reach the target customer. A tool to counter this effect is integrated marketing communication (IMC): a concept that has been the rage of the nineties and is increasingly used today.

WHAT IS IMC?

Integrated marketing communication, or IMC, is a comprehensive plan of marketing communication that evaluates the strategic roles of various communication disciplines. It aims to build a clear, consistent, and effective communication plan that enables one to reach the right customers at the right time with the right message and in the right place.

This research project is an attempt at developing an IMC for Smriti. It is an advertising plan sponsored by Otsira Genetics, Mumbai. Their client (manufacturers of B-TON) is Aristo Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Mumbai.

Chapter 1: Where Are We Now?

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Smriti, a brain tonic, is an over-the-counter drug to enhance memory. It was launched in January 2007. This "new to the market" product was a huge success in its initial launch in the western states of India. Following this success, the brand was promoted nationally.

The drug is based on a formulation prepared by Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow, after 18 long years of research. The formulation is based on "Brahmi", a natural plant native to India. It had been tested over a period of time and was certified by CDRI/CSIR to be safe before it was introduced into the market for commercial purposes.

Since the launch of the product, its sales figures have seen typical variations. Sales have zoomed during school/college exam times and remained dull at other times. This indicates that the majority of its consumers are students.

The limited market acceptance of the product undoubtedly poses a challenge. However, one may also see here an opportunity to tap into a large and untouched market segment.

1.2 CATEGORY REVIEW

It is imperative to begin any marketing analysis by taking a look at how the external environment is shaping the category to which the product belongs. The product in question belongs primarily to the ayurvedic school, but is being promoted as an alternative to allopathic drugs.

1.2.1 PEST Analysis

The PEST analysis, or political, economic, social and technological analysis, used to scan the environment, brought out the following results:

- *Political/legal environment:* Smriti is based on an ayurvedic formulation and hence it is associated with the ayurvedic school of medicine, which is native to India and finds its origin in the ancient Indian texts of *Atharvaveda*. Unlike the allopathic drugs, which are strictly monitored by the medical association (the safety and efficacy of the drugs need to be proven beyond doubt by tests before they can be introduced into the market for commercial use), the ayurvedic drugs are not governed by any medical/ legal body. Besides, most ayurvedic drugs are OTC drugs. This absence of pre-testing as well as a lack of knowledge about these drugs have led medical practitioners to be reluctant to prescribe them.

  A lack of laws on these subjects has made matters worse. Roadside vendors pitch their tents in almost all cities and pose as experts on ayurveda. Quacks display signboards claiming to be doctors. Such cases are rampant and need to be checked before the situation reaches dangerous proportions.
- *Demographic/economic environment:* Urbanization is an ongoing phenomenon in India. Joint families are giving way to nuclear families. The number of earning members in a family is also increasing. Such effects of urbanization represent an

opportunity for marketers to find ready-made solutions for home-made recipes and traditional home remedies.

- *Social/cultural environment:* Liberalization has introduced an all-new dimension to the social and cultural environment in India. Materialism is no more a taboo. At the same time, increased competition has brought in a certain amount of professionalism as well as an increased workload as companies restructure to keep themselves lean, mean, and hungry. All these changes spell out a need for better and higher education levels as well as quicker and faster adaptation to the fast-changing times. In spite of having access to state-of-the-art technology, one has to rely all the more on one's own memory and be able to react quickly and accurately at all times.
- *Technological/natural environment:* With pollution levels rising everyday, conservation has become the norm everywhere. Hence, at all industry levels, eco-friendliness, recycling, etc. are being increasingly adopted. People all over the world are developing products from natural ingredients and selling them at a premium price. This bodes well for India because many of India's schools of medicine are based precisely on this concept. The recent controversy, where two Indians in the USA applied for a patent for *haldi* that was later won over by CSRI, speaks of things to come in the future.

The moral of the story here is: Granny, be ready to patent your home-made *churans* or it might be stolen by an MNC and turned into a multi-million dollar empire.

1.3 MARKET ANALYSIS

The results of the market analysis are discussed here.

1.3.1 Product Life Cycle (PLC)

A new-to-the-market product, Smriti, is just one and a half years old in the market and is still in the introduction stage. The early adopters of the product have been limited to school children. The product claims to have the power to enhance memory, but it has to be used for a three-month course for effectiveness. Unfortunately, the customers are not willing to buy this idea, perhaps because of faulty marketing communication. Keeping the innovators/early adopters in view, the advertisements have been bland and at best informational in nature.

1.3.2 Competition

Being new to the market, it does not face any competition in its category from the organized sector. In the unorganized sector, from the "Ayurveda" school, there are a few variants available. However all such variants are available in the form of either a liquid or a powder and is limited to local or regional areas. Smriti is available in the form of capsules and at all pharmaceutical shops has found itself a place on the shelf among allopathic drugs. Ayurveda and other schools of medicine like homeopathy and Unani school are considered, if at all, as secondary alternatives in this segment. Recently, a new entrant with the brand name "Mind Plus" has been launched which is in direct competition with Smriti but has yet to figure in the market and has limited availability in northern India. As per market information, there are other products from the house of Dabur and Baidyanath waiting to take on Smriti.

- *Growth rate and market position:* New to the market with no distinguishable competition
- *Segmentation:* No clear segmentation
- *Positioning:* Not yet clearly defined
- *Product:* An OTC drug for the enhancement of memory

- *Place:* A national brand with distribution in all the states
- *Promotion:* Promotion has been limited to advertisement through TV and print media
- *Sales promotion:* None
- *Direct marketing:* None
- *Personnel selling:* None
- *Public-relations initiatives:* None
- *Price:* Premium

Smriti is an OTC drug and does not require a doctor's prescription.

A preliminary market survey with the help of some pharmaceutical shops in Chennai and Bangalore has thrown up many pointers:

- The purchasers are generally middle-aged adults while the users are students. A very small percentage comprises old people.
- The customer–purchaser perception about the product is not very positive but is certainly not negative. This lack of definition is because of the difficulty of measuring such results.
- A certain touch of impulse appeal is found especially when the advertisements are being aired.
- Segmentation: In some posh localities such as T. Nagar and Alwarpet in Chennai; and Brigade Road, Shesadripuram, and Malleshwaram in Banglore; the offtakes from the shelves were considered to be good in comparison with that of other localities. Hence, the appeal of the product seems to be greater among the middle, upper-middle and higher classes.
- Trials are high for this product but diehards or regulars are non-existent. The trials tend to increase whenever advertisements are executed and during exam times.

1.3.3 Brand Equity Indicators

Consumer inclination towards the brand can be found through the following indicators:

- *Brand awareness:* The awareness level is high because of the uniqueness of the product and the absence of a competing product. However, the credibility of the product is doubtful.
- *Distribution:* The product is available nationally and moves reasonably fast off the shelves. The company provides good margins and incentives to retailers. The retailers generally keep the product in full view and are satisfied with the product.
- *Pricing, product quality, and product innovation:* The product was available in candy form as well as in capsule form. While the candy form was available in sachets and priced at 60 paise per piece, the capsule was priced at ₹3 per capsule. The production of the product in candy form has been stopped. This is because it lacked a good taste and the offtakes were poor, and because it was in direct competition against the capsule form. As the capsules, which were available only in packs of 100, were slow to move off the shelves, a new pack size comprising 30 capsules per package was introduced. This size has become the standard pack size and sells well. The capsules were also hermetically packed in strips of 10 to enhance quality perception. The pack of 30 has become the mainstay of the company. The premium price adds to the credibility of the product.

1.3.4 Brand Equity Description

This section deals with the identification and description of consumer thoughts and feelings that lead to strong or weak biases.

