Directorate of Distance Education

B.A. (Public Administration)
I - Semester
106 13

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
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Effective communication is central to the success of any business organization. Communication is a pervasive activity which encompasses almost all facets of our lives. Much of our lives is spent communicating with others – be it at our workplace or at home. When communication is referred to in the organizational or business context, it is known as business communication.

In any organization, communication takes place at various levels and it should be effective to enable the organization to survive. Across the organization, individuals send and receive information. It may be in the oral or written form. It may be formal, following the organization’s communication channels or it may take the form of an informal social interaction of colleagues during tea time. Employees also communicate information through computers, talk over the phone, write messages, fill out forms, give orders and receive orders. Employees write reports about their activities, make business presentations and organize meetings. Various tools of written communication are available for communicating within the organization such as memoranda, circulars, office orders, notices, and so on. In addition, employees need to communicate with external agencies like customers, suppliers, banks, insurance agencies and others. Thus, it is through communication that any management performs its basic functions of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling.

This book, *Business Communication*, is divided into fourteen units that follow the self-instruction mode with each unit beginning with an Introduction to the unit, followed by an outline of the Objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple but structured manner interspersed with Check Your Progress Questions to test the student’s understanding of the topic. A Summary along with a list of Key Words and a set of Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit for recapitulation.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will begin by discussing communication. Simply put, the act of transferring information from one place to another is known as communication. The word communication comes from the Latin word communicare, which means to share. Communication is of huge importance in all aspects of human life. One can communicate using words of a language or through non-verbal gestures or signs. In the communication process, a message or communication is sent by the sender through a communication to a receiver or to numerous receivers. In this unit, we will first discuss the meaning and scope, the importance as well as the process of communication. The final sections of the unit will discuss the methods and types of communication.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the meaning, need and nature of communication
- Examine the objectives of communication
Communication: An Overview

NOTES

1.2 MEANING AND SCOPE

Communication is the modus operandi of social and commercial intercourse. It is communication which gets the world going. It is the lifeblood of any group or organization. The communication process encompasses men, women and children as individuals and also members of a group, society, community or organization. One cannot visualize a world where men and women do not communicate. Communication keeps the world going.

Communication is relevant not only to human beings, but also to other living beings. It is the most important link that connects all living organisms. Communication takes place not only among people, but also between people and animals and between animals. The dog owner, the horse rider, the ringmaster in the circus and the fortune-teller communicate with their animals and birds.

It is the ability of mankind to communicate across barriers and beyond boundaries that has ushered the progress of mankind. It is the ability of fostering speedy and effective communication around the world that has shrunk the world and made 'globalization' a reality. Communication has had a vital role to play in ensuring that people belonging to a particular country or a cultural or linguistic group interact with and relate to people belonging to other countries or cultural and linguistic groups.

Communication is at once the cause and consequence of a powerful world order. Development of varied and sophisticated means of communication over a period of time has brought human beings across the globe closer and has facilitated speedy and effective transmission of thoughts and ideas. The expanse or reach of communication, therefore, is worldwide and truly encompasses human life in all its facets and endeavours. It galvanizes action among individuals, organizations, societies and the world community at large.

Communication adds meaning to human life. It helps build relationships and fosters love and understanding. It enriches our knowledge of the universe and makes living worthwhile. Imagine life without various tools of communication—newspapers, books, letters, television and mobile telephone—and the expanse and significance of communication becomes crystal clear. Understanding the power of communication is imperative for the success of any human endeavour.

Need for Communication

Sociologists describe human beings as social animals. As members of society, they have to constantly interact with their fellow beings. They have feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes—all of which they have to convey. In other words, whatever the environment in which they are placed, they have to build links and establish
relationships. The need for communication arises from their desire to express themselves in a meaningful manner. As stated earlier, communication is the modus operandi of social intercourse. As a member of the family, a social group and as part of a work-team, they need to communicate with others.

Just as they are social beings, human beings are also emotional beings. They have certain thoughts and emotions. Human heart generates feelings. Further, just as human beings are social beings, and emotional beings, they are equally importantly, rational beings. They are endowed with the faculty of thinking. They have intelligence and brainpower. The human mind is a very potent force. There is always a constant urge to give expression to what the mind generates. In order to give a meaningful expression to thoughts, ideas, reasoning, creativity and intelligence, human beings resort to communication.

The need for communication arises from the need to emote, to interact, and to express one’s ideas and thoughts and the need to relate and connect. The need or the desire to communicate, however, varies from person to person, depending on time and context. There are times and occasions when a person is extremely communicative. There are also times and occasions when he or she prefers to remain silent. Be that as it may, most of our waking hours are spent in communication. Such communication may take place in several ways—listening, speaking, reading and writing.

It is a well-known fact that we spend a major part of our waking hours in communicating. In the past, researchers have noted that we spend about 45 per cent of the time in listening, about 30 per cent in speaking, about 15 per cent in reading and about 10 per cent in writing. This was in the past when the communication technology was in its nascent stage. But the subsequent developments in communication technology leading to the emergence of Internet, email, SMS, Instant Messaging, video-conferencing, e-books, etc. have added a new dimension to the simple acts of reading, writing, speaking and listening. All the same, communication in its myriad forms continues to be the major pre-occupation of men, women and children.

Evolution of Communication

The art of communication is as old as mankind itself. It is, in fact, older than the written word or even the spoken word. Human beings learnt to communicate much before they learnt to speak, read or write. That is why communication is not unique to human beings. Communication encompasses all living beings and pervades the animal world as well. Birds and animals also communicate. The sounds they make carry meaning. The chirping of the birds, the roaring of the lions, the hissing of the snakes and the whining of the dogs are often meant to be expressive.

Much before they learnt to speak, human beings had learnt to express themselves through sounds, gestures and actions. If we observe closely, we can notice that we continue to use these methods to communicate even to this day. It
is not that those who cannot speak, read or write cannot communicate. A visually challenged person or an illiterate person, resorts to oral and non-verbal communication; while a person with a speech or hearing disability resorts to gesticulations and lip reading.

The art of communication has evolved over the years. It goes back in time to the biblical era, mythological times and even to the prehistoric period. People learnt to express themselves even before they evolved fully into their present form. From sounds, grunts, actions, signs, gestures and gesticulations to the spoken word and thereafter to the world of reading, writing and modern and sophisticated methods of communication, it has been a long yet fascinating and rewarding journey through time. As they progressed on this fascinating journey, human beings learnt to interpret sounds, understand actions and use signs and gesticulations. Messages were conveyed through sounds, cries and drumbeats. The spoken word added a new dimension to the world of learning. Sages and saints of yore learnt to pass on sacred verses and holy texts through word of mouth. Thereafter, human beings learnt to use symbols and pictures to convey messages. Early writings were on stones and leaves. As human beings progressed, communication evolved further. The invention of printing, as we all know, revolutionized the process of communication. In terms of its reach, the written word signified a quantum leap. Side by side, various inventions made possible the recording of the spoken word and its transmission, irrespective of time and distance. Gradually, the emergence of new media added new dimensions to the world of communication. Advancements in technology further enabled storage and retrieval of oral and written records in an effective, time-saving and cost-efficient manner.

1.2.1 Defining Communication

The word communication, which as discussed has its origin in the Latin word ‘communis’, evokes many images in one’s mind. It could be a process, a network, a technique or a form of entertainment. It could be personal or business-related communication, and as we have seen, it has developed its modes, channels, instruments and gadgets over the years.

The word ‘communication’ in the singular form is different from the plural, ‘communications’. When we attempt to define communication, we are looking at a dynamic and evolving subject. It is no surprise, therefore, that communication, over the years, has seen numerous dimensions.

The following definitions bring out different facets of communication and together facilitate an understanding of the expanse of the concept.

1. Communication is a process of sending, receiving and interpreting messages.  
   —Kimberley Hicks
   This definition in very simple words says that communication is a process whereby people exchange messages.

2. Communication is the broad field of human interchange of facts and opinions.  
   —Redfield
This definition emphasizes the fact that communication has to do with interchange or exchange of facts and opinions or social or commercial intercourse, as we have already seen.

3. Communication encompasses all forms of expression which serves the purpose of mutual understanding. —Revesz
This definition highlights the all-encompassing nature of communication and the fact that it has a purpose to achieve.

4. Communication is the transmission of ideas, emotions and skills through the use of symbols and graphs. It is the act or process of transformation that is usually called communication. —Berelso and Steiner
In this definition, the emphasis is on the wide range of messages conveyed, the variety of channels used and the process of transformation.

5. Communication is the process by which we understand others and in turn endeavour to be understood by them. It is dynamic, constantly changing and shifting in response to the total situation. —Anderson
This statement clearly brings out the fact that communication is essentially a dynamic process.

6. Communication is the process that links discontinuous parts of the world to one another. —Ruesch
Here, the focus is on the fact that communication has global reach.

7. Communication is the means by which power is exerted. —Schacter
This brings out the dominant role played by communication in empowering people in their individual and organizational endeavours.

8. Communication maintains and animates life, it creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feelings of togetherness through exchange of messages and translates thought into action. —UNESCO, Many Voices One World
This definition underlines what communication strives to achieve, especially through information sharing, relationship building and action orientation.

Each of these definitions thus rightly highlights the important facets or key thoughts concerning communication. It is seen as an interchange, an expression, a transmission, a dynamic process, a connecting link, a means to power and a force that maintains and animates life.

Communication is both an art and a science. It may be an inborn quality or a talent as it is when we say ‘the gift of the gab’. On the other hand, it is a discipline amenable to systematic study and mastery. It has an element of creativity, as well as an element of precision. It calls for mastering of skills as well as techniques.
Communication is also an interdisciplinary subject. It encompasses literature, sociology, psychology and statistics. With electronic communication gaining popularity, an understanding of technology and the way the gadgets work would also be helpful. All the same, while knowledge of various disciplines comes in handy in improving communication skills, there have been effective communicators even without much formal education.

The world of communication is a complex, expansive and an evolving world. It assumes a very dynamic character as the methods, channels, instruments and approaches relating to the process of communication respond to new situations and challenges. The spectrum of communication assumes a pervasive quality in the contemporary world and defies description as it constantly reaches out and assumes new meanings. Communication is to be understood in terms of what it does. More than a discipline, it is a way of life.

1.3 NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

The importance of business communication in today’s inter-linked global economy is widely appreciated. Effective communication is at the heart of any business. Businesses deal with people and communication serves as a vital link in connecting people. Business organizations that underestimate the crucial role of communication do so at their peril. It is also well recognized that every communication is not necessarily effective. In real-life business situations, there are everyday instances of communication failure. The messages delivered are not what are intended. The messages understood are not what are conveyed. Messages often get distorted, diluted or misunderstood. Every organization, therefore, not only needs to recognize the importance of communication, but also should put in place adequate efforts and proper systems to make communication, both internal and external, effective and result oriented. Successful business communication is not automatic or mere happenstance. It needs time, effort and constant attention across all organizations to ensure that communication becomes effective.

Effective communication skills are among the most essential competencies in any aspiring manager’s skill set. It is well understood in modern day business organizations that in the long run, soft skills are more important than technical skills. Soft skills include communication, time management, team work, negotiation and conflict resolution, assertiveness and business etiquette. Communication, however, tops the list of soft skills that managers need to possess. Important as they are, communication and other soft skills are also the hardest to acquire and the most difficult to practice. Nevertheless, like other skills, communication skills too can be mastered and practiced with ease through constant learning and application.
Given the importance of communication for any business, business organizations are always on the lookout for good communicators. The need for good communicators is particularly strong in business organizations in the service industry where services are delivered through people-to-people interactions. These organizations also put in place their own systems for improving the communication skills of their employees.

The nature of communication in business is quite diverse. In large organizations, the flow of communication is both internal and external and encompasses numerous stakeholders. Such communications could be personal or professional, formal or informal, written or oral, upward or downward or lateral or one-way or interactive. Communication involves the act of sharing ideas, opinions, thoughts, strategies, findings, concepts, attitudes, perceptions, perspectives and a wide array of communication needs. It could be individual-to-individual, individual-to-group or even group-to-group communication. The method of business communication could again take varied forms—written or verbal or non-verbal. Letters and memos, reports and notices, speeches and presentations, signals and gestures and a host of such means are used in business communication. Depending on the nature of communication, its transmission takes place through e-mail, fax, courier, telephone, teleconferencing, video conferencing and even films and other audio visual aids.

Given this diversity, a good communicator should have a clear understanding of the alternative types and methods of communication and the circumstances under which each one of them or a combination of them can be used. The communicator should also master the technical aspects of different methods of communication so that breakdowns and barriers are eliminated. Meetings, seminars, workshops, discussions, presentations, negotiations, strategy sessions and such other interactive fora translate into substantial man-hours involving executives, managers, specialists, guests and customers. Hence, every effort should be made to ensure that smooth flow of communication is facilitated through proper planning and organization. The nature and expanse of communication would depend on the nature of business and its reach across various stakeholders. In real-life situations, the needs and complexity of communication are quite diverse, depending on the type of industry, number of employees, geographical spread of the organization, level of sophistication and technology adoption, hierarchical structures, cross-cultural dimensions and such other relevant factors. Business communication is about sending and receiving messages and sharing information. Information is the key input for decision making and action taking. People in business organizations need to constantly gather information and take business-related decisions. Owners need to know about business growth and profitability. Managers need to know about market trends and organizational strengths. Employees need to know about production schedules. Customers need to know about product features. Almost everyone in business irrespective of his/her functional or geographical or hierarchical position needs to communicate. And those who can communicate effectively stand to gain, achieve better results and win over others.
Unlike what it used to be in the olden days, communication in modern day business organizations relies heavily on technology. The advent of mobiles, computers, networking systems, teleconferencing and video conferencing tools, fax machines and power point sets have added a new dimension to the world of communication. As businesses grow, expand and reach out, they need to rely more and more on such instruments and people well versed in operating such machines. Technology powers business communication. A good communicator, therefore, needs to not only master the varied business communication skills, but also needs to develop adequate knowledge of technology and its use in business communication.

1.3.1 Purpose of Communication

The objectives and functions of communication are inter-related. Communication could have many objectives depending upon the group and context. Communication within the family, in a classroom, in a theatre, in a church, in a war field, in a seminar and in the boardroom has different objectives. The objectives are defined depending upon the group and the purpose to be achieved. Each of these groups has a different set of goals and objectives.

Communication aims at sub-serving those goals. In each of these groups, the dominant objective of communication would be to inform, connect, educate, entertain, motivate, provoke, integrate, reassure and persuade, as the case may be. Communication is thus the means to an end. Communication is largely goal-oriented and the objective of any personal communication would depend upon the person or the group one is addressing and the purpose or object one has in mind.

Let us now look at the objectives of communication in business organizations. It is a process common to every business, whatever be its primary function. Business organizations exist for the purpose of meeting specific needs of the community in which they operate. Every business organization sets its goals and objectives in relation to the specific need it aims to fulfill. Every organization uses resources, including human resources to function effectively, and also targets specific clients and markets. Businesses are often associations of people coming together for specific purposes. It has people within and it also addresses people outside the organization. The activities of any organization require both people within and people outside to act, interact, reach, share, exchange and get across to each other so that specific objectives are accomplished in an effective manner. The word 'business' connotes a commercial motive. As distinct from a charitable or religious organization, any business organization is driven by a profit motive. This implies that the organization would like to ensure that its objectives are achieved with the optimum utilization of resources like time, money and effort. The communication system that is put in place within the organization should, therefore, address and meet these objectives.
Since business organizations are multi-disciplinary in nature, communication encompasses wide areas and is inter-disciplinary in approach. Large organizations are described as networks of interdependent relationships. The objectives, activities and inter-relationships of a business organization necessitate communication to subserve its many diverse objectives.

Let us discuss the objectives of business communication. Refer to Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Objectives of Communication

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### Inform

The first and foremost objective of any communication is to inform. In today’s world, information is power. Communication brings power through information. The dissemination of information covers a wide range of areas, both internal and external. People within the organization have to be kept informed about the organizational goals, objectives, procedures, processes, systems, plans, priorities and strategies. Equally important is the objective of ensuring effective external communication—with customers, prospects, competitors, suppliers and the public, about products, services, plans, happenings, events and achievements. The information needs within the organization take on different nomenclatures—market-related information, product-related information, client-related information, employee information, executive information and management information.

### Educate

Another objective of communication in an organization is to educate, i.e., to disseminate knowledge and develop skills and attitudes among the people working in the organization. There is also a need to familiarize them with the systems, procedures and processes. This process of education may extend to customers as well. This may be done through product literature, publicity, presentations and demonstrations.

### Train

Communication is an integral component of any training program. Business organizations need to train people to achieve proficiency in specific skills. They have to provide working knowledge and attitudinal inputs through training programs to employees at various hierarchical levels. Training sessions involve teaching, instruction, demonstration, practice and discussion. The process of communication is integral to each of these.
NOTES

**Motivate**

People in any business organization have to be motivated to pursue goals and achieve higher levels of performance. High levels of morale and motivation are a must to ensure high levels of productivity and efficiency on a sustainable basis. Communication provides the means to keep the motivation levels high. Talks, lectures, films, meetings, workshops and non-verbal messages are among the means used to motivate people.

**Integrate**

Large business organizations have different business units, departments and territorial divisions. Each of them pursues different goals, sub-goals and target sections. Communication provides the means for an integrated approach in pursuing organizational goals. Effective communication is a must to ensure that people working in different functional and geographical areas are integrated into well-knit teams that eschew working at cross purposes and continue to achieve organizational goals as envisaged. Communication binds together people working for a common objective and helps team building. Communication is of particular relevance in conflict resolution.

**Relate and Connect**

Good business relationships are a must for the continued success of any business organization. It is communication that provides the means for building and nurturing mutually beneficial relationships. These relationships are both internal and external. They may be among and/or between employees, supervisory staff, top management, customers, suppliers, other players, press and other media. As part of the larger community, progressive organizations make it a point to relate themselves with the community at large. It demonstrates that they are a sharing and caring organization. All this is achieved through well-organized communication strategies.

**Promote**

Promotional efforts are a must for any organization to fully achieve its objectives. One of the Ps of marketing (the others being Product, Price and Placement), promotion relates to various activities such as advertising, publicity, public relations and communication, which aim at customer information, customer education, customer communication and customer retention. In the marketing concept, the customer is said to move from stage to stage till the transaction is completed. They move progressively from the state of awareness of the need for a product to the knowledge of the product and thereafter to a state of product preference. The needs of the customers develop into effective demand for products, resulting in the purchase of the product or availing of the service. Promotional aspects of the service are particularly relevant in a service industry like banking or insurance, where the product, i.e., the service, cannot be readily ‘seen’. Financial service
providers essentially sell benefits. For this, they have to organize effective promotional measures, which seek to inform, educate, persuade and actualize the clients/markets. Communication constitutes the basic plank on which promotional strategies are built.

**Entertain**

Every business is not necessarily a serious business. Even serious businesses are not ‘serious’ all the time. Whatever may be the nature of business, there is a time for entertainment. Communication facilitates entertainment. It facilitates social bonding and brings in lighter moments that help in releasing tension, fostering camaraderie and getting rid of negative feelings. Humour, when used effectively, can play a vital role in fostering positive behaviour in business organizations. In the entertainment industry, communication has a much bigger role to play. Communication can serve to achieve the objective of purposeful entertainment.

**Facilitates Decision Making**

Decision making constitutes an important function for any business organization. Well thought out decisions, quickly taken, lead to better results. Such decision making is spread across all the functional areas—personnel, marketing, accounts, production and maintenance. Day in and day out, people in organizations keep taking decisions at various hierarchical levels. People at higher levels in the organization command respect depending upon their decision-making abilities. Any such decision making, however, depends on the availability of adequate and timely inputs. It calls for facts, figures, analysis, deliberation, clarification, confirmation and evaluation. Communication—both oral and written—facilitates decision making in any business organization.

**Helps Networking**

Today’s business world is highly networked. Networking means a closely connected group of people. People need to connect with each other, not only within their organizations, but among themselves as well. Progressive organizations are inter-connected organizations and lay much stress on networking. They invest in networking systems where a number of computers and other devices are connected together so that the equipment and information can be shared. Networking facilitates easy flow of ideas, thoughts, policies and decisions. At their individual level too, people need to network themselves so as to exchange ideas and information. Networking at the individual level means connecting with and being in touch with other people who may be useful, both personally and professionally. Any such networking takes place through the medium of communication.

The objectives of communication, it must be emphasized, are dynamic and ever-changing. Depending upon the nature and functions of the organization, the range of people it deals with, and the sensitivities involved, the process of communication assumes new dimensions. In order to caution, counsel, persuade,
clarify, elicit support, reprimand, organize, apprise, evaluate and achieve numerous other objectives, people in organizations resort to communication. Business organizations today function in an extremely dynamic context. Nothing ever remains the same for long. There are mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, high employee turnover, low customer loyalty, move towards corporate governance, outsourcing, paperless offices and flexible work hours. All these developments have had their impact on the conventional methods of organizational communication.

Inasmuch as organizations themselves are adapting to changes in their operating environment and are facing new challenges, the contours of business communication will have to undergo a change. Communication systems, concepts and approaches will have to cope with new demands on business and there is a constant need to review the adequacy of existing methods and practices. Communication is essentially a support system for any business. With every change in the profile of business, the process of communication has to see refinements. Let us take an illustration. Till recently, a supervisor in an organization would consider having a ‘long chat’ with an employee whose productivity had declined or had started showing indifference to work. The typical scene has undergone a noteworthy change. Today, there may not be much of an opportunity to have a long, focused person-to-person ‘chat.’ With flexible working, outsourcing and limitations of time, new approaches will have to be found. Although internet ‘chatting’ facility may be available in some places, the advantages of person-to-person verbal communication are certainly not there. Every new situation translates into a need for new approach to communication. To cope with new situations and emerging challenges in business, people associated with the process of communication will have to be necessarily creative and innovative.

The objectives of communication, both internal and external, thus cover multifarious facets of organizational functioning. Within the organization, it covers varied functions such as planning, directing, controlling, coordinating, reviewing, monitoring and staffing. It facilitates appropriate feedback so vital for decision making and relationship building. Marketing, selling, goal-setting, employee counselling, team-building, performance highlighting, image-building, morale-building and community orientation are all valid objectives which communication seeks to achieve in an organizational context. Communication supports every business function.

Check Your Progress

1. How does Kimberley Hicks define communication?
2. What is the first objective of communication?
1.4 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a process that involves certain distinct steps. In its simpler form, it relates to stimulus and response. The stimulus arises from the communicator and the receiver responds. Communication is not complete till the message conveyed by the sender is properly understood by the receiver. Any communication process should necessarily have three elements—sender, receiver and the message.

Every communication has a distinct purpose, which determines the message. The stimulus emanates from the sender, and the receiver comes up with the response. The objective in any business communication, as we have seen earlier, is to elicit the desired response. To be understood, however, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition in the organizational context. When the understanding results in the intended action, the objective of the communication is achieved.

The process of communication in an organization can be illustrated with the help of Figure 1.1. It brings out the following steps involved in the communication process:

![Fig. 1.1 Process of Communication](image)

- **Step-1** Message is initiated.
- **Step-2** Sender picks up the idea and encodes it for proper understanding.
- **Step-3** The encoded message is then transmitted through the chosen medium or channel.
- **Step-4** Receiver receives the message and decodes it.
- **Step-5** The decoded message is used or acted upon.
- **Step-6** As a final step, feedback on use or action is sent back to the sender.

Communication Relates to Stimulus and Response

The starting point of any communication is the existence of a message. The process of communication starts with a purpose. There is an underlying idea that has to be
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put across. This idea is developed into a message. The sender gives shape to the idea he wants to communicate.

The next step, as is evident from the chart, is the encoding of the idea. Encoding ensures that the idea or the message assumes a communicable form. Encoding would involve choosing the right words, expressions, phrases, charts and pictures in order to facilitate complete and clear expression of the idea. In doing so, the sender of the message should keep in mind the ability of the receiver to decode and comprehend the message.

The encoded message is now ready to travel. The journey or transmission is undertaken through a medium or channel. The sender of the message has to select the medium or the communication channel—oral, written, visual, audio-visual, electronic or a combination of any of these. Each of these offers various options. The choice of the medium would be influenced by factors like availability, cost, urgency and reliability.

The transmission is complete when the message reaches the receiver. The message has travelled from the sender to the receiver. Having received the message, it is now up to the receiver to respond as he pleases. If the receiver does not open the mailbox, ignores the letter, declines to take the call, refuses to view the audio-visual film or ignores the e-mail, the message gets lost, and the idea fails to reach its destination.

For the communication process to progress as intended, the receiver, on getting the message, should decode it. Decoding relates to reading, listening, viewing, understanding and interpretation of the message. Proper decoding is again a must for effective communication. It calls for earnestness on the part of the receiver. It depends on one’s willingness to respond to the sender’s efforts in sending the message. Even when one responds, understanding and interpretation of the message will be influenced by one’s knowledge, attitude and perception. Communication is complete and effective only when the receiver correctly comprehends the purpose of the message, uses it and acts upon it as envisaged by the sender.

In the organizational context, in particular, the communication process moves a step further resulting in relevant feedback to the sender. The quality of feedback received from the target indicates the effectiveness of communication.

The process of communication is thus a progressive step-by-step movement. Both the sender and the receiver have a definite role to play in ensuring the success of communication. Their internal background, social status, hierarchical relationships, organizational climate, knowledge, skills and attitudes are among a host of factors that determine the effectiveness of communication. Added to that is the efficiency and reliability of the channels of communication chosen in the process. The choice of methods and channels should be such that they are capable of overcoming barriers, if any, to the process of communication. We will delve into the process of communication further in Unit 6.
1.5 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

Communication takes place through various methods and channels. The three main methods of communication are oral or verbal communication, written communication and the non-verbal communication. Oral communication takes place by way of talks, conversation, dialogue, speech, discussion and meetings. Written communication is carried out through letters, circulars, memos, reports, brochures and books. Non-verbal communication takes place through body language. Language constitutes the vehicle on which both oral and written communication travel. Apart from these three main methods of communication, there are others like the visual, audio-visual and electronic. Silence is also accepted as a method of communication. Each of these methods has its own merits, demerits, channels and aids (see Figure 1.2).

![Methods and Channels of Communication](image)

**Oral Communication**

Oral communication refers to the spoken word. It takes the form of sounds and words. Starting out as a struggle by the early man, oral communication has had a long journey. It has developed across different regions, cultures, countries and continents. The development of numerous languages across the world has empowered oral communication.

Oral communication plays a vital role in everyday life, both for individuals and organizations. It is, indeed, the most commonly used method of communication both at the social level and at the organizational level. Everyone makes copious use of oral communication in their transactions and interactions. For the individual, talking and speaking provide a very dependable means of communication within the family and in social groups. Oral communication is also extensively and gainfully used within organizations and business entities as well.

Oral communication is also referred to as verbal communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words. Oral communication takes place in many ways—casual and serious, formal and informal, structured and unstructured. Oral communication encompasses conversation, monologue, dialogue, talk, speech and chat. Some of these are pre-meditated and some are not. Formal
speeches are pre-planned and well structured, whereas informal ones are unstructured and often loosely worded.

Notwithstanding its several merits, oral communication gets constrained by various physical factors. It works well in small groups—at counters, in classrooms, in meetings and conferences, in counselling and persuasive sessions. A major drawback of oral communication is that it cannot be erased. There is a sense of finality concerning the spoken word. Any word uttered by the speaker travels swiftly and reaches the target. Any slip of the tongue can create an embarrassment and an unintended hurt. The moment a wrong or unintended word is delivered, the damage is done. Effective speakers are acutely conscious of this factor; more so, when they make extempore speeches. Recognizing this limitation, while resorting to any form of oral communication, one should learn to make a careful choice of words. Until the fine art of speaking with restraint is developed, it would be desirable to make the speeches and interventions, structured and well thought out rather than spontaneous and extempore. Whenever the oral communication is intended to achieve an important objective, extra care should be taken with the choice of words.

In personal as well as organizational communication, several channels or tools are regularly used. These include the telephone, the cell phone, the microphone, the radio, the amplifier and the loudspeaker. To the extent they are well chosen and well maintained, they facilitate smooth and effective flow of communication. If care is lacking while using them, they may prove to be a hindrance rather than an aid.

Table 1.2 Merits and Demerits of Oral Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Demerits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can be readily used.</td>
<td>It is not very effective when the target group is spread out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is instantaneous.</td>
<td>It is constrained by language, accent and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can be persuasive.</td>
<td>It is also constrained by noise and other physical barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is cost effective.</td>
<td>It is not normally recorded or documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It facilitates effective person-to-person exchange.</td>
<td>It does not permit repeated reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It works very well in small groups.</td>
<td>It cannot be erased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can be supplemented by non-verbal messages.</td>
<td>It is often dependent on memory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written Communication

Written communication is another powerful method of communication. History is replete with instances where a piece of writing was involved in events of great significance—in love, war, peace, unions and betrayals. The power of writing is
eloquently expressed in the saying ‘the pen is mightier than the sword’. The author of this book is also communicating with the readers through this piece of writing. After experimenting with writing on sand, stone and leaves, man invented paper, pen, books and printing. Newspapers and journals developed as the media of mass communication.

Written communication has come to acquire great significance in the lives of individuals as well as business organizations. It reaches across vast geographic areas and targets readers around the world. The reach of written communication is limited to the literate world. However, with the literary levels steadily rising across the world, written communication can accomplish much more today than it could in the past. Writing skills and word-power of the communicator come into play in making the written communication forceful and effective.

Written communication is, more often than not, well structured. The words are carefully chosen to suit the message and the context. Be it a letter, a circular, a memo, a brochure or a report, the subject matter is carefully presented keeping in view the receptivity of the reader. This is how it ought to be. Progressive organizations make conscious efforts to ensure that people across the organization acquire well-developed writing skills. It is possible and necessary to collect all relevant facts and figures beforehand so that the communication is properly structured.

Written communication invariably creates a record that can be preserved over time. Letters, memos, contracts, agreements, documents and reports often carry time value and need to be stored and preserved. As a result, it becomes possible to access them for reference or study. Most businesses rely more on records and written documents rather than verbal contracts and oral commitments. Documentation of knowledge and experience facilitates institutionalization of individual wisdom.

Written communication, unlike oral communication, can be erased. The words can be substituted and thoughts can be rearranged before the letter or the piece of writing is finalized and dispatched. In business organizations, people often prepare drafts and revise them till a satisfactory final version emerges, especially when sensitive and important messages are to be conveyed. Moreover, if circumstances so warrant, the letter or circular or report can be stopped in transit at any time before it is read by the target.

Unlike oral communication, written communication takes time to reach the target. In the past, when postal delays were quite common, considerable time elapsed between the dispatch of the written message and its receipt by the target. The invention of telephone, telex, fax, e-mail and courier has, however, reduced the time involved in message transmission. Nevertheless, they have to be viewed in terms of availability, reach and cost. Further, compared to oral communication, written communication is less interactive. It may be necessary to resort to repetitions and clarifications so that the intended message is properly understood by the reader.
In written communication too, several tools and aids are regularly used. These include telex, fax, mail, e-mail, courier, telegram, print and photocopyer. Care should be taken to ensure that all such aids and gadgets are properly selected and well maintained so that they act as facilitators and not as a hindrance.

| Table 1.3 Merits and Demerits of Written Communication |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| **Merits**                        | **Demerits**      |
| 1. It has an extremely wide reach. | 1. It takes time to reach its target. |
| 2. It creates a record and is easily documented. | 2. It is less interactive. |
| 3. It can be erased and rewritten. | 3. It depends on word power. |
| 4. It is amenable to a high level of planning and structuring. | 4. It takes more time to get feedback |
| 5. It facilitates repeated reference. | 5. It depends on the messenger and the mode of transmission |
| 6. It depends less on memory since facts and figures can be mobilized beforehand. | 6. It is constrained by language, handwriting and efficiency of the tools used. |

Note: Tables 1.2 and 1.3 are only illustrative. The merits and demerits are not absolute and present a comparative picture to facilitate a broad relative assessment.

**Non-Verbal Communication**

The third method of communication relates to non-verbal communication, which is neither oral nor written. While oral communication thrives on listening and the written communication thrives on reading, the non-verbal communication thrives on observation. Non-verbal communication may take any of the following forms—body language, gestures, postures, appearance, personal space, codes, signs and signals, facial expressions, timings, examples and personal behaviour.

Non-verbal communication may be conscious or unconscious, deliberate or unintended. It may substitute verbal communication or supplement it. There may also be occasions when the non-verbal communication may be out of line with or even contradict oral communication. When used with full awareness, body language can create the desired impact. At the same time, unintended body movements and expressions may confuse the listener. Non-verbal communication is extremely relevant during meetings and interactions of a direct or face-to-face nature.

The greatest merit of non-verbal communication is that it has a universal appeal. Unlike both oral and written communication, which depend on a particular language, non-verbal communication can reach across to people of different regions, irrespective of the language they speak. Mother Teresa’s language of love and compassion is just one example. In the organizational context, however, non-verbal language can be used effectively as an adjunct to verbal communication.
Visual Communication

Visual communication is effected through pictures, graphs and charts, as well as through signs, signals and symbols. They may be used either independently or as an adjunct to the other methods of communication. It is also useful in reaching out to an illiterate target group. It can be used in addressing groups of people who do not understand the language of the communicator. As the saying goes, ‘A picture is worth more than a thousand words’. Pictures, graphs, charts and diagrams often convey the intended message quite effectively. Some examples of visual communication are given in Figure 1.3.

Similarly, there are pictures to convey ‘No swimming’, ‘Danger zone’ and ‘Fasten seat belts’. In business communication, pictures, graphs, charts, signs and symbols are frequently used to illustrate, highlight and focus attention. The channels and instruments of visual communication include hoardings, films, transparencies, floppies and projectors.

Audio-Visual Communication

This is an extremely sophisticated method of communication. It involves demonstrations and presentations through various audio-visual aids. Audio-visual communication is an effective blend of both verbal and visual communication. Such communications are, generally speaking, very effective and carry high retention value.

Audio-visual communications are highly skill oriented. They are preplanned, developed with care and are often delivered at formal and structured sessions. This method of communication is particularly useful in fostering learning and in classroom sessions. Audio-visual communication is gainfully used in training colleges as also in seminars and workshops. The use of multimedia presentations is gaining popularity in the business world. Advertisements on television channels are another example of audio-visual communication.
Signs, Signals and Symbols

Signs, signals and symbols have come to acquire considerable significance in the world of communication. Having evolved over a long period of time, they date back to biblical times and mythological periods. Well before language evolved, pre-historic man had learnt to communicate with the help of signs and signals.

A sign is a mark traced on a surface or an object with a view to indicate a particular meaning. It may be a piece of paper, wood or metal that has writing or a picture on it and which gives out information, instruction or warning. It may also be a gesture, a movement or a sound to convey something specific. Let us look at some examples of sign language:

1. Priests and elders convey their blessings by placing their hands on the heads of people bowing to them. (sign of blessing)
2. A player raises two of his fingers in a V sign after a game. (sign of victory)
3. A teacher puts her finger on her lips in a nursery class. (sign that says, ‘keep silent’)
4. Disciples and youngsters touch the feet of teachers and elders. (sign of reverence)

Such signs are sometimes group specific and are accepted as a matter of convention. A sign may also relate to a written mark conventionally used to convey a specific meaning. Such signs may be general, as in the case of road and traffic signs or subject-specific signs, specific to a profession or body of knowledge. In mathematics, there are numerous signs specific to arithmetic, algebra and geometry as also in science and medicine. Some examples of signs, both general and specific, are shown in Table 1.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40 mph</th>
<th>Speed limit of 40 miles per hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Narrow bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Summation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the set of signs, which are commonly understood, there is also the sign language. Sign language is a system of communicating, with people who are hearing impaired, by using hand movements rather than spoken words. In other words, it is the language of the speech impaired, just as Braille is the language of visually challenged.

A signal is a sound or a movement that people make to give others information, instruction or warning. A signal is also understood as an indication that something
exists or something is about to happen. We are familiar with the use of a danger signal and a green signal. Similarly, there are traffic signals and radio signals.

Some everyday examples of communication with signals are signal to the waiter for a bill, signal that you are turning right and signal that one is thirsty. Signs and signals are often used with very similar meanings. There is, however, a noteworthy difference between the two. A sign is something that we find or see whereas a signal is generally used for something that is done intentionally and suggests that some action be taken in response. Signs and signals may be overt or covert, explicit or in a code language. Awareness and understanding of signs and signals makes communication more meaningful.

A symbol refers to a credo or a manner of representation of ideas. Symbols often use the power of association to convey a specific meaning. A symbol is also understood as a person, an object or an event that represents a more general quality or situation. In modern day business, the use of a logo is also very common. A logo is a printed design or symbol that a company or organization uses as its special sign. Here are some examples of the use of symbols.

**Symbol of purity**
- White

**Symbol of strength or supremacy**
- Lion

**Symbol of justice**
- A balance

**Sex symbol**
- Marilyn Monroe

**Symbol of quality**
- 'ISI' mark

**Status symbol**
- Rolls Royce

Symbols are well accepted and widely used in present day business communication. Use of symbols at the right places enhances the effectiveness of communication.

**Silence:** Silence is also a method of communication. It refers to a state of wordlessness or verbal abstinence. It may express anger or atonement. Self-inflicted silence conveys a powerful message. Silence may also convey a form of punishment. The word ‘excommunication’ refers to a state of deliberate cutting off of communication. There are indeed occasions when by keeping quiet one can ‘say’ a lot. Silence can also be either deliberate or unintentional. Unexpected silence sometimes results in awkward situations. In personal communication as well as business communication, silence has a definite role to play. In dealing with an irate customer, an employee would be well advised to observe silence and listen to the customer before reacting. Even the legal system takes cognizance of silence as a method of communication.

We have, in the foregoing paragraphs, studied the salient features of various methods of communication. Each of these methods of communication has its own distinguishing features in terms of speed, reliability, cost, reach as well as overall merits and demerits. In a large organization, communication takes place at various levels. People in large business organizations need to resort to all these methods of communication depending upon the situations. Inasmuch as choices are available, it is necessary to clearly appreciate the relative merits and demerits of these methods in dealing with people and situations in any organization. Good communication is...
hardly ever accidental. It calls for conscious efforts and the choice of the most appropriate methods and channels, keeping in view the target sections and context.

**Check Your Progress**

3. What are the three elements of the communication process?
4. How does written communication take place?
5. What does audio-visual communication involve?

### 1.6 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Apart from the different methods and channels of communication, one can also look at various types of communication. Communication can be categorized into different types depending upon the level at which it takes place, the direction it takes or by its very nature. Some of the commonly referred to types of communication are:

1. Personal and business communication
2. Internal and external communication
3. Upward and downward communication
4. Formal and informal communication
5. Lateral communication
6. Interactive communication
7. Mass communication
8. Global communication
9. Supportive communication
10. Social communication
11. Grapevine

The relevance and importance of each of these types of communication is discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Personal Communication**

Personal communication concerns communication that takes place between any two individuals, be it in a family, group, community or even an organization. It takes place in an individual capacity and is characterized by informality. There is an element of privacy in all such communications. It can take the form of personal letters, personal telephone calls, conversations, one-to-one meetings or e-mail messages. It is private in nature and there is nothing official about it. Private and confidential conversation between two individuals is also referred to as tete-a-tete.

**Business Communication**

Business communication takes place to further the goals of a business. It takes place among business entities, in markets and market places, within organizations.
and between various groups of employees, owners and employees, buyers and sellers, service providers and customers, sales persons and prospects and also between people within the organization and press persons. All such communication impacts business. Done with care, such communication can promote business interests. Otherwise, it will portray the organization in poor light and may adversely affect the business interest. It helps the person concerned in moving up in the organizational hierarchy. Communication is the vehicle on which the business moves.

The ability of the communicator to communicate effectively—verbally, non-verbally and in writing—is a prerequisite for organizational and business-related success. This book is all about this exciting subject which is dealt with in detail in the following chapters.

Internal Communication

Internal communication takes place within the organization or group—among people within, among different groups of employees and between employers and employees. It could be oral or written, visual or audio-visual, formal or informal and upward or downward. Internal communication serves to inform, instruct, educate, develop, motivate, persuade, entertain, direct, control and caution people in the organization. When a personal letter is written at an official address, besides writing the name of the addressee, the envelope is superscribed ‘private’ or ‘confidential’ to convey the nature of communication. Knowledge, skills, goal orientation, sharing of corporate concerns, review and monitoring, performance appraisal, counselling and training are among the issues that internal communication addresses.

External Communication

Unlike internal communication, external communication flows outward. It addresses people outside the organization, like the prospective customers, competitors, public, press, media and the government. External communication can take place in various ways and through different channels. Letters, notices, brochures, demonstrations, telephone calls, business meetings, press releases, press conferences, audio-visual presentations, publicity films, product launch events and advertisements are all examples of external communication. It is important to note that the external agency or person targeted through such communication quite often forms an image or impression based on such communication and it is, therefore, very necessary that adequate care is taken in making it clear, intelligible and appealing.

Upward Communication

Large organizations have different hierarchical levels or tiers. Banks, finance companies, insurance businesses, railways and such other people-oriented organizations have typically a three-tier or a four-tier structure. The process of communication to be complete and effective should encompass all these levels and tiers. Upward communication is one which moves upward, i.e., from the bottom to top levels in the hierarchy.
Any communication that moves from employees to supervisors, supervisors to managers, managers to executives and regional manager to general manager may be categorized as upward communication. Similarly, communication from branches to regional offices, regional offices to zonal offices, zonal offices to the head office is referred to as upward communication. Employee suggestions, market reports, performance reports, feedback on new products and requests for facilities or instructions are all examples of upward communication in the organizational context. Refer to Figure 1.4.

![Fig. 1.4 Upward Communication](image1)

**Downward Communication**

Downward communication moves from top to the bottom, i.e., from the CEO downwards. It travels through senior executives to junior-level functionaries, from the controlling office to the branch, from the head of the division to the head of the unit. Corporate goals, business priorities, motivational letters, work-related instructions, newsletters, letters from the CEO/General Manager’s desk are all typical examples of downward communication.

There may be some communication which would move both upward and downward. A typical example of this is performance budgeting, which is a two-way process. It is a top-to-bottom as well as bottom-to-top exercise. Refer to Figure 1.5.

![Fig. 1.5 Downward Communication](image2)

**Formal Communication**

To ensure communication on an ongoing basis, organizations develop formal systems. Staff meetings, union-management meetings, branch managers’ conferences, periodical sales review meetings and customer meets are examples of forums that facilitate formal communication. Formal communication generally follows a well-defined hierarchical pattern and periodicity. Memos, circulars, instructions, guidelines, clarifications, agreements and reports are some of the channels that facilitate the flow of formal communication in business organizations.

**Informal Communication**

This type of communication takes place in an unstructured manner and outside the formal fora. There is an element of spontaneity in this communication. Informal...
Communication: An Overview

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Self-Instructional Material

Communication works well in smaller, loosely knit organizations. It is used more often in situations where there are no rigid hierarchical tiers. While formal structure of communication is a must in large organizations, it is the informality that helps sustain goal orientation in small well-knit units. Informal communication takes place through chats, conversations and informal talks and the like.

**Lateral Communication**

Lateral communication generally takes place in an organization and is neither upward nor downward. It proceeds in a horizontal manner and takes place among equals and at peer level.

It may also be described as peer-level communication. Any communication that takes place, orally or in writing, from one branch head to the other, from one division head to the other, from one group head to the other, may be described as lateral communication. An important point worth noting in any such lateral communication is that there is not much difference in terms of the hierarchical levels or positions of the sender and the receiver.

**Interactive Communication**

Interactive communication is essentially a two-way process. It takes place through meetings, conferences, teleconferencing, multimedia presentations, group discussions and other such active two-way exchanges. Interactive communication is most appropriate when the message or subject is to be presented at length, e.g., in practical sessions, case study discussions and strategy formulation. When many speakers are involved, there may be a need for a moderator who will facilitate effective flow of communication from different speakers.

**Mass Communication**

Mass communication is distinctive in view of its scale. Essentially, it addresses a large mass of people. Public speaking, newspapers, magazines and journals, radio, television and dotcoms are channels of mass communication. Mass communication has developed into a specialized area of study. Each of these areas or channels calls for distinct skills. By its very nature, mass communication addresses a vast, well spread-out and heterogeneous group of people and, as such, special efforts will have to be made to sustain their interest and achieve the desired response. At the government level too, there is often a separate ministry or department of mass communication to deal with this functional area. Main branches of study relating to mass communication are public relations, advertising and publicity, journalism and digital media.

**Global Communication**

Global communication relates to communication that takes place beyond the national boundaries. Businesses operating in today’s world are characterized by their global nature. Most businesses operate beyond the local or even national boundaries and are influenced by global trends. Businesses are known to operate in what is known as a global village. They often deal with customers, buyers, suppliers, service
providers and even employees who are located in countries abroad. That is how
global communication comes into play. Global communication has its own
characteristics in terms of language, culture, etiquette and time factor, which have
to be reckoned within the process of communication.

Supportive Communication
Supportive communication is a form of communication in which people are
encouraged to speak freely and come out with their feelings and concerns. This
happens when managers take time to listen, do not interrupt or pass judgments,
make efforts to understand, and do not criticize and snub the other party. This
type of communication calls for abundant patience and empathy, or the ability to
understand the other person’s feelings and experiences on the part of the manager
or superior. Any person will freely share his or her inner feelings and concerns only
when he or she feels that the listener is empathetic and interested. The supportive
communicator has to create an environment where a person will feel encouraged
to speak up without restraint.

Social Communication
As members of society, people everywhere will have to interact with others on a
regular basis. Social communication takes place when people meet each other
outside business and workplace situations. Social skills refer to the ability to talk
easily to other people and do things in a group. Social communication often takes
place at an informal and friendly level. Nevertheless, when business people meet
at social events to exchange pleasantries, or meet for lunch or dinner, there are
some social etiquettes which have to be taken note of:

Grapevine Communication
Grapevine is a kind of informal communication that prevails in organizations and
businesses. The source of such communication may not be clear. It spreads by
way of gossip and rumours. It travels through informal networks and quite often
travels faster than the formal messages. Sometimes, it gets more powerful and
becomes more receptive than the formal communication. The prevalence of this
type of communication in an organization has to be recognized and accepted. A
skilled communicator can derive benefits from such a communication as well. It
may not always be possible to control the grapevine, but, nevertheless, an able
communicator knows how to influence it. Like any other type of communication,
this one too has its merits and demerits.

Check Your Progress
6. What is personal communication concerned with?
7. What are some channels of mass communication?
8. What type of communication is grapevine communication?
1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. According to Kimberley Hicks, communication is a process of sending, receiving and interpreting messages.
2. The first and foremost objective of any communication is to inform.
3. Any communication process should necessarily have three elements—sender, receiver and the message.
4. Written communication is carried out through letters, circulars, memos, reports, brochures and books. Non-verbal communication takes place through body language.
5. Audio-video communication involves demonstrations and presentations through various audio-visual aids. It is an effective blend of both verbal and visual communication.
6. Personal communication concerns communication that takes place between any two individuals, be it in a family, group, community or even an organization. It takes place in an individual capacity and is characterized by informality.
7. Public speaking, newspapers, magazines and journals, radio, television and dotcoms are channels of mass communication.
8. Grapevine is a kind of informal communication that prevails in organizations and businesses.

