

African Virtual University

Applied Computer Science: ADM1100

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Phylis Bartoo

Foreword

The African Virtual University (AVU) is proud to participate in increasing access to education in African countries through the production of quality learning materials. We are also proud to contribute to global knowledge as our Open Educational Resources are mostly accessed from outside the African continent.

This module was developed as part of a diploma and degree program in Applied Computer Science, in collaboration with 18 African partner institutions from 16 countries. A total of 156 modules were developed or translated to ensure availability in English, French and Portuguese. These modules have also been made available as open education resources (OER) on oer.avu.org.

On behalf of the African Virtual University and our patron, our partner institutions, the African Development Bank, I invite you to use this module in your institution, for your own education, to share it as widely as possible and to participate actively in the AVU communities of practice of your interest. We are committed to be on the frontline of developing and sharing Open Educational Resources.

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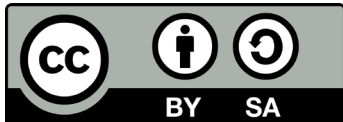
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Course Overview

Welcome to Communication Skills and Team Building course

There are both practical and theoretical reasons to study algorithms. From a practical standpoint, you have to know a standard set of important algorithms from different areas of computing; in addition, you should be able to design new algorithms and analyze their efficiency. From the theoretical standpoint, the study of algorithms, sometimes called algorithmics, has come to be as the cornerstone of computer science.

This course aim to provide an in-depth understanding of the fundamental algorithmic techniques for design and analysis, in turn impart knowledge and practical competence in use of advanced data structures and the design and analysis of algorithms.

Prerequisites

- None

Materials

The materials required to complete this course are:

- Computer
- Internet connection
- Reference materials:
- online sources and text books

Course Goals

Upon completion of this course the learner should be able to:

- Obtain and convey workplace information.
- Use effective questioning, active listening, and speaking skills to gather and convey information.
- Follow the process of communication which show the direction of information flow.
- Select appropriate medium to transfer information and idea.
- Use appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Identify and follow appropriate lines of communication with supervisors and colleagues.
- Define workplace procedures for the location and storage of information in line with current information technology.
- Operate effectively as a productive member of a team by producing results in a range of professional and social situations.
- Create successful teams from a range of members of different educational, social, cultural and technical expertise.

Units

Unit 0: Pre-Assessment

The purpose of this module is to provide you with guidance and practice on how to enhance your business communication skills and team building. This will enable you to become good communicators in business organizations you wish to work for.

Communication Skills and team building has been designed to enable you cope with those business demands that each course and call in the business world demands. The unit contains various documents required in a business set up. How to prepare the documents, make effective presentations and generally how to become an efficient manager, supervisor, team player etc.

Assessment

Formative assessments, used to check learner progress, are included in each unit.

Summative assessments, such as final tests and assignments, are provided at the end of each module and cover knowledge and skills from the entire module.

There are activities at the end of each topic, although some are integrated in the discussion.

Please attempt all the activities because they will give you a chance to practice what you will have learned.

Summative assessments are administered at the discretion of the institution offering the course. The suggested assessment plan is as follows:

1	Assessments 1	10%
2	Assessments 2	10%
3	Assessments 3	10%
4	End of Term Exam	70%

Schedule

Unit	Activities	Estimated time
Unit 0: Pre-Assessment	Preliminary assesment	5hours
Unit 1: Introduction to the Communication process.	Activity 1.1 Definition of the communication process Activity 1.2Communication in the business environment Activity 1.3Writing academic documents	5 hours 10 hours 10hours
Unit 2: Forms of Communication in the Business Setting	Activity 2.1 Information flow in business setting Activity 2.2 Forms of communication Activity 2.3Forms of communication in business	10 hours 10 hours 10 hours
Unit 3: Business and Communication Technology	Activity 3.1 Business Technology Activity 3.2 Role of IT in business Activity 3.3Digital and information literacy	10 hours 10 hours 10 hours
Unit 4: Team Building and Business Communication	Activity 4.1 Understanding team building Activity 4.2 Team building activities Activity 4.3Team building strategies	10 hours 10 hours 5 hours
Unit 5:	Final Examinations	3 hours

Readings and Other Resources

The readings and other resources in this course are:

Unit 0

Required readings and other resources:

Sherron Bienvenu & Paul Timm, (2002): Business Communication: Discovering Strategy
Developing Skills

- <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/general/communication-skills.html>
- (<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/communicating.htm>)
- <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/effective-communication.htm>
- <http://www.teambuilding-kenya.com/>
- <http://managementstudyguide.com/team-building.htm>

Optional readings and other resources

- http://www.isoc.com/london/public-speaking-presentation-training?gclid=Cj0KEQiar8W2BRD2qbCOv8_H7qEBEiQA1ErTBoWo3A3X2oNb2TNyMpsDFduSTH1UEfxZeN-zlYy4ualaAq-o8P8HAQ
- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/meaning-building-team-relationships-31474.html>

Unit 1

Required readings and other resources:

- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/academic-proposal>
- International Journal of Social Research Methodology 10 (2007): 5-20.
- <http://www.restore.ac.uk/mrp/services/lcd/mrp/resources/resproskills/comprespro.shtml>
- <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/general/communication-skills.html>
- <http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/communicating.htm>

Optional readings and other resources:

- <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/types-of-communication-formal-informal-grapevine-verbal-non-verbal.html#lesson>
- <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/more-subjects/principles-of-management/communication-and-interpersonal-skills/methods-of-communication>

Unit 2

Required readings and other resources:

- <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=define+business+communication>
- Dorothy Denning. A lattice model of secure information flow. Communications of the ACM, 19(5):236-242, 1976.
- Smith, Geoffrey (2007). "Principles of Secure Information Flow Analysis". Advances in Information Security. Springer US. pp. 291–307.
- <http://www.notesdesk.com/notes/business-communications/types-of-communication/>
- McCarthy, J. F. (2008). Short stories at work: Storytelling as an indicator of organizational commitment. Group & Organization Management, 33, 163–193
- http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/5?e=carpenter-ch12_s03

Optional readings and other resources:

- Flink, H. (2007, March). Tell it like it is: Essential communication skills for engineers. Industrial Engineer, 39, 44–49.
- <http://www.nywici.org/features/interview/power-story-business>
- http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/15014.Crucial_Conversations
- [http://www.inc.com/encyclopedia/written-communication.html\(2016\)](http://www.inc.com/encyclopedia/written-communication.html(2016))
- http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/7?e=collins-ch08_s05http://www.cgu.edu/pages/852.asp
- <https://alison.com/courses/Business-Communication-Fundamentals-of-Business-Writing>
- http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/5?e=carpenter-ch12_s03#ftn.fn-5
- <http://www.subliminalhacking.net/2012/10/12/proxemics-have-you-heard-of-personal-space/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minutes>

Unit 3

Required readings and other resources:

- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/use-vlookup-different-sheets-excel-40058.html>
- <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=technology+in+oral+communication>

Optional readings and other resources:

- <http://www.restore.ac.uk/mrp/services/ldc/mrp/resources/resproskills/comprespro.shtml>
- <http://image.slidesharecdn.com/usesoftechnologyinbusinesscommunication-120124120500-phpapp02/95/uses-of-technology-in-business-communication-21-728.jpg?cb=1327407107>
- <http://www.uefap.com/writing/genre/discuss.htm>

Unit 4

Required readings and other resources:

- <http://www.teambuilding-kenya.com/>
- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/team-building-communication-skills-4832.html>
- Sahin, F.(2012). "The mediating effect of leader-member exchange on the relationship between Theory X and Y management styles and effective commitment:A multilevel analysis." *Journal of Management and Organization*, 18(2).
- (<http://www.businessballs.com/love.htm>)

Optional reading sources:

- Page, D., & Donelan, J. G. (2003). "Team-building tools for students". *Journal of Education for Business* 78 (3): 125–128. doi:10.1080/0883232030959
- Ravo, E., Monna, A.B., Weigand, A.D., Eskolar, J., & Lintunen, T. (2010). "Team building in sport: a narrative review of the program effectiveness, current methods, and theoretical underpinnings". *Athletic Insight Journal* 2 (2): 1–19

Unit 0. Pre-Assessment

Unit Introduction

The purpose of this unit is to determine your grasp of knowledge related to this course . This course communication and teambuilding helps you to acquire skills so as to perform effectively in any business setting. We look at different communication channels and formats that are available for information flow. Moreover the course takes you through team creating. Team building is very essential in the job market today as its a channel organizations motivate their employees.

Unit Objectives

Upon completion of this unit you should be able to:

- Have a grasp of communication in general and what is expected of them at the end of the module.
- Acquire business communication skills.
- Understand the relevance of IT in business setting.

Key Terms

Communication Skills: The ability to convey information to another effectively and efficiently. It also means a purposeful exchange of information between participants. At the end of communication, the conversants should be able to give feedback as a way of showing understanding.

www.businessdictionary.com/definition/communication-skills.html

Business Communication: The sharing of information between people within an enterprise that is performed for the commercial benefit of the organization. In addition, business communication can also refer to how a company shares information to promote its product or services to potential consumers.

Team building: is a collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_building

Assessment

1. Why do you think communication skills and team building is relevant to you as a student of computer? Give 5 reasons for your answer. (10 marks)
2. Think of team building activities that are relevant for your class. Identify 5 activities and present to your instructor (10marks)

Grading Scheme

The assessment constitutes 5% of the overall assessment.

Answers

1. In your opinion how well is the unit developed or delivered?
2. Which areas do you think needed more clarity?
3. Were there terms that needed further explanation.
4. What suggestions do you have for better delivery of the content?
5. Do you feel the activities and assessments being adequate?

Unit Readings and Other Resources

- Senécal, J., Loughead, T. M., & Bloom, G. A. (2008). "A season-long team-building intervention: Examining the effect of team goal setting on cohesion" (PDF). *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology* 30 (2): 186–99. PMID 18490790
- <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/general/what-is-communication.html>

Unit 1. Introduction to The Communication Process

Unit Introduction

This unit helps us to understand the communication process. In this unit we shall discuss the meaning of communication and describe the processes designed to help you to understand how communication takes place in an institution or a workplace or a business environment. We shall also focus on the various types of communication and the different barriers that can make communication difficult which is considered as noise.

Unit Objectives

Upon completion of this unit you should be able to:

- Define the concept of communication.
- Identify and describe the elements of communication.
- Describe the process of communication.
- Think about the different types of communication barriers.
- Understand business communication requirements with the elements of the communication process.

Key Terms

Communication is a process: it is an activity which is an exchange of meaning that is dynamic. Communication is therefore not static. Communication as a process is a concept whose critical element is the changing nature of its occurrence.

Communication involves meaning: meaning is shared understanding of message. The understanding of the meaning of another person's message only occurs when you elicit common meanings for words, phrases, and non-verbal messages.

Communication is a system of symbols, signs and behavior: the system may be in form of language, gesture, demeanor or even facial expressions

<http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-the-communication-process-definition-steps.html>

<http://thecommunicationprocess.com/models-of-communication/>

Communication Models and Theories

www.praccreditation.org/resources/.../APRSG-Comm-Models.pdf Cultural Barriers to Effective Communication

Burnett, M.J., & Dollar, A. (1989).
BusinessCommunication: Strategies for Success.
Houston, Texas: Dane

Learning Activities

Activity 1 - Definition of communication Process

Introduction

A process often defined as a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end. The communication process is the guide toward realizing effective communication. It is through the communication process that the sharing of a common meaning between the sender and the receiver takes place. Individuals that follow the communication process will have the opportunity to become more productive in every aspect of your life. Effective communication leads to understanding.

