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### Managerial Communication

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INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is central to the success of any business organisation. 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 work place or in our family life. When communication is referred to in the organisational or business context, it is known as business or managerial communication.

In an organisation, communication takes place at various levels and it should be effective to enable an organisation to survive. Across the organisation, individuals send and receive information. It may be in the oral or written form. It may be formal following the organisation’s communication channels or it may take the form of an informal social interaction of colleagues during a tea break. Employees also communicate information through computers, talk over 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 organisation 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, Managerial Communication, is written with the distance learning student in mind. It is presented in a user-friendly format using a clear, lucid language. Each unit contains an Introduction and a list of Objectives to prepare the student for what to expect in the text. At the end of each unit are a Summary and a list of Key Words, to aid in recollection of concepts learnt. All units contain Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises, and strategically placed Check Your Progress questions so the student can keep track of what has been discussed.
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Structure

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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. 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. In this unit, we will discuss the meaning, definition, objectives, characteristics of communication, along with its process and forms. It will also focus on the roles of a manager and communication roadblocks and overcoming them.
1.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the meaning, definition, objectives and characteristics of communication
- Describe the process and forms of communication
- Discuss the roles of a manager and communication roadblocks and ways of overcoming them

1.2 COMMUNICATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

The word communication, has its origin in the Latin words ‘communis’ and ‘communicare’ meaning ‘common commonality or shoring’ and ‘make something common respectively. 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:

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.
1.2.1 Objectives

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 fulfil. 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.

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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.

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.

In as much 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.

1.2.2 Importance and Characteristics 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, teamwork, 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.

1.2.3 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 the Figure 1.1. It brings out the following steps involved in the communication process:

![Fig. 1.1 Process of Communication](image-url)
• **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 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.

1.2.4 Forms of Communication

Communication takes place through various methods and channels. The three main methods or forms 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).

**Fig. 1.2 Methods and Channels of Communication**

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.

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 1.2 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>1. It is not very effective when the target group is spread out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is instantaneous.</td>
<td>2. It is constrained by language, accent and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It can be persuasive.</td>
<td>3. It is also constrained by noise and other physical barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is cost effective.</td>
<td>4. It is not normally recorded or documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It facilitates effective person-to-person exchange.</td>
<td>5. It does not permit repeated reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It works very well in small groups.</td>
<td>6. It cannot be erased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It can be supplemented by non-verbal messages.</td>
<td>7. 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 photocopier. 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.3 Merits and Demerits of Written Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. It has an extremely wide reach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It creates a record and is easily documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It can be erased and rewritten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It is amenable to a high level of planning and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structuring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It facilitates repeated reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It depends less on memory since facts and figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be mobilized beforehand.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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.

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:

- Priests and elders convey their blessings by placing their hands on the heads of people bowing to them. (sign of blessing)
- A player raises two of his fingers in a V sign after a game. (sign of victory)
- A teacher puts her finger on her lips in a nursery class. (sign that says, ‘keep silent’)
- 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 the Table 1.4.
Table 1.4 Some Examples of Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40 mph</th>
<th>Speed limit of 40 miles per hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>Addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
<td>Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∑</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 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.

Types

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:

- Personal and business communication
- Internal and external communication
- Upward and downward communication
- Formal and informal communication
- Lateral communication
- Interactive communication
- Mass communication
- Global communication
- Supportive communication
- Social communication
- 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 the Figure 1.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Chief Executive</th>
<th>Zonal Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Branch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Fig. 1.3 Upward Communication](image)

**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 the Figure 1.4.
Introduction to Communication

Fig. 1.4 Downward Communication

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 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. Refer to the Figure 1.5.

Fig. 1.5 Lateral Communication
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**

1. What are the origins of the word ‘communication’?
2. State the last three steps in the communication process.
3. What are the different forms of non-verbal communication?
4. What is a symbol?

**1.3 ROLES OF A MANAGER**

Since we are on the subject of communication roles, it is important to understand the fundamental roles managers are expected to perform. These roles can be defined as the organized sets of behaviours identified with the position. These roles were developed by Henry Mintzberg in the late 1960s after a careful study of executives at work. All these roles in one form or another deal with people and their interpersonal relationships. These ten managerial roles are divided into three categories. The first category of interpersonal roles arises directly from the manager’s position and the formal authority bestowed upon him. The second category of informational roles is played as a direct result of interpersonal roles and these two categories lead to the third category of decisional roles. The Figure
1.6 shows the managerial roles. These roles are now explained in more detail.

- **Interpersonal roles:** Managers spend a considerable amount of time in interacting with other people both within their own organizations as well as outside. These people include peers, subordinates, superiors, suppliers, customers, government officials and community leaders. All these interactions require an understanding of interpersonal relations. Studies show that interacting with people takes up nearly 80% of a manager’s time. These interactions involve the following three major interpersonal roles:
  
  o **Figurehead:** Managers act as symbolic figureheads performing social or legal obligations. These duties include greeting visitors, signing legal documents, taking important customers to lunch, attending a subordinate’s wedding or speaking at functions in schools and churches. All these, primarily, are duties of a ceremonial nature but are important for the smooth functioning of the organization.
  
  o **Leader:** The influence of the manager is most clearly seen in his role as a leader of the unit or organization. Since he is responsible for the activities of his subordinates, he must lead and coordinate their activities in meeting task-related goals and he must motivate them to perform better. He must be an exemplary leader so that his subordinates follow his directions and guidelines with respect and dedication.
  
  o **Liaison:** In addition to their constant contact with their own subordinates, peers and superiors, the managers must maintain a network of outside contacts in order to assess the external environment of competition, social changes or changes in governmental rules, regulations and laws. In this role, the managers build up their own external information
 system. In addition, they develop networks of mutual obligations with other managers in the organization. They also form alliances to win support for their proposals or decisions. The liaison with external sources of information can be developed by attending meetings and professional conferences, by personal phone calls, trade journals and by informal personal contacts within outside agencies.

- **Informational roles:** By virtue of his interpersonal contacts, a manager emerges as a source of information about a variety of issues concerning the organization. In this capacity of information processing, a manager executes the following three roles:

  o **Monitor:** The managers are constantly monitoring and scanning their environment, both internal and external, collecting and studying information regarding their organization and the outside environment affecting their organization. This can be done by reading reports and periodicals, by asking their liaison contacts and through gossip, hearsay and speculation.

  o **Disseminator of information:** The managers must transmit their information regarding changes in policies or other matters to their subordinates, their peers and to other members of the organization. This can be done through memorandums, phone calls, individual meetings and group meetings.

  o **Spokesperson:** A manager has to be a spokesman for his unit and he represents his unit in either sending relevant information to people outside his unit or making some demands on behalf of his unit. This may be in the form of the president of the company making a speech to a lobby on behalf of an organizational cause or an engineer suggesting a product modification to a supplier.

- **Decisional roles:** On the basis of the environmental information received, a manager must make decisions and solve organizational problems. In that respect, a manager plays four important roles.

  o **Entrepreneur:** As entrepreneurs, managers are continuously involved in improving their units and facing the dynamic technological challenges. They are constantly on the lookout for new ideas for product improvement or products addition. They initiate feasibility studies, arrange for capital for new products if necessary, and ask for suggestions from the employees for ways to improve the organization. This can be achieved through suggestion boxes, holding strategy meetings with project managers and R & D personnel.

  o **Conflict handler:** The managers are constantly involved as arbitrators in solving differences among the subordinates or the employee’s conflicts with the central management. These conflicts may arise due to demands...
for higher pay or other benefits or these conflicts may involve outside forces such as vendors increasing their prices, a major customer going bankrupt or unwanted visits by governmental inspectors. Managers must anticipate such problems and take preventive action if possible or take corrective action once the problems have arisen. These problems may also involve labour disputes, customer complaints, employee grievances, machine breakdowns, cash flow shortages and interpersonal conflicts.

- **Resource allocator**: The third decisional role of a manager is that of a resource allocator. The managers establish priorities among various projects or programs and make budgetary allocations to the different activities of the organization based upon these priorities. They assign personnel to jobs, they allocate their own time to different activities and they allocate funds for new equipment, advertising and pay raises.

- **Negotiator**: The managers represent their units or organizations in negotiating deals and agreements within and outside of the organization. They negotiate contracts with the unions. Sale managers may negotiate prices with prime customers. Purchasing managers may negotiate prices with vendors.

All these ten roles are important in a manager’s job and are interrelated even through some roles may be more influential than others, depending upon the managerial position. For example, sales managers may give more importance to interpersonal roles while the production managers may give more importance to decisional roles. The ability to recognize the appropriate role to play in each situation and the flexibility to change roles readily when necessary, are characteristics of effective managers. Most often, however, the managerial effectiveness is determined by how well the decisional roles are performed.

### 1.3.1 Managerial Skills

A skill is an acquired and learned ability to translate knowledge into performance. It is the competency that allows for performance to be superior in the field in which the worker has the required skill. All managers need to possess technical, interpersonal, conceptual, diagnostic, communicational and political skills. While technical and diagnostic skills refer to the knowledge and ability of understanding the processes involved and scientifically analyzing problems and opportunities, all other skills deal with people in one form or the other. These human skills are the most important assets of any successful manager. It is the manager’s job to achieve the organizational objectives through the proper utilization of its human and material resources. However, since the material resources of equipment, capital, facilities, information, and so on can only be used by humans, the human resources are the most valuable assets of any organization. Accordingly, a manager must be highly skilled in the art of optimally utilizing the human resources. This
art is universal in nature. In every walk of life, human skills are necessary for success. These various skills are briefly explained as follows:

- **Technical skills**: These skills basically involve the use of knowledge, methods and techniques in performing a job effectively. This is a specialized knowledge and expertise which is utilized in dealing with day-to-day problems and activities. For example, engineers, accountants, computer programmers and systems analysts, all have technical skills in their areas and these skills are acquired through education and training. This skill is highly necessary at the lower level of management and as one moves to higher levels of management, the relative importance of technical skills usually diminishes. This is so because unlike first level supervisors, managers at higher levels have less direct contact with technical operating problems and activities.

- **Human skills**: Human skill is the ability to work with other people in a cooperative manner. It involves understanding, patience, trust and genuine involvement in interpersonal relationships. These are interpersonal skills and are necessary at all levels of management. People with good interactory human skills build trust and cooperation as they motivate and lead and thus become successful managers. This skill is gaining more importance as the work place is becoming more and more ethnically diversified and the manager has to be aware and become adaptive to cultural differences. Furthermore, since the businesses are more and more becoming multinational and global, managers are required to learn new ways of dealing with people in different countries with different cultures and value systems.

- **Conceptual skills**: Conceptual skill is the ability to view the organization as a whole and as a total entity as well as a system comprised of various parts and subsystems integrated into a single unit. This skill is specially crucial for top level executives who must keep the whole system under focus. They must understand the complexities of the overall organization, including how each unit of the organization contributes towards the overall success of the entire organization. This skill generally depends upon an organized thinking process which deals with understanding of various functions of an organization, their interdependence and the relationship of the organization with the outside environment in terms of threats and opportunities.

- **Diagnostic skills**: This skill refers to a manager’s analytical ability where a manager can logically and objectively investigate and analyze a problem or an opportunity and use scientific approaches to arrive at a feasible and optimal solution. It is important however that a manager gets to the root cause of the problem so that the solution is the real and a permanent one.
rather than simply a short-term or a cosmetic one. This skill overlaps with other skills because a manager may need to use technical, human, conceptual or political skills to solve the problem that has been diagnosed.

- **Communicational skills.** Communicational skills are an important component of interpersonal skills and are basic to all other skills and these are important and necessary at all levels of management. A manager’s best ideas will have little impact if they cannot be communicated effectively. Good communication is the foundation of sound management. Proper communication eliminates delays, misunderstanding, confusion, distortions and conflicts and improves coordination and control. All the four communicational skills, namely, writing, reading, listening and non-verbal gestures are important ingredients of successful leadership.

- **Political skills.** Political skill can be described as the ability to get your own way without seeming to be selfish or self-oriented. It is the ability to get your share of power and authority and use it without fear of losing it. It is the most complex of skills in the sense that it is required to establish the right connections and impressing the right people and then skillfully using these connections to your own advantage. Political skill is most important at the middle management level because middle managers always aspire to reach the top levels of management and right connections help in such aspirations.

### 1.4 COMMUNICATION ROADBLOCKS AND OVERCOMING THEM

At every stage of the communication process, 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.

#### 1.4.1 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.

1.4.2 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.

1.4.3 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.
1.4.4 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.

1.4.5 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.

1.4.6 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.

1.5 OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

Modern communication is undoubtedly a complex process involving human beings as well as instruments and gadgets. We have already examined a host
of barriers, both physical and people related, which tend to adversely affect the process of communication. These apart, the process of communication is also influenced by several other factors, which both the sender and the receiver of the communication should take cognizance of. Important factors that affect the process of communication are described in the following paragraphs.

**Conceptual clarity**

The starting point of every communication, as we have seen already, is the existence of an idea or a concept. It is this concept that gets translated into a message and gets transmitted to the receiver. Conceptual clarity is thus a very important factor affecting communication. Whatever be the method adopted, the communication must be clear about what the sender wants to convey. They have to give proper shape to their thoughts and should develop the idea meaningfully. If one is not clear about one’s thoughts and ideas, the message formulation also gets affected. Communication is all about transmission of information and ideas that seek to translate thoughts into action. Improperly conceived ideas translate into poor messages. Well-conceived and well-organized thoughts make for a good beginning of the communication process. This also explains why conceptual skills are given much importance in modern day business.

**Language**

The process of communication is both oral and written. People, however, speak and understand different languages. For both oral and written communication, language becomes the vehicle of thought. Therefore, the sender should ensure that the message reaches the receiver in a language that he/she can understand. As long as the sender and the receiver of the communication speak, write, read and understand the same language, there is direct communication. If not, the communicator will have to resort to translation through an intermediary. The intermediary may be an interpreter or a translator. If the translation or the interpretation is not done properly, the message received would be different from what the communicator intended.

In written communication, the literacy level of the recipient assumes significance. In verbal communication too, the depth of understanding of the spoken language makes a difference. If there are vast differences between the sender and the receiver in terms of mastery over the language and if the sender does not take cognizance of them while sending the message, communication gets affected. Every language has its own vocabulary and the quality of communication is influenced by the word power of both the parties. When the knowledge and level of understanding of the speaker/communicator and the listener/receiver varies significantly, it results in difference in the wavelength. This leads to overhead transmission, i.e., the message goes beyond the comprehension level of the receiver. An example of this is the usage of technical jargon and specialized words or phrases in addressing people who are not familiar with the subject.
Moods and receptivity

Communication becomes purposeful when the communicator shows enthusiasm and the receiver shows receptivity. Both of them are influenced by the moods. The mood of the communicator and the mood of the listener thus affect the process of communication. The mood of the person refers to the person’s state of mind or the inclination and willingness to send or receive the communication. If any one of the parties is disinclined, the purpose of communication will not be achieved. These factors are particularly relevant when the message to be communicated is something important, somewhat complex and not of a routine nature. Moods apart, the level of fatigue has also to be reckoned with. A tired speaker, an overworked writer and a bored listener cannot do justice to the process of communication, however good their intentions may be. Smooth communicators make efforts to ensure that the conditions are right.

Timeliness

Most messages have a time value. Action can follow only if the communication reaches in time. This is pertinent to individuals as well as to business. For example, an invitation card received after the event is of no use. Similarly, an intimation or notice received after the meeting is over does not serve any purpose and also shows the sender in poor light. Timeliness, therefore, is an important factor affecting communication. Proper choice of the mode of communication—courier, telex, fax, telephone and e-mail assumes importance as it helps in achieving timeliness in communication.

A host of physical, psychological, cultural and mechanical factors affect communication. They can be either facilitators or barriers to communication. These include power of expression, clarity, coherence, attentiveness, distance, voice or sound levels, relationship and hierarchy, type and quality of the modes of communication and the skill involved in using them. In an organizational context, the prevailing organizational climate and the communication policy are also important factors affecting communication. Especially when it comes to communicating with the media, several organizations and institutions specifically designate spokespersons and others are discouraged from speaking to the press or media. Any policy that encourages confidentiality, withholding of information, suppression of facts and other such controls would naturally hinder the free flow of communication.

1.5.1 Essentials for Effective Communication

Effective communication calls for coordinated effort. Good communication like any other high-quality output is very much the result of hard work. Good communication does not occur accidentally. It calls for proper planning, understanding of human behavior, choice of physical facilities and mechanical or electronic devices and the organizational context. It is necessary to understand the essentials of good communication and work towards achieving them.
Be clear about the purpose

The first essential for effective communication is to be clear about the purpose of communication. Every communication has an objective. It is a means to an end. One should be clear about what one wants to achieve through the process of communication. The objective of any communication is not just to receive or convey a message. The communicator has to ensure that the message reaches the receiver. Any message that is not backed by a clear and well-developed idea becomes purposeless communication entailing wastage of time and effort. The urge to communicate should be preceded by clarity of purpose. Ask yourself what you want to achieve or accomplish by the communication: is it to impart information, express concern, enlist support, express displeasure or imbibe skills?

The objective may not be one but a combination of these purposes.

Understand the process of communication

Another essential for effective communication is the need to understand how the process of communication works, i.e., the principles and tools of communication. To appreciate the various steps involved in communication in terms of encoding, decoding, transmission, comprehension and feedback, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the mode, channels, types, instruments, methods and barriers relating to communication and the factors affecting it. Good communicators, like good artists, use their tools effectively.

Be clear about your target audience

The intended message cannot bring about the desired result unless it reaches the right person or group of persons. The message should address the target group. For communication to be effective, it should be properly focused. Be it a letter, a speech, a film or a presentation, make sure the receiver is connected with or is relevant to the purpose of communication. Quite often, communication loses its effectiveness because it reaches an unintended audience. Good ideas and messages reaching the wrong persons will end up as an exercise in futility. The next essential step is to develop good communication skills. Effective communication presupposes the ability to communicate under varied circumstances. The skills of communication that need mastering are reading, writing, listening, speaking, body language and presentation. One must be clear about the merits and demerits of various types of communication and which of them is to be used under a given set of circumstances. Each of them is a different skill and requires a conscious effort to develop it.

Be well informed

Communication quite often relates to providing information. The initiator of the communication should, therefore, be well informed about the message he wants to pass on. The initiator should also have the right perspective about the message and be in a position to appreciate the context in which the message
is being communicated. Limited information or limited understanding by the sender naturally limits the sender’s ability to communicate. This happens in an organizational context when the sender of the message is doing so based on incomplete information. People receiving the message often have their expectations about it and the person giving the message should take cognizance of it.

**Plan your communication**

In order to be effective, any communication is to be well planned. The message to be conveyed, the words to be chosen, the action to be sought, the feedback to be obtained, are all the areas that need to be carefully considered. These aspects will have to be evolved properly before deciding on the right choices. While some routine messages can be communicated without advance planning, all important communication in organizations/businesses need organized effort. Inadequate planning can, and often does, result in ineffective communication. Good planning should take note of the target audience and pay attention to their attitudes and expectations, as well as timings.

**Be positive in approach**

Yet another requirement for effective communication is a positive approach and the right mental attitude. The communicator should have faith in the process. He should develop confidence through learning and practice. He should take responsibility for making the communication work. The communicator should learn to overcome barriers and look for positive signals. She should not bring in her own bias. He/she should recognize the power of communication and strive to achieve results through the process. She should not underestimate the reader or listener and develop the skill of dealing with every receiver of communication with respect and understanding. A positive approach begets a positive outcome and contributes to the success of the communication process.

**Avoid extreme feelings**

Extreme and strong feelings are not conducive to effective communication. Anger, depression and frustration adversely impact the thought process and thereby distort what is intended to be conveyed or what needs to be conveyed. A disturbed mind brings out disturbed thoughts and thus distorts communication. While addressing important communications, and reacting to provocative remarks, it is essential to wait till the mind regains its balance and the severity of feelings subsides. It is absolutely essential to realize that quite often the process of communication is irreversible. A word spoken or a letter written in a fit of anger can do considerable damage. This is particularly true in work situations, market places, organizations and business. Restraint pays.

**Be sincere**

Effective communication demands a certain degree of honesty and sincerity on the part of the parties involved in the communication. It is necessary that the
messages are given sincerely and truthfully. There should not be a deliberate attempt to mislead or manipulate the recipient of the message. If the receiver of the message loses faith in the communicator, the process of communication suffers in terms of credibility. Effective communication therefore presupposes sincerity and humility.

**Be consistent**

Communication is mostly a regular process rather than a one-time affair. In personal dealings, in organizational settings and business places, communication takes place almost all the time. The parties involved in the communication quite often are the same. When communication takes place on a regular basis, it is necessary to be consistent. It is necessary not to contradict oneself. There may be scope for modification or correction, but not for contradiction. Further, when different methods of communication are used in conveying a particular message, contradictions have to be consciously avoided. The spoken message should be in tandem with the body language. Non-verbal communication should supplement oral messages.

**Appreciate the time factor**

In any communication, especially in business communication, time is of prime importance. Speed and timeliness contribute significantly to the effectiveness of communication. In today’s world, the value of time is well recognized. Organizations and businesses set goals which have to be achieved within a given time frame. Tasks have to be completed before the allotted deadlines. All communications concerning such goals and tasks will have to appreciate the time factor. Quite often the message that is delayed is wasted. Therein lies the significance of the choice of the channel of communication. The channels selected should be such that the message is delivered well in time.

There is another dimension to the time factor in communication. The process of communication should take just the right time. Long speeches that stretch well beyond the allotted time, lengthy written communication and unusually long films and documents not only test the patience of the listener/reader/viewer, but also tend to lose their force and get diluted in the process. Communication should be in measured doses, since an overdose of even useful and relevant communication may be received without enthusiasm. The time the receiver of the communication allocates for the purpose has to be borne in mind to ensure effective communication. This factor is particularly relevant in today’s context of communication overload.

**Use proper modes and channels**

We have already discussed the various modes, channels and types of communication. The method or type of communication to be used will vary from situation to situation. Effectiveness of the communication will depend on the choice of methods and instruments. There are times when written communication
cannot convey as forcefully as oral communication. There are occasions when a telephone call would be more appropriate than a letter. There may be messages which are important enough to be conveyed through fax rather than by regular mail. Similarly, some messages can go by ordinary mail, some by telex and some others by fax or even e-mail. Make the right choice and repeat the message, when essential. The choice of the wrong channel may delay or dilute the message and hamper its effectiveness.

**Be cost conscious**

The process of communication quite often entails costs. There are direct and indirect costs involved in sending messages. These costs vary depending upon the method of communication and the means of transmission. Since communication in an organization is ongoing, such costs can add up to a substantial amount. The results achieved by the communicator should justify the costs incurred in the process. If not, there is no effectiveness in such communication. Organizations should, therefore, make conscious efforts to make their communication systems not only efficient, but also cost effective through proper evaluation of available options.

**Obtain feedback**

Feedback is another important component of the process of communication. The person communicating the message calls for feedback to reassure himself that the message has reached the target as envisaged. Feedback provides valuable information relating to the time factor, quality of the message, understanding of the receiver and the action initiated. Such feedback helps in evaluating the efficacy and reliability of the types, methods and channels of communication used. Feedback helps in understanding the mistakes committed in encoding and decoding the message and losses in transmission. Mistakes, if any, can be dealt with by undertaking effective corrective measures.

**Avoid communication overload**

To be effective, communication should always be in measured doses. The communicator should take care not to overdo or overstretch the communication. Communication is essentially a participative process, and if not within reasonable limits, the efficacy will suffer. Imagine receiving a 30-page newspaper every day, or sitting through a non-stop 4-hour speech by a single speaker, or participating in a technical workshop from morning till late in the evening. Whatever be the merit in terms of context, the response is more than likely to follow the principle of diminishing returns. Effective communicators learn to limit their communication in line with receptivity and avoid excesses.

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have made an attempt to list out the essentials for effective communication. Since communication is essentially a two-way process, both the giver and the receiver of the message will have to conform to well-defined principles and norms. The spirit of communication is as
important as the modalities. When we talk about leadership qualities and other people-related dimensions in the organizational context, it is the role model type of communication that is being emphasized. Unless one practices what one preaches, words become hollow and communication loses its shine. Effective communication strives to preempt any misunderstanding and accomplish complete and clear understanding.

Check Your Progress

5. Why are technical skills necessary at the lower level of management?
6. Mention any three circumstances under which poor expression is likely to occur.
7. How does moods and receptivity affect communication?

1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The word communication, which has its origin in the Latin word ‘communis’ and ‘communicare’ meaning ‘common, communiality or sharing’ and ‘make something common’ respectively.

2. The last three steps in the communication process are:
   (a) **Step 4** Receiver receives the message and decodes it.
   (b) **Step 5** The decoded message is used or acted upon.
   (c) **Step 6** As a final step, feedback on use or action is sent back to the sender.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Technical skills are necessary at the lower level of management as one moves to higher levels of management, the relative importance of technical skills usually diminishes. This is so because unlike first level supervisors, managers at higher levels have less direct contact with technical operating problems and activities.

6. The poor expression is likely to occur under the following circumstances:
   (a) When a person is ill
   (b) When a person is fatigued
   (c) When a person is under severe stress

7. Communication becomes purposeful when the communicator shows
enthusiasm and the receiver shows receptivity. Both of them are influenced by the moods. The mood of the communicator and the mood of the listener thus affect the process of communication.

1.7 SUMMARY

- Communication 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.

- 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.

- The objectives and functions of communication are inter-related. Communication could have many objectives depending upon the group and context.

- 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 of communication, both internal and external, thus cover multifarious facet of organizational functioning. Within the organization, it covers varied functions such as planning, directing, controlling, coordinating, reviewing, monitoring and staffing.

- The importance of business communication in today’s inter-linked global economy is widely appreciated. Effective communication is at the heart of any business.

- 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 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 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.

- Written communication is another powerful method that takes place throughout the literate world through letters, memos, notes and circulars with the use of typewriters, word processors, telex, fax and stenographers.

- Non-verbal communication has universal appeal and takes place through body language, gestures and postures, facial expression, presence or absence and other such actions.
• Visual communication covers pictures, graphs and charts and is often used as a supplement to other forms of communication. Demonstrations and presentations, which are gaining popularity, come within the ambit of audio-visual communication.

• Each method of communication has its merits and demerits. To ensure effectiveness, it is necessary to evaluate the available options and choose the most appropriate ones.

• There are various types of communication, such as personal, business, internal, external, upward, downward, formal, informal, interactive, mass, global, supportive, social, and grapevine communication.

• An approach to study management is to examine the roles that managers are expected to perform. These roles can be defined as the organized sets of behaviours identified with the position. These roles were developed by Henry Mintzberg in the late 1960s after a careful study of executives at work.

• Managers spend a considerable amount of time in interacting with other people both within their own organizations as well as outside. All these interactions require an understanding of interpersonal relations.

• By virtue of his interpersonal contacts, a manager emerges as a source of information about a variety of issues concerning the organization.

• On the basis of the environmental information received, a manager must make decisions and solve organizational problems.

• All managers need to possess technical, interpersonal, conceptual, diagnostic, communicational and political skills.

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

• Barriers relating to expression result in poorly expressed messages. Lack of conceptual skills results in inadequate or incomplete shaping of the idea.

• Noise is yet another barrier especially relevant to verbal communication. Noise disturbs the flow of communication.

• The process of communication is also influenced by several other factors, which both the sender and the receiver of the communication should take cognizance of.

• Good communication does not occur accidentally. It calls for proper planning, understanding of human behaviour, choice of physical facilities and mechanical or electronic devices and the organizational context.
1.8 KEY WORDS

- **Interdisciplinary Subject:** In this, any person explores and integrates multiple perspectives from different disciplines, sub-disciplines and areas of expertise.

- **Telex:** It is an international system of telegraphy with printed messages transmitted and received by teleprinters using the public telecommunications network.

1.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. State the various definitions of communication.
2. Briefly explain the signs, signals and symbols form of communication.
3. What are the different roles of a manager?
4. Write a short note on the soft skills required by a manager.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Explain the objectives of communication in detail.
2. Compare and contrast the features of oral and written communication.
3. Discuss the various types of communication on the basis of the level at which it takes place.
4. Describe the essentials of an effective communication.

1.10 FURTHER READINGS


1.11 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The meaning, definition, objectives and characteristics of communication
- The process and forms of communication
- The roles of a manager and communication roadblocks and ways of overcoming them
UNIT 2  ORAL COMMUNICATION

Structure

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2.2 Oral Communication: Meaning
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2.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral communication is the exchange of information and ideas through spoken word. It can be directly in person in a face-to-face interaction or through an electronic device such as a phone or radio. The most effective way for businesses to transmit information verbally is through oral communication such as a staff meeting. Oral communication is important for learning and understanding those in your environment. It is a fundamental aspect of learning a language and helps solve problems, quickly exchange information, and convey emotion in a conversation. Listening and speaking skills are used personally and professionally, on a daily basis. In this unit, we will discuss the meaning and principles of oral communication, along with barriers and modes of oral communication. It will also focus on the significance of listening as a communication skill and non-verbal communication.
2.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the meaning and principles of oral communication
- Describe the barriers and modes of oral communication
- Discuss the significance of listening as a communication skill and non-verbal communication

2.2 ORAL COMMUNICATION: MEANING

Oral communication involves the exchange of messages with the help of spoken words. It is the most frequently used form of communication. It may take place through

- Face-to-face contact
- Mechanical and electronic devices

![Oral Communication](image)

*Fig. 2.1 Oral Communication*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) It provides immediate feedback and clarifications. The receiver can immediately ask questions.</td>
<td>(i) It does not always save time and money. Very often meetings go on without results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) It builds up a healthy environment by giving a personal touch to the relationship between the superior and the subordinate.</td>
<td>(ii) It is not always effective since it depends a lot on the attitude of the sender and receiver.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iii) It can be made more effective by supporting it with gestures and demonstrations.</td>
<td>(iii) Limited human memory allows only limited retention of the messages. No record can be maintained.</td>
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*Table 2.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Oral Communication*
2.2.1 Principles of Successful Oral Communication

Since oral communication involves a lot of different types, we will be discussing the principles to be kept in mind in terms of speeches, general speaking and presentations. Any speaker keen on mastering the art of speaking would do well to meticulously follow the following ten commandments:

- **Personality and demeanour**: Even before the speaker opens her mouth to speak, the listeners start their appraisal. Audiences tend to size up the speaker from the speaker’s appearance, attire and posture. The attire should convey the right message. Casual appearance in an otherwise formal occasion should be avoided. Any speaker creates a visual impact, positive or negative through eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures, mannerisms and behaviour. Good speakers cultivate their personality and demeanour consciously so as to make a positive impact. Demeanour refers to bearing, conduct and appearance. It relates to one’s behaviour towards others. The speaker’s demeanour should appeal to the audience. Eyes can be highly expressive. Confident speakers know how to make and sustain eye contact with their audience. Avoiding eye contact may be interpreted by the audience as lack of confidence. Further, eyes can also convey feelings and supplement the verbal message. Face being the index of mind, facial expressions also communicate the speaker’s feelings and intensity. A relaxed and friendly expression helps the speaker connect easily with the audience. And any good speaker must learn to smile. It creates a positive impact. It breaks resistance, if any. Postures and gestures also create an impact on the audience. Posture relates to how one carries one’s body. An erect posture conveys confidence and alertness. A sloppy posture or a bent posture conveys casualness. Gesture refers to any significant movement.

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### Oral Communication

#### NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(iv)</th>
<th>It is time saving and cuts down paperwork.</th>
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<tr>
<td>(v)</td>
<td>It is the most effective tool of persuasion and for resolving conflicts.</td>
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<td>(vi)</td>
<td>It is effective for group interaction.</td>
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<td>(vii)</td>
<td>It is economical both in terms of money and time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(viii)</td>
<td>It is flexible as it provides ample scope to the sender to make himself clear and make amendments unlike written messages which cannot be changed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv) In the absence of recorded or taped messages, oral messages do not have legal validity.

(v) Oral communication is not possible when parties are at distant places and no means of communication is available.