1.8 SUMMARY

- Communication is the modus operandi of social and commercial intercourse. It is communication which gets the world going.
- Communication is the transmission of ideas, emotions and skills through the use of symbols and graphs. It is the act or process of transformation that is usually called communication.
- Effective communication is at the heart of any business. Businesses deal with people and communication serves as a vital link in connecting people. Business organizations that underestimate the crucial role of communication do so at their peril.
- The objectives and functions of communication are inter-related. Communication could have many objectives depending upon the group and context.
- The first and foremost objective of any communication is to inform. In today’s world, information is power. Communication brings power through information.
• Any communication process should necessarily have three elements—sender, receiver and the message.
• Communication takes place through various methods and channels. The three main methods of communication are oral or verbal communication, written communication and the non-verbal communication.
• Communication can be categorized into different types depending upon the level at which it takes place, the direction it takes or by its very nature.

1.9 KEY WORDS

- **Grapevine**: It refers to an informal person-to-person means of circulating information or gossip.
- **Oral Communication**: It is the process of expressing information or ideas by word of mouth.
- **Networking**: It is the process of meeting and talking to a lot of people, esp. in order to get information that can help you
- **Lateral communication**: The type of communication that generally takes place in an organization and is neither upward nor downward. It proceeds in a horizontal manner and takes place among equals and at peer level.

1.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Define communication.
2. Write a short-note on how communication has evolved over the years.
3. How does communication facilitate decision making?
4. What is non-verbal communication?
5. What is external communication?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Examine the objectives of business communication.
2. What is communication important for business organizations? Discuss.
3. Describe the process of communication in detail.
4. Discuss the different methods of communication.
5. Explain the different types of communication.
1.11 FURTHER READINGS


NOTES
UNIT 2  BASICS OF COMMUNICATION

Structure
2.0 Introduction
2.1 Objectives
2.2 Essential of Communication
2.3 Some Common Grammatical Errors
2.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
2.5 Summary
2.6 Key Words
2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
2.8 Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss the basics of communication. It will focus on the rules that help make communication concise and effective. In the unit, you will learn that grammar refers to the rules that govern the way in which words are combined to form sentences. You will first be introduced to some of the basics of grammar and its usage, after which you will be taught what a sentence is and how it differs from a clause and a phrase, the various types of sentences and the basic units of a sentence. You will next understand the use of punctuation, which forms a vital part of business writing. Some of the frequent grammar problems leading to erroneous writing will also be discussed. These relate to sentence construction, making comparisons, use of nouns, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, articles and modifiers.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- Discuss the basics of grammar
- Discuss how to use punctuation correctly
- Identify some of the common errors in writing and rectify the same

2.2 ESSENTIAL OF COMMUNICATION

Communication in any language needs to follow a set pattern of rules for it to be effective. This is more so in the case of written communication. To ensure that communication creates the desired impact on the audience, it is important that one looks into the aspect of quality in communication. English is an SVO (Subject
Verb Object) language, that is, it prefers a sequence of subject, verb, object as can be seen in simple declarative sentences like ‘John ate an apple’ and ‘Bill killed the snake’. Some of the guidelines which will contribute towards enhancing the quality of communication have been discussed as follows:

**For Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do’s</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Business writing should be short and simple and to the point.</td>
<td>Try and avoid using acronyms, like using BBC, instead of British Broadcasting Corporation, unless you are sure the reader will understand them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use familiar words. Refrain from using words that you think the reader may have difficulty understanding.</td>
<td>Do not use slang, idioms and flowery language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use both long and short sentences.</td>
<td>Avoid SMS abbreviations, specially in e-mails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Try to use the active tense rather than the passive one.</td>
<td>Avoid using negative statements, or statements with negative connotations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Structure your business documents to enhance clarity.</td>
<td>Avoid sexist language, that is, the use of the masculine gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In business writing, write in a positive tone.</td>
<td>Avoid shifting of tense from one paragraph to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use proper paragraphs—put one thought or idea in one paragraph, and each paragraph should reflect the thought process.</td>
<td>Do not rely on the spell check; it does not catch everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Use connectors or hooks (for example, however, moreover, finally, etc.) to connect different paragraphs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2.1 Basics of English Grammar

To write correctly and effectively one need not be a specialist in English grammar. However, there are some basics with which the writer needs to be familiar so as to avoid writing in a language that is substandard and of poor quality. This section goes on to discuss some of the fundamentals of English grammar.

**What is a sentence?**

A sentence expresses a complete thought which includes the following:

- A Subject—person(s) or object(s)—, which causes or receives action. It is generally the first noun/pronoun/modifier, in the sentence.
- A Predicate, which indicates the action taken or received by the subject. It is or contains the verb. It generally follows the subject and may contain an object (noun).

A phrase and a clause are also groups of words but they differ from sentences and from each other in the following ways:

**Phrase:** A group of words that lacks either a subject or a predicate or both. For example, ‘While at home’ has neither a subject nor a predicate; and ‘Sunlight in my study room’ has no predicate.
Clause: A group of words that have a subject and a predicate. They are of two types—Dependent or Independent.

(i) Dependent clause: A group of words which contains a subject and a verb but which cannot stand alone. For example, ‘Although I am very honest’.

(ii) Independent clause: A group of words which have a subject and a verb and which can stand alone. For example, ‘I am going to office next month.’

Types of sentences

There are three types of sentences.

- **Simple Sentence**: A simple sentence is also an independent clause. For example, ‘The home was empty.’

- **Compound Sentence**: This type of sentence refers to one in which two or more independent clauses are joined together with a conjunction (and, but, or, for, yet) or a semicolon. For example, ‘I am going home next weekend, but this weekend I have to work;’ or ‘I am going home next weekend; this weekend I have to work.’ This type of sentence is generally used when both ideas of the sentence are of equal importance.

- **Complex Sentence**: In this type of a sentence, at least one dependent clause is combined with at least one independent clause by subordination (‘Although I am very homesick, I will not be going home this weekend’). This type of sentence is generally used when information in one part of the sentence is perceived to be subordinate to or less importance than the other. Take this, for example: ‘Because I have to work, I can’t go home this weekend.’ In this example, the fact of not going home is perceived as more important than the fact of having to work. These sentences are characterized by words like that, which and who, which are used to join one clause with another.

Basic units of a sentence

The following are the basic units of a sentence.

Punctuation

This section discusses the various punctuation marks and their usage:

(i) **Full stop (.)**: It is also called a period. It is used in the following cases:

- To mark the end of a statement. For example, He left for work.
- To mark an abbreviation. For example, etc., viz.,
- Ellipsis marks, which refer to three full stops indicating an omission. When they occur at the end of a sentence, they are followed by a full stop. For example, I am ready to go ... .

(ii) **Question mark (?)**: The question mark is used to mark the end of a question sentence. For example, ‘Will you be able to submit the report by next Friday?’
It is not used at the end of an indirect question like, 'I asked the executive if he would be able to submit the report by next Friday.'

(iii) **Exclamation mark (!):** The exclamation mark is used to mark the end of an exclamation, interjection or a sharp command. For example, ‘Oh no! You cannot shut down the factory.’

(iv) **Comma (,):** Commas are used to break up the elements of a sentence to make it easier to read. The presence or absence of a comma can change the meaning of a sentence. For example, the following two sentences are worded identically, but their meanings are different.

The textual questions of Section A, which are compulsory, must be answered in more than 100 words. (All questions of Section A are compulsory)

The textual questions of Section A which are compulsory must be answered in more than 100 words (Some of the questions of Section A are compulsory)

A comma is needed in the following cases:

- Between two or more adjacent adjectives that modify the same noun. For example, 'The manager is hardworking, diligent and committed.'
- To separate words in a series or list. For example, 'Please supply 10 quintals each of rice, sugar, wheat and gram.'
- To separate clauses used in series. For example, 'The official reached the metro station, waited for a few minutes, got on the first train and reached his destination in 10 minutes.'
- Generally, a comma is not used before ‘and’, but sometimes it may be used to make a sentence structure clearer or to improve the rhythm of the sentence. For example, ‘The journey begins by train, continues by bus, and concludes by ferry.’
- In pairs, to mark off words in a parenthesis. For example, ‘The boss, I know, is right, but I just cannot get myself to do it.’
- To mark off the beginning of direct speech or a quotation. For example, ‘The chairman said, “We have called this meeting to discuss cost cutting measures that need to be introduced”.’

(v) **Semicolon (;):** The semicolon is used in two ways:

- To separate items in a list when the list themselves contain commas. For example, Our guest list included Mr R. Chidambaram, Managing Director, Sun Industries; Mr Rohtash Garg, Deputy Chairman, Sun Industries; and Ms Geeta Joshi, Vice President, Global Enterprise.
• To separate clauses, the sense of which would be weakened if they were split off into separate sentences. Example: Puzzled by the absence of clues, the police was looking for a new lead; they suspected that one might be overlooked in the confusion.

(vi) **Colon (:)**

- The colon is used in these ways:
  - To introduce explanatory material. Expressions commonly used to introduce explanatory material are: the following, as follows, this and these. Make sure the clause preceding the explanatory material can stand alone as a complete sentence. Do not place a colon after a verb or a preposition that introduces a listing.
  
  Correct: ‘I have scheduled the selection interviews on the following three days the next week: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.’
  
  Incorrect: ‘While I was in the US, I took a liking to: eating pizzas, going jogging and watching movies.’
  
  Correct: ‘While I was in the US, I took a liking to eating pizzas, going jogging and watching movies.’
  
  - To introduce a quotation or lengthy items of direct speech. For example, ‘Keats wrote: “A thing of beauty is a joy forever”.’
  
  - To mark a dramatic break between two main clauses. For example, ‘Man proposes: God disposes.’
  
  - To introduce a clause that explains or expands on a statement made in the earlier clause. For example, ‘The profits have been declining: the cost of raw material has increased two-fold.’

(vii) **Apostrophe (‘)***

- An apostrophe is used to show either possession or that letters have been omitted. Use the apostrophe in the following conditions:
  
  - To form the possessive of a singular noun add an apostrophe plus ‘s’. For example, ‘Mr Sharma’s salary’, ‘my subordinate’s promotion’
  
  - To form the possessive of a plural noun that ends in ‘s’, add only an apostrophe. For example, ‘Both companies’ stock was grossly undervalued.’
    
    ‘The ladies’ clothing section is on the second floor.’
    
    ‘In two years’ time we will double our turnover.’
  
  - To form the possessive of a plural noun that does not end in ‘s’, add an apostrophe plus ‘s’. For example, ‘Use the men’s entrance on the other side of the building.’
  
  - When two or more proper nouns show possession, the one nearer to the noun is marked with an apostrophe. For example, ‘In the group discussion, Mr Kumar and Mr Reddy’s oratory skills were not up to the mark.’
• To mark the omission of a letter or letters, an apostrophe is used. For example, ‘Please don’t touch the machinery.’ (do not)
  ‘Please be here at five o’clock.’ (of the clock)

• To form the possessive of an indefinite pronoun (anybody’s, everyone’s, no one’s, nobody’s and somebody’s), add an apostrophe plus ‘s’. However, do not use an apostrophe to form the possessive of a personal pronoun (yours, theirs, its, hers, his, ours). For example,
  ‘Everybody’s photograph will be taken during the lunch hour.’
  ‘The company reviewed its financial figures.’

Note: Do not confuse the possessive pronoun ‘its’ with its contraction which is ‘it’s’ (it is).

(viii) Inverted commas (“ ”) or (‘ ’): Inverted marks are also called speech marks or quotation marks. Use quotation marks in the following conditions:

• In direct speech, that is, around the exact words of a person. Do not use quotation marks in reported speech. For example,
  Direct speech: The chairperson said, ‘We will break for lunch and meet again at two o’clock.’
  Reported speech: The chairperson said that they would break for lunch and meet again at two o’clock.

• Around the title of an article, chapter in a book, conference etc. For example: The news of the takeover was reported in the article entitled ‘The Greatest Takeover’.

• Around a particular term to clarify its meaning or to show that it is being used in a special way. For example:
  The article ‘an’ is used before vowels with certain exceptions.

(ix) Hyphen (-): The presence or absence of a hyphen can change the meaning of a word. For example, the meaning of the word ‘recover’ changes by using a hyphen, that is, it becomes ‘re-cover’. A hyphen is used in the following cases:

• To join up individual words in a compound word, For example, ‘self-contained’ and ‘thirty-five’.

• To indicate that an unfinished word at the end of a line is completed at the beginning of the next line. For example, in-settled.

2.3 SOME COMMON GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

The problems of grammar can generally be attributed to the levels of words and sentences. Therefore, choosing the right words and arranging them properly to make clear sentences is also the basis for good written communication. This is
essential as we would all like to read things that are clear. Further, clear communication often minimizes the chances of miscommunication.

There are two ways of looking at the rules of grammar—prescriptively, where grammar rules prescribe our usage and descriptively, which means that grammar rules are not actually rules but descriptions of the way we use language. Therefore, grammar is not seen as something fixed or sacred but something that changes over time.

Some rules of grammar which should not be broken include the following:

- Do not use double negatives—‘She had hardly no choice.’
- Do not use non-standard verbs—‘She knewed he was ill.’
- Do not use double comparatives—‘This girl is more prettier.’
- Do not use pronouns incorrectly—‘her and me are good friends.’
- There should not be disagreement between the subject and the verb—‘We was walking for a long time.’

On the other hand, there are some rules which are not so sacred and can be broken. These include:

- Beginning a sentence with ‘and’ or ‘but’
- Using ‘that’ not ‘which’ for restrictive clauses
- Ending a sentence with a preposition
- Splitting the infinitives

This section discusses some rules to be followed to avoid common grammatical errors.

**Sentence Construction**

There are certain rules which govern sentence construction and these need to be kept in mind by the writer to make his/her writing effective and free of errors.

**Rule 1—Rule of proximity:** Words and phrases which modify the meaning of any word or phrase should be placed near to it. For example:

(i) Incorrect: Wanted a governess for a child of above forty years of age.
Correct: Wanted a governess of above forty years of age for a child.

(ii) Incorrect: Wanted a table for a man with carved legs.
Correct: Wanted a table with carved legs for a man.

**Rule 2—Sentences should be logical:** The meaning of any word or phrase used in a sentence should not make it contradictory. For example:

(i) Incorrect: Towns and districts in the desert are uninhabited.
Correct: Regions in the desert are uninhabited.

(ii) Incorrect: Stretch this barbed wire between each pole.
Correct: Stretch this barbed wire between two poles.
Rule 3—Ambiguous sentences are unacceptable: To ensure clarity in writing, ambiguity in sentences has to be avoided. There can be two sources of ambiguity:

(i) Equivocation – When a word in a sentence has a double meaning. For example,
Correct: A fine will be imposed for parking.
Incorrect: Fine for parking.

(ii) Wrong punctuation –
For example, ‘Could you please tell me how old Mrs Smith is?’
The above sentence can be punctuated in two different ways having two different meanings.
Could you please tell me how, old Mrs Smith is?
Could you please tell me how old, Mrs Smith is?

Rule 4—Incomplete construction: Sometimes some words in a sentence are omitted because their meaning is supposed to be implied in the earlier part. It results in a grammatical mistake. For example,
Incorrect: The walls have been painted and the floor cemented.
Correct: The walls have been painted and the floor has been cemented.

Rule 5—Overstatements: Sometimes overstatements make the sentences illogical and hence should be avoided. For example:
Weak sentence: Like all Indians, he is a hero worshipper.
Improved sentence: Like most Indians, he is a hero worshipper.

Rule 6—Remote antecedent: Sometimes a large number of words may be put as antecedent i.e. between a noun and a pronoun, verb and an adverb. This leads to confusion and should be avoided

Vague sentence: The definitions given by the scholars have been memorised by the students. Only they know their significance.
Improved sentence: The definitions given by the scholars have been memorised by the students. Only the students know their significance.

Rule 7—Tag questions: While writing sentences which include tag questions, keep the following in mind for the tag question:
(i) Use the pronoun given in the statement.
(ii) Use the verb used in the statement.
(iii) The tag question should be in the negative if the statement is in the affirmative, and affirmative if the statement is negative.
For example
Incorrect: He did not get the gold medal. Didn’t he?
Correct: He did not get the gold medal. Did he?

**Rule 8—Redundancies:** Words and expressions which do not contribute to the total meaning of the sentence are called redundant words. They can be eliminated from a sentence as they make the sentence bulky and absurd. For example

Incorrect: I saw the whole episode with my own eyes.
Correct: I saw the whole episode.

Some examples of redundant phrases we use and which can be avoided are

(i) Repeat again
(ii) Equally as
(iii) Consensus of opinion
(iv) Different kinds
(v) Period of time

**Rule 9—Faulty Parallelism:** Parallel ideas should have parallel structures.

Incorrect: I like to swim, to eat, reading and sleeping.
Correct: I like to swim, to eat, to read and to sleep.

**Rule 10—Use of Double Negatives:** Avoid using two negatives in one sentence, as you will end up saying just the opposite of what you mean. For example:

Incorrect: Barely no-one noticed that I had a bad cold.
Correct: Barely anyone noticed that I had a bad cold.

**Rule 11—Fragments:** They are incomplete sentences that are punctuated to appear like sentences. They lack key elements, often a subject or a verb. For example,

Incorrect: She saw her coming. And looked away.
Correct: She saw her coming and looked away.

**Rule 12—Run-ons:** These jam together two or more sentences, failing to separate them with the appropriate punctuation. The solution is to edit the sentences into several short sentences. For example,

Incorrect: I do not recall what kind of a document it was all I remember is that I left it in the bus.
Correct: I do not recall what kind of a document it was. All I remember is that I left it in the bus.

**Making Comparisons**

There are three degrees of comparison—positive, comparative and superlative.

When we talk about one person or thing we use the positive degree.
For example, ‘She is an elegant lady.’
‘He is an intelligent boy.’

When we compare two persons or things we use the comparative degree. For example, ‘He is more intelligent than his friend.’ ‘She is cleverer than her colleague.’

When we compare more than two persons or things we use the superlative degree.

Discussed below are some rules to be followed to avoid the mistakes committed in making comparisons.

**Rule 1—Use of comparative degree for two:** The use of the superlative degree for comparing two persons or things is grammatically incorrect. The comparative degree should be used in such a situation. For example:

Incorrect: This is the cleanest hospital of the two hospitals in the city.
Correct: This is the cleaner hospital of the two hospitals in the city.

**Rule 2—Absolute adjectives:** There are certain adjectives which cannot be changed into comparative and superlative degrees because they have the force of the superlative degree. Some examples are perfect, ideal, parallel, unique, absolute, universal, square, and so on. For example:

Incorrect: This is the most perfect piece of art.
Correct: This is a perfect piece of art

**Rule 3—Select correct items for comparison:** For example:

Incorrect: I have a bigger car than my neighbour.
Correct: I have a bigger car than that of my neighbour.

**Rule 4—Few-Less:** ‘Few’ is used for numbers and ‘Less’ is used for quantity.

Incorrect: No less than fifty men were present in the club.
Correct: No fewer than fifty men were present in the club.

**Rule 5—Double comparatives:** The use of double comparatives and superlatives should be avoided. For example:

Incorrect: She is more taller than her brother.
Correct: She is taller than her brother.

**Rule 6—Use of ‘to’ and ‘than’:** Some comparative adjectives are followed by ‘to’ instead of ‘than’ such as senior, junior, inferior, superior, prior etc. For example:

Incorrect: He is senior than me in service
Correct: He is senior to me in service.
Use of Nouns

Some rules to be followed related to the use of nouns are discussed as follows:

Rule 1: There are certain nouns which are in plural form but are always considered as singular, for example, innings, mathematics, politics, gallows and physics. For example, ‘The Indian team defeated the Pakistani team by an innings.’

Rule 2: Some nouns are always used as singular, for example, furniture, information, hair, advice, luggage, machinery, poetry, advice and mischief. For example,

Please bring all the luggage to the waiting room.

The furniture in this room has been imported from England.

Rule 3: Some nouns like people, poultry, jury, police, gentry and folk have the appearance of being singular but they are always used in the plural. For example,

Cattle are grazing in the meadows.

Only the very elite gentry have been invited to the party.

The police are investigating the issue.

Rule 4: Generally, the compound words formed with one or two nouns are treated as singular. For example,

‘A hundred metre race’

‘A five hundred rupee note’

Rule 5: Some nouns are used in the same form whether singular or plural. For example, sheep, deer, pair, dozen, and so on.

Yesterday I bought five dozen handkerchiefs

I need a new pair of shoes.

Use of Pronouns

Some rules to be followed related to the use of pronouns are discussed as follows:

Rule 1: Each, every, everyone, anybody, nobody, either, neither and none are followed by verbs, pronouns and adjectives in the singular. For example,

Each person who attends the meeting will be given his own stationary.

Nobody will be allowed to keep his pet in the guest room.

None of the five accused was found guilty.

Rule 2: When two or more singular nouns are joined by ‘or’, ‘either ……or’, ‘neither ……..nor’, the pronoun used is singular and the verb agrees with the second noun or pronoun. For example

Incorrect: Either Mr Sharma or Mr Mohan are expected to attend the conference.

Correct: Either Mr Sharma or Mr Mohan is expected to attend the conference.
**Rule 3:** ‘Either’ and ‘neither’ are distributive pronouns and are not used for more than two objects. When there are more than two objects, ‘any’ or ‘none’ should be used. For example:

Incorrect: He did not invite either of the four brothers.
Correct: He did not invite any of the four brothers.

**Rule 4:** The interrogative pronouns are ‘which’, ‘what’ and ‘who’. ‘Which’ is used in selective sense and ‘what’ in general sense. ‘What’ is also used in exclamatory sentences. For example,

- What book is that? (General sense)
- Which book do you want to buy? (Selective sense)
- What a beautiful picture! (Exclamatory)

**Rule 5:** Avoid the use of pronouns when they are not required. For example,

Incorrect: The employee being ill, he was permitted to go home.
Correct: The employee being ill was permitted to go home.

**Rule 6:** A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number and gender. For example,

Incorrect: I am not one of those who betray my friends.
Correct: I am not one of those who betray their friends.

**Rule 7:** In the case of a pronoun following ‘than’ and ‘as’, it is determined by imagining the verb. For example,

Incorrect: He is wiser than me.
Correct: He is wiser than I (am).

**Use of Adverbs**

An adverb is a word that tells us more about the verb. Some rules to be followed related to the use of adverbs are as follows:

**Rule 1:** Adverbs of time like sometimes, seldom, always, often, never, frequently and rarely are placed before the verb they qualify. For example

Incorrect: He smokes seldom.
Correct: He seldom smokes.

**Rule 2:** The adverbs only, chiefly, solely should be placed before the word they qualify otherwise the meaning of the sentence may change. For example,

- Only I spoke to him (meaning that nobody else but me)
- I only spoke to him (meaning that I did nothing else)
- I spoke to only him (meaning no one else but him)

**Rule 3:** Perhaps and probably – ‘Perhaps’ means possibly and ‘probably’ means most likely. For example:
Incorrect: Noticing how well he enunciated his words while speaking, I thought that he was perhaps a good orator.
Correct: Noticing how well he enunciated his words while speaking, I thought that he was probably a good orator.

**Rule 4:** Scarcely, Hardly: ‘Scarcely’ and ‘Hardly’ are followed by ‘when’. For example,

Incorrect: Scarcely had I reached the house, I saw him.
Correct: Scarcely had I reached the house when I saw him.

**Use of Prepositions**

The following are some guidelines to be followed in the use of prepositions:

(i) After, in: After refers to a period of time in the past and in to a period of time in the future. For example,
   King Ram returned from exile after 14 years.
   He will come back from his foreign tour in a month.

(ii) In, within: In means at the expiry of a future period and within means before the expiry of a future period. For example,
   ‘I am going to Nagpur and will return in a month (at the end of one month).’
   ‘I want you to return me this book within a month (before one month is over).’

(iii) In, into: In shows position of rest or motion inside and into indicates motion from outside to inside. For example:
   The boys are swimming in the river.
   The boy dived into the river.

(iv) On, upon: On is used for things at rest and upon is used for things in motion. For example:
   The books are lying on the table.
   Don’t jump upon the sofa.

(v) Between, among: Between is used when we speak of two persons or things and among is used for more than two persons or things. For example,
   ‘Divide these sweets between the two of you.’
   ‘Distribute these sweets among the poor.’

(vi) By, with: By is used for the one who does, that is, the doer; and with is used for the instrument that does something. For example,
   ‘The terrorist was killed by the soldier.’
   ‘The soldier killed the terrorist with a single shot of the gun.’
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(vii) Till, to: Till refers to time and to refers to place. For example,
    ‘Today I will study till two in the night.’
    ‘I want you to come with me to the conference.’

(viii) Beside, besides: Beside means close to and besides means moreover or in addition to. For example
    ‘I kept the medicine beside his bed.’
    ‘Besides being a very well-read person, she is a good orator.’

(ix) For, since: For shows period of time and since and from indicate point of time. For example:
    ‘The meeting lasted for two hours.’
    ‘He has been speaking for 45 minutes.’

(x) At, in: When used with reference to a place in is used before the names of countries and big cities and at is used before the names of small villages and localities. For example:
    ‘There is a very famous temple located at Kamptee.’
    ‘He was born at Hissar in Haryana.’

Use of Articles

Definite article ‘the’; The definite article ‘the’ is used in the following situations:

(i) When we particularize a person or thing already referred to:
    Example: ‘The manager who was fired came to me yesterday.’

(ii) The, when placed before a proper noun, converts it into a common noun. For example, ‘Kashmir is the Switzerland of India.’

(iii) The is placed before proper nouns which are the names of oceans, seas, rivers, gulfs, groups of islands, mountain ranges, ships, newspapers, sacred books, historical building, trains, and so on. For example, ‘The Arabian sea’, ‘The Gita’, ‘The Indian Express’, ‘The Himalayas’.

(iv) The is used before certain objects which are unique. For example, ‘The sun’, ‘the earth’

(v) The is placed before superlatives. For example, ‘Ahmedabad has the largest textile industry.’

(vi) When the precedes a common noun, it makes it an abstract noun. For example: ‘I can see the entrepreneur in you.’

(vii) The name of a nationality or a race is preceded by the. For example: ‘the Africans’, ‘the Hindus’
Omission of ‘the’: The article the is omitted before the noun in the following cases

(i) The is not placed before an abstract noun when it is used in a general sense. For example:
Incorrect: The truth is not liked by many.
Correct: Truth is not liked by many.
(ii) The is not used before nouns denoting languages, months, days, seasons, colours, games diseases, arts etc. For example:
Incorrect: The uniform in our organisation is of the blue colour.
Correct: The uniform in our organisation is of blue colour.
(iii) The is not used before uncountable nouns. For example:
Incorrect: The front office of the new office building is made of the glass.
Correct: The front office of the new office building is made of glass.
(iv) When we mean the language and not the people we do not use the. For example:
Incorrect: French speak the French
Correct: The French speak French.
(v) We do not use the before places when they are visited for their usual purpose. But when these are visited for any other purpose the is added. For Example:
'I left for office at 9 am (for work).'
'I went to the telephone exchange to meet a friend who was working there( Not for the usual purpose).'
Indefinite article ‘A’ and ‘An’: A and An are indefinite articles. They are used with a singular noun only. The sound with which a word begins determines the indefinite article to be placed before it.
(i) A is used when a word begins with a consonant sound or with a vowel having the sound of ‘Y’ or ‘W’, such as a book, a poem, a story, a year, a European bird, a university, and a one-eyed monster.
(ii) ‘An’ precedes a word beginning with a vowel sound, such as an umbrella, an ox, an elephant, an MLA, an MA, and an ink pot
(iii) ‘An’ is used before a word with an unaccented ‘h’ such as an honest person, an honourable man, an honorary job, an hour
(iv) The indefinite article when placed before a proper noun converts it into a common noun. For example:
It takes a Narayana Murthy to get India on to the global scene.
(v) When two adjectives connected by ‘and’ qualify the same noun, the article is used before the first adjective only. For example,
'Only a hardworking and loyal manager will be able to set things in order.'

**Use of Modifiers**

Modifiers are words or groups of words which describe or limit the meaning of a sentence. For example, in the sentence

> 'Only she spoke to the audience.'

The word only is the modifier because it limits the subject to 'she'.

The following are the types of mistakes committed in the use of modifiers:

(i) **Abrupt modifier**: When a modifier is placed immediately after the subject at the beginning of the sentence, it is abrupt. For example:

Incorrect: We decided because our family and friends advised us not to buy a big car, to buy a small car.

Correct: As our family and friends advised us to buy a small car we decided not to buy a big car.

In the above sentence, the modifier is abrupt and separates the subject from the other part to which it should be linked up.

(ii) **Misplaced modifier**: Sometimes the words or phrases are not placed near the words or phrases they modify. For example:

Incorrect: The man says that means to leave the house in the second paragraph.

Correct: The man says in the second paragraph that he means to leave the house.

In the above sentence, the phrase in the second paragraph is wrongly placed.

(iii) **Dangling modifiers**: A modifier that is not clearly or logically related to a specific word in a sentence is said to dangle. For example:

Incorrect: On entering the hall the number of people surprised me.

Correct: On entering the hall I was surprised by the number of people.

(iv) **Squinting modifiers**: A modifier which may refer to the preceding as well as the following word is said to be a squinting modifier. Such modifiers impart ambiguity to the sentence. For example:

Incorrect: I agreed on the following day to assist him.

Correct: On the following day I agreed to assist him.

In the above sentence, On the following day may refer to agree or assist. So it is not clear whether the consent was given on the next day or the assistance was to be given on the next day.
(v) **Arranging modifiers:**

1. In case many modifiers are used in a sentence to improve sentence structure it is desirable to arrange them according to their length. For example:
   - Sentence: It was a battered worn and broken car.
   - Improved sentence: It was a worn, broken and battered car.
2. Modifiers should always be arranged in a logical sequence. For example:
   - Sentence: The grass became flaky, withered and dry.
   - Improved: The grass became dry, withered and flaky.
   (The first stage is getting dry, then it becomes withered and then flaky.)

**Structure of Business Letters**

A business letter is a formal document often sent from one company to another or from a company to its clients, employees, and stakeholders. They are an extremely important form of communication in businesses. A business letter should always follow a certain *format* and structure to ensure it is received as professional and up-to-standard. We will discuss the structure of business letter in detail in Unit 6 of the book.

**Check Your Progress**

1. What are the essential components of a sentence?
2. What do you understand by a phrase and a clause?
3. What are the three types of sentences?
4. What are the basic units of a sentence?

**2.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS**

1. A sentence expresses a complete thought which includes the following:
   - A Subject—person(s) or object(s)—, which causes or receives action. It is generally the first noun/pronoun/modifier, in the sentence.
   - A Predicate, which indicates the action taken or received by the subject. It is or contains the verb. It generally follows the subject and may contain an object (noun).

2. A phrase and a clause are both groups of words but they differ from sentences and from each other in the following ways:
(i) **Phrase**: A group of words that lacks either a subject or a predicate or both. For example, ‘While at home’ has neither a subject nor a predicate; and ‘Sunlight in my study room’ has no predicate.

(ii) **Clause**: A group of words that have a subject and a predicate. They are of two types - Dependent or Independent.

*Dependent clause*: A group of words which contains a subject and a verb but which cannot stand alone. For example, ‘Although I am very honest’.

*Independent clause*: A group of words which have a subject and a verb and which can stand alone. For example, ‘I am going to office next month.’

3. The three types of sentences are:
   - Simple sentence
   - Compound sentence
   - Complex sentence

4. The basic units of a sentence are:
   - Nouns
   - Verbs
   - Adjectives
   - Adverbs
   - Interjections
   - Pronouns
   - Prepositions
   - Conjunctions

2.5 **SUMMARY**

- Communication in any language needs to follow a set of rules for it to be effective. This is more so in the case of written communication.
- In order to ensure that the communication creates the desired impact on the audience, it is important that one looks into the quality aspect of the communication. For this, it is essential that one has a thorough understanding of the principles of grammar underlying the language.
- To write correctly and effectively one need not be a specialist in English grammar. However, there are some basics with which the writer needs to be familiar so as to avoid writing in a language that is substandard and of poor quality.
- A sentence expresses a complete thought which includes a subject—person(s) or object(s)—, which causes or receives action and a predicate, which indicates the action taken or received by the subject. It is or contains
the verb. It generally follows the subject and may contain an object (noun). A phrase and a clause are also groups of words.

- There are three types of sentences, that is, simple, compound and complex sentences.
- The use of punctuation is an essential part of business writing.
- The problems of grammar can generally be attributed to the levels of words and sentences. Therefore, choosing the right words and arranging them properly to make clear sentences is also the basis for good written communication.

2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Business Letter**: It is usually a letter from one company to another, or between such organizations and their customers, clients and other external parties.
- **Grammar**: It means the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics.
- **Syntax**: It means the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language.
- **Punctuation**: It refers to the marks, such as full stop, comma, and brackets, used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and to clarify meaning.

2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. What is a sentence?
2. What are the basic parts of a sentence?
3. Differentiate between compound and complex sentences.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss some common grammatical errors.
2. What points should you keep in mind to enhance the quality aspect of communication?
2.8 FURTHER READINGS


UNIT 3 LISTENING SKILLS

Structure
3.0 Introduction
3.1 Objectives
3.2 What is Listening?
  3.2.1 Purpose of Listening
  3.2.2 Listening Process
  3.2.3 Classification of Listening
3.3 Inefficiency of Listening
  3.3.1 Common Barriers in Listening
3.4 Improving Your Listening Ability
3.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
3.6 Summary
3.7 Key Words
3.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
3.9 Further Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss one of the most important aspects of communication, that is, listening. As you now know, communication is essentially a two-way process. It is a process that involves at least two parties—the sender and the receiver or the speaker and the listener. The purpose of any communication is not achieved till the receiver receives the message which the sender puts across. There is often an expectation that the receiver will not only receive the message, but also interpret it, understand it, use it and provide the requisite feedback about having received the message and acted on it. It is essential to note that sender and receiver are not always fixed permanent positions. One is a sender or a receiver for a particular piece of communication or message transmission. However, communication is by and large an interactive process and the roles are seldom fixed. A receiver becomes the sender and the sender becomes the receiver. Good communication, therefore, calls for listening skills. A good speaker must necessarily be a good listener. We will discuss all aspects related to listening in this unit.
3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand listening as an important communication skill
- Discuss the objectives and importance of listening
- Explain the listening process
- Explain the three levels of listening
- Discuss the various types of listening
- Identify the poor listening habits leading to inefficiency in listening
- Explain the various barriers to effective listening
- Discuss the various ways to ensure better listening

3.2 WHAT IS LISTENING?

Effective listening is the process of analysing sounds, organizing them into recognizable patterns, interpreting the patterns and understanding the message by inferring the meaning.

Listening is not to be confused with hearing. Hearing is a physiological process which involves receiving the sound waves by the eardrum and transferring them to the brain. Listening is more than hearing. It involves the process of interpretation and inference.

Listening is extremely important for the communication process. Many of the problems we experience with people are primarily attributable to ineffective listening or lack of listening. Good listening skills are the foundation of effective human relations. Good listeners can be good negotiators and can handle crisis situations successfully.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1 Basic Communication Skills Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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<td>Speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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Objectives of Listening

The objectives of learning may be one or more of the following:

- To learn
- To increase one’s understanding
- To advise or counsel
- To relieve one’s boredom

3.2.1 Purpose of Listening

A lot of one’s time is spent on listening. One quarter of our waking time is spent in listening. Research shows that at the workplace, on an average, personnel spend about 32.7 per cent of their time listening, 25.8 per cent of their time speaking and 22.6 per cent of their time writing. Effective listening is one of the most crucial skills for becoming a successful manager. This requires paying attention, interpreting and remembering sound stimuli. Listening is an important skill to be inculcated by managers and workers.

- Communication is not complete without effective listening.
- An attentive listener stimulates better speaking by the speaker.
- A good listener learns more than an indifferent listener.
- A good listener can restructure vague speaking in a way that produces clearer meaning.
- A good listener learns to detect prejudices, assumptions and attitudes.

3.2.2 Listening Process

For listening to be effective and meaningful, the process of listening should involve the following steps:

**Hearing**

Hearing is the first essential step in the listening process and relates to the sensory perception of sound. The listener further processes the perceived sound. For learning to be effective, hearing needs to be done with attentiveness and concentration.

**Filtering**

The next step involves sensing and filtering of heard sounds. The heard message is categorized as wanted or unwanted, useful or useless. The unwanted message is discarded. In this step, the sense of judgement of the individual comes into play, that is, the filtering process is subjective and a person chooses to retain what makes sense to him.

**Comprehending**

The next level of listening consists of comprehending or understanding. The listener understands or interprets what the speaker has tried to convey. This activity can
be described as absorbing, grasping or assimilating. In order to grasp the meaning of the message, the listener uses his knowledge, experience, perception and cognitive power. The verbal and auditory message is coupled with non-verbal communication to understand it.

**Remembering**
Remembering relates to a process whereby the assimilated message is stored in memory to facilitate future recall. Remembering assumes significance because many times messages received are meant not for immediate consideration but for future use.

**Responding**
For listening to be complete, a response is important. Responding to a message may take place at the end of the communication, immediately after or later. When it is stored for future use, the response may take place later. However, if there is a need to seek clarification or to empathize with the listener, it may take place earlier. Responding may also take the form of prodding or prompting in order to show that the message is being received and comprehended.

**Levels of Listening**
Based on the effectiveness of the listening process, three levels of listening have been identified. Level 1 is that of Non-listening and is the least desirable, followed by Level 2 which is Passive Listening. Level 3 is Active Listening, which is most desirable. Though we listen at all the three levels during the course of the day depending on our interest and situation, it is beneficial to move to Level 3 for maximum listening effectiveness. Good managers and leaders spend more time listening at Level 3.

(i) **Level 1—Non-listening:** Here, the listener may appear to be listening but actually he is more occupied with his own thoughts. He is minimally aware of the speaker speaking. He is likely to appear detached and will be unresponsive and passive.

(ii) **Level 2—Passive Listening:** Passive listening is more of hearing than actually listening. The listener superficially hears the words but does not understand in depth what is being said. He concentrates on the word content of the message rather than the feelings and emotions associated with the message. He does not get much involved in the communication activity, and rather than contributing equally to the conversational exchange, he is merely spoken to.

(iii) **Level 3—Active Listening:** This is the most desirable form of listening wherein the active listener gives full attention to what is being said. The listener concentrates on what is being said and also motivates the speaker to speak, making it easier for the speaker to deliver the message. An active listener not only comprehends the message better but is also in a better position to remember and recall the message. He not only pays attention to
listening skills

the word content but also concentrates on the emotional and non-verbal aspect of the message. In active listening, the listener is directly involved in the conversation. He provides feedback to the speaker and voices his opinions and arguments.

3.2.2 Classification of Listening

The different types of listening are as follows:

**Discriminative listening**

This is the most basic type of listening. It involves identifying the difference between various sounds. It also enables one to differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar language. The subtleties of accent and pronunciation typical of a language can be identified by this kind of listening.

**Comprehension listening**

This type of listening involves something more than just differentiating between various sounds. It involves attaching meaning to what is being listened to, that is the message is comprehended. It may also include comprehending the non-verbal messages being conveyed intentionally or unintentionally by the speaker.

**Evaluative listening**

This is also called as critical listening. This involves not only comprehending the message but also evaluating and analysing the message being received in light of one’s own background. It involves judging the acceptability of what is said depending on how logical one finds it to be.

**Attentive listening**

It involves paying attention to the words that are being spoken rather than understanding the head and heart of the person speaking. It involves making a conscious effort to listen attentively and decode the message. The concentration is on the verbal part of the message rather than the non-verbal aspect.

**Pretence listening**

This involves more hearing than listening. It means pretending through facial expressions that one is listening to the communicated message when actually one is not.

**Selective listening**

Listening is done only partly or selectively. It involves selecting the desired part of the message and ignoring the undesired part of the message. The attention of the listener is not focused and the listener keeps switching off and on.

**Intuitive listening**

It is a higher form of listening. It means listening through the intuitive mind by silencing the other forms of internal dialogues going on simultaneously.
3.3 INEFFICIENCY OF LISTENING

Research shows that after two days we retain only one fourth of what we hear. In fact, we do not hear all that is said and forget many of the things we hear. This is a reflection of our poor listening habits.

Inefficiency of listening can be harmful for the organization. Some people like to talk more than they like to listen, some listen selectively, some cannot concentrate for long on what others are saying or some may just listen superficially without really bothering about what is being said. All this leads to ineffective listening.

Poor Listening Habits

It is possible to improve your listening habits by identifying which are the poor listening habits and then working upon them to change them. Some of the most common poor listening habits are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor Listening Habits</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inattentiveness</td>
<td>Not paying attention to the speaker is one of the major causes of inefficient listening. The listener may get distracted or may not want to hear what is being said. The listener withdraws his attention and starts daydreaming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Faking attention or ‘Pseudolistening’</td>
<td>Often people who are not actually listening and are thinking about something else deliberately try to look as though they were listening. The listener may do so so as not to appear rude or discourteous to the listener. At times this may lead to disasters in communication because such pretence may leave a speaker with the impression that the listener has heard some important information or instructions offered by him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Focusing on delivery</td>
<td>Sometimes a person concentrates on how someone says something that he pays little attention to what he or she is actually saying. The listener may focus on the appearance and other nuances of the speaker and may, in the bargain, miss out on the real meaning of what is being said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rehearsing</td>
<td>If the listener is thinking about his reply before the other person has finished, then in all probability he is not listening. Some people listen until they want to say something; then they quit listening, start rehearsing what they will say, and wait for an opportunity to respond.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Interrupting
Some people prefer to do the speaking rather than listen to someone speak. Such a listener does not wait for the speaker to complete what he is saying so that the complete meaning can be determined, but interrupts often resulting in a break of the chain of thought of the speaker and thus hampering the communication process. Unnecessary interruptions may discourage and irritate the speaker.

6. Hearing what is expected
People like to hear what they want to hear. Very often, people think they heard speakers say what they expected them to say. Further, people tend to accept only that part of the communication which is consistent with their existing beliefs. Alternatively, they refuse to hear what they do not want to hear and what goes against their beliefs and perception. Poor listeners tend to filter those parts of the message from their understanding which do not readily fit with their own frame of reference.

7. Avoiding difficult and uninteresting material
The listener may just switch off listening when he finds the material difficult to understand or uninteresting. This may become a habit with the listener and he will conveniently stop listening every time he encounters some difficult or uninteresting material. Many a time, the listener may assume in advance that the subject is boring, unimportant or difficult.

8. Being defensive
Sometimes listeners feel threatened by what the speaker is saying and they immediately become defensive, that is, they try to justify their stance on whatever is being said. They may just overreact to certain words and phrases. They get so involved in guarding themselves that they do not get the actual message of what is being said.

9. Being on the offensive
Some listeners seem to wait for the chance to criticise someone. They listen intently for points on which they can disagree and vent out their criticism. They constantly try to counter whatever is being said. Here too they miss out the actual message of what is being said.

3.3.1 Common Barriers in Listening
The factors which act as impediments to effective listening can be classified into the following:
Physical barriers

Noise, poor acoustics, malfunctioning of the mechanical devices being used, frequent interruptions and uncomfortable seating arrangements are physical barriers that hamper effective listening. The first step of the listening process is hearing, and extraneous noise disturbs the hearing process. Extraneous noise disturbs both the listener and the speaker. In case a device like a microphone or telephone is being used, then the malfunctioning of the device will act as a hurdle or it may also result in the failure of transmission of the message from the speaker to the listener. Poor acoustics of the room or uncomfortable seating arrangements may make it difficult for the listener to concentrate on the speaker. Interruptions by other people or by the telephone while someone is speaking disturb the concentration of the listener, frustrate the speaker and make the listening process less effective. Message overload, which involves listening to a lot of information one after another, also makes it impossible to listen attentively after a certain point.

Thus we can summarize the physical barriers to include:
- Noise
- Poor acoustics
- Defective mechanical devices
- Frequent interruptions
- Uncomfortable seating arrangements and environment
- Message overload

People-related barriers

Both the speaker and the listener influence the communication process. People-related barriers can be both physiological and psychological.

State of health

The physical condition of the individual affects the listening ability. Fever, pain or any other form of bodily discomfort makes it difficult for an individual to listen attentively. Similarly poor health conditions of a speaker reduce his ability to speak well and this in turn reduces the listening efficiency of the listener.

Disability

As discussed earlier, hearing is the first step of the listening process and, therefore, hearing deficiencies may lead to poor listening. Similarly, speech disorders of the
speaker may make speech incoherent to the listener. At times the speaker’s accent, though not a disability, may make it difficult for the listener to comprehend. Similarly, when a speaker speaks very rapidly, it may also result in an unclear message reaching the listener.

**Wandering attention**

Research shows that the human mind can process words at the rate of about 500 per minute, whereas a speaker speaks at the rate of about 150 words per minute. The difference between the two is quite large—350 words per minute. This leaves the listener with sufficient time to let his mind wander. The listener has to be careful of this rather than let his mind wander. Spending the time concentrating on the message and analysing it would improve listening.

*Psychological barriers* relate to attitudinal and behavioural aspects. These include the following:

![Psychological Barriers Diagram](image)

**Being unsure of the speaker’s ability**

Based on past experience or inputs from sources, the listener may have a preconceived notion of the speaker’s ability. He may perceive the speaker to not be well informed, or to be lacking in depth and ability. This acts as a barrier to the listening process as the listener will not listen to what the speaker has to say.

**Personal anxiety**

Sometimes we are preoccupied with personal concerns and anxieties. This makes it difficult to perceive what is being said and thus acts as a barrier to effective listening.

**Attitude**

Many times the attitude of the listener acts as a barrier to effective listening. The listener may be highly egocentric with a ‘know it all attitude’ and may not listen because he feels that he already knows what the listener has to say. A casual attitude on the part of the listener towards listening, assuming it can be done without much concentration and effort, also acts as a barrier to listening.
An overly critical attitude of the listener may shift the focus of listening from what is being said to noticing faults and errors in accent, delivery, appearance of speaker, grammar, and so on.

**Impatience**

The listener may not have patience to wait for the other person to finish what he has to say. He may be intolerant or may be eager to add his own points to the discussion. As a result, his desire to speak overcomes his desire to listen, thus acting as a barrier.

**Emotional blocks**

Our deep-seated beliefs in certain ideas may make it difficult for us to listen to ideas which go against our belief. We may hear such an idea wrongly or it may get distorted in our mind to match our perception or we may completely block it off by not listening to it. Many a time, we block something off completely because of painful memories associated with it.

**Check Your Progress**

1. What are the objectives of effective listening?
2. State briefly the various types of listening.
3. List three ways in which we can improve our listening skills.
4. Write a short note on the importance of listening.

### 3.4 IMPROVING YOUR LISTENING ABILITY

Effective listening calls for efforts on the part of the speaker, listener as well as others concerned with the process to remove the barriers that come in the way of effective listening.