It is important for you to note that the communication process is made up of specific key components or elements. Those components/elements include the sender/source; encoding; the message; medium of transmission, receiver decoding; feedback and noise. There are also two other factors in the process, and those two factors are present in the form of the sender and the receiver. The communication process usually begins with the sender and ends with the receiver within specific environment. Communication is therefore a process because it takes place through various stages that interconnected by various elements that will be discussed in the next section.

Activity Details

Elements of Communication

Elements of communication are the components that constitute the communication process. These are:

Source/Sender

The sender is an individual, group, or organization who initiates the communication. This source is initially responsible for the success of the message. The sender's experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skill, perceptions, and culture influence the message. "The written words, spoken words, and nonverbal language selected are paramount in ensuring the receiver interprets the message as intended by the sender" (Burnett & Dollar, 1989). All communication begins with the sender.

The first step the sender is faced with involves the encoding process. In order to convey meaning, the sender must begin encoding, which means translating information into a message in the form of symbols that represent ideas or concepts. This process translates the ideas or concepts into the coded message that will be communicated. The symbols can take on numerous forms such as, languages, words, or gestures. These symbols are used to encode ideas into messages that others can understand.

When encoding a message, the sender has to begin by deciding what he/she wants to transmit. This decision by the sender is based on what he/she believes about the receiver's knowledge and assumptions, along with what additional information he/she wants the receiver to have. It is important for the sender to use symbols that are familiar to the intended receiver. A good way for the senders to improve encoding their messages, is to mentally visualize the communication from the receiver's point of view. Here the sender selects words, constructs sentences and either decide when to write or speak.

Message

As already indicated earlier, when encoding a message, you need to begin by deciding what you want to transmit. The message is therefore the verbal or non-verbal form of idea, thought or feeling that you (source) wish to communicate to a group of people (receivers). The message, therefore, is the content of interaction. A message may be easy to understand or long and complex; it may also be intentional or unintentional.

Channel

To begin transmitting the message, the sender uses some kind of channel (also called a medium). The channel is the means used to convey the message. Most channels are either oral or written, but currently visual channels are becoming more common as technology expands.

Common channels include the telephone and a variety of written forms such as memos, letters, and reports. The effectiveness of the various channels fluctuates depending on the characteristics of the communication. For example, when immediate feedback is necessary, oral communication channels are more effective because any uncertainties can be cleared up on the spot. In a situation where the message must be delivered to more than a small group of people, written channels are often more effective. Although in many cases, both oral and written channels should be used because one supplements the other.

If a sender relays a message through an inappropriate channel, its message may not reach the right receivers. That is why senders need to keep in mind that selecting the appropriate channel will greatly assist in the effectiveness of the receiver's understanding. The sender's decision to utilize either an oral or a written channel for communicating a message is influenced by several factors. The sender should ask him or herself different questions, so that they can select the appropriate channel. Is the message urgent? Is immediate feedback needed? Is documentation or a permanent record required? Is the content complicated, controversial, or private? Is the message going to someone inside or outside the organization? What oral and written communication skills does the receiver possess? Once the sender has answered all of these questions, they will be able to choose an effective channel.

Noise

Noise is any interference in encoding or decoding process that reduces the clarity of a message. This can occur at any stage in the process of Noise can be in the form of:

1. Physical noise, which can be in form of distracting sounds or sights. Such noise is usually easier to prevent in a speaking or listening situation. For example, closing doors to a noisy room, wearing ear plugs etc.
2. Psychological noise, mental and emotional interferences that distract communication, such as day dreaming, pain, hunger and the like.
3. Semantic noise, which is the use of expressions that are unknown to the receiver or are too complex in grammatical structure. They include language differences, inattention and misunderstanding caused by different interpretations of a word or an expression. Cultural diversity can also lead to semantic noise because people from different cultures may have different meanings to same words
4. Physiological noise manifests from the inside of either the receiver or sender of the message and is caused by a physiological process. Physiological processes are the physical and chemical functions of your body. Examples of physiological processes include hunger, fatigue, headaches, pain, and physiological effects from medicine that affects the way you think or feel.

The diagram below shows how noise affects the communication process:

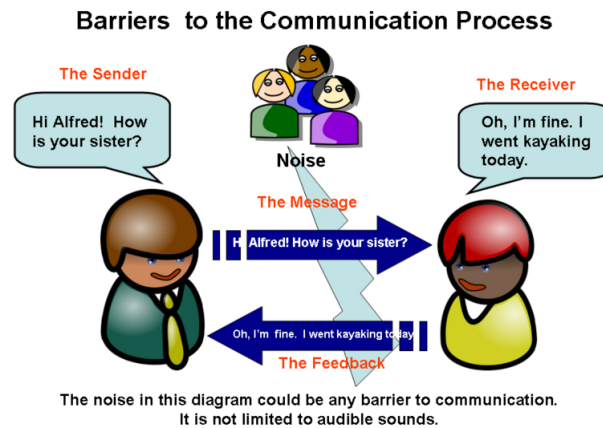


Figure 1.1: Barriers to Communication

The receiver is the individual or individuals to whom the message is directed. The extent to which this person comprehends the message will depend on a number of factors, which include the following: how much the individual or individuals know about the topic, their receptivity to the message, and the relationship and trust that exists between sender and receiver. All interpretations by the receiver are influenced by their experiences, attitudes, knowledge, skills, perceptions, and culture. It is similar to the sender's relationship with encoding.

Decoding

After the appropriate channel or channels are selected, the message enters the decoding stage of the communication process. Decoding is conducted by the receiver. Once the message is received and examined, the stimulus is sent to the brain for interpreting, in order to assign some type of meaning to it. It is this processing stage that constitutes decoding. The receiver begins to interpret the symbols sent by the sender, translating the message to their own set of experiences in order to make the symbols meaningful. Successful communication takes place when the receiver correctly interprets the sender's message.

Feedback

Feedback is the final link in the chain of the communication process. After receiving a message, the receiver responds in some way and signals that response to the sender. The signal may take the form of a spoken comment, a long sigh, a written message, a smile, or some other action. Even a lack of response, is in a sense, a form of response. Without feedback, the sender cannot confirm that the receiver has interpreted the message correctly.

Feedback is a key component in the communication process because it allows the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message. Feedback ultimately provides an opportunity for the sender to take corrective action to clarify a misunderstood message. Feedback plays an important role by indicating significant communication barriers: differences in background, different interpretations of words, and differing emotional reactions

The process of communication can be summarized in the following diagram:

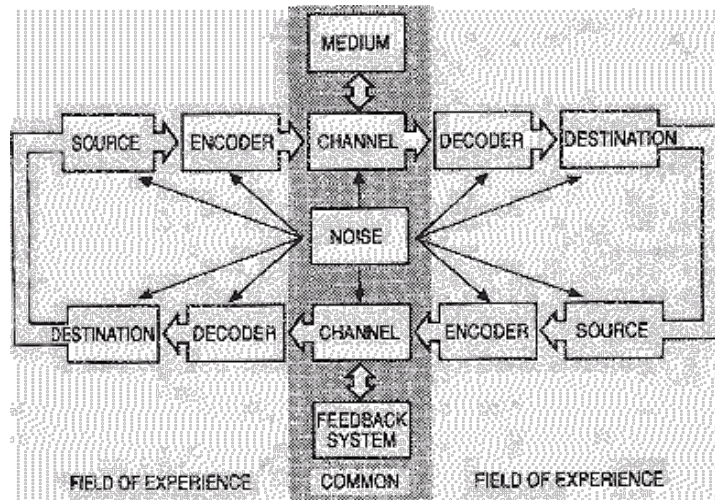


Figure 1.2: Communication Process model

Effective Communication

The communication process is the perfect guide toward achieving effective communication. When followed properly, the process can usually assure that the sender's message will be understood by the receiver. Although the communication process seems simple, it in essence is not. Certain barriers present themselves throughout the process. Those barriers are factors that have a negative impact on the communication process.

Some common barriers include the use of an inappropriate medium (channel), incorrect grammar, inflammatory words, words that conflict with body language, and technical jargon. Noise is also another common barrier. Noise can occur during any stage of the process. Noise essentially is anything that distorts a message by interfering with the communication process.

Conclusion

In this unit you learned that as a student at the university level, you are expected to be both a sender and a receiver. This is because you will be interacting with your tutors, colleagues and with your reading materials. At the same time you will be expected to demonstrate through writing assignments and examinations that you can send relevant messages to your recipients in the academic world including the business environment.

You will get feedback by way of the scores you will obtain and therefore prompting you to assess your abilities. The section shown in the diagram as NOISE implies any interruption that affects the communication. This can occur at any stage in the process. So you will need to be aware of these noises and deal with them when they occur during the communication process.

This is necessary for you to know and act upon because human communication has many problems and difficulties. This is as a result of the fact that whenever we try to communicate, something often seems to get in the way and we are not understood in the way we intended.

Assessment

1. From your academic situation describe the meaning of communication. (5marks)
2. In your experience, how would each of the models discussed be used to explain the communication process? (2marks)
3. Select any one of the types of communication and relate it to your learning situation. (5marks)
4. Identify the barriers that you likely to encounter in your academic communication situation.(5marks)
5. In your opinion, how you would deal with each of the barriers you have identified? (5marks)

Activity 2 - Definition of communication Process

Introduction

Welcome to note taking and note making! This topic will take you through understanding the meaning of note taking and the differences that exist between the two. It will also discuss the key things that you need to consider if you wish to take good note when listening or when you are reading in a business environment. The Topic will discuss the various strategies that you can use to enable you take notes that you can use for a variety of uses.

Activity Details

Meaning of Note Taking and Making

Note taking is one of the active listening skills that you will need to acquire here at Egerton University in order to record accurately what you listen to in lectures and in your study groups. However, you will find that this skill is relevant and necessary in other topics such as reading skills, study skills and writing skills. It is important that you learn the difference between note making and note taking.

Note taking is a crucial skill and one that we would encourage you to develop as early as possible in your studies. It can help you to listen actively as opposed to passively. This means making sense of what you are listening to at that particular point in time and keeping a record for yourself, a record that you can go back to later on, whether for revising for examinations or for making links with later parts of the various courses you are studying. Therefore, taking notes does not imply simply taking things down more or less word for word, of what the speaker says. Rather, it is a selection and it needs to be organized and it will include the most important or interesting parts of the lecture that you have been listening to.

Purpose: The purpose of note-taking is to assist concentration and to guide you in taking down what is important from wide content. You can take notes when you listen to lecturers and other presentations for academic purposes. You may make notes when you are studying on your own in the library or during your private study. Making notes can also include filling up gaps and adding information to notes taken during a listening process where certain details could have been left out.

When taking notes, you are brief and write fast. But later when you go back to look at the notes, you may add some details and provide various examples, thus making them more detailed and clearer and also editing any errors

Despite the slight difference, you can see that Note-taking and note-making are selective processes in which you record or write down the main points or items heard or read in the course of learning.

There are a number of reasons why you need to take and make notes. These include:

1. Notes to assist retention: note-taking and note-making greatly increases the chances of recalling the information.
2. Notes for revision: This is perhaps the most important function of notes. You can perform better when you revise from your own notes.
3. Notes for external storage: when you record what has been said during any presentation, this acts as a storage mechanism of these facts and ideas.
4. Notes as preparation for written assignments. Notes you take may be used to expand the concepts to be discussed or they could be incorporated in the writing process. So this means that extensive and intensive reading and making notes will enable you to focus on the topic or subject of the assignment.