The brand equity description is carried out through two points of view:

- *How consumers view the brand*
  - The endorsement of Viswanathan Anand and its image as safe, non-toxic and without side effects are the driving factors behind its positive image.
  - The credibility of the product is not doubted.
  - The product acts as a strong morale booster for students, especially during exam times.
  - Memory is a very personal attribute. Hence, consumers are not very forthcoming in speaking on the product's behalf.
  - Consumer loyalty to the product is not very strong. The product is not perceived as indispensable.
  - The confidence level on the benefits of the product is low as the results are not quantitatively measurable.
- *What the communication strategy is:* The general communication has at best been informative about the safety aspect and about its compatibility with good parenting.

The competitive strategies and tactics of the product are as follows:

- An excellent celebrity endorsement in Viswanathan Anand has drawn great mileage for the product.
- Being a new-to-the-market product, its uniqueness, coupled with a celebrity endorsement, has helped in generating a good awareness level.

Where it falls short is in developing preferences and in generating conviction.

1.3.5 Target Audience

The acceptance level of the product has been limited to school children, which indicates that the youth are more predisposed towards the product. It then becomes necessary to target a young audience. As can be seen from Table A3.1, the age-group of 25–34 forms the second largest segment of the market and that makes it a worthy target:

Table A3.1 Indian Population Statistics

Age Group	*Population in Million*	*Percentage*
0–11	287.1	31.6
12–14	61.1	6.7
15–19	95.0	10.5
20–24	84.5	9.3
25–34	134.0	14.8
35–44	97.4	10.7
45–54	70.5	7.8
55+	78.9	8.7
Total	908.4	100.0

Source: IRS 1995

1.3.6 Buying Process

The process involved in making a buying decision is crucial for marketers and advertisers alike. Knowledge about the buying processes of consumers helps in developing effective advertising strategies.

The buying process consists of five stages: (1) stimulus, (2) consider, (3) choose/search, (4) buy, (5) experience.

A market research was conducted by the author at Chennai, Bangalore, and Delhi. The awareness level was found to be very high, which confirmed an earlier survey done by an agency. The buying system is explained further in the following section on market research.

1.4 MARKET RESEARCH

The objectives of the market research and the research design and sampling framework are discussed in this section.

1.4.1 Objective

The objective of market research is to get a better understanding of the overall dynamics (attitudinal as well as behavioural) of the target audience. The research should bring forth the following relationships:

- *Target market:* The attitudes of the members of the target market and their influencers
- *Product:* Satisfaction/dissatisfaction and desirable attributes for building a positioning platform
- *Price:* High/low for finding out to what extent it would affect future sustenance
- *Promotion:* Promotion mix

1.4.2 Research Design and Sampling Framework

The research was administered through an undisguised questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to study consumer perception, attitudes, purchase patterns, media habits, customer profile, etc.

The earlier framework was designed taking the following into account:

- Stratified sampling of the total target audience
- Cross-regional samples for better representation of total population and for the reduction of regional biases
- A sample size of 30 each in all segments to be statistically significant for a normal distribution

The research has been able to satisfy the above conditions to only a limited extent owing to time constraints, non-availability of consumers in the regular and executive classes and other such factors beyond the control of the researcher. The final outcome of the sample is as shown in Table A3.2.

At Bangalore, the schools and colleges were closed due to law-and-order problems and hence could not be targeted. Consumers of the executive class segment were not available. Hence, convenience sampling was resorted to in order to conduct analysis on the basis of users and non-users. The user segment is limited to students and the non-user segment comprises students and executives.

Table A3.2
Research sampling framework

	Regular Users			***Occasional Users***			***Non-users***		
	C	***B***	***D***	***C***	***B***	***D***	***C***	***B***	***D***
Students: School/College	2	–	6	10	2	10	22	3	5
Executives: Junior/Middle/Senior	–	–	–	–	2	–	3	13	14
Total		8			24			60	
Grand Total				32				60	

Note: C-Chennai, B-Bangalore, D-Delhi

1.5 DECISION MAKING AND THE BUYING PROCESS

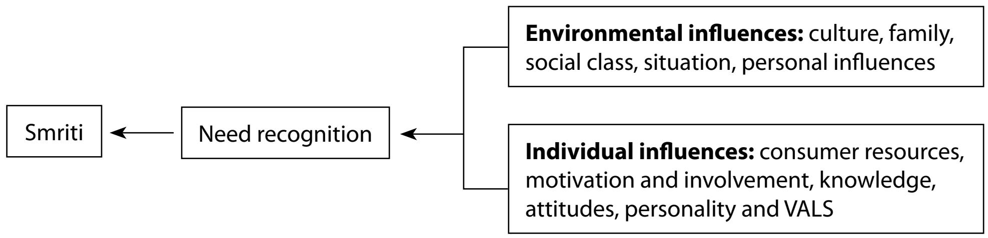
The decision making process and the buying process are discussed in this section.

1.5.1 Stimulus/Need Recognition

Need recognition essentially depends on how much discrepancy exists between the actual state (the consumer's current situation) and the desired state (the situation the consumer wants to be in). When this discrepancy exceeds a certain level, a need is recognized. In other words, it is a state of desire occurring through individual and environmental factors that initiates the decision making process. The Engel-Blackwell-Miniard model on the decision making process is used to study the buying process.

It now becomes easier to take each of the factors mentioned earlier and correlate it with the questionnaire on the buying process for Smriti.

Figure A3.1
Buying Process for Smriti



Environmental Influences The environmental influences, as shown in Figure A3.1, can be broken down into the following:

- ***Culture:*** Culture refers to values, ideas, artefacts, and other meaningful symbols that help individuals communicate, interpret, and evaluate as members of society. India thrives on its ancient heritage and diverse culture. Ayurveda and ayurvedic medicines are known and respected as a part and parcel of Indian heritage. Hence, when an ayurvedic medicine Smriti was introduced into the market in the form of capsules (a case of old wine in a new bottle), top-of-the mind recall was very high. This is proved by the high awareness level.
- ***Social class:*** A social class is composed of individuals sharing similar values, interests, and behaviour. Social classes are separated by differences in socioeconomic status, ranging from low to high. The questionnaire does not strongly put forth this difference in socioeconomic conditions to make any meaningful conclusion with respect to Smriti. However, certain observations were made which may be of interest for further exploration.

  During the preliminary survey with pharmacists in Chennai and Bangalore, it was found that offtakes of Smriti were high in posh areas such as Alwarpet and T. Nagar in Chennai; and Malleshwaram, Seshadripuram, and Brigade Road in Bangalore, as shown in Table A3.3. Further, most students who had used the product were generally from well-off families and renowned schools.

Table A3.3
Details of Schools

Schools	***City***	***Location***	***Status***	***Number of Users***
V.S. Rao School	Chennai	T. Nagar	A well-established school set in a posh locality	8
Vivekananda Higher Secondary School	Chennai	Koratur	Outskirts	3
B.E.T. Convent	Bangalore	B.E.M.L. Layout	Outskirts	1
Chiranjeev Bharati	Gurgaon	Palam Vihar	Posh locale	11
D.A.V. Public School	Gurgaon	Sector 14	Posh locale	6
Boston Higher Secondary School*	Chennai	Nandanam	Posh locale	1

**Boston School was used to do an initial test study of the questionnaire.*

- ***Personal influence:*** Influences are often referred to as comparative reference groups. We have selected students and executives as separate groups and separated students into users and non-users. Knowledge of who the consumers of Smriti are, and to what extent

Table A3.4
Role of the Decider

Part	Question Number	Variable	Category	%
II	*Q1*	*Purchase decider*	*Student users*	
		Self		31.3
		Father		31.3
		Friends		18.8
		Spouse		3.1
		Doctor's advice		12.5
		Relative		9.4

Smriti has been accepted within their reference groups could be a useful indicator of personal influence.