(vi) It is not feasible when the message to be conveyed is very lengthy.
of limb or body. Gesture also includes gesticulation. Speakers can make deliberate gestures by moving their body, face, head or arms as an expression of feeling. Postures and gestures are used by effective speakers to convey enthusiasm, conviction and intensity. Used effectively, they make the speeches and presentations lively, interesting and appealing. Mannerisms and behaviour can also create positive or negative impact. Mannerisms cover individual characteristics and body movements. Avoidable body movements and characteristics such as picking the nose, scratching the ear, feeling the face and such other distractions by the speaker do not go well with audience. Behaviour has to do with the speaker’s response to any stimulus. Good speakers know how to keep their poise and not get agitated or disturbed.

- **Audience connect:** Any speech or presentation is for the audience. Like the reader in written communication, it is the listener or a group of listeners that constitutes the very purpose of the communication. Ultimately, the speech is good or bad depending upon how the audience receives it. Good speakers spare no efforts in learning about their audience. Good speeches are those where the speakers attain the wavelength of their audience. Every speaker, to be effective, should connect with his audience. Audience analysis helps in preparing the speech so as to connect with the audience. If need be, speakers also make it a point to reach the venue in advance and build up a rapport with the audience. Some informal interaction will help the speaker in understanding their expectations. When we refer to connecting with the audience, it is not through the content alone. Contents of the speech should of course be audience relevant. Apart from that, the delivery of the speech should also be audience friendly. The choice of words, the transmission rate, illustrations and stories, amplification of points, use of jargon and the level of interaction would be such as to ensure a proper connect with the audience. Good speakers make improvisations or make modifications to their original plan if they find that they have not assessed the audience properly. Good speakers adapt to their audience expectations. Good speakers are those who earn the attention of the audience from the very beginning and earn the trust and admiration of the listeners through their speeches. Attention of the listeners, it should be noted, does not come about automatically. The speaker should not presume that every group of listeners will necessarily listen with due attention. Today’s listeners often ask, ‘what is in it for me?’ or ‘what do I gain from listening to you?’. Speakers should keep this in mind and answer this often unarticulated question. Speakers should note that listeners’ attention is indeed a hard won reward. Audience connect can happen with effective use of vocal, verbal and visual play during the delivery of the speech.

- **Speech preparation:** Good speakers take pains to prepare their speeches in advance. The time spent on preparation would depend upon the familiarity of the topic, nature of audience and length of speech. Good speeches
are the result of hard work and meticulous preparation. Even the best of
speakers prepare their speeches, although not as elaborately as a beginner.
Elsewhere in the exhibit ‘The long and short of it’, we have noted how
President Woodrow Wilson needed two weeks for preparation when he
had to speak for ten minutes. Much advance preparation is needed if one
has to make a brief yet memorable speech. Good preparation means that
‘the speaker must have his thoughts arranged to form a logically integrated
thought process.’ Always remember the words of wisdom—the better the
preparation, the greater the level of confidence and lesser the nervousness.
Preparation may also mean keeping some short notes, jotting down key
points, figures and quotations and carrying with you to the podium. Even
the best of speakers keep some notes in front of them while speaking. They
act as aide-memoires. Quite often, although the subject is the same, the
audience may be vastly different. A classroom talk on ‘Leadership Qualities’
to a new batch of manager trainees will be very different from a speech on
the same subject to a group of CEOs attending a refresher program in a
business school. The explanations given, quotes and analogies mentioned,
empirical studies and factual details discussed and such other relevant
aspects would vary significantly, both in terms of preparation and delivery.
We have already noted how good speakers add spice to their delivery and
make every effort to keep the audience hooked. Keeping in view the nature
of speech, kind of audience and time allotted, while preparing the speech,
the speaker could gainfully use the following.

- Anecdotes and personal experiences.
- Humorous quotes and statements that make the listeners chuckle or
  smile.
- Relevant quotes from people who matter.
- Rhetorical questions.
- Essential repetitions and summing up.
- Interesting statistics and illustrations.
- Visuals such as charts, graphs and pictures.
- Pauses, eye contacts, silence and audience involvement.
- Voice modulations, speed variations and body language messages.
- Expert opinions and testimonials from specialists.
- Latin, Sanskrit and such other language expressions.

When we refer to business related speeches and presentations, the speaker
will be dealing with a wide variety of audiences. No two groups of audience
are identical. Again, the expectations of the same group may vary from time
to time. That is why it is essential that speaker pitches his or her speech to
the specific audience. Are they young or old, male or female, generalists or
specialists, homogeneous or heterogeneous, small or big, well informed or
otherwise, friendly or hostile? Similarly, are you the only speaker or one of many, are you speaking first or last or in the middle, in the forenoon session or the afternoon session? Would it be better to warm up with the audience and take a friendly approach or better to be formal and keep a distance? All this matters in making your audience connect.

- **Art of speaking:** As observed by the Alcuin of York: ‘The art of speaking is made up of five things: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery.’ Each of these five ingredients is equally important. Invention relates to ideas, creativity and innovativeness. It relates to originality of ideas and conceptual clarity. Regular speakers and experts may speak on the same subject to ten different audiences. Every time they know how to vary the speech and bring in creativity and innovativeness suiting the audience. Similarly, a speaker may be called upon to speak on a subject that is perceived by the audience to be drab and boring. Accomplished speakers know how to make even uninteresting subjects interesting and worthy of attention. Arrangement refers to sequencing and order of presentation. It means avoiding going back and forth and speaking in a rambling manner. Style refers to the stamp of individuality. It refers to a copious supply of words and using them with judgement. It means developing a natural and confident manner of speaking that creates a favourable impression on the listeners. Memory is important especially when the speaker is not consulting any notes. Extempore or impromptu speakers depend much on their memory. While making long speeches, aide memoires or brief notes help in covering all the points in a well-organized manner. The fifth ingredient of the art of speaking consists of delivery. It relates to the actual manner of speaking, which we will be covering in some detail in the following paragraphs.

- **Voice modulation:** Voice modulation determines the vocal impact created by a speaker. Good speakers are well aware of the need for voice modulation. They know how to vary the pitch and intensity of the voice. They also know how to modulate the tone, quality and pace of the voice to suit the content and the force of the message. The tone will be harsh or soft depending upon the situation. The pitch may be high or low. The quality of the voice may be controlled or uncontrolled. The pace may be rapid or slow. The intensity or force will again vary depending upon the message being delivered. All the five features of voice, viz., tone, pitch, quality, pace and force can be varied to create the desired impact. Dull, monotonous voices put off the audience, even when the subject is otherwise interesting. Effective voice modulation helps speakers gain and retain audience attention. Voice modulation makes a big difference to the impact a speaker makes on the listeners. Experts on communication note that even if you have something worth saying, if you express it in a tone or manner that is a turn-off, it guarantees that no one will listen.
6. **Pauses and Punches**: Pauses and punches are to oral communication what full stops and commas are to written communication. Good speakers know how to use pauses and punches for greater effect. Pauses at the right places help in assessing the audience receptivity. Good speakers also use such pauses to review what they have already covered and collect their thoughts about what remains to be covered. While short or brief pauses are acceptable to the audience, unduly long ones detract continuity and focus. Speakers use short pauses to confirm that the audience has understood the message covered so far and may mention how they propose to proceed from that point. Similarly, punches along with appropriate body language facilitate emphasis and reiteration. As Swami Chinnayananda noted, ‘From the platform, when he is delivering, he must be able to punch the ideas into the understanding of the listener.’

- **Listener participation**: Good speeches and presentations necessarily have to be a participative activity. If the speaker goes on speaking, unmindful of audience participation, very little is achieved. Unless the listener pays attention, actively listens and fully comprehends what the speaker is conveying, no speech or presentation can be termed effective. Good speakers, therefore, are keen on ensuring listener participation. They make every effort to keep the audience attentive and engaged. This is done by establishing eye contact, modulating the voice, making gestures, moving around and involving the audience by asking questions. Illustrations, stories and rhetorical questions keep the audience attentive and engaged. The speakers should use every opportunity to elicit responses from the listeners. Questions such as, ‘Are you with me so far?’ or ‘Shall we proceed further?’ or ‘Do you have any questions?’ provide opportunities to the listeners to respond.

- **Summarizing and conclusion**: Effective speakers make it a point to summarize and skilfully re-emphasize the key points at appropriate intervals. Like the emphasis at the end of a paragraph in written communication, in oral communication capturing the essence of the message at frequent intervals ensures clarity of speech. Good speakers draw attention to ‘what we have learnt or noted so far’. At the end of the speech, they conclude by reiterating the essence or high points of their message for clarity. They stress on the important areas and make sure that the message is well received. Closing or conclusion is the last opportunity the speaker has to reach out to the audience. The closing should be strong and the speech should end on a firm note. That leaves a lasting impression.

- **Great delivery**: Delivery relates to the manner in which the message is actually communicated. It is how the speaker says what he or she has to say. Great speakers attach particular attention to various aspects of speech delivery. They practice their delivery and plan their talk. Whatever be the keenness of the audience and the force of the topic, they bring in body language, play with words, use pauses and punches and elicit better receptivity from the audience. They keep the atmosphere lively and charged...
up. Their tone reflects enthusiasm and confidence. Good speakers learn to make their speeches animated and exciting. Listeners enjoy every minute of the speech when there is great delivery. Just as routine or ordinary topics are made interesting by great delivery, very interesting topics are made dull and monotonous by bad delivery. Speaking without giving due attention to various aspects of delivery and ignoring audience response makes any speech tedious and lacklustre. There are speakers who are interesting no matter what the subject is. Similarly, there are speakers who are boring no matter what the topic is. Delivery makes all the difference. When we talk of great delivery, another point worth emphasizing is correct pronunciation. Poor pronunciation can undermine an otherwise great delivery.

• **Positive approach:** Any good communication, be it oral or written, calls for a positive approach. A positive approach in oral communication includes many characteristics. It means speaking without hurting. It means not underestimating the listeners. It means keeping your cool and not getting provoked by anything the listener says or does. Speaking with a positive approach means being considerate, warm and showing friendliness. Good speakers weigh their words and avoid anything that is hurtful and demeaning. They do not make fun of the listeners and shun sarcasm. Sarcasm cuts people and alienates them forever. One wrong word uttered can certainly spoil the otherwise well-delivered speech. Any derogatory references to caste, creed, community, religion or colour and sexist remarks should be scrupulously avoided. Wise cracks or remarks at the expense of somebody else do not always go well with the audience. Good speakers show humility and admit their mistakes and shortcomings, if any. They apologize when they are late or say the wrong things and show their respect to the listeners. They use the right kind of wit and humour. They listen while others speak. They smile and establish rapport with their audience. They do not ever consider the audience to be their adversaries or dim-witted or ignorant persons. Positive speakers do not show arrogance or a know-all kind of attitude. They know that just as they are speakers on this occasion, they would be listeners or a part of the audience on other occasions. They treat their audience with dignity and respect.

**Building confidence**

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?
- 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 oral communication whether it is 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.

2.2.2 Barriers to Communication

As we have already discussed in the previous unit, the barriers to communication or rather communication roadblocks include poor expression, faulty transmissions, indifference and lack of interest, noise, etc. Here, we will further categorize those barriers:

- **Linguistic barriers:** One of the most serious obstacles to successful communication is the language barrier. The most widely used means of communication is language. One of the obstacles to successful communication is the fact that each major region has its own language.

- **Psychological barriers:** Successful communication can be hampered by a variety of emotional and psychological problems. Some people suffer from stage fright, speech problems, phobias, depression, and other issues. Both of these circumstances can be difficult to handle at times and will inevitably limit communication.

- **Emotional barriers:** A person’s emotional IQ dictates how easily and comfortably they can interact. Communication would be better for someone who is emotionally mature. People who allow their emotions to dominate them, on the other hand, will face difficulties.

- **Physical barriers to communication:** The most obvious barriers to successful communication are physical barriers. At least, these barriers are relatively easy to remove. Noise, closed doors, unreliable communication devices, closed cabinets, and other obstacles are among them.
- **Cultural barriers to communication**: As the world has become more globalized, every large office can be observed to have employees from all over the globe. Several core values of society have different meanings in different cultures. Clothes, religions, food, beverages, pets, and general behaviour can vary dramatically from one culture to the other. As a consequence, it is important that we recognize these diverse cultures when communicating.

- **Attitude barriers**: Some people prefer to be alone. They are introverts or people who are socially awkward. Others prefer to be social or clingy at times. Both of these scenarios have the potential to create a communication barrier.

- **Perception barriers**: The same thing is viewed differently by different people. This is a fact that must be taken into account during the communication process. Effective communication requires an understanding of the audience’s perception levels.

### 2.2.3 Conversation Control

Conversation control refers to the ability to listen and respond in a constructive and substantive manner at the appropriate time, enabling participants to efficiently and satisfactorily continue and conclude their conversation with mutual understanding and agreement. Application of conversation control skills in business include:

- Selling and purchasing
- Negotiating
- Interviewing
- Participating in meetings
- Disagreeing without being disrespectful
- Protesting without offending
- Complimentary/praising
- Responding to personal criticism
- Situations in which conversational skills are beneficial are:
  - Convincingly engaging with people in meetings.
  - Dealing with resistance to a proposal.
  - Being able to respond to criticism with self-assurance.
  - Improving interviewing skills.
  - Learning how to easily obtain accurate information.

Negative feedback can be dealt by:

- Show that you don’t question the other person’s good intentions.
- Avoid totally dismissing the other person’s points by using phrases like: ‘You are right about that, however’.
Negative terms should be avoided. Instead of saying, ‘Perhaps you do not know’, try ‘Perhaps you know’.

Some of the conversation control techniques include:
- Recognizing cues and clues
- Using reflection and empathy
- Cultivating a sense of timing
- Avoiding parallel conversation
- Practicing sequential conversation

2.2.4 Reflection and Empathy: Two Sides of Effective Oral Communication

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.

2.2.5 Modes of Oral Communication

There are many different modes of oral communication. Let’s discuss the major modes in this section.

Speaking and speeches

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
Oral Communication

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 long, but may not convey anything worthwhile. Speaking, as we discuss here, is a more subtle art that needs to be understood in terms of its principles and developed with conscious efforts. A good speaker is much more than a good conversationalist.

In any business environment, speeches are of wide variety. They could be formal or informal, private or public, long or short and prepared or extempore. Over a period of time, as they grow up in the organizational hierarchy, people will be required to make all types of speeches. Good speakers learn to deliver speeches for all occasions in a manner appropriate to each of them. That is how they earn the mark of a versatile speaker. They learn how to speak appropriately in meetings, committees, seminars, press conferences, interviews and a host of such situations. Depending upon the occasion, the content, style, delivery and readiness assume relevance. Some occasions call for elaborate and thorough preparation. They are the ones where the speech should be rich in content. There are other occasions where more than the content, confidence and presence of mind come in handy. Different types of speeches include welcome or introductory speech, key note speech, vote of thanks, etc.

Presentations

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.

Since a presentation, like a speech, is also a method of oral communication. All the three aspects relevant to a speech, viz., verbal, visual and vocal dimensions
impact any presentation. A presentation should also be structured like a speech 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.

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.

- Seminars, Workshops and Symposia
- Telephone Talk
- Group Dynamics—Communicating in Teams

Meetings are a part of everybody’s life

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 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.

Seminars, workshops and symposia

Seminars, workshops and symposia are common and popular means of interactive form in modern day business world. These forms if used effectively can play a vital role in the dissemination of knowledge and build-up of skills. They facilitate intense deliberations through participation and interaction in an organized manner.

Seminars relate to any meeting set up for the discussion of one or more topics of interest to groups of persons. Seminars may cover small or big groups and may be held in classrooms or meeting halls or in large auditoriums. They may be organized by institutes of learning or business organizations or chambers of commerce and the like. Seminars may be for a day or longer, ranging from three to five days. Seminars on banking and finance, information technology, agriculture and food processing and business management are just a few examples of interactive business communication.

The main objective of a seminar is to bring together a group of interested people on a common platform for facilitating exchange of views, ideas and developments relating to specific topics. Seminars are generally organized around a particular theme and may include several related topics. They normally include an introductory session, a keynote address, different sessions, panel discussions and concluding sessions. While the specialist speakers and experts make their presentations, the participants interact and benefit from the question-and-answer sessions. Considering
that substantial time, effort and resources are involved in organizing seminars, the seminar organizers, coordinators, resource persons and participants should collectively endeavour to make the deliberations focused and worthwhile.

Workshops are of a similar nature and relate to a course of study or work, especially of an experimental or creative kind. Workshops bring together a group of people working on a particular project or area of interest. Workshops are highly participative in nature as they usually involve hands-on participation. Workshops are conducted in small groups and where attention is given to every participant. Such workshops help in making learning an easy process. Some examples of a workshop could be theatre workshop, carpentry workshop, and horticulture workshop and so on. Workshops normally involve demonstrations and how-to-do tips. Depending upon the background of participants, workshops may be basic or advanced. It is expected that people who attend such workshops learn basic skills on some specific activities.

Symposia refer to the plural of symposium. A symposium is also a conference organized to cover a particular subject in detail, especially relating to an academic subject. One can think of a symposium on renewable energy or distance learning or Vedic mathematics and so on. It is another valuable means of disseminating knowledge.

Telephone talk

Another important facet of oral communication is telephone conversation. With a telephone set on every table in most offices and the presence of mobile phones, it is obvious that phone talks have become an integral part of business communication, and invariably people at various levels have to learn to talk effectively over the telephone. In service organizations like banks, the emphasis nowadays has been on providing services at the doorstep of the customers, and reducing the need for visits to branches and offices. One important means of responding to customer enquiries is through telephones. Tele-banking and tele-contact services are now gaining popularity. Tele-marketing and making sales calls on the telephone are becoming popular, especially in metro centres. It is imperative, therefore, that everyone in the business or any other organization is capable of making effective telephone talks. Even the subordinate staff should be taught telephone manners. The caller at the other end may not know who is responding. Many organizations, therefore, make it a point to train their employees on ‘telephone manners’ and even bring out literature on this topic for the benefit of their staff.

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<th>Check Your Progress</th>
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<td>1. Mention any two disadvantages of oral communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What is a rehearsal?</td>
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<td>3. Mention any three conversation control techniques.</td>
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2.3 LISTENING AS A COMMUNICATION SKILL

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.

In an interactive communication, listening accounts for about 50 per cent of verbal communication. Both the parties keep changing their roles so that objectives of the communication are achieved in full, as intended. If it is an organized speech or lecture, listening should be full-time. That is why it is said that good listening is as much hard work as good speaking. While good listening leads to proper understanding, poor listening can lead to misunderstanding and incomplete understanding.

Are you a good listener? The importance of listening skills in business and work places is often under-estimated. Yet, the fact remains that at work places, on an everyday basis, you will have to listen to other people constantly: to your customers, your superiors, your subordinates and your associates. Good listening creates a positive environment and motivates the communicator. In order to be a good listener, it is necessary to appreciate the listening process and master the listening skills.

Listening attentively and completely is much more than a casual hearing. An attentive listener is the one who hears not just the words the speaker utters, but also the feelings and intent of the speaker. As Jiddu Krishnamurthy notes, an active listener is one who listens to the whole of what is being conveyed, not just part of it. Listening is a comprehensive act that takes place at different levels.

Ronald Adler and Jeanne Elmhorst, the authors of the book, Communicating at Work (McGraw-Hill, New York, 2005) note that listening takes place at four different levels as mentioned below:

- Listening for content
- Listening for feelings
- Listening for intent
- Listening for context
Therefore, listening is a comprehensive exercise where the keen and intent listener tries to listen not just to the content, but also to the feelings as well as intent and concerns of the speaker. Moreover, a good listener is always conscious of the context in which the speaker speaks and makes every effort to interpret the words and the content of the message within the overall context in which the speaker speaks out. Picking up words and interpreting them out of context is obviously bad listening.

2.3.1 Listening Process

More than an act, listening is a process. It is a lot more than hearing. It starts with hearing but goes beyond. In other words, hearing is a necessary but not sufficient condition for listening. Listening involves hearing with attention. Listening is a process that calls for concentration. Hearing refers to the perception of sound with the ear. Hearing is a physical act. One hears a noise, whether one wants to or not. If hearing is impaired, a hearing aid is used. Hearing aids amplify the sound. Listening is more comprehensive than hearing. Listening is done not only with the ear, but also with the other sense organs. While listening, one should also be observant. In other words, listening has to do with the ears, as well as with the eyes and the mind. Hearing is physical, while listening is intellectual, involving both the body and the mind. Listening is to be understood as the total process that involves hearing with attention, being observant and making interpretations. Good communication is essentially an interactive process.

Listening calls for participation and involvement. It is quite often a dialogue rather than a monologue. It is necessary for the listener to be interested and also show or make it abundantly clear that one is interested in knowing what the other person has to say. Good listeners put the speaker at ease. Indifferent and inattentive listeners, on the other hand, disturb the speaker and make it that much more difficult for him or her to reach out with the message. The listener can and should help the speaker in establishing a wavelength through which communication traverses smoothly.

The listening process can be understood best by looking at various words which are associated with listening. These are hearing, decoding, sensing, understanding, comprehending, filtering, absorbing, assimilating, empathizing, remembering and responding. Each one of these plays a role in making listening complete and effective. There is also another set of words which can be associated with the listening process. These are attentiveness, focus, willingness, patience, attitude and concentration. The process of listening, to be effective, should encompass all these. The process of listening involves the following:

- Hearing
- Decoding
- Comprehending
- Remembering
- Responding
Together, these components ensure that the listening part of the communication process becomes meaningful and effective:

**Process Of Listening**

- **Hearing**
  This is the first essential step in listening. It relates to the sensory perception of sound. The communicator expects the receiver to ‘lend his or her ears’. There should be a certain attentiveness or concentration in receiving verbal messages. Hearing relates to receiving the words sent out by the speaker for further processing by the listener.

- **Decoding**
  The next step relates to decoding. This involves sensing and filtering of the verbal messages. Hearing the words apart, other sensory perceptions come into play. Decoding takes place as a conscious exercise. Listening also involves filtering, whereby the message received is classified as wanted or unwanted, useful or otherwise. That which is considered useless or unwanted is discarded. This filtering process is subjective in nature and a person chooses to retain only that which makes sense to him. Sense of appeal and sense of judgment come into play during sensing and filtering the message. The message is thereafter sent to the next process.

- **Comprehending**
  The next level of listening consists of comprehending or understanding. The filtered message assumes a meaning. This activity can also be described as absorbing, grasping or assimilating. The listener has now understood what the speaker has tried to convey. The message received has been heard, sensed, filtered and interpreted. In doing so, the listener has brought into play the listener’s own knowledge, experience, perception and cognitive power. The listener has used not only the body, but also the intellect in grasping the meaning of the message.
The verbal message apart, the non-verbal communication has also been studied and noted.

**Remembering**

This is another important facet of listening. Messages received are meant, quite often, not just for immediate consideration and action, but also for future use. In fact, very often, although the absorption takes place in the present, its use may take place some time in the future. Memorizing the message, therefore, assumes significance. Remembering relates to a process whereby the assimilated message is stored in memory to facilitate future recall.

**Responding**

Response of the listener may take place at the end of the verbal communication or even earlier. When it is intended to provide feedback to the communicator, response occurs towards the end. If however, there is a need to seek clarification or a need to empathize with the speaker, it may take place earlier. This may take the form of prodding, prompting or reassuring that the message is being well received.

### 2.3.2 Types of Listening

All listening is not of the same intensity. Good listening is that which passes all the five steps mentioned above with positive results. Depending upon the extent to which listening becomes effective, it can be classified into three types. They are passive listening, selective listening and active listening.

**Passive listening**

Passive listening refers to inert or indifferent listening. There is no conscious effort to receive and absorb the message. Quite often, passive listening stops at hearing and there is no effort to further process the message. The listener is physically present but is not participating actively in the process of communication. Listening in this instance is insufficient. The message is not absorbed and the passive listener will not be in a position to remember and recall the message at a future date. Passive listening takes place when the listener or receiver is constrained by various physiological and psychological factors. It may be fatigue, ill health, disregard for the speaker or lack of interest in the subject. It also occurs when the speaker fails to meet the receiver’s wavelength. Passive listening leads to misunderstanding on the part of the communicator who would be under the impression that the receiver has grasped the message as intended.

**Selective listening**

Another type of listening that is quite common is selective listening. Listening is done partially or selectively. People listen to only that which they want to listen to. Under this type of listening, the receiver keeps tuning in and out. Attention is not focused. The listener lets the mind wander and the message is not thoroughly
ORAL COMMUNICATION

SELECTIVE LISTENING TAKES PLACE WHEN THE RECEIVER IS NOT IN A POSITION TO CONCENTRATE, OR CONSIDERS THE SPEAKER TO BE NOT SO WELL INFORMED ON CERTAIN MATTERS, OR THE RECEIVER CONSIDERS HIMSELF TO BE BETTER INFORMED THAN THE COMMUNICATOR OR SUCH OTHER REASON WHICH HINDERS ACTIVE LISTENING.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is the most desirable type of listening. In this case, the listener makes conscious efforts to listen attentively, decode the message and absorb it through a participative process. The receiver of the messages shows regard for the speaker, concentrates on what is being conveyed, motivates and prompts the speaker, shows empathy and makes it easy for the speaker to meaningfully deliver the message. When we talk of listening skills, what is meant is the ability to listen effectively. When one listens actively, one not only comprehends the message, but is also in a position to remember and recall the same as and when required.

In his celebrated book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey highlights the imperative need for sincere listening in order to be an effective communicator. He identifies listening as one of the 7 habits of highly effective people. He stresses that an effective communicator is one “who seeks to understand, then to be understood”. He says that all of us typically seek to be understood. Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. People generally listen with the intent to reply, to control and to manipulate.

Having said that, Stephen Covey draws attention to the highest form of listening, namely, empathic listening. Empathic listening, he says is listening with an intent to understand. Empathic listening or listening with empathy means listening that gets inside another person’s frame of reference. Stephen Covey explains that in empathic learning, you listen with your ears and, more importantly, with your eyes and with your heart. By this, you listen for feeling, for meaning and for behaviour. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, and so you feel.

2.3.3 Ten Commandments of Listening

There are certain well-accepted essentials for good listening. More specifically, there are ten commandments, credit for which is given to an anonymous writer. These ten commandments of listening are as follows:

- **Stop talking:** The first commandment of good listening is to stop talking. One cannot be talking and listening attentively, at the same time. The speaker cannot speak and get the message across if the listener continues to talk. Stop talking and start listening.

- **Put the speaker at ease:** The speaker can really organize his thoughts and convey them meaningfully only when put at ease. The listener does so through several positive signals such as sitting down, turning to the speaker and observing.
• **Show you want to listen:** This calls for a positive attitude on the part of the listener. The listener should indicate preparedness. The listener should make it clear that the listener is attentive and is keen to receive the message the communicator wants to convey. This may be done by appropriate body movement, right posture or by keeping the pen and pad ready.

• **Remove distractions:** Communication between the sender and receiver cannot progress if there are distractions. The receiver of the communication should show interest in listening, just as the speaker is interested in speaking. The listener has to remove distractions, if any, such as shut the door, switch off the cell phone and remove objects, if any, placed between the speaker and the listener so that body movements can be observed.

• **Empathize with the Speaker:** An important requirement for effective listening is that the listener should show empathy or proper understanding. The speaker may not be perfect and may have shortcomings. As a listener one should learn to put oneself in the speaker’s shoes.

• **Be patient:** This is an important attribute of good listening. A listener should not only be attentive, but also patient. One should wait for the speaker to complete the talk. The listener should refrain from making frequent interruptions, should avoid making derogatory remarks, cynical comments and distracting gestures. Every speaker has a train of thought, and gestures of impatience on the part of the listener may disturb the delivery of the speech.

• **Hold your temper:** Good listening also calls for the right temperament. The listener may not appreciate what the communicator is conveying or the listener may decide that the speaker is factually incorrect. That does not give the listener a right to instant reaction.

• **Refrain from argument and criticism:** This is not an uncommon happening. Occasions are many when the listener picks up an argument with the speaker. The listener tries to challenge the speaker and criticize the person. Any such argument or criticism would be detrimental to the flow of communication. The speaker and the listener have their respective roles to play and the listener should not make any verbal attack on the speaker. If there are many listeners or a large audience, any such act will deprive them of the benefit of the speaker’s message.

• **Ask questions and elicit more:** While negative interventions and interruptions, as cited above, should be avoided, positive interventions by the listener are desirable. The listener should ask appropriate questions at the right opportunity to elicit more information. In fact, any speaker would welcome this, for it not only provides the feedback, but also provides an opportunity to clarify the message and correct misconceptions, if any. In structured sessions in particular, the speaker provides for a question and answer session for facilitating greater understanding. By asking the right type of questions, relevant to the speaker’s topic, the listener helps himself
as well as the other listeners to get those details which are pertinent, but which the speaker missed out or did not cover adequately.

- **Stop talking again:** This aspect is so essential to the process of listening that it is repeated again as the tenth commandment. For speaking to progress smoothly, talking should be stopped not only at the beginning, but also throughout the message delivery process. Stop talking and keep listening.

It is evident that these ten commandments help the speaker in coming out with the best and making communication very effective. The speaker gets motivated and responds very enthusiastically to such appreciative listeners.

### 2.3.4 Importance of Listening Skills in Business

Good listening, as we have seen already, is an art that can be cultivated. A good listener is generally interested in what the speaker has to convey. A good listener knows the art of getting much more than what the speaker is trying to convey. A good listener knows how to prompt, prod, persuade but not cut or interrupt what the other person has to say.

Development of listening skills at various levels is very essential for business success. Every business has its stakeholders and there is communication taking place all the time among the organization and the stakeholders, and within the various groups connected with the business. If communication within the organization has to be purposeful, people need to listen to each other attentively. Hearing without listening is often a common refrain needing attention. Progressive organizations encourage the people within to learn and adopt active listening.

We have entered an information era and modern day organizations are described as information processing units. There is so much that is happening that needs to be shared with the clients as well as other interested parties. Similarly, today’s worker is being described as the ‘knowledge worker’. People have to constantly upgrade their skills and knowledge, whatever be the business or profession they are associated with. While reading is undoubtedly an important source for skill and knowledge upgradation, active listening too can make a significant contribution.

One area where listening skills are becoming particularly relevant concerns the service industry, such as banking and financial services. In these organizations, businesses involve person-to-person interactions. Products are sold and services are provided over counters and through customer outlets. Quite often, the product is not standardized, but tailor-made to suit specific requirements. These organizations are making relentless efforts to know customer requirements and respond to them. There is a growing concern in every business to offer value added services. This means that people at the counters, the sales force, the people who make customer contacts and everyone concerned with understanding customer needs should actively and sincerely listen to the customer. Organizations which make a conscious effort in this regard are described as ‘listening organizations.’

Behavioural skills and attitudes that focus on attending to the customer are far
more relevant today than in the past. Training programs that cover these groups of service providers are focusing on various communication skills including listening.

Good listening skills are particularly relevant in dealing with customer complaints and employee grievances, in hearing the voice of dissent and while seeking suggestions from customers and employees. Suggestions will be more forthcoming when people in authority lend a patient ear. The customers of today seek reassurance that they are being heard. When they come up with a complaint, the minimum that an organization has to ensure is that there is someone there who lends a patient ear to what the complainants have to say. Moreover, in most organizations, there are meetings and other interactive forums where business-related issues are discussed and issues resolved. All these can be effective only when people learn to listen.

Listening to customers

Customers constitute an important segment of stakeholders for any business. They are the very purpose of any business. If there are no customers, there can be no business. The importance of customers gets further accentuated in a competitive environment. Goods manufacturers and service providers have to make conscious and continuing efforts to seek out and retain customers. In service organizations like banks, customers visit branches and offices and seek delivery of service. In such businesses, services are delivered in person. Service delivery takes place through person-to-person interaction. During all such interactions with customers, whether in person or over the telephone, listening attentively becomes crucial. The manager in the cabin, the officer receiving the telephone call and the frontline staff at the counter, everyone should listen to the customer actively and attentively.