Devices or tools used in note-taking and note-making

The skills required in taking notes include quick coordination between listening (decoding or interpretation) and writing. It is not possible to write down everything as uttered by the speaker or written by the author. There are devices or tools that you can use to enable you take useful notes.

These devices include:

- i). Abbreviations
- ii). Acronyms
- iii). Symbols

What are abbreviations? These are shortened forms of words or part of written word. Abbreviations could either be standard or personal in form. The standard abbreviations are those forms that are conventional and are nationally and internationally used. The personal forms of abbreviations are devised by the writer for his/her own use later on. The personal forms may or may not be understood by other people.

Examples of standard abbreviations are:

U.K	United Kingdom or United Kingdom
Med.	Medicine
F	Female
M	Male
E.g.	For example

U. S. A	United States of America
A. U.	African union
E.U	European Union
A.V.U	African Virtual University

Examples of some non-standard abbreviations are:

Pple	people
Wlkg	walking
Dev.	develop
Devping	developing
Devpment	development

What are Acronyms? These are words formed or based on the initial letters or syllables or other words.

Examples of acronyms are:

KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
KEMRI	Kenya Medical Research Institute
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

What are symbols? These are representations which are conventional. They stand in the place of something else.

You can use any of the following symbols to represent longer words or phrases as shown:

+	addition or plus sign
-	subtraction or minus sign
=	equivalent or equal sign
X	multiplication sign
>	greater than sign
<	less than sign
CO ₂	carbon dioxide

O ₂	oxygen
O ₃	Ozone
≈	approximately equal to

How to take notes. Methods of note-taking are a matter of personal preference & each person should work out the style which suits them. Notes are personal & private & since they are almost always for personal use, they can be as idiosyncratic as the writer may choose.

However, there are some basic principles which may be applied in note-taking to produce good and useful notes. These include:

1. Listening with concentration to that there is an understanding of what is being said.
2. Selecting the main points from the lecture on presentation.
3. Omitting many words and compressing text without losing the essential meaning. The use of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols are appropriate.

Taking Lecture Notes

You might one time find yourself in a lecture mode of learning or a formal talk that you will need to take some notes. Here, you will require to have an understanding of how to take useful notes.

1. There are many reasons for taking lecture notes:
 - Making yourself take notes forces you to listen carefully and test your understanding of the material.
 - When you are reviewing, notes provide a gauge to what is important in the text.
 - Personal notes are usually easier to remember than the text.
 - The writing down of important points helps you to remember them even before you have studied the material formally.
2. Instructors usually give clues to what is important to take down. Some of the more common clues are:
 - A. Material written on the blackboard.
 - B. Repetition
 - C. Emphasis
 - Emphasis can be judged by tone of voice and gesture.
 - Emphasis can be judged by the amount of time the instructor spends on points and the number of examples he or she uses.

- D. Word signals (e.g. "There are two points of view on . . . "
"The third reason is . . . " " In conclusion . . . ")
 - E. Summaries given at the end of class.
 - F. Reviews given at the beginning of class.
3. Each student should develop his or her own method of taking notes, but most students find the following suggestions helpful:
- Make your notes brief.
 - 1. Never use a sentence where you can use a phrase. Never use a phrase where you can use a word.
 - 2. Use abbreviations and symbols, but be consistent.
 - Put most notes in your own words. However, the following should be noted exactly:
 - 1. Formulas
 - 2. Definitions
 - 3. Specific facts
 - Use outline form and/or a numbering system. Indentation helps you distinguish major from minor points.
 - If you miss a statement, write key words, skip a few spaces, and get the information later.
 - Don't try to use every space on the page. Leave room for coordinating your notes with the text after the lecture. (You may want to list key terms in the margin or make a summary of the contents of the page.)
 - Date your notes. Perhaps number the pages.

Saving Time on Note Taking

Here are some hints regarding taking notes on classroom lectures that can save time for almost any student. Some students say that they plan to rewrite or type their notes later. To do so is to use a double amount of time; once to take the original notes and a second to rewrite them. The advice is simple: DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!

Second, there are some students who attempt to take notes in shorthand. Though shorthand is a valuable tool for a secretary, it is almost worthless for you as a student in academic work. Here is why. Notes in shorthand cannot be studied in that form. They must first be transcribed. The act of transcribing notes takes a great amount of time and energy but does not significantly contribute to your mastery. It is far better to have taken the notes originally in regular writing and then spend the time after that in direct study and recitation of the notes.

Third, do not record the lesson on a cassette tape or any other tape. The lecture on tape precludes flexibility. This statement can be better understood when seen in the light of a person who has taken his/her notes in regular writing. Immediately after taking the notes this person can study them in five minutes before the next class as s/he walks toward the next building, as s/he drinks his/her coffee, or whatever. Furthermore, this student, in looking over his/her notes, may decide that the notes contain only four worthwhile ideas which s/he can highlight, relegating the rest of the lecture to obscurity. Whereas the lecture on tape has to be listened to in its entirety including the worthwhile points as well as the "garbage," handwritten notes may be studied selectively. If you take the easy way out - recording the lecture on tape as you sit back doing nothing - you will box yourself into inflexibility.

Note Making

Learning to make notes effectively will help you to improve your study and work habits and to remember important information. Often, students are deceived into thinking that because they understand everything that is said in class they will therefore remember it. This is dead wrong! We encourage you to write it down.

As you make notes, you will develop skill in selecting important material and in discarding unimportant material. The secret to developing this skill is practice. Check your results constantly. Strive to improve. Notes enable you to retain important facts and data and to develop an accurate means of arranging necessary information.

Conclusion

In this topic you have seen the emphasis of taking notes using your own words and even using your own thoughts in that process, but it is also important that you keep reflecting on how you take notes. It is also important to develop a formula that works for you. As you keep on refining that process, you will realize that the notes you are taking towards the end of this course, will be different from the notes you are taking now.

Unit Summary

This Topic has taken you through various key points that you need to consider when taking or making notes. We have done this by helping you to understand the difference & similarity between them. Remember that you can take and make notes in various situations that require you to identify and keep the key points of discussion in any business forum.

Assessment

For you to know whether you have mastered the art of note taking and making, carry out the following activities:

1. Take your notebooks and check your notes; whether you have incomplete sentences and instances where the logic in the sentence is lost.
2. After that, you should check how short your notes are. Your notes need to be short, because it will be easy for you to revise as you prepare for examinations, long notes are tedious.
3. While looking at your notes, ask yourself the following questions:
 - (a) Do I use abbreviations and symbols when taking notes?
 - (b) What formula do I use to organise my notes?

Unit Readings and Other Resources

- [TheCornell Note-taking System](https://lsc.cornell.edu/LSC_Resources/cornellsystem.pdf). Available at lsc.cornell.edu/LSC_Resources/cornellsystem.pdf
- Note Taking and In-Class Skills www.ucc.vt.edu/academic_support.../note_taking_and.../index.h
- Note taking techniques - Skills for OU Study - Open University. www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/notetaking-techniques.php

Activity 3 - Searching techniques

Introduction

As a university student writing academic work is part and parcel of life. As a result there are many forms of academic documents but for this unit we will concentrate on the common types which include: reports and essays which learners write as a form of giving feedback on assessment. We have academic proposals and thesis.

Activity Details

Writing Academic Work

There are several types of academic written works that students are expected to produce however, the most common types are reports and essays, articles are normally written by scholars and academic researchers but are a popular type of academic work. Essays and Reports are a popular form of assessment in academics especially in assignment form. This is because they test a student's ability to gather complex material, make sense of the gathered or researched material and communicate to the informed reader in a convincing manner that the covered material has been understood.

Academic proposal

Academic Proposals are written as the final stage of an undergraduate study. This is after writing a research proposal. An academic research proposal is the first step in producing a thesis or major project. Its intent is to convince a supervisor or academic committee that your topic and approach are sound, so that you gain approval to proceed with the actual research. As well as indicating your plan of action, an academic proposal should show your theoretical positioning and your relationship to past work in the area that is the. The final stage of most undergraduate degrees involves writing a thesis or dissertation.

A research proposal clearly states what the problem is and how the research will be conducted in to answer the research question. The problem that is identified in the proposal should be well grounded in academic literature or theory. A research problem is a statement about an area of concern, a condition to be improved upon, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a troubling question that exists in scholarly literature, in theory, or in practice that points to the need for meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation. In some social science disciplines the research problem is typically posed in the form of one or more questions.

The core elements of an academic research proposal are:

- The title of the proposed study
- Statement of the Problem
- Relevance
- Objectives of the research Study
- Scope and limitations of the study
- Research Questions
- Hypothesis
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- References

Other elements can also be added to a research proposal, however that is based on the discipline or the nature of the research. students are required to read widely the available literature in the relevant discipline in order in order to come up with a good proposal. Thus, students are urged to take time and care in drafting academic research proposals.

Academic Research Reports

The main purpose of the academic report discussion is to show that the results lead clearly to the conclusion being drawn. This may include any limitations that might cause problems with any claims being made as well as any possible explanations for these results. The students are expected to engage in academic report writing depending on what they are pursuing. These may include laboratory reports, industrial visit reports, work placement reports and research reports. Across all faculties, students are expected to write an academic research report as the climax of their study, this is what is referred to as a thesis or dissertation. Therefore, it is important to understand the basic principles of report writing, especially that this piece of work is highly structured. A report unlike an essay has headings and subheadings and is often separated into sections. Academic reports often comprise the following parts:

- Title Abstract Introduction or Background Related work
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusions or Recommendations
- References
- Appendices depending on the methodology

Assessment

1. Identify a research problem in your area of specialization and develop a proposal Include all the components.
2. Write an essay detailing your experience as a first year student in the university.
3. Look for academic proposals identify the different parts. Do they adhere to what we have discussed?

Unit Summary

We have come to the end of unit one. In this unit we looked at the definition of communication and the various processes through which communication goes through. We also saw the various academic documents that are in the academic environment. This should help you generate acceptable documents in the course of your study.

Unit Assessment

1. Giving relevant examples define the term communication (2 marks)
2. Communication is a process. Discuss (10 marks)
3. What are the various elements that makes communication complete? (8 marks)
4. Using your learning environment. Identify various types of noise that can distract communication (6 mark)
5. Identify a topic of your choice and write an essay using the various devices of note taking and note making (4 marks)

Grading Scheme

The marks expected for each question has been given above. It constitutes 5% of the total assessment marks.

Answers

1. In your opinion how well is the unit developed or delivered?
2. Which areas do you think needed more clarity?
3. Are there terms from the unit that needed further explanation?
4. What suggestions do you have for better delivery of the content?
5. Do you feel the activities and assessments being adequate?
Communicate your feedback to the instructor. The address is found in the module.

Unit Readings and Other Resources

The readings in this unit are to be found at course level readings and other resources.

- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/academic-proposal>
- International Journal of Social Research Methodology 10 (2007): 5-20.
- <http://www.restore.ac.uk/mrp/services/ldc/mrp/resources/resproskills/comprespro.shtml>

Unit 2. Forms of Communication in The Business Setting

Unit Introduction

In a business setting people exchange information and ideas at different levels. In this unit we are going to look at different forms of communication that are available for interpersonal communication in a business setting. This is because people inevitably share information as they work. Communication in an organization flows in different directions- downward, upward and lateral. For instance, for purposes of controlling and direction, managers engage in downward communication. To get information and feedback from their subordinates, communication flows in the upward direction. We are also going to look at the different forms of communication.