As evident from Table A3.4, in the case of student users, the influence of friends in making a purchase decision is not high. At the same time, the purchase decision is either self-motivated or taken by the father. But there could be a correlation between the two as the students might quote examples of benefits gained by members of their friend circles and influence their parents to buy Smriti. This could explain the high influence groups who fall in the friend circle. Another interpretation could be that the product is not tried out by parents and hence the product has more relevance and meaning for the children than to the parents. In the "executives" category, the product largely has not been tried out and the awareness level of any person taking the drug is dismally low. Table A3.5 provides the comparative reference group dynamics.

Table A3.5
Comparative Reference Group Dynamics

Part	Question Number	Variable	Category	%	Category	Mean Rank	Category	Mean Rank
I	Q2 in non-users and Q4 in users	Recommendation of friend/relative	Student users	13.32	Student non-users	2.25	Executive non-users	2.8*
II	Q3 and Q4 in non-users and Q5 and Q6 in users	**Number of consumers:** Regulars (0)	Student users	28.1	Student non-users	63.3	Executive non-users	83.3
		1–3		34.4		20		13.3
		4–6		21.9		13.3		3.3
		7–10		9.4		3.3		0
		>10		6.3		0		0
		Consumer group						
		Regulars Friends		59.4		43.3		16.7
		Parents		3.3		0		0
		Old people		15.6		0		3.3
		Neighbours		3.1		3.3		3.3
		Number of consumers Occassionals (0)		21.9		43.3		76.7
		1–3		43.8		43.30		20
		4–6		6.3		6.7		3.3
		7–10		18.8		0		0
		>10		6.3		6.7		0
		Consumer group Occasionals friends		**56.3**		**46.7**		
		Parents		0		0		0
		Old people		0		10		3.3
		Neighbours		21.9		13.3		0

**Rank 1-6*

Table A3.6
Family as a Decision Making Unit

Category	*Part*	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Sample*	*%*
Users	I	5	Elders' reassurance	Students	18.8
	II	1	Father	Students	31.3
Non-users	I	3	Elders' reassurance	Students	13.3
				Executives	30

- ***Family influences:*** Family plays an important part as a primary decision making unit. But does family play a part in decision making for the purchase of Smriti? Table A3.6 shows the influence of the family as a decision making unit.

  Though the scores are not highly reflective because of the qualifying statements of product attributes mentioned in the question, they do reflect that young executives who are independent and on their own trust Smriti due to elders' reassurance. Among the users, the highest percentage of decision makers for the purchase of Smriti comprises parents.
- ***Situation:*** The behaviour of individuals changes as situations change. A scenario was built up in the questionnaire to reflect the behavioural aspects of a situation. Keeping this in view, the behaviour of each individual within their own context was examined. Table A3.7 provides some details.

  The frequency of situations seems to be common among all the sample categories. The behavioural aspect also does not show much change. Rational thinking seems to overpower the rest of the aspect of thinking process as far as memory is concerned. Besides the fact that memory problems are existent, it could be that they are dormant in nature. The thought might not have occurred to try out a drug to provide a remedy.

Individual Differences The individual differences, as shown in Figure A3.1, can be broken down into the following:

- ***Consumer resources:*** Consumer resources are generally categorized by time (Table A3.7), money (Table A3.8), and information reception and processing capabilities (Table A3.9).

  The perception of price is not a deterrent for Smriti. The product benefits are sufficient for the premium pricing to be pegged at ₹3. But in the area of information reception

Table A3.7
Situational Effects

Part	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Category*	*%*	*Category*	*%*	*Category*	*%*
1	11a in Non-users	Frequency of situations: often	Student users	18.8	Student non-users	3.3	Executives non-users	10
	9a in Non-users	Frequency of situations: sometimes		75		76.7		73.3
		Frequency of situations: never		6.3		20		16.7
		Behaviour: think logically		62.5		76.7		80
		Behaviour: stand on the head		3.1		10		0
		Behaviour: fret and fume		21.9		10		3.3
		Behaviour: take it for granted		9.4		3.3		6.7
		Behaviour: ask around hurriedly		3.1		0		0
		Behaviour: any other		0		0		0

Table A3.8
Price Sensitivity

Part	Question Number	Variable	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%
II	1 in Non- users and 3 in users	**Price sensitivity**	Student users		Student non-users		Executive non-users	
		Very costly		12.5		10		6.7
		Costly		25		43.3		50
		Reasonable		59.4		43.3		43.3
		Low		3.1		0		0
		Cheap		0		3.3		0

Table A3.9
Information Processing

Part	Question Number	Variable	Category	Mean	Category	Mean	Category	Mean
I	6 in Non-users and 8 in users	Aided recall: Brahmi	Students users	Mean of 3.419*	Students non-users	Mean of 3.97	Executives	Mean of 3.57
		Aided recall: CDRI		Mean of 2.71		Mean of 2.433		Mean of 3.03
		Aided recall: Safe, etc.		Mean of 2.935		Mean of 2.933		Mean of 2.3
		Aided recall: V Anand		Mean of 4.097		Mean of 4.57		Mean of 4.03

*5-Very prominent; 4-Prominent; 3-Moderate; 2-Slightly; 1-Not at all

and processing, the image of Viswanathan Anand has figured very prominently, appearing to overshadow any product benefit message.

- ***Knowledge:*** Knowledge is defined as "information stored in the memory". It encompasses information such as the availability and characteristics of products and services, where and when to buy, and how to use the products. One main goal of advertising is to provide the relevant knowledge and information that are needed in decision making.

As seen in the earlier discussion, the image of Viswanathan Anand has been overshadowing the rest of the attributes in the communication message. Such a risk is always associated when celebrities are made endorsers.

Since memory involves a chain of mental activities, an exercise was incorporated into the questionnaire to check their knowledge on this aspect. The memory chain comprises the 5 R's: recognize, register, retain, recall, and respond. From Table A3.10, it is evident that the respondents fell short in their attempts to work out the cycle.

Smriti is in the launching stage of its product life cycle (PLC), and, as is common in the advertising sphere, educational messages form the core of marketing

Table A3.10
Memory Cycle

Part	Question Number	Variable	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%
I	12a in users and 11 in non-users	**Memory chain**: correct	Student users	12.5	Student non-users	16.7	Executive non-users	46.7
		Memory chain: incorrect		87.5		83.3		53.3

communication. The new entrant "Mind Plus" has positioned itself a little higher than Smriti by claiming that it "improves memory and enhances recall". Other players are eyeing the market and may work on the other gaps that are present in the memory cycle. The disadvantage is that there are consumers who are not aware of the technicalities of the memory cycle and this leaves a large part of the market unexploited.

- ***Attitude:*** An attitude is simply an overall evaluation of an alternative, ranging from positive to negative. Attitudes are built on two dimensions—involvement and motivation—which are discussed subsequently. Once formed, attitudes play a directive role for future choices and are difficult to change. Alternatives were found to be non-existent and most of them were secondary in nature. The attitude toward Smriti was studied by designing a semantic scale of 1 to 7 to check the perceived extent of benefits (see Table A3.11).

  From the responses to the brand, it can be inferred that the users felt that the brand could and have delivered fairly good results. The student users felt that Smriti could help them to concentrate and learn fast. They also felt that it could help them to organize their lives in a better way and make them relaxed and confident enough to beat the competition. The student non-users felt similar, except that they felt that its claim to "beat competition" was an overstatement.