**Efforts by Listener**

As stated earlier, conscious efforts have to be made by the listener to improve his listening ability and develop effective listening skills. Some important guidelines to develop listening skills by the listener are:

1. **Concentration:** To be a good listener, you must pay attention to the speaker. When a speaker is a dull conversationalist or when it is difficult to follow the speaker because of voice problems like a regional accent, and so on, a listener may have to make an effort to keep from being distracted by other things. Research shows that the more motivated a listener is, the more receptive he is.

2. **Preparation:** Sometimes it is better to make some preparations beforehand in order to improve listening; more so in the case of topics that are perceived
3. **Show interest**: Show that you want to listen by being and looking attentive. It is important not only to focus on the speaker, but to use nonverbal cues (such as eye contact, head nods and smiles) to let them know they are being heard. A listener may ask appropriate questions at the right time to show his interest in what is being said.

4. **Listen for the whole message**: Listen not only through the use of your ears, but also the other senses so as to get the complete message. This includes looking for meaning and consistency or congruence in both the verbal and non-verbal messages and listening for ideas, feelings and intentions as well as facts. Pay attention to the voice intensity, inflection, emotional cues, body movements, and so on, while listening to the speaker so as to ensure that the total message is communicated to you.

5. **Empathy**: Empathize with the speaker, that is, put yourself in the speaker’s shoes. This will help you to better understand what the speaker is trying to say rather than only what you want to understand. For listening to be effective and to achieve its objective it is important that the listener understands the message from the speaker’s point of view.

6. **Listening before evaluating**: Listening to what someone says without drawing premature conclusions is a valuable aid to listening. Premature judgment hampers effective listening. Listen patiently to what the speaker has to say. Give him time to complete what he has to say. By questioning the speaker in a non-accusative manner, rather than giving advice or judging, you can often discover exactly what the speaker has in mind, which oftentimes is quite different from what the listener had assumed.

7. **Note taking**: Many experts recommend note taking as an important technique to improve the efficacy of the listening process. Taking down notes not only enhances the attentiveness of the listener but also helps him record what is being conveyed. Further, when the speaker sees that his listeners are sufficiently interested in take notes, it generates confidence in him and motivates him to speak better.

8. **Paraphrasing**: Paraphrasing is simply restating what another person has said in your own words. Paraphrasing serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it acts as a control device to check whether the listener has listened carefully. Secondly, it checks accuracy because by restating what has been said and feeding it back to the speaker the listener verifies the accuracy of his understanding. The best way to paraphrase is to listen carefully to what the other person is saying. It is important that the listener develops the habit of paraphrasing.
9. **Body Language:** The listener should maintain a positive body language—an upright posture, eye contact with the speaker—which reflects the listener’s interest in what is being said. An upright posture also helps a listener have better concentration. At the same time, if the listener leans forward slightly it shows that the listener is interested in what the speaker is saying. Constantly fidgeting, too much of movement, and so on, reflect a lack of interest on the part of the listener and this may demotivate the speaker.

**Efforts by Speaker**

Since communication is a two-way process, the onus of improving the communication process not only lies with the listener but also with the speaker. The speaker too can influence the way in which the listener listens to the message. The following are some of the guidelines which the speaker can use for facilitating effective listening by the listener.

- The speaker needs to have clarity of thought and purpose, that is, he should be clear about what he is conveying to the audience.
- The speaker needs to communicate the message in a lively, stimulating manner which will capture the attention of the listener.
- The speaker should try to empathize with the listeners. He should imagine himself in their position and this will help him know if the listeners understand his message or if they are bored or confused.
- The speaker should modulate his delivery to retain the attention of the audience. A dull monotone may induce the listeners to switch themselves off.

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<th>Check Your Progress</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. How does note taking improve the listening process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. What is paraphrasing?</td>
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</table>

**3.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS**

1. The objectives of learning may be one or more of the following:
   - To learn
   - To increase ones understanding
   - To advise or counsel
   - To relieve one’s boredom

2. There are various types of listening and they are as follows:
   - (i) Attentive Listening,
   - (ii) Pretence Listening,
   - (iii) Selective Listening,
   - (iv) Active/ Empathic Listening,
   - (v) Intuitive listening.
3. Three ways in which we can improve our listening skills
   - Eliminate distractions
   - Concentrate
   - Focus on the speaker

4. Listening is an important skill to be inculcated by managers and workers
   - Communication is not complete without effective listening.
   - An attentive listener stimulates better speaking by the speaker.
   - A good listener learns more than an indifferent listener.
   - A good listener can restructure vague speaking in a way that produces clearer meaning.
   - A good listener learns to detect prejudices, assumptions and attitudes

5. Many experts recommend note taking as an important technique to improve the efficacy of the listening process. Taking down notes not only enhances the attentiveness of the listener but also helps him record what is being conveyed.

6. Paraphrasing is simply restating what another person has said in your own words.

3.6 SUMMARY
   - Effective listening is the process of analysing sounds, organizing them into recognizable patterns, interpreting the patterns and understanding the message by inferring the meaning.
   - The objectives of learning may be one or more of the following:
     o To learn
     o To increase one’s understanding
     o To advise or counsel
     o To relieve one’s boredom
   - For listening to be effective and meaningful, the process of listening should involve the following steps: hearing, filtering, comprehending, remembering and responding.
   - Based on the effectiveness of the listening process, three levels of listening have been identified. Level 1 is that of Non-listening and is the least desirable, followed by Level 2 which is Passive Listening. Level 3 is Active Listening, which is most desirable.
   - Inefficiency of listening can be harmful for the organization. However, it is possible to improve your listening habits by identifying which are the poor listening habits and then working upon them to change them.
There are different types of barriers to effective listening. These may be physical barriers, disability, people-related barriers and so on.

3.7 KEY WORDS

- **Disability:** It refers to a physical or mental condition that limits a person’s movements, senses, or activities.
- **Comprehension:** It means the ability to understand something.
- **Acoustics:** It means the properties or qualities of a room or building that determine how sound is transmitted in it.

3.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. What is effective listening? Explain its importance with special reference to organizational communication.
2. Differentiate between listening and hearing.
3. Briefly explain the types of listening.
4. What are the objectives of listening?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the various stages of an effective listening process.
2. Explain the barriers to effective listening.
3. Describe the various techniques to improve listening skills.

3.9 FURTHER READINGS


UNIT 4  LANGUAGE FOR COMMUNICATION

Structure
4.0  Introduction
4.1  Objectives
4.2  General Principles of Writing
4.3  Improving Writing Skills
   4.3.1 Essentials of Good Style
4.4  Good News and Bad News Communication
4.5  Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
4.6  Summary
4.7  Key Words
4.8  Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
4.9  Further Readings

4.0  INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss written communication. Written communication is essential in every business. Writing is a creative activity. While oral communication is based on spontaneous reactions, written communication is more carefully thought out and the information gathered is processed logically. It involves a certain time factor. The writer can take his own time in formulating the message. Then it takes some time to reach the receiver. The receiver then takes his time in understanding and interpreting the message and responding to it. Written communication has fewer cycles than face-to-face communication, that is, in comparison to oral communication, the messages are sent to and fro between the sender and the receiver for a fewer number of times.

4.1  OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the principles of effective writing
- Discuss the ways to improve writing style
- Explain good news and bad news communication
4.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF WRITING

Written messages can be broken down into the following parts:

- Words
- Sentences
- Paragraphs

Words are the fundamental unit of writing. Words combine to make sentences and sentences are arranged logically to form paragraphs. In addition to this, paragraphs combine to set the overall tone of the message. Writing principles apply to these four elements of the written message.

The following are the principles of effective writing:

1. **Clarity of writing**: For the written message to be clear and understandable to the reader, both clarity of thought and clarity of expression are required on the part of the writer. By being clear about the purpose of the message and knowing exactly what needs to be conveyed to the reader, one can obtain clarity of thought. The writer needs to arrange his thoughts logically before writing them down.

   In order to achieve clarity of expression, the message needs to be well-expressed, because if encoding is faulty the message may be misinterpreted. Clarity of expression can be achieved by the following means

   (i) **Use simple words**: Short and simple words are easily understood and are less likely to be misused. Of course, variety in vocabulary makes the writing impressive but too many long words in a sentence should be avoided. They distract the reader and do more harm than good. It is a myth that the bigger the words, the greater is the intellect of the writer. One needs to remember that writing is to express rather than to impress.

   Some Short Substitutes of Words which can be used in Place of their Longer Counterparts so as to Enhance Clarity are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Substitute Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualise</td>
<td>See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recapitulate</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endeavour</td>
<td>Try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate</td>
<td>help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   (ii) **Use familiar words**: Use words which are familiar to you as a writer and are also likely to be familiar to the reader. For this, you need to possess a good vocabulary to enable you to select the words most appropriate for the reader. Unfamiliar words unnecessarily confuse the reader and he may, ultimately, get disinterested.
Consider this example taken from the book Contemporary Business Communication by Scot Ober.

‘The hexad worked with élan so as to redact their report and e-login their guilt.’

This sentence is difficult to understand because it contains a number of words which are unfamiliar to the average reader. Replacing the sentence with the following sentence will definitely make it more clear and understandable.

‘The six people vigorously edited the report so as to conceal their guilt.’

(ii) **Use short sentences**: To enhance the clarity of writing, use short sentences. Long sentences can be confusing and many a time, they may be misinterpreted. If the sentence is of more than thirty words, break it up.

(iv) **Use concrete expressions and not vague expressions**: While writing, choose words that have definite and specific meaning. If the words chosen are ambiguous the reader is likely to act based on his own interpretation, which may be different from what the writer intended.

For example, consider the sentence:

‘The goods are being dispatched soon’.

Here the word ‘soon’ is vague and can mean different time spans for different people. It would be worthwhile revising this sentence to:

‘The goods are being dispatched by 12th July.’

(v) **Avoid unnecessary use of jargon**: Jargon refers to technical vocabulary used by members to communicate within a specialized group. It is alright to use jargon to communicate within the same specialist group as the words will be familiar to the members and will, hence, be understood by all of them. However, if the reader is from a different field, he is likely to either misunderstand the word or not understand it at all. For example, the word ‘virus’ has different meanings for a doctor and a computer specialist. Therefore, it is better to avoid the use of jargon especially for communicating outside ones specialized group.

(vi) **Avoid ambiguity in framing sentences**: A message is ambiguous if it means more than one thing. Avoid using ambiguous sentences in your message as this may confuse the reader. For example, from the sentence,

‘Please send me two copies of the books, “Who moved my Cheese” and
“Emotional Intelligence at Workplace”

It is not clear as to what action is expected from the reader. It can mean one copy each of the two books or two copies each of the two books. This sort of ambiguity has to be avoided. It is important to clearly specify the message so that it has the desired impact.

Faulty punctuation is another cause of ambiguity. The complete meaning of a sentence may change if it is punctuated in a different manner as is clear from the following example.

The new assistant said, ‘The manager is very hard working’.

‘The new assistant’, said the manager, ‘is very hard working’.

2. **Completeness**: In business communication, completeness of facts is absolutely necessary. This is more so with written communication where immediate feedback is generally not possible. Incomplete information may either result in an incorrect decision or in time being wasted in the follow-up correspondence to complete the gaps in the information. While answering a letter, make sure that you have answered all the questions. While giving some information, check for the five Ws for ensuring completeness, that is, tell the reader the who, what, where, when and why of the information.

3. **Accuracy**: The accuracy of the message depends on what is said and how it is said. Thus, the message has to be accurate both in terms of truthful presentation of the contents, that is, the facts and figures mentioned in the message and in terms of the timeliness of the message, that is, the message should be conveyed at the appropriate time. The credibility of the written message depends on its accuracy.

For example, consider this sentence taken from a message—‘On Monday, 18 January, the advisory board took the decision to hold the re-examination’.

If the reader checks and finds that 18 January was a Sunday and not a Monday, the credibility of the message is reduced and the rest of the message also comes into suspicion as regards its accuracy.

Check and recheck the message for accuracy of the facts and figures, especially where important decisions have to be taken based on the document containing the information.

4. **Appropriate tone and language**: It is not only the accuracy of the contents but the tone in which they are expressed which take away or add meaning to the message. Tone refers to the feelings created by words used to communicate a message. Just as the tone of voice is important in oral communication, the tone of the written communication affects the reader.

The selection of the appropriate tone depends on the relationship between the reader and the writer and their relative status in the organization. These factors determine the level of formality of the message. Depending on the level of formality between the writer and the reader, the tone of the message
can be informal, semi-formal or strictly formal. The language that involves
the selection of words should also be appropriate. Some of the issues to be
considered are:

(i) **Avoid clichés and slang:** Clichés are overused phrases that become
boring through overuse. They take away the originality and freshness
of the message. Avoid these to present your message from sounding
stereotyped and mechanical.

Slang is an informal word or phrase which is not a part of the standard
language and is often used by a specific category of individuals. For
example ‘Hip’ is the slang for stylish, ‘Pie eyed’ is the slang for drunk.
Use of slang reflects a high degree of informality and should be avoided
in written business communication.

(ii) **Use non-discriminatory language:** Avoid the use of sexist language,
that is, words and phrases which show a gender bias. This involves
replacing words such as ‘chairman’ with ‘chairperson’, using ‘Sir/Mam’
in the salutation if you are not sure of the person you are addressing.
Do not assume that the addressee is a male. With an increasing number
of women forming a part of the workforce, this is a common error that
is committed. Similarly, a sentence of the kind ‘The manager should
try to convince his customers’ can be replaced by ‘The manager should
try to convince the customers’.

Do not use words which lower the dignity of women. Refer to women
and men in the same way. Consider the sentence, Mr Ravi Sharma,
the lawyer, and Ms Rita Ahuja, the lady doctor, were present for the
meeting. Here ‘doctor’ should replace the word ‘lady doctor’.

Writing should also be free from bias based on factors such as race,
religion, disability, and so on. Our writing should reflect sensitivity and
should not offend others.

The following are examples of the use of masculine pronouns for both
sexes and their gender-neutral substitutes.

---

**Gender biased use of pronoun:** When a new employee joins the
organization, he undergoes an orientation programme of 15 days.

**Gender-neutral substitute:** A new employee who joins the
organization undergoes an orientation programme of 15 days.

**Gender biased use of pronoun:** When a customer asks for a
replacement during the guarantee period, he has to be provided one.

**Gender neutral substitute:** A customer who asks for a replacement
during the guarantee period has to be provided one.
Examples of Words Derived from Masculine Gender and their Gender Neutral Substitutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender biased words</th>
<th>Gender neutral substitutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman</td>
<td>Business executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man-made</td>
<td>Manufactured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workman</td>
<td>Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best man for the job</td>
<td>Best person for the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>Salesperson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) **Avoid negative words:** Some words have a negative connotation associated with them. Avoid using such words. Instead, replace them with substitutes that sound positive.

Some words that reflect negativity are unpleasant like disagree, damage and complaint. Some examples of how negative sounding words can be replaced by words that sound positive are as follows:

- **Negative** – We will not be able to dispatch the goods till 12th July.
  - **Positive** – We will be able to dispatch the goods by 12th July.

- **Negative** – Complaint department
  - **Positive** – Customer Service Department

5. **Courtesy:** Incorporate courtesy in your writing. Apologize sincerely for an omission and thank generously for a favour. Do not be rude or harsh. Timely response to correspondence also reflects courtesy. Follow the golden rule of not replying to any communication when you are angry or upset. A tone of courtesy and sincerity enhances the effectiveness of the message by making it more acceptable to the reader.

Avoid offensive statements even though they may be the truth. Even though such statements may be stating the obvious, they result in humiliating the reader. Such statements best avoided. Consider the examples

- **Discourteous statement** – ‘Do not allow your careless attitude to ruin the project.’
- **Courteous substitute** – ‘Be careful while handling the project as it is very crucial.’

- **Discourteous statement** – ‘You have sent the request to the wrong department. We do not handle queries related to domestic electricity supply.’
- **Courteous substitute** – ‘We have forwarded your query to the domestic electricity supply department as we deal with the commercial supply of electricity.’
In addition to this, courtesy can be achieved by the following techniques:

(i) **Personalizing the message:** This refers to singling out the reader, that is, address the message directly to the reader rather than generating a common message for a number of readers. Personalized messages tend to make the reader feel important. However, many times this may not be possible; but wherever possible, write directly to one reader to increase the acceptability of the message.

(ii) **Adopting the You attitude:** Adopting a You attitude helps in adding a sense of goodwill to the message. It holds the interest of the reader and is a recommended style especially for persuasive writing. The following are some examples which illustrate how the I/We attitude can be substituted with the You attitude to improve the effectiveness of communication.

6. **Brevity:** Being brief and to the point also contributes to making the writing effective. Brevity in writing saves the reader’s time, and is clearer and more interesting. Being brief means conveying only what is relevant and leaving out what is irrelevant or words which are unnecessary. However, brevity at the cost of clarity is not desirable. The following are some of the techniques to achieve brevity in your writing.

(ii) **Avoid wordiness:** Avoid using 4–5 words where one or two words can be used without loss of meaning. The following are examples of how a phrase can be substituted with a single word without loss of meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wordy Phrase</th>
<th>Shorter Substitute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Along the lines of</td>
<td>Like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In very few cases</td>
<td>Seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the purpose of</td>
<td>For</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a view</td>
<td>To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the occasion of</td>
<td>On</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the event that</td>
<td>If</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In spite of the fact</td>
<td>Although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the mean time</td>
<td>Meanwhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the present time</td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the reason that</td>
<td>Because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the near future</td>
<td>Soon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) **Avoid surplus words:** To achieve brevity eliminate words that add nothing further to the meaning of the sentence. Examples of sentences containing surplus words and their shorter version are given below

- The boys who were dismissed were asked to leave the college campus.
  The dismissed boys were asked to leave the college campus.
- There are six poems that need to be memorized.
  Six poems need to be memorized.
– The houses that were damaged by fire were reconstructed.
The houses damaged by fire were reconstructed.

(ii) Avoid using redundant words: Redundancy means duplication of ideas through the use of different words that mean the same thing. Avoid redundancy, as it serves no logical purpose.

(iv) Brevity can also be achieved by
— avoiding the overuse of passive voice
— dropping out ‘which’ and ‘that’ clauses wherever possible

Example — I need a shirt that is blue in colour.
I need a blue shirt.
I received an invitation that was of formal type.
I received a formal invitation.

7. Appropriate emphasis: In a message there are some items that are more important than others and these need to be emphasized to get the desired effect of writing. There are certain techniques which can be used to give proper emphasis to the selected parts of the message. These techniques include:

(i) Using position for emphasis: The major emphasis positions are the beginning and the closing of each sentence, paragraph or the message. Place words, sentences or paragraphs at these positions if you want to emphasize them. Other parts of the message that do not need emphasis can be placed between these positions.

(ii) Using space for emphasis: It is natural that the more you say about something, the more likely it is to draw attention. Thus repeating certain points which require emphasis or elaborating them in detail is a useful technique for emphasizing important parts of the message.

(iii) Using mechanics for emphasis: Using bold letters, italicized letters, capital letters, underlining, using a different colour or a different font are some of the ways in which a particular part of writing can be emphasized to readily catch the attention of the reader.

8. Unity and Coherence: The message consists of information in the form of words, sentences and paragraphs that need to be logically arranged to give a unified and coherent effect. There is a slight difference between a paragraph that is unified and a paragraph that is coherent.

A unified paragraph gives information directly relevant to the topic and presents it logically. A way of achieving unity in a paragraph is to give the sentence that contains the subject of the paragraph as the opening sentence. This helps the writer to focus on the topic of the paragraph while writing the message.
A message is said to be coherent when each sentence is smoothly linked to the succeeding sentence. Various techniques are known to impart coherence to the message, that is, to bind together the information that is presented so as to convey the big picture to the reader. These include the use of transitional words and pronouns, repetition of key words and using parallelism in structure.

(i) Using transitional words: Transitional words tell the reader the thought connection between sentences and the relationship between sentences. Some commonly used transitional expressions are: in addition, moreover, besides, also in contrast, although, but, however, as a result, in the same way, likewise, thus, therefore, for example, in conclusion, to summarize, meanwhile, and so on.

(ii) Using pronouns: As pronouns refer to words that have been previously used, they help in connecting ideas and words they relate to. The use of pronouns like this, that, these, those, he, they, and so on, help in relating ideas in different sentences.

(iii) Repeating key words: By repeating key words from one sentence to the next one can provide a link between two sentences. Avoid needless repetition but use purposeful repetition to achieve coherence in the message.

(iv) Using parallelism in structure: Sentences need to have a parallel structure, which means using a similar grammatical structure for similar ideas, that is, matching adjectives with adjectives, nouns with nouns, infinitives with infinitives, and so on. Parallel sentence structure enhances coherence.

Examples
- The player is physically tough and a consistent player.
- The player is physically tough and consistent
- The management consultant will look into issues related to
  - Training and development
  - How to reduce turnover
  - Managing conflict
- The management consultant will look into issues related to
  - Training and development
  - Turnover reduction
  - Conflict management
4.3 IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS

Let us look at some of the ways one can improve our writing skills.

Think About Your Readers Needs

Whatever you are writing, your aim should be to make your text as clear as possible – to present your ideas clearly and concisely and to avoid ambiguity or redundancy. Achieving this becomes easier the more you practice writing and begin to develop your confidence in your writing style.

Remember Basic Rules for Good Written English

It is important that you pay attention to the basic rules for good written English - accurate spelling and correct use of grammar and punctuation.

Write Regularly to Develop Confidence and Quality

The saying goes practice makes perfect. The more you write, you’ll develop confidence in your writing ability and your quality will improve.

Get Feedback on Your Writing and Use It

Getting feedback from others helps one greatly improve skills.

4.3.1 Essentials of Good Style

Writing style refers to the way in which the information is expressed and not the substance. It is related to the choice of words and their arrangement into sentences, paragraphs and the complete message. The effectiveness of the message and the overall tone of the message largely depend on the style. Effective writing not only needs to be error-free but should also have style.

Some of the characteristics of an effective writing style include the following:

(i) Use of short simple words
(ii) Varied vocabulary
(iii) Crisp, concise and clear writing
(iv) Use of positive language
(v) Logical flow of ideas in paragraphs
(vi) Optimum paragraph length, that is, paragraphs which are neither too long nor too short.
(vii) Use of a variety of sentence types
(viii) Reflecting courtesy

Writing style is about the mechanics of writing. Mechanics are elements of writing that are of relevance when the message is in written form. Mechanics of writing include spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, and so on.
4.4 GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS COMMUNICATION

Good news writing relates to communicating messages which the reader finds pleasant and is keen to receive. Instances of good news include the following:

- A request for a loan is considered favourably.
- A job applicant has been selected.
- An employee has been promoted.

Good news is best communicated in a direct manner. Your opening sentence should start on a pleasant note. Cover the good news in brief sentences. Follow a friendly tone. Convey the positive content of the message. Avoid irrelevant details. Do not wait till the end of the letter to convey the good news. If the good news has a limiting factor or a portion that is not considered favourable, put it across in a positive manner. Make sure the letter or writing leaves a positive impression in tune with the content of the letter. Otherwise, the good news will be marred by poor writing.

Bad news letters are those that convey an unpleasant message. The reader is likely to be disappointed. It may relate to failure in a test or interview, rejection of a raise or promotion, lay off or retrenchment or any such event that would be unpleasant to the receiver. The drafting of a bad news message has to be done with more care than a good-news letter. The writer should visualize the extent of shock or hurt that would be caused to the recipient. Choose words that will soften the impact of the message. Explain what is essential. Take care to avoid being blunt or hurtful or apologetic. State the facts and avoid being judgmental. Be polite.

Whether you should give the bad news direct and upfront or after some explanation depends upon the content and your relationship with the recipient. Elsewhere in this book (Refer Chapter 20), we have discussed crisis management and the sensitivity under the heading 'Communication in a Crisis'.

Even in respect of routine every day letters, there is scope for making the letter sound favorable by avoiding negative words. Some examples are given below:

Instead of “The repair to your car cannot be completed for a week”, say, “We can complete all the repairs and deliver your car by next week.”
Language for Communication

NOTES

Instead of “There will be a delay in sending the items”,
say, “We shall arrange to supply the items at the earliest”.
Instead of, “Your performance is very poor”,
say, “You must show all-round improvement”.

Good writers always keep in view the goodwill factor. Like the positive or good news letters, the bad news letters too should carry the goodwill factor without overdoing it. One need not be blunt and necessarily use hurtful or carelessly selected words. Goodwill factor can be sustained by giving reasons for declining the request, delay, rejection, etc. expressing regret and also by suggesting future course of action.

While conveying a no or refusal, remember three things. First, convey the no in the warmest possible manner. Refrain from making hurtful comments. Use nice words. Second, avoid being personal and convey the refusal in impersonal terms. Third, try to tell the person what he or she should do get a yes instead of no. This alone will earn you much goodwill from the recipient of your letter.

Persuasive Writing

Writing effective persuasive messages constitutes a challenging task for any good writer. Here the writer has to go beyond a mere statement of fact. The writer has to not merely inform, but has to go beyond and persuade. Persuasive messages call for planning in advance and working out an appropriate strategy. The writer should be clear about his or her approach towards persuading the reader. The type of persuasion would vary depending upon the target group and the objective of the persuader.

In order to make persuasive writing effective, the writer should first be clear about the meaning of persuasion, and how to persuade. According to the Business Dictionary.com, persuasion is a process aimed at changing a person’s (or group’s) attitude or behaviour toward some event, idea, object, or other person (s) by using written or spoken words to convey information, feelings or reasoning, or a combination of them. Thus, persuasion is a process which calls for deliberate and planned efforts. In written communication, it means writing in a manner that influences the reader to respond as intended by the communicator.

The process of persuasion has several approaches, and a look at some related words helps us in understanding how to be persuasive in writing. The word persuade has several synonyms or shades of meaning. They include satisfy, impress, urge, assure, prompt, prevail upon, cajole, induce, reason, gain confidence of and work over. When the writer starts writing to persuade, he or she should be conscious of these options, and choose the most appropriate one or a combination of those to make the persuasion effective.

Persuasive communication, generally speaking, should cover the following steps:

1. **Make a clear statement of purpose.** The writer should be clear about the objective of the message.
2. **Identify the audience.** Understanding the audience helps the writer to tailor the message accordingly.
3. **Use persuasive techniques.** Techniques include using questions, rhetorical questions, analogies, and so on.
4. **Provide evidence and support.** Use facts, data, and statistics to strengthen the message.
5. **Use active voice.** Active voice makes the message more direct and compelling.
6. **Use vivid language.** Vivid language helps to create a mental picture in the reader’s mind.
7. **End with a call to action.** A clear call to action encourages the reader to take the desired action.
1. Gain reader’s attention.
2. Make your opening statement so as to get the reader interested in what you want to say.
3. State clearly and reason out.
4. Anticipate probable resistance and try to address it.
5. End by seeking action.

The objective of any persuasive writing is to seek the desired action. Your effectiveness in persuasion depends on the extent to which your written message influences the readers and wins them over. Persuasion succeeds when the reader is induced, convinced or prevailed upon to act as intended. Your strategy will determine what would be the most appropriate approach to persuade the reader in any given context - whether to make an emotional appeal, or to follow a strong logical reasoning, or emphasize and highlight the benefits and advantages, or use a combination of these, depends upon the subject and the target group. You need to be clear about the audience or target group, their needs, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, and so on. You cannot really woo them or influence them without understanding them. Make your writing as target-specific as possible.

In the real world of business, persuasive communication is an everyday happening. There are multifarious ways in which persuasion takes place. When you are inviting someone, when you are seeking an appointment, when you are organizing a customer meet, when you are sending a proposal, when you are seeking a favour, when you are applying for a loan, when you are seeking an admission, when you are enlisting someone’s support, when you are bringing something to notice, and in many other different ways persuasion is taking place. Of course, the intensity and the words you use may vary depending upon the context.

The most ubiquitous or pervasive type of persuasive communication relates to the sales letters and advertising communication. Sales letters, product demonstration meets, direct mailers, brochures, pamphlets, customer oriented letters, and a host of such other written messages flowing from business organizations are all examples of persuasive communication. In writing such messages, the business writer should ensure clarity, presentation appeal, the ‘you’ factor, vibrant and vigorous words, and all such factors which make persuasion result-oriented. Often, persuasion calls for repetitive efforts. The initial message will have to be supplemented by follow-up letters and reinforcing messages.

Check Your Progress

4. How is good news best communicated?
5. What is the objective of persuasive writing?
4.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

NOTES

1. Written messages can be broken down into the following parts:
   - Words
   - Sentences
   - Paragraphs

2. Jargon refers to technical vocabulary used by members to communicate within a specialized group.

3. Writing style refers to the way in which the information is expressed and not the substance.

4. Good news is best communicated in a direct manner.

5. The objective of any persuasive writing is to seek the desired action.

4.6 SUMMARY

- Words are the fundamental unit of writing. Words combine to make sentences and sentences are arranged logically to form paragraphs.
- For the written message to be clear and understandable to the reader, both clarity of thought and clarity of expression are required on the part of the writer.
- A message is ambiguous if it means more than one thing. Avoid using ambiguous sentences in your message as this may confuse the reader.
- The accuracy of the message depends on what is said and how it is said.
- It is important that you pay attention to the basic rules for good written English - accurate spelling and correct use of grammar and punctuation.
- Writing style refers to the way in which the information is expressed and not the substance. It is related to the choice of words and their arrangement into sentences, paragraphs and the complete message.
- Good news writing relates to communicating messages which the reader finds pleasant and is keen to receive.
- Bad news letters are those that convey an unpleasant message. The reader is likely to be disappointed.

4.7 KEY WORDS

- Clarity: It is the quality of being coherent and intelligible.
- Jargon: It means special words or expressions used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand.
• **Persuasive**: It means to be good at persuading someone to do or believe something through reasoning or the use of temptation.
• **Brevity**: It means to be concise and exact use of words in writing or speech.

### 4.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**
1. Why is it important for written messages to be accurate?
2. What are some of the ways in which one can improve one’s writing skills?
3. What are the essentials of a good writing style?

**Long-Answer Questions**
1. Discuss the principles of effective writing.
2. What do you understand by persuasive writing? Discuss.
3. What is good news and bad news communication? How should such news be communicated?

### 4.9 FURTHER READINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss communication in organizations in detail. Organization as a means to get things done has been practiced by humans since time immemorial. Interaction between the members of organizations to achieve shared goals became the central feature of such organization. Eventually, human organizations took the shape of much complex and diverse business organizations, and as a result, the role and importance of communication in organizations her increased manifold. Today, effective organizational communication has become a prerequisite for organizational excellence.

Almost all the modern organizations of the 21st century have been witnessing and operating in turbulent times characterized by changing technology, economic pressures, globalization, diversification and several other factors. Many of these modern organizations which have survived the turbulence give credit to effective organizational communication.

Managers today have realized that an important part and the majority of time spent on their work is on communication whether it is meetings, face-to-face discussions, memos, letters, e-mails, business reports, and so on. A study published in Business Outlook revealed that executives and managers in an organization spend staggering amounts of time in communicating. The study, which was based on the responses of 1000 employers of Fortune 1000 companies, found that workers send and receive an average of 1798 messages each day via the telephone,
email, faxes, papers, and face-to-face communications. Some experts believe that the average business executive spends 75 to 80 per cent of the time or about 45 minutes of every hour communicating.

Effective organizational communication has become a prerequisite in every organization and serves at two levels, both inside and outside the organization. Internally, effective organizational communication infuses confidence towards an organization’s vision and mission, connects employees and motivates them, eases change and contributes to overall development. Externally, it assists in creating and developing an organization’s image, exploring newer avenues and linking with society.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the evolution of organizational communication
- Examine the different perspectives of organizational communication
- Describe the different methods of internal and external communication in organizations

5.2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The roots of communication science and studies can be traced back to the times of ancient Rome and Greece. The credit for identifying the foundation principles of organizational communication originated in the fourth century with Chinese scholars working on communication issues within bureaucracy and government and people. Several other ancient eastern scholars focused on information flow, message fidelity and the quality of information within their governmental bureaucracy.

Organizational communication like other fields of specialization emerged scientifically and systematically in the 20th century. The early contributors in the development of the field were P.E. Lull and W. Charles Redding at the University of Purdue. Prior to them, individuals like Chester Bernard and M.P. Follet were involved in appreciating the role of communication in organizations.

Follet, who is often referred to as the first management consultant in the United States, focused on message complexity, appropriate channel choice and worker participation in organizations. Bernard placed communication at the heart of the organizational process and stressed on mutual interaction for organization’s success.

Several authors since then have attempted to contribute in the development of the field.
Dale Carnegie’s landmark work, How to Win Friends and Influence People in 1936 highlighted the importance of oral presentation and written communication skills for managers to succeed in organizations and added value to the field.

Alexander R. Heron in 1942 wrote a book, Sharing Information With Employees, that took a fresh look at manager-employee communication for the first time.

Highlighting the emergence of the field, the authors Putnam and Cheney (1985) concluded that organizational communication developed out of three main speech communication traditions viz. public address, persuasion and social science research on interpersonal, small group and mass communication.

Redding and Thompkins (1988) identified three periods in the development of organizational communication. These are:

- Era of Preparation (1900 – 1940s)
- Era of Identification and Consolidation (1940 – 1970s)
- Era of Maturity and Innovation (1970 – Present)

From the 1900s to the 1940s, i.e., during the Era of Preparation, the emphasis was laid to establish the discipline. The main focus during this phase was on public address, business writing, managerial communication and persuasion.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, i.e., the Era of Identification and Consolidation, witnessed the emergence of business and industrial communication along with the recognition of organizational relationships and their importance.

The Era of Maturity and Innovation, i.e., from the 1970s to the present, is a more recent phase and has been witnessing increased work in the area of empirical research, concept development, theoretical premises and philosophical critique. Today, organizational communication has evolved itself into a full-fledged independent discipline and has gained respectable recognition in the larger academic domain.

At least four perspectives can be taken into account to understand the history and development of organizational communication. These include:

I. The Classical Perspective
II. The Human Relations and Resources Perspective
III. The Integrative Perspectives
IV. The Contemporary Perspectives

I. Organizational Communication from the Classical Perspective

Organizational communication from the classical perspective has been mostly used as an instrument of direction and control. This theoretical perspective advocates vertical communication particularly downward communication (top to bottom) that is mostly used in communicating rules and regulation, policies and procedures. The communication practices of the era characterized and endorsed presence of
highly formalized and centralized nature of organizations. The classical perspective era is characterized by the works of F. W. Taylor (scientific management), German Sociologist Max Weber (bureaucratic theory), Henry Fayol (administrative principles) and the like.

Fredrick W. Taylor, who propounded scientific management theory, was a foreman at Bethlehem Steel Works in Pennsylvania in the early 1900s and worked on improving efficiency by introducing scientific management principles. These included:

- Replacing the rule-of-thumb with scientific methods;
- Scientific selection of workers and role assignment and training;
- Detailed description of work and time; and
- Proper division of work between manager and workers.

Max Weber worked and wrote about bureaucracy as an ideal concept for modern organizations. He wrote about organizational features like specialization and division of labour, written rules and procedures, hierarchy of authority, formal communication, detailed job descriptions, employment based on merit and impersonal environment.

Henry Fayol, a successful manager in a French mining company, propounded 14 principles of management that came to be known as General and Industrial Administration. These became important guidelines for most managers of that time. His principles included:

- Division of Work
- Authority
- Discipline
- Unity of Command
- Unity of Direction
- Subordination of Individual Interests to General Interests
- Remuneration
- Centralization
- Scalar Chain
- Order
- Equity
- Stability of Tenure
- Initiative
- Espirit De Corps

II. Organizational Communication from the Human Relations and Resources Perspective

Unlike the classical perspective, the Human Relations and Resources Perspective supports communication flow from lower to upper levels of the organization. The
The human relations perspective was criticized on the ground that while it focused on human elements in an organization, it still primarily was concerned with productivity. Moreover, critics also pointed out that the concepts were treated merely superficially. The human resources perspective moved further with creating possibilities of greater employee engagement and participation in decision-making.

The perspective as became evident in William Ouchi’s (1981) Theory Z illustrates the importance of lifetime employment, teamwork, collective responsibility and a sound mind and body. Such an approach can be seen in many Japanese companies while implementing Quality Circles (QC), Quality of Work Life (QWL), Management By Objectives (MBO) and Total Quality Management (TQM). Such systems/practices are resultant of flattened hierarchies, increased participation, better quality control and effective teamwork as displayed by many of Japanese companies.

III. The Integrative Perspectives

Organizational communication from integrative perspective portrayed a picture different from the earlier two perspectives. Where the classical perspective emphasized on formal and central structures and procedures and focused mainly on vertical communication channels and human relation/resource perspective advocated decentralization and horizontal flows, the integrative perspective did not rest on the rule that there is ‘only one best way’; rather, given the nature of communication in newer organizations, the approach believed that ‘it depends’.

Critiques questioned the classical and human perspectives for failing to account for the environment in which all organizations operate. Both the
perspectives failed to consider the impact of the varied elements of the business environment. Two important perspectives therefore emerged from the 1950s to the 1970s to embody the integrative perspective and included the socio-technical and system model.

The roots of socio-technical system can be traced back to the early 1950s when Eric Trist and K.W. Bamforth along with Tavistock Institute studied the English Coal Mining industry where mechanization had actually decreased worker productivity. In his study, Trist concluded that organizations (also known as systems) have two aspects, namely, social and technical. The social system includes people and their habitual attitudes, values, behavioural styles and relationships. The technical system includes machinery, processes, procedures and a physical arrangement. The two aspects of the system are strongly linked and interconnected. The aspects do not work in isolation, rather strong interconnections between them determine a system’s performance.

In his study, Trist found that in the coalmines, mechanization had disturbed closely-knit teams that had previously performed the entire extraction process from blasting to hauling to sorting. His study revealed:

- With mechanization, different people performed the various steps of extraction on different shifts and this caused coordination problems.
- The equipment was so loud people could not communicate and this inhibited teamwork and team development.
- The pay system went from a group incentive system to an hourly wage system and this destroyed monetary motivation.
- People felt alone, isolated, and unappreciated deep in the earth. This destroyed the powerful intrinsic motivators of pride, satisfaction and belonging.

The overall result for the English mining industry was decreased productivity and labour strife.

Trist and Bamforth in their socio-technical system model proposed the interconnectedness of technology and social benefits. They suggested effective training of workers must take place in handling newer equipment, multi-shift teams should set their own production rates, and pay levels should depend on the combined output of all shifts. When implemented, the socio-technical system resulted into far greater output as compared with increased mechanization.

Another integrative perspective to organizational communication is that of the systems model. The model presents an organization as consisting of parts that interact continuously with its environment in order to survive.

A landmark in systems theory is the open systems approach applied by Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn. The model evolved between the 1950s and 1960s from economical, sociological and natural sciences theories.
The model attempts to explain organizational behaviour by mapping the repeated cycles of input, throughput, output and feedback between the organization and its environment. The figure below illustrates the open-system model as developed by Katz and Kahn.

**Fig. 5.1 The Open Systems Model**

As proposed by Katz and Kahn, the system receives an input from the environment in the form of resources. The systems then process the input through a process known as throughput and produces outputs in order to restore balance in the environment. The system then seeks feedback to determine the effectiveness of the output. When applied in organizations, Katz and Kahn concluded that the model aims at maintaining organizational survival and emphasize long-term goals as against short-term goal attainment.

Katz and Kahn further elaborated that organization systems can be described as open or closed. An open system exchanges information/resources with its environment. A closed system does not exchange information/resources. In practice, such a system has a very limited information/resource exchange.

Further, open and closed systems can also be categorized into organic and mechanistic systems. An organic system is internally flexible and allows a very high degree influence on decision making. In a mechanistic system, the activities are highly specialized, clearly defined and standard operating procedures are always followed.

**IV. The Contemporary Perspectives**

The duration from the 1970s to 1980s, as observed by Gareth Morgan and Linda Smircich in *The Case for Qualitative Research*, published in the Academy of Management Review witnessed a shift in the view of organizations. The shift in perspective from objectivity toward subjectivity became evident.
The objective view, also referred to as an outside view, considered organizations as concrete and observable as is the physical world to the scientist. The objectivists pay more attention to the structure. The subjectivists view organizations as being created by the members themselves. They see organization as an ongoing process of organizing and pay more attention on behaviour.

Morgan in 1986 in his book, *Images of Organization*, presents metaphors of organization and relates them to machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons and instruments of domination. In the discussion that follows, we shall discuss two of the commonly and important metaphors, namely, the organization as a brain and the organization as a culture.

Morgan was the first to address brain-like limitations and capabilities of organizations in his book *Images of Organizations*. His work was drawn on the work of Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon and his colleagues, whose work explored the similarity between human and organizational decision making in the 1940s and 1950s. Simon proposed the concept of Bounded Rationality – individuals and organizations are capable of only limited forms of rationality. According to Simon, perfect rationality cannot exist as access to entire information is not possible. Thus, organizations can consider a few alternatives while making decisions where accurate prediction of outcome becomes difficult. Organizations are thus guided by rules of thumb and limited information that make decision making manageable.

While working on capabilities of organizations, Morgan found that they can learn like brains and identified two kinds of learning organizations are capable of, namely, single loop learning and double loop learning. These concepts were developed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon.

Single loop learning is the ability of any system to adjust its behaviour in response to negative feedback. The loop has an ability to identify and correct any error against a given set of objectives. The figure below depicts single loop learning:

![Single Loop Learning Diagram](source)

*Fig. 5.2 Single-Loop Learning*

In practice, single loop learning exists in many organizations that have a highly developed information system which keep organizations on track.

On the other hand, double loop learning is a system where it not only adjusts its performance toward set objectives, but also questions and adjusts those set objectives if necessary. The figure below illustrates the double loop learning:

![Double-Loop Learning Diagram](image)

Fig. 5.3 Double-Loop Learning


Morgan observed that in practice double loop learning is difficult and not many organizations have been able to achieve the same. This is particularly true in case of bureaucratic organizations which cannot discuss problems openly and adopt a bottom-to-top participative approach.

In addition to single and double loop learning, Morgan also worked on the brain’s holographic character – the brain’s ability to create and present three dimensional images. He argued that the ability of organizations to build a complex network of connections between individual parts results in efficient and self-supporting operations.

The culture concept is a currently popular and a very rich metaphor for understanding organizations. Every organization is unique on its own. Many of them differ in language, traditions, symbols, practices, procedures, vision, and so on, that distinguishes them from others.

Edgar Schein defined organizational culture as the basic assumption its members share. Schein also provided critical insights into how culture works in organizations. He identified three interdependent levels that assist in understanding the working of culture. These are mentioned below:

- **Artefacts**: There are certain symbols used by organizations to represent its culture. Artefacts are the first ever communicative behaviour we encounter in any organization. Office technology, office architecture, lighting, artwork, written documents, personal items on the desk, clothing
preferences, personal appearances, name tags, security badges, policy handbook or websites are all examples of artefacts that speak of the organization’s cultural values and practices.

- **Values:** Another level that assists in effective understanding of organizations is that of values, which serve as the yardstick for judging behaviour. The value system in an organization sets guidelines for getting things done.

- **Basic Assumptions:** Schein refers to basic assumptions as unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings that influence one’s own experience as a member of an organization.

Schein further argues that an outsider may uncover a culture’s assumptions by organizing the above mentioned levels into the following five categories:

- **Assumptions about the organization’s relationship to its environment:** Includes member consideration about organization vision and mission, opportunities, threats, successes etc.

- **Organization’s Assumption about Reality:** Includes anything that shape an organization’s decisions. Such assumptions might reflect tradition (we have always done it this way), trial and error (let us try and see how it works), or scientific test (our research proves this is the way to go).

- **Assumptions about Human Nature:** Includes the assessment of human nature whether people are ‘good’ or ‘bad’.

- **Assumption about the Nature of Human Activity:** Includes whether people should act to change things, accept things as they are, or work in harmony with their surroundings.

- **Assumptions about Human Relationships:** Whether, for example, autocracy, paternalism, consultation, participation, delegation, or collegiality should colour the relationships within the organization.

Examination of the cultural perspective began in the 1980s. Famous books published during the time focused on organizational cultures. In one of the popular books, Corporate Cultures, Terrence Deal and Allan Kennedy derived four basic types of organizational cultures. These are:

1. **The Tough-Guy, Macho Culture**
2. **The Work Hard/Play Hard Culture**
3. **The Bet-Your-Company Culture**
4. **The Process Culture**

- **The tough-guy, macho culture** is characterized by individualistic employees who take big risks and get quick feedback on the success or failure of their actions. The stress level is high and colleagues watch one another, piranha-like, for signs of weakness. In such a culture, corporate heroes come and go quickly.
(ii) The work hard/play hard culture maintains a high level of relatively low-risk activity. The organization’s credo emphasizes teamwork, meetings, employee contests, and high-volume output.

(iii) The bet-your-company culture requires its members to make decisions for heavy stakes, but provides feedback slowly. The central event in such organizations is the business meeting, where information sharing takes place. Risk-taking and immaturity are not tolerated.

(iv) The process culture characterizes organizations where attention is paid not on what is done, but on how things are done. The bureaucracy is a wonderful example of such organizations where titles and formalities take prime importance.

In practice, a single organizational culture might not exist. Every organization often adopts and follows different and competing organizational cultures. For example, accountants may adhere to one philosophy, marketing people to another, while different policy handbooks might guide production people and human resource personnel.

Morgan’s brain metaphor proved that organizations can learn. This learning, however, depends clearly on its capability in establishing communication between its members and the environment. Concepts of single loop and double loop learning re-endorse the importance of communication. An organization’s holographic character furthermore invites open and efficient communication systems that facilitate individuals working in part for shared goals.

The culture metaphor moves ahead to view communication from an anthropologist’s view and acknowledges the use of language, symbols, and artefacts in expressing and forming meaning. In this sense, organizational communication is the process of sharing and framing culture within an organization. Managers dealing with organizations benefit if they understand people working around them in a better way and communication facilitates the same.

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**Check Your Progress**

1. Who were the early contributors to the field of organizational communication?
2. From the classical perspective, what is organizational communication used as?
3. What is double loop learning?

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### 5.3 CHANNELS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Every business organization employs people. The number of people employed, however, would vary depending on the size and nature of the business. Larger
businesses and service sector organizations employ relatively larger complements of staff. Banks, insurance companies, public utilities are all a part of the service industry, where the delivery of the service takes place with the help of the staff. Even in a computerized environment, certain manpower has to be deployed, though the intensity may be substantially less as compared to an environment where the degree of mechanization and computerization is lower. As organizations employ a large number of people, and have extensive contacts with clients and customers, correspondence with them becomes extremely important. Correspondence between members of an organization can be termed as **internal communication**. On the other hand, communication between an organization and a customer or a client can be termed as **external communication**. For example, when a business organization exchanges information with other business organizations, government offices, banks, insurance companies, customers, suppliers, leaders and general people and so on, it is external communication. External communication covers how a provider interacts with those outside their own organization.

Staff in business organizations are often categorized into various hierarchical levels—subordinate, clerical, supervisory, managerial and executive. The nature and type of letters to be addressed to various categories of staff would also vary. At the managerial level, there is often a greater intensity of communication, for the manager has certain responsibilities for the functioning of the branch or the department. Quite a large proportion of letters targeted at the branch is often addressed to the branch manager, as he/she is the team leader and overall in-charge of the branch or unit. Nevertheless, recognizing the growing importance of eliciting a higher level of participation from all categories of employees at the workplace, business organizations are strengthening their communication with the employees through various means. Service providing organizations, in particular, are increasingly treating their human resources as valuable assets, and are sharing more and more information about the way the business is going—corporate objectives and concerns, public image, performance highlights, emerging environment, competition and success and failures in various spheres.