People good at listening are good service providers and poor listeners often fail to provide good service to the customers. Good listening is a must to ensure satisfactory service delivery. Be it a request, or a complaint, or a suggestion or a piece of advice, listening to the customer is a must. Unless the listening is active and purposeful, response to the customer cannot be effective. Quite often, customers are dissatisfied because people in service organizations do not bother to listen and respond. When the customer speaks, the service provider should listen with patience and attentiveness. Indifferent listening results in customer annoyance and customer complaints. In recent years, business organizations have been setting up call centres which not only receive calls, but also make outbound calls. Employees working in call centres work full time receiving and making calls. Needless to say, attentive listening is a must in call centres.

Check Your Progress

4. What are the levels at which listening takes place?
5. State any three commandments for good listening.
6. Mention an industry where listening skills gain special significance.
2.4 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication refers to the communication which occurs with the help of words. A verbal contract, therefore, suggests an oral contract and a verbal evidence denotes oral evidence. By its very definition, non-verbal communication refers to the type of communication that does not use words. It is thus a very prominent third type of communication as distinct from both oral and written communication. It takes place extensively at various levels—individuals, family, society and organization.

Non-verbal communication is ancient and constitutes the earliest type of communication. It developed much before oral communication and languages came into being. Gestures, postures, signals and facial expressions were obviously among the earliest means of communication used by the pre-literate man. The language of the hearing impaired which uses signs and gestures perhaps evolved from these ancient methods of communication. Another significant dimension of non-verbal communication is its universality. Unlike verbal communication, which has limitations in terms of reach, the non-verbal communication is universal in appeal. Words have boundaries, whereas non-verbal communication, which does not use words, transcends linguistic and cultural barriers and boundaries. The language of love and compassion is widely recognized as a universal language. Mother Teresa, for example, was a communicator par excellence who ‘spoke’ the universal language of love and compassion that was understood all over the world. Thesilentmoviesofthebygoneeraareanotherexampleofeffective non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication is closely associated with the power of observation. The receiver of the communication should be in a position to see, hear and even feel the communicator. The receiver of the communication should be in a position to clearly see the face, the gesture, the tone, the dress, the appearance and also hear the voice of the communicator. Since it is through observation, non-verbal communication may be both intended and unintended. It is intended when the communicator tries to convey certain messages to the target group through conscious gestures, postures, attire and other forms of body language. Non-verbal communication is unintended when the body language, posture or appearance of the communicator is interpreted by the receiver, even though it is not done consciously. A sloppy posture or a casual attire may be interpreted as lack of seriousness, although the speaker may be quite intent.

Although non-verbal communication can take place independent of other methods of communication, it often goes along with oral or verbal communication by the speaker. Used appropriately, body language and non-verbal messages can supplement and complement the oral message.

Together they can make the message loud, clear and forceful. On the contrary, if they are not consistent, the message that comes out would be ambiguous or garbled. When a speaker speaks, it is not just through words,
but through the speaker’s personality as well. Similarly, although interpreting each non-verbal message provides a useful clue, listeners or the target audience should not jump to conclusions, but should, instead, take note of the totality of the messages communicated. It takes conscious effort and keen attention on the part of both the communicator and receiver to appropriately convey and interpret the message. The required degree of awareness and consciousness on the part of both is of particular relevance for the effectiveness of non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication can have an overwhelming impact. There are myriad ways in which the body and its associated actions communicate messages, both intended and unintended. Non-verbal communication takes place at various levels when parts of the body, actions, mannerisms, behaviour, attire and demeanour tend to communicate. In other words, non-verbal communication takes place through the following objects, actions, and expressions:

- Body language—facial expressions, eyes, voice
- Postures/Gestures—carriage, leaning, shrugging, nodding
- Attire
- Appearance
- Handshake
- Personal Space
- Timing
- Example
- Behaviour
- Smile

Body language is a well-developed discipline of study. Behavioural psychologists and researchers have studied, over the years, individuals and groups of people in business organizations and have developed the art of interpreting each one of the above as a means to ensuring effective communication.

Social scientists use the term ‘paralanguage’ to describe a wide range of characteristics or expressions based on voice, facial expressions, or actions. A paralinguistic study relates to interpreting communication that takes place through other than words. It relates to studying the tone of voice and expressions on one’s face and actions. Paralanguage relates to ‘how’ something is said, rather than ‘what’ is said.
2.4.1 Branches of Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication covers several branches of study including kinesics, oculesics, haptics and proxemics. A brief description of each of these subcategories, with particular reference to business communication, is given below:

- **Kinesics:** It is the most well-known branch of non-verbal communication. It relates to a systematic study of various aspects of body language. Kinesics covers the study of body movements, gestures, facial expressions, appearance, etc. A well trained person, given to close observation, can meaningfully interpret body movements, facial expressions, etc. in the context of business communication. Superiority, inferiority, likes, dislikes, trust, confidence, earnestness, and a host of such feelings and emotions can be inferred from a close study of the person with whom we are interacting. Such interpretations when done properly will be of great help in negotiations, interviews, counselling, interactive sessions, and the like.

- **Oculesics:** It is a branch of non-verbal communication that relates to the study of eye movements and eye contact. Human eyes being highly expressive, they often convey a lot to the keen observer. Eye movements are described as glaring, dominating, avoiding, etc. Similarly, the type of eye contact that takes place between individuals is also significant. The extent and type of eye contact that takes place when people meet conveys attention, respect, confidence, alertness, and so on.

- **Haptics:** It relates to the science of touch. It is a branch of non-verbal communication covering the study of touch. Haptic communication is the means by which humans and animals communicate through the medium of touch. Haptics that relates to touch and proxemics that relates to space are closely related. In business and personal communication, together they have much to convey. Touch can convey trust, encouragement, reassurance, dislike, etc. Any business communicator should, however, know the difference between a good touch and a bad touch, and avoid the wrong kind of touch.

- **Proxemics:** It is a kind of non-verbal communication that deals with personal space. It relates to the distance that people need to maintain in their personal, social, official and public interactions with the other people. Proxemics overs various types such as intimate distance, personal distance, social distance, and public distance. Most people in business value their personal space and feel discomfort, and even angry, when their personal space is encroached upon. In the business and organizational context, especially while interacting with business associates and superiors, personal space should be respected.

When we talk of these aspects of non-verbal communication, we need to note that there are cultural variations associated with them. Different cultures attach different meanings to body movements, gestures, touch, spacing, and eye contact and while communicating in an inter-cultural context, the differences should be kept in view.
2.4.2 Body Language

There are many ways in which a human body expresses itself. These expressions may be obvious or subtle, conscious or unconscious and complementary or contradictory. It is said that bodies don’t lie and body language, therefore, tells the truth. If you are tired, you can’t sit erect; if you are sleepless, your eyes tend to shut or if you are bored, you tend to yawn. Skilful communicators can express themselves in many ways as long as they are conscious of the fact that various parts of the body may intentionally or otherwise carry a message. Similarly, a keen listener or an observer carries and makes sense from the body expressions as well. Facial expressions, eye movements and the state of the eyes and the variety and intensity of the human voice can and do convey different meanings. Innocence, anger, wonder, shock, grief, terror, indifference, seriousness, friendliness, approval, disapproval, exasperation and many other feelings can be expressed through body language. In some professions, where the facial and body expressions are important, they are consciously cultivated. Let us consider drama artists, movie stars, actors and people in show business. The success of their performance often depends on their ability to cultivate and display a wide range of expressions as the situation demands.

The head, the gait, the walk, the carriage are also various facets of body language. Ramrod straight, bolt upright, hunchback, stoop and slouch are some of the words associated with the body and its movements. Nodding of the head to convey consent or approval and vigorous shaking of the head to convey dissent are also common.

Facial expressions

It is said that the face is the index of the mind. The thoughts of the mind and the feelings of the heart often find expression on the face. There are people who are good at reading facial expressions. Good communicators, whether they are speakers or listeners, learn to read and interpret facial expressions. Some of the idiomatic phrases used in connection with facial expression are as follows:

- The face that launched a thousand ships
- To make a face
- The smile of acknowledgement or recognition
- To carry a wooden expression
- To carry a mask on one’s face

The facial make-up, if any, can also be subjected to interpretation.

Eyes

The eyes are indeed the most expressive part of the human face. The eyes of a person are often said to tell a tale. In fact, the eyes are the most commonly described part of the body. The feelings of the heart quite often find expression through the eyes. In the expression of love, affection and sincerity the eye contact...
becomes crucial. Romantic literature, over the years, has seen copious references to the eyes. Some of the words and expressions used in common parlance while reading the eyes are as follows:

- Twinkle in his eyes
- Furtive glance
- Eyes emitting fire
- Worried look
- Sad look
- Wary look
- Unsettling stare
- Hurried glance
- Cold stare

Since eyes are considered to be highly expressive, there is considerable significance attached to the presence or absence of eye contact. In legal cross-examinations, in counselling sessions, in negotiations and other such business situations, the quality of eye contact comes in for particular scrutiny. In dealing with customers at the counter, in facing interviews for recruitment and promotion, in making presentations and in sales talk, eye contact assumes considerable significance.

Voice

Human voices, through their variations, convey different meanings. Speech or oral delivery reaches the audience better through voice modulation. Voice modulation refers to the adjustment or variation of tone or pitch while speaking. Voice has many characteristics and the social scientists have studied these characteristics in detail and given generally accepted interpretations to them. It is generally understood that when studied closely, voice has the following distinct features, viz.:

- Tone—harsh, soft, whisper
- Volume—loud, soft
- Quality—controlled, uncontrolled
- Pace—rapid, slow
- Force—intensity
- Range—wide, narrow
- Articulation—precise, imprecise
- Rhythm—smooth, jerky
- Resonance—resonant, thin

Voice-related features are particularly relevant in spoken communication, either face to face or through telephone.
2.4.3 Postures and Gestures

Yet another component of non-verbal communication relates to postures and gestures. Posture refers to the carriage, state and attitude of body or mind. Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body and a deliberate use of such movement as an expression of feeling. Gesture can also be understood as a step calculated to evoke response from another person or to convey intention. Gesture includes gesticulation. Like other aspects of body language, posture and gesture should also be read along with the verbal and other messages. The posture of a person may be described as erect or upright or reclining. Posture may be physical or mental. Gestures in human interfaces are many and varied. People read and interpret gestures and hence these are extremely important in the organizational context.

Nodding, shaking of head, smiling, patting the back, putting the hand over one’s shoulder, clasping hands, shrugging, touching, frowning, scowling, blinking, yawning and crossing and uncrossing of legs are among the various types of physical actions and gestures that are used to convey meanings and messages and are likewise interpreted by others receiving the message. The message conveyed through these actions can be both positive and negative, and therefore, the communicator has to be quite conscious of his actions. Again, to be effective, these postures, gestures and actions have to complement the spoken word. If not, the communication results in contradiction and confusion.

Postures, gestures and actions are of much significance in the organizational context. Understood properly, they can be of great help in conveying the right message. Ignored, they can cause considerable unintended damage and misunderstanding. In a meeting where the chairman is addressing, or a promotional interview, or even when an important customer is being attended to, people concerned should be conscious of their body movements and actions. They should convey the proper message that they are both physically and mentally alert and responsive. A smile at the wrong time may be taken as a sneer and, therefore, may irritate a person. Slouching, yawning, swinging of arms and legs and such other actions which give a message of indifference and carelessness will have to be scrupulously avoided in all serious business-related and organizational interactions. In the organizational context, leaders and good communicators make effective use of gestures like a smile, a touch and a pat on the back. They come in very handy for motivation, morale building and clearing misapprehensions.

2.4.4 Attire, Appearance and Handshake

Attire, appearance and handshake are other facets of body language that are subject to interpretation by the audience or the people with whom one interacts.

- **Attire:** Attire or dress is another important aspect of non-verbal communication. The way a person dresses is often subjected to much interpretation. Attire proclaims a person. The dress a person wears, besides announcing him or her, creates the first impression. In business organizations the world over, the attire of a person has come to acquire much significance.
Formal, informal or casual dressing conveys different meanings. Important and ceremomial occasions normally call for a formal dress. Organizations, in fact, very often have their own unwritten dress code that is well understood and scrupulously followed. A person addressing an important meeting, making an important announcement, receiving dignitaries or making an appearance at a high-level conference or a court of justice has to wear a formal dress or a dress that is not interpreted as casual wear. Any breach of this unwritten code is likely to dilute the effectiveness of the communication. The dress one wears should be in agreement with the occasion.

- **Appearance**: Physical presence and appearance of persons play a key role in the process of communication. The way one looks and presents oneself indicates the importance one attaches to one’s presence or participation. A dishevelled look as evidenced by disorderly hair, untidy, ruffled or unkempt appearance, suggests indifference or casualness. Any person who is serious about what he wants to convey, especially in a formal setting, tries to appear so. In modern society, people have the habit of judging others by their appearance. While there may be exceptions, generally a person keen on conveying a serious, business-related message has to make a positive impression in terms of appearance. People tend to prejudge a speaker through his attire and appearance even before he starts speaking. When people speak and interact in business and organizational context, they speak not merely with their words but with their total personality.

- **Handshake**: It is now well accepted, especially in metropolitan and urban environs, that people greet each other and introduce themselves to one another with a handshake. It is a common form of greeting and introduction among both men and women. Since a handshake is seen as a type of nonverbal communication, it is very essential that it is done properly. Like the other aspects of body language, handshakes are also varied, and each one of them has certain interpretations. Given below are some descriptions and interpretations:

  - A firm handshake—The right way, shows confidence and keenness.
  - A limp handshake—Indicates that the person is not very sure of himself, suggests an inferiority complex.
  - A clasp—Using both the hands, suggests high degree of warmth or respect.
  - A vice-like grip—A tight grip which makes the other person uncomfortable suggests some kind of aggressiveness and dominance.

  A good communicator is aware of what each type of handshake stands for and ensures that the most appropriate one is used. A limp handshake by a person in authority may be interpreted to mean that the person is not keen on further communication or interaction. Further, when a businessman meets a businesswoman, it is appropriate to let her make the first move, when he is not very sure of the proper way of greeting.
2.4.5 Personal Space

Personal space or the space between persons during their interactions with each other is another segment of non-verbal communication. Physical distance between persons can indicate familiarity and closeness or otherwise. People who are close to each other tend to keep minimum distance whereas strangers and people who are not on very friendly terms with each other maintain physical distance. In a hierarchical context, while peers move close to each other, subordinates maintain a certain distance from their superiors. Similarly, the poor person refrains from going close to a rich person. In ancient societies, besides economic factors, class, community, colour, profession, rank, education and other such factors constituted the basis for physical space. All these factors are relevant for the proper understanding of the spatial non-verbal language. The British, particularly, respect such spatial considerations. Not only the length of space, but even the physical position has its own significance. Front seats and special seats, as we all know, are occupied by relatively senior and more important persons. When peers are in conversation, or speaking on the telephone, the subordinates normally wait at a distance awaiting the signal to approach. On the contrary, when the subordinates are in conversation or speaking on the telephone, the superior moves close and often shows his impatience.

The spatial distance people maintain as a part of their hierarchical positions is also referred to as power distance. However, such attitudes towards organizational authority vary from culture to culture. Countries where such power distance is observed include India, Philippines, Mexico and France. In these countries, the subordinate employees stand at a distance while speaking to their seniors in the hierarchy. However, power distance, is non-existent in countries like the USA, Singapore and some European countries like Denmark.

Research shows that there is another aspect of personal space and distance that is worth noting, which relates to the content of the message. Accordingly, when a person who expects an unpleasant message or views the person conveying the message as unfriendly, then the recipient takes a somewhat distant position. On the other hand, when the recipient expects a good news or perceives the communicator to be friendly, then he or she bridges the gap. Whether it is in an organization, or in a social context, personal space has its own significance, which one has to appreciate so as to make communication effective.

2.4.6 Timing

Timing is another means through which non-verbal communication takes place. Who comes first, who sits first, who gets up first and leaves first are all actions of non-verbal communication. Generally speaking, the subordinates, the invitees, the students and the participants arrive early and occupy their seats in advance. They are expected to do so. On the other hand, the teachers, the speakers, the superiors, the special invitees and the chief guests generally arrive a little later. They are not made to wait. Similarly, in any meeting, the senior-most person or the chief sits first, speaks first, gets up first and leaves before the others. When it comes to public and
other formal functions involving the heads of state and other dignitaries, speakers are seated as per protocol. For example, the governor of a state is the last to speak while all other speakers get to speak before him. Looking at the watch is another aspect of time-related communication. The superior looks at the watch to suggest his displeasure when the subordinate arrives late. The listener looks at the watch frequently to give the message to the speakers that their time is over.

Time management has come to acquire great significance in modern day business management. It is well recognized that as business organizations pursue their multifarious goals as per clearly laid out time schedules, time management holds the key to success. In the organizational context, the efficiency or otherwise of an organization is judged by the importance people concerned attach to actions such as:

- Whether the person is in time for an appointment
- Whether a person who has come on time for an appointment is kept waiting
- Whether the meetings and functions start on time
- Whether the speaker keeps to the allotted time.
- Whether the telephone is picked up as soon as it rings.

Progressive organizations ensure that the value of time is well appreciated. Indifference to time schedules, on the other hand, suggests a sloppy work culture.

### 2.4.7 Examples and Behaviour

The way in which one conducts oneself and behaves in the process of communication is another very forceful facet of non-verbal communication. Actions convey messages more forcefully than words. People expect others to practice what they preach. Preaching without practicing would sound hollow. It is said that examples are far more effective in communicating intentions and concerns than words. ‘Do as I say, not as I do’ does not carry conviction. The example set by the teacher, the father, the superior and the leader either reinforces or contradicts the verbal message. Talking about cost control without being frugal may not be very effective. Asking others to work hard without setting an example in that regard dilutes the message. Before expecting one’s staff to be polite and courteous to the customers, the manager should set an example by being polite and courteous.

Behaviour refers to manners, conduct or treatment shown by a person towards others. People tend to interpret behaviour. One talks about childish behaviour, responsible behaviour and dignified behaviour. Behaviour is governed by thoughts as well as feelings. The qualities of head and heart decide the behaviour of a person under given circumstances. Sometimes the mind or a rational approach dominates behaviour. There are also occasions when the heart or emotions take an upper hand. The behaviour of people gets closely watched by others in social, organizational and business interactions. People in organizations tend to imitate their superiors in behaviour and action. Superiors who communicate through personal example and deeds communicate effectively
and carry conviction. Great leaders recognize the power of example and behaviour and use them for effective communication.

### 2.4.8 Smile

A smile is a very potent form of facial expression. It opens the doors to communication. A natural, pleasant smile carries great significance in establishing and sustaining human relationships, be they in a family, society, community or a business organization. The significance of smiling is beautifully brought out in the saying, ‘You are never fully dressed unless you wear a smile.’ Smile speaks the language of love, compassion, sincerity, courtesy, confidence and dependability. A smile emits positive signals. All the same, it is also true that all smiles are not genuine. Wry or artificial or platonic smiles convey messages quite contrary to those of natural and pleasant smiles. A smile should be well intended and not sarcastic. In making sales calls and presentations, in interacting with teammates and in every such transaction, a smile can create a favourable impact and earn goodwill. In the service industry, the sales force is specifically taught to cultivate genuine smiles and smile liberally in their day-to-day transactions with colleagues and customers.

### 2.4.9 Organizational Body Language

Like individuals, organizations too have their own body language. It is said that physical facilities in a business organization constitute the first step in communicating with the customers and visitors. As such, an organization ‘expresses itself’ through the following features:

- Design and layout
- Office arrangements
- Space management
- Distance and locations
- Colour statements
- Imagery

Each one of these, by design or otherwise, conveys a certain meaning or impression to every visitor.

**Design and layout**

The structure of the building, the design of the counters, the layout of the office, all convey a message. People talk about solid and imposing structures, conservative and modern designs and nowadays, eco-friendly buildings. Every business or profession carries a certain impression and the design or the layout quite often reinforces it. Whether it is a bank, hospital or a department store, there is a pattern that becomes evident. For a long time, till recently, bank buildings and banking halls in UK and Europe were known for their conservative and imposing structures. Designed to impress the elite sections of society, in terms of physical appearance, they were more awe inspiring than inviting. The early banking halls exhibited aloofness and carried a forbidding atmosphere. The solidity of the
structures, so to say, reflected the security of the funds deposited by the affluent public. The advent of mass banking and retail focus have, however, brought about a friendly and inviting look to bank branches. Every business strives to create a certain ambience that conveys a positive message about itself. Service organizations like banks are taking care to be seen as friendly and accessible. Branches and automated teller machines (ATMs) even provide ramps so that people with physical disability find them accessible.

**Office arrangements**

Businesses have their own offices, outlets, stores and such other physical centres where work is done, business is transacted and interactions take place. Seating arrangements, sign boards and name plates, lighting, access and exit, visitors lounge are to be decided keeping in view employee comfort and customer convenience. Under manual environments, office layout and arrangements had to facilitate efficient paper or file movement. Under computerized conditions, lighting, dust-free environment and cabling have to receive attention. When employees work at a stretch for long hours, it is very essential that office arrangements and physical facilities are congenial. Similarly, as far as the customers are concerned, customer counters constitute the face of the business and the people at large judge them by this face. Design, layout and physical arrangements have to be well planned so that the people concerned perceive them to be not only operationally convenient, but also pleasant.

**Space management**

Business organizations are commercial entities. Governed by the profit motive, they are always under pressure to optimize their resources and cut costs. Given this scenario, space management or efficient utilization of available space assumes significance. While not wasting space, business organizations should ensure that their offices and outlets are not cramped for space. Many businesses have front offices and back offices and these have different specifications. There should be adequate lung space for the employees and customers. To give a positive message, businesses should also demonstrate their concern for people, especially women, children and the elderly persons. For example, offices frequently visited by senior citizens should, as far as possible, be located on the ground floor, so that they do not have to climb stairs. Similarly, there should be adequate parking space so that visitors do not have to walk long distances. Given the spiralling rentals and real estate prices, space management becomes a challenging task.

**Distances and locations**

Distances and locations too assume significance in the process of communication. Unreasonably long distances between two connected departments and offices, for example, do not convey a positive message. Other things remaining the same, lesser the distance, more frequent is the communication. Proximity facilitates effective communication. When the need for communication between any two groups is frequent, as far as possible, they should be located in proximity to each
other. Another noteworthy feature concerns location. The location of an office, a functionary, a department or unit is also subject to interpretation. There are also perceived and generally accepted status symbols. An executive floor to house the offices of general managers or presidents, an executive floor or lift or passage for the chairman or chief executive and such other location-specific messages are also prevalent in certain business organizations. When a person is elevated and occupies those offices, the person is seen to have ‘arrived.’ Distances and locations also convey another message, i.e., accessibility. There are offices with an easy access and there are others where the access is restricted.

**Imagery**

Business organizations in a highly competitive environment are very particular about their image—whether it is positive or negative, friendly or otherwise. There is a constant effort on the part of businesses to see that a good image is built up and sustained. Imagery includes pictures and photographs and refers to the image that one conjures up at the mention of the name. Imagery is the language that produces pictures in the minds of people reading or listening. Communication becomes effective when the mention of a name evokes a favourable picture—friendly, efficient or dependable. Signs, symbols, logos and emblems should help convey the right message.

**Colour statements**

Like flowers, it is possible to ‘say it with colours’. Colours too make their own statements. Different colours communicate different feelings.

- White—serene, sober, peaceful
- Red—passion
- Green—growth, brightness
- Blue—competence
- Grey—strength
- Black—dark, serious, mysterious

Colours convey boldness and aggression, conservatism, tranquillity, quiet efficiency or loudness. Businesses which are keen on effective communication ensure that the colours they use for their offices and buildings as well as the colours for their personal use do not conflict with the other messages brought out. The signboards, interiors, uniforms, ties, stationery, vehicles and such other items which are in the public eye should be consciously designed to make the right colour statements.

From the above paragraphs, it is evident that there are many ways in which an organization communicates with its stakeholders and other public. People add up all these features and form their judgments—efficient, laid back, friendly or robust. It is to be remembered, however, that these interpretations and judgments are constantly changing. That which was considered flashy and bold yesterday...
may not be so today. Competition, changing lifestyles, advancements in science and technology bring in an element of dynamism to the process of non-verbal communication. Banks, railway platforms, government offices, supermarkets, petrol stations, theatres and a host of other businesses take extra care to present themselves as friendly places. Since communication is goal oriented, all such efforts are directed at making the right statements.

Check Your Progress

7. Define a paralinguistic study.
8. How can a limp handshake by a person in authority be interpreted?

2.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The disadvantages of oral communication are:
   (a) Limited human memory allows only limited retention of the messages.
   (b) In the absence of recorded or taped messages, oral messages do not have legal validity.

2. 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.

3. Some of the conversation control techniques include:
   (a) Recognizing cues and clues
   (b) Using reflection and empathy
   (c) Cultivating a sense of timing

4. The listening takes place at four different levels as mentioned below:
   (a) Listening for content
   (b) Listening for feelings
   (c) Listening for intent
   (d) Listening for context

5. The commandments for good listening are:
   (a) Stop talking: The first commandment of good listening is to stop talking. One cannot be talking and listening attentively, at the same time. The speaker cannot speak and get the message across if the listener continues to talk. Stop talking and start listening.
   (b) Put the speaker at ease: The speaker can really organize his thoughts and convey them meaningfully only when put at ease. The listener does so through several positive signals such as sitting down, turning to the speaker and observing.
(c) **Empathize with the speaker:** An important requirement for effective listening is that the listener should show empathy or proper understanding. The speaker may not be perfect and may have shortcomings. As a listener one should learn to put oneself in the speaker’s shoes.

6. One area where listening skills are becoming particularly relevant concerns the service industry, such as banking and financial services.

7. A paralinguistic study relates to interpreting communication that takes place through other than words. It relates to studying the tone of voice and expressions on one’s face and actions. Paralanguage relates to ‘how’ something is said, rather than ‘what’ is said.

8. A limp handshake by a person in authority may be interpreted to mean that the person is not keen on further communication or interaction.

### 2.6 SUMMARY

- Oral communication involves the exchange of messages with the help of spoken words. It is the most frequently used form of communication.

- Even before the speaker opens her mouth to speak, the listeners start their appraisal. Audiences tend to size up the speaker from the speaker’s appearance, attire and posture. The attire should convey the right message.

- Any speech or presentation is for the audience. Like the reader in written communication, it is the listener or a group of listeners that constitutes the very purpose of the communication.

- Good speakers take pains to prepare their speeches in advance. The time spent on preparation would depend upon the familiarity of the topic, nature of audience and length of speech.

- As observed by the Alcuin of York: ‘The art of speaking is made up of five things: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery.’ Each of these five ingredients is equally important.

- Good speeches and presentations necessarily have to be a participative activity. If the speaker goes on speaking, unmindful of audience participation, very little is achieved.

- Delivery relates to the manner in which the message is actually communicated. It is how the speaker says what he or she has to say. Great speakers attach particular attention to various aspects of speech delivery.

- The barriers to communication or rather communication roadblocks include poor expression, faulty transmissions, indifference and lack of interest, noise, etc.

- Conversation control refers to the ability to listen and respond in a constructive and substantive manner at the appropriate time.
- 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.

- 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.

- Listening attentively and completely is much more than a casual hearing. An attentive listener is the one who hears not just the words the speaker utters, but also the feelings and intent of the speaker.

- More than an act, listening is a process. It is a lot more than hearing. It starts with hearing but goes beyond. In other words, hearing is a necessary but not sufficient condition for listening.

- Depending upon the extent to which listening becomes effective, it can be classified into three types. They are passive listening, selective listening and active listening.

- The first commandment of good listening is to stop talking. One cannot be talking and listening attentively, at the same time.

- An important requirement for effective listening is that the listener should show empathy or proper understanding. The speaker may not be perfect and may have shortcomings. As a listener one should learn to put oneself in the speaker’s shoes.

- While negative interventions and interruptions, as cited above, should be avoided, positive interventions by the listener are desirable. The listener should ask appropriate questions at the right opportunity to elicit more information.

- If communication within the organization has to be purposeful, people need to listen to each other attentively. Hearing without listening is often a common refrain needing attention. Progressive organizations encourage the people within to learn and adopt active listening.

- During interactions with customers, whether in person or over the telephone, listening attentively becomes crucial. Whether it is the manager, officer receiving the telephone call, or the frontline staff at the counter, everyone should listen to the customer actively and attentively.

- By its very definition, non-verbal communication refers to the type of communication that does not use words. It is thus a very prominent third type of communication as distinct from both oral and written communication.

- Non-verbal communication is closely associated with the power of observation. The receiver of the communication should be in a position to see, hear and even feel the communicator.
• It is essential to note that what a person says, together with the body language of that person creates the total impact. If they are consistent, they strengthen and reinforce the message and if they are inconsistent and contradict each other.

• Non-verbal communication covers several branches of study including kinesics, oculesics, haptics and proxemics.

• There are many ways in which a human body expresses itself. These expressions may be obvious or subtle, conscious or unconscious and complementary or contradictory. It is said that bodies don’t lie and body language, therefore, tells the truth.

• Yet another component of non-verbal communication relates to postures and gestures. Posture refers to the carriage, state and attitude of body or mind. Gesture refers to any significant movement of limb or body and a deliberate use of such movement as an expression of feeling.

• Attire, appearance and handshake are other facets of body language that are subject to interpretation by the audience or the people with whom one interacts.

• Personal space or the space between persons during their interactions with each other is another segment of non-verbal communication. Physical distance between persons can indicate familiarity and closeness or otherwise.

• Timing is another means through which non-verbal communication takes place. Who comes first, who sits first, who gets up first and leaves first are all actions of non-verbal communication.

• It is said that examples are far more effective in communicating intentions and concerns than words.

• Behaviour refers to manners, conduct or treatment shown by a person towards others. People tend to interpret behaviour. Behaviour is governed by thoughts as well as feelings.

• A smile is a very potent form of facial expression. It opens the doors to communication. A natural, pleasant smile carries great significance in establishing and sustaining human relationships, be they in a family, society, community or a business organization.

• Like individuals, organizations also have their own body language. It is said that physical facilities in a business organization constitute the first step in communicating with the customers and visitors.

### 2.7 KEY WORDS

• **Oral communication:** It is the exchange of information and ideas through spoken word.

• **Listening:** The total process that involves hearing with attention, being observant and making interpretations.
• **Non-verbal communication**: It refers to the type of communication that does not use words.

• **Aide-Memoire**: It is a French word, meaning an aid to the memory, especially a book or note.

• **Emblems**: It refers to an object or symbol that represents something.

• **Conservatism**: It means the disapproval of new ideas and change.

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## 2.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the advantages of oral communication?
2. State the different barriers to communication.
3. What are the different types of listening?
4. How does personal space figure into non-verbal communication?
5. Briefly explain the features of organization through which it expresses itself.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the principles of successful oral communication in detail.
2. Describe the different modes of oral communication.
3. Explain the components of the process of listening.
4. Discuss the meaning of different branches of non-verbal communication.
5. Evaluate the different facets of body language highlighting their significance.

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## 2.9 FURTHER READINGS


M. Selvam 2013 Quality Management, Lakshmi Publications, New Delhi

Besterfield, H. 2018 Total Quality Management

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## 2.10 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The meaning and principles of oral communication
- The barriers and modes of oral communication
- The significance of listening as a communication skill and non-verbal communication
UNIT 3 MEETINGS

Structure

3.0 Introduction
3.1 Objectives
3.2 Ways and Means of Conducting Meeting Effectively
   3.2.1 Planning a Meeting
   3.2.2 Meeting Process
   3.2.3 How to Lead an Effective Meeting
   3.2.4 Writing Agenda
   3.2.5 Minutes of Meetings
   3.2.6 Evaluating Meeting
   3.2.7 Web Conferencing Case Study: A Special Meeting of the Executive Committee
3.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
3.4 Summary
3.5 Key Words
3.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
3.7 Further Readings
3.8 Learning Outcomes

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In general, a meeting is a group of people who come together to discuss or make a decision about something. It refers to people gathering to address a problem, an issue, or a unique situation. In the communication method, it is a useful and valuable tool. Meetings allow several people to communicate face to face at the same time. In this unit, we will discuss the ways and means of conducting meeting effectively, along with the meeting process and writing agenda. It will also focus on the significance of minutes of meetings and evaluating meeting.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the ways and means of conducting meeting effectively
- Explain the meeting process and writing agenda
- Discuss the significance of minutes of meetings and evaluating meeting

3.2 WAYS AND MEANS OF CONDUCTING MEETING EFFECTIVELY

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.