Unit Objectives

Upon completion of this unit you should be able to:

- Define business communication.
- Identify different channels of communication.
- Identify and describe the various forms of communication used in a business set up.
- Make a distinction between the features of verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Discuss the features of nonverbal communication and how it interacts with verbal and written communication.

Key Terms

Business communication: Business communication is any form of communication, verbal or nonverbal, that is used to relay a message, promote a product or service or share information.

Information flow: Path data takes from its original setting to its end users.

Learning Activities

Activity 1 - Information Flowing In a Business Setting

Introduction

In this section we are going to discuss the various directions information flows in a business organization, This is based on the path the information takes. Such knowledge is very important to you in the sense that as a member of an organization, you should know who to report to and who reports to who and also referred to as the chain of command.

Activity Details

Communication can be categorized in three ways.

- a) By the number of people involved in the communication process.
- b) By the channel or medium used in the communication process.
- c) By the flow of information

Communication categorized by number of people involved:

- i) **Intrapersonal communication:** It's the process of sharing meaning within oneself in the mind, involving such activities as reflection, problem solving, planning, & solving internal conflict among others. This is a continuous process we always engage in but rarely realize we are involved in it.
- ii) **Inter-personal communication:** this involves exchanging meaning between at least two people in a situation that allows mutual opportunities for both speaking and listening. Interpersonal communication can be of two types:
Dyadic communication: involves two people in communication such as a doctor and a patient, a lecturer and a student.
Small group communication: involves 3-10 people such communication includes that which takes place in families and work groups.
- iii) **Public communication:** it involves one person communicating to a large group of people.
- iv) **Mass communication:** this is communication via a technological transmission system involving a source (professional communicator often representing an organization), & a large number of unseen receivers spread over a wide geographical area. The transmission system might be in the form of electronic, audio, audio-visual signal or visual technologies such as publication in form of books or newspapers.

Communication Categorized by Channel or Medium

- i) **Verbal communication:** Often refers to use of word to communicate. It can refer to communication that relies on the oral-auditory signal via the hearing system (e.g. listening) for communication and written, that refers to the use of visual symbols, representing language, on a surface which is read by receivers.
- ii) **Graphic communication:** this communication is also known as diagrammatic communication. It involves use of non linear aspects to communicate ideas facts and objects other than written communication e.g. cartoons, graphs, charts, models, objects etc.
- iii) **Visual Communication:** that uses the use of visual signals could include graphics, diagrams photographs and cartoons. They also include forms such as gestures, posture, distance, facial expressions, movements.
- (iii) **Upward Communication:** Is the reverse of the above. It starts with the subordinates and flows through to the Head of Department. The Head should help to ensure that information travels upwards by creating situations in which subordinates views are put forward and given necessary 'listening'. The Departmental Head gets ideas, suggestions, views, grievances and problems from his subordinates (Junior officers). It is important for the Head of Department to note that in both upward and downward Communication information might be diluted, distorted or halted depending on the nature of the information.
- (iv) **Horizontal Communication:** Takes place between parallel groups in the organization. The nature of interaction may be between: -
 - a. Subordinates and subordinates.
 - b. Head of one department and another.
 - c. Supervisors and Managers.
 - d. Managing Director and his Departmental Managers etc.

Horizontal Communication stimulates consultations, discussions, teamwork, sharing of ideas and experience. The Departmental Heads must ensure that information travels upwards, downwards, and sideways in order to have effective communication.

Conclusion

You have realized that information takes different paths based on the categorization of people involved, medium and the flow of information. In a business set-up you should be able to map out the information flow based on the various dimensions. This helps you to know the chain of command i.e who reports to who?

Assessment

1. Select any one of the type of communication and relate it to your learning situation
2. Discuss the various paths information take in an organization
3. Imagine a situation where information flow in an organization was having no clear direction. What would be the consequence?

Activity 2 - Forms of Communication

Introduction

People communicate with each other in a number of ways that depend upon the message and its context in which it is being sent. Choice of communication channel and your style of communicating also affects communication. So, there are variety of types of communication which are summarized in the diagram below:



Figure 2.1: Types of Communication

Activity Details

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to the form of communication in which a message is transmitted verbally; communication is done by word of mouth and a piece of writing. Objective of every communication is to have people understand what we are trying to convey.

In verbal communication remember the acronym KISS(keep it short and simple).when we talk to others, we assume that others understand what we are saying because we know what we are saying. But this is not the case. usually people bring their own attitude, perception, emotions and thoughts about the topic and hence creates barrier in delivering the right meaning.

So in order to deliver the right message, you must put yourself on the other side of the table and think from your receiver's point of view. Would he/she understand the message? how it would sound on the other side of the table?

Verbal Communication is further divided into:

1. Oral Communication
2. Written Communication

In oral communication, Spoken words are used. It includes face-to-face conversations, speech, telephonic conversation, video, radio, television, voice over internet. In oral communication, communication is influenced by pitch, volume, speed and clarity of speaking.

Examples of Oral Communication:

Storytelling

Storytelling has been shown to be an effective form of verbal communication in business settings. Many businesses are finding that stories offer a new and relevant way to connect with audiences in other forums beyond advertising their products. Businesses now use storytelling in presentations, meetings and as a way to present research or motivate employees.

It serves an important organizational function by helping to construct common meanings for individuals within the organization. The tone, frequency and the strength of a story shows how individuals are committed to the core business of the organization. When the stories are of good quality they serve to enhance the culture of an organization. A great story engages the emotions recreating an experience for the audience in an organization.

Stories create a forum where people connect in a context. This also helps in the retention of information especially if the story contextualized in relation to time and space. This is by being able the "5Ws" at the outset — who, what, where, why and when.

Crucial Conversations

Crucial conversations are tools used for navigating situations when stakes are high. Stakes are high when opinions vary, and emotions run strong. In such a situation one can make the following decisions: avoid crucial conversation and suffer the consequences; handle the conversation badly and suffer the consequences; and discover how to communicate best when it matters most.

This guide gives you the tools you need to step up to life's difficult conversations. One has to navigate the situation carefully in order to get the best results.

Some of the examples of crucial conversations are:

- Asking for a raise/promotion
- Ending a relationship
- Evaluating a peer or subordinate
- Confronting an abusive person
- Family matters
- Addressing inappropriate behavior
- Financial issues
- Work related conflict
- Imagine any of the above examples and give ways in which you can resolve each one of them

Advantages of Oral communication are:

- It brings quick feedback.
- In a face-to-face conversation, by reading facial expression and body language one can guess whether he/she should trust what's being said or not.

Disadvantages of oral communication:

- In face-to-face discussion, user is unable to deeply think about what he/she is delivering, so this can be counted as a barrier to communication

Written Communication

In written communication, written signs or symbols are used to communicate. A written message may be in printed or handwritten. The message can be transmitted via email, letter, report, memo etc. Message, in written communication, is influenced by the vocabulary & grammar used, writing style, precision and clarity of the language used. Written Communication is most common form of communication being used in business. So, it is considered core among business skills. Memos, reports, bulletins, job descriptions, employee manuals, and electronic mail are the types of written communication used for internal communication. For communicating with external environment in writing, electronic mail, Internet Web sites, letters, proposals, telegrams, faxes, postcards, contracts, advertisements, brochures, and news releases are used. It is essential for small business owners and managers to develop effective written communication skills and to encourage the same in all employees. Written communication involves any type of interaction that makes use of the written word. Communication is a key to any endeavor involving more than one person. Communicating through writing is essential in the modern world and is becoming ever more so as we participate in what is now commonly called the information age. In fact, written communication is the most common form of business communication. It is essential for small business owners and managers to develop effective written communication skills and to encourage the same in all employees. The information age has altered the ways in which we communicate and placed an increasing emphasis on written versus oral communications.

The ever-increasing use of computers and computer networks to organize and transmit information means the need for competent writing skills is rising.

Advantages of written communication includes:

1. Messages can be edited and revised many time before it is actually sent.
2. Written communication provide record for every message sent and can be saved for later study.
3. A written message enables receiver to fully understand it and send appropriate feedback.
4. Disadvantages of written communication includes
5. Unlike oral communication, Written communication doesn't bring instant feedback.
6. It takes more time in composing a written message as compared to word-of-mouth.
7. and number of people struggle for writing ability.

Non-verbal Communication

What is said is very important. More so what you don't say is even more important. Signs speak volumes that words. Most of What you say is a vital part of any communication. But what you don't say can be even more important. Research also shows that 55% of in-person communication comes from nonverbal cues like facial expressions, body stance, and tone of voice. According to one study, only 7% of a Receiver's comprehension of a Message is based on the Sender's actual words; 38% is based on paralanguage (the tone, pace, and volume of speech), and 55% is based on nonverbal cues (body language).

This implies that non-verbal cues affect so many things in business. Sometimes in some organizations judges scrutinize job applicants via videos. In this case the judges assess the social skills of job candidate. They scrutinize qualities such as gestures speaking skills dress code. For this reason, it is important to consider how we appear in business as well as what we say.

The muscles of our faces convey our emotions. We can send a silent message without saying a word. A change in facial expression can change our emotional state. Before an interview, for example, if we focus on feeling confident, our face will convey that confidence to an interviewer. Adopting a smile (even if we're feeling stressed) can reduce the body's stress levels. Below are some few examples that can change a message. You can add others too.

Body Language

Sincerity is key to effective communication. A firm handshake, given with a warm, dry hand, is a great way to establish trust. A weak, clammy handshake conveys a lack of trustworthiness. Gnawing one's lip conveys uncertainty. A direct smile conveys confidence.

Eye Contact

In business, the style and duration of eye contact considered appropriate vary greatly across cultures. In some cultures, for example in the United States, looking someone in the eye (for about a second) is considered a sign of trustworthiness. What about in your culture?

Facial Expressions

The human face can produce thousands of different expressions. These have been given varied meanings. For example, our faces convey basic information to the outside world. Happiness is associated with an upturned mouth and slightly closed eyes; fear with an open mouth and wide-eyed stare. Flitting ("shifty") eyes and pursed lips convey a lack of trustworthiness. The effect of facial expressions in conversation is instantaneous. Our brains may register them as "a feeling" about someone's character.

Posture

The position of our body relative to a chair or another person is another powerful silent messenger that conveys interest, aloofness, professionalism—or lack thereof. Head up, back straight (but not rigid) implies an upright character. In interview situations, experts advise mirroring an interviewer's tendency to lean in and settle back in her seat. Such positions can affect the way we are judged in business context.

Touch

The meaning of a simple touch differs between individuals, genders, and cultures. In Mexico, when doing business, men may find themselves being grasped on the arm by another man. To pull away is seen as rude. In Indonesia, to touch anyone on the head or touch anything with one's foot is considered highly offensive. In Kenya in some communities, women and children don't shake the hands of elders.

Space

This is the distances people should keep in an organization. Proxemics is the study of the spatial requirements of humans and the effects of population density on behavior, communication, and social interaction. According to Anthropologist Edward T. Hall different kinds of distance that occur between people convey meaning. These distances vary between cultures. The figure below outlines the basic proxemics of everyday life and their meaning.