The good, the bad, the ugly—all aspects of business are shared with the employees and their response is elicited. Employee communication, it is to be noted, is particularly vital in times of crisis or when the organization is passing through a difficult phase. As the employees are important stakeholders of any organization, every effort should be made to take them into confidence and keep them posted on everything in the company that affects their welfare. It is very necessary that the employees learn about events and developments of larger concern to the organizations from authentic internal sources, rather than be forced to gather bits and pieces from the public, the customers or the media and their own conjectures.

Letters to staff within the organization have their own sensitivity, especially when they are from personnel, inspection and other such departments. The matter becomes more so when the issue relates to disciplinary matters, calling for
explanation, depriving benefits and pointing out deficiencies. Every word assumes a meaning, and hence with such letters, the letter writer should ensure that while the message is unambiguous, feelings are not hurt on account of poor expression or the wrong choice of words.

One can think of a wide variety of letters to staff members. They may convey benefit, loss, punishment, appreciation, concern, progress or setback, and may in turn cause joy, hurt, anger, apprehension or disillusionment. Since these letters cover human issues, the letter writer should be conscious of the reaction to the letter and use the appropriate tone, intensity and modulation. In organizations, letters can be written by the personnel department to employees about things such as transfer and postings, leave sanction and refusal, disciplinary matters or seeking explanation, salary and perquisites, interviews, tests and promotion-related matters, performance appraisal, appreciation of performance and drawing attention to weaknesses, staff deployment and work distribution, sanctions and refusals, etc. Letters can be written by the marketing department internally and externally about new products and services, customer service initiatives and concerns, competition and market-related developments, talking points on schemes and services, employee contests, suggestion schemes, counter sales and product promotion, additions to customer base, customer complaints and their redressal, etc.

Letters can also be written to employees from the human resource department about training programs, postings and feedback, motivational letters, self-development opportunities, greetings, appreciation and condolence and quality circles and study circles. Letters can be written from the accounts department to employees about loans and related matters, tax-related issues, recovery of amount due, provident fund and pension and payments, reimbursements and clarifications.

Circulars and Memos

Circulars and memos are a very common method of conveying specific messages across widely spread out units or branches in any large multi-branch organization. These are also examples of internal communication. A circular is generally understood as a written communication addressed to a circle of persons and customers. A circular may cover a notice or advertisement, etc., reproduced for distribution. The process of sending circulars is referred to as circularizing.

A memo, on the other hand, is the abbreviation of the word memorandum. It is understood as a note to help the memory or record of events for future use. In law, a memorandum means a document recording terms of contract. It is also described as an informal letter without signature.

It would be difficult to draw a precise distinction between circulars and memos. Both are often identical in approach and reach. One way of differentiating between circulars and memos is to look at circulars as a means of specific, subject-related instructions, whereas memos cover events and developments. Circulars are generally meant to be followed, whereas memos are noted. Circulars are in
the nature of instructions or guidelines and are expected to be followed mandatorily. Memos are generally a matter of information. Circulars are of a permanent nature, of long-term relevance and may be modified as and when instructions have to be revised. Memos are generally of short-term relevance. Instructions issued by banks, government departments and regulatory bodies like the Reserve Bank of India and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to their offices, exporters, market players, etc. for compliance are generally referred to as circulars.

Referring to banks specifically, all types of instructions covering various functional areas such as deposits, advances, foreign exchange, ancillary services, schemes and facilities are communicated by way of circulars. Circulars cover details of terms and conditions, eligibility criteria, interest rate and service charges. Memos cover details of events or developments such as branch opening and shifting, staff-related matters such as transfers and promotions and market-related developments. The distinction made here is between circulars and memos. This, however, should not be taken as a hard and fast rule, and it would be desirable to follow whatever practice is already in vogue in an organization. Circulars and memos can be general or sectional. Unlike general ones, sectional circulars and memos are addressed only to specific units or sections of people. For example, circulars concerning non-resident Indian (NRI) need be sent only to branches handling NRI accounts. Likewise, circulars and memos pertinent to, say, Mumbai Zone need to be sent only to offices coming within its jurisdiction. Similarly, memos concerning officers need to be circularized among the officer community and circulars relating to rural business need to be circulated only among the rural branches.

Circulars and memos contain vital details of relevance in functional areas, and will have to be referred to frequently by the personnel working in the organization. Due to their crucial importance and reference value, circulars are often carefully indexed, filed and preserved, facilitating ready sourcing and reference. Circulars and memos are issued on an ongoing basis to cover various operational and functional areas, by corporate as well as other administrative and controlling offices and units. Proper indexing into specific areas such as deposits, advances, statements, premises, personnel, regions and schemes is a must to facilitate back reference. Organizations also use different colours for circulars covering different subjects.

Circulars and memos, to be effective, will have to be carefully drafted. They should possess the usual characteristics of a good written communication such as clarity, brevity, cogency and completeness. In view of their importance, quite often, the draft of the circular or memo passes through several levels or tiers for approval. The text gets printed whenever copies required are large in number. Dispatch and distribution are other areas requiring due attention. Care should be taken to ensure that copies reach all concerned in time so that there is no communication gap. Sometimes circulars and memos refer to several previous ones on the subject, which makes it difficult for the user. It would be necessary to bring out a comprehensive or consolidated circular to facilitate easy reference. Sometimes
instructions, directives or guidelines issued by external agencies such as government departments, trade organizations and regulatory bodies are reproduced in circulars. In doing so, care should be taken to clarify the message in terms of internally understood terms, phrases and abbreviations.

**Memorandums**

A memorandum is a written statement or record, especially one circulated for the attention of colleagues at work. It is principally a means of sharing information internally. It relates to a note of something to be remembered and acted upon. The word memorandum came from the Latin word ‘memorare’ which means to remember. In law, a memorandum means a document recording terms of contract. The plural of memorandum is memorandums or memoranda. It is commonly known by its abbreviation, viz., memo.

A memorandum is a means of inter-office correspondence. Memos are sent within an organization from office to office or department to department. In large organizations, memorandums are sent from head office to regional offices, branches, divisions and so on. Of late, memos are sent using the email and the bulky ones and those inappropriate for email have to be sent as printed copies. Memos are intended to be read and acted upon by executives, branch managers, supervisors and all staff members as and when they are addressed to them. Memos may also be referred to as circulars or inter-office memorandum or spiral communication. Large organizations spread across numerous functional departments and geographical areas regularly issue a variety of memos every day or at frequent intervals. In a large organization like a bank, there are many departments such as personnel, credit, accounts, marketing, international business, planning and so on and all of them communicate with the branches, offices and staff through memos and such other internal communication. Memos are used routinely for making announcements, giving instructions, giving reports and conveying policy decisions.

Memos may be typed or printed and dispatched to the target groups and offices across the country and even abroad. For easy reference, memos are often printed in different colours with different departments using specific colours. With the advent of electronic communication, memos are now being sent across by e-mail and are also put on the internal network or intranet for the use of offices and staff. Large organizations like banks may also differentiate between memos and circulars and use them for specific messages.

It would be difficult do draw a precise distinction between circulars and memos. Both are often identical in approach and reach. Some organizations use circulars as a means of specific, subject-related instruction whereas memos are used to cover events and developments.

Circulars are in the form of instructions or guidelines and are expected to be mandatorily followed. Memos are generally a matter of information. Circulars are
of a permanent nature, of long-term relevance and may be modified as and when
instructions have to be revised. Memos are generally of short-term relevance. Any
such distinction, however, is only a matter of internal arrangement and in most
books on business communication published abroad, there are references to memos
and no discussion on circulars.

Memos contain vital details of relevance on functional areas and may have
to be referred to frequently by the personnel working in the organization. Due to
their importance and reference value, memos are often carefully indexed, filed and
preserved, facilitating ready sourcing and reference. Although memos are like
business letters there are some noteworthy differences.

**Business Letters and Memos—Noteworthy Differences**

- Business letters are addressed to outsiders and constitute external
  communication. Memos are addressed to employees and constitute internal
  communication.
- Business letters are generally formal in nature, whereas memos are more
  informal.
- Business letters are sent out on a company letterhead whereas memos need
  not be written and sent on the letter head.
- Business letters should necessarily have inside address, salutation and
  complimentary closing.
- Business letters have to be necessarily signed whereas memos do not carry
  any signature.
- Business letters should not use unfamiliar jargon whereas memos can use
  internally accepted jargon and specialized terms.
- Business letters should start by providing the context and preparing the
  reader whereas the memos can come straight to the subject and come to
  the heart of the matter. In internal communication, there is a presumption
  that the reader knows the basic facts.
- Business letters should aim at building goodwill and relationship besides
  sharing information, whereas memos are focused on sharing information
  and communicating for action.
- Business letters are largely addressed to individuals whereas memos are
  largely addressed to groups, teams or a large number of recipients. Memos
  formally addressed to individuals, however, should be typed/printed and
  signed.

In writing a good memo, the following points need particular attention.

**Take Time to Plan Your Memos**

Any office memorandum constitutes a piece of official communication. There are
many types of memos. Some are aimed at providing information. Some are aimed
at eliciting feedback or other relevant details. Some may talk about goals, objectives and action points. In that sense, they may be seeking specific action. Memos are sent across to inform, motivate, persuade, educate, and galvanize people, groups and teams into achieving results.

Given such varied objectives, the memo writer should sit down and plan out the contents of the memo before actually drafting it. He or she should collect relevant information, figures and details which have to be shared with the readers. The memo writer should be clear about his target groups—an employee or branch manager or sales personnel or unit heads or executives. The contents/language and the tone should be appropriate to the targeted readers of the memo. The memo should have the right tone and emphasis. The memo writer should also decide about the length of the memorandum keeping in view the details to be shared. The memorandum may have to have some relevant annexures and tables or charts, if need be. It may have to make some references to the earlier memos or other relevant communication. All this involves proper planning.

The memo writer should also plan how to reach out to the target groups. Memos can be sent out in a typed format and if the number is large, sufficient copies of the memo may have to be printed. In this case, the writer has to keep in mind the time taken for getting the memo copies printed and the actual travel time before the memo despatched from the office reaches the recipient. Memos often carry a sense of urgency and as such should reach the addressee expeditiously or within the shortest possible time. The advent of electronic channels of communication has made it possible for the memo to reach out instantaneously. That is why organizations today resort to email or internal network or company website to convey internal communication.

**Drafting the Memorandum**

Memos are drafted keeping in view the context of the communication as well as the recipient of the message. Memos are written in the second person with a direct approach. Every effort is made to involve the recipient and the word ‘you’ is used often. The message is conveyed in clear terms using a simple and direct language. There is no need to spend time on niceties like a salutation (Dear sir) or a complimentary close (Yours faithfully, etc.) or a signature at the end of the letter. Since the memo is meant to be read by colleagues within the office, the writing should be to express, and not to impress. The tone should be neither too casual nor too formal.

Memos, as we have already noted, often reach out to a large section of people spread across the organization. Since memos are taken seriously by people to whom they are addressed and also acted upon as directed therein, every care should be taken in drafting and despatching memos. Quite often, memos are not drafted by the person under whose authority they are issued. Hence, if any miscommunication occurs on account of the negligence or callousness of the person drafting the memo, the authority or the department issuing the memo would have
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Drafting of office memos thus calls for good communication skills. When the subject matter dealt with is complex or specialized in nature, such as clarifying legal aspects or announcing the features of a new product or a pricing policy, all relevant facts and figures will have to be covered in an organized manner. There is often a need to give examples and instructions and also append relevant annexures so as to amplify and clarify the message. Memos carrying ambiguity, inconsistency or incomplete details may end up creating confusion and result in avoidable clarifications being sought by the readers. On the other hand, a clearly worded, logically consistent, unambiguous and complete memo gets well understood, facilitating prompt response.

Readability is indeed an important pre-requisite not only for internal memos, but also, more particularly, for all communication addressed to customers and the public. As noted in a box item earlier, organizational literature often sent to the customers, prospects and the public is often more difficult than standard levels of readability. One area where this is particularly evident is financial literature such as the prospectus. In this regard, communication experts refer to the following example of a Mutual Fund Prospectus.

**Employee Newsletters**

Employees constitute a very important segment of the stakeholders. Well informed and efficient employees are considered to be an asset for every business. That is why most large sized business organizations bring out their own employee newsletters with regular periodicity. Employees are considered to be the ambassadors of every business organization. That is why progressive organizations spend time and resources on employee education. That builds employee morale and keeps the employee motivation levels high. Employee newsletters are an effective tool of employee education and employee related communication.

Employee newsletters generally cover news of relevance to the employees. These would include events, activities and developments relating to the company...
and the industry. They also specifically cover information about HRD initiatives, employee facilities, welfare measures, changes in terms and conditions, disciplinary matters, motivational messages, industry level settlements, changes in management, new projects coming up and all such items that would be of interest to the employees.

The main advantages of employee newsletters are: (1) they help build employee loyalty, (2) they act as a regular source of communication from the employers, (3) provide all relevant information to the employees and keep them well informed, and (4) help in employee education.

Through the newsletter, the target sections are kept informed about the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Just as there are outgoing newsletters meant for customers, prospects and other public, there are internal or employee newsletters in large organizations. Employee newsletters constitute a beneficial medium of communication through which information and developments of relevance are shared with the employees on a periodic basis. Such newsletters may be ad hoc or of fixed periodicity. Very large organizations, where thousands of people are employed, across widely spread geographical regions, regularly bring out newsletters which serve a very useful purpose. In fact, in larger organizations, there may be more than one newsletter, brought out on a functional basis. There may be an economic newsletter, personnel or HRD newsletter or training newsletter. Depending on the skills of the people associated with bringing out such newsletters, the design, format and presentation are made not only informative and educative, but also appealing. House magazines brought out by organizations for the benefit of their employees also belong to this genre.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that internal communication within the organization takes place through various well-drafted internal letters, circulars, memos, newsletters, booklets, brochures and house magazines. Communication through bulletin boards or notice boards too comes in handy in carrying messages across various levels, offices and personnel. While selective, well-written internal communication certainly has its merits, it should be noted that any excessive and unregulated effort leading to virtual explosion of written messages should be avoided. Branch managers and other personnel receive such regular loads of written material, and unless the writer takes pains to make the communication attractive, interesting and brief, there is every possibility of its getting lost in the labyrinth of literature.

5.3.1 Electronic Mail Messages

E-mails are messages that are composed, transmitted and usually read on the computer screens. They have virtually replaced the traditional letters and are perhaps soon going to replace the telephone as the preferred means of communication. In fact e-mails have become so popular that there is a substantial
increase in the amount of information we are flooded with through this medium. E-mails can be sent internally to staff, as well as externally to customers and clients.

Due to their speed and cost benefit, e-mails are virtually sent without giving much thought to the urgency of the message and the quality of the written communication which at times creates problems.

- E-mails are different from traditional forms of written business communication like letters.
- E-mails are extensively preferred for their speed and broadcasting power.
- Their quick turnaround time makes them a preferred means of communication in today’s jet age.
- The quick turnaround time also makes it more ‘conversational’ than paper.
- This conversational aspect also makes it less formal than the traditional letters even in business related e-mails.
- In fact, people generally do not follow netiquettes—an informal code of conduct or set of rules that e-mail users are expected to follow while sending messages on the Internet.
- E-mail language also tends to be informal and one needs to keep in mind the language one uses while sending out mails to superiors.
- Difference in hardware and software between the sender and the receiver can result in the mail looking very different how it was sent
- In composing e-mails, one needs to keep in mind the subject lines, page layout, emphasis, status, language and attachments.
- You should ensure that you write brief descriptive subject lines for your messages as people often choose to open or ignore mails after reading the subject lines. It should, therefore, give a clear idea of the content of the message.
- Avoid sending messages with the subject line blank.
- Restrict the paragraph length of your mails to two–three sentences.
- Unnecessary marking of cc should also be avoided.
- All capital letters are perceived as shouting and the excessive use of the uppercase is considered bad netiquette.
- E-mails need to be specifically checked for grammatical mistakes as many people feel offended if they receive mails that are full of errors.
- E-mails are a permanent record of what one has written and can easily be forwarded to other people. Therefore, one has to be extremely cautious about what and how one is writing.
- Another major advantage of e-mails is the ease at which different types of files (word, excel, J-peg, etc.) can be attached.
Check if it is all right to send very heavy files before you actually go about sending them as they take long to download and use a lot of disk space.

While forwarding messages, put a couple of comments on top of the message.

Overuse of acronyms should be avoided.

We will learn more about emails in Unit 10.

**Videoconferencing**

It is the live exchange of information among people distanced from each other but linked by a telecommunication system. Like e-mails, videoconferencing can be used to communicate internally as well as externally. The technique was very expensive earlier and could not be used for routine applications such as telemedicine, distance education or business meetings. Video teleconference systems rapidly evolved in the 1990s. In the 1990s, IP (Internet protocol) based videoconferencing became possible, and more efficient technologies were developed permitting desktop or PC based videoconferencing. Today we have modern plasma videoconferencing systems available with multiple user interface.

The popularity of videoconferencing has grown tremendously in recent times due to the increased cost of travel, and more affordable transmission rates.

**Guidelines for Conducting Successful Videoconferences**

- Plan well in advance for the conference.
- Prepare a detailed agenda like you would do for a meeting and follow it.
- Involve all participants equally during the meeting.
- Speak normally and clearly. Don’t shout.
- Remember the reduced non-verbal communication in videoconferences has to be made up by clarity in speech.
- Address individuals by their names to assure their attention when speaking.
- During the videoconference, introduce yourself and wait for the camera to focus on you before you start speaking.
- Limit the use of gestures and restrict movement.
- Prepare all graphics keeping the video in mind.
- Use and provide appropriate handouts.
- Minute the meeting as you would normally do.
Check Your Progress

4. What is a memo?
5. What are circulars?
6. What are e-mails?

5.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The early contributors in the development of the field were P.E. Lull and W. Charles Redding at the University of Purdue. Prior to them, individuals like Chester Bernard and M.P. Follet were involved in appreciating the role of communication in organizations.

2. Organizational communication from the classical perspective has been mostly used as an instrument of direction and control.

3. Double loop learning is a system where it not only adjusts its performance toward set objectives, but also questions and adjusts those set objectives if necessary.

4. A memo is the abbreviation of the word memorandum. It is understood as a note to help the memory or record of events for future use.

5. Circulars are in the form of instructions or guidelines and are expected to be mandatorily followed.

6. E-mails are messages that are composed, transmitted and usually read on the computer screens.

5.5 SUMMARY

- The roots of communication science and studies can be traced back to the times of ancient Rome and Greece.
- Organizational communication like other fields of specialization emerged scientifically and systematically in the 20th century.
- Organizational communication from the classical perspective has been mostly used as an instrument of direction and control.
- Unlike the classical perspective, the Human Relations and Resources Perspective supports communication flow from lower to upper levels of the organization.
- As organizations employ a large number of people, and have extensive contacts with clients and customers, correspondence with them becomes...
Correspondence between members of an organization can be termed as internal communication.

- On the other hand, communication between an organization and a customer or a client can be termed as external communication.

- Circulars and memos are a very common method of conveying specific messages across widely spread out units or branches in any large multi-branch organization.

- Memos are drafted keeping in view the context of the communication as well as the recipient of the message.

- E-mails are messages that are composed, transmitted and usually read on the computer screens. They have virtually replaced the traditional letters and are perhaps soon going to replace the telephone as the preferred means of communication.

- Like e-mails, videoconferencing can be used to communicate internally as well as externally.

### 5.6 KEY WORDS

- **Circulars**: It is a letter or advertisement which is distributed to a large number of people.

- **Videoconferencing**: A video conference is a live, visual connection between two or more people residing in separate locations for the purpose of communication.

- **Memorandums**: It is a short note designating something to be remembered, especially something to be done or acted upon in the future.

- **E-mails**: They refer to messages distributed by electronic means from one computer user to one or more recipients via a network.

### 5.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the evolution of organizational communication.
2. Differentiate between memos and circulars.
3. Write a short-note on some of the forms of internal and external communication.
Long-Answer Questions

1. Examine the classical perspective of organizational communication.
2. Describe the Human Relations and Resources Perspective view of organizational communication.
3. Discuss some contemporary perspectives of organizational communication.

5.8 FURTHER READINGS

UNIT 6 COMMUNICATION NETWORK

Structure
6.0 Introduction
6.1 Objectives
6.2 Communication Process
   6.2.1 Channels
6.3 Barriers and Problems
6.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
6.5 Summary
6.6 Key Words
6.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
6.8 Further Readings

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss the communication process as well as barriers and problems in communication. As discussed before, in the communication process a sender transmits a message through a channel to the receiver. In the process, one may encounter numerous issues that make communication difficult. These barriers could be physical, or could be related to the sender or receivers personality or disability. We will discuss these aspects in detail.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- Discuss the different components of communication
- Examine the different barriers to the communication process
- List the various channels of communication

6.2 COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is a process of transmitting and receiving messages (verbal and non-verbal). Thus, communication is a dialogue and not a monologue. Therefore, a communication is said to be effective only if it brings the desired response from the receiver.

Communication consists of six components. These are:
(a) Sender/Receiver: In an attempt to construct shared realities through social interaction, the human communication process engages a sender also known as source and a message receiver.
(b) Encoding and Decoding: In the communication process, message encoding and decoding are important elements. Message encoding refers to the process of formulating messages, choosing content and symbols to convey meaning. Message decoding is the process where meanings are assigned to the symbols as received by the receiver.

(c) Message: Message in context of the communication process refers to the signal that serves as a stimulus for a receiver and includes auditory, visual, olfactory (relating to the sense of smell), gustatory (relating to the sense of taste) and tactile (relating to the sense of touch) in any combination of the five senses.

(d) Channel: Channel or medium in the communication process refers to the link or the links between sender and receiver and include the five senses and any technological means used for message transmission.

(e) Noise: The entire communication process is affected by distortion or interference known as noise and it contributes to discrepancies between the meaning intended by the source and the meaning assigned by the receiver. Noise can be anything, physical distractions, channel interference, communicative competence, communication context, or psychological predispositions.

(f) Feedback: Feedback in the communication process is a return loop which assists the sender in obtaining reactions from the receivers.

6.2.1 Channels
In every organization the information is shared forward, backward and sideways. For this flow of information a proper medium is required. This medium is called the communication channel. Channels are the mediums selected for transferring the information. If the flow of information through the channel that is restricted, then it leads to disorganized communication. For example if the channel is disturbed, then the whole process will be disturbed. If the communication process is disturbed, communication cannot take place between the employee and the manager. As a result, employees will remain unaware of the expectations of the manager and the organization and this will affect the overall performance and the productivity of the organization. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain the accuracy of the way of communication in the organization. This will help the employees to remain updated of the organizations rules and policies and also of the expectations of the organization. This will result in the mutual productivity and success of the employees as well as of the organization.

Types of Communication Channel
There are three types of communication channels. These are listed below:
- Formal
- Informal
- Unofficial
Formal Communication Channel

Formal communication describes the rules and regulations and the policies and agendas of the organization. A chain of command flows in this type of communication channels. It means the information flows from the manager to the employees and then sent by the employees to the workers of lower level. Common examples of this type are newsletters, which are provided to every member of the organization including employees and the clients too in order to make them aware about the procedures of the organization. The information also flows in this chain of command in the form of meetings and memos. Other types of formal communication channels include manuals, annual reports, meetings held for review and surveys.

Informal Communication Channel

Besides formal communication channel which is considered as strict way of communication, there exists informal communication channels in every organization that affect the chain of command. It is up to the manager how he keeps the balance between both communication channels and the employees. A simple example of informal communication channel is discussion during lunch time in the company’s canteen. Here the manager has to perform his role in encouraging informal discussions between employees and has to ask the questions regarding organization’s performance in an informal ways. Different training programs and team work also come under this category of communication channel.

Unofficial Communication Channel

Sometimes the manager has to be lenient with his employees in order to develop good interpersonal relationships. It can be done by sharing ideas on general issues like sports, TV shows and current affairs. This unofficial communication helps in forming strong relations among employees, so that they could build good friendships and hence work in a friendly atmosphere. Effective communication results as the perfect execution of the process of communication. Members of an organization have the chance to improve their communication skills, if they follow the process and will be able to remove all the hindrances that occur while communicating.

6.3 BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

As we have seen earlier, communication is a process that covers six different steps involving, among others, encoding, decoding and transmission. For ensuring effective communication, all the parties and instruments will have to play their part as envisaged. At every stage of the communication process, however, there are barriers, which hinder or dilute the flow of communication. The barriers to communication in an organizational context may arise out of authority structure, status difference, reporting relationships, culture and background of individuals. The barriers to communication may arise out of behavioural differences, differences in skills and understanding as well as physical factors. While some kinds of barriers
like behavioural differences and differences in skills may be commonly applicable to all methods of communication, barriers arising out of physical factors may be specific to the method of communication adopted. Some barriers, which are specific to the written communication, are handwriting, spellings and legibility. Similarly, barriers to oral communication would include absence of felicity of expression, accent, speed of delivery and appropriateness of the language.

**Poor Expression**

The power of expression of the communicator determines the quality of communication. To be effective, the message has to be properly developed from an idea. Barriers relating to expression result in poorly expressed messages. Lack of conceptual skills results in inadequate or incomplete shaping of the idea. Ambiguity as well as lack of clarity arise due to limited word power, improper organization of ideas and lack of coherence. If the words and thoughts are not organized properly, the communication would suffer for want of structural balance or a sense of proportion. Obviously, such poor expression of thoughts and ideas leads to incorrect, incomplete and incoherent messages. All this would result in avoidable errors and seeking of further clarifications, adding to costs and delays in communication. Encoding and decoding require skill to ensure clarity and precision. Poor expression is likely to occur under the following circumstances:

1. When a person is ill
2. When a person is fatigued
3. When a person is under severe stress
4. When a person is under the influence of alcohol
5. When a person’s thoughts are not clear and vocabulary is limited.

These are true for both oral and written communication.

**Faulty Transmissions**

The process of transmission, essential for any communication, is susceptible to errors of omission and commission. In the organizational context, the person transmitting the message may be different from the person who conceived the idea. The intent and purpose of the message may not remain the same as it moves from the originator to the transmitter. Not only that, the person transmitting the message may bring in his own bias, feelings and perceptions, which the originator of the message would not have intended. Or else, there may be occasions when the originator of the idea expects the transmitter to detail, illustrate and elucidate the idea, which the latter may fail to do.

**Indifference and Lack of Interest**

This is indeed a very strong barrier in the process of communication. Organizations have to make considerable effort to ensure that indifference to organizational communication is brought down to the minimum. Communication, to be effective,
presupposes that the receiver of the message is also attentive or receptive. Attentive listening in oral communication, careful reading in written communication and keen observation in non-verbal communication are a must. Indifference or lack of interest on the part of the recipient, in turn, adversely impacts the enthusiasm of the communicator. When the students are not attentive, the teacher is likely to lose interest. On the other hand, when the speaker lacks expertise or credibility, the receptivity of the audience wanes. Indifference and lack of interest creates barriers to communication, as a result of which the quality of communication suffers. The intended message is either not received at all or is incomplete and, worse still, is understood incorrectly.

Noise
Noise is yet another barrier especially relevant to verbal communication. Noise disturbs the flow of communication. The recipient fails to receive the oral messages sent by the communicator, as a result of which the message gets diluted. While noise certainly affects oral communication, it may also affect written communication to the extent that the person writing a letter or a report may lose his concentration and consequently his flow of thoughts may suffer.

Physical Factors
The process of communication, especially transmission of messages, makes use of numerous channels, instruments and gadgets such as telephone, microphone, projector, printing, photocopying, telex, fax, radio, film, cassette and of late, the floppy, compact disc and the pen drive. All these are very useful when they function smoothly. At the same time, they act as barriers when they fail to perform their functions efficiently. As a result, communication fails to reach the target audience. Snapping of telephone lines, non-availability of meeting rooms, failure of multimedia equipment and disturbances of power supply may lead to delays in transmitting the messages to the intended recipients.

People Related Factors
The process of communication essentially involves human beings. Like democracy, we may describe communication as of the people, for the people and by the people. Yet, people do not think, understand and interpret alike. In other words, meanings are in people. In any large organization, especially in multinational ones, there are differences among the employees in terms of language group, cultural background, rural-urban origin and hierarchical levels which in turn create psychological, linguistic and cultural barriers. Differences in hierarchical positions have their implications in terms of work structure, authority, status and relationship. In such situations, people may have bias, fear and reticence, which act as barriers to the free flow of communication. All these factors lead to different expectations among people within the organization, as to who should communicate with whom and in what manner. Apart from this, the organizational climate has its impact on
Communication. It is conducive when people are encouraged to speak out and there is free flow of communication. On the other hand, when the organizational climate is disturbed, and when dissenting voices are stifled, barriers emerge.

We have seen in the foregoing paragraphs that there are often numerous barriers to the free flow of communication. Such barriers disturb or dilute or hinder the process of communication. These barriers may be classified as physical, psychological, linguistic and cultural. It is worth emphasizing, however, that most barriers are surmountable. It is possible to anticipate, recognize and foresee the prevalence of barriers and take appropriate corrective action. With conscious effort, it should be possible to overcome these barriers and ensure free flow of communication on an ongoing basis.

Check Your Progress
1. Why is communication a dialogue and not a monologue?
2. What is a communication channel?
3. List the three types of communication channels.
4. What determines the quality of communication?

6.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Communication is a process of transmitting and receiving messages (verbal and non-verbal). Thus, communication is a dialogue and not a monologue.
2. Channel or medium in the communication process refers to the link or the links between sender and receiver and include the five senses and any technological means used for message transmission.
3. The three types of communication channels are:
   - Formal
   - Informal
   - Unofficial
4. The power of expression of the communicator determines the quality of communication.

6.5 SUMMARY

- Communication is a process of transmitting and receiving messages (verbal and non-verbal). Thus, communication is a dialogue and not a monologue.
Communication consists of six components. These are: (a) Sender/Receiver, (b) Encoding and Decoding, (c) Message, (d) Channel, (e) Noise and (f) Feedback.

There are three types of communication channels. These are listed below:
- Formal
- Informal
- Unofficial

At every stage of the communication process, however, there are barriers, which hinder or dilute the flow of communication.

The barriers to communication in an organizational context may arise out of authority structure, status difference, reporting relationships, culture and background of individuals.

The process of transmission, essential for any communication, is susceptible to errors of omission and commission.

6.6 KEY WORDS
- Encoding: It means to convert into a coded form.
- Decoding: It means to convert (a coded message) into intelligible language.
- Feedback: It refers to information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task, etc. which is used as a basis for improvement.

6.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions
1. Write a short-note on the different channels of communication.
2. How does noise affect the communication process?

Long-Answer Questions
1. Examine the different components of the communication process.
2. Describe the different barriers to communication.

6.8 FURTHER READINGS


7.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss business letters. Business writing always has a purpose. The purpose of any writing is to communicate and convey a message. When you write, you want to communicate your ideas, thoughts, sentiments, feelings, events, experiences, etc. You want to inform, motivate, inspire, persuade, elicit information, invite, announce, remind, and so on. Written communication takes several forms—from ordinary business letters to typed and cyclostyled messages, to printed pamphlets and brochures. Business letters are a prominent part of written communication in business. The advantages of written communication far outweigh its limitations and this method of communication is extensively used in the business world. Business letters are extremely popular because they have all these advantages which a written correspondence enjoys.

Although written communication may not provide the depth and intensity of a face-to-face communication, it meets very well the requirements for a variety of simple and direct correspondence/messages that a business needs for its everyday transactions. There may be occasions when the first letter may not give all the details the recipient wishes to have, necessitating further correspondence. Nevertheless, a good business letter constitutes the basic plank on which effective business correspondence rests. A good business letter has to create, nurture and sustain a good business relationship.
7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the importance, structure and format of business letters
- Differentiate between personal and business letters
- Discuss the different types of business letters

7.2 WRITING OF BUSINESS LETTERS

Business letters, to be good and effective, must contain certain essentials. In other words, business letters should conform to certain minimum standards of letter writing. One can look at these essentials from different angles—language, content, context, length, structure, layout, taste, tone, impact and purpose orientation. Any letter is amenable to description in terms of these characteristics or features. To qualify, the letter should measure up as good when viewed from any of these considerations. It may or may not encompass all these features. Nevertheless, a good letter writer should have a clear understanding of all the characteristics that make the letter effective. In order to be clear about what is a good letter, it is also very necessary to know what a bad letter is. While a good letter can be good on many counts, a bad letter may have one undesirable feature which can mar the beauty of the entire letter.

A bad letter stands out like a sore thumb for any of its deficiencies, which might be any of the following:

1. Lack of clarity
2. Poor use of words and expressions
3. Incorrect spelling and grammatical errors
4. Too short or very lengthy
5. Too many ideas crowded into one letter
6. Not accurate or factually incorrect
7. Fails to convey the main purpose
8. Not to the reader’s wavelength
9. Too much jargon and technical words
10. Lacking in aesthetic sense
11. Language used not familiar to the reader
12. Lengthy paragraphs
13. Offensive in nature
14. Absence of personal touch
15. Lacking in courtesy
Business is all about creating goodwill, favourable impressions, attracting attention, creating interest, wooing customers, reaching prospects and building relationships. All this calls for conscious efforts, concerted action and correspondence on a regular basis. As this has to be done in a world that is full of competition, one bad letter can cause avoidable damage to the reputation of the business. Badly written letters cause embarrassment to the people behind the business and show the organization in poor light.

Before discussing the essentials of a good business letter, it would be desirable to keep in view what such a letter can achieve for business. A good business letter can reach out and directly address the target, be it a customer or a prospect or a patron or the regulator. A good business letter can address the prospect and set the sales pitch. A good business letter can act as an effective salesperson. A good business letter can strengthen the bond and provide further details to an existing customer. A good business letter can, thus, act as your relationship officer. A good business letter can dispel disinformation and create goodwill. It thereby acts as your ambassador. A good business letter can make announcements, share relevant information and keep you in touch with people who matter. In this way, a good business letter can be your public relations officer (PRO). Well-written and imaginatively drafted letters can play the role of a salesperson, a relationship officer, an ambassador and a PRO for business establishments. This is true especially for small businesses which cannot afford to employ people specifically for carrying out these functions.

7.2.1 Importance of Business Letters

Business letters are important for:

- Exchanging business information
- Establishing business relationship
- Creation of markets
- Substitute to personal visit
- Maintaining secrecy
- Increasing goodwill
- Formal agreement
- Settlement of transaction
- Use as reference
7.2.2 Difference between Personal and Business Letters

Business letters are essentially formal letters while personal letters are informal letters. In business letter business-related issues and information are exchanged with the suppliers, customers, banks, insurance companies and other external parties of the organization. While, a personal letter is written to exchange personal or family affairs with family members, relatives, friends, lovers, teachers, students etc.

The differences between business letter and personal letter are as follows:

- A business letter is impersonal and universal in nature. Personal letters are personal in nature.
- A business letter is used for exchanging various business-related issues and information. A personal letter is used for exchanging personal or family related affairs and information.
- The scope of a business letter is wide and contains various types of business information. The scope of personal letters is limited and contains only personal information.
- A business letter follows a formal structure while a personal letter does not have any structure.
- A business letter maintains formal rules and procedure while a personal letter is informal.
- A business letter generally is concise in size and avoids irrelevant matter. On the other hand, a personal letter may be of any length.
- The language in a business letter is easy and simple. On the other hand, the language in a personal letter varies according to the writer.

Check Your Progress
1. List some deficiencies of a bad letter.
2. Why are business letters important?

7.3 STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF BUSINESS LETTERS

A letter is a permanent and tangible record of a business relationship. It is generally written for enquiry, give information, give instruction, or to persuade the recipient towards the desired action. A well written business letter can achieve much for a business. It can act as an effective sales person, create goodwill, strengthen the relationship with customer and act as a source of reliable, useful information.

Because of its importance it is a must that business letters be effectively written and maintain conformity to certain standards. A badly written letter reflects poorly on the organization and is a cause of embarrassment to the managers.
Some of the deficiencies that a badly written letter may have are summarised below and need to be avoided.

**Standard parts of a business letter**

A business letter consists of the following essential parts:

(i) Heading
(ii) Inside name and address
(iii) Opening salutation
(iv) Subject
(v) Body of the letter
(vi) Complimentary close
(vii) Signature
(viii) Enclosures

(i) **Heading:** Business letters are written on letter-heads that show the name and address of the organization, its telephone and fax numbers; the Internet and e-mail addresses along with the logo of the company. At the foot of the page the address of the ‘registered office’ and a registration number might appear.

   Only the first page of any letter on letter-head stationary, with subsequent pages on blank pages. The heading also consists of—

   - Reference—This could be a file number. It indicates the company’s reference or the recipient’s if this is a continuing correspondence.
   - Date—This is the date of writing the letter. There are two ways of putting down the date. The English style (25th April 2007) and the American style (April 25, 2007)

(ii) **Name and address of the recipient:** The name and address of the recipient as it will appear on the envelope is also mentioned in the letter. This ensures that the letter reaches the correct person even if the envelope gets damaged. The name includes the title of the person (Mr, Ms, Dr.).

(iii) **Opening Salutation:** Salutation is a way of addressing the addressee. The words generally depend upon the relation of the writer with the addressee. ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’ is a little old-fashioned and organizations now prefer to use a more personal approach though ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’ is still used in very formal correspondence.

(iv) **Subject line:** This is often omitted, but its inclusion means the reader can quickly see what the letter is about. Subject heading is prefixed with the word Subject: or Sub or Ref: and underlined to make it more prominent.

   Example

   Subject: Request for quotation
   
   Ref: Our letter No Pur/134/07 Re: Delay in receipt of goods
(v) **Main body of the letter:** This part contains the actual message/content of the letter. This part consists of several paragraphs. Always leave a line space between paragraphs. The first paragraph is the introductory which may include a reference to a previous correspondence or a telephonic conversation etc. The middle paragraphs constitute the main body and deal with the subject matter. The last paragraph is the concluding paragraph and states the expectation of some action.

(vi) **Complimentary close:** It is a polite, formal way to end a letter. Standard forms are *Yours faithfully* or *Yours sincerely.* The complimentary close must match the salutation.

  Dear Sir or Dear Madam matches with *Yours faithfully*
  Dear Mr Smith matches with *Yours sincerely*

(vii) **Signature space:** Leave space for the writer to sign the letter, usually about 5 blank line spaces. The signature is written in handwriting below the complimentary close. The name and designation of the person signing the letter – writer’s name and job title are printed below signature for clarity.

(viii) **Enclosures:** In case any documents are being sent with the letter, it is indicated on the left hand bottom corner of the letter. It is abbreviated as ‘Encl’ or ‘Encl’ and after the abbreviation are given the number of enclosures.

**Layout of a business letter**

These days there is a tendency to adopt a friendly informal style. However, one should follow an established type or form to avoid inconvenience, confusion and wastage of time. The company’s in-house style includes rules on the layout of its business letters. A proper layout also gives the letter a formal look.

For most business letters single line spacing is used as this gives the letter a compact look. In case the letter is very short one may need to use double spacing. There are various styles of layouts available for business letters. In different forms there are different systems of indentation followed. The various styles include

(i) Fully indented style
(ii) Semi indented style
(iii) Fully blocked style
(iv) Modified blocked style

**Fully indented style**

This style has become old fashioned and is being fast replaced by other styles. Each paragraph appears prominently in this type of layout. This style is at times found cumbersome because of its numerous indentations. It has the following characteristics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NOTES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Letters</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) The name, address and paragraphs of the body are five spaces indented.

(ii) The letter is typed in single line spacing.

(iii) The subject heading is two line spacing below the salutation which is three line spacing below the inside name and address.

(iv) The paragraphs are separated by double line spacing.

(v) The complimentary close begins at the centre of the typing line and the typed signature and designation follow ten spaces and five spaces as is determined depending on the length of the two.

(vi) The inside address is offset to give the letter a balance.

**Semi-indented style**

This is a modified version of the fully indented style. It has the following characteristics:

(i) The inside name and address does not have any indentation and is in a block form.

(ii) The complimentary close and designation are typed evenly across the centre of the typed line. However sometimes they are placed on the right hand side.

(iii) This style provides a neat and compact look because of the block form of name and address.

**Fully blocked style**

This is a modern style and is most commonly used. Earlier the ‘indented’ format was used for business letters, but as a result of word processing, the ‘fully blocked’ format is the most commonly used one now, as it saves time setting up tabs and indents and the letters look more neat and tidy. It has the following characteristics:

(i) All typed entries including date, inside name and address, subject line paragraph, complimentary close, signatures begin at the left-hand margin, form a vertical line down the page.

(ii) There is a complete absence of punctuation marks from the date, salutation, the complimentary close and the endline of the inside name and address.

(iii) In some letters, the date and complimentary close are placed towards the right margin so as to give the letter a more balanced appearance. This style is known as semi-blocked style.

**Modified blocked style**

This style is similar to the fully blocked style. The difference in this style is that the date, subject heading and the complimentary close signature are placed like semi indented style. There is a treble line spacing between paragraphs to differentiate between paragraphs as paragraphs do not have indentation.
Form letters

When a number of identical letters are to be sent to many individuals or organizations on a regular basis, form letters may be used. These letters are printed and blank spaces are left for filling in the name, date, address and sometimes some other minor details. These type of letters are generally used for acknowledgement of orders, thank you letters, debt collection, etc.

Use of form letters saves time and even a clerk can deal with this kind of correspondence. However these letters lack personal touch and flexibility.

Guidelines for writing effective business letters

Following are some guidelines for writing business letters:

(i) Business letters, as all other types of correspondence, should follow the structure of a beginning, a middle and an end.
(ii) The first paragraph would be the introduction and should state the reason for the correspondence.
(iii) The middle should add detail to the information in the introduction.
(iv) The ending is the conclusion and should state clearly what action one hopes or expects the recipient to take.
(v) Words should be effectively used so as to appeal to the level and sensibilities of the recipient.
(vi) Keep to the point.
(vii) Be brief without being curt.

7.3.1 Types of Business Letters

Businesses are of numerous types. They may be big or small, old or new, local or national, public or private, proprietary or partnership, monopolistic or competitive and manufacturing or service units. Nevertheless, by and large, all these businesses have certain common concerns and approaches within any given business environment. They deal with people internally as well as externally. They have their stakeholders in owners, employees, customers and the community. Businesses are also organized into various functional areas such as personnel, marketing, sales, purchase, accounts, administration and secretarial. Some of the types of business letters include collection letters, sales letters, agency letters, banking letters, insurance letters, letters of enquiry and so on. These letters are discussed in detail in the subsequent units.

Check Your Progress

3. What are the essential parts of a business letter?
4. When should form letters be used?
7.4 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Some of the deficiencies of a bad letter are as follows:
   - Lack of clarity
   - Poor use of words and expressions
   - Incorrect spelling and grammatical errors
   - Too short or very lengthy
   - Too many ideas crowded into one letter

2. Business letters are important for:
   - Exchanging business information
   - Establishing business relationship

3. A business letter consists of the following essential parts:
   - (i) Heading
   - (ii) Inside name and address
   - (iii) Opening salutation
   - (iv) Subject
   - (v) Body of the letter
   - (vi) Complimentary close
   - (vii) Signature
   - (viii) Enclosures

4. When a number of identical letters are to be sent to many individuals or organizations on a regular basis, form letters may be used.

7.5 SUMMARY

- Business letters, to be good and effective, must contain certain essentials.
- One can look at these essentials from different angles—language, content, context, length, structure, layout, taste, tone, impact and purpose orientation.
- Business is all about creating goodwill, favourable impressions, attracting attention, creating interest, wooing customers, reaching prospects and building relationships.
- Business letters are essentially formal letters while personal letters are informal letters.
• A business letter consists of the following essential parts:
  (i) Heading
  (ii) Inside name and address
  (iii) Opening salutation
  (iv) Subject
  (v) Body of the letter
  (vi) Complimentary close
  (vii) Signature
  (viii) Enclosures
• The various styles include
  (i) Fully indented style
  (ii) Semi indented style
  (iii) Fully blocked style
  (iv) Modified blocked style

7.6 KEY WORDS

• **Layout:** It refers to the way in which the parts of something are arranged or laid out.
• **Tone:** It refers to the general character or attitude of a place, piece of writing, situation, etc.
• **Personal Letters:** It is a type of letter (or informal composition) that usually concerns personal matters (rather than professional concerns) and is sent from one individual to another.

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the importance of business letters.
2. Differentiate between personal letters and business letters.
3. Write a short-note on the different types of business letters.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Describe the different parts of a business letter.
2. Examine the different styles of business letters.
7.8 FURTHER READINGS


UNIT 8 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS-I

Structure
8.0 Introduction
8.1 Objectives
8.2 Collection Letters, Sales Letters, Agency Letters, Banking Letters and Insurance Letters
8.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
8.4 Summary
8.5 Key Words
8.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
8.7 Further Reading

8.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss different types of business letters. As discussed a business letter is a formal document often sent from one company to another or from a company to its clients, employees, and stakeholders, for example. Business letters are used for professional correspondence between individuals, as well. Some of the business letters discussed in the unit are sales letters, recovery letters, agency letters, banking letters and insurance letters.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

• Discuss some of the types of letters used in business
• Describe the format of collection letters, sales letters, agency letters and banking correspondence

8.2 COLLECTION LETTERS, SALES LETTERS, AGENCY LETTERS, BANKING LETTERS AND INSURANCE LETTERS

Businesses are of numerous types. They may be big or small, old or new, local or national, public or private, proprietary or partnership, monopolistic or competitive and manufacturing or service units. Nevertheless, by and large, all these businesses have certain common concerns and approaches within any given business environment. They deal with people internally as well as externally. They have their stakeholders in owners, employees, customers and the community. Businesses
Types of Business Letters

are also organized into various functional areas such as personnel, marketing, sales, purchase, accounts, administration and secretarial. Business letters are of a wide variety and emanate from all these sources. Similarly, people who deal with these businesses also correspond with all these departments at some stage or other. To be able to correspond effectively with all these departments under various business situations, one has to familiarize oneself with various types of letters and their features. Although the general principles of good letter writing discussed earlier hold good, the approach will have to vary depending upon the functional area to which the letter relates.

When we refer to various types of business letters and their replies, we are covering letters that move both ways, i.e., letters from business organizations to various other agencies as well as individuals and other agencies to business organizations.

Some common areas of business correspondence or the specific types of letters with which a business letter writer should be well versed with are as follows:

From the Purchase Department:

1. Calling for quotations for products and services.
2. Inviting tenders for jobs and supplies.
3. Asking for samples and drawings.
4. Placing test orders.
5. Placing orders.

When we refer to tenders, quotations and orders it must be emphasized that there are financial implications. The subject matter and the details of the quotation, tender or order have to be specifically and clearly stated such that there is no ambiguity.