- ***Personality and VALS:*** Individuals differ in their decision making and buying behaviours because of differences in personality, values, attitudes, and lifestyles (VALS). Unlike motivation and knowledge, an individual's personality is more visible. For example a product or ad that fits what I believe (value), the way I normally behave (personality), and my situation in life (lifestyle) might cause me to make a buying decision.

  Personality is something that is in-built and directs behaviour by providing a consistent response to environmental stimuli. It provides for orderly and coherently related experiences and behaviour.
  VALS is a subject of its own and its details are beyond the scope of this project.

Table A3.11
Perceived Benefits

Part	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Category*	*Max. Score of 7*	*Category*	*Max. Score of 7*	*Category*	*Max. Score of 7*
I	6 in users and 4 in non- users	**Benefit sought:** better concentration	Student users	Mean 5.06*	Student non-users	Mean 4.633	Executives	Mean 4.867
		Benefit sought: fast learning		Mean 4.91		Mean 4.033		Mean 4.933
		Benefit sought: better organization skills		Mean 4.906		Mean 4.467		Mean 4.8
		Benefit sought: to beat competition		Mean 4.688		Mean 3.533		Mean 4.167
		Benefit sought: to be relaxed and confident		Mean 4.813		Mean 4.5		Mean 4.933

*Semantic scale 7 (+) to 1 (–)

7-Excellent, 6-Very good, 5-Good, 4-Neutral, 3-Unsatisfactory, 2-Very unsatisfactory, 1-Totally unsatisfactory

Table A3.12
Trust

Part	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Category*	*%*	*Category*	*%*	*Category*	*%*
I	5 in users	Trust in ayurvedic product	Users	37.5	Non-users	43.3	Non-users	66.7
	3 in non-users	Trust in natural product		37.5	Students	50	Executives	13.3

- ***Motivation and involvement:*** Need recognition/stimulus is a manifestation of the discrepancy between the actual state and the desired state. This felt need leads to *wants* and finally to *behaviour*. The felt need can be classified into two categories based on benefits expected through purchase and use—*utilitarian needs* and *hedonic/experimental needs.*

When a person is motivated, there can be quite a range of accompanying feelings, emotions and mood. These influences are termed positive or negative affects. A positive affect speeds up information processing and reduces decision time in selecting appropriate products.

Activated mood leads to recall of products with positive association. Emotions can serve to activate a static drive.

Appeal is an important part of advertising. As has been said "*You have a better chance to win them if you make them feel good*".

Generally speaking, the need to improve memory exists even though it may have been dormant and largely unrecognized. Marketing communication is to accomplish how to position the brand in the most favourable light in terms of the potential to overcome the problem.

Need and motivation together combine to form the self-concept. Self-concept is the way one views the self. The self can be divided into four:

- *Ideal self*: The self one aspires to be
- *Real self*: The way one is.
- *Extended self*: The self as incorporated into objects and rate-facts that assume importance.
- *Self in context*: The way one sees oneself in different settings.

Self-context works in daily life and is reflected in many advertisements. Some of the types are mentioned here:

- *Transcendence*: I contends that "We are what we have" i.e. It is an extended self-concept that encompasses possession. This allows us to transcend our existence on biological beings and to assign unique often sacred meanings to our possession. Possession also plays an important part in relating to our past.

Self-Monitoring

(a) Concerns for social appropriateness of behaviour
(b) Attention to social comparisons for appropriate self expression
(c) Ability to modify self presentation and expression according to situation.

Fantasy: Comparing of real with ideal self

The utilitarian needs or the rational part is addressed in the question which states the Reason why anyone would take Smriti. The overwhelming response is that it can increase Memory which suits to the products +ve aspect.

The ad appeal was found to be informative in the case of non-users while it was found to quite appealing for users though not highly.

To check the self-concept on what are the causes for memory problem the response sways more towards clutter in the mind. The responses for the exact problem in the memory chain is in recall and retention.

1.5.2 Consider or Search for Information

Information search is of two types—internal and external search. *Internal search* is the scanning of memory to determine whether enough is known about available options to allow a choice to be made without further information. *External search* is required when this is not so. External search fall into two categories—market dominated and others. Market dominated external search includes advertisements and point-of-purchase (POP) material. "Others" include the word-of-mouth (WOM) information. WOM is by far the most important in a category like Smriti because people are seeking information and WOM is powerful at generating interest and conviction in any phase of the buying process.

Consumer search can be characterized along three dimensions—degree, direction, and sequence. The degree of search is related to involvement. Based on whether the purchase is a low-involvement purchase (LIP), a medium-involvement purchase (MIP), or a high-involvement purchase (HIP), the amount of search varies. The direction of search relates to which brands consumers consider during decision making and what attributes consumers examine during an internal search. The sequence of search relates to the brand search sequence.

The determinants of a search are: situational, product per se, retail shop, and the consumer.

According to research, doctors are an important intermediary in the decision making process. Experts' opinions were sought to take a perspective of this important intermediary. A brief of their reactions follows.

When Dr Chittaranjan Andrade, professor and head of the department of pharmopsychology at NIMHANS, Bangalore, was contacted at his chamber in Bangalore, he had some interesting observations to make:

- Ayurvedic drugs are not governed by any medical body.
- There are many drugs which have shown highly positive results when tested on animals under laboratory conditions but when it comes to applications on humans, it is a different game. The human mind is complex and so far, no one has been able to clinically prove that such a thing as memory enhancement has been possible.
- Clinical trials using placebos as a standard procedure have always given mixed and even conflicting results.
- Memory has a direct correlation with stress and stimulation. When there is high or low stress or when there is very high or low stimulation, memory fails to function properly. We need an optimum level of stress and stimulation for memory to function at its best.
- He refused to comment on Smriti and said that unless he read the paper presented by CDRI, it would be unfair for him to make any remarks. He, however, reiterated that the paper presented by CDRI had not been published in any respectable medicinal journal.

When the doctoral and post doctoral students were contacted during their rounds in the hospital, they reiterated that they had not come across the paper presented by CDRI and hence were doubtful of its efficacy. When asked about prescribing the medicine, a couple of them said they had prescribed it when some of the patients had asked about it.

Dr N. Ramanabashyam, professor and leading practitioner in Chennai, had written an article on the efficacy of Smriti and his conclusions were that Smriti was an effective and safe drug. When contacted, he reiterated the claim but added that he had prescribed Smriti to elder citizens of the age of 55+ and had found that there were decided improvements among his patients.

Dr. Ramanabashyam later referred to a patient in his clinic, who had used Smriti. The patient was an old man of the age of 65–70 years. Since he was resting, his wife was contacted and she added that after taking Smriti her husband was responding well.

Alternatives, as could be gathered from the respondents, were secondary in nature and a few did mention Mind Plus. The executives were especially unaware of any other alternatives.

1.5.3 Information Processing

Market communication as an external stimulus follows the following pattern: awareness, comprehension, image, attitude, and action.

Information processing is what is called *purchase evaluation criteria*. This is a very important criterion for an advertiser as it gives a clear-cut guideline for the standards and specifications used by consumers, or the desired outcomes from purchase and consumption expressed in the form of preferred attributes. In turn, as we know, they are shaped and influenced by individual differences and environmental influences.

The awareness level for Smriti is high but the information processing of the message has not been high. This means the comprehension of the message is not high. This leaves us to study the preferred attributes that consumers seek and is an area which requires to be explored the most. The questionnaire contained a section in which several attributes were listed out and respondents were asked to rate it on a Likert scale. The responses were than collected and a factor analysis was conducted. The results are shown in the section on positioning.

1.5.4 Buy/Purchase

We have generalized from the preliminary survey about the purchase pattern. However, to get a clearer understanding of the buying pattern of Smriti, a couple of questions were incorporated.