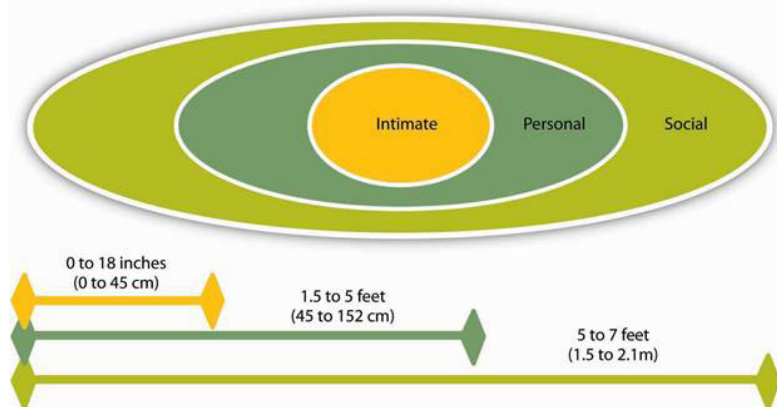


Figure 2.2: Proxemics of everyday

The English Question in New Zealand: Exploring national attachments and detachments among English Migrants', Nationalism and Ethnic Politics, 16

Standing too far away from a colleague (such as a public speaking distance of more than seven feet) or too close to a colleague (intimate distance for embracing) can thwart an effective verbal communication in business.

Conclusion

We have looked at the various forms of communication, These are verbal and non-verbal forms in a business setting. We have also looked at the various ways the forms of communication convey information. The different examples in each section will help you to understand what it takes to communication in whatever setting. You can also discover other forms of communication from you own cultures.

Assessment

1. Make a distinction between verbal and non-verbal communication
2. Discuss the various communication techniques in non-verbal communication. Give examples of your own.
3. What do you understand by term proxemics? Explain how it is relevant to business communication

Activity 3 - Forms of communication in business setting

Introduction

In this section we are concentrating on those forms of communication which are relevant in a business set-up. To get information and feedback from their subordinates in an organization, communication flows in the upward direction. For purposes of teamwork and group coordination, the flow of communication is said to be lateral as seen earlier. However, these directions or flows of communication in recent years have evolved due to technological advances that enable speedier and more efficient ways of communicating as necessitated by market need.

Activity Details

Business Letter

Business letters are considered to be very important in a business environment because they play a very crucial role. Most organizations prefer to use them as an official way of communicating important messages. For a business letter to be authoritative, it has to be well structured, written and printed well. As a result, it is important for business students to be well versed on how to structure a business letter. There are many types of Business Letters and their structures may differ however the attributes are always the same across cultures language and other set-ups.

The common features, elements are:

- The Date
- The Sender's Address
- The Inside Address/Recipients Address
- Salutation
- Subject
- Main Body

- Closing
- Name of Sender
- Signature

All these elements must appear in a business letter. Below is a sample of a business letter

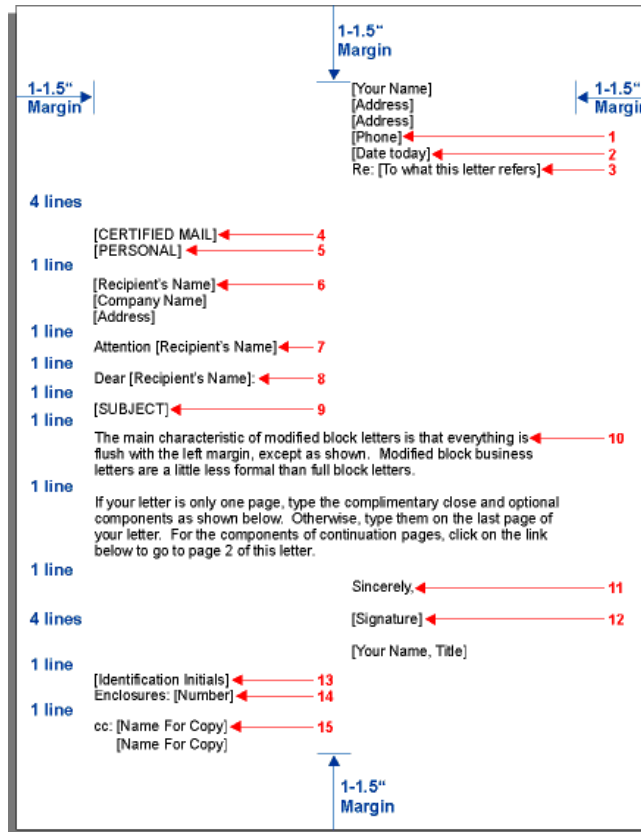


Figure 2.3: Business Letter

The letter above contains most of the labels required in a business letter. However, some variations can be there depending on the organization.

Business Reports

Reporting is a very important aspect when a business aims at larger movement towards improved benefits. The Oxford English Dictionary (2012) describe a report as a structured written document or statement with a clear purpose and for a particular audience; that succinctly analyses and presents information about an investigation, matter or incident in an easy and professional manner.

Reports are written for different reasons as such there are many types of reports like; Business report, Executive Report, Technical reports, Research Reports, feasibility study reports, System Analysis reports, and Client Case Report and Incident reports. Reports are important because they present information which is helpful in decision making and may significantly reduce risk in decision making. The Standard Components of a Business Report are:

- Title Page
- Letter of authorization
- Letter of transmittal
- Table of contents
- Synopsis or summary
- Introduction
- Body of the report
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Bibliography
- Appendices
- Brief Guidelines for Sections

Below is a sample of business report.

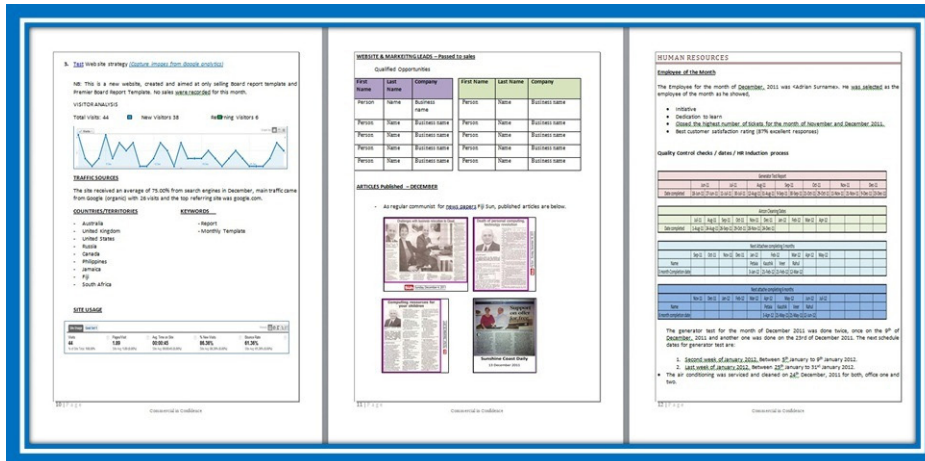


Figure 2.4: A Sample of Business Report

Business Reports

Minutes, also known as protocols or, informally, notes, are the instant written record of a meeting or hearing. They typically describe the events of the meeting and may include a list of attendees, a statement of the issues considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions for the issues. Meeting minutes keep an official account of what was done or talked about at formal meetings, including any decisions made or actions taken. They are taken during a formal meeting of the board of directors or shareholders of a corporation, such as initial and annual meetings. Minutes are an accurate record of decisions, accomplishments, tasks and agreements arrived upon during a meeting. They are important because they communicate what happened in a meeting and act as a reference document for purposes of tracking actions or item. For accurate procedure of writing minutes, the following can be done:

1. Write down who's there.
2. The name of the group which held the meeting
3. Date, time and place of meeting
4. Names of chairman and members present, their designations and organization
5. Names of observers – Ex officio members
6. Names of members who sent apologies
7. The Minutes paper

All channels of communication are structure. The minutes consist of the following parts:

- The title/subject matter
- The thinking which influenced members in reaching agreement/decisions
- The agreement/decisions/resolution.
- Here one listens to catch the essence and then write down a few words from each person.
- Was there a decision? Agree on it.
- Was there an action item? For what individual? Agree on it.
- Furthermore minutes have the following characteristics:
- Written in the third person and in the past tense.
- Names of contributors to the decision should not be recorded unless there is a specific reason to do so.
- State the title of each Minute – but be brief, you may use the agenda item as the title of the Minute.
- The thinking which influenced the decision should be set out for precedent.
- The agreement/decision/resolution must be stated verbatim.
- Names of proposers and seconders may be stated.

- Circulate Minutes immediately after the meeting to members who have to do specific actions.
- The motion must be recorded – unanimous, without dissent; or actual numbers “for” and “against”.
- Minutes should be numbered.
- The resolution must be stated completely as a statement which indicates exactly what has been decided.
- It pays to compose the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting. A rough draft is adequate, the polish can come later.

Order of Presentation in Minutes

- i) Title includes Type of Meeting: Name of group, committee or organization; Date, Time and Place.
- ii) Names of Members present (if group is small).
- iii) Names of members absent.
- iv) Time of Opening.
- v) Confirmation and approval of previous Minutes.
- vi) Matters arising (when applicable).
- vii) New Business
 - A. Record all significant discussions, announcements, etc.
 - B. Record exact language of main motions, name of initiator and seconder.
 - C. A brief summary of the discussion on the motion.
- i) Action taken, resolutions passed etc.
- ii) Any Other Matters.
- iii) Date of Next Meeting.
- iv) Time of Adjournment or Closure.
- v) Signature of Secretary (sometimes signature of chairman/presiding officer too).
- vi) Date Minutes are signed.

A Note In The Agenda

The inclusion of the item “Any Other Business” or “Any Other Matters” on the agenda should not be taken as the opportunity to raise matters for which proper notice should have been given. Typical items which are permitted under this heading are urgent important questions which have suddenly arisen and minor items which are not mentioned on the agenda. It is at this stage of the agenda that the chairman can indicate his worth, for he should be careful what business he accepts for discussion. Consideration of items which are important but not urgent must be left until the next regular meeting of the committee.

Below is a sample of minutes

Minutes for [Organization Name]

Call to Order
 A [meeting type] meeting of [organization name] was held on [date] at [location]. It began at [time] and was presided over by [chairman's name], with [secretary's name] as secretary.

Attendees
 Voting members in attendance included [list voting members here]
 Guests in attendance included [list guests here]
 Members not in attendance included [list members who did not attend]

Approval of Minutes
 A motion to approve the minutes of the previous [date] meeting was made by [name] and seconded by [name].

Officers' Reports
 [Report name] was presented by [name of presenter].
 [Report name] was presented by [name of presenter].

Other Reports
 [Report name] was presented by [name of presenter]. The following resolution was adopted: [resolution].

Main Motions
Motion: Moved by [name] and seconded that [state the motion here]. The motion [carried or failed] with [number of yeas] in favor and [number of nays] against.
Motion: Moved by [name] and seconded that [state the motion here]. The motion [carried or failed] with [number of yeas] in favor and [number of nays] against.
Motion: Moved by [name] and seconded that [state the motion here]. The motion [carried or failed] with [number of yeas] in favor and [number of nays] against.

Announcements

Adjournment
 [Name of mover] moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at [time of adjournment].

 Secretary
 [Organization Name]

Date of Approval

Figure 2.5: Sample Minutes

Other Tips For The Secretary

- The name and subject of a quest speaker can be included in the Minutes. Do not include a summary of the remarks.
- Do not include what did not occur in the meeting.
- When the Minutes have been approved, the word “Approved” with the Secretary’s initials should be written below the Minutes.
- When corrections are made, the error should be bracketed and the correction written on the facing page or in a wide margin.
- Minutes can be corrected years after they are approved.
- The Secretary should sit near the presiding officer.
- The names of those elected or appointed to committees should be listed.