From the Sales/Marketing Department:

1. Sales letter.
2. Circular letters.
3. Preparation of sales letters with the conditions of sale on the reverse.
4. Preparation of market survey reports.
5. Reports from salesperson to sales executives.
6. Offer of discounts and business concessions.
7. Launch of a new product or scheme.
8. Mailing of company literature.
In this category, there are two types of business letters. One set relates to the letters emanating from within the sales departments, or from sales persons and marketing personnel in the field to other departments or to their own executives. The other set of letters relates to letters written by people in sales and marketing to people outside the organization—customers, prospects, agents and distributors and other agencies. It is the latter category that needs particular attention. Letters to the customers and prospects either substitute or supplement personal contacts and as such can make or mar the business promotion efforts. They carry the image of the organization and the people behind the letters. Sales letters should also be elegant and appealing. The presentation should be such that it elicits the attention of the addressee.

**From the Accounts Department:**

1. Dues and collection letters to various agencies and customers.
2. Follow-up letters.
3. Correspondence with banks.
4. Opening/closing of accounts.
5. Regarding overdrafts, cash credit and current accounts.
6. Stop payment instructions.
7. Request for issue of letters of credit (LCs).
9. Letters relating to interest payments and service charges.
10. Complaint letters covering wrong credits and debits and delays in realization of instruments.
11. Correspondence with insurance companies regarding payment of premium, renewal of policies, claims and settlements.
12. Correspondence with agencies like the Telephone Department, Postal Telegraph authorities, the Provident Fund Office, Income Tax Office and Commercial Tax Department.

By their very nature, these types of business letters should be accurate, brief, simple and to the point. In particular, letters relating to collection of dues and recovery of money need to be drafted with a keen sense of understanding and sensitivity. Such letters should necessarily vary in terms of terseness or intensity and choice of words depending upon the nature of dues, age of dues and other such relevant factors. Some of them have to be polite, some persuasive and some firm.

**From the Personnel Department:**

1. Calling candidates for written tests.
2. Interview call letters.
Types of Business Letters 1

NOTES

3. Offer of appointment.
4. Provisional and final appointment orders.
5. Confirmation in service.
7. Disciplinary matters—show cause notices, charge sheets, calling for explanation, discharge, other punishments and letters of dismissal.
8. Leave and travel sanctions.
9. Training programs and deputation.
10. Reference letters.

When we refer to personnel department letters or employee-related letters, we are indeed discussing a very wide variety of letters. These letters may be general or specific, routine or special, pleasant or unpleasant. Letters from HRD department are normally pleasant or otherwise motivating and training related, whereas letters from the Industrial Relations Department or from the Disciplinary Authority are normally of the none-too-pleasant category. These two are obviously widely different in nature and the letter writer must use the appropriate language and approach. While HRD and training-related letters should carry a positive, encouraging and developmental stance, disciplinary letters will have to carry an authoritarian and even a legal or procedural approach. It is necessary to acquire adequate familiarity with the terms and ensure that there are no inadvertent inadequacies in the letter.

From the Administration and Secretarial Departments:

1. Change in management.
2. Changes in business hours.
3. Opening and shifting of branches and offices.
4. Invitations and public notices.
5. Correspondence with directors and shareholders.
6. Agenda and minutes of company meetings.
7. Correspondence with shareholders and debenture holders pertaining to dividend and interest payments, transfer and transmission of shares.
8. Correspondence with agents and transport companies.
9. Representations to trade associations, chambers of commerce and public authorities.
10. Letter seeking appointments/personal interviews.

Correspondence relating to directors and shareholders and matters concerning company meetings, especially in listed companies and larger organizations, are often handled by qualified company secretaries. The point to be noted here is that such correspondence is generally specialized in nature and will
have to be attended in a systematic and organized manner. The business letter writer keen on acquiring such letter-writing skills will have to necessarily understand secretarial functions.

**Other Types of Business Communication:**

1. Job applications.
2. Preparation of bio data and curriculum vitae.
3. Export- and import-related correspondence.
4. Preparation of bill of exchange, promissory note and hundi.
5. Telegraphic and fax messages.
6. Mild and strong appeals.
7. Correspondence with foreign institutions and agencies.
8. Advertisements of various types—newspapers and print media, hoardings and banners.
10. Questionnaires and opinion polls.
11. Legal correspondence.
12. Publicity literature such as brochures and booklets.
13. Newsletters and house journals.
14. Preparation of charts, graphs and stickers.

**Letters of Social Significance:**

1. Social letters in business.
2. Inviting a guest.
3. Congratulatory letters on achievements.
4. Letters that say ‘Thank you’.
5. Letters of appreciation.
6. Accepting or declining invitations.
7. Condolence letters.
9. Goodwill messages.

We have generally listed in the foregoing paragraphs various types of letters and correspondence that emanate from a business on a regular basis. While most of it is routine involving primary level of writing, there are some, as we have noted, which call for specialized and cultivated skills. The objective in listing various types of letters from different departments and functional areas is to give an idea of the expanse of business communication. Like in other areas, in letter writing too, conscious efforts and willingness to learn are a must. A good business letter writer
has to appreciate the essential characteristics of each such letter and develop relevant skills.

Instead of providing drafts or models of various types of business letters, we have thought it appropriate to present a fairly comprehensive list of business letters for all occasions. We have also highlighted the significant features and principles to be borne in mind while drafting some letters such as orders and quotations, sales letters, and collection and recovery letters. Models tend to inhibit learning. Skills are acquired through attentive learning, application and practice. We are also giving in the following paragraphs some more useful tips or guidelines that should help in developing letter-writing skills. Notwithstanding the routine nature of most business correspondence, it is possible, and indeed desirable, to develop variety and style in writing the letters. Letters must have certain intensity or depth depending upon the situation, and it is not possible to bring out such variations in one or two ‘draft models.’ Students and practitioners desirous of improving their skills in letter writing are advised to practice drafting a variety of such letters, i.e., letters for all occasions, taking note of the following additional guidelines and compare them with standard drafts or models available from authentic sources as confidence-building measures.

**Collection and Recovery letters**

Collection and recovery letters are plain speaking and sometimes sternly worded. The letter writer should know which approach would be appropriate under each circumstance. Some organizations follow the practice of sending a reminder even before the due date. Obviously, such letters should be very polite and make for a pleasant reading. Similarly, even after the due date, the first set of letters will have to be polite and warmly worded. It is a common practice to send a simple pre-printed reminder using a well-worded format, duly filling up the name, address and due date. It is possible that the addressee has forgotten or overlooked to make the payment or has been out of station or any such genuine reason. Under no circumstance should such a person be embarrassed or undermined. While collection of dues is important, as far as possible it should be done with due sensitivity and without hurting the feelings of the person from whom the amount is due. The letter writer should discriminate between a wilful or intentional and an unintentional defaulter. The letter writer should also discriminate between the first time defaulter and a habitual or hardened defaulter. The customer is important and the business will have to deal with them in future too, as long as the relationship is worthwhile. The letter should not hurt the feelings of the addressee and result in a severing of the business relationship, unless such an extreme situation is warranted.

There will be occasions when a strongly worded letter will have to be drafted. Skills of letter writing come into full play under these circumstances. A series of letters may have to be addressed with increasing intensity. Politeness and consideration for feelings and relationship will give way to plain speaking and emphasis on business compulsions. In Sanskrit language and ancient texts, there is a reference to chaturopaya, i.e., four options, viz., sama, dana, bhedha and danda.
Starting with a friendly approach one moves on to threatening and punitive messages. The letter writer should not only know the category to which the addressee belongs, but also the payment culture in that particular line of business, and when to blow the whistle. ‘Please note that we will be compelled to take the extreme step of legal action against you’ should be the last resort, as far as possible. Another important aspect to remember is not to make a final or terminal statement limiting the scope for further correspondence. A keen sense of understanding, appropriate choice of words and persuasive skills assume significance.

**Sales Letter**

A good sales letter highlights what is of interest to the addressee and prompts them to seek more details and respond positively. Pleasing layout and appealing language, along with relevant facts and figures, are a must. Unlike the letters emanating from the purchase department, the letters sent out by the marketing department can be highly creative and innovative. They bring out the product differential. They focus on the unique selling proposition (USP). While avoiding an overdose of superlatives and tall claims, the sales letter should focus on the strength of the company and the merits of the offer.

The business letter writer should have a good understanding of the essential features of product marketing or services marketing, as the case may be, and use them to his advantage while drafting sales letters. Any product has its tangible and measurable features. If the sales letter concerns a product, it is desirable that the product-related features such as price, strength, colour, weight, ease of operation, after-sales service and varied qualitative and quantitative dimensions are appropriately highlighted. Similarly, if the sales letter concerns a service which is essentially intangible, the service-related features such as courtesy, promptness, employee attitude, physical facilities, customer identification/recognition, speed, clarity, communicative and interpersonal skills, as relevant, are to be highlighted.

As we have noted earlier, there is tremendous scope for being creative and imaginative while drafting sales letters. A good letter writer makes it a point to develop the appropriate word power and play with words and ideas. It is necessary to consciously avoid dull and outdated words and instead use vigorous and current words. Some examples of vigorous and current words would be robust, cost-effective, user friendly, savvy, eco-friendly, quality standard, zero defect, premium brand, win-win proposition, tailor-made, designer, garden fresh and fast moving, just to name a few. Similarly, compelling phrases can also be used to make a point. For example, freshness of the product was imaginatively brought out by a restaurant in the following statement—‘The fish you are eating today was swimming yesterday.’ The skill lies in making the product or service look special or exclusive or distinctly different.

**Agency letters**

Agency correspondence is the correspondence between the principal and the agent. The application for an agency, the appointment of an agency, its tenure and
renewal, facilities provided by the agent, the support he receives from the principal, etc., form the subject matter of agency correspondence.

An example of such a letter is given below:

From:
The Sender's Name,
Door Number and Street's Name,
Area Name,
City.
Postal Code: XXXXXXX
Phone Number: 0000 - 123456789
E-mail ID: sendersname@companywebsite.com
Date:
Reference:

To:
Addressee's Name,
Designation,
The Company's Name,
Full Address with Phone Number.

Subject:

Dear ____,

We have come to know from M/s Gupta & Co., Delhi that you have no representative of your mills in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

We are the reputed wholesale dealers of 'Vanaspati' 'Mustard' and 'Till oil'. Our firm is in the market for a very long time and we are the sole agents of Quality Oil Mills Ltd., Delhi and M/s Sarah Oil Works, Kaptur. We have been supplying vegetable products to many cities of eastern U.P. We also have our branches at Gasper and Gorakhpur.

We are confident that M/s Gupta & Co., of Delhi and the State Bank of India, Shahabad will speak of our financial position, business dealings and integrity.

Kindly apprise us of your terms and conditions, if you decide to appoint us your sole agents.

Awaiting an early reply.

Thanking you.

Yours Sincerely,
(The Sender's Signature)
The Sender's Name

Enc:
Banking letters

Banks and financial institutions are an integral part of the world of business. Given their primacy, it is inconceivable for any business organization to do business without a bank account or a banking transaction. In other words, every organization, whatever be its structure, has to have bank dealings. Be it a partnership or proprietorship, private limited company or a public limited company, a government department or a society or trust, it has to have banking-related transactions in the course of its business. The nature and variety of dealings, of course, depend upon the activities and expanse of business. It is against this backdrop that banking-related correspondence assumes significance.

Generally speaking, some common services provided by banks include the following:

1. **Deposit facilities**: Current, savings and term deposit accounts would involve account opening, issue of cheques, nomination facilities, death claims, stop payment instructions, payment of periodical interest, introduction formalities and so on.

2. **Credit facilities**: Banks are known to extend a variety of credit facilities such as term loans, cash credit, bills discounting, vehicles loans, agriculture loans, corporate credit, retail loans, guarantees and letters of credit, and a host of such other need-based facilities. These would involve credit requests, services and sureties, regulation of rates of interest, services charges and other terms and conditions, request for enhancements, waiver of penalties, one-time settlements and so on.

3. **Remittances and Payments**: These would relate to transfer of funds from one account to the other, from one city to the other, payment of bills, collection of cheques and bills, availment of modern payments systems such as Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) Electronic Clearing Service (ECS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Transfers (SWIFT) and so on.

4. **Export, Import and Foreign Exchange Facilities**: Banks provide not only various domestic banking facilities, but also international banking services. Export and import credit, foreign letters of credit, cross-country payments, currency exchange, remittance from abroad and such other services are provided to individuals as well as business entities.
5. **Investment Banking and Wealth Management**: These include providing personal banking, asset management, executor and trusteeship arrangements and such other services.

6. **Auxiliary Services**: Banks also provide a very wide range of auxiliary or subsidiary services such as safe custody and safe deposit locker facilities, solvency certificates, insurance and mutual fund services, credit and debit cards, and sale of gold coins.

Banking correspondence would necessarily cover all the above activities and, indeed, all such services and facilities which banks offer to their customers. In order to be able to correspond appropriately with banks, the writer should necessarily have a fair understanding of banking services and the method of availing those services. The writer should also acquire reasonable familiarity with the terms and phrases used in the context of banking. The following terms, are commonly used in Indian banks:

- Savings or checking account
- Indemnity
- Either or survivor
- Jointly or severally
- Simple and Compound interest
- Pre-payment penalty
- Promissory note
- Servicing of loan
- Documentation
- Equated Monthly Instalment (EMI)
- Co-obligant or Surety
- Password
- Power of attorney
- Letter of authority
- Consortium Banking
- Cash Credit and Overdrawings

These are just some examples of terms which the bankers use in their correspondence and communication. As businesses get to deal more intimately with banks, people concerned would come across many more such terms and phrases, and even abbreviations (such as RTGS, NEFT, ECS and SWIFT as used earlier). A good understanding of all such terms and phrases in everyday use in banking and finance would be essential to communicate, correspond and interact effectively.
It is worth noting here that most banks have their own letters, forms, agreements and formats which have to be necessarily used in dealings with them. Account opening, request for credit facilities, cheque book requisition, renewal of deposits, export and import-related formats and a host of such commonly availed services and facilities have to be done through the pre-printed forms and letters provided by the banks themselves. In all other cases where bank forms and formats are not available, appropriate letters have to be drafted. Correspondence through e-mail and making enquiries and giving instructions through telebanking and internet and mobile banking are also gaining popularity. Most of the new generation banks are moving towards paperless banking, which means correspondence takes place through means other than mailing and delivery of letters.

One area where banks write frequently relates to recovery of loan amounts. Recovering the overdue amounts from the recalcitrant borrowers is always a challenge. This is also an area where the communication skills are put to a real test. Different borrowers have to be dealt with differently. Progressively more stringent letters have to be sent and often it would be necessary to create a record of such recovery efforts. A draft of a sample final collection letter that can be sent to the borrower before taking legal remedies is given below.

**Example of a Final Collection Letter**

11 January 2018

Dear Mr. Chaddha  

Our Recoveries Department has informed us that they propose to initiate legal proceedings against you since you have failed to repay the overdue amount despite several reminders. The total amount overdue and immediately payable by you is `-----.

Before taking legal action, however, I would like to make an appeal to your business judgment. I wish to state that if you call on us within the next 2 days with a concrete proposal, we can find some means to settle this matter and thereby avoid taking the matter to court.

I do hope that you will avail this opportunity and call on me before this Saturday (20 January 2018) for a detailed discussion. Otherwise, the Bank will have no alternative but to take unpleasant steps.

Sincerely yours  

K. J. George  
(Manager – Legal Department.)

**Insurance letters**

Insurance letters are letters written to insurance companies to apply for insurance for claim an insurance demand.
An example is discussed below:

**Letter Applying for Life Insurance Policy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>191 / N – Nariman Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumbai – 600 020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone : 0011 - XXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax : 0011 - XXXXXXXX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your ref : VGT / 0091
Our Ref : SAL / 6 / 1425
6 March - 2018
To :
Mr. Ajay Sharma,
Manager,
GIE Insurance Sdn Bhd,
834 Jalan Utara,
31000 Ipoh,
Perak.

Dear Mr. Sharma,

**RE : LIFE INSURANCE POLICY**

I have decided to take up Policy A142. Enclosed is the completed proposal form. Please process my application and inform me of your decision.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Rohit Verma
General Manager

Encl. (1)

An insurance claim letter can be written to get a claim for car accident, for medical claim, reimbursement or for damaged goods. It is a means to inform the insurance company regarding the partial or complete damage that has occurred and request the company for the reimbursement of the same. The letter has to be written by the claimant to ask for the compensation or to inform about the damage that has taken place. This letter is also written by the claimant in case of death of his relative to ask for the claim amount.
From

______________

______________

Date

To

____________

_____________

Subject – Claim letter

Dear _________ (name)

I, ________ (name). I am having a life insurance policy in the name of my father ___________ (name of father) the policy number is __________ (policy number) dated _____ (date). The policy is nominated in the name of my mother _______ (name of mother). I am writing this letter to you to inform you about the sad demise of my father. As my mother is legal nominee and she was dependent on him, I request you to pay her the claimed amount. As per my records the amount for the reimbursement comes to Rs.____________ (amount). The detailed documents and the death certificate are attached herewith. You are requested to release the due amount as it can be helpful for her. Looking forward early response from your end.

Thanking you

Name,

_________

Signature

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8.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Businesses are of numerous types. They may be big or small, old or new, local or national, public or private, proprietary or partnership, monopolistic or competitive and manufacturing or service units.
NOTES

2. Collection and recovery letters are plain speaking and sometimes sternly worded. The letter writer should know which approach would be appropriate under each circumstance.

3. Insurance letters are letters written to insurance companies to apply for insurance for claim an insurance demand.

8.4 SUMMARY

- When we refer to various types of business letters and their replies, we are covering letters that move both ways, i.e., letters from business organizations to various other agencies as well as individuals and other agencies to business organizations.
- Collection and recovery letters are plain speaking and sometimes sternly worded. The letter writer should know which approach would be appropriate under each circumstance.
- A good sales letter highlights what is of interest to the addressee and prompts them to seek more details and respond positively.
- Agency correspondence is the correspondence between the principal and the agent.
- In order to be able to correspond appropriately with banks, the writer should necessarily have a fair understanding of banking services and the method of availing those services.
- An insurance claim letter can be written to get a claim for car accident, for medical claim, reimbursement or for damaged goods.

8.5 KEY WORDS

- **Tender:** It is a formal written offer to carry out work, supply goods, or buy land, shares, or another asset for a stated fixed price.
- **Collection letters:** Letters that are sent usually one after another, with the tone and language getting more direct with each successive letter, until at least some payment is received.
- **Insurance:** It is an arrangement by which a company or the state undertakes to provide a guarantee of compensation for specified loss, damage, illness, or death in return for payment of a specified premium.
8.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions
1. List some of the letters one can get from the purchase department.
2. Discuss some of the letters one can get from the administration department.
3. What should a good sales letter highlight?

Long-Answer Questions
1. What are recovery letters? Discuss its format.
2. What are agency letters? Discuss its formats.
3. Describe some of the services offered by banks.

8.7 FURTHER READINGS

UNIT 9 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS-II

9.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, the discussion on the different types of business letters will continue. In it, we will discuss orders, quotations, letters of enquiry and tenders. A letter of enquiry is a letter written to request information and/or ascertain its authenticity. It deals with various matters like job vacancies, funding, grants, scholarships, projects, sales, pre-proposals and others. Quotations on the other hand are formal statements that estimate the cost of a particular job or service. An order is essentially an instruction or command to do something. They are given by managers or other types of supervisors to their subordinates. They can also be instructions to purchase items.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss letters of enquiry, trade reference letters and quotations and their format
- Describe how to place orders in an organization

9.2 ORDERS, OFFERS, QUOTATIONS AND TENDERS

In any organization, orders, offers and quotations are correspondences that are carried out every single day. In quotations, specifications or details which must be unambiguously mentioned should cover the following:
1. Number or quantity: Given the economies of scale, the cost would vary depending upon the quantity or volume of work order. Moreover, some businesses may not evince interest if the quantity or size of the job is small or uneconomical. The letter calling for quotations or inviting tenders should therefore clearly state the size of the order or quantity of supply.

2. Quality or specifications: Modern businesses attach considerable significance to the qualitative aspects of any job. Suppliers who do not conform to prevalent acceptable standards are often rejected. In view thereof, it is imperative that the qualitative dimensions such as strength, thickness, purity, colour, texture, age, weight and accuracy are clearly stated. This will also ensure that those who are not in a position to meet the required standards or quality levels do not respond.

3. Delivery time: The third dimension of significance while calling for orders, tenders and quotations is time. The time taken for delivering the supplies or executing the order has to be covered. For many businesses, time is money. Time overruns of a project under implementation translate into cost overruns and, therefore, execution or delivery time needs to be specifically stated.

4. Additional unit: While calling for quotations, quite often, apart from mentioning the fixed number or quantity, quotes are also sought for every additional unit. For example, if it is an order for printing a booklet, the quotation called for will be, say, for thirty-two pages, and also plus or minus every four pages so that calling for fresh quotations, in case there is a small variation in the order size, is avoided.

5. Competitive offer: Calling for quotations, tenders or orders presupposes a competitive scenario and the intention is to get the most competitive offer. It is therefore essential that quotations or orders are sought in such a way that evaluation of alternative quotes is facilitated.

6. Response time: Orders and tenders relate to the purchase of material, execution of a job and completion of a process, which are undertaken as per a time schedule. It is necessary to specify a date and even time within which the response is to be made. When the quotations and tenders called for relate to high-value jobs, business organizations, especially government and public sector units, follow an open and transparent system for opening the tenders. Any such procedure, wherever applicable, has to be stated while inviting tenders. In such cases, in order to ensure confidentiality and fair play, the quotations or tenders ought to be made in sealed covers.

7. Other aspects: Apart from those mentioned above, there are often several other relevant aspects concerning orders, tenders and quotations. These would vary depending upon the nature of the work—whether it is supply of material, execution of a work, a comprehensive project or turn-key order. The terms and conditions of the supplier or the service provider should be clearly ascertained. If the rates quoted are valid only for a specific period,
the same is to be made clear. Correspondingly, the presence of any escalation clause is also to be clarified. The same is the case if accessories are part of the quoted price and are chargeable. In order to avoid any likely ambiguity on account of negotiability of prices and terms, while calling for quotations and tenders, quite often the words, ‘Your lowest offer’, ‘Your most competitive rate’, ‘Your best terms and conditions’ and such other phrases are used. The idea is to ensure that the work specifications are clear to all and that they are in a position to give relevant and timely quotes to facilitate proper assessments of relative merits.

We have, in the foregoing paragraphs, listed out some key features relevant in the context of seeking quotations and tenders. It is important to be clear about the technical and other details of the job so that the communication can be clearly worded. Any student keen on developing appropriate skills in this area should study a variety of such orders, tenders and other such related communication appearing in newspapers, trade journals and other sources, and build up a set of models for use. Since the appropriate model itself would vary depending upon the size, nature and complexity of the work, it is essential that the principles stated above are kept in mind.

Tenders

A tender is an offer or a proposition made for acceptance, such as an offer of a bid for a contract. A tender is something that is offered in return for a specific payment, subject to well laid down terms and conditions. Tenders are invited by large organizations, especially governments and undertakings, for supply of items, construction of buildings, roads, maintenance activities and other such relatively high-value works. Tenders are invited to ensure competitive offers and transparent decision making. Since substantial monetary payments are associated with the process of inviting tenders and awarding contracts, every care has to be taken to ensure clarity, openness and fair play. Inadvertent omission of key/relevant details could lead to avoidable confusion, complaints and legal action. Important points that need to be covered in a tender are as follows:

1. Name of the organization and address.
2. Tender number and date.
3. Captions such as
   (a) Tender notice
   (b) Tender notification
   (c) Notice inviting tenders
   (d) Sealed tenders invited
4. Who can apply—sealed tenders are invited from
   (a) Class I civil contractors
   (b) Established contractors having customs house agency license
   (c) Manufacturers or their authorized Indian agents, etc.
5. Experience/requirement
   (a) With experience in completing similar work
   (b) Satisfying the eligibility criteria mentioned below
   (c) Who have supplied the tendered items successfully to other government organizations, etc.

6. Brief description of work or items/material to be supplied

7. Contract period and/or delivery schedule

8. Earnest money deposit

9. Contact address or authority
   (a) For further details please contact/write to
   (b) Tender documents can be obtained from

10. Date of issue of blank tender forms

11. Cost of tender document—mode of payment

12. Last date for receipt of sealed tenders—time

13. Time and date of tender opening

14. Other relevant details such as
   (a) Amount of tender
   (b) Average turnover (annual) for the last 3 years
   (c) Technical bids and commercial bids
   (d) Website

15. Authority issuing the tender notice

   We have seen that tenders can be invited for supply of items or construction works or also for cleaning, upkeep and maintenance. In order to elicit high response, the tender notices are widely advertised. At the specified time and date, the tenders are opened in the presence of representatives of the tender applicants and a final decision is taken on the successful bids and the same is communicated in writing. Exhibits 9.1 and 9.2 illustrate how the organizations communicate the acceptance of the tender for maintenance work.

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**EXHIBIT 9.1**

Notice Inviting Tenders
Koyla Bhavan, 25, M.G. Road, Indore, MP Notice Inviting Tenders
Tender No:- BCL/JAB/JACK/1112 Date: 11 December 2017

Sealed offers are invited from manufacturers or their authorized Indian agents who have supplied the tendered items successfully to Central or State Government Undertakings for the supply of the following items:

Schedule of tenders with details of terms and conditions can be had from the office of the General Manager (Purchase), Bharath Coal Fields Ltd, Koylah Bhavan, 25, M.G. Road, Indore, MP Assistant General Manager (Purchase).

**EXHIBIT 9.2**

*Letter Confirming the Acceptance of Tender and Award of Contract*

‘Global Mansions’,
Mumbai-400005.
10 February 2018

M/s Beauty Cleaners, 16,
Princess Road, Worli, Mumbai.
Ref: GAL/UCM/M:105.

Dear Sirs,


This has reference to your tender dated 30 December 2017 for the subject work and the subsequent letter dated 15 January 2018. I am directed to convey the approval of your tender for an amount of ₹35,000 (Rupees thirty-five thousand only) per month, inclusive of cleansing materials of approved quality and equipment for the maintenance of all the six areas mentioned in the tender.

The contract will be initially for a period of six months with effect from 1 March 2018 on a trial basis and the same can be confirmed as a regular contract at the above mentioned amount for a further period of thirty months, if the services during the trial period are found to be satisfactory.

You should employ the requisite number of workers and supervisors as mentioned in your tender on all days including Sundays and holidays.

You are required to remit an amount of ₹42,000 (Rupees forty-two thousand only) towards security deposit (being 10 per cent of the annual contract value) before the commencement of the work.

You are required to maintain a register of attendance and wages paid to your workers deployed for various locations and such records should be made available for our inspection as and when required.
For absence of workers and supervisors, ₹80 per day per head will be deducted from the monthly bill.

A copy of Accepted Tender Schedules and Conditions is enclosed for your reference and compliance. Your tender dated 30 December 2017 and your letter dated 15 January 2018 will form part of this contract.

You are requested to return the duplicate copy of this work order in token of your acceptance and acknowledgement.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,
For Global Airlines Ltd
S N Dixit
Assistant General Manager (Finance)

Encl: Accepted Tender Schedule.

9.2.1 Letter of Enquiry

Letters of enquiry cover various types of enquiry made by a wide cross section of clientele and prospective customers regarding the availability of various products, services and other related aspects of the business. Most such enquiries nowadays do take place orally and telephonically and the volume of correspondence has decreased as compared with the past. Modern and computerized organizations in metropolitan centres, in particular, provide tele-contact facility, self-help terminals, kiosks and websites which obviate the need for written correspondence. Nevertheless, business units would be receiving letters of enquiry conveying availability and details of products and services, location of branches and offices, rates and charges relating to products and services, and contact persons and numbers. Letters of enquiry may be from not only individuals, but also from various organizations, institutions, corporate entities and even government bodies.

By its very nature, not much complexity is involved in such types of correspondence. What is necessary is prompt action. There should be a commitment at the branch office level to respond promptly to such enquiries. Apart from promptness, it is also necessary to ensure that not only is the required information provided, but also as a matter of concern for the enquirer, all related information is also made available. Although the letter itself may be precise and formal, appropriate rate charts, brochures, reports, lists and tables should be enclosed. Such gestures and prompt responses not only help in business development, but also in creating a favourable impression on the minds of those seeking information. The person making the enquiry is happy that the organization is prompt and keen on doing business. In a competitive environment, it is often the prompt response which can make a difference in gaining or retaining customers.
9.2.2 Orders and Quotations/Trade References

Orders are placed by business organizations for purchases to be made by them. It may be for purchase of a commodity, rendering of service, installation and maintenance or any such activity. Orders are to be specific and clear. An order is a direct request. An order is not an ‘order’ or a command. Hence, the statements need to be courteous and yet clear-cut. Specific areas to be covered while placing an order are as given below:

1. **Order Request:** The following statements are generally used:
   - ‘Please send us the following items’
   - ‘We are pleased to place an order with you for the supply of’

2. **Description:** The order should clearly state the type of items or material, make or capacity, number of items or quantity and related details unambiguously.

3. **Rate:** The rate at which the order is being placed should be clear and should relate to units or quantities referred to on the quotations as far as possible. Mention clearly specific details such as rate per piece, rate per metric ton, rate per 1,000 ml and rate per box of 10 pieces, whatever is relevant. Mention whether any tax or packaging charges would need to be paid or whether the rate/amount is all-inclusive.

4. **Packaging Specifications:** Mention the specifications relating to packaging, especially considering the breakage, transport and other such relevant factors.

5. **Delivery Schedule:** Clearly mention when, where and in which lots the items ordered are to be delivered. This is especially significant when there are penalties for delayed delivery. Further, the delivery may not be at one place and instead may be at different centres/offices. For example, an organization that is placing orders for calendars or diaries may place a centralized order but may instruct that the delivery be made to various offices/branches.

6. **Mode of Payment:** While placing the order, mention the mode of payment and terms, if any. Payments are normally done by demand drafts or cheques payable at specific centres/branches. If payments are in instalments, such details should be clearly stated.

7. **Validity:** Any purchaser would like to have the items or goods within a specific time period, especially when the goods are perishable or seasonal. The period for which the order is valid has to be stated for ensuring clarity.

8. **Other terms and conditions:** The orders should also specify the other terms and conditions as are relevant, such as special packaging, if any, discounts sought, insurance details and conformity to samples.
Companies normally use special forms for ordering products or service. They use their own forms, called purchase orders, or those provided by the sellers, called order forms. These forms carry blank spaces to ensure the inclusion of all relevant details. These forms can be numbered and filed for any future reference. Notwithstanding this, the business communicator may be called upon to prepare his own order form and draw up a format for the company use. In drafting the order, the communicator should keep in view all the points mentioned above. For ready reference, we give a checklist for orders.

**Checklist for Placing Orders**

The order should cover the following details:

1. Name of the Item/Product/Service
2. Item Number (from the catalogue/press ad, model, etc.)
3. Quantity Required (in no.s, dozens, tonnes, cases, etc.)
4. Description (size, colour, material, weight, etc.)
5. Unit Price
6. Discounts Applicable
7. Sales Tax, other taxes
8. Total Price
9. Method/Terms of Payment
10. Desired Delivery Schedule
11. Delivery Address
12. Authorized Signature

While putting an order into a letter format, one must ensure to include complete and accurate information since incomplete details would result in wrong items, delayed deliveries and excess payments.

**Trade Reference Letter**

In an organization, trade reference letters are vital and are employed to convey official messages. They are primarily written by a person to his acquaintance suggesting a company that provides a decent business opportunity. The organization being recommended is usually one that has previously conducted business with the referrer over a period of time and one that matches the profile required by the business. A trade reference letter briefly encompasses how the writer is acquainted with the organization being recommended, as well further details about its policies and how was his/her experience with the organization as a whole. The letter should also mention why the writer suggests that the reader consider the organization over other firms.
### Exhibit 9.3: Trade Reference Letter Template

From,

__________

__________

__________

__________

Date: __________

To,

__________

__________

__________

__________

Subject: Letter in reference to your request

Respected Sir,

I am very much pleased to reply to your request. I would like to inform you that the XYZ Co-operative Society is the one you should approach. It’s one of the best bulk selling societies that should meet all your needs. As per your demands, it is the best thing that can happen to you. With many additional qualities and obviously it is a lot cheaper than your present stock list.

It has provided us service for over a decade now and its services are very much satisfying. The terms and conditions are very friendly for your company and its health. It looks after everything and makes sure that the product reaches the common man’s hand. It also looks after the consumer’s rights and interest.

Hope you will experience a good business working with them. Thanking you.

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### 9.2.3 Status Enquiries- Confirmation

The words enquiry and inquiry mean almost the same and are used interchangeably. Enquiry relates to the act or process of seeking information. In everyday correspondence, people in business have to deal with numerous letters of enquiry. When people need information about products, services, terms and conditions, margins and discounts, opening and closing, and a host of such relevant details from banks, insurance companies, traders, suppliers, transporters and the like, letters have to be sent or calls made. It could be a traditional letter or an e-mail. Similarly, organizations which receive such letters of enquiry have to respond by providing the information sought swiftly and courteously. Two such common types of enquiries in the world of business are credit and status enquiries. Drafting of such enquiry letters is indeed quite simple and such letters are considered to be routine letters.
The main objective in writing such letters is to seek information. The letter should necessarily be polite and specific about the details sought. Come straight to the point and state what you want to know. If you want a quick response, say something nice about the organization or the product. In other words, make sure your letter of enquiry ends on a note of goodwill.

Here are some examples of credit enquiries:
- ‘Please let me know if you have credited our account for the supplies we made vide our Bill No. 86/2017 dated October 10, 2017.’
- ‘We shall be thankful to know from you if the maturity proceeds of our fixed deposit receipt for ₹50,000 that matured on 6 April 2018 have been credited to our current account.’

Here are some examples of status enquiries:
- ‘Will you please let us know if the cheque drawn on Canara Bank, Model Town, Bhopal dated 16 March 2018 for ₹25,000 sent for collection has been realized and credited to our savings account no. 3625 with your branch.’
- ‘Please let us know if you have despatched 20 boxes of mangoes to our regional office in Kolkata as per our order dated 15 January 2018.’

While we have given above examples of traditional letters of enquiry, it is worth noting that with internet and mobile banking, e-mail and telephone communication the need for writing such routine letters has come down significantly. Letters of enquiry, however, would be relevant when the details sought are numerous and when a record (document) needs to be created for having sent an enquiry. With most organizations today having their own websites giving all relevant details, the need for such routine letters is much less and arises only when detailed information is sought.

Check Your Progress
1. Why are qualitative aspects of any job important for a business?
2. What is a tender?
3. What do letters of enquiry cover?
4. What are trade reference letters?

9.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Modern businesses attach considerable significance to the qualitative aspects of any job. Suppliers who do not conform to prevalent acceptable standards are often rejected. In view thereof, it is imperative that the qualitative
dimensions such as strength, thickness, purity, colour, texture, age, weight and accuracy are clearly stated.

2. A tender is an offer or a proposition made for acceptance, such as an offer of a bid for a contract.

3. Letters of enquiry cover various types of enquiry made by a wide cross section of clientele and prospective customers regarding the availability of various products, services and other related aspects of the business.

4. In an organization, trade reference letters are vital and are employed to convey official messages. They are primarily written by a person to his acquaintance suggesting a company that provides a decent business opportunity.

9.4 SUMMARY

- In any organization, orders, offers and quotations are correspondences that are carried out every single day.
- A tender is an offer or a proposition made for acceptance, such as an offer of a bid for a contract. A tender is something that is offered in return for a specific payment, subject to well laid down terms and conditions.
- Letters of enquiry cover various types of enquiry made by a wide cross section of clientele and prospective customers regarding the availability of various products, services and other related aspects of the business.
- Orders are placed by business organizations for purchases to be made by them. It may be for purchase of a commodity, rendering of service, installation and maintenance or any such activity.
- In everyday correspondence, people in business have to deal with numerous letters of enquiry. When people need information about products, services, terms and conditions, margins and discounts, opening and closing, and a host of such relevant details from banks, insurance companies, traders, suppliers, transporters and the like, letters have to be sent or calls made.
- In an organization, trade reference letters are vital and are employed to convey official messages. They are primarily written by a person to his acquaintance suggesting a company that provides a decent business opportunity.

9.5 KEY WORDS

- **Letter of enquiry**: It is a letter written to request information and/or ascertain its authenticity.
- **Trade reference letter**: It is a recommendation provided on behalf of a client, vendor, or other business associate or contact.
• **Orders**: They are correspondences placed by business organizations for purchases to be made by them. It may be for purchase of a commodity, rendering of service, installation and maintenance or any such activity.

### 9.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISE

#### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is the main objective in writing letters of enquiry?
2. What are trade reference letters? Why are they written?
3. What are the areas that need to be kept in mind while placing orders?

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the specifications or details which must be unambiguously mentioned in quotations or tenders.
2. What are letters of enquiries? Discuss their formats.
3. What are tenders? What are the points that should be kept in mind while drafting tenders?

### 9.7 FURTHER READINGS


UNIT 10 WRITING E-MAILS

Structure
10.0 Introduction
10.1 Objectives
10.2 E-Mails
10.2.1 Overcoming Problems in E-Mail Communication
10.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
10.4 Summary
10.5 Key Words
10.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
10.7 Further Readings

10.0 INTRODUCTION

The contours of business communication are changing at a rapid pace. The methods and channels of communication used yesterday are making way for speedier and more efficient ones today. Telecommunications and computers are driving this change across the world. Numerous technology-induced developments towards the end of the last century have brought about new dimensions to the range, speed, methods and modalities of personal and business communication. Internet, laptop, mobiles, modems, word processors, communication networking systems, data warehousing, computer-based messaging systems and a host of technology powered developments have started impacting every sphere of activity, including corporate and business communication.

Businesses are metamorphosing. Old ways of doing things are making way for the new and more sophisticated ones. Telecommunications have seen an enormous growth, thereby impacting the lives of people around the world. As John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene say in their book, Megatrends 2000, ‘In telecommunications we are moving to a single worldwide information network, just as economically we are becoming one global marketplace.’ Thanks to globalization and cross-border flow of ideas and resources, developments in one place are rapidly reaching other parts of the world. The technology revolution has started impacting rural areas as well.

A growing number of companies the world over have started investing in networks and e-mail for communications. For business communicators, all these developments bring in new opportunities as well as responsibilities. Messages have to be brief, swift and focused. Transmission leakages have to be brought down substantially. As businesses share and transmit information, both internally and externally, data security assumes significance. There is now a much greater choice of channels and instruments. It has become necessary to keep abreast with such developments, appreciate their advantages and use them for improving t
10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- Discuss e-mails and the principles of e-mail writing
- Describe the challenges of e-mail communication and how to overcome them

10.2 E-MAILS

E-mail stands for electronic mail. ‘e’ in e-mail stands for electronic. This word can be spelled either e-mail or e-mail. E-mail is described as a way of sending messages and data to other people by means of computers connected together in a network. E-mail refers to an electronic message sent via the Internet. It is a computer-based messaging system that transports electronic messages from one computer to another through a communication network. In a large organization, e-mail connectivity is established across numerous locations, such as branches, regional offices, controlling offices, service units and training centres. Each e-mail location is identified by a unique e-mail identification, in short an e-mail id. Messages and data, which are otherwise transferred through couriers, speed post and floppies can instead be transferred through e-mail. Physical transfer and movement, so essential in other means of transmission, are avoided. Data transmission through e-mail is both instantaneous and cost effective.

The advantages of using e-mail are indeed many:
- E-mail communication is swift, in fact instantaneous.
- E-mail communication is extremely economical.
- E-mail communication can be lengthy or heavy when it carries attachments.
- E-mail communication has a large global reach and access.
- E-mail communication is unmindful of time zones.
- E-mail communication is largely reliable; the sender can know if the message has reached the addressee or not.
- E-mail communication can be readily acknowledged by the receiver.
- The sender can also seek an acknowledgement from the receiver.
- The sender can send copies of the message to many others instantaneously.
- E-mail communication messages normally use the telegraphic language and salutation, and other essentials of a regular correspondence are not a must.
E-mail communication can be stored and retrieved as and when required by both the sender and the receiver.

**Create an E-mail ID**

E-mails are emerging as the fastest system of communication among people across the globe. Websites provide a variety of options to users for transmitting and receiving text messages, graphics and even photographs. Corporates and organizations transmit their messages through e-mails to avoid telephone conversations. Moreover, the message can be conveyed to a large number of people simultaneously.

A person wanting to send an e-mail is required to have an e-mail account with any website which provides an e-mail service to its users. The e-mail ID is similar to the postal address, which a person must have to receive postal mail or couriers.

Businesses which realize the potential of e-mails are giving as much importance to e-mail messages as they are to mail messages. Like any other communication, sales and other people are encouraged to open their e-mail inboxes periodically and make sure that e-mails are read and responded to promptly. Similarly, in order to discourage the use of official e-mail channels unduly for personal communication, strict penal provisions are stipulated and enforced.

No wonder, there is a rapid growth in the use of e-mail across the world. One of the earlier annual reports of Lucent Technologies refers to a whopping five million messages per minute through the e-mail. More recent data (2014) suggest that the number of e-mail messages per minute has crossed 200 million. E-mail has become an indispensable means of information exchange, continuing to gallop in terms of volumes.

It is indeed very essential to be familiar with e-mail, as most businesses today are using this medium of communication. We have earlier discussed the subject of preparing and sending job application letters and resumes. It is worth noting here that some of the companies and job advertisers insist that application letters and resumes be sent only through e-mail, to the specified e-mail address. Similarly, intimations and other routine communication are also sent by businesses only through e-mails. Having an e-mail ID and being conversant with this medium of message transmission is thus not only useful but also absolutely essential.

E-mail is used for both personal communication and business communication. When e-mail messages are sent for personal communication, they tend to be informal communication. On the other hand, when e-mail messages are sent in a corporate or business framework, they tend to be formal and official. E-mail application for a job, sending of an office memorandum and e-mail office reminders are all examples of formal communication in business. Personal e-mails may or may not give adequate attention to spelling, grammar and the rules of good writing, but business communication must necessarily do so. Every good communicator
must keep in mind the distinction between personal informal communication and official and formal communication. When these distinctions get blurred, business communication becomes shoddy. Business communication should not be informal and casual.

When E-mails are not Suitable:

Notwithstanding the several advantages of e-mail communication, there are some instances where an e-mail communication is not recommended. These are as follows:

- E-mails are not suitable when the communication or letter is of special significance to the receiver. For example, when an appreciation letter, promotion letter or any communication that is worth preserving is sent. E-mail messages do not carry the same personal touch which a handwritten or neatly typed message on good quality paper carries.
- E-mails are not suitable when the receiver has to file them and keep them for long time future reference. The storability or durability of electronic communication is not as well-known as that of paper records.
- E-mails are best avoided when they are meant to be confidential as they can be easily forwarded to several others.
- E-mails serve well when the letters are short and the contents routine. When the letters are long and subject complex, it would be more appropriate to send formal written communication.
- E-mails are not to be used when the receiver expects a signed copy of the communication.

E-mail Etiquette

When it comes to sending business related e-mails, the rules of good writing are very much relevant. Just because e-mails are easy to send, due diligence relevant in business writing should not be overlooked. E-mails do constitute business communication, although the transmission of the message takes place through the internet mode. Rules of good writing are to be followed.

Avoid the following:

- grammatical errors
- punctuation mistakes
- marking unnecessary copies
- typos or typing errors
- misspellings
- capitalization errors
- casual writing
- texting abbreviations

Further, the ‘to’ address, subject line, greetings, formal business language and formal and friendly closing are all very essential in e-mail messages too. The degree of formality in sending e-mails would vary depending upon the status and
relationship of the sender and the recipient of the letter. E-mail communication does not permit informal and casual approach when the business relationship is formal and official.

**NOTES**

Dear is still very appropriate As evident from the Box Item given above, of late, the use of ‘Dear’ has seen some controversy. The advent of e-mail has impacted the formal writing style and has raised a question mark over the use of ‘Dear’. Notwithstanding certain reservations expressed at some quarters, we need to note that, for the present, ‘Dear’ is still dear when it comes to formal business communication. ‘Dear Sir’, ‘Dear Mr. Khan’, ‘Dear Ms.Bharathi’, and ‘Dear Prof Iyer’ are examples of how to address the business e-mails. It is appropriate to use titles wherever they exist. ‘Dear All’ can be used when addressing a group. ‘Hi’ and ‘Hello’ are used only in informal writing. Similarly, while closing the business e-mails, Sincerely, Cordially, Regards, Best Regards, etc. would be appropriate.

E-mail provides for sending not only messages but also files and lengthy documents. When such lengthy reports and documents have to be sent through the e-mail, they are invariably sent as ‘attachments’. Sending lengthy documents by way of e-mail attachments is instantaneous and works out cheaper than the postal or courier route.

That is why lengthy messages and documents are regularly sent as attachments. In addition to such messages and documents, pictures, internet links, audio files and video files can also be sent as attachments to an e-mail. E-mails can be sent by the press of a button. This is both a boon and a bane. Good business communicators should make it a habit to press the ‘send’ button only after checking the contents thoroughly for grammatical and other errors, ensuring that the attachments are in place and the recipient’s address is correctly typed. That is why, it is recommended that the ‘to’ address and the ‘Cc’ columns are typed at the end after thoroughly ensuring that everything is in order. Any undue haste invariably results in sending incomplete or incorrect messages and the consequent embarrassments.

E-mails are speedy communication. Anyone receiving an e-mail is expected to respond promptly and without any delay. If no reply is warranted, the message is read and either saved or deleted as the case may be. Further, when required, a print out of the message can be taken and filed. Although there is a provision to forward the e-mail received, as a matter of business ethics, due care should be taken while forwarding e-mails. Any such forwarding should be strictly need-based and any confidential information should not be forwarded indiscriminately. While acknowledging e-mails received, do specifically acknowledge the attachments, if any.
Example of Good Communication

To: ahmad@vikaspublishing.com
Cc: programs@toptrainers.com

Subject: Business Communication Training Material

Dear Mr. Ahmad,

I am the Training Manager at Top Trainers Ltd. at Bengaluru. I am contacting you in connection with our requirement of books and CDs available with you on the subject of business communication.

We will be organizing training programmes for the faculty of prominent Business Schools next month. Apart from providing relevant training material to all the participants, we propose to provide to them a few books and CDs on the subject of Business Communication. Our initial requirement would be 30 sets.

Could you please send us a set of relevant books and CDs available with you on the subject along with your price list, delivery time and payment terms. Our mailing address is: Top Trainers Ltd. 55, M.G.Road, Bengaluru 560002. Contact No. 91 9999955555.

Looking forward to your early response.

Regards

Mathew Arnold, Training Manager.

Example of Bad Communication

Reply soon.

Bye

Mathew

Principles of E-mail Writing

Some of the principles of good e-mail writing are:

- Begin with a greeting
- Subject line
- Use simplified language
- The recipient should be kept in the mind while writing e-mails
- Use Passive Voice
- Ascertain following the rules of Punctuation, basic grammar and spellings
- Try to use positive words
- Add your closing remarks
10.2.1 Overcoming Problems in E-Mail Communication

Business managers today regularly communicate with their employees, customers and other stakeholders via e-mail. While e-mail communication is fast and can be sent from a PC, phone or other mobile device easily, there are some challenges in e-mail communication. These are:

- **Effects:** Sending an e-mail message is not like sending a letter. Unlike e-mails, communications on paper are far less likely to be read by someone the message is not intended for. E-mails can be forwarded by the recipient to whomever he chooses. The challenge for any business person is to think clearly about the content of the e-mail message he is about to send and the unintended consequences of the information ending up in the wrong in-box.