3.2.1 Planning a Meeting

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

Following aspects need to be considered 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, and provide glimpses of the issues involved. 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 invitees 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 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 units, 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 for refreshments and rest room visits. At the same time, frequent and long breaks may hinder effective deliberations and come in the way of continuity of deliberations. 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.

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 of 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

- Confirming that the meeting notice and all the sets of background papers have reached all the members and invitees.
- Ascertaining the participation of the chairperson and the members, and the availability of the quorum.
- 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.
- Refreshments and catering as are appropriate to the meeting have been arranged.
• Checking flight arrivals, room bookings and conveyance for the chairperson and others wherever required.
• Reminding the local and other members about the time and venue of the meeting.
• Ensuring that the table items for the day’s meeting, if any, are put up.
• Briefing the chairperson and other key members about the issues to be taken up at the meeting.
• 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.
• Entrustment of responsibility concerning the recording of minutes or proceedings.
• Timely intimation of postponement, cancellation or change of venue.
• Changes to be effected in the composition of the members or participants and special invitees.
• Reminding the chairperson, if need be, about the priority and urgency of various items which have to be necessarily taken up.
• Probable dates for the next meeting.
• 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.

3.2.2 Meeting Process

After planning the various aspects of a meeting and drawing up the agenda, the next stage lies in actually conducting the meeting. This includes opening the meeting, starting the discussion, developing the discussion and concluding the meeting.

The chairperson starts the meeting with apologies for his absence followed by his approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. He should restate the purpose of the meeting. If the agenda has not been circulated before, then it should circulated next. Give members time to go through it. Take up the items on the agenda one by one. Breaking the ice and setting the ball rolling is the responsibility of the chairperson. There are several ways of getting the discussion started. The chairman can start by addressing the meeting and giving views on the item of the agenda. He can give reference to some source like a policy document or report. The chairperson can call upon the person responsible for the particular agenda item to give his points. This is followed by the other members joining in with their contribution towards the issue being discussed. The chairperson needs
to steer the discussion back on course in case it goes on to irrelevant issues. The chairperson, from time to time as well as at the end of the discussion on each item, needs to summarize the discussion.

Conclude the meeting on a positive note. Ensure that there are no more ideas that are forthcoming and that an acceptable solution has been reached by viewing the issue from all relevant angles. A follow-up is essential to ensure that the decisions taken during the meeting are implemented. The minutes of the meeting take care of this aspect. The minutes also mention the specific responsibilities assigned by name, making the task of accountability and follow-up easier.

**Basic structure of meetings**

The basic structure of a meeting is as follows:

- Use the agenda as a planning tool.
- Circulate the meeting agenda well in advance.
- To run the meeting, keep control, take note of the agreed-upon outcomes, actions and responsibilities, and take notes.
- Write and circulate all notes in the form of minutes, especially those related to action and accountability.
- Follow up on the actions and responsibilities agreed upon.

**Role of the chairperson**

The chairperson is the key person responsible for the successful conduct of a meeting. Inefficiency on his part may result in a wastage of time and resources with the meeting reaching no fruitful conclusion. The chairperson should take care that he does not monopolize the meeting except when the purpose of the meeting is to give information. Some personal characteristics of an effective chairperson include the ability to think objectively and clearly, good listening skills, a friendly disposition and the ability to maintain one’s calm even when the situation gets heated up. The duties of the chairperson include the following:

- Planning the meeting, drawing the agenda and overseeing the arrangements for the meeting
- Keeping the meeting within time limit, maintaining order and preventing any drifting from the topic
- Ensuring that the business of the meeting proceeds in the sequence of the agenda
- Studying in detail the various aspects to be discussed which include facts relating to the topic and the needs of the meeting
- Making everyone aware of the objectives
- Setting a positive tone for the meeting by creating an atmosphere which encourages healthy participation from the members
Meetings

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Self-Instructional Material

• Facilitating the proceedings towards the ultimate attainment of the pre-decided objectives by questioning, clarifying misunderstandings, providing information and summarizing

Role of the secretary

The secretary too plays an important role in organizing and running the meeting. He should be well aware of the objectives, rules and procedures of the meeting. The duties of the secretary include the following:

• Assisting the chairman in fixing the date, time, location and agenda of the meeting
• Taking notes during the meeting
• Preparing a draft of the minutes of the meeting for the approval of the chairman
• Despatching meeting notifications, agenda, minutes, and so on
• Making administrative arrangements for the meeting

Role of the members

The members are the prime players in a meeting and their cooperation and contribution are essential for the effectiveness of the meeting. The members of the meeting are not merely participants; they too have certain duties. These include:

• Contributing ideas, opinions, views and suggestions based on their knowledge and experience
• Keeping oneself well informed about the meeting by studying in detail the agenda, additional reports or other related matter
• Respecting and following the rules laid down by the chairperson
• Listening actively and attentively
• Cooperating and giving support to fellow members
• Arriving at the meeting punctually

3.2.3 How to Lead an Effective Meeting

For meetings to run smoothly and efficiently and to derive maximum benefit from them, certain guidelines can prove useful. These include:

• Always have a clear purpose; otherwise, it is better not to have the meeting at all.
• Decide the issues that are to be included for discussion in the meeting and their relative priority. Depending on their importance and urgency, they are quite different and need to be treated in different ways.
• Consider the time required for the various items rather than arbitrarily deciding the length of the meeting. Allocate a realistic time slot for each item. Keep the timings realistic—usually things take longer than you think.
• Decide the date of the meeting well in advance.
• The key to a successful meeting is keeping control. One can keep control by sticking to the agenda, managing the relationships and personalities and concentrating on outcomes.
• As a chairman, politely suppress the over-zealous and encourage the nervous.
• Follow the instructions and requests of the chairperson.
• Take care of your body language. For good body language, you must:
  o Sit straight
  o Face the speaker
  o Look attentive
  o Make adequate eye contact with the speaker
  o Nod at appropriate junctures
• Bad body language is reflected through negative actions such as:
  o Sitting outside the group
  o Avoiding eye contact
  o Folding your arms
  o Clicking pens
  o Shaking legs
  o Holding your head in your hands
• Take notes as you go, recording the salient points and the agreed-upon actions, with names, measurable outcomes and deadlines.
• Do not be late for the meeting.
• Do not interrupt others when they talk.

3.2.4 Writing Agenda

The agenda is a list of items which are to be dealt with during the meeting. The agenda provides a framework for the meeting and ensures that no item is left out. Agendas may be thought of as a planning and control device for meetings. An agenda for a meeting communicates important information, such as the topics for discussion, the presenter or discussion leader for each topic, the sequence in which the various items will be dealt with and the time allocated for each topic. An agenda contains the following information:

• Exact place and date
• Time for starting the meeting
• Names of expected attendees
• Objective of the meeting
• Issues to be discussed
Meetings

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- Approximate indication of time for each item
- Any specific preparation required by the members
- Documents containing any information that needs to be provided to the members, attached with the agenda

![Agenda for Sales Meeting](image)

Fig. 3.1 A Sample Agenda

Advantages of a good agenda

The advantages of a good agenda are as follows:

- It ensures that all issues are covered and no issue is left out.
- It ensures that a proper sequence is followed.
- It informs the members on what will be dealt with.
- Since members are made aware of what will be discussed in the meeting they can prepare accordingly and this leads to greater effectiveness of the meeting and also saves time.
- It provides guidelines for the time allocated for each item and hence minimizes wastage of time.

Steps for creating a good agenda

The following are the steps involved in creating a good agenda:

- Send an e-mail stating that there will be a meeting, the goal of the meeting as well as administrative details such as when and where it will be.
• Ask those invited to accept or decline the meeting. Make it clear that once they have accepted the meeting, they are expected to attend.
• Ask those participants requesting for an agenda item to be discussed in the meeting to contact you no less than two days before the meeting with their request, and to inform you about the amount of time they would require to present it.
• Once all of the agenda requests have been submitted to you, summarize them in a table format with the headings—Agenda Item, Presenter and Time. It is your responsibility to ensure that each agenda item is directly related to the goals of this particular meeting.
• Send the agenda to all the meeting participants the day before the meeting with a reminder of the meeting goals, location, time and duration. At this time, ask the presenters if they are happy with the order in which they will be speaking and the amount of time they have been allocated.
• The most important part of creating an effective agenda is to follow it during the meeting.

Agenda guidelines

The guidelines for preparing an agenda are as follows:
• The agenda should not be vague. Each item should be explained clearly with no scope for ambiguity.
• Clearly specify who is expected to contribute to which item.
• It may be helpful to circulate some additional information with the agenda.
• Put an approximate indication of the time for each item.
• Ensure the items are in a logical sequence.
• ‘Any Other Business’ at the end of the meeting can be avoided if a draft of the agenda is circulated in advance of the meeting Ask for any other items for consideration. Otherwise this creates at times a free-for-all session that wastes time.
• Attach labels if possible, such as ‘For information’, ‘For decision’, ‘For action’ to each of the agenda items.
• Review the items to make sure that not too many items have been scheduled in too short a time.

3.2.5 Minutes of Meetings

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.

- The name of the organization.
- The date, time and place of the meeting.
- Periodicity and nature of the meeting.
- The Presiding Officer or Chairperson of the meeting.
- The members present and/or absent. Leave of absence granted. Changes, if any, in the composition of the Committee/Board.
- A reference to the previous meeting and the approval of the minutes.
- 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.
- 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.

3.2.6 Evaluating Meeting

Out of all the measures taken to schedule, organize, and attend a business meeting, the most strategic work can very well occur after the physical meeting has finished. You must be able to assess the outcomes of meetings, follow up on unresolved action items, and schedule better meetings in the future as a meeting leader. Every meeting is a process, and assessment is the final step in the process. A detailed review of four main ‘performance’ factors: meeting outcomes, meeting procedure, participation/tone, and next steps is required for an effective post-meeting evaluation.

Relevant assessment questions must be answered (per factor) while the evaluation is carried out, and these questions will be used to quantify and analyze overall meeting performance. The aim is to see if any of the essential needs and aspirations were met:

- Were the meeting’s outcomes productive and as required?
- Was the meeting well-organized and carried out?
- Was the meeting’s tone and level of participation positive and productive?
- Were all follow-up acts properly defined, recorded, and tracked?

It’s time to put the findings to use as “lessons learned” after all evaluation factors and variables have been considered and “performance” has been evaluated. Lessons should be used to change the way meetings are arranged, planned, conducted, and recorded (including the preparation of meeting materials and minutes) in the meeting context.

3.2.7 Web Conferencing Case Study: A Special Meeting of the Executive Committee

Web conferencing is a broad term that refers to a variety of online conferencing and collaboration programs, such as webinars (web seminars), webcasts, and web meetings. In general, Internet technologies, especially TCP/IP connections, allow web conferencing. Real-time point-to-point communications as well as multicast communications from one sender to multiple receivers can be possible with services. It allows users to exchange data streams of text-based messages, audio, and video chat across geographically separated locations at the same time. Meetings, educational events, seminars, and presentations are examples of web conferencing applications. Now, we will examine a case study relating to the use of web conferencing to conduct meetings.
**Case study: A special meeting of the executive committee**

Despite the unprecedented times of COVID-19 pandemic, local authorities still need to deliberate and make decisions about the future of their localities, enable democratic participation from applicants and residents, maintain momentum on major developments in their boundaries while adhering to social distancing and new government regulations during the COVID-19 emergency. This case study will set out a notable example of UK local government under which committees have piloted virtual meetings using various web conferencing platforms.

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, Adur and Worthing councils have begun preparing to run council meetings online under new Government regulations to ensure democracy is transparent. The team has selected Zoom as the video conferencing platform because it has a professional level of functionality, familiarity with users, and resilience for a high volume of attendees. The team commissioned an audit of technical capability of all councillors to establish which devices they had access to, cameras and microphone capability, Wi-Fi and general connectivity. This allowed the team to formulate a solution that suited a wide range of users.

The council established a project group with representatives from digital, HR, Legal and Democratic Services. The group is compiling an end to end process document that will cover how to run these meetings from preparation to voting in sessions to public participation. Zoom has been selected for the meetings as it provides user-friendly functionality around chairing meetings (in particular the raise hand, background, private message functions) while for the public who do not wish to contribute will be able to watch a YouTube live stream of proceedings. Councillors will vote via a traditional roll call, having each member in turn cast their vote for, against or abstain. In order to prepare councillors, the digital team has run training sessions with 1 to 1 coaching on how to prepare technology for the meetings and ensure that they become familiar with the roles and processes in Zoom. They have also provided councillors with tips and tricks to ensure they do not encounter connectivity issues.

**How is the new approach being sustained?**

As of 7 April 2020, the team has hosted a test run with 25 officers and members from various councils assuming different roles in the council meeting proceedings in order to streamline the platform and processes. The team aim to carry on their training sessions with members and officers to ensure everyone has the skills and knowledge to confidently participate. Pre-registered public question speakers will also have access to coaching on the technology if they would like it to ensure they are able to hold their members and council to account.

**Lessons learned**

It is important to survey and audit with officers and members in order to fully understand your technical capability. Using the latest collaboration software and
audio-visual equipment that suits your context is extremely beneficial. Running personal 1 to 1 training sessions for councillors and officers ensures longevity and acceptance for this new form of technology.

## Check Your Progress

1. Mention any three purposes of meetings.
2. State any three duties of the chairperson with regards to a meeting.
3. List any three advantages of a good agenda.
4. Define a resolution.
5. Name the four main ‘performance’ factors required for an effective post-meeting evaluation.
6. What do you mean by web conferencing?

### 3.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. In the everyday business world, meetings are conducted for the following purposes:
   (a) Sharing, exchanging and evaluating information
   (b) Discussing complex issues and solving problems
   (c) Obtaining periodical updates – weekly, monthly, quarterly meetings

2. The duties of the chairperson include the following:
   (a) Planning the meeting, drawing the agenda and overseeing the arrangements for the meeting
   (b) Keeping the meeting within time limit, maintaining order and preventing any drifting from the topic
   (c) Ensuring that the business of the meeting proceeds in the sequence of the agenda

3. The advantages of a good agenda are as follows:
   (a) It ensures that all issues are covered and no issue is left out.
   (b) It ensures that a proper sequence is followed.
   (c) It informs the members on what will be dealt with.

4. 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’.

5. A detailed review of four main ‘performance’ factors: meeting outcomes, meeting procedure, participation/tone, and next steps is required for an effective post-meeting evaluation.
6. Web conferencing is a broad term that refers to a variety of online conferencing and collaboration programs, such as webinars (web seminars), webcasts, and web meetings. In general, Internet technologies, especially TCP/IP connections, allow web conferencing.

### 3.4 SUMMARY

- 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.
- With the advent of technology, meetings in the corporate world are not necessarily face to face. While such meetings are indeed quite ubiquitous and commonplace, we also have meetings in which people are not necessarily in one room.
- 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.
- 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.
- Agenda is the list of items to be taken up for discussion during the meeting. It provides the reason for calling a meeting.
- 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.
- The convenor of the meetings will have to take responsibility for the success of the meetings. It would be desirable to maintain a checklist of items relevant to various stages, i.e., before, during and after the meeting.
- After planning the various aspects of a meeting and drawing up the agenda, the next stage lies in actually conducting the meeting.
- The chairperson is the key person responsible for the successful conduct of a meeting. Inefficiency on his part may result in a wastage of time and resources with the meeting reaching no fruitful conclusion.
- The secretary too plays an important role in organizing and running the meeting. He should be well aware of the objectives, rules and procedures of the meeting.
- The members are the prime players in a meeting and their cooperation and contribution are essential for the effectiveness of the meeting. The members of the meeting are not merely participants; they too have certain duties.
- For meetings to run smoothly and efficiently and to derive maximum benefit from them, certain guidelines can prove useful.
• The agenda is a list of items which are to be dealt with during the meeting. The agenda provides a framework for the meeting and ensures that no item is left out.

• 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.

• Web conferencing is a broad term that refers to a variety of online conferencing and collaboration programs, such as webinars (web seminars), webcasts, and web meetings.

3.5 KEY WORDS

• Meeting: It is a group of people who come together to discuss or make a decision about something.

• Agenda: It is a list of items which are to be dealt with during the meeting.

• Minutes: It is a summary or record of what is said or decided at a formal meeting.

• TCP/IP: It stands for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol; it is a set of standardized rules that allow computers to communicate on a network such as the internet.

• COVID-19: It is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. It is caused by infection with the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus strain.

3.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. List out the items relevant to the planning of a meeting.
2. Write a short note on the meeting process.
3. Why are minutes of meetings significant?
4. How can meetings be evaluated?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the aspects that need to be considered before the meeting.
2. Explain the guidelines to lead an effective meeting.
3. Discuss the steps and guidelines for creating a good agenda.
4. Evaluate the case study for a special meeting of the executive committee using web conferencing.
3.7 FURTHER READINGS


Websites

local.gov.uk

3.8 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The ways and means of conducting meeting effectively
- The meeting process and writing agenda
- The significance of minutes of meetings and evaluating meeting
UNIT 4 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Structure
4.0 Introduction
4.1 Objectives
4.2 Effective E-mail and Email-Etiquettes
4.3 Writing Business Reports
   4.3.1 Essentials of Good Report Writing
   4.3.2 Structuring the Report
   4.3.3 Note-taking and Summarizing Skills
   4.3.4 Writing Style
4.4 Writing Business Proposals
   4.4.1 Project Proposals
   4.4.2 Request for Proposal (RFP)
4.5 Business Letters
   4.5.1 Essentials of a Business Letter
   4.5.2 Parts of a Business Letter
   4.5.3 Layout of a Business Letter
   4.5.4 Kinds of Business Letters: Inquiries, Orders and Replying to Them, Sales Letters, and Job Application Letters
4.6 Writing Effective Memos
   4.6.1 Format of Writing Memos
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4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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4.9 Key Words
4.10 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
4.11 Further Readings
4.12 Learning Outcomes

4.0 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. 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. It has become necessary to keep abreast with such developments, appreciate their advantages and use them for improving the effectiveness of business communication and customer, public and employee relations. In this unit, we will discuss the concept of business communication by understanding its different aspects like email-etiquettes, writing business reports, and proposals, along with the different kinds of business letters including inquiries, orders and replying to them, sales, and job application letters. It will also focus on the writing of effective memos and principles of writing memos.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the email-etiquettes, writing business reports, and proposals
- Explain the different kinds of business letters including inquiries, orders and replying to them, sales, and job application letters
- Discuss the writing of effective memos and principles of writing memos

4.2 EFFECTIVE E-MAIL AND EMAIL-ETIQUETTES

When it comes to sending business related emails, the rules of good writing are very much relevant. Just because emails are easy to send, due diligence relevant in business writing should not be overlooked. Emails do constitute business communication, although the transmission of the message takes place through the internet mode. Rules of good writing are to be followed. Following should be avoided:

- Grammatical errors
- Punctuation mistakes
- Lengthy sentences and paragraphs
- 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 email messages too. The degree of formality in sending emails would vary depending upon the status and relationship of the sender and the recipient of the letter. Email communication does not permit informal and casual approach when the business relationship is formal and official.
Addressing E-mails

Of ‘Dear’ has seen some controversy. The advent of email 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 emails. 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 emails, Sincerely, Cordially, Regards, Best Regards, etc. would be appropriate.

Use of Lengthy Documents

Email provides for sending not only messages but also files and lengthy documents. When such lengthy reports and documents have to be sent through the email, they are invariably sent as ‘attachments’. Sending lengthy documents by way of email 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 email.

Caution while Sending E-mails

Emails 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.

Responding E-mails

E-mails are speedy communication. Anyone receiving an email 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 email received, as a matter of business ethics, due care should be taken while forwarding emails. Any such forwarding should be strictly need-based and any confidential information should not be forwarded indiscriminately. While acknowledging emails received, do specifically acknowledge the attachments, if any.
4.3 WRITING BUSINESS REPORTS

Report writing is, in a sense, the ultimate in business communication. It calls for a considerably higher level of writing skills. Reports are of various kinds, varying in terms of complexity and size. Reports are such a common feature that people in organizations, businesses and institutions, at various levels, are called upon to not only read related reports, but also write or associate with the preparation of the reports. It is desirable, therefore, that anyone who is keen on developing varied business communication skills acquires a good insight into the art of report writing. What is a report? English dictionaries cover several interpretations of the word ‘report’. These include, bring back account of; state as an ascertained fact; tell as news; narrate or describe or repeat especially as eyewitness and relate as spoken by another. While each of these interpretations has its relevance in the context of report writing, the most appropriate one would be, ‘account given or opinion formally expressed after investigation or consideration’. In other words, a report refers to information that has been carefully gathered and logically presented. A report is a document that presents an account of what one has learned or done.

Reports are of various types and, in fact, come in endless variety. They could be big or small, individual or group, routine or special, formal or informal, internal or external, interim or final. An illustrative list of various kinds of business reports is presented below:

- Routine reports such as monthly report, performance report, review report and progress report.
- Research reports, survey reports and special reports.
- Enquiry reports, audit reports and investigation reports.
- Status reports and progress reports.
- Sales reports.
- Confidential reports.
- Information reports and Analytical reports.
- Feasibility reports.
- Industry surveys and Marketing reports.
- Technical reports.
- Directors’ reports.
- Annual reports.
- Committee reports.

Viewed from another angle, reports can also be classified as either individual reports or group/committee reports or interim and final reports. While individual reports may be drafted or written by the person concerned, other reports submitted by study groups, working groups and committees are written with the help of
a specialized team or a secretariat. Further, whenever the subject coverage, or
terms of reference are such that fact finding and detailed presentation is likely to
take a long time, interim reports are submitted by the groups or committees. Each
of these types of reports has its own characteristics and the report writer should
learn to present the report in its appropriate format. Some of the routine reports
such as review report, progress report, survey report, sales report or credit report
may even have a regular printed format in organizations which call for them on
a frequent or periodic basis. As far as the other types of reports are concerned,
the report writer, in consultation with the authorities concerned, should structure
the report to bring out all relevant facts and figures in their proper perspective.

**4.3.1 Essentials of Good Report Writing**

As noted earlier, each kind of report has its characteristics. An enquiry report or
a survey report is essentially a fact-finding report and should bring out the facts
clearly. A directors’ report, on the other hand, is the detailing of the developments,
or the progress relating to the business organization during a particular period.
A committee report, however, may not only bring out facts and figures, but also
cover the alternative viewpoints expressed by the members, and also the final
recommendations made by the committee. Notwithstanding these features specific
to the reports, we may take note of certain features relevant to any report writing
as stated in the following paragraphs.

**Issue in perspective**

The first essential for any good report is to bring out the issue in its proper
perspective, duly emphasizing the pros and cons. Be it a progress report, a survey
report, an analytical report or an enquiry report, the subject should be presented
in an unbiased and objective manner. Both the positive and negative aspects of
the issues studied should be covered in the report. The report writer should make
conscious efforts to keep out any bias or exaggeration while stating facts and
incidents, especially in the enquiry and investigation reports.

**Authoritative facts and figures**

Reports are sought as a fact-finding measure. The report writer should ensure
that the facts and figures quoted in the report are authentic and reliable. Very
often, the facts and figures quoted are from primary data sources and are taken
on the basis of personal enquiries or surveys specially conducted for gathering
information. The data quoted in the report are likely to be made use of by several
other individuals and agencies who will gain access to the report. It is also very
likely that major business-related decisions will be taken on the basis of details
mentioned in the report. Even when the data quoted are taken from secondary
sources, care should be taken to see that the sources are reliable and cross-verified.

**Maintain a judicial approach**

The report writer should keep to measurable facts and verifiable details.
Impressionistic statements and inaccuracies will have to be scrupulously avoided.
A good report calls for an effective assessment based on authentic facts and figures. Human errors, biases and any kind of selective reporting have no place in report writing. Good reports are those where the report writer maintains a judicial and non-partisan attitude.

**In-Depth analysis**

It is expected that the reports provide an in-depth study. Any report that does not go into the details of the subject studied may turn out to be peripheral, necessitating one or more report, or additional information being sought. The reporting authority or the report writer, as the case may be, should make it a point to meticulously go about collecting all related information for inclusion in the report.

**Alternative viewpoints**

The purpose of a report, as we have noted earlier, is to get the facts in proper perspective. When we refer to an enquiry report, an investigation report or a committee report, the intention is to get the inputs or views from different persons who are in a position to throw light on the subject or incident under study. In fact, when we talk of a committee report, a very important requirement for the report writer is to bring out alternative viewpoints. Although the final recommendations may be based on a consensus or majority view, the fact that some other views were also expressed during the course of deliberations or enquiries should also be mentioned. Further, in reporting deliberations or alternative viewpoints, the report writer should not be overly conscious of the hierarchical position of the members. In other words, the points made or the views expressed are to be covered, even if they are from relatively junior members, as long as they are relevant to the issue under consideration. It is worth noting here that when committees submit their reports, apart from giving a majority view, there is also a mention, in some cases, of the note of dissent.

**Appropriate annexures and appendix**

Most reports also contain relevant annexures, which cover additional information that is germane or pertinent to the matter dealt with in the body of the report. Such annexures normally include charts, graphs, relevant statistics, questionnaires, list of centers visited, agencies, institutions and individuals contacted and interviewed. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that any such charts, maps and tables are relevant to the matter under study and enhance understanding. Well thought out annexures help assess the depth of the report and the extent of representativeness of the studies/surveys made in connection with the investigation or study taken up. While major findings and statistics are furnished in the main report, the questionnaire formats, detailed statistical tables and other similar details covered in the annexures provide supplementary information which is of particular value to a more discerning reader or researcher. Reports also contain Appendix at the
end. Appendix refers to a section giving relevant additional information at the end of the report.

Appendix, like the annexure, constitutes an extra section of the report or a document. Any supplemental information relating to the report is given in the appendix. Appendix generally includes the following: illustrations, photographs, maps, surveys, statistical abstracts, diagrams, questionnaires and samples, pictures, and formulae and calculations.

**Glossary**

Reports also contain glossary at the end. A glossary is a list of special or technical words used in the document or report. Along with the words, their meanings are also given in the alphabetical order for easy reference. Glossary helps the readers understand the meanings of key words or the jargon used in the report or book. Every domain or business has words specific to it and the glossary lists out the words and their meanings. It is particularly relevant when the readers are not familiar with the words used in the report.

**Index**

Voluminous reports, large documents and books carry an Index at the end. Index presents the list of names or topics that are referred to in the report or document or book. They are usually arranged in the alphabetical order. Like the subject index, there can also be an author index. It is worth noting that this book presents Subject Index at the end. In the subject index, key words with the page numbers are given in the alphabetical order. Similarly, in the author index, the names of authors and the page numbers where they appear are mentioned. Microsoft Word, the word processing software, creates an index automatically.

**Appearance**

Good appearance is of particular significance in presenting reports. Reports constitute an important business document. Their objective is to present a clear picture or objective account of what is learned or done or observed. Quite often, the reports tend to be lengthy. If a report has to be read by the audience, apart from the quality of contents, the manner of presentation assumes relevance. Notwithstanding the relevance and usefulness of the contents, the report may get discredited and ignored if the presentation is casual and shoddy. Good reports are those that are carefully prepared so as to present all the contents in a systematic, appealing and reader-friendly manner.

4.3.2 **Structuring the Report**

For any business communicator associated with report writing, structuring the report assumes great significance. It calls for superior skills in observing and absorbing the deliberations, making notes on an ongoing basis, getting doubts clarified and putting them all in an organized and light-bearing fashion while
presenting the report. Report writing is somewhat akin to writing a book. While in a book the author puts forth his own thoughts, in a committee report the author will have to remain objective and present the consensus of the deliberations. All the same, the need for a thorough understanding of the subject, command over language, organization of chapters and elucidation of ideas are all equally relevant. In structuring the report, the following aspects need particular attention:

- Outlining and report organization
- Length of the report
- Formal report
- Sequence of presentations
- Annexures
- Sub-committee report
- Dissenting notes, if any

It is possible that the committee, in the course of its deliberations, may go beyond the terms of reference into unrelated areas. The report writer, while structuring the report, should clearly outline what the committee work consists of, and rule out any temptation to go beyond what is necessary, useful and relevant. The chapter designing of the report would vary from committee to committee. However, if one were to suggest a standard format, the following chapters/coverage would be appropriate:

- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- Background of the study
- Scope and objectives of the study
- Study methodology
- Findings and observations
- Recommendations
- Annexures

The report writer should be familiar with the essentials of report writing and make it a point to refer, wherever need be, to some well recommended reports on the subject. Apart from the broad approach indicated above, there are certain other aspects to be covered, such as:

- Acknowledgements
- Summary of recommendations
- Composition of the committee
- Meetings and visits
- Covering letter for report submission
Report writing not only puts to test the skill of the report writer, but also provides an opportunity to an accomplished writer to bring out a document of real merit by adding value.

4.3.3 Note-taking and Summarizing Skills

As we have noted earlier, report writing is the last step in the committee’s work. A report is the end product of a committee. The report should contain the essence of all the deliberations, viewpoints, surveys and observations made by the experts who make presentations. All this implies that the report writer must be associated with the committee meetings and take keen note of all the deliberations. All the important points which emerge during the course of deliberations should be meticulously noted down. The points may or may not emerge in a ready-made fashion. Not all members and participants would be articulate and cogent in expressing their viewpoints. The member-secretary, the convenor or the person who will be writing the report will have to be attentive throughout, and develop the skill of identifying the points which may or may not be clearly spelt out, but yet they are made during the deliberations and give a meaningful shape to them. While members may have their own areas of expertise, any committee would look to the report writer for drafting skills. At the end of every meeting, the report writer, in consultation with the chairman, should summarize and read out the main points which come out of the deliberations. Summarizing skills thus assume significance. Such points would also help in avoiding repetition in the subsequent meetings and would ensure that the deliberations are carried forward in a progressive manner.

Another important point to be noted by the report writer is that findings and recommendations of the committee do not always arise in a sequential order. Deliberations at the committee meetings often tend to go back and forth. It is incumbent on the report writer, therefore, to present the findings and conclusions in an appropriate sequence. The report writer should also develop good reference skills. Quite often, the members of the committee would expect the report writer to scan and collect relevant material from other sources, and place it before the committee to enable them to view the subject in perspective. A skilled report writer can add value to the committee’s work and the reporting function in many ways. The report writer should develop not only written communication skills of a high order, but should also be good at listening, comprehending, noting down, summarizing, structuring and making the end product a valuable effort.

4.3.4 Writing Style

Committee reports are written in a certain style to make them authoritative and appealing. In writing the committee report, the report writer should give particular attention to the following:

- Impersonal style
- Active sentences
- Appropriate headings
• Proper tense
• Accurate nouns and pronouns
• Definition of concepts
• Tabulation of data
• Documentation
• Objectivity
• Erudition

Similarly, the list of items to be avoided would include the following:

• Excessive jargon
• Verbosity and involved writing
• Personal bias
• Factual inaccuracies
• Grammatical blunders
• Pedestrian approach
• Absence of reasoning
• Absence of sequencing and references

In order to ensure all the above, the draft report may have to undergo several modifications and will have to be carefully vetted by the chairman and other members.

### 4.4 WRITING BUSINESS PROPOSALS

Proposals, like letters and reports, constitute a widely used piece of written communication in business. In the market place, in business organizations, varied proposals are put up from one party to the other or from one authority to the other for their consideration. Proposal refers to an act of proposing or suggesting a plan, task, event, etc. Proposals are examples of persuasive communication. In general, proposals are put up for the consideration of the appropriate party or authority. A proposal is an offer to do something or a request for some sanction or permission. Proposals relate to an idea that needs to be sold. The purpose of any proposal is to persuade the reader to consider the idea favorably and permit to put into action. Proposals put up in business organizations are of a wide variety.

Business Proposals are of a wide variety such as credit sanction proposal, new premises proposal, new office proposal, staff allocation proposal, sales proposal and project proposal. Any proposal in the business context seeks allocation of resources. These resources may be funds, men and material, office space, vehicles and so on. A proposal while seeking the allocation of resources should substantiate the need and make out a case. The details to be included and the format to be selected in putting up a proposal would vary depending upon
the nature of the proposal. Those proposals seeking grants and allocation of substantial funds and other resources need to include elaborate details and should be as per the format prescribed, if any. Proposals, in general, should feature the following points:

- **State your idea or plan:** The proposal should start with a clear statement of the idea or plan of the proposer. The nature and scope of the proposal or idea and its purpose and limitations should be clearly defined. If the reader is familiar with the idea, no detailed background need be given. On the other hand, when the reader or the sanctioning authority is not very familiar, a suitable note explaining the context would be appropriate.