- Motions should be recorded exactly as adopted.
- If a motion is long or difficult to record it could be requested that it be submitted in writing.
- If a draft of the preceding meeting minutes are sent to all members, they need not be read unless requested.
- The fact that a motion was seconded is not included.

Meetings

A secretary of an organization is in charge of calling for meetings. The secretary composes the notice of meeting for approval by the chairperson. The secretary is guided by the company secretary/lawyer/legal department on matters dealing with by laws, signing a proxy etc. sending notices of meetings that are held very regularly, a form may be printed or duplicated at the beginning of the year so that the date, subject of meeting or other pertinent information are filled in to complete the form. A good meeting should follow a procedure as follows:

Agenda or Order of Business

Every meeting should follow a systematic programme that is planned and outlined prior to the meeting. Review of the minutes of previous meeting(s) will be invaluable in preparing the agenda because it will help the secretary determine if any unfinished business items should be included on the agenda. In some organizations, the order of business is set out in the bye-laws. However, the usual order for formal meetings is as follows:

- i) Call to order by chairman or presiding officer
- ii) Roll call – either oral or observed by secretary
- iii) Announcement of quorum (not always done).
- iv) Reading of minutes of previous meeting (omitted when minutes are circulated before the meeting).
- v) Confirmation and Approval of Minutes.
- vi) Matters arising or unfinished business (taken from previous Minutes).
- vii) New Business.
- viii) Any Other Business
- ix) Adjournment.

Procedure

Very formal meetings make use of parliamentary procedure for their conduct. The purpose of this procedure is to arrive at a group decision in an efficient and orderly manner. It is based on four principles; namely:

- i) Courtesy and justice must be accorded to all.
- ii) Only one topic is considered at one time.
- iii) The minority must be heard.
- iv) The majority must prevail.

Motions

Most business in formal meetings is transacted through main motions. This involves a member addressing the chairperson, being recognized, and making a motion (proposal). Another member seconds the motion. Then the chairman/presiding officer states the motion, names both the person who made it and the seconder and calls for a discussion.

At the end of a discussion, a vote is taken – usually by voice but sometimes by show of hands – The chairman announces the result:

“The motion is carried” (yes)

“The motion is defeated” (no).

Basic Methods of Voting in a Meeting

1. Voice Vote is the most common voting method since it is the easiest and fastest way of determining a vote outcome. If the vote is in doubt, another voice vote or show of hands may be taken. Responses in favour are either yeas or yes; against nays.
2. Show of Hands or Rising is used when a motion requires a definite number of affirmative votes, such as two thirds. The secretary and possibly others appointed by the presiding officer are responsible for counting the votes.
3. Roll call vote may be required by the by-laws of an organization for particular motions or may be decided upon by a motion from a member. The presiding officer states the response to be used in voting for or against the motion. Members not voting may be asked to respond by saying. “Present” or “Abstain”. Names are called in alphabetical order and the vote is given. The presiding officer is named last and only if the vote would affect the result. The roll call record is made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

4. Ballot vote allows for a secret vote and is commonly used for elections or important matters brought before the organization. Printed ballots, as in the case of elections, generally are prepared before the meeting. For matters arising at the meeting requiring a ballot vote, slips of paper are distributed to the membership for voting use.

Announcement of Results: The affirmative vote is given first, followed by a statement to the effect that the motion passed or the motion was defeated.

5. Some Terms Associated with Meetings

Standing: Permanent e.g. standing committee or body which exists permanently even though membership may change.

Ad hoc: Special purpose (e.g. ad hoc committee is formed for a special purpose, and where its task has been accomplished, the committee is dissolved.

Address the Chair: A member wishing to speak on a point must address the Chair in the following way:

- 1) Mr. Chairman – for a gentleman
- 2) Madam Chairman – for a lady

All remarks must be addressed to the chairman, and members should as much as possible not discuss matters between themselves at a meeting.

Adjournment/Postponement: Subject to the Articles, rules or constitution of an organization, the chairman, with the consent of the meeting may adjourn it in order to postpone further discussion, or because of shortage of time.

Motion: A motion must be “moved” by one person and seconded by another. If there is no seconder, a motion is dropped and cannot be introduced again. When put to a meeting, the motion becomes “the question and when it is passed, it is called “the resolution”. A motion on a matter made has not been included on the agenda can be moved only if “leave of urgency” has been agreed by the meeting or it has been included under the customer item “any other business”.

Amendment: A proposal to alter a motion by adding or deleting words. It must be proposed, seconded and put to the meeting in the customary way.

Putting the Question: To conclude the discussion on a motion it is customary for the chairman to “put the question” by announcing “The question before the meeting is...”

Question Be Now Put: When members feel that sufficient discussion has taken place on a motion it may be moved "that the question as now put". If it is carried, only the proposer of the motion being discussed may speak and a vote is taken. If the motion "question be now put" is defeated discussion may be discontinued.

Rider: A rider is an additional clause or sentence added to a resolution after it has been passed and it differs from an amendment in that it adds to a resolution instead of altering it. A rider has to be proposed, seconded and put to the meeting in the same way as a motion.

Nam. Com. : This means "no one contradiction", i.e. there are no votes against the motion, but some members have not voted at all.

Teller: Teller is the title given to the person appointed to count the votes at a meeting.

No Confidence: When the members of a meeting are aggrieved or at variance with the chairman they may pass a vote of "no confidence" in the chair. When this happens the chairman must vacate the chair in favour of his deputy or some other person nominated by the meeting. There must be a substantial majority of members in favour of this decision.

Quorum: This is the minimum of persons who must be in attendance to constitute a meeting. The quorum is laid down in the constitution or bylaws of the organization.

In attendance: Persons who are at a meeting other than by right are said to be in attendance. The term is usually applied to the one who is not a member or to a recorder.

Standing Orders: These are rules compiled by the organization regulating the manner in which its business is to be conducted.

Going into Committee: A motion "that the meeting go into committee" is moved if less restricted discussion is thought necessary. A motion "that the meeting be resumed" gives the meeting authority to proceed at the point where it left off.

Lie on the Table: A letter or document is said to "lie on the table" when it is decided at a meeting to take no action upon the business contained in it.

Majority: The articles and rules of the organization will define the majority of votes required to carry a motion.

Poll: Poll is the term given for the method of voting at an election, and in a meeting this usually takes the form of a secret poll. Its conduct is determined by the laid down rules in the standing order or constitution of the organization.

Point of Order: This is a question regarding the procedure at a meeting or a query (relating to the standing orders or constitution) raised by a member during the course of the meeting, e.g. absence of quorum.

Casting Vote: A second vote usually allowed to the chairman except in the case of a company meeting. A casting vote is only used when there is an equal number of the existing members of the organization.

Presentations

The ability to deliver a good presentation is yet another important communication skill that many employers are looking out for in the labor market. There is a growing need for people to develop their presentation skills because business settings have evolved. People are increasingly being challenged to orally explain things with support from written work. Even academically, students are expected to engage in presentations such as defense of their research proposals. Therefore, it is not surprising that presentation skills are key. For example, a Business Development Manager may be asked to make a presentation on a proposed Business Plans or Venture.

There is need for individuals to be able to make presentations with flair, great style and success. However, this is not easy; it takes time and experience even though there are no hard and fast rules involved. Presentation skills go hand in hand with PowerPoint skills, a well-designed PowerPoint document is a great tool in making great presentations. PowerPoint bring out the key issues in a presentation in written form, thereby acting as notes for the presenter and can be used to aid visuals in oral presentations. When preparing PowerPoint, take care not to overload the slides with chunks of text. Use bullets and avoid explanations – otherwise then you will be reading and not presenting. The PowerPoint should simply be used for key issues not details. For further reference on presentation skill refer to the following source

<http://www.skillsyouneed.com/present/what-is-a-presentation.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minutes>

Effective Presentations

Most people have at least some level of apprehension about public speaking, and yet most business and public careers require oral presentations at least periodically. Some jobs require oral presentations almost immediately; others may not require them until you've been on the job a while. If you are to advance in your career, however, it is certain that you will eventually be called upon to deliver an oral presentation.

For this reason, the more you know about what is required for an effective presentation, and the more practice you have had speaking to groups, the more comfortable you will feel when it comes time for you to deliver your first one to an audience. As is true for all communication, the two initial factors are your purpose and your audience: what do you need or want to say to whom. The third critical factor is the effectiveness of your delivery.

The Audience

The audience is an important variable in any communication situation. Analyzing an audience for an oral presentation is easier than analyzing an audience for a written message.

You and your audience are in the same place at the same time, usually for a specific purpose.

Check about your audience's range in ages, educational backgrounds, and occupations.

The attributes of your audience that will have the greatest influence on your presentation are size, attitude toward you and your subject, and their previous knowledge about the subject.

Audience Size. The size of the audience is an important influence on any presentation. In general, the larger the group, the more difficult it is to satisfy everyone. Sometimes, just gaining the attention of a large group can be a challenge. The three most important qualities of large audiences that cause problems for presenters are the following:

1. The members of a large group are less cohesive; hence the behavior of large audiences is less predictable than that of small groups.
2. The members of a large group are likely to have less in common with one another. Thus in any large group, some members of the audience will disagree with you.
3. The members of a large group have a greater variation in attitudes, knowledge about the subject, and educational level. So large groups present greater challenges for finding the appropriate balance of technical and non-technical information.

Audience Attitude. The attitude of the audience toward you and your subject can vary in several ways. The audience may:

- Like you and like your subject.
- Like you but dislike your subject.
- Dislike you but like your subject.
- Dislike both you and your subject.
- Like or dislike you and be neutral about your subject.
- Be neutral about you and like or dislike your subject.
- Be neutral about you and your subject.

If the audience has a positive attitude toward either you or your subject, you are off to a good start.

When you know beforehand that your audience has a negative attitude, make a special effort to be positive at the beginning of the message. If you have discovered the reason for the negative attitude, can you deal with it directly and eliminate it as an influence?

Audience Knowledge. What does your audience already know about your subject? What is the typical educational level of those in the audience? The answers to these questions determine what you will need to do to adapt your presentation to fit a specific audience. When the audience is unfamiliar with the subject, or when the subject is complex given their educational background, you will need to make a special effort to help your audience understand:

1. Use a vocabulary that everyone will understand.
2. Explain technical terms.
3. Make your organizational plan obvious, and make transitions clear.
4. Repeat and emphasize key points.

Presentation Skills

Regardless of the variables in the situation, the techniques required for an effective presentation are essentially the same. You will need to plan what you will say, establish credibility, deliver the message, and obtain feedback.

Planning

How much planning you must do before you speak depends on the complexity of the subject and the formality of the situation. Complex subjects require more planning than simple ones.

Planning means thinking before you speak. Adequate planning includes the following steps:

1. **Know Your Subject.** Presentations will require at least some specific preparation to adapt material to the audience and occasion and to ensure that the most important points are covered in a logical order. Being thoroughly familiar with your subject and what you intend to say about it is the best antidote for presentation jitters and the best guarantee for a successful presentation.
2. **Be Positive.** When possible, avoid saying negative things about people, organizations, or ideas presented by others.
3. **Rehearse.** You should rehearse enough to be familiar and comfortable with your message. To be effective as a presenter, you must know what you want to say well enough to say it without reading it or memorizing it.
4. **Be clear, truthful, and interesting.** You can't be perfect; nobody is. You cannot prepare for every contingency; and you cannot know everything about your subject, the circumstances, or the audience. You do, however, owe it to your audience to present what you do know in a clear, truthful, and interesting way, and that's all they will expect.