The purchases pattern and the consumption pattern can be inferred from Tables A3.13 and A3.14.

Table A3.13
Purchase Quantity

Part	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Category*	*%*
II	2	**Purchase**	Student users	12.5
		>30		37.5
		30		31.3
		10–30		18.8
		<10		

Table A3.14
Purchase Frequency

Part	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Category*	*%*
I	1	**Purchase frequency**	Student users	
		Regular		31.3
		Occasional		68.8

1.5.5 Experience/Post Evaluation Criteria

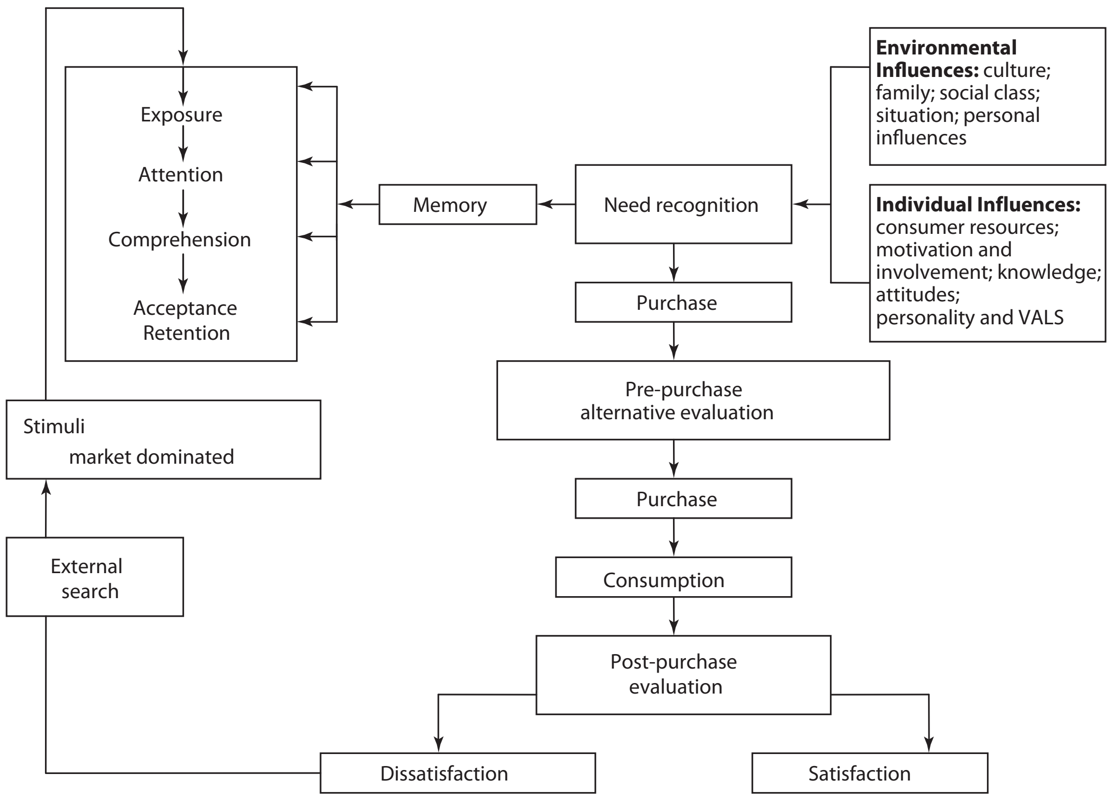
This relates to the satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels after purchase is made and leads to attitude development. As evident from Table A3.15, the users seemed to be somewhat satisfied with the product. It looks as though they had very high expectations of the product and it might not have fully met their expectations.

Table A3.15
Satisfaction Level

Part	*Question Number*	*Variable*	*Category*	*%*
I	3	**Satisfaction**	Student users	
		Totally		6.3
		Great extent		15.6
		Somewhat		71.9
		Not at all		6.3

1.5.6 Flowchart of the Buying Process

Figure A3.2
The Engel–Blacwell–Minard Model



Source: Engel (4)

1.6 SWOT ANALYSIS

Figure A3.3 illustrates the SWOT analysis for product.

Figure A3.3
SWOT Analysis

Strengths • First in the market • A unique product • Gels with the outlook of naturalness Indian audience's familiarity with Ayurvedic medicine • Excellent product endorser in Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand • CDRI / CSIR certification for safety and non-toxicity	**Weaknesses** • Market acceptance limited to students • Product efficacy cannot be measured • The important intermediaries of doctors are still sceptical about the product • Benefit segmentation of target audience is not done • Communication strategy and effectiveness is lacking • Advertisement execution and quality of the advertisements are not up to the mark • Being at a nascent stage, with hardly any competitors to exploit the market by introducing variants and filling in all the slots for differentiation.
Opportunities • Market penetration of untapped segments of executives, older people etc. can be explored • As a market leader and a first in the market, strengthen your hold through effective communication	**Threats** • Other large houses are eyeing the market and could enter the field, thus eating away on your resources

Chapter 2: Where Do We Want to Be?

2.1 MARKETING OBJECTIVE

The marketing objective is to increase sales from the current ₹1 crore+ to ₹5 crore in three years.

2.2 ADVERTISING OBJECTIVES

The 7 steps of advertising as a force are to lead the customers through. This includes:

1. Potential purchasers completely unaware of the product.
2. Prospects aware of the product.
3. Prospects who know what the product offers.
4. Prospects who know the product and have a favourable attitude towards it.
5. Favourable attitudes have developed to point of preference over all other possibilities.
6. Prospects who have preference and conviction that the purchase would be a wise buy.
7. Translation of this attitude to purchase.

2.2.1 SpecificTask

The task in terms of product positioning, benchmarking, the target audience, and time period for achieving the objective are discussed here.

2.2.1.1 Positioning

The positioning for the product has to be developed in such a way that the right image and appeal is communicated.

2.2.1.2 Benchmark

The awareness level is high for Smriti. However, the product comprehension and image need to be improved to develop favourable attitudes leading to purchase.

2.2.1.3 Target

The target audience considered is school students, executives and senior citizens. The objective is to induce trial among executives and repeat purchase from school students. With this as the objective, the target of marketing communications is to increase brand comprehension and image from moderate to high.

2.2.1.4 Time Period

The time period considered is one year in this case.

2.2.2 Desired Conditions to Achieve in the Consumers' Mind

The desired conditions that need to be achieved in consumer thinking are as follows:

a. Make the consumer feel with certainty that in these changing and trying times, a difference does exist *now* or in the future with respect to his/her memory conditions and thus induce a felt need.
b. Increase the association between the felt need and Smriti as **the** most appropriate solution.
c. Increase the credibility of consumer's knowledge towards Smriti.
d. Develop favourable attitudes towards Smriti.
e. Increase the breadth of the target audience.

2.2.3 Desired Conditions to Achieve in the Consumers' Behaviour

The desired conditions that need to be achieved in the consumers' behaviour are as follows:

a. Increase brand trial purchase among executives.
b. Increase volume of repurchases (in students) [by reducing cognitive dissonance]
c. Increase quality and quantity of word-of-mouth communication among consumers.

Chapter 3: How Do We Get There?

3.1 STRATEGIC OPTIONS AND THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

3.1.1 Marketing Background

While there is a strong potential in the large memory enhancer market, there are many alternatives available that compete for the same benefits. The alternatives however fall in the secondary and other categories not linked to memory enhancers. For Smriti to succeed, they must attract business from the existing consumers as well as other segments of the market. To accomplish this, marketing communications has to position itself by analyzing the consumer segments.