- **Be logical and persuasive:** Any good proposal should make a logical and persuasive pitch. The purpose to be achieved and the advantages or benefits that would follow should be clearly brought out. Step by step, the proposal document should build up the case for pursuing the proposal or plan proposed. The stronger and more irrefutable the case, better would be the chances of their being considered favourably.

- **Elucidate how to proceed:** Having defined and logically presented the proposal, follow it up by stating how to proceed. Mention the actions involved in taking the proposal forward, the constraints to be dealt with, the time frame and other logistics involved in putting the proposal into action. Like in any business document, the following aspects of the proposal should be clear.

  Title of the proposal: Give a catchy title to your proposal that clearly states the central idea. For example, ‘Proposal for Creating a Marketing Taskforce’, or ‘Proposal for Reorganizing the Regional Offices’, or ‘Proposal for Grant of Funds for a Marketing Survey’.

  Heads and Sub-Heads: Make the document reader-friendly and appealing by developing your case through several headings and sub-headings. Heads like Finance, Manpower and Premises with appropriate sub-headings like Capital Investment and Monthly Expenses; Managers and Technicians; Office Premises and Godowns, etc. would enhance readability and make the requirement explicit. The heads and sub-heads should cover all important aspects relevant in considering the proposal.

- **Anticipate challenges and objections:** A good proposal also anticipates likely objections and provides answers. It raises probable doubts and provides clarifications. Issues likely to arise such as staff constraints, environmental concerns and productivity and profitability aspects should be foreseen and addressed. Wherever possible, expert opinions, market related and competitor initiated measures, and cost-benefit analysis should be built into the proposal. The idea is to convince the recipient of the proposal that all relevant issues have been anticipated and addressed in putting up the proposal.
Proposals, as already noted, are a form of persuasive communication. They relate to an idea, suggestion or a plan that needs to be sold. It is put up for the consideration of the authority concerned seeking resources, financial grants or permission to go ahead. Like a good sales letter or any good persuasive communication, proposals should be properly presented. The cover should be neat, elegant and appealing. The contents should be well organized and the page layout, font, spacing, margins and other such features need careful attention. When the document is lengthy, there should be a Summary at the beginning covering the synopsis and the highlights of the proposal details contained in the document.

Good proposals reflect the confidence and enthusiasm of the person putting up the proposal. A good proposal should have the right tone. It should radiate the confidence and urgency that are relevant for its favorable consideration. It should be prepared and put up without delay and well in time, especially when deadlines are involved. Good proposals should use vigorous words and should not follow a drab, matter-of-fact style.

### 4.4.1 Project Proposals

A project proposal, as the name indicates, is a proposal for undertaking a project. Since any proposal is a kind of persuasion, a project proposal puts forth clearly the nature of and need for undertaking the project. A project could be a plan, a task, a turn-key job, an assignment or a research study. A project proposal may be internal or external. It may be submitted by a department within an organization to the sanctioning authority or senior management. Externally, it may relate from one business organization to the other, which has a need for that facility.

Preparation of a project report requires substantial skills. A typical project may involve the following:

- **Technical feasibility**: To decide whether in terms of technical aspects, the project is doable. If so, then details of availability, expertise, time frame, quality and level of sophistication should be worked on.

- **Economic viability**: To decide whether the project has merits in terms of demand and supply, resources to be put to use, environmental and seasonal factors and so on.

- **Financial strength**: To decide what kinds of funds the project requires, both short term and long term, how the funds can be raised, cost-benefit analysis of the proposal, etc.

Some examples of projects would be a residential school project, a poultry development proposal, an irrigation or power project, a travel agency proposal and so on. It could be small or large, a new activity or an expansion, undertaken independently or jointly with other agencies. Each has its own implications for drafting or preparing the project proposal. Each aspect, whether technical or
economic or financial should be properly presented. Cost-benefit details have to be clearly spelt out. The receiver of the proposal should be in a position to get a total view of what is proposed, and take an appropriate decision on merits. Sometimes large proposals are put up to committees and the person submitting the proposal may be invited to make a presentation and clarify doubts. Technical jargon, if any, may have to be explained in clear terms.

It is worth noting that proposals are essentially a form of persuasion. The proposer has to state clearly the rationale, the merit or the ‘why’ of the proposal. In other words, the purpose statement has to be very carefully drawn up in respect of large proposals. In a business context, given intense competition, it is likely that there are several competitors submitting their proposals for consideration and sanction or award. Clarity, completeness, forceful presentation, timeliness and a user-friendly approach have to be essential ingredients for any good project proposal.

## PROJECT PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

### 1. Basic information

1.1 Peer-to-Peer Partnership number: *given by the Program coordinator*

1.2 Project title:

1.3 Area:
   - Budget management reforms, e.g. performance-informed budgeting
   - Human resource management reforms
   - Reforms to improve service delivery
   - Reforms to improve inter-governmental relations
   - E-government
   - Strengthening of custom and tax collection agencies

1.4 Partner(s) information and contact details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of partner institution from recipient country:</th>
<th>Name of partner institution from partner country:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of project leader:</td>
<td>Name of project leader 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>Email:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number:</td>
<td>Telephone number:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 Total cost: *estimated funding requested*

### 2. Project description

2.1 Background and justification

Briefly explain the rationale for the partnership, the need for improvements in this particular public sector management area, the efforts that have been undertaken so far and the value-added that the partnership is expected to bring.
2.2 Contribution to the national development plan or the strategy of the recipient country’s public administration

2.3 Linked projects (other national and international initiatives)
Briefly describe earlier activities and projects in this area in the recipient country’s public administration, showing any connections with each other and this project.
Briefly describe any relevant current activities being undertaken by other parties, such as the national government of the recipient country or other international institutions.

3. Overall objective(s)
Describe the long-term social and/or economic impact (benefits) to which the project will contribute, and describe why the project is important for the recipient country and for society. The overall objective is not expected to be achieved by this project alone; external factors outside the scope of the project are important for the fulfillment of the overall objectives.

4. Objective of the project
Describe the objective and expected outcomes, or direct effects, of the project. These are the benefits which the recipient country derives from the project. The purpose states why the project is needed by the recipient country.

5. Expected Results
Describe the service(s) the recipient country will receive from the project, i.e. what the project will be responsible for delivering.
Also, list the indicators of achievement, which should be verifiable and time-bound.

6. Activities
Describe the activities that will be put in place to achieve the results. It is recommended to present them in a log frame because it will simplify the process of elaborating the work plan.

7. Budget
Describe resources needed to implement the project.

1 The World Bank will cover up to $50,000 of eligible expenditures per year, and up to $100,000 in exceptional cases.
Eligible expenditures are: (i) The cost of travel to recipient or partner countries, incurred by public officials; (ii) Accommodation of public officials; (iii) Rental expenditures for venues, seminars, workshops or other educational events; and (iv) Production of educational materials such as leaflets and reports.
Salaries and per diem of public officials are not eligible. They must be covered by their respective public administrations.
8. Implementation schedule (indicative)

Insert table with a calendar of activities

9. Sustainability

After the project implementation ends, the project can continue by itself, without external support, and the project purpose is sustainable in the long term. This presupposes that effective mechanisms are put in place by the recipient administration to disseminate and consolidate the results of the project.

10. Institutional framework of the partner country (PC)

10.1 Partner’s profile

Describe the relevance of the administrative system of the PC public administration and the quality and experience of its administrative experts.

10.1.1 Profile and tasks of the partner country (PC) project leader

Describe the profile of the PC project leader (i.e. experience, expertise) and tasks.

10.1.2 Profile and tasks of other PC experts involved in the project

10.1.3 Profile and tasks of the recipient country (RC) project leader

Describe the profile of the RC project leader (i.e. experience, expertise) and tasks.

10.1.4 Profile and tasks of other RC experts involved in the project

11. Community of Practice

Describe how the project can contribute to create a Community of Practice, i.e. network of experts.

ANNEXES to the project proposal

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format (optional)
2. Work plan (optional)

4.4.2 Request for Proposal (RFP)

RFP is a method of seeking or inviting proposals. Government organizations, public sector undertakings and large institutions often resort to RFP to ensure transparency and competitive bids from competent bidders. While issuing an RFP, the organization concerned specifically lays down all the relevant details of the requirements. To make the RFP highly participative, these are publicized in the newspapers and are given wide publicity.

Let us take the example of a bank issuing an RFP inviting bids from consultants for undertaking a comprehensive management study. The RFP is a document that has been drawn up with due care. The RFP serves the purpose of inviting bids from the interested parties. The RFP documents should necessarily contain the following:
- A brief description of the party calling for RFP
- Whether the bids have to be submitted in two parts, viz, technical bid and price bid
- Specific eligibility conditions for the bidders
- Scope of the study or work
- Selection criteria such as credentials, exposure, prior experience, etc.
- Price schedule, i.e., how the price is to be quoted, whether in Indian rupees, escalation clauses, taxes, etc.
- Commercial terms and conditions such as terms of payment, documents to be submitted, etc.
- Validity period and last date
- Arbitration and applicable laws
- Cancellation of the contract and compensation
- Confidentiality obligations

Those responding to the RFP should scrupulously follow these requirements and submit their complete proposals.

**Expression of Interest (EOI)**

Expression of interest is another method by which large organizations invite offers from willing partners. EOI is sought after giving publicity and relevant details such as scope of study, eligibility criteria, etc. All preliminary proposals received in response to the EOI are duly evaluated and shortlisted. RFP calling for technical and commercial (price) bids are called only from those shortlisted parties. The process of shortlisting through EOI, while ensuring competitive response, provides an opportunity for screening of responses. Only those who meet all the eligibility criteria will be given RFP and asked to give their technical and price bids. EOI process helps in screening all the entries and restricting the issuing of RFP, and calls for technical and commercial bids only from the most eligible and qualified bidders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check Your Progress</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. What considerations should be followed while forwarding an email?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mention any four kinds of reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Which aspects need particular attention while structuring the report?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is the advantage of the process of shortlisting through EOI?</td>
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**4.5 BUSINESS LETTERS**

The world of business is replete with various types of written communication. Written communication is so much a part of everyday business that one cannot
think of a business without related correspondence. Think of any organization or institution—bank, electric company, hotel, college or library dealing with people and there is obviously some written correspondence. It may be handwritten, typewritten or printed. In the olden days, there were people who were specially assigned the job of taking care of correspondence, even in small businesses. Such persons were popularly referred to as ‘writers’.

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. Enquiries, invitations, price lists, offers, quotations, announcements, due notices, new arrivals, clearance and disposal, recoveries and reminders, orders and a host of other such activities of everyday relevance for any business are to be covered through written communication. Any business has to correspond in writing with its customers, branches, auditors, suppliers, bankers, media persons, employees, shareholders and others with whom it has a business relationship. Written communication is a convenient way for any business to reach across to people, within the locality and the neighbourhood, and also customers, prospects and other public spread across other cities, regions and even countries. Written correspondence thus has an extremely wide reach and as such is very useful for any business whose operations are widely spread out.

Written communication has certain distinct advantages as compared to verbal communication. It has a much larger reach whereas verbal communication can only go as far as the voice or oral messages can travel. Moreover, while verbal communication goes with the non-verbal message, written communication creates a solo impact. For this very reason, in oral communication, the communicator has to be quite conscious of the accompanying body language and other non-verbal messages, for they have the potential to distort or contradict the basic oral message. Written communication takes several forms—from ordinary business letters to typed and cyclostyled messages, to printed pamphlets and brochures.

Business letters, it should be noted, are a prominent part of written communication in business. Before discussing business letters as such, we need be clear about the advantages of written communication. Written communication has certain clear advantages as detailed below:

- Written communication has an extremely wide reach, co-terminus with the literate world.
- Written communication can be well organized to convey the precise message.
- Written communication, generally speaking, can be prepared at the time when the communicator is best prepared to do so.
- Written communication, unlike oral communication, can be effective as a stand-alone medium.
Written communication can be targeted to reach specific individuals/sections.

Written communication can be composed in a language that the receiver can read and understand.

Written communication can carry the much desired personal touch.

Written communication can be erased, revised and re-written.

Written communication, when stored, can be exactly reproduced or repeated.

Written communication, organized properly, can be cost effective.

Written communication, very importantly, creates records and reference sources.

Written communication, when presented in an appealing manner can create the right impression.

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.

4.5.1 Essentials of a Business Letter

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.

But before that, lets have look at certain samples of business letters.
Letter Confirming the Acceptance of Tender and Award of Contract

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

- 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
- Not accurate or factually incorrect
- Fails to convey the main purpose
- Not to the reader’s wavelength
- Too much jargon and technical words
- Lacking in aesthetic sense
- Language used not familiar to the reader
- Lengthy paragraphs
- Offensive in nature
- Absence of personal touch
- Lacking in courtesy
- Creates ill-will
- Written out of context
• Absence of relevant information
• Use of poor-quality paper and ink
• Wrong address
• Absence of address

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. Let us now briefly discuss the requisites or essentials of a good business letter.

Clarity

A letter must have clarity. The underlying message should be expressed in clear terms. Care should be taken to avoid ambiguity. The purpose of communication should be made clear. Whether it is to inform, invite, reiterate, emphasize, remind, announce, seek participation and clarify and correct the earlier message, the purpose should clearly be stated. If a letter writer is writing a letter on behalf of somebody else, it should be done after obtaining clear instructions. There are occasions when one may receive a letter informing the date and the venue of a meeting without an accompanying invitation or request to attend. The reader or the receiver of the communication, in such an instance, will be in a dilemma. Is the invitation intended and implied but not specifically stated? Or is the letter just meant to be informative and no invitation is being extended? One way or the other, the message should be clear. Just imagine the embarrassment that is caused when people not meant to be invited turn up at the venue and have to be turned back or when people who have to attend the meeting feel there is only
intimation and no invitation and hence fail to turn up. When this happens due to lack of clarity in communication, any business suffers. This is just one example. There are umpteen ways in which the lack of clarity affects the intended purpose of the letter. A letter writer should be conscious of this and exercise due care.

Impact

The letter should create the necessary impact. Behind every letter there is an objective and the letter should have a clear purpose. The purpose of writing a letter is not just to reach out to the customer. Every letter has an intended impact which must be felt. To create the desired impact, it is often necessary to lay emphasis. Emphasis can be laid in many ways. It can be done by proper positioning—placing them in an important position. It can be done by repetition. It can be done by underlining or using a larger type or font. Similarly, to create the right impact, the letter writer should address the letter to the right person. The right person is the specific person who is the target of the communication, and whose action or response the business considers to be of value. Creating an impact also calls for establishing an appropriate wavelength. The letter writer should write keeping in view the skill, knowledge, status and comprehension ability of the reader or the addressee.

Yet another requisite of an impact-creating letter is coherence. It is necessary to use words, phrases and clauses clearly, so as to form balanced sentences. Coherence seeks to establish a proper relationship and links sentences to make the intended message clear. Coherence brings consistency and orderliness to the encoded message. A letter succeeds in creating the desired impact when it ensures purpose orientation, lays the right emphasis, establishes an appropriate wavelength and is coherent. Some of the common questions asked or statements made in relation to these attributes are:

- What is one trying to convey? (Purpose orientation)
- Which of these is really urgent? (Emphasis)
- Is it too elementary or is it an overhead transmission? (Wavelength)
- What is the sequence? (Coherence)

Remember that any business writing creates an impact when both the beginning and the ending are forceful. Start the letter with what is called a ‘grabber’, that is something that grabs the attention and compels the reader to keep reading. Similarly, avoid a tame ending to the letter. Give your ending a punch.

It is necessary to give due attention to these areas and build up skills so that the letters become impact-creating.

Relevant information

The letter should provide the relevant details forming part of the message. Facts, figures, illustrations and other such information, which are both accurate and reliable, as well as relevant to the context of the communication, should be incorporated in the letter. The principle of communication that we are referring
to here is also known as adequacy or completeness. A communication can be said to be complete only when it contains all the facts and details which the receiver needs to know in order to respond or act on the basis of that communication. Not giving all the required details leads to protracted correspondence, loss of customers or lack of response. Worse still, although non-submission of full details may be due to an oversight or inadequate attention to details, the receiver may infer that there is a deliberate attempt to withhold or conceal facts and figures. Imagine a letter received from a departmental store announcing the opening of a new branch and seeking your patronage that does not give details of the new address or timings. Another requirement of a business letter is concreteness. A communication is said to be concrete when it is specific, definite and to the point and not vague and generalized. Often the letters are so rambling in nature that one can imagine the reader screaming, ‘Please come to the point and be specific.’ A concrete letter does not ramble and is sharp and focussed.

**Brevity**

Any good communication—oral or written—should necessarily incorporate this essential feature. Brevity is a very important attribute for any business letter. For everyone connected with business, time is of essence. The time that one can allot for reading business letters is certainly limited. The receiver does not have unlimited time to spare towards reading and re-reading the letter and drawing out the message in its entirety. On the contrary, any business letter is competing with a huge mass of business-related and other communication targeted at the receiver, waiting to catch attention and time. Recognizing this, any business will have to value the receiver’s time. Brevity in letter writing, therefore, is a must. Long letters, whatever be their merits, are often kept aside for ‘later reading’. Brevity in communication is also referred to as conciseness.

Conciseness refers to the skill of conveying what one wants to convey in the fewest possible words, without sacrificing completeness or courtesy. Conciseness eliminates unnecessary words and phrases, repetitive sentences and keeps the letter focussed. A good letter makes economical use of words. Brevity is a skill that a business communicator must develop. As people move up in an organizational hierarchy, their ability to condense messages into brief and focussed letters counts for a lot. In typical bureaucratic and hierarchical work situations, one can see the ‘drafts’ of letters prepared by the junior staff moving upwards tier by tier ‘for final approval’ and much time and effort are wasted if brevity is not ensured.

**Simplicity**

Simplicity is the hallmark of any good communication. Simplicity refers to the ease of understanding. Simple writing is the opposite of complex and involved writing. The art of simple writing is mastered through conscious effort and practice. A letter written in a simple, easy, informal style using easily understood words catches the attention, and makes an impact. Simplicity in writing does
not, however, necessarily imply simple or plain thoughts. The thoughts may be complex, and the subject quite complicated, but the manner of expression or presentation is kept simple. It takes tremendous insight and skill to express complex matters and complicated issues in a simple form. The normal tendency on the part of the communicator is to resort to complex sentences, cliches, technical jargon and high-sounding words to communicate not-so-simple thoughts and developments, resulting in confusion and bewilderment. One must make constant efforts to write simple, yet meaningful and impact-creating, business letters. It involves not only the use of simple words, but also, more importantly, a clear insight into the structure of sentences and paragraphs. In the chapter on the rules of good writing, we have mentioned a set of complex words and their simple equivalents. Brevity and simplicity are so essential for good communication that many writers refer to it with the acronym KISS—Keep It (the letter) Short and Simple.

**Timeliness**

Business letters, to be effective, should have proper timing. Letters should be written and dispatched on time. Some messages have a sense of urgency. They call for action, which is ‘immediate’ or ‘urgent’, or within a given time frame. Letters which carry such messages should reflect the associated urgency. They should be so addressed and delivered that there is enough time to permit action within the given time frame. It is not uncommon to see letters seeking some action by a specified date reaching the receiver after that date. Some not-so-uncommon examples of this are:

- A communication from a controlling office to a branch stating, ‘Please send us the statement without fail by 30 September 2020’ reaching on 2 October 2020’.
- A letter from a committee secretariat asking the member to attend the meeting scheduled on the 10th of the month, reaching him that evening.
- A letter from a departmental store announcing ‘clearance sale for 3 days’ reaching after the sale.
- A letter from a personnel department asking an officer to appear for her promotional interview on 6 October 2020’ at the regional office reaching on 5 October 2020’.

Apart from negating the purpose of communication, such letters reflect poorly both the organization and the sender of the message. If the action called for is so urgent, the minimum that anyone would expect from the sender is a clear demonstration of the urgency by ensuring speedy communication. This necessitates not only timely writing but also timely dispatch. For example, there may be occasions when a letter dated 15 September 2020 reaches the addressee on 5 October 2020, due to a dispatch delay. Goal-oriented and effective communication presupposes that the person concerned acts and intervenes at every stage in the transmission of communication. Timeliness in business writing
also involves the choice of the right channel—mail, telegram or courier, as the case may be. Sending letters too much in advance is also to be avoided because unless there is a timely reminder, the message is likely to be forgotten.

**Language**

Language is an extremely important facet of business communication. First and foremost, it is necessary to ensure that the language used is appropriate, i.e., the language with which the reader is at ease. Apart from English and Hindi, various regional languages are in common use in businesses in different parts of the country. Public sector organizations such as banks follow the three-language formula. Many printed letters are bilingual—both in Hindi and English. Business letters should use the language which the prospect, customer or addressee can read and understand. Choosing the appropriate language for a large multi-national or multi-regional organization is important not only for furthering business interests, but also for ensuring that the sensibilities of certain sections of people are not offended. When organizations and businesses get global, the choice of appropriate language becomes highly relevant. Having chosen the right language, the next step is to ensure that the phrases, expressions, words, grammar and spellings are correct.

Grammatical errors and spelling mistakes have no place in a good business letter. They create a poor impression on the reader. Every business writer may or may not achieve grammatical perfection. The use of commas at all relevant places in the sentence and avoidance of split infinitives, for example, may not always take place. In fact, certain grammatical imperfections such as the use of split infinitives are tolerated as long as the message is clear. The important point emphasized here is that while the letter writer may or may not achieve grammatical perfection, glaring and obvious grammatical errors have no place in good writing. A good letter writer should know his grammar well and seek appropriate reference when in doubt. A business letter with noticeable bad grammar, notwithstanding other merits, creates a poor impression on the reader.

**Appeal**

A good letter should appeal to the reader’s sensibilities. It should go beyond the message it conveys and make a good impression. It should have elegance, which means taste, beauty and decency. A good letter also ensures certain aesthetic appeal. No letter can be called elegant or aesthetically appealing if it does not give due attention to appearance. Mistakes and corrections, striking, overwriting, improper ink flow, unintended gaps and other such deficiencies rob an otherwise good letter of all its elegance.

A letter is appealing when it shows consideration. Consideration means thoughtfulness. It means keeping in mind the reader and putting oneself in the reader’s shoes while writing the letter. Consideration means visualizing the reactions of the reader and accommodating them in the approach to the communication. A good letter writer invariably makes it a point to think from
the other person’s point of view. Another essential for a good writer is empathy. A letter shows empathy when it reflects understanding and comprehension of the impact on the reader. It tells the reader what is of interest to the reader. A good letter uses the ‘you’ more frequently than ‘I’. A good letter makes the reader feel important.

**Style**

Style refers to the manner of writing. It constitutes the collective characteristics of the writing or impression or way of presenting things. Each person has an individual style. The writing style, to create an impact, again needs conscious effort, on an ongoing basis. While encompassing various requisites of letter writing, the letter brings to bear the individual’s stamp on the letter. If you are regularly reading the letters emanating from a particular source, you get to identify the style. People tend to judge the style and categorize them—good style, bad style or free style. Style can be associated with the person writing the letter and carries certain distinctiveness. Style is also understood as ‘Proper words in proper places’. One can also describe style in other ways—personal or impersonal, formal or informal, narrative or descriptive, rambling or focussed, considerate or harsh, simple or verbose. A simple, informal, considerate and focussed style of writing scores high in building a rapport with the reader.

Good writing style also implies the proper use of idioms and expressions. An idiom is described as the way ideas are used in a language. It is a form of expression peculiar to a language. Like any other language, English too has its idioms. Some examples of idioms in English language include the see eye to eye, beat around the bush, and the ball is in your court. Another aspect worth noting in the context of developing a good writing style is to avoid cliches. Cliches are hackneyed literary phrases. They are often repeated ad nauseum. Some commonly used cliches include ‘last but not least’ ‘better late than never’, ‘needless to say’ and ‘there is no room for complacency’. Similarly, avoid vague words like ‘as soon as possible’ and ‘soon’. Instead, be specific in terms of the date, time, etc. Good writing style carries sincerity. Sincere writing is straightforward and there is no attempt at manipulation. The writer comes through as honest, genuine and frank. Sincere writing also gets described as candid and transparent. Being sincere, therefore, means writing naturally. The words reflect feelings, concerns and expectations in a forthright manner. Good writing style should also encompass politeness or courtesy. It should respect the reader as an individual. It should reflect the basic minimum courtesies that any transaction or relationship demands. It should be appreciative and complimentary to the extent appropriate in the given context. Business letters, by and large, seek to strengthen the relationships that are good for the business when the occasion demands. The writer should not hesitate to apologize for omissions or errors.

Good writing style also refers to writing naturally, without undue efforts.
Otherwise the writing becomes laboured and loses spontaneity. After a while, the tediousness starts showing. The ability to write spontaneously and effortlessly for all occasions has to be consciously developed.

**Positive approach**

A good business letter, in the ultimate analysis, is that which has a positive approach. It creates a friendly atmosphere. It avoids negative feelings. One must be in a proper frame of mind to write a really good letter. Thoughts and words must synchronize. The basic objective should not be lost sight of. The letter should bestir and motivate the reader to act or respond as visualized. Good letters cannot be written under extreme emotional conditions such as sorrow, depression, anger, frustration or shock. Such letters may not carry the overall balance in approach which is so essential for effective writing. Similarly, a good letter cannot be written in a hurry. One must take adequate time to put thoughts into words, choosing the most appropriate ones for the context. The writer should write the letter taking adequate time, with due attention to all relevant considerations.

Apart from the various characteristics already listed, a good letter should have integrity, accuracy and promptness. There should be respect for values and ethical and moral standards. The writer should demonstrate a sense of legitimacy in his writing. Messages should be accurate and there should not be any misrepresentation and out of context passages. Positive approach also means being prompt in responding. A writer is often a recipient of communication also. The writer should make it a point to respond without any undue delay.

Positive approach does not mean that one has to say ‘yes’ to everything. Any business has its commercial considerations. It has its rules, norms and compliances. One cannot say ‘yes’ if it is commercially imprudent and if the set norms are not met. Good letter writing, therefore, is the art of learning to say ‘no’ by packaging ‘no’ in a pleasing manner. It is the art of packaging ‘no’ in an acceptable format. It is the art of winning over the customer even while losing that particular offer or transaction. The business offer may or may not come up to the expectation, but, nevertheless, the communication should leave behind a favourable impression.

In any organization and in any business, there will be umpteen occasions to say no, to disagree, to convey displeasure, to punish, to pull up, to do plain speaking and to call a spade a spade. Quite often this will have to be done by way of a letter. In all such instances, it is necessary that the damage, the feeling of hurt or ill will, if any, is kept to the minimum. While the nature of the message would have certain unpleasantness associated with it, the tone and style can make a difference and soften the blow. It is under such circumstances that the skill of good writing comes into full play. A skilful writer learns to mitigate the hardship or adverse impact of the message through choice of words and manner of presentation. Although what is being said is not pleasant, how it is being said makes it less unpleasant.
Building and keeping goodwill is very essential for business organizations and business writers should necessarily keep this in mind. After all, no business can thrive in the absence of goodwill. For any business to grow and thrive, the goodwill factor is a must. Goodwill is defined as a friendly disposition towards the people who deal with the organization. When there is goodwill, people look to the business as kindly, helpful, likeable, trustworthy and consistent. Goodwill is earned the hard way through the actions of people in business over a period of time. In the accounting jargon, goodwill is defined as an intangible asset that gains particular relevance when the ownership of the business changes hands. It arises from the accumulated or built up image and reputation of the business over the years. Written communication, including business letters, should consistently sustain that goodwill effect through appropriate statements and words. The business writer should note that letters are often written to people who may not visit or talk to them. Their only contact or connection may be through those letters. It is those letters that create an impression, good or bad, about the business and the writer. Good business writers know how to create the goodwill effect in all their communication. Remember that every letter you write provides you an opportunity to create a good impression about your business.

Positive approach in letter writing does in many ways create goodwill for the writer and the organization. It creates regard for the writer and a friendly disposition towards the business. It generates heartiness and a kind feeling so essential for the success of any business organization in today’s market place. Positive approach in letter writing means creating goodwill by making your letters friendly, helpful, courteous and tactful.

Another very essential characteristic of good business writing is imagination. The writer has to bring a unique perspective and experience and, to the extent appropriate, relate them to the letter on hand. It is this imagination that brings excitement into the communication. Communication becomes active and creative. Imaginative writing takes the level of writing to a reader-friendly mode.

Organizations and businesses that succeed in the present intensively competitive environment are those that sparkle with innovations and creativity. Written communication emanating from business organizations should, therefore, duly reflect enthusiasm. A good letter radiates enthusiasm.

Any good communication should have variety. It is said that variety is the spice of life. Variety adds spice to writing. It makes communication lively and interesting. A good letter makes its impact the very first time. When the letter is repeated, however good and relevant it may be, the impact gets diluted. The reader’s interest wanes. When the subject of the message is repetitive in nature, in terms of thoughts and ideas, there may not be much change. Nevertheless, in terms of choice of words, structure of sentences and intensity of the tone, the letter can and should be different.

Viewed against the backdrop of so many essentials for good letter writing, models or drafts or stereotyped formats of letters are of limited value. Barring areas such as documentation, legal drafting and routine procedural forms, it is
not desirable to follow such stereotyped writing models. Any draft or model letter would also carry the writer’s style or approach. Moreover, copying or adopting such formats blindly restricts the writer’s ability to develop a distinctive style of writing. In any case, each situation and every context is quite different and no standard format can be followed without appropriate refinements. At best, such formats can only be taken as broadly suggestive or indicative. Instead of taking a model and attempting to make requisite modifications to suit one’s specific needs, it would be worthwhile to understand the principles and develop one’s writing skills.

In the foregoing paragraphs, we have looked at numerous essentials or requisites of good writing. The attempt has been to make it fairly exhaustive rather than to cover only the minimum requisites. One can refer to the minimum requisites as the ‘ABC’ of good letter writing, where A stands for accuracy, B for brevity and C for clarity. The minimum requisites are necessary, but by no means adequate.

**Striving for excellence**

A good letter writer should try to achieve a significantly high standard of letter writing and endeavour to achieve excellence. All the dozen or so essentials outlined above are relevant in building up the skills of effective letter writing. When we talk of business letters, we refer to a great variety of letters. They range from the routine, repetitive letters to the more complex, goal-oriented ones. They seek not only to inform, educate and appeal, but also to carry out complex and composite functions such as evaluation, justification, motivation, persuasion, penetration, dispelling of wrong impressions and even award of punishment. They may be as short as half a page or as long as eight to ten pages. The bigger and more complex the letter, the greater the scope for skilful writing.

However, some letters need to be just simple and straightforward, in which there may not be much scope for imagination or creativity. The nature of the subject, the context of the communication and the relationship of the recipient determine how many qualities or essentials can one build into any letter. Being aware of as many essentials as are relevant in writing a wide range of business letters helps in developing effective letter-writing skills.

**Understand the context**

Business letters will have to be necessarily business like. The letter writer should understand the context and make the letter specific and precise. There is often not much scope to make the letter lengthy and verbose. When we refer to letters from the accounts department or the purchase department, the message will have to be direct and specific. On the other hand, when it comes to the marketing department, it is possible to be descriptive and qualitative. When we refer to the letters relating to the personnel department, the general requirement would be to keep such letters polite, and yet firm wherever necessary, and also show respect for authority. A good business letter writer necessarily takes cognizance
of the context. The general tone of letters should take note of the subject matter, context, the person to whom it is addressed and be informative, persuasive, firm or authoritative, as the situation warrants.