Establishing Credibility

Your credibility as a message source will have an important influence on the reception the audience gives your message. You can establish long-term credibility only by becoming a recognized expert in a given area. Once you have established yourself as an authority, you carry this credibility with you. Long-term credibility in one area has a halo effect or carry-over effect.

But the halo effect is not always national. It is logical for a tennis player to recommend a brand of tennis racket, for example, but why would people expect a tennis player to make good recommendations about automobiles or soft drinks? Even if you possess long-term credibility, you will still need to establish short-term credibility with your audience each time you speak. To help ensure high short-term credibility, make clear distinctions among facts, inferences, and value.

Delivering The Message

In addition to the structure and content of your message, the way you deliver it will also have an influence on its reception. Whatever the sizes of your audience, the skills you need to make an effective presentation are essentially the same as the conversational skills you have been using all your life.

Unfortunately, the larger the size of the audience, the easier it is to forget the basic conversational skills. Most people find large audiences at least a little intimidating. The fundamental rules for delivering a message to a group are the following:

1. **Relax.** One of the things effective presenters have in common is that they are relaxed and comfortable while speaking to a group. You will recall from the discussion of “Establishing Rapport” that people tend to match one another in social situations.

If you appear nervous and uncomfortable, your audience will become nervous and uncomfortable as well. Use natural gestures and movements, but avoid pacing and other nervous mannerisms.
2. **Involve everyone.** Whatever the size of the group, take a moment before you begin to speak to establish eye contact with as many people as possible. “pull” the audience in to you, glance at those seated on the left side of the room, then look at those seated across the back of the room, and then move your gaze back toward the front of the room, looking at those seated on the right. Make sure that everyone can hear you.
3. **Ask questions.** Ask them for a “show of hands” in response to a relevant question about the subject of your presentation (such as “How many of you own a digital camera?”). If appropriate, ask for a volunteer to take part in a demonstration. After the demonstration, have the audience applaud that person.

4. **Be enthusiastic.** If you are interested in and enthusiastic about your subject, you increase the level of interest and enthusiasm in your audience. If you look depressed and speak in a small, shaky voice, your audience will believe your appearance rather than your words.
5. **Stick to the subject.** Entertainment material is useful only if it helps you convey your message. Jokes, stories, and other material inserted for entertainment purposes must be related to your message. Remember that you have a purpose in speaking and that your principal objective is to accomplish that purpose.

Obtaining Feedback

You need to obtain feedback from your audience for two distinct reasons. First, you need feedback to make sure that your audience is hearing and understanding your message. Second, you need feedback to help you do a better job on your next presentation.

To ensure that everyone is hearing and understanding you, maintain eye contact with your audience and invite questions.

- **Use eye contact.** The only way to know how the members in your audience is responding to you is to look at them. If the entire back row has fallen asleep, they probably can't hear you. If members of the audience have turned their attention to their calendars or to the stack of reading materials they brought with them, you have lost their attention and will have to do something to regain it.
- **Invite questions.** Let your audience know in advance whether you prefer to receive questions at the end of the presentation or as you go along. When someone has a question, others probably have the same question, which suggests a need for clarification. If a question anticipates a point that you will be addressing later in the presentation, you can ask the person to hold the question until that point by saying something like. "That's a good question, and I will be addressing that issue in a few minutes."
- To obtain feedback for the second objective of doing a better job with your next presentation, do the following:
 - **Analyse the audience's questions.** Keep track of the questions the members of your audience ask, and then revise your presentation to ensure that you provide better coverage of the topics they asked about during your next presentation.
 - **Invite evaluation.** Request an evaluation of your presentation by your presentation by your supervisor or a trusted colleague.

Remember that the feedback does you no good unless you act on what you have learned. Not every comment you receive will be valid, but if four or five people tell you that you need to speak more slowly or more quickly, you would do well to change the pace of your delivery.

Formality

Formal presentations differ from other kinds of oral communication primarily because one person speaks for an extended time without receiving much oral feedback. In most other communication situations – from interviews to group meetings – the participants exchange a series of short messages and comment on what others have said. In a formal presentation, the speaker is expected to deliver a fully planned, well-organized, extended message on a topic usually announced in advance to the audience.

Restricted oral feedback is a criterion of a formal presentation. Sometimes the medium used for the presentation, as would be the case with a televised presentation, may make feedback virtually impossible. Other formal presentations may permit questions and answers during the presentation itself, but even in such cases, feedback is restricted to help ensure the orderly presentation of ideas.

Reading Presentations

Rarely used in business but most academics and scientists read papers. In business, the following kinds of presentations – are most common.

1. Public speech or lecture. Public presentations are prepared in advance and typically delivered with the aid of notes. Oral feedback is usually restricted to the end of the presentation, if any is permitted at all.
2. Sales presentations. Sales presentations may be invited or uninvited, with invited sales presentations being the more formal of the two. In an invited sales presentation, the speaker has been specifically invited to present his or her product or service to those who will make the purchasing decision. In an uninvited sales presentation, the speaker takes advantage of an opportunity to describe a product or service. In either case the presenter must prepare a wide variety of material in advance and then select the most appropriate material for the situation and audience. Most sales presentations include time for questions and answers.
3. Education and training presentation. Education and training presentations combine the characteristics of lectures and discussion sessions. The speaker must be fully prepared both to deliver a specific message and to deal with a wide range of questions about related subject matter. Oral feedback is encouraged during and after the presentation and, sometimes, even before it.
4. Informal oral reports. A common occurrence in business is for managers to ask members of their staffs to report on their progress with a particular project or a solution to a problem. At any staff meeting, you may be called upon to brief your department or committee on something you have been working on. Although the situation is much less formal than most other presentation types, others will be judging you on the quality of your presentation, so be prepared.

Note that, in general, as the formality of the presentation decreases, the responsibility of the presenter also decreases, while the responsibility of the audience increases. In a public speech or lecture, the audience is characteristically responsible only for listening; whereas in discussion sessions and for most informal oral reports, the audience is expected to participate by asking questions and making comments.

Presentation Support

For most formal presentations, you will need two kinds of support: notes and visual aids, which typically depend on equipment of one type or another.

- i) Notes experienced presenters typically prefer to put their notes on full-size sheets or to speak from an outline shown by overhead projector or computer-based display. Some presenters put their entire presentation on their notes pages. But once a speaker begins reading, he or she tends to focus exclusively on the notes, losing eye contact with the audience. The other problem with having your notes contain the complete text of your presentation is the possibility of getting lost and having to take time to search through your notes for what you want to say next.

The alternative is to know your material well enough that you can move about naturally, referring to the text only when you need to provide the audience with a specific detail.

- ii) Paraphernalia. The most common supplements to an oral presentation are chalk and white boards, display boards, flip charts, projectors, handouts, and models.

Chalk and White Boards. Black, green or white boards are known communication aids. The basic rules for using chalk and white boards are the following:

- **Write legibly.** Your writing should be big enough to read. Start at the left side of the board (as you are facing it), and work to the right.
- **Keep the message simple.** Too much information clutters the board and confuses the audience.
- **Stay out of the way, and speak to the group.** Make sure that the audience can see what you have written or drawn. Stand on one side when you're referring to information on the board, and use a pointer if one is available. Speak to the audience rather than to the board.
- **Flip Charts.** The main advantages of a flip chart are that they require no erasing and different colour markers can be used to help create visual interest.
- **Projectors.** It is currently the standard device for visual support. Other projector types include computer-based projection systems. VCR and TV systems, and film projectors.

Overhead Projectors

For effective use of the overhead, organize your transparencies in advance, and keep transparencies simple and easy to read. Use 18 point type or larger for anything printed on a transparency.

Computer-based projection systems.

Power Point Computer-based projection systems will do everything an overhead projector will do, and more – when they work. At their best, they project a bright image and can use the several colours. Even when you are absolutely sure that your equipment is compatible and that everything will work, have a backup plan. Take a set of printed transparencies and/or handout package containing the essential points of your message.

VCR and TV systems.

Videotape can be used to present a wide variety of material, including stand-alone presentations. If you need to deliver a specific message to groups of people separated by time, distance, or both, a videotaped presentation may be the most effective way to do that. The principal disadvantages of videotaped presentations are the relatively high cost of producing quality video and the size of typical TV monitors.

Nevertheless, once produced, it can be sent to a wide variety of locations for viewing by small numbers of people over an extended time. For this reason, video may prove an effective means of distributing certain kinds of information to well-defined audiences.

Handouts.

Handouts are written supplements that a presenter distributes to the audience. Handouts have the following uses:

1. To provide details you don't have time to cover.
2. To illustrate specific points of your presentations.
3. To serve as worksheets for your audience.
4. To outline the key points of your presentation and thus help your audience follow your message more easily.
5. To provide a summary of your presentation.
6. To provide statistical data or other information that supports your generalizations.

Before Delivery

It should be obvious that to give an effective oral presentation, you need to know what you are talking about. The first step in delivering an effective preparation is to make sure that you are thoroughly familiar with your subject.

Second, to the extent that it is possible to know such things in advance, you need to have a good understanding of your audience and the context in which you will be speaking. Key to success depends on the following:

a) Preparation

The three cornerstones of preparation are to know your material, know your audience, and know your objective. Knowing your material, however, does not mean that you should memorize what you are going to say.

Your memory can fail. When that happens, you are left with nothing to say and nowhere to go. The best preparation is to know your material well enough to be able to speak from an outline.

Also, part of your preparation should be to cultivate a good speaking voice. Use a tape recorder to record and listen to your own voice. You do not actually hear your own voice the way others do when you are speaking. Also tape your presentation as you plan to give it, and check the tape for the following:

- Pronunciation. Are you pronouncing all words clearly and distinctly?
- Modulation. Your voice should rise and fall in both volume and pitch naturally, increasing in volume to emphasize important points, and decreasing from time to time to provide variety.
- Speed. Make sure that you are speaking at a moderate rate, neither too fast nor too slow.
- Projection. Does your voice carry well enough for you to be heard at the back of the room? If not, use a microphone. It is better to use a mike than to strain your voice.

b) Coping with Stage Fright

Virtually everyone is nervous about speaking in front of a group at least the first time. Fear of public speaking – stage fright – is the most common type of performance anxiety.

Practice is the most reliable cure for stage fright. The first presentation is the hardest: each subsequent time will get a bit easier. You will, of course, need to rehearse for all your important presentations. Use your imagination to picture yourself in front of your audience, speaking and moving naturally. As you gain experience speaking to groups, you will need to spend less time on rehearsal of this variety.

While you are rehearsing your presentation, keep the following points in mind:

- Your subject and your audience are more important than you are. Think about your audience and your subject rather than about yourself.
- No presentation is perfect. You are bound to make a mistake or two – everyone does. If you make a mistake, you can correct yourself and move on. Keep going forward rather than looking back.
- You cannot please all the people all the time. No matter how well (or poorly) you actually perform, someone in the audience will think you were wonderful, and somebody will think you were awful. Do not let the one who thinks you were awful undermine your confidence.
- When it comes to presentations, you will want to be both confident and competent – circle of excellence.

c) Overcoming Speaking Anxiety in Meeting and Presentations.