Table A3.16
Problem Analysis Chart

Problem Analysis Chart	Is?	Is Not?	Distinctiveness Is In?	Change
What	Increasing the breadth of the target audience	Awareness	Students form majority among the target audience	Students opt for the product only during exams
Where	Product credibility	Benefits	Tangible results not forthcoming	None
When?	Communication	Awareness/ recall	Excellent celebrity endorsement	None
To What Extent?	Developing a liking and preference for the total target audience	Awareness	Confidence about the product is lacking	None

Source: Kepner & Tregoe

3.1.2 Positioning

Positioning generally begins with a competitor analysis of competition positions, their rational and emotional appeal, followed by analysis of customers before developing the position. In our case, however, there was no direct competition in this field (until Mind Plus arrived). Hence, consumer perception is all that is studied to develop a positioning strategy.

A set of 26 product attributes and customer benefits were chosen and the customers were asked to rate it against an ideal drug. The users were also asked to rate Smriti on the same attributes.

When both students and executives as a total class of non-users were considered and a factor analysis conducted, a diffused image was the result. Hence, the categories were divided to users and non-users: executives and non-users: students. The factor analysis with six factors was considered. The factors as well as their contributing attributes are listed in Table A3.17.

Table A3.17
Factor Analysis for the Ideal Drug

Factors	***Students Users***	***Students Non-Users***	***Executives Non-Users***
Memory Enhancer	• Concentration • No side effects • Provides quick results	• Memory power • No side-effects • Provides quick results	• Memory power • Mental strength • Provides quick results
Ease of Use	• Capsule form • Easy to carry	• Candy	• Candy • Easy to carry • Value for money
Common Cure	• Vibrant • Whole family • Multi-cure	• For growing children • Improves concentration	• Natural • Taken anytime • For growing children
Safety	• Trustworthy • Natural ingredients • For growing children	• CDRI • Natural ingredients	• Doctor's recommendation
Protection/ Shield	• A manufacturer I trust	• Provides mental strength	• Reduces stress
Non-habit-Forming	• Reduces stress • Non-habit-forming	• Non-habit-forming	• Non-habit-forming

In the case of Smriti, all the factors could not be clubbed together in the same format as in the case of the ideal drug. Hence, the factors have been considered separately and the attributes are listed in Table A3.18.

A comparison of the ideal drug and Smriti can help us in developing a positioning platform.

The benefits sought along which to position the brand are:

1. Memory enhancing capability
2. Ease of use
3. Common cure
4. Safety
5. Protection / Shield
6. Non-habit-forming nature

Table A3.18
Factors Analysis for Smriti

Product Benefit	• Mental stress • Real benefits • Vibrant
Product Identity	• CDRI • Capsule form • Memory power
Safety	• Natural • Trustworthy • Child friendly
Recommendation	• Doctor's recommendation • Friends' / Relatives' recommendation
Protection/Shield	• No side-effects • Recommendation of pharmacists
Common Cure	• Safe • Non-habit-forming • Appropriate for the whole family

Table A3.19
Need Segmentation

Category Benefits	***Security Needs***
Memory Enhancing Capabilities	Safety
Protection / Shield	Non-habit-forming
Ease of Use	Common cure

The benefits sought among the broad factors of each group can give us an indicator of what to stress in order to provide a meaningful and well-represented communication message.

In the factor which represents *memory enhancement,* we find that the ideal drug should have memory enhancing capabilities for student non-users and executives. Users, however, are looking for a drug that will improve their concentration. Compared to this, the perception of Smriti is that it has been able to reduce mental stress and provide real benefits and has made the consumers feel vibrant.

In the factor representing *ease of use*, the candy form is more preferred by non-users while users are happy with the capsule form. The executives at the same time are seeking value for money. The perception of Smriti as an easy-to-use product is lacking, and is perhaps perceived to be a serious affair.

The factor representing *common cure* is meant as a medicine (OTC) which is generally kept at homes for providing cures to minor ailments like fever and cold. The ideal drug should be good for growing children or the whole family as in the case of users. Users also seem to seek vibrancy and multi-cure aspects while non-users students feel it should be helpful in improving concentration. Executives, on the other hand, are looking for a natural product that can be taken at any time. The perception of Smriti is that it is a safe, non-habit forming drug and is appropriate for the whole family.

The *safety* factor shows greater variation with the different cases, showing different requirements except for the natural ingredients which the students prefer. In case of Smriti, the safety factor shows perception on trustworthiness, naturalness and goodness for growing children.

The *protection/shield* factor represents a psychological benefit sought by the representatives. Reducing stress is seen as an important benefit sought by non-users while users seem to be contended with a quality product from a good company. Here, "the manufacturer I trust" may be interpreted as an alter-ego of Viswanathan Anand.

The sixth factor which is its *non-habit-forming* quality. This factor seems to glow brightly and has great unanimity among the three groups.

The six factors can be grouped into two different tests, satisfying the two different needs of product category benefits and security needs, as shown in Table A3.19.

These are two sets which need to be authenticated and proved to make a claim. Hence the positioning suggested is as follows:

PROVEN

Proven to provide both category as well security benefits. One gospel truth with positioning is: Don't try to be something you are not. Essentially, as the factors have been derived from an ideal drug for all the three segments, there could be a distortion. Now, let us look at each of the factors in relation to the positioning statement. The drug has been proven to provide memory enhancing capability, is an OTC drug which takes care of the ease-of-use part. Next, let us look at the security part. The drug has been certified as safe by CDRI and works on the principle of reducing stress levels and increasing stimulation, which takes care of the protection/shield part. The last point of non-habit-forming properties has to be emphasized as the drug is a three-month course but at the core is an ayurvedic product.

3.2 TARGET AUDIENCE ACTION OBJECTIVE SHEETS

Where are the sales or usage to come from?

The sales are expected to come from existing as well as non-customers in the memory enhancer market. While the emphasis is to rope in non-customers, it is also important to maintain the primary group of users.

Does the marketing objective involve initiating trial or continuous usage?

The marketing objective is to initiate trial among the executives and other segments. At the same time, it is to induce continuous usage among prospects who have tried the product.

Where does trade fit in?

Trade has an important part to play. Currently, the retailers are motivated in the sense that they get a handsome 20 per cent margin. During the preliminary survey conducted with pharmacists, it was found that there no POP s were given and the pharmacists did feel that POP material could help trade. Another pointer that they provided was that the box was cluttered with too many messages and they felt that it could be reduced. It was also seen that the product was kept upfront on the bridge or in the display shelves giving high noticeability.

POPs in the form of posters or wall hangings many not serve the purpose as there are too many products and with too many companies already supplying their own promotional materials, POPs lose their meaning. A permanent solution is required on this aspect.

3.3 KEY COMMUNICATION STRATEGY WORKSHEET

The need for memory enhancement is there in the market, in the segments, in the self, although it might be dormant, or, as the respondents overwhelmingly said, a "sometime" affair. The target segment is also high in its awareness level, therefore, the primary communication objective is brand attitude and brand purchase intention.

3.3.1 Brand Attitude

Brand attitude can be measured on two dimensions: involvement and motivation. We had earlier inferred that the overall attitude has been good and that the brand showed qualities of a high-involvement purchase (HIP). With this inference as a tool, we can develop a marketing communication strategy for brand attitude using the Rossiter-Percy grid.

Rossister and Percy have considered the following motives as the basis for formulating the grid. They have classified motives into two parts: negative motives and positive motives (Table A3.20).