**Use words appropriate to the subject**

Whether it is accounts, purchase, sales or personnel, there are words, phrases and abbreviations which are relevant and appropriate to each function or department. Words and abbreviations like ‘closed tender’, ‘free on board (f.o.b)’, ‘after office hours (a.o.h)’, ‘clearing cheque’, ‘effects not cleared’ and ‘tax deduction at source (TDS)’ are often used in business correspondence. The business letter writer should familiarize himself or herself with such words and use them appropriately. Abbreviations are to be generally avoided and if at all used, the letter writer should ensure that they are understood as intended and that there are no misunderstandings. Business letters, as we have noted, also vary in terms of intensity and approach. There are routine letters, reminders, persuasive letters, goodwill letters, informative letters, mild and strong appeals, circular letters and memos and representations, and the letter writer should develop the skill of using appropriate words relevant to the context.

**Use short sentences and paragraphs**

In business letters, any temptation to use high-sounding language and long-winding sentences should be resisted. The business letter writer should consciously use short sentences with about 10 to 15 words on an average. Long sentences with more than 20 words tax the reader and make comprehension unnecessarily difficult. If your sentences run to four lines or five lines, make it a point to split them so that its readability improves. Another important requirement is to break the message into appropriate and adequate paragraphs. Short paragraphs, each covering an idea or a message, are generally appealing to any reader.

**Use abbreviations with due care**

In our everyday communication, we often use abbreviations or short forms. Abbreviations are generally shortened versions of the word or they may be formed from picking the first letters of the word. Words like Prof. for professor, Dr. for doctor, sth for something and pt for point are all examples of shortened versions of the words. Words like ATM, PC, AV and TC are first letters of the group of words – automated teller machines, personal computer, audio visual and ticket collector. Abbreviations that can be pronounced as words are called acronyms. For example, AIDS. In our day to day business, we come across numerous instances of the use of abbreviations. They may refer to countries, companies, institutions, objects or time. Some of these abbreviations relate to Latin expressions like e.g. – exempla gratia. Some familiar abbreviations in business use are given below:

- **Countries:** USA, UK, US
- **Companies:** IBM, SBI, GE.
- **Institutions:** IIM, IIT, UN, ADB, SEBI
As long as they are understood as they are intended to be by the writer, they serve a useful purpose. However, it is often true that some of the abbreviations with which the writer is familiar may not be readily comprehended by the reader. Moreover, some abbreviations may convey different meanings depending upon the context. It is necessary, therefore, that the writer clarifies what he means at the first instance.

**Use of contractions**

Like abbreviations, contractions are also used in communication. Contractions are short forms where two words are joined together by using an apostrophe. Some letters are omitted while joining the two words. Some examples of contraction are as follows:

- will not = won’t; are not = aren’t;
- did not = didn’t; shall not = shalln’t;
- we are = we’re; I am = I’m;
- we have = we’ve; let us = let’s;
- you would = you’d; it will = it’ll

Where did she go? = where’d she go?

What does she do? = what’s she do’

Contractions are acceptable in personal and informal communication. They suggest a conversational style of writing and speaking. These, however, are not desirable in formal business communication. When you are writing formal business letters, resumes and covering letters, reports and documents, such contractions may imply a certain casualness and are best avoided.

**Provide relevant details**

Brevity of letters should not be at the cost of clarity and all relevant details should be furnished. The date, time and venue of the meeting, whether invitation or information, the number and the amount of cheque whose payment is to be stopped, the date, time and place of interview, due amount of money which the collection letter seeks, the exact amount of discount offered are all details which, though seemingly elementary, may escape attention. Omitting such relevant details would lead to confusion, misunderstanding and repetitive correspondence. A good business letter writer gives attention to all such minute details. (Talking about brevity and simplicity of business writing, it is worth noting here that while the first sentence of this paragraph has 18 words, the second sentence has as many as 60 words and the effort involved in comprehending is much more in the latter.)
Use standard drafts or formats

Most of the routine correspondence is repetitive in nature. Once the basic approach for writing a variety of letters is mastered, it would be beneficial to build a set of ready-to-use drafts and formats. In banks, insurance companies and a host of other institutions and businesses, there are often printed formats in use. These include stop payment instructions, over draft facilities, account opening and making claims. When a business letter writer uses them appropriately and consciously, the formats help in minimizing the time spent on writing the same type of letters. Care should be taken, however, to review such formats or drafts periodically and also improvise and update them to cope with emerging situations.

Specialized writing

Specialized writing such as journalistic writing, advertisements of various types, press releases, developing a questionnaire or preparing an advertorial call for higher level of skills and application. Skills in these areas are acquired through constant study and efforts.

Constant improvisation

Business writing is dynamic in nature. There should be an on-going effort at improvisation. The business letter writer should learn to do self-editing. Before finalizing important letters, one should make sure that the message is clear, the language is appropriate, surplus words if any are removed, unwarranted repetition is avoided and the letter is appealing. Yesterday’s words, phrases, formats and style may not appeal today. Good letter writers keep themselves updated and modern.

Vocabulary or word power

For the language to be effective, an important prerequisite is abundant vocabulary or word power. Words are the very essence of written communication. Words translate thoughts and carry the message through to the reader. They lay emphasis as and when required. Since words have the potential to make or mar the language of the business communicator, this aspect has been dealt with in some detail in the following paragraphs.

English has emerged to be the predominant global language. In this interconnected world, it is the language that people across countries strive to learn. Proficiency in writing and speaking English provides a distinct advantage to people in business. On the other hand, lack of fluency and command over this language is undoubtedly a disadvantage. Businesses today, as we have seen earlier, are no longer regional or national in character. People have to deal with people across regions and cultures. Good English is a must for good business. Mastering English is becoming more and more challenging because the language is not static, but keeps growing. The staggering wealth of English words is ever-expanding, mainly on account of the open arms with which it welcomes and adapts words from other languages.
The world of words, as we have noted earlier, is wonderful and fascinating. English language has an enormous stock of words. With new words being added constantly, the stock of usable English words keeps growing.

Even if we accept the lower count, there is an abundant choice of words for the speaker or writer. This vast and growing reservoir of words offers, at once, both an opportunity and a challenge to the communicator. It is an opportunity because there is a tremendous choice of words available to the person. It is a challenge no doubt, for the building up of word power calls for a systematic and ongoing effort, using familiar words and learning new words. One can easily spend one’s lifetime learning new words, understanding their shades of meaning and effectively using all the words available.

Words make the letter. A good letter writer should choose the words with care. To do so, one must necessarily build enormous word power. Every person keen on becoming an effective communicator should delve deeply into words and their meanings. Most of the words have many shades of meaning. The appropriate word or set of words depend on the context, tone and gravity of the message and also on the relationship with the person to whom it is addressed.

Much as one would like, it is not always possible to readily recall the exact word. As a result, one may often find oneself groping for the right word. Any person keen on building word power and using the most appropriate word in every piece of write up must take recourse to a standard English dictionary and also Roget’s Thesaurus. Until a writer gets a fine command over English words, and even thereafter when a reconfirmation is required on the shades of meanings a word conveys, constant reference to these two sources would be immensely helpful. It is worth emphasizing that the author of this book has made umpteen references to these sources while writing this book. To make it clearer, let us take a look at a few words and try to understand all that they convey. Take, for example, the word ‘communication’. Roget’s Thesaurus refers to the following shades of meaning: Joining, Transfer, Intercourse, Information, Messages, Oral communication, Conversation, Epistle, Passageway, Giving, Social intercourse. Each one of them is in turn elaborated under different sections with nouns, verbs, adjectives and exclamations associated with the word. One of the meanings of communication listed above is information. In turn, the word ‘information’ covers the following: Enlightenment, Light, Acquaintance, Familiarization, Instruction, Intelligence, Knowledge, The know, The dope, The goods, The swoop (all slang), Communication report, Word, Statement, Mention, Notice, Notification, Intimation, Sidelight, Inside information, The low-down, Tip-off, Point, Pointer, Hint, Indication, Suggestion, Suspicion, Inkling, Glimmer, Cue, Clue, Scent, Telltale, Implication, Allusion, Insinuation, Innuendo, Gentle hint, Broad hint and many more.

Apart from knowing the word, it would also be desirable to know the various words belonging to that word family. Some examples of this are: Rely, Reliable, Reliability, Reliance.
There are also words whose meanings are close to each other. One should be clear about the fine difference that exists to be in a position to choose the right word. Some examples of such words are: Condition, State; Classic, Classical; Altogether, All together.

All the above examples and many more such helpful suggestions are highlighted in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. The point to be noted here is that words in the English language have multifarious connotations and uses. There are words which convey the same meaning but each one perhaps has a context where it fits in perfectly.

Similarly, there are many words belonging to the same word family. A good writer must build up his word power in such a way that words of all kinds are on top in memory, or as an alternative, the writer has ready access to sources like the thesaurus. In the absence of a proper supply of words, the smooth flow of writing gets obstructed. Groping every time for the most appropriate word or even just a sufficient word causes frustration.

In letter writing or any other written communication, it is very essential that words are not frequently repeated. Repetition tends to irritate the reader. If you come across a particular word repeated again and again in a sentence and the sentences that follow in the same paragraph, the reader is likely to get a poor impression of the writing. To be able to avoid repetition, the writer should have a good stock of equivalent words or synonyms. Synonyms are words identical and co-extensive in sense and usage with another of the same language.

Ivor Brown, in his introduction to the third edition of *Roget’s Thesaurus*, has beautifully summed up the significance of word power and its effective use for any good writer. He says: Words as well as ideas are the raw material and that he requires in good supply. But words can be the decoration as well as the tools of good writing. This does not mean that they should be splashed around recklessly: a good artist with the riches of his paint box at hand does not use them in a lavish or slapdash way. The artist considers, selects and blends tints to get both strength and delicacy in the finished picture. So it is with words. To have a copious supply and to use it with judgement is an excellent foundation for good writing and for the possession of what is called style.

### 4.5.2 Parts of a Business Letter

Business letters are different from personal letters and carry a distinct format and style. Business letters are known to cover several widely accepted parts and a good business letter should be drafted in accordance with the principles of such formatting. Although there are different types of letters, each is relevant in a specific context and the parts are generally common to all such letters. One needs to be familiar with not only the different parts of the letter but also, equally importantly, about their positioning in the letter. When we refer to a business letter, we refer to it in its totality, including both external and internal features. As we have seen in the earlier chapters, a good business letter not only carries across the message as intended, but also creates the right impression on the reader.
A letter has many parts—outside, inside, top, bottom, middle, left, right, first page, second page, enclosures and annexure. Each one of these parts has a certain significance and carries a definite place in the context of letter writing. All these external and internal features concerning a business letter carry a time-tested position and significance. All the same, when we refer to a position or placement, we are not necessarily referring to a very rigid position for all times. Over a period of time, business writers have brought in flexibility and improvisations resulting in certain choice of positioning as well. Thus, notwithstanding the various types and places relevant to a business letter, it is possible to have different styles in writing a business letter.

Let us take a look at the various parts of a business letter and their essential characteristics.

**Letterhead**

The letterhead announces the name of the business. It often suggests what the business is about—whether it is a bank, an insurance company, a transport agency, a trading firm, a building contractor or an estate agent. While some businesses choose to mention their name as well as their line of business in their letterhead, others confine only to the name. Quite often the constitution of the business is also stated—public limited, private limited or government undertaking. Along with the name and line of business, some relevant particulars such as date of establishment, location of head office or registered office, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address are also furnished on the top of the letterhead.

Apart from all these details, the letterhead also carries prominently the logo of the business. If it is a public sector undertaking, as per the official language policy, all these details will have to be furnished bilingually. Each business decides what details it wants to include about itself on the top of the letterhead. Sometimes the details are distributed among the top and bottom portions of the letterhead. The name and logo are covered in the top and the address, phone number, fax number and website are given at the bottom.

Letterheads have the potential to create a favourable impression and hence much thought and effort should go into their design and selection. The colour and quality of paper, the size of the letterhead, the types and fonts used and the spacing are all carefully decided. Such is the importance of the letterhead that some businesses even seek the assistance of advertising agencies or other such specialists in designing their letterheads. A good letterhead not only informs, but also impresses. If the letterhead is the first introduction of the business, one must ensure that it is done well.

When the letterhead does not give the full address or the exact place from where the letter is emanating, the letter writer will have to incorporate these details himself. The writer should mention specifically the branch, the zone, the section and the department from which the letter is emanating. In its absence, if the business is a large multi-branch, multi-department and multidivision establishment, the receiver of the letter will have difficulty in knowing the exact
source of the letter and may fail to respond. In practice, this keeps happening quite frequently in large organizations and people keen to respond will have to waste much time and effort in finding out from which branch, office, division or department the letter has been sent. Too many details, thoughtlessly placed on the letterhead rob the elegance out of it. On the other hand, not furnishing relevant details makes the letterhead an understatement or inadequate. It is essential to strike a proper balance between the two.

Reference line

Business letters have reference details which help in clearly tracing the letter to its source and context. When the business is large, in terms of functions and customers covered, it becomes necessary to compartmentalize the activities into different regions and functions. A separate file can be maintained for each customer. Reference details usually consist of abbreviations, letters and numbers. They may also carry the initials of the person drafting the letter or maintaining the file. The reference line helps both ways. On the one hand it helps the letter writer or anyone else within the organization to know the exact context in which the letters were written, and makes it easy to relate it to the specific context on receipt of the reply. On the other hand, it also helps the receiver of the letter to make out the exact source and context of the letter and helps the receiver to respond.

Each organization or business would have normally evolved its own reference pattern and the business letter writer has to become familiar with the method followed. In the absence of such reference particulars, the business will have to spend considerable time in relating it to the exact file even after it reaches the branch or department concerned. Not taking any chance on this, some organizations make it a point not only to mention the reference number but also request the recipient of the letter to ‘Please quote this reference number in all future correspondence.’

The originating reference number of a letter for any business would be stated thus: ‘Our reference number’. Similarly, in any business letter, it would be necessary to refer to the other party’s reference details as well. This is stated as, ‘Your reference no. ...... dated ’. This may be stated below the subject line or as the first sentence of the body of the letter.

When a particular business letter is part of a series of such communication over a period of time, or part of a protracted correspondence, the letter writer may have to refer to the earlier correspondence, in which case one may have to list out the relevant ‘Our letters dated ......’ and ‘Your letters dated ’. If the relevant letters are too many, instead of referring to all such letters the letter writer may state, ‘Please refer to our earlier correspondence on the subject, resting with our letter dated ’.

Date line

The date line follows or stays close to the reference line and clearly mentions the date, month, and the year of the letter. The date is mentioned in many ways—
22.05.2020 or 22 May 2020 or May 22, 2020. The most appropriate way of stating the date would be the second one, i.e., 22 May 2020 for its lack of ambiguity. It is worth noting that the sequencing of date, month and the year, when written only in figures, varies from country to country. In the United Kingdom, like it is in India, the date, month and the year are written in that order, viz., 22.5.2020. In the United States of America, however, the practice is to write the month first and then the date and the year. For example 12 May 2020 is written as 5.12.2020. In view of these different practices, writing the date as 22 May 2020 ensures that there is no misreading of the date of the letter. To ensure elegance, it is also appropriate that writing the day in letters—ninth or eighteenth—and using abbreviations for months—Feb or Apr—are avoided.

Inside address

Inside address refers to the addressee or the person to whom the letter is addressed. It may be an individual, a functionary, a group or an institution. The letter may be addressed by name or by designation. The inside address need not give the full postal address which has to be necessarily furnished outside. It is generally restricted to the name and/or the designation, the department and the office, since this position is well recognized. The word ‘to’ may be avoided for greater elegance. Another place normally used for inside address is the bottom of the letter, on the left side at the end of the letter. When the letter is addressed by name, care should be taken to mention the correct initials, name and surname as the individual would like to be addressed. Please take due care in writing the correct name, for that is the least that the letter writer owes to the addressee. If the letter writer does not make due effort to ascertain and mention the correct name of the addressee, it amounts to indifference and discourtesy and qualifies as a bad letter. Spell the name correctly, for it makes the reader or the addressee much more responsive. Mr Jagdish should not be mentioned as Mr Jagdeesh or vice versa. Mrs Rajashree cannot be addressed as Mrs Rajashri. Same is the case with the surnames and initials. If it is Banerji do not change it to Bannerjee or vice versa. In good business letter writing, it is very essential to write the name exactly as the person spells it. If the person has a title such as Professor, Doctor, Father, Revered, Justice, Captain or Brigadier the same is to be correctly stated. When there is no title, Mr or Shri is commonly used for men and Mrs, Miss, Smt. or Kumari, as the case may be, is used for ladies. Ms is used when one is not sure of the marital status of the lady who is being addressed. The plural of Mr is Messers, which is used in addressing partnerships and groups. Likewise, the designation of the person, whenever mentioned, should be proper.

One should be particularly careful when addressing letters to dignitaries like the President, the Governor, the Chancellor, the Ambassador, the Pontiff or to religious heads. The appropriate title such as His Excellency, His Highness or His Holiness will have to be used after ascertaining the same from the appropriate authority. Many such exalted offices will have what are known as protocol officers. Any mistake in addressing the person inside the letter certainly distracts the impact of an otherwise well-drafted letter.
Attention line

Attention line usually appears on the right side of the inside address and is relevant when the letter is addressed to a designation, to the group or to a firm. The attention line draws the attention of the specific person to the contents of the letter. There is no need for an attention line when the letter is addressed to a specific person. Attention line usually reads, ‘Kind attention of Mr so and so.’ The attention line does the important function of ensuring that the letter reaches the particular person whose response is essential.

Salutation

Salutation is a must for every letter. It relates the letter to the reader. It can take many forms such as

‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’ or ‘Dear Mr so and so’ or
‘Dear Shri so and so’ or ‘Dear Mrs so and so’ as the case may be.

When the letter is addressed to an organization or a group, the salutation is in the plural form, i.e., Dear Sirs. When the status of the person is high and additional respect is intended to be conveyed, ‘Dear’ is omitted and the salutation is Sir or Madam. Although in our Internet age, ‘dear’ is considered too intimate by some, and too formal by others, the student of communication should note that this salutation is still the most appropriate one for all formal written business letters.

Subject line

After the salutation, the next part of the letter is the subject. The subject of the message is stated clearly and boldly at the centre of the letter. This helps to draw and focus the attention of the reader on the specific subject or topic or area which the letter covers. The subject should be stated clearly yet briefly, i.e., in a few words. Often the receiver of the letter looks at the subject and decides as to how important or urgent its contents are for him. A skilled letter writer learns to state the subject in a manner that attracts attention. The subject should fairly reflect the essence of the letter. Furthermore, since this particular position in a letter is meant for the subject line, mentioning ‘subject’ may be avoided to ensure greater elegance. Where appropriate, the subject itself may be mentioned in distinct letters.

Message

The message is the body of the letter which comprises the opening line and the message to be conveyed. The message is organized into appropriate paragraphs in order to convey thoughts sequentially. The paragraphs are so designed as to cover related thoughts and facts. The opening line usually starts with an acknowledgement or introduction. It may draw reference to earlier correspondence, if any. The opening line or the introductory paragraphs endeavour to put the message in perspective. In the next paragraph or paragraphs, as the case may be, the message of the relevant communication is dealt with. It is important to note that the message is the essence of communication and the very reason for writing
the letter. The length of the message would vary depending upon the thoughts and details which the letter writer wishes to convey. The message is the crux or core of the letter and all other features are embellishments or accompaniments. The message of the letter, in other words, is usually the content or subject of the communication. The letter is written because the message has to be conveyed.

Closing line

The closing line paragraph is very important for the letter. It should sum up the message and emphasize the action intended. Good writers take pains to make the closing line as effective as possible.

The complimentary closing line comes after the message and before the signature. It is ‘Yours faithfully’ or ‘Yours sincerely’ or ‘Faithfully yours’ or ‘Sincerely yours’ as the case may be. When the salutation is ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’, the closing line is ‘Yours faithfully’, and when the salutation is ‘Dear Shri’ or ‘Dear Mrs’, the closing line is ‘Yours sincerely’. It is also common to see the closing line ending with plain ‘Cordially’ or ‘Sincerely’, omitting Yours. The business writer should choose the style appropriate to the context.

The complimentary closing line is followed by the signature. Every letter must end with a signature. The signature gives authenticity to the message. An unsigned letter is usually of little significance. Unsigned letters are deficient and the addressee may not act upon them. Official letters also carry the designation of the person below the signature.

Postscript

Postscript or P.S. is an afterthought. Sometimes, however, a postscript is used by a letter writer to re-emphasize a particular point in the message. It is an additional remark that comes at the end of a letter, after the signature. For example, as a postscript to the letter, she may add, ‘P.S. I will write to you again soon’.

Some of the other parts or related aspects of the letter are enclosures or annexure, continuation page, spacing, folding, outside address, envelopes and window covers. These too, call for adequate attention in order to ensure the elegance of the letter. Enclosures contain related relevant information and accompany the letters. The reference to the enclosures is made at the end of the letter—Encl: 2 or Encl: Copy of draft agreement or in the body of the letter appropriate to the message—(Please see annexure 1) or (Please refer to the table enclosed). Reference to the continuation of the matter in the next page is indicated for greater clarity. The spacing of the letter is important in terms of ensuring elegance and making the letter attractive. Spacing should be such that there is neither crowding of sentences nor undue gaps in between. When the letter extends over several pages, it is essential that all the page numbers are clearly mentioned and appropriately stapled. Quite often, seemingly elementary aspects are overlooked—the stapling or pasting is done so badly that one has to struggle to open the letter intact or the enclosure which is mentioned in the letter is left out. One can bring in considerable imaginativeness in letterheads, envelopes, colour of the type, spacing and page presentation. While
commonly accepted and widely followed positions of various parts are stated in the
foregoing paragraphs, it is pertinent to reiterate that a skilful letter writer can
bring in variety and flexibility in approach without sacrificing the principles. Good
letters do stand out and gain attention.

4.5.3 Layout of a Business Letter

A business letter has several parts, as we have seen in the earlier paragraphs. In
order to make the letter attractive and readable it would be necessary to arrange all
these parts in an organized manner. In other words, the layout of the letter assumes
importance. Suitable and correct layout enhances the overall effectiveness of any
letter. There are essentially three types of layout for a business letter. They are:

- **Full block layout:** This form of layout is extremely popular. It makes the
  letter look attractive, elegant and efficient. In this form, each part of the
  letter—date, sender’s address, subject, salutation, complimentary closing
  begin at the margin of the page. Apart from making the letter elegant, this
  form also saves key movements for the typist, since every line begins at
  the same point on the left.

- **Modified block layout:** In this layout, various parts are distributed on the
  page. Some are on the left, some in the middle and some on the right. The
  place, the sender’s address, salutation and each paragraph may be aligned
  to the left. Complimentary close and signature may be either centred or
  aligned to the right. This method is considered conservative and is not very
  popular. It also adds to the typist’s work.

- **Modified block with indentation layout:** Indenting refers to setback or
  beginning the line farther from the margin to mark a new paragraph. The
  layout here is as in the modified block form, except that the start of each
  paragraph is indented, i.e., each paragraph starts a few spaces away from
  the margin. This form makes the letter somewhat clumsy and has gone out
  of style.

In order to make the letter effective, the letter writer should ensure that the
layout is modern and elegant and creates a favourable impression on the reader.

4.5.4 Kinds of Business Letters: Inquiries, Orders and Replying to
Them, Sales Letters, and Job Application 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. 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 discussed in following sections.

**From the purchase department**

- Calling for quotations for products and services.
- Inviting tenders for jobs and supplies.
- Asking for samples and drawings.
- Placing test orders.
- Placing orders.
- Status enquiries.
- Technical bids and commercial bids.

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**

- Sales letter.
- Circular letters.
- Preparation of sales letters with the conditions of sale on the reverse.
- Preparation of market survey reports.
- Reports from salesperson to sales executives.
- Offer of discounts and business concessions.
- Launch of a new product or scheme.
- Mailing of company literature.
- Letter of acknowledgement.

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
- Dues and collection letters to various agencies and customers.
- Follow-up letters.
- Correspondence with banks.
- Opening/closing of accounts.
- Regarding overdrafts, cash credit and current accounts.
- Stop payment instructions.
- Request for issue of letters of credit (LCs).
- Protest for wrongful dishonouring of cheques.
- Letters relating to interest payments and service charges.
- Complaint letters covering wrong credits and debits and delays in realization of instruments.
- Correspondence with insurance companies regarding payment of premium, renewal of policies, claims and settlements.
- Correspondence with agencies like the Telephone Department, Post and 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
- Calling candidates for written tests.
- Interview call letters.
- Offer of appointment.
- Provisional and final appointment orders.
- Confirmation in service.
- Changes in emoluments.
- Disciplinary matters—show cause notices, charge sheets, calling for explanation, discharge, other punishments and letters of dismissal.
- Leave and travel sanctions.
• Training programs and deputation.
• 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
• Change in management.
• Changes in business hours.
• Opening and shifting of branches and offices.
• Invitations and public notices.
• Correspondence with directors and shareholders.
• Agenda and minutes of company meetings.
• Correspondence with shareholders and debenture holders pertaining to dividend and interest payments, transfer and transmission of shares.
• Correspondence with agents and transport companies.
• Representations to trade associations, chambers of commerce and public authorities.
• 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
• Job applications.
• Preparation of bio data and curriculum vitae.
• Export- and import-related correspondence.
• Preparation of bill of exchange, promissory note and hundi.
• Telegraphic and fax messages.
• Mild and strong appeals.
• Correspondence with foreign institutions and agencies.
• Advertisements of various types—newspapers and print media, hoardings and banners.
• Press releases.
• Questionnaires and opinion polls.
• Legal correspondence.
• Publicity literature such as brochures and booklets.
• Newsletters and house journals.
• Preparation of charts, graphs and stickers.

**Letters of social significance**

• Social letters in business.
• Inviting a guest.
• Congratulatory letters on achievements.
• Letters that say ‘Thank you’.
• Letters of appreciation.
• Accepting or declining invitations.
• Condolence letters.
• Letter of introduction.
• 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.

**Inquiries, orders and replying to them**

Specifications or details which must be unambiguously mentioned should cover the following:

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- 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:

- Name of the organization and address.
- Tender number and date.
Captions such as
- Tender notice
- Tender notification
- Notice inviting tenders
- Sealed tenders invited

Who can apply—sealed tenders are invited from
- Class I civil contractors
- Established contractors having customs house agency license
- Manufacturers or their authorized Indian agents, etc.

Experience/requirement
- With experience in completing similar work
- Satisfying the eligibility criteria mentioned below
- Who have supplied the tendered items successfully to other government organizations, etc.

Brief description of work or items/material to be supplied

Contract period and/or delivery schedule

Earnest money deposit

Contact address or authority
- For further details please contact/write to
- Tender documents can be obtained from

Date of issue of blank tender forms

Cost of tender document—mode of payment

Last date for receipt of sealed tenders—time

Time and date of tender opening

Other relevant details such as
- Amount of tender
- Average turnover (annual) for the last 3 years
- Technical bids and commercial bids

Website

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.
Quotations

Quotations relate to offers sought by the intending purchasers from the intending sellers or suppliers of goods and services. When the proposed purchases are substantial and the purchaser is interested in getting competitive offers, quotations are called for. Based on their experience and enquiries, the probable suppliers are identified or shortlisted and thereafter, their quotations would be sought. Thus quotations have two phases. The first part is when the buyer calls for quotations from the seller. The second part is when the supplier responds and sends the quotations or offer with all the relevant details. On many occasions, the supplier may not wait for the request and instead send the quotation, suo moto, for the consideration of the buyer. Quotations are sought and sent by business organizations as regular business correspondence. Quotations become effective when they result in specific orders.

Both while inviting and sending quotations, due attention should be given for all the relevant details and specifications. These include:

- Description covering quantity and quality
- Rates and discounts for bulk orders
- Mode and terms of payment
- Delivery time
- Taxes, duties and charges
- Transportation and delivery
- Samples and approval
- Insurance and breakage allowed
- Guarantee period and after sales service
- Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) details

As clearly stated, in all these business letters due attention should be given to all relevant details to ensure clear mutual understanding and avoid different interpretations or expectations.

Orders

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:

- **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’

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

- **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.

- **Packaging specifications:** Mention the specifications relating to packaging, especially considering the breakage, transport and other such relevant factors.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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. The order should cover the following details:

- Name of the Item/Product/Service
- Item Number (from the catalogue/press ad, model, etc.)
- Quantity Required (in no.s, dozens, tonnes, cases, etc.)
- Description (size, color, material, weight, etc.)
- Unit Price
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.

**Credit and status enquiries**

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. 86/2019 dated October 10, 2019.’
- ‘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 2020 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 2020 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 2020.’
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.

**Letters 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.

**Sales letters**

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.

**Job application letters**

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 4.1 lists the key areas that a good application letter should cover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EXHIBIT 4.3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make your application letter inclusive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Personal Details</strong></td>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Languages Known</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Academic Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialization</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marks/Percentage</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Extra-curricular Activities</strong></td>
<td>Hobbies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interests</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Experience</strong></td>
<td>Previous Jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positions Held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Profile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. Some illustrations on highlighting your strengths are stated in Exhibit 4.2.

**Exhibit 4.4**

**Highlight Your Key Strengths**

- Have worked as a purchase officer in a professionally managed construction company.
- Have 10 years of experience in teaching post graduate students of economics and commerce.
- Have secured distinction winning the gold medal in marketing management.
- Have captained the university cricket team for four consecutive years.
- Have acquired a high level of proficiency in French language.

Try to highlight those qualities in your resume that match the job profile. Talk of that quality which the employer would be looking for. It may be academic distinction, your ability to get along with people, knowledge of regions and markets, capacity for sustained hard work, specialized training, physical fitness, reading wide range of publications, medals and awards for study or work.

**Update regularly**

The application letter should be updated on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that the latest details are furnished. Update years of experience timely. 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 suo moto 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

5. Mention any four advantages of written communication.
6. Why is timeliness important in business letters?
7. How many words should be used in a sentence while writing a business letter?
8. List out any four types of letters exchanged in the Personnel Department.
9. What are the captions that should be used in tenders?

4.6 WRITING EFFECTIVE MEMOS

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
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 to 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 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 addresses, 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.

4.6.1 Format of Writing Memos

It is good to be direct and brief while writing memos. In many organizations the stationery used for memos is different. Often memo forms are used.

Sample Memo form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMORANDUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memos have a standard layout which includes the following:

- To (name of the recipient).
- From (name of sender and designation, could include telephone number).
- Date (in full, as in a letter).
- Reference (for filing purposes).
- Subject (serves as a title which briefly describes the content).
- No postal address is required.
- No salutation.
- No complimentary close.
- Memos are not normally signed, but some include a space for the writer’s signature.
- Normally a memo has only one subject; if you have two topics to write about, use two memos. This facilitates filing.
- Message is set out in paragraphs as in a letter and should be brief/concise.
- Enclosures: indicates accompanying documents (if any).
- You may send the same memo to several different people by listing their names after the heading To.
- You may send copies to others to let them know what is going on; this is shown by the abbreviation cc.

Note: cc - originally stood for ‘carbon copy’. Since carbon paper is rarely used. Now, cc: has come to be known as ‘courtesy copy’.

The abbreviation bcc: stands for ‘blind courtesy copy’ and is written only on the copy for the person receiving it. This means that the main recipient does not know that this person has also been sent a copy. If you are using e-mail and you enter a name in the bcc: field, the system empties that field before the message is delivered to the main recipients so that they are unaware who else has received a copy.

4.6.2 Principles of Writing Memos

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

**Examples of good communication—memos**

We give below some examples of memos used in business organizations.

**Example 4.1**

To: All Departmental Heads in Head Office  
From: General Manager, General Administration, Head Office  
Date: 11 Jan 2018  
Subject: Meeting with Courier Agencies  
A meeting has been scheduled at 11.00 A.M on Monday, 15 Jan 2018 in the Committee Room on First Floor to meet with the short listed courier agencies and discuss the modalities of cost effective and timely despatch and delivery of out bound mail and merchandise.  

You are requested to brief me about the despatch needs of your department and your experience in dealing with the short listed agencies well in advance.  

Attachment: List of participating courier agencies
Example 4.2

Superior Bank
Personnel and HR Department
Mumbai
To: All Branches and Offices in India
Subject: Dearness Allowance

The confirmed All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (Base 1960-100) for the quarter ended December 2017 is as follows:

- October 2017: 3378.23
- November 2017: 3378.23
- December 2017: 3355.41

All our branches and offices are advised to be guided by this memo while effecting salary payments to our staff for the months of February and March 2018.