- **Time Frame:** Sometimes an e-mail message gets clogged in the system and is not delivered for hours or sometimes even days from the time it was sent. You expect almost instantaneous delivery, but that is not always the case.

- **Considerations:** E-mail was designed to enhance communications by making it faster and more to the point. But printing e-mail messages on the company printer defeats this purpose. The “paperless” office is a long way off if too many employees insist on keeping paper files of all the e-mail messages they send or receive.

- **Warning:** E-mail has made it easy to be lazy. While there are obvious efficiencies to be gained by using e-mail, it should be remembered that there is nothing like a warm in-person meeting for prospective business opportunities.

### Check Your Progress

1. What are e-mails?
2. What is an e-mail id?
3. What is fast emerging as the fastest system of communication across the globe?
4. List one situation where e-mails are not suitable.

### 10.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. E-mail is described as a way of sending messages and data to other people by means of computers connected together in a network.
2. Each e-mail location is identified by a unique e-mail identification, in short an e-mail id.
3. E-mails are emerging as the fastest system of communication among people across the globe.

4. E-mails are best avoided when they are meant to be confidential as they can be easily forwarded to several others.

10.4 SUMMARY

- E-mail refers to an electronic message sent via the Internet. It is a computer-based messaging system that transports electronic messages from one computer to another through a communication network.
- E-mails are emerging as the fastest system of communication among people across the globe.
- A person wanting to send an e-mail is required to have an e-mail account with any website which provides an e-mail service to its users.
- E-mail is used for both personal communication and business communication.
- When e-mail messages are sent for personal communication, they tend to be informal communication. On the other hand, when e-mail messages are sent in a corporate or business framework, they tend to be formal and official.
- When it comes to sending business related e-mails, the rules of good writing are very much relevant. Just because e-mails are easy to send, due diligence relevant in business writing should not be overlooked.
- While e-mail communication is fast and can be sent from a PC, phone or other mobile device easily, there are some challenges in e-mail communication.
- E-mails can be forwarded by the recipient to whomever he chooses. The challenge for any business person is to think clearly about the content of the e-mail message he is about to send and the unintended consequences of the information ending up in the wrong in-box.

10.5 KEY WORDS

- Communication network: A type of network which uses broadcasting for communication between its nodes.
- Etiquette: It refers the customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group.
- E-mail id: It is a unique identifier for an email account. It is used to both send and receive email messages over the Internet.
10.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

NOTES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the advantages of using e-mail?
2. List the principles of e-mail writing.
3. Describe the challenges in e-mail communication and how to overcome them.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss how one can create an e-mail id.
2. Discuss the situations where e-mail communication is not suitable.

10.7 FURTHER READINGS


UNIT 11 ORAL BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS

Structure
11.0 Introduction
11.1 Objectives
11.2 Oral Communication Skills
11.3 Business Presentation
11.4 Steps in Making a Presentation
11.5 Effective Use of Audio-Visual Aids
11.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
11.7 Summary
11.8 Key Words
11.9 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
11.10 Further Readings

11.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about business presentations. A presentation is basically the process of presenting a topic to the audience. It could be a lecture or a speech that introduces an idea or discusses a topic with an audience. A presentation is an extremely important form of oral communication in business organizations. A manager may give a presentation externally to inform others about a product or service or internally to employees to discuss a new idea. The main goal of a business presentation is to maintain interest and communicate your ideas effectively. The unit will discuss various facets of business presentations. It will begin by discussing oral communication.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- Discuss the merits and demerits of oral communication
- Describe the different stages of the presentation process
- Explain some of the techniques to improve presentation skills
- Examine the various audio-visual aids used in presentations
11.2 ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Oral communication refers to the spoken word. It takes the form of sounds and words. Starting out as a struggle by the early man, oral communication has had a long journey. It has developed across different regions, cultures, countries and continents. The development of numerous languages across the world has empowered oral communication.

Oral communication plays a vital role in everyday life, both for individuals and organizations. It is, indeed, the most commonly used method of communication both at the social level and at the organizational level. Everyone makes copious use of oral communication in their transactions and interactions. For the individual, talking and speaking provide a very dependable means of communication within the family and in social groups. Oral communication is also extensively and gainfully used within organizations and business entities as well.

Oral communication is also referred to as verbal communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words. Oral communication takes place in many ways—casual and serious, formal and informal, structured and unstructured. Oral communication encompasses conversation, monologue, dialogue, talk, speech and chat. Some of these are pre-meditated and some are not. Formal speeches are pre-planned and well structured, whereas informal ones are unstructured and often loosely worded.

As already noted, oral communication can be both structured and unstructured. It can also be formal or informal. In other words, oral communication comprises of both small talk and big talk. Small talk is informal and unstructured. You simply talk. Small talk is often casual. On the other hand, big talk is both formal and structured. It is a serious talk with particular concern for its impact and effectiveness. Big talk calls for planning and organizing. Small talk usually refers to conversations, chats, gossiping and the like where the speakers talk without much concern for the consequences. They are casual and often described as friendly chat, idle talk, common gossip, and so on. Figuratively speaking, when we say, “we indulged in small talk before getting down to business”, it means that we did some casual talking before discussing business. Big talk comprises of giving a speech, making a presentation, participating in a meeting, handling a negotiation, counselling, dealing with a crisis, attending an interview, making a sales talk, strengthening customer contact, discussion as a panel member, and a host of other talks which are now an integral part of the business world. Small talk may not always be aimed at achieving anything specific. It, nevertheless, helps in building rapport and paving the way for big talk. Big talk, however, is always goal oriented. Big talk is done with specific objectives. Big talk aims to inform, influence, educate, convince, promote, resolve, motivate, and attain several such objectives. Big talk, to be effective, calls for tremendous skills and persistent efforts. The world of business especially looks for those people who are good at big talk.
Direct person-to-person communication plays a very useful role in any organization, essentially in work situations, where there are employer-employee, superior-subordinate and service provider-customer interactions. Oral communication is a speedy two-way process. The message conveyed through oral communication is instantaneous. The messages can travel back and forth without any loss of time. It is possible for the receiver of the message to respond immediately to the sender making the process highly interactive. The messages between the sender and the receiver can go back and forth, with role reversals taking place, till the objective is achieved.

There are many businesses and groups where spoken word carries considerable weight. There are businesses where, for various reasons, not much is documented or reduced to black and white. The verbal contracts are taken as seriously as the written ones and are faithfully fulfilled. A promise made is a promise kept. Likewise, in organizational situations, oral instructions, appeals and messages are seldom disregarded. Oral communication, besides being interactive, can also be quite persuasive.

Another noteworthy merit of oral communication is that it can be supplemented and complemented by non-verbal communication for greater impact. When a speaker speaks, the message is conveyed not only through the spoken words, but also by body movements and actions. When a person is talking or speaking or counselling, the warmth or otherwise of the person’s feelings is also expressed through the body language. It is, however, worth noting that if this language is not used consciously to reinforce the verbal messages, it may lead to confusion and even contradiction.

Notwithstanding its several merits, oral communication gets constrained by various physical factors. It works well in small groups—at counters, in classrooms, in meetings and conferences, in counselling and persuasive sessions. A major drawback of oral communication is that it cannot be erased. There is a sense of finality concerning the spoken word. Any word uttered by the speaker travels swiftly and reaches the target. Any slip of the tongue can create an embarrassment and an unintended hurt. The moment a wrong or unintended word is delivered, the damage is done. Effective speakers are acutely conscious of this factor. More so, when they make extempore speeches. Recognizing this limitation, while resorting to any form of oral communication, one should learn to make a careful choice of words. Until the fine art of speaking with restraint is developed, it would be desirable to make the speeches and interventions, structured and well thought out rather than spontaneous and extempore. Whenever the oral communication is intended to achieve an important objective, extra care should be taken with the choice of words.

In personal as well as organizational communication, several channels or tools are regularly used. These include the telephone, the cell phone, the microphone,
the radio, the amplifier and the loudspeaker. To the extent they are well chosen and well maintained, they facilitate smooth and effective flow of communication. If care is lacking while using them, they may prove to be a hindrance rather than an aid.

Table 11.1 Merits and Demerits of Oral Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Demerits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It can be readily used.</td>
<td>It is not very effective when the target group is spread out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is instantaneous.</td>
<td>It is constrained by language, accent and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It can be persuasive.</td>
<td>It is also constrained by noise and other physical barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is cost effective.</td>
<td>It is not normally recorded or documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It facilitates effective person-to-person exchange.</td>
<td>It does not permit repeated reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It works very well in small groups.</td>
<td>It cannot be erased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It can be supplemented by non-verbal messages.</td>
<td>It is often dependent on memory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check Your Progress

1. What is oral communication?
2. List one merit of oral communication.

11.3 BUSINESS PRESENTATION

Presentations constitute an extremely popular method of interactive communication, especially in the world of business. Presentations are so much a part of the business world today that it is hard to think of a profession or business that does not make use of presentations. Speeches and presentations have become an integral part of business transactions and relationships. The ability to make a good speech and an effective presentation adds value to a professional or anyone associated with the world of business. Both speeches and presentations are a part of oral communication and are often used interchangeably. However, while a speech refers to an act of speaking, a presentation relates to the act of presenting. In that sense a presentation is, generally speaking, a more formal act. It is done with much preparation and there is nothing casual or sudden about it. More importantly, a presentation relates to oral communication with the help of audio-visual aids.

A presentation is described as an act of showing, explaining or describing something to a group of people. Its objective may be to inform, explain, convince or win over the audience. It is an important communication skill that must be mastered for professional and business success.
A presentation should be structured to cover three main parts, viz., introduction, body and conclusion. The choice of words, appropriate use of jargon, fluency of language, presentation style, audience analysis and such other concerns relevant in connecting with and engaging the audience are also very relevant for an effective presentation. Without repeating what we have already covered under speeches, we shall now discuss aspects specific to understanding and acquiring presentation skills.

Presentations are made in classrooms, seminars, conferences and to groups of persons on certain scheduled topics. The topic for presentation is predetermined and there is nothing rambling or disorganized about it. Presentations have a specific objective. Quite often, the objective is not just to inform, but more importantly to influence, persuade, motivate and amplify. The verbal message is supplemented with the help of audio and visual aids for greater impact. Seeing plus hearing has greater impact than mere hearing. The objective of a presentation is to present all relevant details to the interested target audience on a specific topic or concept or area of interest in a participative manner. Any good presentation is well structured, properly packaged and presented to create high impact.

Presentations are of various kinds. Whenever a presenter feels that he has to reach out to an audience, influence their thinking and create an impact to achieve a certain objective, he may gainfully make a presentation. The presentations may range from a simple classroom presentation to amplify a concept or idea to a sales presentation to a very high-level strategy presentation. The venue for a presentation may be as varied as a classroom or a conference room or an executive cabin or even a boardroom. Apart from concept or idea presentations, product or sales presentations and strategy presentations are very common in the world of business. During any presentation on products and services, demonstrations covering the functioning and operation of new products are also introduced. Let us look at some examples of how presentations are used in business:

- A salesperson makes a presentation on a new product.
- An advertising agency makes a presentation on an advertising campaign to a client.
- A management consultant makes a presentation on organizational restructuring to a large business organization.
- An economist makes a presentation on the impact of global recession in a business seminar.
- An event manager makes a presentation to a chamber of commerce on a major trade fair.
- A CEO makes a presentation to his top management team on their business strategy plan for the ensuing year.

As we can see, these are just some random thoughts and there could be any number of minor and major, short and long, technical and non-technical, routine and path-breaking presentations in business situations. A salesperson or a junior-
level person to the chief executive or a highly placed person may be required to make a presentation. Likewise, a presentation may be made by one individual or a group of persons. Presentations help when technical as well as non-technical aspects have to be neatly and forcefully presented by means other than mere written or verbal.

Presentations are emerging as a popular means of communicating various concepts and ideas, features of gadgets, technology-based products, business results, analytical studies, status reports, strategic plans and a host of such items. Presentations help in simplification, amplification, analysis and reiteration. Presentations facilitate putting forth issues in proper perspective. Presentations are extremely useful in covering the subject emphatically within a given time. Presentations are helpful from the standpoint of time management, so crucial in business management.

Keeping in view all these advantages, in most business organizations, presentations, scheduled on various relevant topics, are made to CEOs and top management teams, decision-making authorities and even to board members. Whenever a selection is to be made for any assignment or task, the contenders are normally asked to make a presentation. Based on the presentations, evaluations are made. For example, short listed vendors of any software or hardware product may be asked to make a presentation. Similarly, short listed advertising agencies may be called upon to make a presentation before a panel before a selection is made. Obviously, in all such cases, the quality of the presentation and its impact on the target audience influence the final decision concerning the product or assignment. When such presentations are made, apart from the merits of the product or the proposal, the manner in which it is presented often assumes critical importance. Under such circumstances, presentation skills of the people concerned assume great significance. No wonder, people with good presentation skills are in great demand in the world of business.

Let us now look at the skills relevant for making a good presentation. The person keen on making an effective presentation has to necessarily develop various types of interactive skills:

- Essentially, one should be a good communicator and should learn to express oneself clearly and forcefully.
- He or she should be comfortable in facing the target audience and should build requisite confidence.
- The communicator should be familiar with the various techniques for holding the audience’s attention.
- The presenter should be well versed in presenting various types of audio-visual aids to heighten the impact of presentation.
- The person should be able to synchronize the verbal delivery or narration with the visual message.
• The presentation should not appear rehearsed or stereotype. The person should make the presentation within the allotted time.
• The presenter should be looking at the visual message as well as the audience and should not miss eye contact with the audience.
• The presenter should develop good fluency of language and also use familiar and appropriate words.
• The presenter should know which parts of the visual message or slides should be emphasized or elaborated and which should be skipped or rushed.
• The person should be alive to the response from the audience and know how to sustain it.
• The presenter should also know how to make effective use of the vocal and visual aspect of body language to make the presentation effective.
• Good presentation skills thus constitute good speaking skills plus effective use of visual and other aids to create a total impact.
• The person making the presentation should know how to manage the Question and Answer session effectively.

Check Your Progress
3. How should a presentation be structured?
4. List some of the different types of presentations.

11.4 STEPS IN MAKING A PRESENTATION

Good writing is a three-stage process covering pre-writing, writing and revising. Similarly, good presentation consists of three stages, viz., planning, preparation and delivery. Making a formal presentation is a serious business. It calls for an organized effort. Any faux pas or embarrassing blunder in public speaking or formal presentations will adversely affect the standing or credibility of not only the speaker but also the institution which he or she represents. Good presentations do not happen by accident. Although good presenters make their presentations look effortless, a great deal of effort actually goes into it. Effective presentations are the result of a three-stage process comprising of planning, preparation and delivery.

1. Planning the Presentation: Planning the presentation essentially involves four steps, viz., audience analysis, setting the objective, defining the topic and mind travelling.

Any speech or presentation is meant for the audience. It is the group of listeners who constitute the very purpose of the communication. Ultimately, the presentation is good or bad depending on how the audience or target group receives it. That is why audience analysis constitutes the starting point
Oral Business Presentations

NOTES

of any presentation. The target audiences are indeed very diverse and varied. They may not necessarily be a homogeneous and a highly attentive group. They may be heterogeneous and disinclined. In terms of the level of knowledge, ability to understand, receptivity, proficiency of language, kind of expectations, and a host of such factors, there could be very significant variations among the audience groups and batches of listeners. What works well with one group need not be equally effective with the other groups. There cannot be one-size-fits-all approach in making presentations. Depending upon the audience, the presentations have to be tailor-made. A good presenter should always be conscious of audience-related differences and plan and organize his or her presentation to suit the specific target group.

The next step in planning the presentation would be to set the objectives. Business communication, we have already noted, must be goal oriented. Any presentation, formal speech, letter, memo or meeting has a purpose. The objectives of presentations would be varied – to inform, to influence, to amplify, to simplify, to educate, to motivate or to persuade. At the planning stage, the presenter should take care to cover all the objectives in structuring the presentation.

Every presentation will have a topic or a subject to be covered. This topic could be the one selected by the speaker or the one decided by the audience or organizers of the seminar, conference, study group, committee, as the case may be. The planning process has to ensure that the topic so assigned or chosen is adequately covered in the presentation. At the planning stage, the person should ensure that the subject is covered with clarity and completeness, and there is no room for ambiguity and misinterpretation. Unless that is taken care of, the very purpose of the presentation may get defeated.

The fourth step in the planning process is what is called mind travelling. Mind travelling relates to building a vision of the presentation you are going to make. It relates to organizing our thoughts – what to say, how to say, what style to adopt, where to emphasize, where to pause, where to bring in humour or present statistics, and so on. Mind travelling covers the broader areas such as the dream, or imagination or foresight involving the presentation. In doing so, a good presenter makes sure that audience analysis, setting of objectives and delineation of the topic are all in place.

Presentations cannot be forceful, effective or persuasive, if the speaker is not focused. If he or she wanders or is disorganized, the presentation flounders. Those presentations which don’t follow a clear path to a concrete call for action fail to deliver results. The planning should be such that the key message and call for action come through clearly. Effective planning ensures that the outcome of the presentations is on the expected lines. God
planning ensures that the structure of the presentation is clear, logical and result-oriented.

2. **Preparing the Presentation:** Preparing any presentation involves four steps, viz. collecting relevant information, organizing the content, selecting the visual and other aids, and composing the presentation. Good speakers and presenters take pains to prepare their speeches in advance. The time spent on preparation would depend upon the familiarity of the topic, the nature of audience, the length of the presentation and such other relevant factors.

The essence of any presentation is the content or the subject matter. In other words, content counts. All the relevant facts and figures should be necessarily covered in the presentation. In gathering the factual details, we should note that there are basically two sources of data – primary and secondary. Similarly, the data sources could be both internal and external. Good presenters take care to collect requisite data from authentic and reliable sources. They use updated and duly verified data. Inaccurate and stale data are likely to be questioned and challenged during presentations. It is said that, in general, there are no bad audiences, but only bad speakers. The speaker should always assume that the audience consists of good, thoughtful and responsive persons. They are attending the presentation because they may not be as familiar with the subject as you are and are keen to know more. Any good presenter should put in the content so as to enrich the audience’s understanding of the topic.

Having collected all the relevant information, the next step is to organize the material. The material should be arranged in proper sequence. Apart from the subject related facts and figures, quotations and examples, tables and charts, humorous anecdotes and such other aspects which add spice to the presentation should be collected and kept ready. Keeping in view the wide variety of presentations, it would be useful to bring in logical, ethical and emotional appeals, as well as a variety of evidence to support your argument.

The next step is to select the visual and other appropriate aids. In today’s context, presentations are done, more often than not, with the help of audio-visual aids. Visual aids in any presentation include slides, flip charts, pictorial presentations and the like. While organizing the presentation, the presenter would get a fair idea about which stage and at which point during the presentation, he or she would be needing these aids. Accordingly, the speaker has to select, check the working condition and keep ready the visual aids.

All that we have discussed so far is akin to collecting the raw material. Composing the presentation is somewhat like assembling the final product. Composing the presentation means to combine together to form the whole. In terms of content and coverage, any presentation would cover three distinct aspects – introduction, body and closing.
The speaker starts with a greeting, covers the preliminaries and introduces the topic. This is the introductory part. What is important here is to capture the audience’s attention and to give them a reason to listen. You should get the audience hooked by telling a story or illustration, referring to a disturbing event or information, asking a rhetorical question or telling something that at once arouses interest. In introduction, the speaker tells the audience what he or she is going to present and how it would benefit them. In the introductory part, the speaker sets the proper tone. The introductory part normally consists of giving your credentials as a speaker and telling clearly what you are going to say. Since the initial words spoken by the presenter are heard very attentively by the listeners, the speaker should take extra care to make them appealing. What the speaker says by way of introduction will influence the attentiveness of the audience. The speaker must make every effort to catch attention, arouse curiosity and keep the opening remarks promising. The speaker may also mention during the introductory remarks when the listeners may ask their questions and get doubts clarified.

Next comes the body of your presentation. Moving to the body part of the presentation, the speaker covers all the main points of the subject, puts in all the supporting material and ensures complete coverage. All the evidence and logical arguments are covered in the body of the presentation. The audience attends the presentation with the expectation that the speaker will enrich them on the topic. The audience expects the speaker to inform, elucidate, amplify, enlighten and cogently cover the subject so that it becomes worthwhile for them to listen to the speaker. The speaker may consult his notes or the visual aids and comprehensively bring out all the relevant facts and figures. The speaker may refer to the supporting material and provide illustrations and examples in support of the points made. In view of its significance, about two-thirds of the time spent on any presentation is allotted to the body of the presentation. The main points are enumerated, emphasized and amplified, so that the audience gains clarity about the subject covered.

The third and final part of the presentation is the closing of the presentation. The closing or conclusion quickly sums up the main points and emphatically makes the final point. Good speakers know that their final words can create a lasting impression on the listeners. They take care to avoid weak ending. This part of the presentation, they know, is crucial. They make sure to reiterate the theme of their opening statement, sum up the key points and the main message they have brought out. They end the presentation by calling for action. Good speakers make the conclusion stand out. They know how to close the presentation on a strong note. The closing should be such as to leave behind a positive and lasting impression on the audience.

It is worth repeating that good presentations and speeches are the result of hard work and meticulous preparation. Even the best of speakers prepare their speeches, although not elaborately as a beginner or a novice. Earlier in
this chapter, we have noted how Woodrow Wilson needed two weeks for preparation when he was required to speak for only ten minutes. To quote Mark Twain, ‘It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech’.

Further, since presentations normally end with Question and Answer sessions, during the preparation, the presenter should also anticipate the likely questions and be in readiness to deal with them. The questions asked need not necessarily be simple and familiar which means the preparation should provide for even tricky and difficult questions. For any presentation to be successful, speakers should anticipate different scenarios and prepare well. Inability to answer questions leaves behind a poor impression about the speaker, his or her team and the organization. Thorough preparation enhances the chances of a successful presentation.

3. Delivering the Presentation: Delivery relates to the actual manner in which the message is communicated. Effectiveness of any speech or presentation depends not only on what is said, but also on how it is said. When the speaker is not experienced, he or she is bound to suffer from speech anxiety. This anxiety causes weak knees, low voice and sudden memory loss. Practicing, especially in front of a small group, helps overcome such anxiety. Great speakers attach particular attention to various aspects of the delivery of the presentation. Delivery of a presentation should also take cognizance of four aspects, viz. practice, non-verbal aspects, time management, and building confidence.

Practice is very essential for any effective oral communication, and a speech or presentation in particular. Practice here refers to the rehearsal of the presentation. In the practice session, you make sure that the vocal, verbal and visual aspects are in sync to create the desired impact. You ensure that the presentation can be completed within the time allotted, even after providing for some interruptions to seek clarifications. By practice, the speaker ensures that all aspects of the presentation are duly factored in. No amount of planning and other preparation is, in itself, any guarantee to a good presentation. One must practice in front of a mirror or, better still, in front of a familiar group of persons. To use a cliché, practice makes a man (and a woman) perfect. Until a speaker practices the actual delivery of the speech, it is only hope or conjecture. Practice also helps a speaker overcome his or her anxiety. The more one practices, the more confident he or she becomes.

Some communication experts believe that it is unrealistic to aim at a ‘perfect’ presentation. One should feel happy if the presentation is clearly organized, well documented and effectively delivered. Expecting every presentation to be perfect puts extra pressure on the speaker and adds to his or her nervousness. As a training expert puts it, ‘Practice only makes you better, but perfection doesn’t exist. The goal is to become so comfortable with what you are saying, it will roll off your tongue with minimum effort.’
Another important aspect for ensuring great delivery relates to the non-verbal aspects. The visual and the vocal features do play a significant role and may either supplement or distort the verbal messages. Every speaker and intending presenter should be cognizant of the non-verbal aspects not only during the preparation stage, but also at the actual stage of delivery. He or she should consciously cultivate good body language which includes a smile, good postures and gestures, pleasing facial expressions, required voice modulation, eye contact and mannerisms, and behaviour. Awareness relating to these aspects, especially during the delivery of presentations, is vital for presentations to be effective.

Time management constitutes another essential requirement for presentations to be effective. In the world of business, time means money. Audiences relating to business presentations are mostly people who value their time. The speaker must learn to complete the presentation well within the allotted time. Moreover, in seminars, conferences, etc., speakers are normally slated one after the other in consecutive time slots, and if one speaker overshoots the allotted time, it will disrupt the subsequent sessions. Similarly, completing the presentation much before the allotted time is also not desirable and indicates poor planning and inadequate preparation.

In this context of ensuring effective time management, an important point to be reiterated is the transmission rate. Transmission rate refers to the number of words spoken per minute. Speakers speak, on an average, at the rate of 150-175 words per minute. Those who speak fast may achieve a speed of about 200 words per minute. It is said that most listeners are capable of comprehending 500 words per minute. Good presenters should mind this transmission gap and make conscious efforts to keep their audience engaged. Appropriate eye contact, body movements, pauses and gestures, voice modulation, recourse to visual aids and such efforts to keep them engaged would become essential.

Finally, it should be emphasized that good speaking and effective presentations call for a high level of confidence. Key communication skills are cultivated over a period of time through hard work, conscious efforts and a series of ups and downs. There could be many moments of failures and under-performance. Nevertheless, with sustained efforts, even a mediocre speaker or presenter can certainly work his or her way up and become not just an effective presenter, but in fact a great presenter. It is worth noting here that all great speakers of today were mediocre or even poor speakers sometime in the past. Building confidence is something every good communicator has to do step by step.

11.5 EFFECTIVE USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Studies have shown that retention value is much higher when people both see and hear than when they only hear. Any presentation by definition is much more effective than a speech because here the oral messages are reinforced by visual messages.
When the presenter presents the key points and pictures or figures on the screens or slides, the audience comprehension can be sharper and retention longer. That is because words build one upon the next, whereas visuals present the whole idea in one glance. Experts assert that the eye can grasp the whole idea quicker than the ear. Be that as it may, the speaker should familiarize himself or herself with the audio-visual aids and make sure that they are in working order. Any presentation depends heavily on the visual aids. The presentation itself may flounder and create considerable embarrassment if for any reason the visual aids fail to function. Good presenters make it a point to carry some extra hard copies of the presentation to save the situation in such an eventuality.

The audio-visual kit forming a part of the presentation would include slides or transparencies, compact disc (CD) or pen drive, projector, laptop or computer access, collar mike, laser pointer and such other accessories. The latest aid in making a presentation is the multimedia kit. The person making a multimedia presentation or a power point presentation normally does so with the help of a personal computer or a laptop. Multimedia presentation facilitates storage and retrieval of not only the written text, but also very colourfully developed graphs, charts, tables and pictures. It is possible to go back and forth and refer to any slide without losing much time. It also facilitates cross-reference to another slide if the audience raises a query or the communicator wishes to elaborate the point. The current versions of the multimedia equipment are highly sophisticated and anyone who has learnt to use them well will be in a position to make very focused and forceful presentations.

Since the effectiveness of any presentation depends both on the vocal aspects and the visual aspects, care should be taken in designing and preparing the presentation slides. Very often, one comes across such poor-quality slides that the visibility gets impaired. When the slides presented are in very small fonts or the colours used are too bright and gaudy or the written messages are clustered, readability gets affected and the audience is unable to read the content. The presenter will create a poor impression if the slides are presented in such a way that only the presenter and only those in the front row can see the slides while those in the back cannot. The presenter should also avoid standing in front of the slides and blocking the audience view. Proper planning should keep in view the size of the audience, the number of screens and visibility of slides.

**Power Point Presentation (PPP)**

A power point presentation is a presentation, which is made with the help of a presentation software. PPPs consist of a number of presentation pages or ‘slides’. These slides may contain text, graphics, sound, movies, etc. arranged as per the choice of the presenter. The Power Point developed by Microsoft is the most popular and widely used presentation software. Power Point provides several features that facilitate flexibility and are of great help in making very professional business presentations.
Since Power Point Presentations have become so common, presentation software is also readily accessible. It is possible to develop need-based visuals with the help of such widely accessible presentation software. The most commonly used such software is the Microsoft Power Point. According to an estimate made in 2012 reported in Wikipedia, this program is used at an estimated frequency of 350 times per second by the presenters world-wide.

Good slides can be prepared keeping in view the following points:
1. Follow a uniform size and design for all your slides. Do not vary the size too much.
2. Make sure that there is a title for every slide and the text covers the title.
3. Use sub-titles within the main title where appropriate.
4. Present the logo of your organization at the top of every slide.
5. Take care to keep your sentences short and focused.
6. Use bullet points. Avoid lengthy sentences.
7. Follow a one-idea one-slide approach to the extent possible.
8. Choose your colour with care. It should be bright and pleasant and yet ensure readability.
9. Colours look different on the screen as compared to the ones on your laptop. Be aware.
10. Do not use too many colours. Be consistent.
11. Use fonts that enhance readability.
12. Make good use of borders and boxes to improve visual appeal of your text messages.
14. Be creative. With some extra efforts you can certainly make your slides a treat to watch.
15. Every line should not be read verbatim by the presenter. Give sufficient time to the audience.
16. Add footer with copyright information if and where relevant.
17. Use the pointer, not your finger, to draw attention.
18. Do not forget to mention page/slide numbers.

**Delivering a Presentation**

Group Presentations have also become quite common in the world of business. Quite often, in the corporate world, presentations are made by teams representing the organizations. Properly organized, these can be much more effective than the individual presenters. The audience will have the benefit of hearing several persons speak on the subject. Teams can be so organized that people with different skill
sets and subject knowledge can make presentations to bring out their best. The head of the team will usually start with an introductory note, and this will be followed by the others bringing out their own areas of specialization.

In order to make this effective, however, there should be good co-ordination within the team members. They should confine themselves to their pre-determined roles. Care should be taken to avoid repetitions and stepping into someone else’s area. There should be smooth transition from one to the other and avoidance of mix-ups. In fact, this also provides an opportunity to the team to strengthen or supplement the efforts of their colleagues, if need be.

Group presentations provide an opportunity to several members of the group or organization to participate in the presentation. They bring variety and make the presentation more impactful. However, they should be well planned. Proper co-ordination is the key. Members should stick to their time limits and allotted roles. They should not contradict one another. Transitions should be quick and smooth. This is the reason group presentations need greater rehearsals than individual presentations.

**Distributing Handouts**

Handouts refer to free copies of printed or other information handed out to the audience while making a presentation. They usually supplement the verbal or audio-visual presentation made by the speaker. It is a common practice to see speakers distributing handouts. Handouts do serve a useful purpose in reinforcing the verbal message. Nevertheless, when and whether to prepare and distribute handouts is a matter to be decided by the speaker taking into account the nature of the presentation and what the speaker wants to achieve. Distribution of handouts is particularly beneficial when the topics are complex and need a closer study. They are helpful when the technical details, factual information and statistical tables are equally important. The copies of the presentation slides may also be distributed when it is appropriate. Distributing handouts and hard copies is worthwhile when the speaker expects some positive response and action.

Handouts can be distributed before, during or after the presentations. Each of them has its merits. They should be distributed at the beginning when the speaker wants to make the session interactive from the beginning and when the presentation contains materials like statistical tables and articles that cannot be presented through slides. Handouts can be distributed in the middle when it relates to the message the speaker wants to convey at that point in his/her presentation. We may distribute the handout at the end when we want to leave the material with the audience for further study and reference. If we choose to distribute the handouts at the end of the presentation, please inform the audience in the very beginning so that they need not take notes.

Preparing and distributing handouts as discussed above is beneficial both to the speaker and the audience. For the speaker, the benefits are several. First, the
speaker will have the flexibility to go beyond the slides and cover additional information relating to the topic. Second, the speaker need not be concerned about forgetting anything or rushing through because of time constraints for after all, the copies of handouts cover all that is essential. Third, the speaker can leave essential material in the hands of the audience for their future reference. Fourth, mentioning contact details at the end of the handouts ensures that the audience are enabled to get back to the speaker for more details.

For the audience, the benefits are threefold. Firstly, they need not take notes and instead concentrate on the speaker’s presentation. Secondly, they need not depend only on their memory to recall the key aspects covered. Thirdly, they can use the hardcopy of the presentation or the handout for preparing summaries, discussion notes and action points.

**Oral Fluency Development**

Oral fluency is a must for making good speeches and presentations. Mastery over the language and command over words distinguish an accomplished speaker from a mediocre one. A good speaker cannot stand before an audience and start groping for the right word. At the same time, if a speaker fails to marshal the right words, the speech falters and becomes mundane. Oral fluency development means having an abundant supply of words and being in a position to choose the most appropriate word in every given context. Fluency means having full command over the language. Fluency refers to the ability to speak effortlessly and with ease. Fluency means speaking with grace and in a flowing style.

As we have noted earlier, the world of words is vast, growing and fascinating. Building up superior word power is a lifelong endeavour. English language constantly adopts new words. Very recently the millionth word entered the English lexicon. New words come into being and gain currency. Old words fall into disuse and yield place to more contemporary words. Good speakers and effective presenters make conscious and continuing efforts to add to their word power. Good speakers learn the art of weaving vibrant words into forceful sentences. They bring alive the power of English language. They do this by being on the look out for and assimilating new words from varied sources—dictionary, thesaurus, newspapers, books, reports and listening to accomplished speakers. But then, it is a long and progressive journey.

**Reflection and Empathy**

Reflection and empathy are two more constituents of an accomplished speaker. Any speaker, especially in the context of business communication, has a purpose. The speaker achieves the purpose by reaching out and impacting the audience. For this, the speaker needs to reflect. Reflection relates to giving a thoughtful consideration. Reflection refers to contemplation or the process of going through the speech mentally. A speaker reflects when he/she thinks about the audience and how the speech will be meeting and surpassing their expectations. Good
speakers vary their speeches depending upon the responses coming from their audience. Good speakers make it a point to pause and reflect on the impact they are creating on the listeners. They are mindful of the feelings of the audience. They do not necessarily speak out as prepared. They react to the audience and improvise while speaking.

Empathy refers to the ability to share, understand and feel another person’s feelings. Empathy refers to showing passion and affection. By being empathetic, a speaker shows that he/she understands and cares for the audience feelings. By showing empathy, a speaker establishes a rapport or an appropriate wavelength. An empathetic speaker is passionate while responding to the audience and shows that he/she cares for their reactions, feelings and expectations. A speaker’s empathy comes through when he or she interacts with the audience, while providing clarifications and explanations, and answering questions raised with concern and feelings. Great speakers like Obama and Dr Abdul Kalam speak with reflection and empathy as they address varied audience.

Building Your Confidence

Good speaking and effective presentation call for building confidence and this comes the hard way. These are skills that are cultivated over a period of time through hard work and a series of ups and downs. There could be many moments of failure or underperformance. Nevertheless, every mediocre speaker can certainly work his or her way to become an effective presenter. As we noted earlier, almost every good speaker of today was a mediocre or bad speaker of yesterday. Likewise, any speaker who looks like an overnight success would have put in years of hard work before accomplishing success.

Good Speakers Keep Adding to their Word Power

Be it speaking or presentation, the imperative of building vast word power and developing a good command over the English language cannot be under-estimated. When a person goes to the podium and faces the audience, he or she must necessarily have an abundant supply of words. Speeches or presentations to be made in the real-life business world are so numerous and diverse that the stock of words to be used for each occasion vary significantly. It is an abundant supply of appropriate words for every occasion that boosts any speaker’s confidence levels. We have in this chapter, as well as the earlier chapters, and also in the Appendix, covered extensively on the need to and methods of building vocabulary and command over the language. Those who are always at a loss for words cannot be effective speakers.

Let us now look at some tips that help build confidence and make the journey from a mediocre and fumbling speaker to a forceful and fluent speaker. Beginners and first-time speakers often suffer from nervousness and performance anxiety. They are not confident and are afraid of facing the audience. Nervousness would result in loss of memory and loss of words. People sweat, voice quivers...
and knees give in. The speaker’s discomfiture is writ large on his face. The audience cannot miss it. They do realize that the speaker is a beginner and is struggling to gain confidence. Yet, most of the time the audience shows understanding. The speaker, however, should test herself in smaller, informal and familiar groups and forums before venturing out to speak in front of a large audience or make a formal presentation.

The beginner’s low-confidence behaviour, to reiterate, gets manifested in fumbling, fidgeting, mumbling, fostering, looking confused, sweating and such other disturbed disposition. On the other hand, seasoned speaker’s high-confidence behaviour comes through clearly in a strong and controlled voice, smooth flow of thoughts and words, good posture, smile and eye contact, confident movements, firm gestures and other such positive and friendly disposition.

The following four steps help a speaker in moving from a low-confidence behaviour to a high-confidence behaviour:

- Observation
- Practice
- Feedback
- Self-analysis

**Observation**

Observation is to oral communication what reading is to written communication. You get to know different styles and varied approaches. Anyone wishing to be a good speaker should make it a point to observe the other speakers closely—their postures and gestures, choice of words and use of language, their voice modulations, their examples and stories, their pauses and punches, their beginning and closing and so on. Through such observations, one can notice the good, bad and ugly features. Make a mental note to adapt the good and desirable features, to avoid the bad or undesirable features and certainly shun the ugly features. Apart from observing the styles, eloquence and play of words, body movements, etc. it would also be useful to observe the use of pauses and silence in making presentations effective. If you observe closely, you will notice that very accomplished speakers use pauses or a few moments of silence to make telling points.

**Practice**

Practice or rehearsal is the crucial second step in developing a high-confidence level. Practice in front of a mirror, in front of a small familiar group or classrooms. To use a cliche, practice makes a man (or woman) perfect. Till you practice and actually deliver your speech, it is all a theory or conjecture. Like a swimmer who learns only after jumping into water, it is only through real-life situations that a speaker improves his or her delivery. Practice helps bridge the gap between notions and reality.
Another name for such a practice session is rehearsal. A rehearsal is a session of exercise or practice done in preparation to a subsequent public or formal speech or performance. Rehearsals are useful in preparing for interviews, public speaking and such other anticipated activity of significance. Rehearsals should be done as if one is speaking from a podium to a live audience. The speaker should stand on his or her feet, visualize the audience and speak out loudly. The speaker should note all the key aspects—time taken, pronunciation, key points covered and speed of delivery. As you practice, make it a point to check all relevant aspects. How are you coming through—dull or interesting? Are you looking confident or nervous? Are you varying your pitch and using pauses and punches where required? How is your opening and closing? Are you making a good delivery? Asking yourself such questions helps you focus on and overcome the shortcomings.

Feedback

The importance of feedback in any process of communication can hardly be overemphasized. It is said that feedback is the breakfast of champions. For a beginner, it is indeed much more. Seek out feedback on your speeches and presentations from friends, family members, colleagues, well-wishers, participants, organizers and even critics. In fact, more than praise, it is constructive criticism that really helps in overcoming deficiencies. In seminars and conferences, feedback forms are used and the audience is requested to offer their comments and suggestions. A good speaker takes the feedback seriously and makes conscious effort to improvise and refine content and delivery.

Self-Analysis

Self-analysis and evaluation is yet another vital step in the journey towards achieving high confidence and great impact speeches. Set yourself high standards and give marks to your performance. Every time you achieve the minimum score, raise the bar. Ask yourself the following questions and carry out a self-evaluation.

- Was my preparation and content coverage adequate?
- Did I do proper audience analysis?
- Did I supplement my verbal message with appropriate vocal and visual attributes?
- Did I make effective use of pauses and punches?
- Were my postures and gestures appropriate?
- Did I smile and establish eye contact?
- How good was my beginning?
- Did my main points come through loud and clear?
- How strong was my closing or conclusion?
- Did I manage my time well?
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- Was anything lacking in the question-and-answer session?
- Did I make an effective use of the visual aids or power point presentation?
- Did I use undesirable mannerisms and audience-unfriendly remarks?

Ask yourself relevant questions. Note down what your strengths are and where you did well. Similarly, note down your weak areas and aspects that need improvement. Self-analysis helps you become a better and more confident speaker.

In real-life situations, several good ideas and thoughts come to the speaker just after they complete their speeches and return to their seats. There is not much that one can do about it. Similarly, the speaker may also realize that many points he or she had planned to make just did not happen. That is how things often turn out in real-life situations. Do not become despondent. Be more alert and conscious next time. Good luck to you.

In the context of business communication, every speech and presentation has a certain purpose to achieve. The question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions are conducted in order to ensure that at the end of a speech or even during the course of a presentation, the audience is encouraged to ask questions or seek clarifications. Under normal circumstances, no speech or presentation can end without a Q&A session. That being so, the speaker should be fully prepared to anticipate any relevant question and reply satisfactorily. The questions need not necessarily be simple and familiar. The questions are often difficult and tricky. Speakers should anticipate and prepare well. Persistent inability to answer the questions raised speaks poorly about the speaker’s capabilities, and may even put the organization and the speaker in poor light. Good speakers give no scope for such failures. Speakers, nevertheless, may not always know the answers to the questions raised by the audience. The speaker should be frank about it, note down the question and take the earliest opportunity to check the answer and get back to the questioner. That is the hallmark of a good speaker.

To conclude, the art of speaking and making effective presentations is perfected through regular practice. Every opportunity should be used, especially till one gains the required confidence. One can only learn the hard way. There is bound to be initial nervousness and anxiety. There is often the fear of failure and not being in a position to answer all the questions. There are bound to be successes and failures, good days and bad days. It is all a part of the journey. The audience is often prepared to make allowances for the beginner. Accept your shortcomings and try to win over your audience. Good learning happens when you don’t make the same mistake twice. Humility, sincerity, commitment and the will to succeed finally ensure that initial fears and failures make way for mastery and effectiveness. Remember, the world of business very significantly needs more and more good speakers.
Table 11.2 Dos and Don’ts of Effective Presentations

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<th>Do’s</th>
<th>Don’ts</th>
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<td>Walk to the stage and stand behind the lectern/podium with confidence and purposeful gait. Establish instant visual contact with your audience. Take them on board. People form an opinion even before you open your mouth. Be conscious of your body language. Control your voice. It should supplement the verbal note. Make appropriate variations in your pace and tone. Be aware of your tone quality and enhance it using voice improvement techniques. Start strong. Catch attention using an anecdote, a disturbing statistic, a humorous remark or a rhetorical question. Quote great personalities and leaders wherever appropriate. They help in strengthening your premise. Make early efforts to relate to the people. Speak about issues of concern to them. Give respect to your audience. Keep them engaged through eye contacts, gestures and appropriate body movements. Relax and learn to laugh at yourself, if you goof up. Your audience smiles back and is more indulgent, if you are sincere and self-effacing. Establish an ‘I’, ‘You’ and ‘We’ connection. Know when to give out elaborate statistics and details, and when to be brief. Use visual aids effectively. Let them supplement your verbal messages. End on a strong note.</td>
<td>Avoid walking to the stage in a sheepish and hesitant manner. Do not start or keep speaking in a dull and monotonous tone. Take care not to sweat excessively. It suggests lack of self-confidence. Do not get into unnecessary arguments or berate your audience. Avoid anything that alienates the audience. Do not underestimate your listeners. Make your presentation effective with or without visual aids. Avoid over-reliance on such aids. Do not read every line in your power point presentation. Elucidate the key points. Avoid disturbing mannerisms. Don’t be too serious and self-conscious during the presentation. It adds to your nervousness.</td>
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Check Your Progress

5. What are the four steps of planning a presentation?
6. What can the audio-visual kit that forms a part of a presentation consist of?
7. What are power point presentations?
8. List one step that is important in achieving high confidence and great impact speeches.
11.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS
QUESTIONS

1. Oral communication refers to the spoken word. It takes the form of sounds and words.
2. One noteworthy merit of oral communication is that it can be supplemented and complemented by non-verbal communication for greater impact.
3. A presentation should be structured like a speech to cover three main parts, viz., introduction, body and conclusion.
4. The presentations may range from a simple classroom presentation to amplify a concept or idea to a sales presentation to a very high-level strategy presentation.
5. Planning the presentation essentially involves four steps, viz., audience analysis, setting the objective, defining the topic and mind travelling.
6. The audio-visual kit forming a part of the presentation would include slides or transparencies, compact disc (CD) or pen drive, projector, laptop or computer access, collar mike, laser pointer and such other accessories.
7. A power point presentation is a presentation, which is made with the help of a presentation software. PPPs consist of a number of presentation pages or ‘slides’.
8. Self-analysis and evaluation is yet another vital step in the journey towards achieving high confidence and great impact speeches.

11.7 SUMMARY

- Oral communication is also referred to as verbal communication. It takes place between individuals with the help of words.
- Oral communication takes place in many ways—casual and serious, formal and informal, structured and unstructured.
- Direct person-to-person communication plays a very useful role in any organization, essentially in work situations, where there are employer-employee, superior-subordinate and service provider-customer interactions.
- Presentations constitute an extremely popular method of interactive communication, especially in the world of business.
- Good writing is a three-stage process covering pre-writing, writing and revising. Similarly, good presentation consists of three stages, viz., planning, preparation and delivery.
Some communication experts believe that it is unrealistic to aim at a ‘perfect’ presentation. One should feel happy if the presentation is clearly organized, well documented and effectively delivered.

Any presentation by definition is much more effective than a speech because here the oral messages are reinforced by visual messages.

The audio-visual kit forming a part of the presentation would include slides or transparencies, compact disc (CD) or pen drive, projector, laptop or computer access, collar mike, laser pointer and such other accessories.

Since the effectiveness of any presentation depends both on the vocal aspects and the visual aspects, care should be taken in designing and preparing the presentation slides.

The following four steps help a speaker in moving from a low-confidence behaviour to a high-confidence behaviour:
  o Observation
  o Practice
  o Feedback
  o Self-analysis

11.8 KEY WORDS

- Oral communication: It is the process of expressing information or ideas by word of mouth.
- Empathy: It refers to the ability to share, understand and feel another person’s feelings.
- Faux pas: It means an embarrassing or tactless act or remark in a social situation.
- Audience analysis: It is the process of examining information about your listeners.
- Reflection: It means to give serious thought or consideration about a topic.

11.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How are presentations used in business?
2. Why is oral fluency important for making good presentations?
3. Describe some of the skills relevant to make good presentations.
4. Discuss the merits and demerits of oral communication.
**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Explain the three stages of the presentation process in detail.
2. Examine the do’s and don’ts of effective presentations.
3. Describe the various audio-visual aids used in presentations.

**11.10 FURTHER READINGS**


UNIT 12 MEETINGS

Structure
12.0 Introduction
12.1 Objectives
12.2 Types of Meetings/Business Meetings
  12.2.1 Importance of Business Meetings
12.3 Conducting Meetings and Conferences
  12.3.1 Parliamentary Procedures for Conducting Meetings
12.4 Answer to Check Your Progress Questions
12.5 Summary
12.6 Key Words
12.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
12.8 Further Readings

12.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss meetings. Meetings and conferences have become an integral part of business life. They facilitate exchange of views and as such constitute an important means of interactive communication. Conferences and meetings refer to an assembly of persons who come together and deliberate on topics and issues of communicable interest. So common are they in today’s business and organizational environment that it is inconceivable to think of any person associated with business organizations who has not been in a meeting or conference. Both these interactive forums facilitate face-to-face discussions that take place at various levels. They may be employer-employee meetings, employee-employee meetings and conferences or employee-customer meetings. Meetings take place more often than conferences, and also relate to fewer persons. While there can be a meeting of even two persons, a conference normally connotes an assembly of a large number of people. Similarly, meetings may take place any number of times during a day or a week while conferences are normally scheduled annually or bi-annually. While meetings can be both pre-planned and impromptu, conferences are by and large planned in advance.