Table A3.20
Motives

Negative Motives	***Description***
Problem removal	Looking for a product or service to solve a problem
Problem avoidance	Looking for a product or service to avoid a future problem
Incomplete satisfaction	Looking for a product or service that is better than what is currently used
Mixed approach-avoidance	Looking for a product or services that resolves a combination of likes and dislikes in what is currently used
Normal depletion	Looking to maintain inventory of product usage of service

Positive Motives	**Description**
Sensory gratification	Looking to enjoy product or service
Intellectual gratification	Looking to explore or master a new product or service
Social approval	Looking for personal recognition by using an product or service

Source: Percy. L (7)

3.3.2 The Rossiter–Percy Grid

The Rossiter–Percy grid (Figure A3.4) is a combination of the two dimensions of involvement and the motives as generated by them. The fundamental criteria affecting the selection of a product or service are the amount of perceived risk in the outcome of

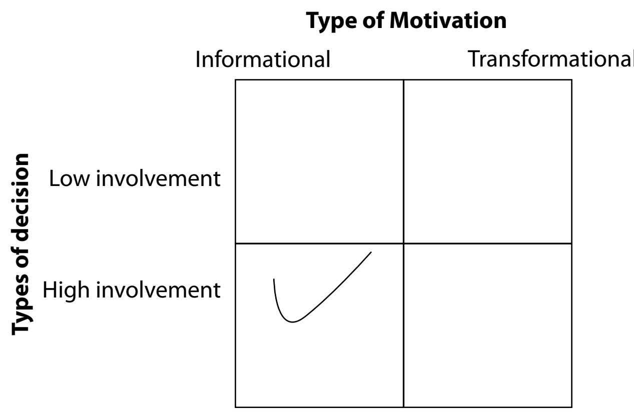


Figure A3.4
Rossiter–Percy Grid

the decision and whether the need to be satisfied by the choice is positively or negatively motivated.

Each of the four grids reflect different strategic directions. In the grid, the labels *informational* and *transformational* describe strategies related to motivation.

Generally, to satisfy a negative motive, someone is searching for information about a brand in order to reduce or eliminate a problem, hence it calls for *informational* communication strategies. On the other hand, when positive motives are involved, someone is generally trying to transform themselves, so strategies dealing with positive motives are refereed to as *transformational.*

Depending upon where the brand purchase or usage decision lies within the grid, marketing communication tactics will differ significantly. When a decision implies no risk, one does not really need to convince the target audience. All one needs to do is titillate the audience or generate what is called "curious disbelief". With high involvement decisions, one will need to convince. This means a more permanent media should be considered.

We have inferred that Smriti is a HIP based on the response that non-users are more inclined to try out the drug on doctor's recommendation. Alternatively, we see that Smriti is an OTC drug and demands low involvement, which makes the brand altitude interesting. Adding to this, the respondents considered alternatives which were secondary in nature, making the building of communication strategy all the more difficult. Another difficulty is that it is often not easy to measure the results of using these products, especially in the short term, hence it would be more likely that people need to be convinced about their choice, overcoming the perceived risk attached in possibly wasting their effort and money on a supplement that does not perform. As a result, it is safer to assume that this will be a high-involvement purchase. The motivation on the other hand is clearly negative (problem solution), calling for an informational strategy.

What we want to do as a result of IMC is to convince the target audience of the efficacy and superiority over alternatives, leading to trial and continued usage.

3.4 BEHAVIOUR SEQUENCE MODEL

The behaviour sequence model (Table A3.21) utilizes the findings of the buying process. The need for a particular memory enhancer has to be aroused, potential users will then "check it out" and if they are convinced of its potential, they will purchase it. Here, we are incorporating decision roles involved for each of the stages in the buying process. Need arousal is most likely to come from individual adults, family members, or friends after they have noticed the advertisement in a newspaper or magazine, or word of mouth communication. This stage will lead to the information search and evaluation stage, gathering information from various sources where friends, family or some other adult play the role of the influencer. In this stage, pharmacists or the pharmacy itself

Table A3.21
Behaviour Sequence Model

Decision Stage/ Consideration at Each Stage	*Need Arousal*	*Information Search and Evaluation*	*Purchase*	*Usage*
Decision Roles Involved	School children, executives, family members, older people, and friends as initiators	• School children, executives, family members, friends as influencers • School children, executives, family members, older people as deciders	School children, executives, family members, older people as purchasers	School children, executives, older people as users
Where the Stage Is Likely to Occur	• Home • W-O-M	• Home • Pharmacy	• Pharmacy	• Home
Timing of Stage	• Upon felt need • Before exams for school going children	Weeks following felt need*	After being convinced of benefit	Daily twice for three months
How it Is Likely to Occur	See or hear about product category or brand	• Seek information from others • Visit pharmacy • Look up information	Visit pharmacy stores	Taking supplements on daily basis

Source: Percy. L (7)

could also play an important role of influencer. Once this information has been evaluated, the potential individual adult user will form an intention to try, playing the role of a decider. This same individual may be the purchaser and user or will be the purchaser and the individual's family members will assume the role of users.

3.5 IMC TASK GRID

The BSM provides an overview of how people are likely to go about making a decision to purchase and use a memory enhancer, and the people and factors that will be involved in that decision. Thus, we are able to "see" where marketing communications might be effectively used. A closer look at the BSM tells us that a single message using one primary type of marketing communications will not be sufficient to effectively market Smriti. This means an IMC has to be planned.

The IMC task grid (Table A3.22) gives an answer to this. The IMC task grid looks at each stage in the consumer's likely decision process and develops appropriate communication objectives that relate them to the appropriate segments of the target audience and their behaviour. This is then listed and appropriate advertising, direct response and other options allotted to each segment to effectively accomplish the tasks.

The communication task associated with need arousal reflects the brand awareness and brand attitude communication objectives. The first task is to stimulate interest in memory problems. Here, we can safely assume that the target audience is aware of ayurvedic medicines. This then leaves us with the task of linking safe ayurvedic cures for memory problems with Smriti. The target being mainly young adults, it is advisable to use something with a visual impact to increase retention. TV advertising is the best and fastest way to satisfy these objectives, while print advertising will reinforce them. At the same time, trade advertising will be required to raise the salience of the product with the trade.

At the information search and evaluation stage, the task is to provide enough information to convince the target audience that this product is worth trying, seed a positive brand attitude and to occasion a purchase intention. This is the stage where marketing communication must fully affect the "brand attitude" and "brand purchase intention"

Table A3.22
IMC Task Grid

Decision Stage	***Communication Task***	***Target Audience***	***Where and When***	***IMC Options***
Need Arousal	• Generate interest in memory problems • Generate interest in safe ayurvedic cure • Stimulate the link between memory problems and Smriti • Develop positive attitude for Smriti	• Family members • School children, executives • Older people	• At home • At office • At school • At pharmacy shops	TV, print media, P-O-P's
Information Search and Evaluation	• Provide enough information to convince target • Gain positive intentions to try brand	• Family members • School children, executives, • Older adults	• At home • At pharmacy shops	• Print medium (response coupons) • P-O-P • Public relations
Purchase	Act on positive brand intention	• Family members • School children, executives, • Older adults	Pharmacy shops	• Advertising • P-O-P promotions
Usage and Reinforcement	Reinforce decision and brand usage	• School children, executives, • Older adults	At home	Advertising

Source: Percy. L (7)

communication objectives. We will have to reach the target audience for information search and evaluation. Print media using response coupons and POP's with more details can be used to provide details necessary to help convince potential consumers on the product's effectiveness. This is essential to change the attitudinal problems relating to seeking of doctors' advice. The response coupons can also help develop a database and provide answers to the interested target audience. It would also help to further refine the marketing communications from the type of queries asked by these potential consumers. Public relations is another area that is required to strengthen the product. Public relations can help in building inroads to change the perception of efficacy of the product and to provide the required support.