Personnel Officer

Example 4.3

Premier Motors Ltd.
Commercial Vehicles Department, New Delhi.
Memo 5/2018 – 8 February 2018
To: All Showrooms in the Eastern Region
Subject: Special Discount for Commercial Vehicles for March 2018

The Company has decided to offer a special discount of 2 per cent on the sale price of various types of Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) sold at all our Showrooms during March 2018.

The applicable price for different categories of LCVs before and after the 2 per cent discount is listed in the annexure to this memo.

All our Showrooms should note that this special discount of 2 per cent will be applicable ONLY TO CASH SALES made during March 2018 and will not be extended beyond this period.

All our Branch Heads are requested to prominently display the Special Rates on their Notice Boards and take full advantage of this special offer in maximising the sale of LCVs during March 2018.

Branch Heads are also requested to send the details of LCVs sold during March by FAX on 1st April 2018, without fail.

Director – Sales

Attachment: List of Special Rates for LCVs
Copy: General Manager, Eastern Region.
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 to face considerable embarrassment. The drafting of memos, especially the important ones, is entrusted to persons with good communication skills. Memos should necessarily possess the usual characteristics of good written communication such as clarity, brevity, cogency, completeness and readability. In view of their importance, quite often the draft of memo passes through several levels or tiers for approval. The method of despatch is also decided keeping in view the target sections and the urgency of the message. Sometimes memos refer to several previous ones on the subject making the comprehension and access difficult for the reader. It would be necessary to bring out a comprehensive memo to facilitate easy and all-in-one-place reference. Sometimes instruction, directives or guidelines issued by external agencies such as government organizations, regulatory bodies, legal entities, etc., may have to be reproduced through the memos. In doing so, care should be taken to clarify the message in terms of internally understood terms, phrases and abbreviations.

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.

**Check Your Progress**

10. What is the origin of the word memorandum?
11. Why should niceties be avoided in memos?
4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Although there is a provision to forward the email received, as a matter of business ethics, due care should be taken while forwarding emails. Any such forwarding should be strictly need-based and any confidential information should not be forwarded indiscriminately.

2. An illustrative list of various kinds of business reports is presented below:
   (a) Routine reports such as monthly report, performance report, review report and progress report.
   (b) Research reports, survey reports and special reports.
   (c) Enquiry reports, audit reports and investigation reports.
   (d) Status reports and progress reports.

3. While structuring the report, the following aspects need particular attention:
   (a) Outlining and report organization
   (b) Length of the report
   (c) Formal report
   (d) Sequence of presentations
   (e) Annexures
   (f) Sub-committee report
   (g) Dissenting notes, if any

4. The process of shortlisting through EOI, while ensuring competitive response, provides an opportunity for screening of responses. Only those who meet all the eligibility criteria will be given RFP and asked to give their technical and price bids. EOI process helps in screening all the entries and restricting the issuing of RFP, and calls for technical and commercial bids only from the most eligible and qualified bidders.

5. The advantages of written communication are:
   (a) Written communication can be well organized to convey the precise message.
   (b) Written communication, unlike oral communication, can be effective as a stand-alone medium.
   (c) Written communication can be targeted to reach specific individuals/sections.
   (d) Written communication can be composed in a language that the receiver can read and understand.

6. Business letters, to be effective, should have proper timing. Letters should be written and dispatched on time. Some messages have a sense of urgency.
They call for action, which is ‘immediate’ or ‘urgent’, or within a given time frame. Letters which carry such messages should reflect the associated urgency. They should be so addressed and delivered that there is enough time to permit action within the given time frame.

7. The business letter writer should consciously use short sentences with about 10 to 15 words on an average.

8. The types of letters exchanged in the personnel department are:
   (a) Calling candidates for written tests.
   (b) Interview call letters.
   (c) Offer of appointment.
   (d) Provisional and final appointment orders.

9. The captions that should be used in tenders are:
   (a) Tender notice
   (b) Tender notification
   (c) Notice inviting tenders
   (d) Sealed tenders invited

10. The word ‘memorandum’ came from the Latin word ‘memorare’ which means to remember.

11. 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 a memo. Since the memo is meant to be read by colleagues within the office, the writing should be to express, and not to impress.

4.8 SUMMARY

- When it comes to sending business related emails, the rules of good writing are very much relevant. Just because emails are easy to send, due diligence relevant in business writing should not be overlooked.

- Email provides for sending not only messages but also files and lengthy documents. When such lengthy reports and documents have to be sent through the email, they are invariably sent as ‘attachments’.

- Report writing is, in a sense, the ultimate in business communication. It calls for a considerably higher level of writing skills. Reports are of various kinds, varying in terms of complexity and size.

- Any good report should embody certain common features. First, it should discuss both the pros and cons and present the issue in proper perspective. Second, it should ensure that the facts and figures are authentic and up-to-date.

- The report should not merely be peripheral in its treatment, but also incisive. It should avoid bias and bring out alternative viewpoints. Finally,
appropriate annexures and appendix such as graphs, charts, tables and questionnaires should be incorporated.

• For any business communicator associated with report writing, structuring the report assumes great significance.

• The report should contain the essence of all the deliberations, viewpoints, surveys and observations made by the experts who make presentations.

• Proposals, like letters and reports, constitute a widely used piece of written communication in business. In the market place, in business organizations, varied proposals are put up from one party to the other or from one authority to the other for their consideration.

• Business Proposals are of a wide variety such as credit sanction proposal, new premises proposal, new office proposal, staff allocation proposal, sales proposal and project proposal. Any proposal in the business context seeks allocation of resources.

• A project proposal, as the name indicates, is a proposal for undertaking a project. Since any proposal is a kind of persuasion, a project proposal puts forth clearly the nature of and need for undertaking the project.

• RFP is a method of seeking or inviting proposals. Government organizations, public sector undertakings and large institutions often resort to RFP to ensure transparency and competitive bids from competent bidders.

• Expression of interest is another method by which large organizations invite offers from willing partners. EOI is sought after giving publicity and relevant details such as scope of study, eligibility criteria, etc.

• Written communication has certain distinct advantages as compared to verbal communication.

• It has a much larger reach whereas verbal communication can only go as far as the voice or oral messages can travel.

• 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.

• A letter must have clarity. The underlying message should be expressed in clear terms. Care should be taken to avoid ambiguity.

• The letter should create the necessary impact. Behind every letter there is an objective and the letter should have a clear purpose. Every letter has an intended impact which must be felt.

• The letter should provide the relevant details forming part of the message. Facts, figures, illustrations and other such information, which are both accurate and reliable, as well as relevant to the context of the communication, should be incorporated in the letter.

• Language is an extremely important facet of business communication. First and foremost, it is necessary to ensure that the language used is appropriate.
• Style refers to the manner of writing. It constitutes the collective characteristics of the writing or impression or way of presenting things.

• A good letter writer should try to achieve a significantly high standard of letter writing and endeavour to achieve excellence.

• Business letters will have to be necessarily business like. The letter writer should understand the context and make the letter specific and precise.

• In business letters, any temptation to use high-sounding language and long-winding sentences should be resisted. The business letter writer should consciously use short sentences with about 10 to 15 words on an average.

• For the language to be effective, an important prerequisite is abundant vocabulary or word power. Words are the very essence of written communication.

• Business letters are known to cover several widely accepted parts and a good business letter should be drafted in accordance with the principles of such formatting.

• In order to make the letter attractive and readable it would be necessary to arrange all these parts in an organized manner. In other words, the layout of the letter assumes importance.

• 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.

• Sales letters should be elegant and appealing. The presentation should be such that it elicits the attention of the addressee.

• In particular, letters relating to collection of dues and recovery of money need to be drafted with a keen sense of understanding and sensitivity.

• Notwithstanding the routine nature of most business correspondence, it is possible, and indeed desirable, to develop variety and style in writing the letters.

• A tender is an offer or a proposition made for acceptance, such as an offer of a bid for a contract. It is something that is offered in return for a specific payment, subject to well laid down terms and conditions.

• Quotations relate to offers sought by the intending purchasers from the intending sellers or suppliers of goods and services. When the proposed purchases are substantial and the purchaser is interested in getting competitive offers, quotations are called for.

• 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.
• 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.

• 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.

• 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.

• 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.

• 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.

4.9 KEY WORDS

- **Report**: A report is a document that presents an account of what one has learned or done.

- **Proposal**: A proposal is an offer to do something or a request for some sanction or permission.

- **Tender**: A tender is an offer or a proposition made for acceptance, such as an offer of a bid for a contract.

- **Quotations**: It relates to offers sought by the intending purchasers from the intending sellers or suppliers of goods and services.

- **Memorandum**: A memorandum is a written statement or record, especially one circulated for the attention of colleagues at work.

- **Bcc**: Bcc stands for Blind carbon copy or Blind courtesy copy, which is similar to that of Cc except that the Email address of the recipients specified in this field do not appear in the received message header and the recipients in the To or Cc fields will not know that a copy sent to these address.

- **HRD**: Human Resource Development (HRD) is the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities.
4.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How are emails boon and bane to business communication?
2. Briefly explain the significance of note-taking and summarizing skills in business reports.
3. Why are clarity, impact, and brevity important in a business letter?
4. Which areas should be covered while placing an order?
5. Briefly explain the essentials of a job application letter.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the essential features that a good report should have.
2. Explain the points that should be considered while making proposals.
3. Describe the use of positive approach in business letters.
4. Discuss the various parts of business letter in detail.
5. Explain the details that should be included in letters related to inquiries, orders and replies to them.

4.11 FURTHER READINGS


4.12 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- The email-etiquettes, writing business reports, and proposals
- The different kinds of business letters including inquiries, orders and replying to them, sales, and job application letters
- The writing of effective memos and principles of writing memos
UNIT 5 EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION

Structure

5.0 Introduction
5.1 Objectives
5.2 Introduction to Employment Communication
  5.2.1 Composing Application Messages
  5.2.2 Writing CVs
  5.2.3 Group Discussions
  5.2.4 Interview skills
5.3 Impact of Technological Advancement on Business Communication
  5.3.1 Revolutionary Electronic Innovations
  5.3.2 Technology-Enabled Communication
  5.3.3 Communication Networks
  5.3.4 Internet
  5.3.5 Intranet
  5.3.6 E-mails
  5.3.7 Teleconferencing and Videoconferencing
5.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
5.5 Summary
5.6 Key Words
5.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
5.8 Further Readings
5.9 Learning Outcomes

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Employment communication revolves around written communication and conversation between the employer and the job-seekers. The employer communicates with the job-seeker or prospective talents about the vacancies, company culture, perks and benefits and security, etc. It is essential for an organization’s success that there are many different channels available to communicate with your employees as well as your customers. Social media definitely has certainly increased the scope of communication. In this unit, we will discuss the concept of employment communication by focusing on how to compose application messages and CVs, along with the explanation of group discussion and interview skills. It will also focus on the impact of technological advancement on business communication by explaining technology-enabled communication.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the concept of employment communication by focusing on how to compose application messages and CVs
5.2 INTRODUCTION TO EMPLOYMENT COMMUNICATION

The process of communication, as we have noted earlier, 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. Your letter of application, cover letter and resume are areas that need most careful treatment, for they constitute the first step in getting an employment.

5.2.1 Composing Application Messages

We have already discussed the composition of job application letter in the previous unit, therefore, only general composition don’t of application message or cover letter are discussed in this section.

Writing the cover letter

It is very important to include the cover letter while sending your resume/CV. Such a letter introduces you and explains your purpose. It introduces the major points in your CV. It makes it easier for the employer to take action. Since it is your introduction to the employer, it is important that the covering letter is impressive. A cover letter should be customized to suit the particular position you are applying for. Cover letters, also referred to as application letter, are of two types:

- Solicited application letter
- Unsolicited application letter

A solicited application letter is written when you are sending your CV in response to an advertised vacancy, that is, when applications have been called for by an organization. An unsolicited application is written when you are sending your CV for an unadvertised job position in an organization.
**Purpose of the cover letter**

A cover letter is essential because of the following reasons.

(i) A cover letter gives a personal touch to the CV.

(ii) A cover letter helps the reader focus on your strengths, experience and qualification.

(iii) A cover letter reflects basic professional courtesy and, thus, creates a positive impact of you as a professional.

(iv) Sometimes you may be sending a CV in response to a telephonic or face-to-face conversation you had with the concerned person. In such a case, the cover letter acts as a reminder of the conversation. It is also possible that the envelope containing your CV will be opened by someone other then the person you have spoken to. In such a case, a cover letter ensures that the CV reaches the right person.

**Format of the cover letter**

The length of a cover letter has to be limited to a single page. The most commonly used format for a cover letter is ‘Full Block’ format. There are four main components of a cover letter:

- Address and salutation
- An opening to catch the attention
- The main body
- A closing that induces action

**Address and Salutation**

In the case of solicited applications, the application letter is addressed to the person mentioned in the advertisement. In the case of a blind advertisement, that is, when only the Box Number of the address is mentioned and the name of the organization is not disclosed, you have to address the letter to the newspaper/magazine in which the advertisement appeared and use a generic salutation like ‘Dear Director’.

However, in the case of unsolicited applications, address your letter to an individual and not to the organization. Try and find out the name of the individual to be addressed rather than addressing an individual by his designation. Use the correct spelling of the name and the correct designation. In the salutation, use Dear Ms/Mr/ Dr followed by the person’s last name. Do not address a person by his first name. If you are a fresher or are entering the organization at a comparatively junior position you may use the salutation ‘Dear Sir’.

**Opening**

The opening has to catch the attention of the reader. For a solicited application, use a direct approach wherein you mention the position for which you are applying...
and give the reference of the advertisement in response to which you are applying. For unsolicited applications, you may begin by mentioning why you are applying for the position. In case there is a reference involved, mentioned that.

**Body**

The body consists of one or two paragraphs. It gives information about your current job and summarizes in a couple of lines your qualification and experience. It mentions your strengths and your suitability for the position you are applying for.

**Closing**

Close the letter with a request for an interview. Mention that you are enclosing the CV. It is a good practice to mention your contact phone number, address as well as your email address in the last paragraph or below your name at the close of the letter. Use standard complimentary close such as ‘sincerely’. Do not forget to sign your name using a black or blue pen. Also mention the enclosed documents (CV and other documents if any).

**E-mail cover letter**

It is increasingly becoming the practice to send the CV through e-mail. While applying for a position through e-mail, copy and paste your cover letter in the e-mail message. Like printed cover letters, an e-mail cover letter should have a formal salutation and closing. It serves the same purpose as the print cover letter, only the mode of sending it is different. Therefore, it needs to possess all the characteristics of the print cover letter. However, in the case of the e-mail cover letter, one needs to clearly mention the subject line which should include the job position you are applying for.

Send your CV as an MS Word attachment. Do not forget to attach your CV. This is a very common mistake. Some employers do not accept attachments. They ask you to paste the CV on to your e-mail message. In such a case, keep the formatting of the CV very simple so as to make it readable. Use the spell check to check the grammar and capitalization. There is a tendency to be informal in e-mail communication. But it is important to ensure that you maintain a formal tone.

**Guidelines for writing a cover letter**

The following are some of the guidelines to be followed while writing a covering letter:

- Address it to the relevant person in the organization. It is desirable to personalize the letter by addressing it to the individual by name rather than to the department or organization in general. Ensure the correct spelling of the name, title and address.
- Specify clearly that your aims, qualifications and experience meet the requirements of the post.
• Specify the position advertised, the date of the advertisement and the name of the publication in which the advertisement was printed. If someone has referred you, name that person.
• Emphasize and elaborate your strong points especially those relevant to the job.
• Maintain a formal approach in the cover letter.
• Be concise and clear.
• Keep your letter neat, well-spaced and in short paragraphs.
• Check the spelling and grammar of the letter.
• Confine your letter to the one-page, A4, white-colour paper.
• Give your full name in the cover letter and remember to sign the letter.
• Keep a copy of the cover letter for your future reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAMPLE FORMAT FOR COVER LETTER (Full Block Format)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Name, post and address of the person who will receive your letter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear (Mr/Ms/Dr Surname)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application for the Post of (Title of the Post) (Ref. no., if any)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1st paragraph: Introduction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State how you found out about the vacancy and your reason for applying for the post.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2nd paragraph: Body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefly describe your qualifications and work experience which are relevant to the post.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3rd paragraph: Body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market your strong points and achievements that are beneficial to the post.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4th paragraph: Closing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request the employer for an interview.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yours sincerely
(Your signature)
(Your name)
(Your Address including phone number and e-mail address)

Enclosures

5.2.2 Writing CVs

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.

Before looking at the essentials of a good resume, let’s have a look at a sample CV.

| Exhibit 5.1 |
|---|---|
| **Personal Details** |  |
| **Name** | Amit Khanna |
| **Date of Birth** | 20 December 1990 |
| **Age** | 27 years |
| **Nationality** | Indian |
| **Present Position** | Reader |
| **Department of Economics** | Christ College |
| **Residential Address** | Ambedkar Road, Coimbatore 641018 |
| | 27, Devaki Apartments |
| | Ramaswamy Road |
| | R.S. Puram, |
| | Coimbatore 641002. |
| **Contact Details** | Email: akhanna1990@gmail.com |
| | Tel: 0422-3613052 |
| | Mob: 988844 32132 |

| **Academic Qualifications** |
|---|---|---|
| **(Chronological)** | **BA (Hons) Economics** | I Class |
| | Delhi University |  |
| | **MA (Economics)** | II Class |
| | Punjab University |  |
| | **Bachelor of Laws** | Distinction |
| | Kurukshetra University |  |
| | PhD in Economics |  |
Educational Qualification
(Reverse Chronological)

2008-2012
B.E. Instrumentation
R.V. Institute of Technology
Bengaluru
65%

2006-2008
Pre-University Course
St. Aloysius College
Mangalore
71%

2006
SSLC
Mysore High School
Mysore
88%

Academic Distinctions
• Gold Medal for securing the Highest Marks in the BA (Hons) Exam.
• Chancellor’s Medal for the Best Student in M.Com.
• Merit Scholarship awarded by the Allahabad University during M.Com.
• Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Prize for Scientific Research
• Silver Medal for scoring the Second Highest Marks in LLB

Period of Work (Key Phrases)
• Thirty years of experience in the field of education, research, training, consultancy and academic administration in reputed centres of higher education in India and Australia.
• Over 20 years of experience in banking and finance covering diverse operational, administrative and teaching assignments in the Indian Public Sector.
• More than eight years of experience in the area of selling consumer durables, out of which five years as Sales Head of a city branch.
• Have worked as a Professional Service Representative for two years for a multi-national pharmaceutical company in Chennai.

Present Position
Since June 2010
Principal, Aditya College of Commerce (ACC)
Bangalore University.
ACC is a well-established and renowned college offering both graduate and post graduate programmes in commerce, with over 600 students and 30 faculty members.
Baroda
In charge of marketing and distribution of the full range of pharmaceutical products covering Gujarat and Rajasthan.
Overseeing 12 Professional Service Representatives and 4 Depot Managers.

Career Highlights or Previous Positions
2009–2014
Vice-President – Corporate Clients,
2005–2009
Executive – Client Servicing, Indus Advertisers, Brigade Towers,
M.G. Road, Pune.
2003–2005
Sales Executive, Publicity and Event Makers, Apoorva Complex,
Itwari, Nagpur.
2012–2016
Associate Professor, Business Communication
Bhandari Institute of Management, Chandigarh.
2010–2012
Senior Lecturer, Department of Management,
Kapoor College of Arts and Commerce, Ludhiana.
2007–2010
Administrative Assistant, Institute of Foreign Trade, New Delhi.
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 favorable 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
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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:

- Academic achievements including the schools and colleges attended
- Areas of study and specialization
- Marks scored, grades achieved and distinctions, if any
- Extra-curricular activities and sports
- Computer skills
- Languages known
- Hobbies and special interests
- Special studies and courses taken
- Employment details and work experience
- Career related contributions and achievements
- Core competencies
- Skills and expertise acquired
- Technical competencies
- Professional education
- Professional accreditations, licenses and certificates
- Memberships and affiliations
- Seminars and workshops attended
- Awards and honors
- Publications, papers and research
- Consultancy and speaking assignments
- Prominent training programs and institutions
- Hobbies and interests
- Personal details and contact address
- Community service and
- References.

Career related contributions and achievements would find expression in the
resumes as follows:

- Have brought new high value/corporate customers
- Have introduced several cost-cutting measures
- Have contributed to improvements in productivity and operational efficiency
- Have developed a product development team
- Have contributed research papers to prominent journals
- Have trained several batches of new recruits.
- 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.

**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:

- Personal details
- Academic qualifications
- Academic distinctions
- Work experience
- Areas of specialization
• Career-related achievements
• Seminars and workshops
• Papers and publications
• Membership of boards and committees
• Guest faculty
• Consultancy
• Computer/Technical skills
• Languages known
• Marital status
• Hobbies and interests
• 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. Different illustrations are given in.

• **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. Given below are two examples:

- Specific functional areas
  - Labour law
  - Investment banking
  - Economic journalism

- Specific industries
  - Ceramic industry
  - Mutual funds
  - Auto components

- Specific regions
  - South-East Asian markets
  - South India
  - Eastern Region

- Specialized training
  - Advanced Training in Commodity Futures
  - Advanced Program on Asian Financial Markets

**Dos and Don’ts of resume writing**

Following are the dos and dont’s of resume writing are:

**Dos**

- Make your resume stand out. Clearly bring out your strong points.
- Your resume creates your first impression. Make it neat, error-free and professional.
- Keep your resume short. Should not normally exceed 2-3 pages.
- Make a comprehensive list of your qualifications, experience, competencies, skills, etc. before writing your resume.
- Choose headings that reflect your strength and match the employer needs.
- Make your resume factually accurate and up-to-date.
- Choose the right format and keep your font professional and appealing.
- Re-check your resume for grammatical errors and inconsistencies.

**Don’ts**

- Do not boast or exaggerate. Never insert lies.
- Don’t use big and pompous words. Use key words used in the profession.
- Don’t use lengthy sentences. Use catchy phrases.
• Don’t give the contact numbers or a mailing address on which you cannot be reached.
• Don’t use words, fonts, colors and styles which make the resume gaudy and unprofessional.
• While updating don’t just squeeze in additions. Rewrite and reprint.
• Don’t make critical comments on your previous job/superiors.
• Don’t highlight achievements which you cannot substantiate.

5.2.3 Group Discussions

Group discussions constitute an important facet of group communication. Unlike a meeting or conference, which is well structured with specific roles being assigned to participants, group discussions are less formal and unstructured. One can essentially refer to two types of group discussions in an organizational context. The first type of group discussion is where a group of persons meet informally and exchange information or discuss and deliberate on a topic of common interest. The participation of the members is voluntary and every member is free to express his/her views and react to the issues brought out during the deliberations. In order to be effective, the groups should be neither too small nor too large, and should have a composition that offers scope for every participant to participate effectively. There is no chairperson or hierarchy and the participants enjoy freedom of expression. In the organizational context, group discussions involving participants from different departments, functional areas and hierarchical levels help in seeking collective wisdom on issues of concern. It is essential, however, that to be effective, the participants follow certain ground rules and self-regulation. In this context, you may also observe the type of group discussions that take place on TV channels, where experts invited air their views on the topic, with a moderator being present and facilitating the smooth flow of deliberations.

The second type of group discussion is where the job-seeking candidates invited for group discussions participate as part of the selection process. Candidates are called upon to participate in group discussions when they apply for certain job positions, or even seek admission to certain prestigious institutes like the Indian Institute of Management. The final selection is done after taking into consideration the academic qualifications and experience, performance in the written test, as also during group discussions and personal interview. Performance at the group discussion thus becomes vital for the candidate in the selection process. In the following paragraphs, we will be discussing at some length this second type of group discussions which form part of the selection process.

In any group discussion which is conducted as part of the selection process, the performance of the candidates will have to be evaluated. In order to do this, seasoned observers thoroughly observe the participation by each member and take notes. At the end of the group discussion, these observers will have to evaluate the participants in terms of well-defined relevant parameters. Like in the interview
process, here too, a score sheet covering relevant parameters is used to evaluate the performance of each candidate.

As we have noted earlier, given the demand and supply position for every available vacancy, group discussion is used as much for elimination as for selection. In other words, given the intensely competitive environment, only those candidates who excel in their participation in the group discussion can hope to make it to the personal interview and final selection. Candidates who take the initiative, communicate effectively, respect group behaviour and generally distinguish themselves through their thoughts and expressions, tend to score over the others in the group discussions. In every group of say eight to ten members, probably, three to four may qualify for the personal interview, unless every candidate appearing for the group discussion is also invited to appear for the personal interview.

From the list of traits stated in the exhibit, it is evident that candidates desirous of doing well in group discussions will have to consciously develop these traits. Although the traits listed here are relevant for the successful conduct of any group discussion, every group discussion may or may not be according to guidelines. Controversial and provocative topics sometimes lead to heated and animated discussion leading to confusion and chaos. Candidates possessing leadership qualities and strong interactive skills will be in a position to intervene effectively and turn chaos into order. Neither too much aggression and domination, nor too much hesitation and dilly dallying is desirable. The candidate participating in the group discussion should also quietly size up the other members of the group, which would help in making appropriate interventions. Usually, the topics selected for group discussion are such that it is possible to argue both for and against it. What is important for the candidate is to support personal views by analytical approach and logical reasoning. The candidate should be in a position to defend the arguments if the occasion demands. Anger, intimidation, domination, submissiveness, personal attack and non-participation will have to be consciously avoided. At the same time, confidence, wit, humour, respect for fellow participants and accommodation should be used advantageously.

5.2.4 Interview skills

Job interviews constitute the last leg of the career selection process for any candidate. Job seekers would have probably completed the following steps in their quest for jobs before getting a call letter for the interview:

- Identifying the job opportunity
- Sending an application
- Resume or Biodata
- Testimonials
- References
- Group discussions
Since choosing the right career is very important for every individual, conscious efforts have to be made in every aspect of the job-seeking effort cited above. The final selection would be a culmination of all these efforts. A good resume, strong testimonials, appropriate references and effective participation in the group discussions together facilitate a high level of confidence as the candidate faces the interview.

Interviewers are normally provided the biodata, testimonials, references and brief report on their performance in the group discussion as reference material for the interview. Any extra care the candidate takes in these areas would certainly provide that welcome edge in facing the interview panel.

Given the significance of performing at one’s best at the interview, the preparation has to start well in advance and should cover many areas. The knowledge-related and subject-specific inputs apart, success in the interview calls for a positive orientation, high level of self-confidence, active listening, effective communication, pleasing disposition, noticeable interpersonal skills and the right temperament. In the following paragraphs, we look at the various aspects that need keen attention prior to, during and after the interview.

Do your homework

Preparation for the interview starts with good homework. Try to learn as much as you can about the organization. What is its line of business, track record, strengths and weaknesses, hierarchical structure, values and future plans? Then find out the details about the job on offer—number of vacancies, place of posting, remuneration package, work culture, job description and attributes sought and so on.

Make sure that the job on offer is what you are looking for, or at least what you will settle for. You should ask yourself the following questions. Are you qualified? Do you possess the skills required to take up the job on offer? Are you confident that you will measure up to the expectations of the company? Suitability for the job is very essential. In essence, the interview panel would be looking for candidates who match the job profile. Make sure that you collect the relevant details about the organization and the job on offer and that it fits your aspirations. If yes, start your preparation in right earnest. If not, do not waste your time and the interviewers’ time. When the job on offer matches your expectations, seize every opportunity to provide the most important information about yourself and clearly show your enthusiasm and inclination.

Anticipate questions

After learning the basic facts about the organization and the job, get ready to face the interviewers’ questions. Put yourself in their shoes and try to anticipate questions. Questions will be of different types. They may be general or specific. They may be fact-related or opinion-related. They may be personal or professional. They may be knowledge oriented or attitude oriented. They may be
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primary or first time questions or follow-up questions. They may be hypothetical or leading questions. They may be easy or tough. They could even be tricky and provocative. The questions may cover the details you have mentioned in your application and resume. Think of all the likely questions and the right way of answering them. It would be a good idea to write down answers to questions you anticipate and expect to answer.

Broadly speaking, interview related questions fall into certain major categories as below:

- Education and Academic Study
- Work Experience
- Job Knowledge and Skills
- Self-Assessment
- Personality and Temperament
- Organizations or Employers
- General Knowledge and Awareness.

Some typical questions are as follows:

- What would you like to say about yourself? Describe yourself.
- Why do you consider yourself suitable for this job?
- Why are you leaving your present job?
- Why have you changed so many jobs?
- What kind of a career are you seeking?
- What will you do if you get a better offer?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Which are your noteworthy failures? What lessons have you learnt from those failures?
- Are you prepared to work in any place?
- Given your qualifications and experience, should you not be looking for a higher level position?
- Why are you not seeking a job in line with the subjects you have studied?
- In which extra-curricular activities have you excelled?
- Describe your greatest accomplishment in college.
- What significant contribution have you made in your previous jobs?
- Why should we prefer you over somebody who has more experience?
- Tell us three good reasons as to why we should hire you.
- This job calls for high levels of initiative and hard work. Can you measure up?
• How good are you in working under pressure? Can you handle stress?
• How tech savvy are you? Are you comfortable working in a computerized environment?
• How well can you work as a member of a team? Tell us how you have demonstrated your team working abilities.
• What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in the next 5 or 10 years?
• Why have you been without a job for so long?
• Are you willing to work if we offer you a different/lower level position?
• What kind of books do you read, music you like and what is your favourite pastime?
• What do you know about our organization?
• Who are your role models? Why?

These are just some examples. Depending on the type of organization and nature and level of position you are seeking, the questions can get more penetrating. There could be questions based on your answers. The questions would normally cover your (1) academic qualifications, (2) work experience, (3) extra-curricular activities, (4) personal contribution, (5) subject knowledge, (6) general business awareness, (7) management concepts, (8) health and fitness (9) likes, dislikes and biases and (10) ability to cope with higher responsibilities and stress. Remember, while it is helpful to anticipate the probable questions and prepare the answers, it is prudent to be in readiness to face unanticipated questions.

Don’t get worked up

It is very necessary that the candidate keeps his/her cool when getting ready to face the interview. While some legitimate concerns are perhaps unavoidable considering what is at stake, getting unduly worked up should be consciously avoided. This is true of all important interviews, be they job interviews, promotion interviews or assignment selection interviews. Too much of tension and edginess starts showing up and gives a wrong message to the interviewer. The candidate should not get unduly worried about the type of preparations made by other competitors. Similarly, the candidate should not get tensed up about areas which have not been covered during the preparation. If you are composed and in control of yourself, you will think of the right reply. Try to be at ease with yourself. It helps you become more attentive, listen well and organize your thoughts better as you face the panel.

Reach on time

Reach well in time for the interview. This is an obvious, yet very essential requirement. It gives you sufficient time to find the exact venue, get used to
the ambience and be comfortable. Arriving late for the interview may lead to guilt feelings and put you at a disadvantage, besides creating an unfavourable impression on the interviewer. If the place of interview is in a city/area with which you are not very familiar, make sure to either visit the place earlier or start sufficiently early. Reaching late and entering the hall sweating profusely gives you a bad start.

**Physical appearance**

Any interview is much more than a question-and-answer session. For the candidate, it is actually the challenge of marketing oneself. Given this reality, the overall impression a candidate makes on the interview panel assumes significance. The candidate makes the first impression on presentation of oneself. It is axiomatic that attire oft proclaims a man/woman, especially in a serious appointment like an interview. It is very necessary, therefore, that the candidate dresses well for the occasion. It may be a suit, a tie, a full sleeve shirt and other accessories that make the candidate look smart. Being well dressed for the interview gives the message that one is keen on creating the right impression. After reaching the venue, the candidate should look at the mirror and make sure that he or she is presentable. Although what dress is appropriate for the particular interview may depend on the nature of the organization, category of the post, the climate and such other factors, it is very essential that the appearance is not casual.