While some distinction has been made here between meetings and conferences as commonly followed in practice, the distinction is by no means very rigid. There is a certain overlap between the two in actual practice. One may say, for example, that the chief executive is in conference with the general managers. The dictionary refers to a meeting as an assembly of persons, especially for entertainment or workshop whereas a conference is described as a meeting of any organization or association for consultation and deliberation.

Meetings and conferences, when effectively organized and conducted, can play a significant role in business communication. They facilitate exchange of
Meetings

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information, articulation of alternative viewpoints, deliberation on specific issues, removal of misconceptions, elaboration and clarification of concepts and ideas, finalization of plans and strategies, review of performance, enlistment of support and a host of such communication needs, so essential in business or organizational context. They facilitate intensive interaction with individuals as well as groups and achieve much more than any written communication. Meetings and conferences, therefore, are to be seen as an inevitable yet useful medium of interaction between people in different businesses and organizations.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- Discuss the types and importance of meetings
- Describe the steps that need to be taken to prepare for meetings
- Explain the principles to be followed while conducting formal meetings

12.2 TYPES OF MEETINGS/BUSINESS MEETINGS

Meetings can be of various types. Each type involves a different structure and supports a different number of participants. For example, a status (feedforward) meeting has no limit to the number of participants, while a decision-making meeting produces results faster with a small number of participants. Generally speaking, there are six different types of meetings. They are:

a. Status Update Meetings
b. Information Sharing Meetings
c. Decision Making Meetings
d. Problem Solving Meetings
e. Innovation Meetings
f. Team Building Meetings

Let us discuss these types of meetings in detail.

Status update meetings: They are one of the most common meeting types. This category encompasses regular team and project meetings, where the main objective is to align the team via updates on progress, challenges, and next steps. Commonly found group activities in these types of meetings are problem solving, decision making, prioritization, and task assignment.

Information Sharing Meetings: Presentations, panel debates, keynotes, and lectures are all examples of information sharing meetings. The main objective of these meetings is for the speakers to share information with the attendees.

Decision Making Meetings: Numerous business decisions are made by groups in meetings. While small decisions are made in all kinds of meetings, the more
critical decisions often get their own dedicated meetings. There are various group decision making processes, and care should be taken to choose a process that best matches the situation. A decision making process can include group processes like information gathering and sharing, brainstorming solutions, evaluating options, ranking preferences, and voting.

**Problem Solving Meetings:** These are the most complex type of meetings. Whether the meeting addresses an identified problem, or is focused on creating strategies and plans to navigate the future, there is a rich arsenal of group processes that can be employed. Scopes and priorities need to be defined, opportunities and threats need to be identified, and possible solutions should be brainstormed, evaluated, and agreed upon.

**Innovation Meetings:** Innovation meetings and creative meetings often start with thinking outside the box, by brainstorming, associating, and sharing ideas in a broad scope. Meeting participants can then employ different methods to decrease numerous ideas into a more focused short list. Through ranking, evaluations, and decision making the most suitable idea, or ideas, are identified, and recommendations and tasks can be assigned based on this.

**Team Building Meetings:** All meetings should contribute to team building, strengthening relationships and corporate culture. However, now and then team building activities should be the main focus for a meeting. This category encompasses meetings like include all-hands meetings, kick-off meetings, team building outings, and corporate events.

### 12.2.1 Importance of Business Meetings

An important advantage of business meetings in organizations is that they provide an opportunity to share information. This could be as simple as sharing updates on finances of a company or recognizing new employees to more complex issues, such as contract negotiations, new client presentations or addressing problems of customers. An actual meeting pinpoints a time and place to have in-depth discussions without other distractions or work getting in the way. Moreover, business meetings are the perfect environment for encouraging teamwork, be it among employees or between client and account managers. Meetings provide a forum with which to set team objectives and brainstorm ways to meet them, considering input from everyone in the meeting, versus just one person. When the meeting is between a client and a company representative, teamwork may happen in the form of feedback, when the client may suggest certain things, to which the other party may respond and go back and forth in a dialogue until an agreement is reached.

### Check Your Progress

1. What is the most common type of meeting?
2. What type of meeting starts with thinking outside the box?
12.3 CONDUCTING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

As discussed, meetings are the most popular method of interactive communication. They facilitate direct, face-to-face communication and are essential at various levels in all organizations. When there are two or more persons, there is a meeting, structured or otherwise. They serve the valuable objective of facilitating exchange of information, fostering of team spirit and commitment to common goals and objectives. More importantly, they help in elaborating ideas, clarifying concepts and clearing confusion, if any, created on account of ambiguous and incomplete verbal or written messages. Misunderstandings arising from unclear memos, circulars, directives and targets can be cleared through meetings with the people concerned.

Meetings are of wide variety and serve numerous objectives. In the everyday business world, meetings are conducted for the following purposes:

- Sharing, exchanging and evaluating information
- Discussing complex issues and solving problems
- Obtaining periodical updates – weekly, monthly, quarterly meetings
- Deliberating on matters of concern and taking decisions
- Bringing together different sections and resolving conflicts
- Describing goals and obtaining commitments
- Inspiring and motivating people to achieve common objectives

Thus meetings may range from routine information-sharing meetings to the decision making and conflict resolution types.

With the advent of technology, meetings in the corporate world are not necessarily across-the-table face to face meetings. While such meetings are indeed quite ubiquitous and commonplace, we also have meetings in which people are not necessarily in one room. We may have telephone meetings and meetings through teleconferencing and video conferencing. These are very useful when participants in the meetings are spread across different offices and locations.

There are also online meetings conducted with the use of information technology. With the help of computers and internet, the users indulge in their own private conversation through online meetings; these users exchange typed messages in real time. They can hold chat sessions with the help of in-house computer networks. Online meetings are also held by way of exchanging instant messages. This way, the exchanges can be done easily and quickly.

Meetings of marketing executives with prospective customers while launching a new product or service help in clearly bringing out the significant features of the product and clarifying finer points. Similarly, meetings with the computer or electronic data processing (EDP) personnel facilitate detailed and effective planning.
of connectivity and networking. These are just two examples of the ways in which meetings can be of use to serve a vital communication need in an organization. In fact, on a regular basis, there can be customer meets, supplier meets, investor meets, dealer meets, managers’ meets, staff meetings, association meetings, business meets and review meets.

Like their Western counterparts, Indian executives too, in most organizations, spend a large part of their working day in company meetings. In the United States, it is pertinent to note, decisions are made by groups of managers or executives rather than by individual top management functionaries. Similarly, in India too, we have various committees in the organizations like the Purchase Committee, Audit Committee, Executive Committee, Management Committee, Promotions Committee, Systems Committee, Credit Committee, Recovery Committee and Legal Committee which take decisions, and that is why it becomes necessary to organize so many meetings.

Given the ubiquitous, or present everywhere, nature of meetings in the world of business, the ability to plan, organize and conduct meetings effectively becomes a valuable asset for the business communicator. Anyone who becomes adept at conducting meetings purposefully is bound to be rewarded, recognized and respected in business organizations and institutions.

While meetings, which are effective, contribute to decision making and result in positive outcomes, ill-conceived and indifferently conducted meetings entail enormous waste of time, effort and resources. They may even lead to chaos and confusion. It would, therefore, be imperative to give attention to certain details while convening meetings. The preparation for an effective meeting starts well in advance and there is much that needs to be attended to on the day of the meeting, during the meeting and thereafter, till the minutes are drawn up and sent.

**Before the Meeting**

**Agenda:** Agenda is the list of items to be taken up for discussion during the meeting. It provides the reason for calling a meeting. It should be ensured that there are adequate numbers of worthwhile issues which need deliberation at the meeting. All topics and issues that will be taken up at the meeting call for advance efforts. The items stated in the agenda should be relevant and appropriate, keeping in view the purpose of the meeting and the expertise of the members who will be participating in the meeting. If the agenda is not properly drawn up, the meeting may not serve any useful purpose. The agenda should be such that an adequate number of issues that merit the attention of members are listed for deliberation so that the duration of the meeting is gainfully spent. Calling a meeting for the sake of it, without any serious agenda, or just to ensure that the predetermined periodicity is met, entails a waste of time and resources.

**Background Papers:** Every meeting of some importance will have a set of background papers, which are sent in advance to the members who will participate in the meeting. These background papers relate to the items listed in the agenda.
Meetings

Background papers are normally prepared by the concerned functionaries or departments seeking a decision on the issue or a deliberation on the subject matter. Background papers should cover all relevant details that are germane to effective deliberation. This would normally include facts, figures, different views, expert opinion and the latest position. Minutes of the previous meeting are also sent along with the first lot of background papers since they are always the first item on the agenda. They are taken up for confirmation before proceeding to the other items. Background papers ensure that deliberations are focused and cover all relevant dimensions of the subject under discussion.

Background papers should clearly state what is expected of the meeting and members. Board notes and office notes put up for meetings should state clearly whether the note is submitted for ‘consideration and orders’ or for ‘information’. It is also a common practice to state the ‘resolution’ covering the type of orders sought to ensure abundant clarity. The board or the committee, in its wisdom, will decide whether the resolution has to be passed as it is, or with any modifications.

Background papers, it should be noted, are to be sent to all the members and invites well in advance to enable them to come prepared with their views and suggestions. In fact, if the subject matter is of a serious nature and if sufficient time has not been provided for advance consideration, there is every likelihood of the agenda item being deferred by the committee for consideration in the next meeting. At the same time, it is worth noting that whenever there are some important developments which are to be brought before the committee members, or when there are urgent decisions called for, and the matter is so urgent that it is not desirable to wait till the next meeting, there is a system of submitting what are called ‘table items’. Such items are tabled at the time of the meeting and are not sent in advance. If the chairperson and members agree, such items are also taken up for deliberation at the day’s meeting. As a general rule, however, table items should be put up as an exception and only when warranted.

Whom to Invite: To be effective, deliberations at the meeting should involve all the concerned functionaries. Regular members of the committees, wherever formally constituted, will have to be invariably invited. At the same time, in the absence of a formal list, it would be essential to identify people whose presence would be of significance when subjects are taken up for deliberation. In some cases, senior functionaries will have to be necessarily invited to lend authority to the decision-making process, whereas some junior-level functionaries and subject matter specialists will have to be present to provide technical details and other relevant papers. Persons to be invited to the meeting, wherever not specifically stated, are best decided in consultation with the chairperson and other senior functionaries on whose behalf the meeting is convened.

Invitation for the meeting is to be clearly drawn up indicating the day, date, time and venue of the meeting. Invitations have to be sent well in advance to ensure that outstation participants have sufficient time to make appropriate travel arrangements.
plans. Meeting notices will have to clearly indicate who should attend the meeting. Sometimes people in organizations receive notices, which do not clearly indicate whether they are sent as an invitation or just as an intimation. The addressee, in this case, is likely to be confused and will have to start making enquiries. More so, when one is not a formal member of the committee or has had no prior intimation about it. The meeting notice should also state, wherever appropriate, whether the addressee may bring one or two other colleagues dealing with the subject or, in the alternative, if one is not in a position to attend, whether someone else can be deputed on one’s behalf. Though most of these requirements look obvious, they are often overlooked.

**Timing and Venue:** Care should be taken in fixing up meetings in a manner that is convenient to most of the members or participants. A notice, well in advance, will ensure that participants get adequate opportunity to schedule or reschedule their engagements. The date and time should be fixed taking into account holidays, other important events and functions which may clash with the meeting dates and time, and make it difficult for the members to choose between one and the other. It is generally expected that the person convening the meeting will take some trouble to ensure that most of the members, if not all, are in a position to attend and contribute. While it may not be possible to totally avoid overlapping in all cases, some advance planning and enquiries will certainly help achieve better attendance at meetings. Indication of the duration of the meeting will also be helpful so that participants would know how much time they have to allot for attending the meeting. Further, details such as arrangements made, if any, for breakfast, lunch, accommodation and travel need to be mentioned.

It is pertinent to mention here that while a reasonable advance intimation for any meeting facilitates better attendance, any notice sent too much in advance will have to be necessarily followed up with subsequent reminders. It is desirable to remind the members and ascertain their participation on the day of the meeting or a day prior to the meeting. This becomes even more essential when formal, structured meetings need to have a quorum or minimum number of members.

The venue of the meeting should be fixed up well before the meeting notices are dispatched. With so many meetings taking place in organizations, there is bound to be considerable demand for meeting halls and conference rooms. The meeting venue should have all the required physical facilities—fans, air conditioners, microphones, projectors and toilets that ensure minimum comfort for the members and facilitate uninterrupted deliberations. As we have seen in the earlier chapters, physical barriers such as non-availability of sound systems, extraneous sounds, cramped seating and stuffy rooms hinder the effectiveness of communication. It is not uncommon in organizations to come across instances where the availability of the venue is not confirmed, or there is some misunderstanding in the date or time, as a result of which either meetings are delayed or participants are made to move from one venue to the other. A little extra care will avoid embarrassment and inconvenience at the time of the meeting.
There are occasions when the chief executive or other senior functionaries may decide to convene impromptu or emergency meetings with very short notice, in which case the availability of the venue, physical facilities and other arrangements for refreshments will have to be attended to on priority. Any meeting where the deliberations have concluded, and yet refreshments or lunch is not ready, speaks of poor planning and has to be assiduously avoided. The participants’ time, it is to be noted, is valuable and cannot be taken for granted.

Punctuality: Starting the meeting on time is an area that calls for conscious effort. Keeping the venue open and ready well in time, reminding the chairperson and other members, ensuring that all papers have reached the participants, making sure that the table items are placed and that the conveners and organizers are at the venue well before the scheduled time are all a must in making meetings time-bound and purposeful. A situation where the convener is still in consultation with the chairperson of the meeting well past the scheduled starting time, while the participants are waiting in the venue, unattended and not knowing when and if at all the meeting would start, is the kind of situation that speaks of indifferent attitude towards the meeting and must be avoided.

Time Management: Time management is of essence in ensuring the effectiveness of meetings at all levels. Meetings, which start on time, end on time and provide adequate time for purposeful deliberation of all the listed items, ensure cost effectiveness. On the contrary, meetings that start with undue delay, take up items which are not on priority and run out of focus, entail waste of time and effort and prove to be costly to the organization. One can, indeed, assess the level of efficiency of the organization in terms of effectiveness of the meetings conducted at various levels. In an exhibit/box item shown above, we have noted that executives tend to spend much of their time in attending meetings. Unless every effort is made to make the meetings business-like and focused, organizational effectiveness gets impaired.

At the planning stage of the meeting itself, the Chairman/Secretariat should estimate how long it may take to discuss each item on the agenda, and add extra time for the unexpected yet relevant issues that might come up during the discussion. Advance assessment of time for various agenda items would not only help in time management, but also in keeping the meeting focused. People invited to make presentations should be told in advance the time allotted for their presentation. It would be meaningless to call for a full day meeting, if the business can be completed by lunch time. Similarly, convening a half a day meeting and extending it till evening would thoroughly inconvenience the participants. Time required for the meeting should be properly assessed and adhered to.

Breaks are an essential part of the time management exercise. The organizers should decide when and for how long the breaks should be allowed. Lengthy meetings held without breaks may not be desirable, because people are normally known to concentrate well for about forty-five minutes or so. Breaks are required...
Meetings are often criticized for the reason, “Meetings keep minutes, but waste hours.” Similarly, J.K. Galbraith remarked, “Meetings are indispensable when you don’t want to do anything.” Business communicators responsible for meetings should give no room for such adverse comments. Any meeting is an investment in time. More the number of participants, greater the man-hours spent. This investment pays out only when meetings become productive. Business meetings, if not properly administered, can lead to indiscriminate wastage of time. For meetings to be a success, effective time management and productive utilization of available time are a must.

12.3.1 Parliamentary Procedures for Conducting Meetings

Over the years, a set of rules, customs and ethics have been worked out for conducting meetings in an orderly and result-oriented manner. This set of rules is known as the parliamentary procedure. This body of rules aims to protect the rights of members, and at the same time enable the organizations, institutions and legislative bodies to conduct the meetings effectively and efficiently. These parliamentary procedures are widely prevalent across the world.

The basic principle behind the parliamentary procedures is to allow the majority of the members to make decisions (majority rule), while providing a fair opportunity to the minority/individual members to voice their opinion. These parliamentary procedures have been well documented and act as guidelines for conducting business meetings purposefully. Five well-accepted principles to be followed while conducting formal meetings as per the parliamentary procedures are as follows:

1. Ensure courtesy and justice to all members. Each member has equal rights and responsibilities.
2. Consider one item at a time.
3. Follow the rule of majority.
4. Hear the voice of minority.
5. Freely discuss and debate every proposal. Work towards facilitating action.

Parliamentary procedures cover details relating to convening, conducting and minuting meetings. Some of the specific rules mentioned include, (a) how to make a motion, (b) how to postpone indefinitely, (c) how to amend a motion, (d) how to call a question, (e) how to table a discussion and (f) how to adjourn a meeting. Procedures have also been laid down for recording the minutes of the meetings.

Good business communicators should familiarize themselves with these procedures by studying the standard documents on the subject.
Minutes and Proceedings

Both minutes and proceedings relate to the official record of deliberations. There is not much difference except that sometimes the proceedings are more elaborate than the minutes. While the term minutes is mostly used with reference to meetings, the term proceedings is used with reference to the record of deliberations in a conference, seminar, workshop, etc. Both these terms are used in actual business practice by business organizations.

After the Meeting

Having conducted the meeting successfully, there are some steps to be taken after the meeting. The minutes have to be drawn up promptly, approval of the Chairman to be obtained for the same, and these minutes or proceedings have to be dispatched to the members and participants promptly. If during the meeting, any specific tasks have been assigned to any member or any department, that is to be promptly recorded in the minutes and communicated to the concerned in writing.

Checklist for Meetings

The convenor or the secretariat for the meetings will have to take responsibility for the success or effectiveness of the meetings. They have to invariably give attention to every small detail and ensure that everything is in order. It would be desirable to maintain a checklist of items relevant to various stages, i.e., before, during and after the meeting.

The checklist should include, among others, the following items:

1. Confirming that the meeting notice and all the sets of background papers have reached all the members and invitees.
2. Ascertaining the participation of the chairperson and the members, and the availability of the quorum.
3. Venue arrangements such as ensuring that the meeting hall is ready and open well in time, checking whether all equipment such as microphones, air conditioners, fans and projectors are functioning properly and pens and pads are provided.
4. Refreshments and catering as are appropriate to the meeting have been arranged.
5. Checking flight arrivals, room bookings and conveyance for the chairperson and others wherever required.
6. Reminding the local and other members about the time and venue of the meeting.
7. Ensuring that the table items for the day’s meeting, if any, are put up.
8. Briefing the chairperson and other key members about the issues to be taken up at the meeting.
9. Where the meetings are very formal, such as the Board Meetings, Audit Committee Meetings, etc., the rule book of procedures to be followed should be made available to the Chairperson or Board Secretary for ready reference.

10. Entrustment of responsibility concerning the recording of minutes or proceedings.

11. Timely intimation of postponement, cancellation or change of venue.

12. Changes to be effected in the composition of the members or participants and special invitees.

13. Reminding the chairperson, if need be, about the priority and urgency of various items which have to be necessarily taken up.

14. Probable dates for the next meeting.

15. Preparation of minutes or proceedings on time, obtaining approval of the same and their dispatch.

This kind of attention to all relevant details by the convenor or the secretariat brings in a professional approach in conducting meetings.

Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson, the convenor or the secretary and the senior members have a vital role to play in conducting the meetings effectively. They have to ensure punctuality and effective time management. While providing freedom to the members for expressing their views on the items taken up for deliberation, the chairperson ensures that discussions do not stray. The chairperson also ensures that the members do justice by having due deliberations on the items put up. He or she should ensure that, as far as possible, all the listed agenda items are duly covered.

The chairperson may also have to make appropriate opening and concluding remarks in the interest of directing the course of the deliberations and arriving at unambiguous decisions and conclusions. For every meeting, the Chairman’s opening remarks assume much significance. They can help (a) by identifying the goals of the meeting, (b) by providing relevant background information, (c) by suggesting the time frame for deliberating on various important agenda items, (d) by re-stating the priorities in respect of subjects listed and (e) by seeking the cooperation and active participation of the members.

Through experience, wit and wisdom, the chairperson brings in authority and decisiveness to the deliberations. If during the course of deliberations, members get into a war of words, or a personal clash, the chairperson will have to use his/her skill in resolving such conflicts without hurting the people concerned. Accomplished chairpersons even make use of appropriate humour to lighten the air and remove the tensions. When meetings are either long or very frequent, some time may have to be spent in warming up or refreshing the participants or unwinding. People management assumes significance in all meetings. It is common
knowledge that sometimes, discussions in meetings tend to revolve too much on insignificant and not directly relevant topics and concerns, leaving much less time for deliberating on the more important topics. The chairperson, or the convenor, who should play a complementary role in conducting the meetings should intervene, and bring in the much needed sense of proportion in the deliberations. Very importantly, the chairperson has to summarize and reiterate at appropriate places, and thereby clearly state the main points that have emerged out of the deliberations. Especially at the end of every meeting, the action points, decisions and conclusions have to be reaffirmed. This will also help the person drawing up the minutes to be clear about the decisions and action points.

The chairperson is the leader of the meeting and his or her management skills are put to test in business meetings. Each meeting is different and the leader has to follow a flexible approach in running the meetings. The effectiveness or otherwise of the meeting often rests on the chairperson. True, the members have a role to play in making the deliberations meaningful. They must participate effectively and express themselves on the agenda items. But, in order to do that, the leader of the meeting should act as a guide and create a participative atmosphere.

The participants in meetings are often a diverse lot. Some are enthusiastic, some others are aggressive and some choose to remain silent. In any meeting, there are people who try to dominate the proceedings. Similarly, there are others who may be shy and have to be persuaded to speak out. It is the chairperson who with her authority and purposefulness draws contributions from all the members present, and also brings orderliness when too many people start talking at the same time. The chairperson moderates the dominating members, coaxes the silent members, provides fair opportunity to everyone, and ensures that everyone contributes. This is done by using tact, authority, and persuasive skills.

The Chairperson’s role becomes even more challenging when the members are well informed about the procedural aspects relating to the conduct of meetings. Statutory and Board level meetings have to be conducted as per the parliamentary procedures prescribed in this regard. Such procedures lay down the set of rules to be followed in the proper conduct of the meetings. Following them helps in keeping the deliberations at the meeting productive and methodical. They help in restraining members who are bent on interrupting often or resisting decision making. Sometimes members may insist on the recording of their dissent. In all such instances, it is the knowledge, authority, tact and resourcefulness of the Chairperson that brings in orderliness to the meetings. There will be specialist and qualified officers like the Company Secretaries who with their knowledge of the procedural aspects assist the Chairperson in handling such tricky situations.

Like the opening remarks, the concluding remarks of the Chairperson too can help in putting things in perspective. The concluding remarks while thanking the members for their contribution, can sum up the decisions taken and the action points identified, and identify some good ideas and suggestions that came up for deliberations in the subsequent meetings.
Why do Meetings Fail?

Although meetings can and do serve a very useful purpose in the world of business, and have therefore become very ubiquitous, they are not always effective or productive. In a survey conducted by Microsoft some time back, it is noted that 69 per cent of 38,000 respondents claimed that the meetings they attended were unproductive. Meetings can become unproductive and wasteful for various reasons. Some of the reasons are given below.

- When meetings are convened even when the issues can be decided over telephone or email.
- When the amount spent on convening the meetings is disproportionate to the value of the deliberations and decisions.
- When the meeting is seen by the participants as unnecessary and wasteful.
- When agenda is not clearly drawn up and objectives of the meeting are unclear.
- When the chairperson and the key members fail to attend.
- When unconnected persons are in majority.
- When the chairperson and the convener fail to exercise control over the deliberations and let the members discuss unlisted items and subjects.

To be successful, meetings should be need-based, properly planned and effectively conducted. The participants should find it worthwhile and useful. Apart from the chairperson and the convener, all the participants too should work for the success of the meeting. If the objective can be achieved by video-conferencing or tele-conferencing, convening a face-to-face meeting at a fixed venue can be avoided. If the objective is only to share information, it can be accomplished by issuing a memo or making a few calls. Meetings become really relevant when there is need for interaction and threadbare deliberations.

To conclude, it is worth reiterating that meetings, when conducted effectively, can bring substantial benefits in resolving even sensitive matters through collective wisdom. They can be a very cost-effective means of intense interaction. When participants learn to talk, listen and interact in a responsible manner, meetings can be really result oriented. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that although the people participating are knowledgeable, they may or may not speak out freely and contribute to the deliberations. Sometimes, some of the more vocal participants may tend to dominate the deliberations, not giving an opportunity to others to express themselves. In all such cases, the chairperson or the convener should intervene. After all, the very purpose of inviting people is to get their views and suggestions, and meetings have to be highly participative within the given context. In other words, it takes conscious effort, attention to details, and deft and authoritative steering of deliberations to make meetings effective.
Meetings

Conferences

As we have observed earlier, it is imprudent to draw a rigid line of distinction between meetings and conferences. Organizations do have ‘conference halls’ where meetings take place regularly. Conferences, as well as meetings, also take place in hotels and other large venues. The word conference is normally used to describe meetings of a larger scale. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, a conference is a large official meeting, usually lasting for a few days, at which people with same work or interest come together to discuss their views. One usually refers to annual conference or bi-annual conference, zonal or regional conference or two-day conference, suggesting longer duration and larger participation. Business plan conferences are regularly held in business organizations. Several topics of relevance are discussed in such conferences. Background papers and posers and audio-visual presentations are prepared in advance to facilitate meaningful deliberations. Conferences, like meetings, are a means of direct, face-to-face interactive communication. The advent of innovative methods like teleconferencing and video conferencing have facilitated interactive communication between participants, without necessitating physical presence of all concerned at one venue.

The type of preparations and attention for details in relation to the conferences are, by and large, the same as those of meetings. Sometimes, the conferences may also have the features of a function, in which case, the presence of a chief guest, introduction of the speaker or the dignitary, invocation, lighting of the lamp, presentation of bouquets, distribution of brochures and other details become relevant. The checklist for meetings suggested earlier will have to be suitably modified to plan for and accommodate all details. In organizing any such events, it would be desirable to choose the word that fits the occasion. For example, when senior functionaries participate, the programme may be referred to as a ‘seminar’ or a ‘conference’ rather than a training programme. We also normally come across words like ‘summit’ to describe a meeting of the heads of the states and ‘retreat’ to describe temporary retirement from serious business meetings. Viewed in that context, meeting, meet, conference, workshop, seminar and study circle are, by their nature, platforms facilitating interactive communication and the most appropriate term may have to be used.

Check Your Progress

3. What is an agenda?
4. What do you understand by parliamentary procedure?
5. What is a conference?
12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Status update meetings are one of the most common types of meetings.
2. Innovation meetings and creative meetings often start with thinking outside the box, by brainstorming, associating, and sharing ideas in a broad scope.
3. An agenda is the list of items to be taken up for discussion during the meeting. It provides the reason for calling a meeting.
4. Over the years, a set of rules, customs and ethics have been worked out for conducting meetings in an orderly and result-oriented manner. This set of rules is known as the parliamentary procedure.
5. A conference is a large official meeting, usually lasting for a few days, at which people with same work or interest come together to discuss their views.

12.5 SUMMARY

- Meetings can be of various types. Each type involves a different structure and supports a different number of participants.
- An important advantage of business meetings in organizations is that they provide an opportunity to share information.
- Meetings facilitate direct face-to-face communication. Misunderstandings and confusions arising out of ambiguous and incomplete circulars, memos and notes can be cleared through meetings.
- While meetings which are effective contribute to decision making and positive outcome, ill-conceived and indifferently conducted meetings entail substantial waste of time, efforts and resources. Attention to detail is a must for making meetings purposeful and rewarding.
- The agenda drawn up should be relevant and appropriate. Background papers and notes put up should state clearly what is expected of the meeting. Meeting notices should be clear as to who should attend. Advance planning and enquiries will certainly help in avoiding overlap and ensure better attendance. Physical barriers such as malfunctioning of sound systems, cramped seating and disturbing scenes outside should be avoided.
- The participant’s time, it should be noted, is precious and, therefore, meetings should start on time and be time bound. Time management is of essence. In fact, one can assess the efficiency level of an organization in terms of the effectiveness of the meetings. It would be desirable to keep a checklist of items to be consulted for every important meeting.
Over the years, a set of rules, customs and ethics have been worked out for conducting meetings in an orderly and result-oriented manner. This set of rules is known as the parliamentary procedure.

Every meeting will have a chairperson/convener who will have to ensure that deliberations are focussed and participants are encouraged to speak up. When participants learn to talk, listen and interact in a responsible manner, meetings can be really worthwhile.

Conferences are normally on a large scale and often have a regional character and periodicity—regional conference, zonal conference and annual conference. Since there is considerable similarity in approach, it is imprudent to draw a rigid line of distinction between meetings and conferences.

12.6 KEY WORDS

- **Agenda:** It refers to a list of items to be discussed at a formal meeting.
- **Conferences:** They are formal meetings of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over several days.
- **Time Management:** It refers to the ability to use one’s time effectively or productively, especially at work.
- **Chairperson:** It refers to a person who presides over a meeting, committee, board, etc.

12.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. Why are meetings important?
2. Discuss the different types of meetings in an organization.
3. Write a short note on the role of a chairperson of a meeting.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. What are the necessary steps to be taken before calling a meeting?
2. Prepare a checklist for ensuring effective meetings.
3. Describe the principles to be followed while conducting formal meetings.
12.8 FURTHER READINGS


UNIT 13 REPORTS, OFFICE NOTES AND SHORT SPEECHES

Structure
13.0 Introduction
13.1 Objectives
13.2 Drafting of Minutes
13.3 Reports
13.4 Office Notes
13.4.1 Drafting of Short Speeches
13.5 Principles of Effective Speech
13.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
13.7 Summary
13.8 Key Words
13.9 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
13.10 Further Readings

13.0 INTRODUCTION
This unit will discuss reports, office notes and short speeches. A report is an account given of a particular matter, especially in the form of an official document, after thorough investigation or consideration by an appointed person or body. Notes are essentially something that you write down to remind you of something. On the other hand, a speech is an organized effort on the part of a person to communicate ideas and thoughts on a subject of interest to the audience.

13.1 OBJECTIVES
After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss business reports and its types
- Describe the procedure for writing business reports
- Discuss office notes and minutes
- Examine the principles of effective speech

13.2 DRAFTING OF MINUTES
Minutes refer to a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting. Minutes, in fact, constitute a written record of everything important that transpires in all formal meetings. Minutes are prepared and maintained in company files or records to facilitate future reference. Copies of the minutes are sent to all the participants and even the absentees.
Since minutes constitute authentic and official record of the deliberations and decisions of the meeting, these have to be drawn up in a diligent and error-free manner. The minutes should also be clear and complete, and should not omit anything important. That is why, the job of preparing the minutes is entrusted to a responsible person, usually the secretary of the meeting. In order to prepare the minutes efficiently, the secretary has to be attentive throughout the deliberations and take down thorough notes. It is the secretary who has to decide what is important and what is insignificant and note all the important and noteworthy deliberations. Any such draft minutes prepared by the secretary should be submitted to the chairperson of the meeting for approval. On approval by the chairperson, the minutes are sent to all the participants. In fact, as a matter of good practice, minutes of every meeting are also approved by the members in the next meeting, and revisions if any are made.

The manner of recording the minutes of the meetings may vary from organization to organization, and depending upon the nature of meetings. While the deliberations of routine and periodical information-sharing minutes are sometimes recorded in a summary form, more formal meetings like the Board Meetings, Management Committee Meetings, Audit Committee Meetings and such other meetings with a statutory significance are recorded verbatim and follow a prescribed procedure. The statutory and regulatory organizations follow a very meticulous procedure in preparing minutes.

A resolution refers to a course of action decided upon after due deliberation. It refers to a decision taken in a meeting after discussion or voting. It is recorded in the minutes of the meeting. A resolution is recorded as “Resolved that.”

In general, the following details are covered in drawing up the minutes.

1. The name of the organization.
2. The date, time and place of the meeting.
3. Periodicity and nature of the meeting.
4. The Presiding Officer or Chairperson of the meeting.
5. The members present and/or absent. Leave of absence granted.
6. Changes, if any, in the composition of the Committee/Board.
7. A reference to the previous meeting and the approval of the minutes.
8. References to the agenda items taken up one by one, the key points that came up, reports submitted, motions made, decisions taken and the resolutions passed.
9. The date, time and venue of the next meeting.

Although we have noted the key aspects that must find a mention in general in all the formal meetings, it should be noted that depending upon the nature, importance and level of participation, the meetings prescribe the standard procedures to be followed in drawing up the minutes. In fact, in conducting formal meetings, such as the Board Meetings, Managing Committee Meetings, etc. there...
are well laid down procedures that have to be followed. What are known as parliamentary procedures are laid down for conducting such meetings and recording the minutes, and they need to be scrupulously followed.

13.3 REPORTS

Reports are an integral part of an organizational activity. Managers are constantly required to submit reports to supervisors and executives to enable them to take informed decisions change policies, etc. Reports are a good way for the management to get a constant and reliable source of information. A report may be defined as a form of systematic presentation of information relating to an event, progress of action or some activity. Reports present facts for the interested reader. More specifically, business reports may be defined as an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves a business purpose.

The characteristics of business reports can be briefly summarised as follows
- Generally submitted to a higher authority
- Communicated upwards in an organisation
- Logically organised
- Objective in tone
- For a limited audience
- Both short and long

Purpose of business reports

A report carries information from someone who has it to someone who needs it. It is a basic management tool used in decision making. Reports may be used to provide information (information reports), analyse information and give suggestions (analytical reports), request for action or give recommendations to initiate action. Thus, in a business context reports serve the following purposes:
- Reports give factual information to the management.
- Reports record facts and results of investigations or surveys for future reference.
- Reports are useful tools for providing shareholders, customers, creditors and general public with useful information.
- Based on detailed investigations, reports give recommendations which can be used in future.

Importance of reports

1. **Conveyor of information:** Reports serve as conveyors of information. They provide necessary information to various parties who need it.
2. **Review and evaluate operations**: Reports help management to review and evaluate operations continuously. They help in coordinating the activities of the different departments.

3. **Decision making**: A report aims at providing correct, objective and suitable information to persons who require it so that correct decisions can be taken at his end.

4. **Better coordination**: Reports aim to promote common understanding of information between different groups in the organisation, thus ensuring better coordination.

5. **Tools for measuring performance**: Reports are useful tools for measuring departmental performance. The operational data from various departments helps management to assess performance of each department.

6. **Help in making desirable changes**: Reports help in making and implementing desirable changes to business policies.

**Essentials of a good business report**

For a business report to serve effectively the purpose for which it is intended, it is essential that it possess certain essentials. Following are some of the characteristics of a good business report:

(i) **Accuracy**: The information presented in a report should be as accurate as possible, because on it are based several important decisions and actions. While preparing reports make sure to double check figures to ensure accuracy.

(ii) **Clarity**: Business reports should be clear and completely understandable. The paragraphs should be logically presented with suitable headings.

(iii) **Consistency**: The report should be consistent with the main theme and should not deviate. It should serve the purpose for which it is meant. Irrelevant information should not be included. At the same time useful information should not be left out while preparing the report.

(iv) **Objectivity**: Objectivity involves freedom from personal prejudices. There should be objectivity in observation, collection of related facts and writing the report.

(v) **Completeness**: The report should be complete in all respects and free from ambiguity.

(vi) **Brevity**: Time is precious both for the writer of the report and the reader. Therefore reports should not be too lengthy. They need to be brief and to the point, excluding all irrelevant details.

(vii) **Simplicity**: Reports are not a test of your command over literary aspects of language. A report should be simple and easily understandable and free from too much of jargon.
(viii) **Appearance:** The arrangement, organisation, format and layout of a report should be pleasing and eye-catching as far as possible. It should be grammatically correct and free from typographical errors.

(ix) **Reliability:** A report should be reliable. Objectivity and accuracy of information contribute towards the reliability of a report.

(x) **Timeliness:** To be useful and purposeful a report should reach the reader well in time otherwise it is of no use.

### Types of Reports

Reports can be in both oral and written forms, though written reports are preferred. Written reports have the following advantages over oral reports:

- Oral reports can be denied at any time.
- Oral reports tend to be vague as compared to written reports.
- Written reports can be referred to again and again which is not the case with oral reports.
- Written reports can be transferred from person to person without the risk of distortion.

In this section we will be dealing with written reports. Reports can range from one page to those running into several volumes. In all cases reports should be clear, concise and objective in their tone as decisions are based on them.

We will classify reports into the following types:

- Informational reports and analytical reports
- Routine or periodic reports and Special reports
- Informal and Formal reports

#### Informational reports and analytical reports

Informational reports only contain information in the form of facts and data. They do not contain any analysis or suggestions based on the information presented.

On the other hand, Analytical reports contain both facts as well as analysis of facts and conclusions. Recommendations/Suggestions based on the analysis may also be included in such a report.

#### Routine or periodic reports and Special reports

Routine reports are submitted to the management at regular intervals by individuals, sections, departments, etc to help the management control administration effectively. These are the most common type of business reports. These may be submitted on a daily, weekly, quarterly, monthly basis. These are generally meant for internal consumption by the organisation and are not public documents. The length of these reports may vary from a single page to about ten pages. These include budgets, monthly accounts, cost reports, production reports, etc.
Special reports are prepared to deal with problems or issues specifically developed. They are specifically asked for by the concerned authority and are custom prepared to suit the particular purpose.

**Informal and Formal reports**

Informal reports do not follow any fixed form or procedure for submission. They are prepared according to the convenience and requirement of the organisation. The term ‘informal reports’ does not mean the style and language of the report is informal. It only indicates simplicity in terms of structure or format.

The following are some of the forms these reports may take:

(i) **Short reports**: These reports are presented in a simple letter format. They are less than five pages in length. The presentation style of such reports is kept simple and facts are reported.

(ii) **Progress reports**: These reports contain information regarding the progress of a particular work or project.

(iii) **Staff reports**: These reports are prepared to resolve particular staff problems.

(iv) **Justification report**: These reports are used to justify a particular recommendation or a course of action.

When a report is prepared in the prescribed form and is presented according to an established procedure, it is called a formal report. Formal reports have a uniform structure and format which is specific to the organisation. Generally formal reports have the following characteristics:

- Longer than an informal report
- More thorough and often based on a detailed examination of a problem
- Formal in terms of format, structure, language.

**Formal reports may be**

(i) **Statutory reports**: These are reports which are prepared as a mandatory requirement by law. The format of such a report is as prescribed by the concerned body.

(ii) **Non statutory reports**: There is no legal binding for preparation and submission of these reports but these are asked for by the management to facilitate the various managerial functions.

**Writing a report**

A report should be drafted keeping in mind the following points:

(i) Purpose of the report

(ii) Time within which it is to be submitted

(iii) Level of authority for which it is intended
The procedure for report writing includes the following steps:

(i) Determination of the purpose of the report.

(ii) Identify the audience who will be reading the report: Collect information regarding their expertise, hierarchical positions, educational background, etc.

(iii) Collect the data necessary to prepare the report.

(iv) Identify and classify the data.

(v) Outline the report.

(vi) Prepare the final report.

(vii) Present the report.

Structure of a report

A report consists of the following parts

(i) Title page- may include all or some of these subject, author, date of completion, file reference, confidentiality

(ii) Table of Contents

(iii) Acknowledgements

(iv) Executive Summary (sometimes called ‘Abstract’ or ‘Synopsis’ if the report is academic in nature)

(v) Body of the report
   (a) Introduction
   (b) Procedures / method
   (c) Analysis & Findings
   (d) Conclusion
   (e) Recommendations
   (vi) Appendices
   (vii) Bibliography

Executive Summary

- Very important part of a report.
- Extends from a paragraph to two pages in length.
- Should include a bit of all components of the report.
- No one particular part of the report should dominate
- Written after the entire report is complete.
- Gives a gist/ summary of what is there in the report.
- Is an independent document and may be circulated to people who do not have the time to read the entire document.
• Should not be a cut and past activity from the main report.
• It should be written afresh.
• It should also be very accurate as decisions might be taken based on just the executive summary.

**Body of the report**

The various parts of the body of the report are discussed briefly

**Introduction**
- Gives a brief background to the report

**Procedures/Method**
- Outlines how the data was collected, observations etc.

**Analysis & Findings**
- The major findings after the analysis of data is presented in an organized, logical and objective form.

**Conclusion**
- It states what the findings have shown objectively. It is different from an executive summary and should not be confused with it. They are generally written in the past tense.

**Recommendations**
- Should logically flow from the conclusion.
- Generally expressed in future tense.
- Outlines direct possible course of action.
- No explanation of action is required in the recommendation.

**Appendices**
- Information that doesn’t fit into the text, like charts, data and graphs

**Bibliography**
- List of references used in the preparation of the report including citations of all websites, books articles
- Consistency should be maintained while citing references
- Listed alphabetically by author’s last name
- Various formats are available for bibliographies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Your Progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are minutes?</td>
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<td>2. Define reports.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What are the advantages of written reports over oral reports?</td>
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Office notes are another form of internal communication popular within business organizations. Office notes are put up by sections, departments or units to the higher authorities, head of the unit, department or institution. Office notes are put up for ‘consideration and orders’ or for ‘information’ where there are specific delegated powers for various sanctions, incurring of financial expenditure, changes in placements and assignments. Office notes incorporating all relevant details and seeking such sanctions are put up to the appropriate sanctioning authority. Such sanctions, through office notes, constitute a record of due permissions obtained before duly communicating or acting on them.

Office notes are put up to the president, general manager, executive director, managing director or chairman, as the case may be. Alternatively, they may be put up to the Executive Committee, the General Managers’ Committee, the Management Committee, Audit Committee and the Board of Directors as well. Some organizations also have some specific functional committees like the Legal Committee, Premises Committee, Credit Committee, Promotions Committee, Procedures and Systems Committee to whom office notes seeking deliberation and orders or reporting developments are put up.

Although there may or may not be any specific written instructions on the drafting of office notes or the details to be furnished therein, in practice, one can observe a well-established and widely followed method in putting up such notes. Sometimes, the size and colour of the paper, the nature of typing (single space or double space), the authority who should sign and time schedule for submission are clearly stated. Office notes often refer to policy guidelines or important sanctions and generally pass through various tiers and incorporate views or comments of different functionaries. Whenever inputs are sought from different departments such as legal, personnel and inspection, their views are incorporated in the office notes as well. Office notes are prepared and filed in serial order and serve as authoritative documents confirming sanctions or orders. While in some cases copies of the office notes are dispatched to the implementing units, in other cases the gist of the order or observations made by the authority concerned on the note are conveyed to the implementation levels.

Preparation of office notes too calls for relevant skills, as all relevant facts and figures will have to be furnished sequentially. Wherever necessary, other related matters and previous decisions will have to be cited for reference. The actual recommendation has to be clearly stated. In the end, the specific decision or instruction sought, or development being reported, has to be clearly mentioned. Unless the office note itself is clear, the observations or orders thereon may also become vague and un-implementable. This will create uncertainty at various levels and may necessitate the putting up of the note once again with additions and modifications. It is necessary, therefore, that the office notes prepared cover all
relevant information and facilitate consequent decision making and orders by the authority concerned.

13.4.1 Drafting of Short Speeches

The following points should be kept in mind while drafting short speeches:

1. **Have a point (but no more than a few):** An effective short speech should have primarily one point. This is because having too many messages creates the same problem as having none.

2. **Think about structure:** Like a good story, a speech needs a beginning, a middle and an end. An audience reacts best if you tell them early on in your speech what you plan to tell them, and give them mileposts along the way.

3. **Connect with the audience:** It is important for a speech to be a two-way conversation. It is also important to not talk down to them, but at the same time translate your words into language they’re comfortable with.

4. **Tell a story:** All great speeches are essentially stories that are told. For example, Steve Jobs’ commencement address at Stanford in 2005. Jobs’ speech was a masterful speech organized around into three stories: how taking calligraphy courses later impacted the MacBook, being fired from and returning to Apple, and what he learned from his first diagnosis with pancreatic cancer.

5. **Rewrite and practice:** Those who give speeches often reuse the same material. That makes sense, as long as you accept that continual revision and practice is your responsibility as a speaker.

13.5 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE SPEECH

Speaking and speech-making are conscious and organized efforts on the part of a person to communicate ideas and thoughts on a subject of interest to the audience. Mere talking is not speaking. Idle conversation is not speaking. When we use the word ‘speaking’ here, it is in the context of business communication. It refers to talking business. It refers to a talk by a designated speaker. Speaking here implies that the speaker is addressing a certain audience with a purpose. Speaking is understood to mean a formal talk. Mere talking goes on all the time. Whenever people get together, they get talking. In such talking, what matters is talking sense and conveying feelings. An individual does this kind of talking everyday with members of his or her family, colleagues, at the park and so on. When two people talk to each other, it is also described as conversation. The ability to converse readily and meaningfully with family, friends, strangers and the like in groups, parties, business meets, social functions and other occasions is also very essential. Nevertheless, if the ability to converse or talk sensibly is not cultivated, the talk becomes idle and boring. Talkativeness should not be equated with the ability to converse or speaking. A talkative person may address the others and talk for...
Verbal plus Non-Verbal

Speaking involves both verbal and non-verbal aspects. According to researchers, the non-verbal part of the communication has an overwhelming impact. It is said that less than 10 per cent of the effect of a speaker on an audience is determined by the verbal content or the words themselves. Over 90 per cent of the effect comes from the non-verbal part. The nonverbal part consists of two components, viz., visual and vocal. About 50 per cent of the effect is accounted for by the visual factors—appearance, apparel, body language, postures and gestures, facial expressions, movement and demeanour. Over 35 per cent of the speaker’s impact is conditioned by the voice—tone, sincerity, modulation and articulation.

Verbal and non-verbal communication or the spoken words together with the body language create the totality of impact. For any speaker to be really effective, body language should be consistent with the spoken words. That way, the verbal message gets reinforced by the non-verbal language. When they contradict each other, there is a mismatch. The speaker in this case conveys two different messages—one with his words and the other with his body. When there is a contradiction, the non-verbal message often prevails over the verbal message. As we have noted earlier, bodies do not lie. Unlike the verbal messages which are well planned, body language is unedited and spontaneous.

Thus, when a speaker speaks, his or her entire personality speaks. Effective speaking rests on three pillars—verbal, visual and vocal. These three components together create the final impact on the audience.

Speaking is indeed a very subtle art. Communication of ideas is the very heart of speaking. Making a noise in front of a mike, encouraging the audience to compete with your sound is not public speaking.