The purchase stage occurs only at the pharmacist shops. Point-of-purchase displays thus assume an important job in triggering brand recognition and reminding the potential user of his or her intention to try the product. Advertising plays a critical role in this stage. Packaging assumes a lot of importance and so also the POP displays providing credibility and information at the site of purchase. Here, special promotions schemes can be offered to target school going kids. The promotion shall have the effect of increased trial, especially during exam times.

With usage, continued advertising and selective promotion should be administered to reinforce the user's brand decisions.

3.6 THE PRIMARY CREATIVE BRIEF

The primary creative brief lays out the creative guidelines for the IMC program. It is clear that a message-oriented campaign will be required. The overall task of the communication program is to build a positive brand attitude. The "proven" positioning should help in overcoming the consumer barrier of product safety. The mediums of communication should be extended to TV, print (in the form of response coupons), promotions and POP display. Consistency should be incorporated in all the forms. Consistency in look and feel in the execution is one of the most critical areas in IMC. A unique feel or look is required in everything that is done so that the target audience recognizes the marketing communication with the proven positioning. Table A3.23 shows the primary creative brief for Smriti.

Table A3.23
Primary Creative Brief

Product: Smriti	
Key Market Observations:	
The product has seen typical variations, where the off takes from the shelf had shot up during school / college exams and remained dull during other times	
Source of Business:	
School-going children or current users	
Consumer Barrier/Insight:	
Product efficacy, safety and knowledge, all of which needs to be reinforced	
Target Market:	
School children, executives and older people who are outwardly driven	
Communication Objectives and Task:	
Building positive brand attitude by "proven" positioning	
Brand Attitude Strategy:	
High involvement / informational brand attitude strategy driven by motivation of problem-solution, problem avoidance, or incomplete satisfaction.	
Benefit Claim and Support:	
"P R O V E N"	Support: CDRI/CSIR
Desired Consumer Response:	
Belief that Smriti is an all-encompassing memory-enhancing drug because its effectiveness is "proven".	
Creative Guidelines:	
Tie "proven" to each of the brand claims, providing and ensuring a consistent look and feel across all the communication media.	
Requirements / Mandatory Content:	
All requirements as per OTC guidelines.	

Source: Percy. L (7)

3.7 IMC MEDIA BUDGET ALLOCATION

IMC media budget allocation (Table A3.24) helps in utilizing the strength of various marketing communications options to address the communication tasks confronting the brand.

TV broadcasting is to be used continuously to maintain brand salience and interest in the product. The two segments are required to be targeted separately, except that the product benefits / attributes for each segment (from factor analysis) are to be given prominence. The product attributes are to be projected under the "proven" platform. TV advertising is the best way to address awareness, but not as effective on its own in providing details usually required to convince consumers of a high involvement decision. This is where print media with / without response coupons are included to provide an opportunity for learning and to stimulate interest in trials. While the executive segment is to be allured into trials, all the print media options for all stages are to be targeted at building salience, which would result in steady off-takes (unlike the case of school children where seasonal options can be adopted).

Promotion is required during exam time to increase trials for school children. Table A3.25 shows the communication tasks for school-children. For executives, however, promotions are to be adopted during other seasons. Promotions should be used to educate the target audience and induce them to opt for the full course of three months as is required for effectiveness.

Table A3.24
IMC Media Allocation: Communication Tasks for Executives

IMC Communication Options	• Generate interest in memory problems • Generate interest in safe ayurvedic cure • Stimulate the link between memory problems and Smriti Develop positive attitude for Smriti	• Provide enough information to convince target • Gain positive intentions to try brand	• Act on positive brand intention	• Refineries decision and brand usage
Television	✓		✓	✓
Print Media:				
• Weeklies	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Monthlies	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Dailies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promotions			✓	
Public Relations	✓	✓		
POP Displays	✓	✓	✓	

Source: Percy. L (7)

Public relations is essential to gain advantage of the product's certification by CDRI and CSIR. It would also help in bringing attitudinal changes with the target audience.

POP displays are essential. The best form would be to provide a shelf hanger-cum-display for storing the product, carrying the "Proven" positioning statement along with all the related statements. This would serve the dual purpose of gaining attention and providing the necessary information unlike the short-lived POP displays.

In all the media, there should be consistency offered in the form of the "Proven" positioning statement. The selected media should reinforce each other.

Table A3.25
IMC Media Allocation: Communication Tasks for School children

IMC Communication Options	• Generate interest in memory problems • Generate interest in safe ayurvedic cure • Stimulate the link between memory problems and Smriti • Develop positive attitude for Smriti	• Provide enough information to convince target • Gain positive intentions to try brand	• Act on positive brand intention	• Refineries decision and brand usage
Television	✓		✓	✓
Print Media:				
• Weeklies		✓	✓	✓
• Monthlies		✓	✓	✓
• Dailies		✓	✓	✓
Promotions			✓	✓
Public Relations		✓	✓	
POP Display			✓	

CONCLUSION

The IMC suggested for Smriti is a sequence of activities planned through a set of worksheets. The use of public relations, response coupons in daily publications, and POP displays—an equally major set of communication activities which were not considered or maybe not given their full due—is suggested. In all the communications, there should be continuity in the form of the "proven" positioning statement. There should be congruity in all the IMC activities, without which the consumer may not be able to develop a positive attitude towards the product.

The endorsement of Viswanathan Anand is a strong factor to cash in on. But considering his VALS, the communication platform should be executed in similar lines to vibe well with the audience. At the same time, the message should not get lost. The TV commercials should be designed for at least 20-30 seconds as the message requires to provide information.

PR activities, POP displays and package redesigning need to be considered.

LIMITATIONS

- Consumer behaviour has not been statistically analysed for significance.

  The sampling resorted to was convenience sampling instead of stratified sampling, as earlier planned. Consumers in both segments were not available. Hypothesis formulation was hence not adhered to. The emphasis was to develop a positioning statement, which was done by using factor analysis. The differences in the three different samples are not very high, so statistical analysis of the Parts I, II and IV were not done.
- Pricing and distribution strategies have not been analysed. The distribution networking details were withheld by the agency and pricing was not in their agenda.

  The marketing set-up and the marketing and business objective have not been dealt with as the information was withheld.
- The media plan has not been drawn out as the budget allocation is yet to be formulated. The agency was yet to negotiate the yearly budget with the clients and the agency withheld details on the current and previous years' budgets.
- Final creative brief and execution is not suggested as it is to be developed by the agency. The study has been limited to that of an account executive of the agency as the findings and recommendations would be given to the creative department for developing prototypes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. D. A. Aaker, R. Batra, *Advertising Management* (India: PHI, 1992).
2. S. Agarwal, *Marketing Research* (India: Global business Press, 1994).
3. W. R. Dillon., Thomas. J Madden and N. H. Frittle, Marketing Research in a Marketing Environment, (United States: Richard Irwin Inc, 1990).
4. J. Engle, R. D. Blackwell and P. W. Minard, *Consumer Behavior* (United States: Forthworth Dryden Press).
5. P. Kotler, Marketing Management (India: PHI, 1996).
7. Larry Percy, *Strategies for Implementing Integrated Marketing Communications* (Lincolnwood, Illinois: NTC Business School, 1997).
8. Otto Kleppner, Thomas Russel, Glenn Verrill, Otto Kleppner's Advertising Procedure (Engelwood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1983).
9. I. G. Schiffman and I. I. Kanuk, Consumer Behavior, (Delhi: PHI, 1994).

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

1. Comment on the form and structure of the report.
2. Improve the report with respect to its presentation and layout.
3. Correct the language and other errors wherever necessary.

Index