There is one more reason why a candidate should dress well for the interview. That is on account of the level of confidence it generates for the candidate. Imagine an interview for a senior post where most of the other candidates are in a suit and you are in your slacks. May be if you are really smart, you may still do well, but then it all depends on how the interviewer interprets it. It is important to be self-confident. It is always desirable to avoid the feeling that you are likely to be at a disadvantage for being under-dressed for the occasion. If you are not comfortable and at ease with a suit or a tie, get used to it by practising it well in advance. At the same time, if somebody is better dressed than you, let it not deter you from making your best effort. How you feel about yourself is what matters. Feed your self-confidence.

**Appropriate body language**

Looks apart, there are several dimensions to body language. The candidate for the interview should be conscious of them. Right posture, alert look, firm handshake, not looking nervous, confident and clear voice and appropriate eye contact help create the right impression. Slouching, drooping, sitting with a hunchback, fidgeting, blinking and shaking the legs create a negative impression. When you are facing an interviewer, avoid negative body language and distracting gestures. Scratching your head, pursing your lips, staring at your palms, examining your nails, picking your nose, and rolling your tongue are all best avoided. More than anything else, it is important to wear a smile. A smile projects as well as reinforces confidence.
Build a rapport

Try to build a rapport with the interviewer or the members of the interview panel. This can be done by looking confident, smiling, greeting and a firm handshake. This should be done not just with the chairman of the interview panel, but with the other members as well. Establish eye contact with and reply to the person who has asked you a question. Be conscious of your mannerisms. Refrain from making statements such as ‘You have got me wrong’, ‘You have not understood me’, ‘What you are saying is not correct’, ‘It is impertinent’ and the like. Don’t look either grim or casual. Do not interrupt them when they are speaking to each other.

Understand the question

Make sure that you have understood the question. This is possible when you are attentive. Active listening is very essential. Let the interviewer complete the question. Do not be in a hurry. Do not interrupt. If you do not interrupt, there is a possibility that the interviewer will give you some hints of what he/she is driving at. However, after the question has been put forth, if you are not clear about it, feel free to seek a clarification. In doing so, be polite. State what you have understood and seek a confirmation. For example, ‘Sir, as I understand, you want me to...’.

Reply earnestly

Organize your thoughts quickly and give earnest replies. State whatever you know with confidence. Give correct facts and figures. Avoid mixing up figures. State clearly the lakhs, millions, the crores, the dollars or any other statistics unambiguously. Bring out not only your knowledge or depth of understanding of the subject, but also your attitude and concerns. As far as possible, use positive words. Use bright, sharp and appropriate words relevant to the discipline or profession. Be assertive, but avoid extreme positions. There are some questions in which it is possible to hold different views, which means that a very rigid, ‘anything else is incorrect’ type of statement is to be refrained from. Keep balance. Make your reply as brief or as long as the interviewer expects. For this, take the clue from the way the question is worded. When questions are tricky, take your time in organizing your thoughts.

Confidentiality

There are occasions when working in an organization, the employee comes into the possession of confidential information. Such information – whether it is product related, process related, performance related or client related – should not be leaked out to outsiders, especially competitors, for it harms the interest of the organization. Most companies ask their employees to sign a confidentiality agreement. Even otherwise, when an employee works for any organization, there is always an implicit promise of confidentiality. This promise of confidentiality, whether explicit or implicit, should not be breached. That means, in answering...
the interview questions, the interviewee should protect the interest of the current/previous employer and refrain from disclosing such confidential information. All ethically minded interviewers/organizations do appreciate that and do not expect the interviewee to disclose any information that is organization-specific and confidential in nature. That apart, there would be a natural presumption that an employee who cannot keep things confidential for his current or previous employer is unlikely to do so about the future employers too. The candidate’s credibility or trustworthiness takes a beating. The trick, therefore, lies in answering questions in a manner that reflects the candidate’s experience and accomplishments without leaking out confidential matters or offending the interviewers.

**Be sincere, truthful and well mannered**

Answer what you know for sure with confidence. State when you are in doubt. Don’t ever tell a blatant lie, hoping that it will go undetected. Admit that you don’t know the answer, if that is the position. If you know part of the answer, state that in clear terms and if you are guessing the rest, state so. The interviewer accepts that you know some and do not know some, but no interviewer will accept deliberate lies. Credibility is important. Some interviewers will even encourage you to make false statements so that you talk yourself into a trap. Be sincere and truthful.

Impress the interviewer with your good manners. That is very important. Especially so when you are just out of the college and are facing your first job interview. Good manners count a lot in dealing with colleagues, superiors, customers and other business associates. Manners make a man or woman look pleasant.

**Do not offend the interviewer**

As an interviewee one should conduct oneself in such a way that the interviewer is not, for any reason, offended. Argumentation should be avoided. Be assertive without being offensive. If you disagree with the interviewer, or if you hold a diametrically opposite point of view, bring it out as your experience or understanding. Never ever unnecessarily correct the interviewer’s observations or challenge statements. Remember, you are not keen on winning the argument if it means losing the interview.

If you want to create the right impression, do not interrupt your interviewer. Wait till he finishes talking, even if he has interrupted you. You create a good impression by being a good listener. A good listener allows the other person to finish what he or she starts telling. You stop talking when the interviewer starts to speak even when you are not finished.

**Do not brag**

Do state your achievements, contributions and strong points, as and when called for, but keep it in perspective. Avoid loud mouthing and pompous or boastful statements. Braggarts, or those who blow their own trumpets, do not find favour
with the interviewers. Do not overstate your achievements. Gracefully accept your shortcomings and weaknesses. State the efforts you are making to overcome them, if there is an opportunity. Give due credit to the teamwork, favourable circumstances and such other factors that helped you perform well. Honest self-assessment always carries a favourable impression. At the same time, don’t miss the right opportunity to mention your high points.

Avoid long pauses

Take your time to organize your thoughts and give your replies. When you are asked a question, you are not expected to reply immediately. A small pause as you mentally formulate your reply, in fact, results in well thought out answers. When you take some time to collect your thoughts, the interviewer appreciates your earnestness. All the same, avoid long pauses. Long pauses lead to communication breakdown and result in an awkward situation. Keep the conversation going. Sometimes the panel members will offer hints and tips which will be of help in collecting your thoughts. Make the best use of such gestures. Know when and how to keep the conversation going from your side. For example, there are some open-ended questions where the answer should be much more than a yes or a no. Obviously, in all such cases, the interviewer will be looking for some positive and logical back-up statements rather than just a mere affirmation.

Grab opportunities

Interviewers generally follow a set pattern. They start with the candidate’s academic and professional background before coming to job-specific and knowledge assessment questions. Quite often, the questions get progressively tougher. Every candidate is very likely to get a mix of easy and tough questions. The candidate should grab the opportunity and make it a point to score more on the easy questions. Among the panel members too, some ask general questions while some others persevere and ask probing questions. The candidate should be alert enough to take advantage of the opportunities as and when they show up. There may be breaks in between on account of tea breaks, telephone calls and consultations among the panel members. The candidate can make gainful use of such breaks to review earlier replies and especially what was missed out. The candidate may elaborate on the earlier replies and make such additional points as are to his or her advantage when the interview resumes. An alert candidate makes it a point to grab any such opportunity.

As an interviewee, it is your responsibility to clearly bring out how your academic background, job related knowledge and skills, and expertise and experience can add value to the organization. Seize every little opportunity to make it easy for the interviewer to appreciate your suitability and enthusiasm. Just because something is already mentioned in your resume, do not presume that the interviewer has read that. On your part, highlight your strengths and capabilities with reference to the job requirements and interviewer expectations.
Use wit and humor

Interviews need not necessarily be very serious affairs. Interviewers are normally required to conduct interviews of numerous candidates in a time-bound manner. This results in certain tedium or wariness for the interview panel, especially towards the end. A candidate who, even while answering the questions well, uses wit and humour naturally scores high in the interview. In doing so, however, proper discretion is called for. A candidate should avoid telling irrelevant jokes and anecdotes, and maintain decorum and seriousness associated with an interview process. Humorous anecdotes associated with great personalities like Mark Twain or Bernard Shaw which are appropriate for the occasion may, however, add some lighter moments. Similarly, if opportune, the interviewee may also mention some relevant quotes of famous personalities to lighten the atmosphere and show his or her wit and presence of mind. Remember, however, that this is not a must. Don’t spoil your chances by using a bad joke or stale humour.

Kinds of interviewers

Every interview has a human dimension. Like the interviewee, the person on the other side is an individual and, as such, it would be desirable to be informed about various kinds of interviewers. They too constitute a mixed lot—some are friendly, some are tough, some focus on positives, some on negatives, some are easily satisfied, some are much more demanding, some look for concepts and theories, some are more into specifics, some focus on knowledge, some on ignorance, some lead you into the right answers, some into traps, some are soft, some are a bully. The interviewee has to be conscious of the many faces of an interviewer. One should learn to make a quick assessment and learn to deal with each kind of them. The saying ‘Different strokes for different folks’ holds true in this case. Every candidate facing an interview should learn to understand and evaluate the kind of person the interviewer is and respond appropriately. It would be imprudent to always expect an interviewer who makes it easy for the interviewee to give one’s best. It would be wise to be prepared to face the tough and difficult interviewer. The real challenge for any candidate is to face a very tough interview panel and emerge successful.

Interviewer’s perspective

Appreciating the various kinds of interviewers, it is also advantageous for the interviewee to look at the interview process from the interviewer’s perspective, i.e., to understand what the panel is looking for. The interviewer is essentially trying to identify and select the most suitable candidate for the post. The interviewer is trying to match the job profile with that of the candidate. He has several questions in his/her mind. Will the candidate deliver the goods on the job? Will the candidate measure up to expectation? Will the candidate find the job exciting and stay on? Will the job measure up to the candidate’s expectations? If not, the entire exercise will become futile. Whether the selected candidate quits after appointment or whether the organization finds the selected candidate not up
to the mark on the job, the end result is the same. Any interview panel is always conscious of the time, effort and resources involved in organizing the interviews and the consequent imperative of making them worthwhile.

As a candidate for interview, one should put oneself in the interviewer’s shoes and try to assess what the organization is looking for. The interview panel normally decides beforehand the various qualities or attributes appropriate for the job, and the relative weightage for each of them. Depending on whether the job is that of a generalist or a specialist, a line job or a managerial position, a customer contact job or otherwise, the weightage to skills and qualifications sought would vary. Each member of the interview panel would be provided with a score sheet where they will note down the marks scored by each candidate during the interview under each major parameter. While some interviewers would give numerical scores for each parameter, others would settle for a gradation—A+, A, B+, B, etc., or qualitative remarks—excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, poor, etc. Some relevant parameters based on which final selection of the candidate is made are:

- academic qualifications
- previous experience
- attitude and temperament
- communication skills
- interpersonal skills
- subject knowledge
- general awareness
- age
- extra-curricular activities
- motivation and
- health and fitness.

Apart from the intelligence quotient or IQ, emotional quotient or EQ also assumes significance when the jobs carry high levels of stress and responsibility.

### Interview Score Sheet

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<th>Name of the candidate:</th>
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Although the table above lists some of the more common qualities on which the evaluation takes place in most interviews, there are bound to be some differences depending upon the nature of the post and the position in the hierarchy. All these parameters do not always carry equal or identical weightage. For example, in a marketing job, appearance and communicative skills are given higher weightage. In a specialist or R&D job, subject knowledge and conceptual clarity have greater weightage. In positions of leadership, interpersonal skills, communication skills and initiative are accorded higher weightage.

**Try to be distinctive**

In an interview, any candidate is obviously competing with a host of other candidates. All of them have been called for the interview after the usual process of screening, which means that all of them meet the minimum eligibility criteria. Given this reality, those candidates who are distinctive and try to stand out from the rest of the candidates are more likely to be successful. Within the short span of time, they try to make their presence felt. They leave behind an impression on the interview panel members. This is done in many ways—noticeable appearance, depth of understanding of the subject, confident conduct, quick responses, command over the language, positive attitude, optimistic approach and so on. In the ultimate analysis, impressions do matter. Be conscious of the need to create the right impression.

**Concluding the interview**

You have had your interview—may be for 10 minutes or 30 minutes—and it is time to conclude. The chairman of the interview panel in consultation with others suggests that your interview has come to an end. At that time, sometimes, you may be asked, ‘Anything else you want to say?’ or you may on your own venture to add, if the conditions are right, something which you have not had the opportunity to say. Make good use of any such opportunity. Say something which puts you in an advantage. If necessary, seek details about the organization and the position without being too inquisitive. It could be anything that suggests that you are interested. At the same time, assess the mood. Do not say something if that is not welcome and, more so, if it is likely to detract the favourable impression you have already put up.

**Be discreet and restrained**

You complete your interview, say ‘thank you’ to the chairperson and other members of the panel and walk out of the room. Immediately, you start evaluating your performance. You may feel you have done very well, reasonably well, not so well or very bad. Just keep it to yourself. You don’t have to advertise and talk about your performance to people waiting outside, especially if you feel you have not done well. First, it is only your impression. Second, what matters is relative performance—how you fare vis-a-vis your competitors. Moreover, any
interview is an intense process. How you really perform depends not only on your knowledge and sense of preparedness, but also on a host of other factors over which you have no control. It may start with a delay. You may not get the right questions or adequate time. One of the interviewers may be hostile. It may start off on a wrong note. By the time you get your turn, the interviewers may have got fatigued. Remember: It is desirable to be well prepared for the interview. Take all essential steps as described in the earlier paragraphs. Yet, notwithstanding all your preparedness, it is likely that the delivery and the final outcome during the interview may not be the way you wanted. Learn to take it in your stride.

After the interview

After the interview, as you wait for the results, learn to keep the anxiety level low. The outcome can be either way. May be you have done well. But there may be others who have done better. May be you have done very well in the interview, but there may be other requirements which have not been met. In most cases there are few posts and many competitors. Keep your sense of equanimity.

Further, it is also desirable that no direct contact is made with the interviewer/interview panel members to know the results. Not only are such requests generally not entertained, but also such attempts are considered improper. Although this seems appropriate in most cases, there are authors who opine that immediately after the interview, as a matter of common courtesy, a thank-you letter should be sent to the interviewer. It will work in favor of the interviewee by reminding the interviewer about the candidate. On this, the candidates should take a call depending on the nature of the organization and sense of propriety.

Do not blame yourself

You faced the interview boldly, did quite well and yet you receive a regret letter. There is, of course, the initial disappointment. But, nevertheless, do not indulge in self-pity. Do not blame yourself. It will take you nowhere. It is not always your fault that you lost the opportunity. Moreover, it is not the end of the world. As the saying goes, ‘Tomorrow is another day.’ Gather your spirits and strengthen your resolve. Accepting rejection or failure, whatever be the reason, is an important trait for any person seeking success in career and business. It helps build resilience or the ability to cope with failure and spring back to action. Those who know how to cope with failure are more determined than before to seek success. Introspect and learn the right lessons from the experience. In what ways can you position yourself better to meet such challenges in future? Believe in your ability. Think positive. If it can happen to the late Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, past President of India, it can happen to anyone. The incident quoted below is indeed an eye opener.
5.3 IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT ON BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The advancement of information technology has dramatically changed the way that many businesses communicate today. For example, the fax was a popular form of communication for businesses in the 1980s. Though it still has its uses, people now largely use the e-mail instead. With the coming of the Internet, most companies today use it to communicate with the outside world. Similarly, intranets are used in companies today to communicate within the organization. It is today essential to have in place appropriate technology in order to facilitate communication within organizations.

Perhaps one revolution that has affected our lives to the maximum is the Internet—a world-wide collection and storehouse of information that keeps increasing every minute. The ability to access and share this information stored in thousands of computers world-wide for free (nearly so) at any hour of the day or night, has revolutionized the way we work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merits and Demerits of Information Technology</th>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Demerits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Increased capacity to monitor individual and team performance.</td>
<td>* Constant accessibility to employees can create problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Enhanced decision-making based on faster information flow/access.</td>
<td>* The demarcation between work and personal life often gets blurred.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Greater possibility of collaboration and sharing of information.</td>
<td>* An employer has access to even official mails that are not necessarily private.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Greater accessibility to co-workers.</td>
<td>* Many employees are not clear about the laws and company policies governing electronic communication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Great improvement in the speed at which communication can take place in organizations, with intranet and extranet, allowing widely distanced employees to work together.</td>
<td>* Responding to customer and employee complaints has become a challenge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Increased effectiveness and efficiency as it integrates decision-making and work.</td>
<td>* Employees often do not follow e-mail etiquette.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* The ability of organizations to build online information databases that employees can access.</td>
<td>* Information overload is the current challenge that organizations face.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* The ability of organizations to create communities in which people can share their expertise and knowledge and interact with other employees.</td>
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</table>
5.3.1 Revolutionary Electronic Innovations

The following are some electronic innovations that have revolutionized communication:

- Electronic mail, popularly called e-mail, is the instantaneous transmission of a message on computers that are connected through the inter/intranet.
- Instant Messaging (IM) is the interactive real-time exchange of messages among computers logged on at the same time.
- Fax machines allow transmission of documents containing both text and graphics over ordinary telephone lines. These days, fax can also be sent through computers.
- Voice mail is a system that digitizes a spoken message that is transmitted over a network and stores the message on a disk to be retrieved later.
- Electronic data interchange (EDI) is a way to exchange documents (invoices or purchase orders) with vendors, suppliers and customers using direct computer-to-computer networks.
- Teleconferencing refers to the simultaneous conference between groups using telephones or e-mail group communication software.
- Videoconferencing refers to a conference/meeting in which groups are at different locations, perhaps across the world and can see each other through video screens.
- Intranets refer to a network that uses internet technology but is accessible only to organizational employees.
- Extranets are organizational communication networks that use internet technology and allow authorized users within the organization to communicate with certain outsiders such as customers or vendors.
- Wireless Communications allow users to send and receive information from anywhere as there are no hard-wired network systems.
- Knowledge management refers to a growing learning culture in which employees systematically gather knowledge and share it through computer-based networks to interest groups.

5.3.2 Technology-Enabled Communication

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 the effectiveness of business communication and customer, public and employee relations.

5.3.3 Communication Networks

Network used for communication is called communication network. Network is of different types:

- **LAN** (Local Area Network)
- **MAN** (Metropolitan Area Network)
- **WAN** (Wide Area Network)
- **PAN** (Personal Area Network)
- **SAN** (Storage Area Network)
- **EPN** (Enterprise Private Network)
- **VPN** (Virtual Private Network)

These are used for:

- **LAN**: is used in small areas like office, building or an organisation. It is network which is spread in local area. The main purpose of LAN is to share information and resources.
- **MAN**: is used to share information within a city or town to share information. MAN is commonly used for TV cable network.
- **WAN**: is used to share information with world. It is spread all over the world. Example of WAN are Internet, Intranet, Bank ATM etc.
- **PAN**: Personal Area Network is a network which enables communication between computer devices near a person.
SAN: It is a block-based storage. It is a technology by which high-speed architecture connects with servers to their logical disk units (LUNs). A LUN is a range of blocks provisioned from a pool of shared storage and presented to the server as a logical disk.

EPN: It is used by a business enterprise to connect its various company sites (such as production sites, offices and shops) in order to share computer resources.

VPN: It is a network technology that is used to create a safe and encrypted connection over a less secure network, such as the internet.

5.3.4 Internet

Advancements in information technology have also resulted in the explosive growth of the internet culture. Internet is described as an ‘international network of networks’ that consists of millions of private, public, government, academic and business networks linked by several electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. Through Internet, it is now possible to access any information for the purpose of e-learning, e-business, e-commerce and even entertainment. Social networking which we have discussed elsewhere in this book, is also supported by the Internet.

Internet, which is also referred to as the Net, is an international computer network that connects other networks and computers from companies, universities, institutions, etc. It provides the means for people’s computers to interface with one another via the network. In other words, internet is a global system of interconnected computer network that uses the Standard Internet Protocol Suit (TCP/IP) to serve billions of people worldwide. With the extensive use of the internet for surfing for a wide array of information and exchanging messages day in and day out, Internet has become a vehicle of choice on the information superhighway.

Internet applications are wide ranging and include email and information search. Apart from emailing, Instant Messaging (IM), Teleconferencing and Videoconferencing are also facilitated by the internet. Corporates and businesses are increasingly using internet for both internal and external communication. The internet carries an extensive range of information, resources and services, as a result of which it is used in every office, institution, company and business organisation, besides individual homes all over the world.

World Wide Web (WWW)

Just as it provides the infrastructure support to email, internet also supports the worldwide web (www), file transfers, remote computer control, newsgroups, Internet chats and online games. Worldwide web is a popular method of accessing any need-based information through the medium of internet. WWW is an information sharing model that is built on the internet. Since academicians, researchers, resource persons, universities and institutions regularly use and upload data internet sites, educational material at all levels from pre-school to
post-doctoral is available from numerous websites supported by the internet. The Internet in general and the World Wide Web in particular have been recognized to be important enablers of both formal and informal education.

While the internet is a global network connecting billions of computers providing ready access to all, Intranet refers to a private computer network that uses the internet Protocol to securely share information within the organisation. Intranet is described as a computer network that is private to a company, university, institution, etc. but is connected to and uses the same software as the Internet.

As of January 2021, there were 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide 59.5 percent of the global population. All these developments underline the growing importance of Internet and the need for a good business communicator to be Internet savvy.

5.3.5 Intranet

An Intranet is a type of private Internet. Intranet uses IP protocol to sharing information. It is used to share information, computation services and operational system within an organisation. Intranet is also an example of WAN. It is a type of private network is not open for public. The information is limited within an organisation. It can be organisation internal website, which is spread over the multiple LAN on different locations. Intranet may be private website, internal communication tool used to communicate internally in an organisation for important information exchange and focus on important decisions. Intranet also work on seven layer OSI model. It has also the protocols used in SOI model like HTTP (Hyper Text Transfer Protocol), FTP (File Transfer Protocol), SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol) at Application layer. In short Intranet is a private internet or WAN technology, used to communicate within an organisation for internal communication. Intranet is accessible to employee of an organisation and same like Intranet, Extranet is available to customers, suppliers and permissible members for business purpose. User can access Extranet with the special provision of AAA protocol. AAA protocol is used to authenticate, authorize, accounting protocol. This protocol is used to identify user to access the information provided on Extranet. Intranet is protected by firewalls through network gateway for data protection. Intranet are used to share internal corporate directories related with business, customer relationship management tools and for improvement of business productivity and promote internal communication.

Advantages of intranet

The advantages of Intranet over the Internet are as listed below:

- Intranet is simple, feasible and speedy network used within an organisation for communication. It is a communication tool used by an organisation for increasing productivity. It is a communication tool used to inform employees at different location in world. It saves the time for travelling and result in quick and easy meetings through Intranet. It saves the organisation expenses and increase productivity.
• Using Intranet information is easily available between employees and thus they demand information frequently on demand and help to develop employee friendly environment.

• Employees can share their views and ideas with the other employees at different location. This process of brainstorming generates quick and efficient results and helpful in taking decision by an organisation. Employee can communicate freely with other employee and participate in questions and answers rounds, discuss on root level problem and they are more fee to express their views with others. Intranet is very helpful in problem solving, data analysis and team work. The concept of discussion group with expert helpful in decision making.

• It improves productivity of the manager. With Intranet, the manager can spend more time in analysing information and not in seeking information and waiting for its delivery. Production rate will be improved by using Intranet.

• Intranet is helpful in free flow information among the members of an organisation.

Disadvantages of Intranet

There are few disadvantages of Intranet. Intranet requires proper planning and the implementation phase is difficult as all the information is uploaded on Intranet. Employees sometime find it difficult to share every information at the beginning.

• **Security Risk:** Major risk involved in Intranet is the security of information on Intranet. Intranet is a private network and if hacked by other agency then there is risk of information leak which can effect the growth of an organisation. Unauthorized alteration is also possible in Intranet at the time of AAA protocol violation.

• **Difficult at implementation phase:** Intranet is difficult to implement at the starting point. Employees are not supportive at the beginning, they find it difficult as their working environment is changed.

5.3.6 E-mails

E-mail, as you already know; stands for electronic mail. ‘e’ in e-mail stands for electronic. This word can be spelled either email or e-mail. Email is described as a way of sending messages and data to other people by means of computers connected together in a network. Email 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 email 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,
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.
- Email communication can be lengthy or heavy when it carries attachments.
- E-mail communication has a large global reach and access.
- Email 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 email messages per minute has crossed 200 million. Email 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.

Email is used for both personal communication and business communication. When email messages are sent for personal communication, they tend to be informal communication. On the other hand, when email messages are sent in a corporate or business framework, they tend to be formal and official. Email application for a job, sending of an office memorandum and email office reminders are all examples of formal communication in business. Personal emails 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 emails are not suitable

Notwithstanding the several advantages of email communication, there are some instances where an email communication is not recommended. These are as follows:

• emails 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. Email messages do not carry the same personal touch which a handwritten or neatly typed message on good quality paper carries.

• emails 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.

• emails are best avoided when they are meant to be confidential as they can be easily forwarded to several others.

• emails 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.

• emails are not to be used when the receiver expects a signed copy of the communication.
5.3.7 Teleconferencing and Videoconferencing

Teleconferencing refers to a conference or discussion that takes place in which the members are at different places and speak to each other using telephone and video connections. Teleconferencing is a process of live exchange of information among several persons linked together by the telephone equipment. Telephone instruments with speaker facility enable speaking and hearing without the handset or the mouthpiece.

In teleconferencing, it is possible for more than one person to speak from one end and discuss with more than one person at the other end. This way, the advantage is that people from one group or team can speak to another and have discussions, without physically attending the meetings. Teleconferencing is gaining popularity in modern business houses, institutions and organizations, especially for small group interactions.

Teleconferencing equipment links together several persons located at different places and thereby facilitates live exchanges. Software such as NetMeeting, Skype and Yahoo Messenger are used in teleconferencing. Most large organizations have their internal tele and video conferencing software to meet the needs of their organization and keep the information shared discreet and confidential.

Videoconferencing goes a step ahead of teleconferencing, whereby apart from the audio messages, videos of participants are also available. While teleconferencing basically focuses on audio or oral exchanges, videoconferencing is meant for video or picture enabled exchanges. It is possible to look at the person speaking at the other end. It is of particular relevance when the chief of the state, CEO of the company or any expert wants to address people spread across regions and locations.

A typical example of videoconferencing is the live telecast of budgets and election results and the interviews and analysis that follows, wherein opinions and comments are sought. It is also possible that when an expert speaker cannot be physically present to address a meeting, a live telecast of his or her message or address can be brought to the assembly of people in a meeting or seminar. Here, the communication becomes more effective than a mere recorded audio message. In fact, not only participants’ video, the participants’ desktop can also be shared so that the content on one person’s laptop can be viewed by the whole team without having to actually send it across to each of them. New product demos and knowledge sharing sessions benefit from this method of conferencing.

The real benefit of videoconferencing is that it uses both audio and video telecommunications to bring people at different locations together for a live interaction. For the corporate sector, this means that meetings can be called at short notice and people in different locations can participate in the meeting without leaving their workplaces. There is an obvious saving of time and cost when meetings take place through videoconferencing.
Since videoconferencing as a system enables people at different parts of the world to have a meeting by watching and listening to each other using video screens, banks, insurance companies, and a variety of corporates and businesses are installing videoconferencing systems for their regular business use.

Face-to-face meetings are indeed desirable and much more effective. However, since distance and cost factors make such meetings impractical or expensive, teleconferencing and videoconferencing are considered to be the next best thing to personal meetings. Advancements in communication technology now enable people in different locations to speak, and see and speak to each other.

### Check Your Progress

6. What kind of network is SAN?
7. How many internet users exist currently in the world?
8. Mention any three advantages of email.

### 5.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A solicited application letter is written when you are sending your CV in response to an advertised vacancy, that is, when applications have been called for by an organization. On the other hand, an unsolicited application is written when you are sending your CV for an unadvertised job position in an organization.

2. The body of a cover letter consists of one or two paragraphs. It gives information about your current job and summarizes in a couple of lines your qualification and experience. It mentions your strengths and your suitability for the position you are applying for.

3. The don’ts of resume writing include:
   (a) Do not boast or exaggerate. Never insert lies.
   (b) Don’t use big and pompous words. Use key words used in the profession.
   (c) Don’t use lengthy sentences. Use catchy phrases.

4. Participants in group discussions are evaluated by seasoned observers who thoroughly observe the participation by each member and take notes. At the end of the group discussion, these observers will have to evaluate the participants in terms of well-defined relevant parameters. Like in the interview process, here too, a score sheet covering relevant parameters is used to evaluate the performance of each candidate.

5. Broadly speaking, interview related questions fall into certain major categories as below:
   (a) Self-Assessment
6. SAN is a block-based storage. It is a technology by which high-speed architecture connects with servers to their logical disk units (LUNs). A LUN is a range of blocks provisioned from a pool of shared storage and presented to the server as a logical disk.

7. As of January 2021 there were 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide - 59.5 percent of the global population.

8. The advantages of using e-mail are indeed many:
   (a) E-mail communication is swift, in fact instantaneous.
   (b) E-mail communication is extremely economical.
   (c) Email communication can be lengthy or heavy when it carries attachments.

5.5 SUMMARY

- An important segment of business communication 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.

- It is very important to include the cover letter while sending your resume/CV. Such a letter introduces you and explains your purpose. It introduces the major points in your CV.

- 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.

- Group discussions constitute an important facet of group communication. Unlike a meeting or conference, which is well structured with specific roles being assigned to participants, group discussions are less formal and unstructured.

- Job interviews constitute a very vital aspect of the job selection process in any organization. Although, quite often, written tests and group discussions carry their own weightage, the performance of the candidate at the job interview may make or mar the final selection.

- A good understanding of the essentials that help in making the interview a success is very necessary for every job-seeking candidate.

- The preparation for any interview should start well in advance with the candidate collecting as much information as possible about the organization and the job profile.

- The candidate should anticipate and prepare for various types of questions that are likely to be asked by the interview panel. Being prepared to face
the difficult and tricky questions actually helps in answering them during
the interview.

- Attire and appearance make a difference in any interview. Make sure that
you dress well and look professional. Avoid looking grim and tense, try
to smile and look relaxed.

- Ultimately, it is a game where the candidate has to outscore competitors.
One has to be distinctive, get noticed and create an impression. Be
enthusiastic.

- Notwithstanding what happens in the interview, the final outcome could
be either way. The candidate should learn to take it in stride and not give
up resolve.

- The advancement of information technology has dramatically changed the
way that many businesses communicate today.

- 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 is described as an ‘international network of networks’ that consists
of millions of private, public, government, academic and business networks
linked by several electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies.

- Worldwide web is a popular method of accessing any need-based
information through the medium of internet. WWW is an information
sharing model that is built on the internet.

- An Intranet is a type of private Internet. Intranet uses IP protocol to sharing
information. It is used to share information, computation services and
operational system within an organisation.

- E-mail stands for electronic mail. ‘e’ in e-mail stands for electronic. This
word can be spelled either email or e-mail. Email is described as a way
of sending messages and data to other people by means of computers
connected together in a network.

- Teleconferencing refers to a conference or discussion that takes place in
which the members are at different places and speak to each other using
telephone and video connections.

- While teleconferencing basically focuses on audio or oral exchanges,
videoconferencing is meant for video or picture enabled exchanges. It is
possible to look at the person speaking at the other end.

5.6 KEY WORDS

- Employment communication: It revolves around written communication
and conversation between the employer and the job-seekers.

- Cover Letter: It is a letter which introduces the major points in your CV.
• **Resume**: It is a short account of one’s career and qualifications typically prepared by an applicant for a position.

• **Consultancy**: It refers to a company or person that gives expert advice on a particular subject.

• **OSI Model**: The Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) model describes seven layers that computer systems use to communicate over a network. It was the first standard model for network communications, adopted by all major computer and telecommunication companies in the early 1980s.

5.7 **SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

**Short-Answer Questions**

1. What are the guidelines that should be followed while writing a cover letter?
2. Write a short note on the interviewer’s perspective in an interview.
3. State the distinctive features of teleconferencing and videoconferencing.

**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Discuss the essentials of a good resume.
2. Describe the interview skills required before, during and after the interview.
3. Elaborate on the usage of emails by focusing on their advantages and their creation.

5.8 **FURTHER READINGS**


5.9 **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

• The importance of group discussion and interview skills
• The impact of technological advancement on business communication by explaining technology-enabled communication