The speaker must have his thoughts arranged—ideas to form a logically integrated thought process. From the platform where he is delivering, he must be able to punch the ideas into the understanding of the listener. He has to adjust his idea delivery and his presentation to suit the type of audience he is addressing. Capturing the attention of the listeners within the first three sentences is the very foundation of a very successful speaker. Modulation of voice, appropriate illustrations and clearly demonstrating examples can all engage distracted minds and bring them back to the main channel of discussion.

Content Counts

The essence of any speech is the content or the subject matter. The message that the speaker wants to convey during the speech assumes considerable significance. The audience attends the speech with a normal expectation that the speaker will enrich them on the topic or subject of the speech. The audience expects the speaker
to inform, elucidate, amplify, reiterate and cogently cover the subject so that it becomes worthwhile for them to listen to the speaker. This implies that the speaker should take the job seriously and study the subject in detail. The speaker should learn about the subject in some depth so that he or she can pass on the ideas and thoughts on the subjects in a manner that is relevant to the listeners. The speaker should make sure that the topic on which he or she will be speaking is such that he or she has some expertise or particular knowledge or interest. The speaker may be an expert and if so the thoughts will flow easily. If you are an expert you would be sharing your knowledge and experience on the subject with your audience. Not everyone, however, is an expert. People are often required to speak even on subjects in which they are not experts. One cannot just shy away from such situations. On such occasions the speaker has to make efforts to know more about the subject.

The level of confidence of the speaker in addressing the audience is largely determined by the speaker’s grasp of and grip over the subject. When the speaker is thorough, thoughts and ideas will flow effortlessly. The speaker can be thorough on the subject when he or she has done adequate research on the subject. By research we mean a careful and detailed study of relevant aspects of the subject so as to acquire adequate grasp of the subject. In today’s world, there are so many sources of information, including the internet, that any knowledge can be easily accessed. If you want to be a good speaker, make adequate efforts to grasp the intricacies of the subject. When we use the word research, we do not mean the academic research relevant for a thesis. What we mean is adequate command over the topic or subjects and preparedness keeping in view the interests of the audience.

Choice of Words

After ensuring that the speaker has the requisite content, the next step would be to choose the right words. Your vocabulary or command over words will determine how effectively you can express your ideas. Your vocabulary assumes importance in the context of both your oral and written communication. The words you choose should be appropriate to the occasion as well as the audience. If the speaker is addressing a group of persons whose vocabulary is quite strong, he or she can use higher-order words. The general rule, however, is to use simple words and such words which are within the realm of knowledge of the audience. The world of words is large, growing and fascinating. There is such a large variety of words that whatever be the occasion and whoever be the audience, there is abundant choice. Words can be simple or complex, short or long, ancient or modern, English or foreign, dull or vigorous. Like in written communication, in oral communication too, it is possible to pick and choose the words depending on the occasion. Effective speakers know how to use strong, vibrant and contemporary words when the occasion demands. Good speakers should make it a point to avoid jargon, acronyms or abbreviations and superfluous words.
Jargon, as we have noted earlier, denotes technical words specific to a profession or body of knowledge. It could be legal jargon or medical jargon or computer jargon or scientific jargon or any such set of technical terms specific to that domain. While jargon has its relevance when speaking to an informed audience, use of technical terms to an audience unfamiliar with the technical terms dilutes the understanding of the listener. By using unfamiliar words frequently without explaining what it means, the speaker alienates the audience. Jargon is therefore best avoided. If necessary, simpler and more common technical terms may be used giving proper explanations to ensure comprehension. Again, the extent to which a jargon could be used depends on the profile of the audience and the topic itself.

Acronyms are abbreviations and are often words made from the first letters or syllables of other words. NATO, GATT, IIM, IIT and ISI are some examples of acronym. Like acronyms, each organization or industry sector may have abbreviations which are well understood internally by their members. While speaking to a larger audience, however, such abbreviations are either avoided or properly explained at the very first instance. If a speaker uses the terms, YOY or FY or FIFO without explaining the meaning, the audience most probably will not understand that the speaker is referring to Year-on-Year, Financial Year and First In First Out, respectively. The objective of the speaker should be to express and convey the message with clarity and not try to impress the listener with avoidable jargons and acronyms.

Good speakers should also take care to avoid superfluous and unnecessary words or what are also described as non-words. In the exhibit, ‘Do You Understand?’ we have reiterated the need to avoid such mannerisms. Using non-words like exactly, basically, typically and understand in a routine and repetitive manner during the speech weakens the strength of the message. Such mannerisms are often acquired by the speakers in their initial speaking years and continued thereafter for want of conscious efforts. Good speakers should make conscious efforts to avoid such utterances.

Style is another significant aspect of speech. Yet, it is difficult to give a precise meaning to style. If we look up the dictionary, a style is described as the manner or way of doing something—writing, speaking, designing, building and dressing. Style refers to a distinctive manner that characterizes a writer or a speaker. In that sense, it encompasses several aspects of a speaker’s approach and repetitive performance. The level of confidence of a speaker, his or her choice of words, pauses, voice modulation and treatment of the subject together characterize style. Speakers are often described as confident speakers, nervous speakers, humorous speakers, fluent speakers, passionate speakers, articulate speakers, boring speakers and so on.

Style is cultivated over the years. As in good writing, for good speaking too, conscious efforts have to be put in. The journey from a nervous and boring speaker to a confident and enthralling speaker is often a long and full of hard work and practice. A speaker keen on developing a good speaking style
should also observe good speakers at every available opportunity and try to imbibe characteristics which will fit into his or her personality. There is no such thing as only one or two good styles. There are numerous and varied styles that can all be appealing and one can develop versatile approaches. Given energy, enthusiasm, inclination and confidence, the speakers can move their audience, radiate energy, make their presence felt and elicit spontaneous response. Confidence constitutes the key, for all great communicators possess great confidence.

Speaking is different from reading a speech. Reading out from a written text is easier compared to speech making. Most of what we have discussed in this chapter relates to speech making as distinct from reading. Reading out verbatim from a written text, from beginning to end calls for good reading skills rather than speaking skills. Speaking may consist of some references to written notes or points jotted out to get the sequence right and ensure full coverage. Here the points noted are described more as an ‘aide memoire’ or aids which help in recollecting or remembering the items to be covered in the speech. Sometimes the speaker may read out a particular item to quote someone or quote from a report or a data source. Here the speaker follows the quote-unquote approach.

Some speakers who do not wish to be seen reading their speeches try to follow another approach, that of memorizing the speech. Memorizing, however, is very difficult and not very dependable. However well a speaker may memorize, there is no guarantee that memory will not fail. If the text is long, it is not easy to memorize the content and words and reproduce them in the same order. The problem with memorizing is that the speaker tries to recollect the exact memorized words rather than substitute them with other relevant words. Any failure to recall the words and thoughts will confuse and disturb the speaker and may result in his or her losing poise. Such moments could cause considerable embarrassment and loss of face to the speaker. Recalling from memory becomes very challenging when facing a large and unfamiliar audience. Memorizing, if at all done, should be relied upon to a limited extent. Very few speakers will be in a position to speak through by memorizing. Perhaps, in the initial stages, when the speaker has not developed full confidence in making an extempore speech, an approach involving part memory and part speaking could be attempted.

Speaking extempore may be described as the ultimate skill in oral communication. The word extempore is a Latin expression that means on the spur of the moment. An extempore speech is also referred to as an impromptu speech, meaning a speech made without any planning or preparation. In an extempore speech, a speaker does not get any advance intimation and is called upon to speak at a short notice. In today’s professional life, such instances are not uncommon, especially for managers, executives and specialists or experts. Not merely speaking, but speaking well and appropriate to the occasion on every such occasion, distinguishes an accomplished speaker from an ordinary speaker. To be able to do so, the speaker should be confident, well informed and even versatile, and be in a position to draw from his memory. In meetings, seminars, business
conferences and a host of such everyday business situations, people are often asked to propose vote of thanks, introduce the speaker, be a part of the panel and offer comments or even be invited to speak on the subject. Sometimes, the listed speakers may fail to turn up, necessitating someone else to deputize and fill the slot. Accomplished speakers are those who can readily respond to such situations and make their speeches worthwhile to the audience. To move into a position where one can be ready to deliver a good impromptu speech on any occasion, the person should cultivate preparedness. It does not mean that impromptu speakers do not need any kind of preparation. As Mark Twain noted, ‘It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.’

Catching Attention

The first few minutes of any speech or presentation are very important. On the one hand, this is when the speaker makes the first impression on the audience. On the other, this is when the audience or listeners form an opinion about the speaker. That is why gaining attention from the very beginning assumes importance. All good speakers make it a point to come to the point as quickly as possible. If the audience starts asking, ‘What is the point the speaker is making?’, the speaker has already delayed making his or her point. Catching early attention and making one’s point quickly are a must for every good communicator. In real-life situations, the audience for any speaker can be really varied. A speaker may address both known and familiar groups, or distant and unfamiliar groups of people. Similarly, the speaker may address people who are interested in the subject and those who are indifferent and not very responsive. From the minute the speaker approaches the podium or lectern or stands up to speak, he or she is under evaluation. Quite often, the audience may not only be indifferent, but also hostile. The speaker has to deal with every such situation with tact and understanding.

Five Ways of Catching Attention

Catching the attention of the audience from the word go is also known as getting the audience hooked. A good hook ensures that the audience gets connected to the speaker and the speech. A good hook builds a rapport with the listeners. If the audience is with the speaker from the very beginning, transmission of the message takes place smoothly. Effective speakers are known to practice different approaches to catch attention and get the audience hooked.

An Interesting Anecdote or Story One way of making a hook is to start with an interesting anecdote or event or illustration or story. It could be a real-life event or an imaginary one. Make it brief and use it just to gain the attention of your audience.

A Humorous Episode Good humour has its place in making communication effective. A humorous remark lightens the air and makes the audience more receptive. Any such humorous remark should, however, be relevant to the occasion and appropriate to the audience. Avoid poor jokes and ill-conceived humour.
While it is nice to start on a humorous note, a speaker should not force one on the audience where it would not be welcome. Know your audience and decide which approach is the best.

An Interesting Statistic Relevant figures do help in attracting attention, more so, when they are disturbing or something that warrants a concern. When the speaker says, ‘In our city, everyday, on an average, there are three fatal accidents taking place’ or ‘The number of man-days lost during the year to strikes is as high as...’, people’s attention gets drawn.

A Rhetorical Question A rhetorical question is the one that is asked in order to produce an effect rather than to gain information. When a speaker asks a rhetorical question, he or she does not necessarily expect a reply from everyone. But it helps in drawing the attention of the audience. When the speaker starts by saying, ‘Who wants to earn a free trip to Singapore?’ or ‘How many of you have gone for a medical check up to a Government hospital?’, then heads turn and an instant rapport gets built up.

We have mentioned above some approaches that are known to be effective in catching the attention of the audience. Good speakers develop their own style and use the approach appropriate to the occasion and the audience. When the subject is serious, a quote or some disturbing statistics may be more appropriate than a humorous remark or an anecdote. On the other hand, if the audience is a familiar and friendly group, a humorous note or an interesting story would go well. Your opening sentence can be about your impression of the city, or your address to a similar group elsewhere, or some personal anecdotes or stories, self-deprecating humour (making fun of yourself), or some good and relevant quote.

Use of Pause and Silence Good speakers also know the power of a pause and the efficacy of silence. We have noted in an earlier chapter how silence can be more eloquent than words. A pause at the right juncture can convey a lot. Statements like, ‘Think of this situation for a minute’ and ‘Let us pause and recollect what we have learnt in our last session’ often start the presentation on the right note. So also is silence.

Transmission Rate
Transmission rate refers to the number of words spoken per minute. A speaker, one should note, rarely achieves a transmission rate above 200–225 words per minute, while most listeners are capable of comprehending 500 words per minute. In fact, it is said that most speakers talk at about 150-175 words per minute. As a result, unoccupied time gets filled with random thoughts and images, distracting the attention of the listener and thereby affecting the comprehension of the speaker’s message. The difference between the speaker speaking and the listener processing leaves a substantial mental spare time.

Speakers are therefore cautioned to mind the gap. Every speaker should be conscious of the gap and make every effort to engage the attention of the listener. The speaker should give little room for the mind to wander by keeping the...
transmission engaging. Appropriate eye contacts, body movements, pauses and gestures, voice modulations would all help in engaging the listeners. The transmission rate should also vary depending on the nature of the subject and the type of audience. If the audience is familiar with the subject, a faster pace of speech delivery would be appropriate. However, when the speaker is educating the audience on the subject, a relatively slower pace should be adopted. The speaker, in other words, should follow the principle, ‘What the traffic shall bear’ and condition the transmission rate accordingly.

Check Your Progress

4. Why are office notes put up?
5. In reference to a speech, what is the transmission rate?

13.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Minutes refer to a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting.
2. A report may be defined as a form of systematic presentation of information relating to an event, progress of action or some activity.
3. Written reports have the following advantages over oral reports.
   • Oral reports can be denied at any time.
   • Oral reports tend to be vague as compared to written reports.
   • Written reports can be referred to again and again which is not the case with oral reports.
   • Written reports can be transferred from person to person without the risk of distortion.
4. Office notes are put up for ‘consideration and orders’ or for ‘information’ where there are specific delegated powers for various sanctions, incurring of financial expenditure, changes in placements and assignments.
5. Transmission rate refers to the number of words spoken per minute. A speaker, one should note, rarely achieves a transmission rate above 200–225 words per minute, while most listeners are capable of comprehending 500 words per minute.

13.7 SUMMARY

• Minutes refer to a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting. Minutes, in fact, constitute a written record of everything important that transpires in all formal meetings.
- Business reports may be defined as an orderly and objective communication of factual information that serves a business purpose.
- For a business report to serve effectively the purpose for which it is intended, it is essential that it possess certain essentials. These include accuracy, clarity, consistency, brevity, simplicity, and so on.
- Reports can be in both oral and written forms, though written reports are preferred.
- A report should be drafted keeping in mind the following points:
  (i) Purpose of the report
  (ii) Time within which it is to be submitted
  (iii) Level of authority for which it is intended
- Office notes are another form of internal communication popular within business organizations. Office notes are put up by sections, departments or units to the higher authorities, head of the unit, department or institution.
- Speaking and speech-making are conscious and organized efforts on the part of a person to communicate ideas and thoughts on a subject of interest to the audience.
- Speaking involves both verbal and non-verbal aspects. According to researchers, the non-verbal part of the communication has an overwhelming impact. It is said that less than 10 per cent of the effect of a speaker on an audience is determined by the verbal content or the words themselves.

13.8 KEY WORDS
- **Accuracy**: It is the quality or state of being correct or precise.
- **Minutes**: It refers to the written record of what was said at a meeting.
- **Demeanour**: It refers to outward behaviour or bearing.
- **Brevity**: It means concise and exact use of words in writing or speech.

13.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**
1. What details are covered while drawing up the minutes?
2. List the characteristics of a business report.
3. Differentiate between formal and informal reports.
4. Write a short-note on office notes.
5. What are the points that should be kept in mind while drafting short-speeches?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Define business reports. Discuss its purpose and importance.
2. Describe the characteristics of good business reports.
3. Explain the procedures for writing a business report.
4. Examine the principles of effective speeches.

**13.10 FURTHER READINGS**


UNIT 14 EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION

Structure
14.0 Introduction
14.1 Objectives
14.2 Application for Employment
14.3 Covering Letter
14.4 Bio-Data Preparation
14.5 Testimonials, Offer of Employment
14.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
14.7 Summary
14.8 Key Words
14.9 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
14.10 Further Readings

14.0 INTRODUCTION

The process of communication encompasses all facets of human life. Every human being is almost always a member of three units—family, profession or occupation and society. Most of one’s life is spent in interacting with other members associated with these spheres. An important segment of business communication, therefore, deals with career-oriented or job-related communication. From the individual’s personal point of view, no other correspondence is perhaps more important than employment related correspondence.

To be able to get a job and embark on a career, two things need to happen. First, one must get an opportunity by way of an Interview call. Second, when the chance does come along, he or she should perform well on the given day.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:
- Discuss application and cover letters
- Describe how to prepare for writing a resume
- Explain letter of employment and letter of resignation
14.2 APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Let us begin by discussing how to send applications.

Sending an Application

After a candidate identifies a job, the next step is to send an application letter. Any organization which is sought after will be receiving hundreds and even thousands of application letters from candidates, often from various parts of the country and even abroad. The candidate sending the application letter should keep in view the likely enormity of such requests or responses faced by the organization and make every effort to get noticed or catch attention. The contents of the application letter apart, its packaging also makes a difference. There are any number of small details which can make a noticeable positive difference—good-quality paper, attractive presentation format, neat and error-free typing, good folding (if at all) and forceful sentences. Similarly, lack of attention to some details would mar the attention-grabbing value of the application form—shabby envelope, misspelling the name of the addressee or the organization, poor typing, illegible handwriting and pedestrian statements. Some relevant dos and don’ts have to be necessarily followed while sending the application letter and the relevant accompanying papers. Various points which have to be kept in view while sending an application letter are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Suo Moto or In Response

Application letters seeking jobs are essentially of two types—suomoto and in response. Application letters sent by an applicant suomoto (or suomotu) are those where the aspirant is sending the letter by choice and not in response to any specific advertisement or invitation. Suomoto means action done on your own without any formal request from anyone. For example, an engineer, soon after completing graduation sends out applications to a few engineering firms without waiting for advertisements. One is hopeful that the organization is offering opportunities in keeping with one’s academic qualifications and extra-curricular activities. Similarly, an accounts clerk who has worked in a junior position for a few years has, by now, acquired additional qualifications and relevant experience in view of which the person now sends an application letter suomoto seeking an accounts officer position in another firm in the relevant industry. While sending such suomoto application letters, the candidates should make appropriate enquiries, besides homework. Is the organization looking for or in need of candidates? Is the organization taking up new projects? Is the organization looking for candidates in specific functional and geographical areas? Is the candidate equipped with necessary qualifications and experience to fill the post? As far as possible, the application letter should try to identify a specific post or a functional area and not just seek
any suitable post. When telephone calls are made to employers seeking job opportunities even though no jobs are advertised, such calls are called “cold calls”.

The second category of application letters relates to those sent in response to specific advertisements or announcements or invitations. Here the organization/advertiser has already stated the details of the job offer, the required qualifications and experience, position in the hierarchy, emoluments, place of posting and methods of selection, and the candidates have to make sure that they qualify or meet the eligibility criteria. The application letters have to clearly state how he/she is suitable for the post advertised. These application letters are not always sent directly to the organization. Quite often, the organization keeps its identity confidential and hence the advertiser would want the application letters to be sent to a specific post box address. In some cases, the selection process may be entrusted to an external recruitment agency or consultancy firm, in which case the application letters have to be addressed accordingly. In sending these application letters the candidates should strictly abide by the stipulated conditions listed in the advertisement—where and by which date to send the application, the number of pages and size of the paper, essential details to be furnished and whether testimonials need to be enclosed. In some cases, like government and public sector organizations, there would be printed application forms, often available for a fee, and the same have to be obtained, filled in and submitted as directed.

14.3 COVERING LETTER

Application letters are often accompanied by short covering letters. Covering letters, also referred to as cover letters, are often sent along with a job application or a resume. Application letters have to cover all relevant details as called for, or as are necessary to bring out the candidate’s strengths and merits. As a result, the letter becomes somewhat detailed. The covering letter comes in very handy and has to be specific and attractive. It could be typed on the letterhead of the candidate or any other good-quality paper to make it elegant. While the covering letter has to be properly addressed to the right person, department, advertiser or post box, the contents have to be necessarily short and sharp.

Any application, as we have noted, quite often competes with numerous others for attention. The covering letter provides an opportunity to the job-seeking candidate to make the application somewhat distinctive. Make it as appealing as you can. At least take care to see that it is not unattractive and ordinary looking. First Impressions Matter: Your covering letter is seen even before the addressee takes a look at your application and resume. Since first impressions matter much, it has to be taken seriously. In fact, the appeal and elegance of the covering letter can sway the prospective employers in your favour and get them interested in looking closely at your resume. The basic purpose of any covering letter is to
highlight the candidate’s strengths so as to call attention of the employer. To grab attention, your cover letter:

1. Should be duly customized and made job specific. A stereotyped letter cannot be a winner.
2. Should clearly highlight your accomplishments and skills in bold fonts.
3. Should “sell” you by ensuring that the highlights provided match the job requirements and arouse employer interest
4. Should be free from grammatical and typing errors.
5. Should be neat and elegant so as to catch attention.

Details to be Covered

An application letter presents the candidate’s profile to the organization or the recruitment agency. In order to do that effectively, the application letter has to necessarily cover all essential details about the candidate. Exhibit 14.1 lists the key areas that a good application letter should cover.

Exhibit 14.1: Make Your Application Letter Inclusive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Personal Details</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Languages Known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Academic Qualifications</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marks/Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<th>3. Extra-curricular Activities</th>
<th>Hobbies</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports</td>
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<tr>
<th>4. Experience</th>
<th>Previous Jobs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positions Held</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of Work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job Profile</td>
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<tr>
<th>5. Job-related Achievements</th>
<th>Promotions</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awards</td>
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<td>Recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Assignments</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Distinguishing Qualities</th>
<th>Interpersonal Skills/Team work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Qualities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicative Skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. References</th>
<th>Teachers/Professors</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Departmental Heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heads of Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Prominent Persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 8. Your Strengths | Why You Are Suitable |
You Are the Right Candidate

When you are seeking a job by sending an application and facing an interview, you are essentially trying to market or sell yourself. You will have to bring out your strengths, highlight your distinguishing features and underline all those qualities that make you particularly suitable for the job. Reiterate why you think you are the right candidate for the job.

Update Regularly

The application letter should be updated on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that the latest details are furnished. If you were 22 years old in 2001, you would be 24 years old in 2003. If you had 6 years of experience, subsequently add two more years to it when you use it during 2003. If you added another degree or diploma, have undergone another training, got married or your present emoluments have gone up, make sure that you update these details when you send your application or bio data. More importantly, vary the emphasis or focus depending upon the post. If you are applying for the post of an officer as well as a clerk, try to vary the emphasis. Similarly, what you highlight for an operation-oriented job would be different from what you emphasize for a research job or a teaching job. In the former, you focus more on your result-oriented or strategy-oriented skills, whereas in the latter case, you talk more about academic strength and publications. Avoid straitjacketing.

Address to the Right Person

Having taken the initiative of preparing an application and covering letter providing all relevant details in an elegant eye-catching manner, the next step is to ensure that it is addressed to the right person or authority. When the candidate is responding to an advertisement, the address to which the application is to be sent should always be clearly stated. It could be a post box number, the recruitment agency, the selection board or any such stated authority. In contrast to this, in respect of application letters which are sent by the job seekers suomoto or on their own, extra care has to be taken to address the application/covering letter to the appropriate authority or the department. It may be the chief executive, the director (personnel), the chief of the personnel department or the specific departmental head. If it goes to the wrong person or the department, there is always the possibility that it may lie there without getting redirected to the appropriate person or department. Ascertain the right addressee for your application letter.
Endorsing Copies

Job seekers sending application letters must resist the temptation to send out multiple copies to the same organization. Sending the letter by courier, fax and e-mail to different departments repeatedly will certainly not help the cause of the candidate. As rightly observed by the Director of Human Resources for GE Capital, Asia-Pacific, “Sending multiple copies of your CV by e-mail and fax, re-sending it with additions and corrections, including multiple e-mail attachments and nagging the company with follow-up phone calls can do much to hurt your chances. It is a deduction of points even before you have a chance for an interview.” In most organizations, the entire process is often internally well streamlined such that other departments/functionaries receiving the application redirect the same to the personnel/HR department. Sending multiple copies to different departments would ultimately mean that all such copies finally end up with the same department, which obviously is to be consciously avoided by the job seeker.

Check Your Progress

1. What are suomoto application letters?
2. What is a cover letter?

14.4 BIO-DATA PREPARATION

A person’s resume is probably the first and the most important employment related document. The right resume has the potential to open doors of opportunity. Every person looking for professional success should know how to make it work. A resume is what a candidate sends along with the job application letter. A resume usually accompanies the covering letter and presents all relevant details about the candidate. A resume is also referred to as bio data or curriculum vitae (CV). A resume or a CV is a short account of one’s career and qualifications typically prepared by an applicant for a position. A resume is also understood as a personal datasheet that presents the academic qualifications, job-related experience, skills and strong points of a person seeking a job.

What a Good Resume Achieves While preparing a resume, it is important to know what a good resume can achieve. A good resume helps project the person in proper light. It makes the first right impression on the employer. A good resume helps bring out the basic strengths of the individual in terms of academic achievements, job-related skills, attitude and aptitude and other relevant details in order to hold the attention of the receiver/employer. A good, neatly prepared and a strong resume reinforces the candidate’s confidence. It helps the candidate put
his or her best foot forward. A good resume vies for attention and gets noticed. A good resume makes an impression even at a cursory glance. The demand and supply position in the job market being what it is, any application letter or resume competes with numerous others and only those prepared with care and elegance succeed in kindling the interest of the prospective employer. Above all, a good resume helps you get an interview call and move closer to getting the job you are seeking.

Essentials of a Good Resume We have seen how crucial it is to have a good resume that gets noticed and takes the candidate closer to an interview call. Let us now look at various essentials to be kept in mind while preparing a good resume.

First and foremost, a resume will have to stand out in terms of its neatness. The presentation of details in the resume will have to be in an organized and orderly manner. Unless your handwriting is exceptionally good, it is desirable to get the resume neatly typed. Smudging, overwriting, uneven lines, ill thought out font variations and unwarranted folding will have to be eschewed. Use a good paper, pen, envelope and a superior format. Take care to do a neat job and avoid careless mistakes. A resume presents an outline and is not a detailed record. Therefore, instead of using lengthy sentences, it would be desirable to use short phrases.

Remember, your resume has to create a favourable impression. It is the first opportunity you have to impress your prospective employer. The second essential for a good resume is adequacy or completeness. The resume should cover all relevant details about the candidate which the employer will be looking for and yet it should not be loaded with too many details. The recipient will most probably be looking at hundreds or even thousands of resumes and the candidate should try to make it easy to the reader by making it brief and focused. The desirable length of a resume would perhaps vary depending on the qualifications and experience of the candidate and the nature of the post applied for. Freshers and just out-of-the-university candidates may not have much to cover, as compared to those who have had varied exposure and experience over several years. In any case, the recipient would be comfortable with a resume that does not exceed about two to four neatly typed pages. Shorter the resume, greater the chance of its being noticed and read.

In preparing a resume, a candidate is well advised to mercilessly leave out trivial or insignificant details about achievements. The resume writer has to resist the temptation to go overboard by packing the resume with too many details. Those who are just out of college may not have much to state in terms of experience and therefore will have to make a pitch in terms of their potential and employability.
Another requirement towards ensuring a good resume is accuracy of facts and figures. All details furnished in the resume should contain correct and updated information about the candidate. Care has to be taken to mention correct dates and years, names of the institutions, organizations and designation. Equally important, spelling mistakes have to be carefully avoided. Whether it is the designation of the person or the name of the organization, correctness has to be ensured.

Re-check your resume and covering letter for any grammatical and spelling errors. Also, make sure that the dates and years are accurate. Make sure that the resume is updated to cover the latest developments. Honesty and sincerity are very important ingredients of any good resume. Be truthful about your qualifications and achievements. Do not lie. Take care to project your natural self, the real you. Do not make tall claims or overstate your strengths. Any seasoned HR functionary, who keeps going through numerous resumes regularly, can easily detect an insincere and dishonest presentation of false facts and figures.

Any good resume should clearly bring out the strong points of the candidate. For doing so, the applicant should learn to look at the resume from the employer’s standpoint. When a job is advertised, the employer is trying to fill up a specific vacancy or position. The position carries a certain job profile with its underlying needs. Every employer looks at the resume and tries to assess it in terms of meeting certain specific needs. The candidate’s strength lies in highlighting one’s own qualification, experience, skills and attitude such that it appeals to the prospective employer. Considering what the job demands, the candidate should endeavour to suggest how the candidate is equipped to add value to the job. Obviously, no employer would be keen on just offering you or anybody a job. At the same time, every employer would be keen on getting the right candidate or ensuring the right fit for the vacant post. Are you Mr Right or Ms Right? If so, try to highlight it in your resume.

Finally, make sure that the resume is appealing and distinctive. Do not use a standard pattern. Make it stand out in a crowd. Be imaginative, in terms of letterhead, presentation style, statement of objectives or understanding of employer needs. Fine-tune the presentation keeping in view the nature of the organization and the job expectations. The manner of presentation will vary depending on whether it is a public sector undertaking or a multinational company, whether it is a marketing job or an accounts job and whether it is an academic job or an administrative post. In fine-tuning your resume, use keywords that go well with the job description. Use language specific to the industry or functional responsibility. At the same time, give your resume a personal touch. Take your time and make it a thorough job. Make sure that all the vital contact information such as name,
mailing address, phone number and e-mail address are furnished prominently on the top right-hand corner of the covering letter/resume. Gather and present all relevant details in a clear, correct, honest and visually appealing manner. There are indeed many ways in which resumes can be presented by job seekers. The candidate has to use discretion in selecting the details to be covered and the headings to be used. In deciding the length of the resume, sequencing of data, choice of headings and emphasis on strengths and achievements, the candidate should be guided by (1) what the advertiser specifies, (2) nature and level of the position, (3) degree of competition and (4) the level of qualification and experience of the candidate. If the occasion demands a one-page bio data rather than a detailed resume, the candidate should take care to condense the resume and present the most significant details within one page. On the other hand, where the application is for a senior position or where it calls for a relatively high level of academic or research achievements, the resume needs to cover the details in a more elaborate manner. Similarly, when the candidate is fresh out of the university or without much job experience, academic achievements and other relevant features will have to be duly highlighted.

While Updating Don’t Just Add, Better Re-Write As you add new experiences, qualifications and accomplishments, your resume has to be necessarily updated. When things change, you cannot do with the outdated resume. Constantly update your resume with new additions. In doing so, however, do not take the easy way and make hand written additions and alterations. This shows carelessness and makes your resume shabby and half-hearted. Don’t ever give the impression of being lazy, clumsy and lacking in enthusiasm. Take care to reorganize and redo your resume. You should submit a new print which looks fresh, neat and professional. The impression it creates is worth the extra effort you put in. As already noted, resumes should be customized depending upon the job requirements. For that purpose, the job applicant should emphasize those facts and accomplishments which are particularly relevant for the particular job.

As one moves up the career ladder and gains varied exposure and experience, one would have acquired substantial values which have to be imaginatively packaged in the resume. Whichever format or style the candidate uses, it should clearly bring out the strong points. While bringing out the academic qualifications, all significant achievements, such as ranks, scores and grades as well as merit scholarships, if any, will have to be properly highlighted. On the other hand, if the grades or scores are not very impressive, the candidate should underplay them without resorting to conspicuous omissions.

Types of resumes Resumes are prepared in different formats. Broadly speaking, they may be chronological or functional, or a combination of these two.
Chronological resumes present the details in a historical order, in a timeline. They follow a linear approach. Traditionally, they would proceed in a progressive manner starting with the early history or beginnings and move on to the current position. The more common approach, however, is the reverse chronological resume, where you start with the latest or present position and move backwards. Achronological resume is desirable when the person has progressed gradually over a period of time. Functional resumes do not follow any timeline approach and instead focus on skills and responsibilities. A functional resume is also referred to as a skill-based resume. Functional resumes are useful when several skills have been acquired or several positions held within a short period of time. The combination resume follows a mixed approach highlighting skills and experiences and also providing work experience during different periods. Depending upon the length of experience, career advancements, academic study, skills, achievements and responsibilities, the type of resume should be decided.

The headings or captions under which details are furnished could be many and varied. While some of them covering personal details and academic qualifications would be common to most of the resumes, the other headings may or may not be relevant, depending upon the age and experience of the candidate and the nature and responsibilities of the post.

Make a List of All Items Before you start writing your resume, it would be a good idea to put together all relevant aspects about yourself. Start from the beginning and move up to your latest position. The list you draw up should cover:

(a) Academic achievements including the schools and colleges attended
(b) Areas of study and specialization
(c) Marks scored, grades achieved and distinctions, if any
(d) Extra-curricular activities and sports
(e) Computer skills
(f) Languages known
(g) Hobbies and special interests
(h) Special studies and courses taken
(i) Employment details and work experience
(j) Career related contributions and achievements
(k) Core competencies
(l) Skills and expertise acquired
(m) Technical competencies
(n) Professional education
Employment
Communication

NOTES

Self-Instructional
Material

(o) Professional accreditations, licenses and certificates
(p) Memberships and affiliations
(q) Seminars and workshops attended
(r) Awards and honours
(s) Publications, papers and research
(t) Consultancy and speaking assignments
(u) Prominent training programs and institutions
(v) Hobbies and interests
(w) Personal details and contact address
(x) Community service and
(y) References.

Career related contributions and achievements would find expression in the resumes as follows:

1. Have brought new high value/corporate customers
2. Have introduced several cost-cutting measures
3. Have contributed to improvements in productivity and operational efficiency
4. Have developed a product development team
5. Have contributed research papers to prominent journals
6. Have trained several batches of new recruits.
7. Have led a team of software developers

This attempt at drawing up an exhaustive list ensures that nothing of importance is left out. Of course, the number of items to be included from this list for each candidate would vary depending upon the level of experience, professional standing and breadth of accomplishments. This wealth of information would certainly help in picking up relevant items and customizing the resume keeping in view the job description. Further, a comprehensive list prepared and kept ready would also be helpful in preparing application forms and also while preparing for the interview. This list acts as a worksheet. In preparing the final resume, however, the communicator should pick up only relevant details, rearrange the order and priorities, convert facts into accomplishments/substance statements and highlight the most important ones.

Whether Personal Details? A word of caution in this context about personal details is essential. Although in the Indian context, the resumes provide personal details such as age, date of birth, marital status, etc., in some countries abroad
such details are to be avoided. For example, if the resume is meant to be used in applying to a position in the USA, such details have to be omitted. Essential facts such as email address, mailing address and contact numbers, and other professionally relevant details should be included in the resume. It is also worth noting that in the U.S, even during the interviews, the interviewers refrain from asking questions about age, marital status, religion, etc.

A suggested list of captions or headings appropriate for resumes in general is given below:

1. Personal details
2. Academic qualifications
3. Academic distinctions
4. Work experience
5. Areas of specialization
6. Career-related achievements
7. Seminars and workshops
8. Papers and publications
9. Membership of boards and committees
10. Guest faculty
11. Consultancy
12. Computer/Technical skills
13. Languages known
14. Marital status
15. Hobbies and interests
16. References

In the above paragraphs, we have looked at the various captions or headings under which relevant details have to be covered in the resumes. In the following pages, we will be presenting illustrations on how relevant details may be presented under each one of the above captions.

**Personal details** Personal details to be covered in the Resume/Bio Data include the name, age, date of birth, nationality, present position, residential address and contact details.

**Academic qualifications** Academic qualifications may be mentioned either in the chronological order or from the latest backwards. Similarly, the grades and percentages may or may not be stated.
**Academic distinctions** This is an optional caption, in the sense that only those candidates who have something significant to highlight by way of academic distinctions may use this heading. Medals won, merit scholarships conferred and other such achievements may be highlighted.

**Work experience** Any prospective employer would keenly study details under this caption. The resume writer should take extra care in presenting the details of work experience in an effective manner.

Work experience would normally cover the following details.

- Period of Work
- Functional Designation
- Duties and Responsibilities
- Present Position
- Career Highlights or Previous Positions

**Areas of specialization** Quite often, people specialize in specific areas or even geographical markets. The resumes should clearly bring out related strengths, especially when the post applied for demands specialization.

1. Specific functional areas
   (a) Labour law
   (b) Investment banking
   (c) Economic journalism

2. Specific industries
   (a) Ceramic industry
   (b) Mutual funds
   (c) Auto components

3. Specific regions
   (a) South-East Asian markets
   (b) South India
   (c) Eastern Region

4. Specialized training
   (a) Advanced Training in Commodity Futures
   (b) Advanced Program on Asian Financial Markets
DOs and DON'Ts of Resume Writing

Dos

1. Make your resume stand out. Clearly bring out your strong points.
2. Your resume creates your first impression. Make it neat, error-free and professional.
4. Make a comprehensive list of your qualifications, experience, competencies, skills, etc. before writing your resume.
5. Choose headings that reflect your strength and match the employer needs.
6. Make your resume factually accurate and up-to-date.
7. Choose the right format and keep your font professional and appealing.
8. Re-check your resume for grammatical errors and inconsistencies.

Don’ts:

1. Do not boast or exaggerate. Never insert lies.
2. Don’t use big and pompous words. Use key words used in the profession.
3. Don’t use lengthy sentences. Use catchy phrases.
4. Don’t give the contact numbers or a mailing address on which you cannot be reached.
5. Don’t use words, fonts, colours and styles which make the resume gaudy and unprofessional.
6. While updating don’t just squeeze in additions. Rewrite and reprint.
7. Don’t make critical comments on your previous job/superiors.
8. Don’t highlight achievements which you cannot substantiate.

Check Your Progress

3. What is a resume?
4. What are chronological resumes?

14.5 TESTIMONIALS, OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Testimonials refer to letters of appreciation or letters of recommendation. A testimonial is a letter of evidence or open acknowledgement of a person’s character and abilities, normally issued by a superior or executive under whom the candidate has worked. Unlike a reference, which is in response to the specific request by a
prospective employer, a testimonial is not specifically addressed. It is a character reference or an expression of appreciation issued by the authority to the candidate. It is presented in the format of a certificate or statement rather than a letter. Testimonials are also issued by teachers in favour of their students. Testimonials are issued when the student is leaving the college or is applying for admission elsewhere. Similarly, the superior or reporting authority may issue the testimonials to the employee, on request, to enable the employee to seek employment elsewhere. Like certificates, testimonials are used by candidates while seeking admission/job positions.

**Illustration of a Good Testimonial**

To Whom It May Concern

Miss Chanda Dixit is a student of MSc (Botany) in our institute and will be appearing for her final examination during April 2018. Miss Chanda has been taking keen interest in her studies and has scored distinction throughout her graduation. She has also actively participated in the literary and cultural activities of the institute and has won the Best Student Award during the academic year 2016—2017. Miss Chanda has a positive approach to life and gets along well with fellow students and faculty members. She is keen on pursuing higher studies in her chosen field and thereafter take up a career in teaching. I wish her every success in her professional and academic pursuits.

Anna Thomas
Prof and Head Dept of Botany

**References**

It has become a common practice among prospective employers to seek references from job applicants, and thereafter seek the opinion or views of the referees before taking a final decision on the selection of the candidate. This is true in the case of admissions to universities abroad as well. The approach followed in getting the references is detailed below.

A job-seeking candidate mentions the names of the references in the resume/application. Referees are people holding important positions known to the candidate. They may be teachers or guides, supervisors or heads of departments and institutions, where the candidate has studied or worked. They have known the candidate well enough to give their opinion on the skills and aptitude of the candidate.
Before mentioning the names of the references in the resume, the candidate seeks their specific permission to do so. In doing so, the candidate will have to refer to the specific period during which the candidate studied or worked in the institute or organization concerned. If there is a lapse of time since then, the candidate will have to refer to some conspicuous events relating to the candidate’s studentship or work tenure to facilitate the referee to recall the details concerning the candidate.

A prospective employer seeks a reference from a referee about the candidate. In doing so, the prospective employer will mention the post for which the candidate is being considered, the nature of responsibilities associated with it and the referee’s views on the candidate’s qualities and capabilities.

As a final step in the process, the referee concerned will reply to the letter written to the prospective employer giving the referee’s views on the candidate. Apart from covering the specific details sought, the referee may also provide additional information, which in the referee’s opinion is relevant to the context.

An important characteristic that prospective employers look for in the candidate is trust and integrity. Most employers would like to ensure that the candidate to be selected is trustworthy. Apart from noting the academic achievements and professional abilities, employers would be keen to know the ethical and moral aspects of the candidate.

14.5.1 Letter of Acceptance and Letter of Resignation

Let us begin this section by discussing offer of employment.

Offer of Employment

The offer letter for employment is a letter from the company/business organization to the selected candidate confirming that he/she has been selected for the relevant post and the job is being offered subject to certain specified terms and conditions. It is worth noting that just as the employer has a choice of selecting the candidates for the job, the candidates too would have the choice of accepting the job offer or rejecting it. For this reason, it is equally essential that the offer letter is made appealing. This letter is the first opportunity to the hiring organization to create a favourable impression about them. In the world of business, first impressions do matter. Like an individual, any business organization too has a body language. Organizational body language gets manifested in its logo, letterhead, quality of stationery, website, quality of communication, etc. To create the right first impression, the company or organization sending the offer letter should take care to make the letterhead, typing elegance, content quality and the cover or envelope of the letter of a high standard.
A good letter of employment would generally take into account the following:

- Mention the candidate’s name correctly
- Make sure the address mentioned is right
- Welcome the candidate
- Mention the position and grade
- Mention the gross annual salary/cost to the company (CTC)
- Give the details of break-up of salary in terms of various allowances, provident fund (PF) and any other components like gratuity, pension scheme, etc.
- Present location and transferability
- Starting date and time
- Validity period of the offer
- Annexure giving the other terms and conditions of the job offer which include, among others, the following:
  1. Probation period
  2. Office timings
  3. Confidentiality clause
  4. Notice period
  5. Joining bonus, if any
  6. Relieving letter from the previous employer

The letter should be duly signed by the HR manager mentioning the date and place. It would also be appropriate to end the letter on a positive note such as “Looking forward to having you on board” and “Looking forward to the pleasure of having you with us.” The employer should also ensure that the offer letter is despatched promptly, for any delay would give a poor impression about the organization.

**Letter of Acceptance**

A letter of acceptance is a simple letter that is sent by the receiver of the offer letter conveying his/her willingness to accept the offer of employment. It is again the first impression that the offeree creates on his/her employer in writing. The letter should be brief, to the point and free from errors. Also, it should be grammatically correct and neat.
The letter of acceptance should include the following:

- Thank the organization for the offer
- State clearly that you are happy to accept the offer
- Show enthusiasm in joining the organization
- Mention the joining date
- Seek more time, if necessary, giving the reason for the same
- Signature and date

The selected candidate sometimes may not be in a position to report or join on the date specified in the offer letter, in which case he/she may have to seek extension of time for joining. In that case the letter of acceptance may have to state the circumstances under which an extension is being sought.

There are occasions when the selected person may not be in a position to accept the job offer for some reason. In such a case, the candidate may have to politely decline the offer. Instead of an acceptance letter, the person concerned should send an appropriately worded regret letter. This will ensure that while the job offeror is promptly informed about his/her non-availability, he/she still retains the goodwill with the organization.

**Letter of Resignation**

A letter of resignation conveys the employee’s inability to continue serving the organization where he/she is employed. The employee may be resigning for any reason such as getting a better job, or pursuing higher studies, or reasons of relocation or personal reasons. In doing so, the employee has to duly inform the organization by writing a resignation letter. Leaving without intimation is undesirable as it amounts to abandonment of service. If the organization decides to discontinue or terminate the services of an employee, it does so by due intimation in writing. So also, the employee has to inform in writing his/her intention to resign.

A letter of resignation should cover the following:

- Inform the departmental head/HR manager that you have decided to resign and would be putting in your papers.
- As far as possible, indicate the reason for tendering your resignation.
- Mention the date on which you wish to be relieved.
- Refer to the completion of the notice period or waiver, if required.
- Mention the status of work pending, where relevant.
• Create goodwill by mentioning how you enjoyed working with the employer.
• Even if you are quitting because of not-so-happy working conditions, refrain from making nasty or unpalatable remarks.
• Remember that although you are ceasing to be an employee, you need not sever the relationship.

Make sure that your letter of resignation is sent promptly and is addressed to the right authority in the organization.

Check Your Progress
5. Differentiate between a reference and a testimonial.
6. What is a letter of resignation?

14.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Application letters sent by an applicant suomoto (or suomotu) are those where the aspirant is sending the letter by choice and not in response to any specific advertisement or invitation.
2. Application letters are often accompanied by short covering letters. Covering letters, also referred to as cover letters, are often sent along with a job application or a resume.
3. Every person looking for professional success should know how to make it work. A resume is what a candidate sends along with the job application letter.
4. Chronological resumes present the details in a historical order, in a timeline. They follow a linear approach.
5. Unlike a reference, which is in response to the specific request by a prospective employer, a testimonial is not specifically addressed. It is a character reference or an expression of appreciation issued by the authority to the candidate.
6. A letter of resignation conveys the employee’s inability to continue serving the organization where he/she is employed.
14.7 SUMMARY

- After a candidate identifies a job, the next step is to send an application letter.
- The candidate sending the application letter should keep in view the likely enormity of such requests or responses faced by the organization and make every effort to get noticed or catch attention.
- Application letters seeking jobs are essentially of two types—suomoto and in response. Application letters sent by an applicant suomoto (or suomotu) are those where the aspirant is sending the letter by choice and not in response to any specific advertisement or invitation.
- The second category of application letters relates to those sent in response to specific advertisements or announcements or invitations. Here the organization/advertiser has already stated the details of the job offer, the required qualifications and experience, position in the hierarchy, emoluments, place of posting and methods of selection, and the candidates have to make sure that they qualify or meet the eligibility criteria.
- Application letters are often accompanied by short covering letters. Covering letters, also referred to as cover letters, are often sent along with a job application or a resume.
- A person’s resume is probably the first and the most important employment related document. The right resume has the potential to open doors of opportunity.
- Every person looking for professional success should know how to make it work. A resume is what a candidate sends along with the job application letter.
- Resumes are prepared in different formats. Broadly speaking, they may be chronological or functional, or a combination of these two.
- Testimonials refer to letters of appreciation or letters of recommendation. A testimonial is a letter of evidence or open acknowledgement of a person’s character and abilities, normally issued by a superior or executive under whom the candidate has worked.
- The offer letter for employment is a letter from the company/business organization to the selected candidate confirming that he/she has been selected for the relevant post and the job is being offered subject to certain specified terms and conditions.
A letter of acceptance is a simple letter that is sent by the receiver of the offer letter conveying his/her willingness to accept the offer of employment.

A letter of resignation conveys the employee’s inability to continue serving the organization where he/she is employed.

### 14.8 KEY WORDS

- **Resume:** It refers to a formal presentation of a job applicant’s education, skills, and work experience.
- **Suomoto:** It is a Latin term meaning “on its own motion”. It is used in situations where a government or court official acts of its own initiative.
- **References:** It refers to a letter from a previous employer testifying to someone’s ability or reliability, used when applying for a new job.
- **Application Letter:** It is a personal letter that is typically used to apply for a job.

### 14.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. List out the dos and don’ts of resume writing.
2. Discuss the two categories of application letters.
3. Discuss the different types of resumes.
4. Write short notes on (a) Letter of acceptance and (b) Letter of resignation.
5. How do you ensure that your job application is appropriate and appealing?

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. What are the essentials of a good covering letter?
2. Elucidate the relevant details to be covered in a resume.
3. What is a reference? You have been asked to give your opinion about a salesman who was working in your company till recently. Draft a suitable reply.
4. Mention the details to be furnished in a letter offering employment.
5. What should be the preparation for writing a resume?
14.10 FURTHER READINGS