Stage Fright or the fear of speaking in public is the number one fear of all fears. The fear of dying is probably number seven and this tells you immediately how serious stage fright is.

People who have this fear or anxiety dealing with speaking in front of groups can experience all kinds of symptoms:

- Sweaty palms
- Accelerated heart rate
- Memory loss.

An effective way of dealing with speaking anxieties is first to acknowledge that this fear is normal and that it is not only with you. But to reduce this fear is to thoroughly prepare yourself before you speak. And proper preparation and rehearsal will bring down this fear to about 75%, says Lenny Laskowski. Using his 9Ps:

***PRIOR, PROPER, PREPARATION, PREVENTS, POOR,
PERFORMANCE OF THE PERSON, PUTTING ON THE
PRESENTATION***

Laskowski gives suggestions we can use to overcome our speaking anxiety:

1. Know the room – become familiar with the place in which you will speak.
2. Know the audience – as they arrive chat or greet them.
3. Know your material – nervousness will decrease.
4. Relax – by exercising, breathe in slowly, hold your breath for 4-5 seconds, then slowly exhale.
5. Visualize yourself speaking.
6. Be aware the audience want you to succeed.
7. Don't apologize for being nervous – your nervousness might not show at all.
8. Concentrate on the message, not on the audience nor your nervousness or yourself.
9. Gain experience – experience in frequent speaking is the key to effective speaking.

So if the fear of public speaking causes you to prepare more, then the fear of speaking serves as its own best antidote. He who fails to prepare is preparing for failure – so prepare.

Delivering The Message

When the day and time of your presentation arrives, arrive sufficiently early to check the room and equipment – or to set up, if you have that responsibility as well. In particular, check the following:

- **The room arrangement.** Are the chairs for the audience arranged appropriately for our presentation? Will those seated in the back be able to hear you and see you and your visual aids?
- **The lighting.** Will you need to adjust the lighting in the room (either by opening or closing curtains or by adjusting the lights)? If the lighting will require adjustment during your presentation, do you know how to do that, or will someone be available who can help?
- **The sound system.** If your audience will be large enough so that you will need a sound system, check to make sure that it works. If you have a choice of microphone, request a lavalier. A lavalier mike will allow you to move around while speaking. A hand-held mike is second best because it limits your gestures and needs to be held at a fairly constant distance from your mouth so that our voice hits the “sweet spot” on the mike that allows for the cleanest sound. Because a stationary microphone attached to a lectern increases the physical and psychological separation between speaker and audience, consider them a last resort to be used only for speaking to large audiences when you have no other options.

- **Audiovisual equipment.** What kind of audiovisual support will be appropriate for your presentation? Is the equipment there, and does it work properly? Computer-based projection systems in particular require additional time to set up, so make sure that you will have sufficient time to ensure that the system is working (and have a backup plan in case it doesn't). If you are using an overhead or slide projector, make sure that a spare bulb is available.
- **Your appearance.** Before your presentation, check yourself in a mirror to make sure that your appearance is acceptable. Men should make sure to check the zipper on their trousers. It's awkward to have someone in your audience point out that your trousers need zipping. Women need to check their makeup and jewelry. Knowing that you look acceptable will help provide the additional confidence required for an effective presentation.

If you find that you are still nervous when you begin speaking (in spite of your rehearsal and Circle of Excellence), do not apologize for it or make any comment that suggests that you are inexperienced or poorly prepared. Concentrate on your message and your audience. If your throat gets dry, drink water.

When your time to speak arrives, walk confidently to the lectern without speaking.

Before you speak, look at the audience, starting by looking at the people seated in the front on your left. Let your eyes gaze down the left side of the audience, across the back row, and then back to the front along the right side. This will pull the audience into you before you begin.

If you have been introduced, be sure to thank the person who introduced you. Express appreciation for the opportunity to speak and, perhaps, the importance of the occasion. While you speak, watch the audience for signs that everyone can hear you and follow what you are saying.

A presentation, like all communication forms, requires a specific organizational pattern just as letters, memos, and reports follow certain formats. These include the following:

I. Opening.

The opening of a presentation is usually designed to help both the speaker and the audience feel comfortable and to orient the audience to the purpose of the presentation. The following are typical openings:

1. **A joke.** When they are relevant and told well, jokes can be effective ice breakers. Audiences have been conditioned to expect a joke or two at the beginning of most presentations, so telling an appropriate joke will meet that expectation.
2. **A story.** People enjoy listening to stories if they make an appropriate point.
3. **A preview.** For most presentations, a preview helps orient the audience to the basic structure of the message. A preview provides the audience with the structure of your presentation by identifying the main points and the order in which you will present them.

4. **A special goodwill statement.** If you haven't already done so when thanking the person who introduced you, you can open by expressing appreciation for being invited to speak and referring to the importance of the occasion.

II.Body.

The body of the presentation consists of the facts, figures, and principles you wish to convey. Because your organizational pattern must be clear to your audience, use explicit transitions from one point to the next. Tell the audience how each part contributes to the whole, and how the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. Refer to your purpose from time to time. Show how what you have already said and what you are about to say contribute to your overall purpose.

An example of a transition: *"Now that we have seen how X influences Y. let's briefly consider how X influences Z".*

Build your case slowly and carefully. If there are two sides to a subject, present both of them. Your audience will become aware of the other opinion sooner or later anyway, and if you neglect to mention the other side, they will hold that against you.

In an oral presentation, some redundancy is essential. Repeat important points. An oral message is not the same as a written message in this regard. Because your audience cannot "look back" to see what you said before, you will need to repeat important points to help them remember. Work your repetitions in naturally but with variation.

III.Closing

- Invite questions. If appropriate, allow time at the end of your presentation to answer questions from the audience.
- Summarize key points. Review the main points for your audience. Emphasize the benefits associated with doing as you have suggested.
- Be specific about desired actions. If you want your audience to act, ask specifically for that action. Explain exactly what you want your audience to do, and make the action seem easy. If appropriate, get some kind of immediate commitment from them – signing a petition, leaving names and phone numbers (or email addresses), or showing hands to indicate willingness to act.
- Be positive and forward-looking. If you end your presentation on a negative note, your audience will associate you with that negative element rather than with the positive elements that may have preceded it. No matter how gloomy your topic happens to be, find some hope for the future and focus on it as you conclude your presentation.
- Conclude when you say you will. If you have been allotted a specific time for your presentation, finish on time. Once you have said "In conclusion," be sure that you conclude – restate your main point, specify an action, and quit.

Speech writing

Speech is one of the most common means of communication. One important skill in speech writing is to determine the following factors before the speech writing process:

- i) the issues, problems, or subjects to be addressed;
- ii) the audience(s) for which the speech is intended;
- iii) the reasons supporting the directives; and
- iv) the goals to be attained.

The audience(s) to be addressed would depend on the needs to be satisfied, which may be diverse and wide-ranging. The issues/problems to be addressed as constituting the substance of the speech may be either general in character, or specific depending upon the nature of the interests under consideration.

The major factors to be taken into consideration should include the type and scope of information to be obtained, as well as the sources from which the necessary materials may be obtained, as explained below:

1. The Type and Scope and Information to be Obtained

The collection and analysis of the required data should be guided by the nature and depth of the needs and/issues to be addressed. That should be approached within the broad perspectives of the institutions/organisations, and/or the individuals interested in, or affected substantially by the substance of speech.

2. Sources from which the needed Information may be Obtained

The sources from which the necessary materials may be obtained would depend upon the nature and scope of the problems and/or issues to be addressed. Equally important as a factor to be considered is the kind of measures that can be applied for the effective disposal of the problem/issues under consideration. The possible sources to be utilized should include the different organisations and/or individuals with recognised relevant capabilities, competence, and interests, which would include:

- Responsible public organisations and institutions such as Ministries, Regional Coordinating Offices, District Assemblies, State Own Enterprises; Public Boards, Corporation, Commission's, Services, etc.
- Special interest groups such the Labour and Women's Organisations, Chambers of Commerce and Industries, Employers Organisations, Professional Associations, Religious Organisations, Farmers' and Fishermen's Organisations; etc.
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- International, regional and bilateral cooperation organisations and their agencies.
- Individual specialists, consultants etc. with acknowledged competence and capabilities in the subject(s) under consideration.

3. Substance and Style of the Text:

- The substance of any speech should be oriented towards addressing directly, problems/issues of prime and immediate interest to the targeted audiences. Thus the substance of speech should be relevant, factual and meaningful in the context of the needs of the identified audience. The facts to be presented should be thoroughly tested to withstand challenges from any quarter. By the same token promises that cannot be fulfilled should be eschewed.
- The substance of the speech should also be arranged and presented in a logical manner to enhance the impact that it is expected to make.
- The style of writing should reflect simplicity and clarity in the language used. The aim should be to make the speech easy to understand or comprehend for the benefits of its audience. Short sentences as far as practicable should be used all along so as to sustain a good style.
- Technical jargons as well as technical expressions not to be readily comprehended by the targeted audience should as far as practicable, be avoided. Where it may become necessary for technical jargons and expressions to be used, such technical language should be explained.

4. Arrangement of the Text:

The sequence in the delivery of speeches should be logically arranged so as to strengthen the impact the speeches are expected to make. The following guideline is suggested:

a) The Opening Salutations:

This should as far as practicable follow the prevailing state and/or official protocol prescriptions. It is therefore necessary that Chief Directors together with their supporting speech writers should have ready access to and be sufficiently conversant with the prevailing Order of Precedence in the relevant protocol as authorized by the Government.

b) The Purpose of the Speech:

This should be clearly explained to include the reasons for the timing of its presentation.

c) A Summary of the Key sub/Topics of which the entire speech is composed of.

That should serve as a brief introduction to the subjects to be discussed later in detail.

d) Detailed Presentation of the Main Text of the Speech:

As covered by the summaries of sub-topics mentioned in Sub-paragraph © above; the aim of this should be to facilitate the quick assimilation of the speech by its audience.

e) Conclusions:

These should include directives for the necessary follow-up action in accordance with the decisions reflected in the speech.

f) Final Recommendations in Summary:

The recommendations should be presented as far as practicable, according to the order of the relative importance.

g) Implementation Strategies

These should be defined in terms and resources requirements. They should also include an indication of the allocation of responsibilities among prospective executing organisations and agencies.

Conclusion

From now it is clear that people including business people need various techniques to disseminate information. The way you present the information determines the way it will be received by the audience. There are also various samples of the forms of communication presented. However, the list is inconclusive. In other sections links have been given for further reading.

Assessment

1. Imagine you are a CEO in a company. Prepare a report showing the company's performance in the last financial year to be presented in a meeting.
2. You are secretary of a business company write minutes for a previous meeting that took place
3. What is the most appropriate means of communication for a higher institution of learning.

Unit Summary

This unit takes through the process of information flow. . As a result we have various forms through which information is transmitted. We also looked at the various forms of communication available in a business setting including speech, minutes and presentations, I hope you will be able to make better decisions in communication environments.

Unit Assessment

1. Imagine you are the secretary of your class write minutes of a meeting which took place (10marks)
2. List the elements of a business letter(5marks);
3. Describe the three basic layouts of business letters (5marks)
4. Discuss the various non-verbal communication techniques available in your institution (5marks)
5. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation for your classmates in a topic of your own choice (10 marks)

Grading Scheme

Each question above has marks expected to be awarded. It constitutes 5% of the total final marks

Answers

1. In your opinion how well is the unit developed or delivered?
2. Which areas do you think needed more clarity?
3. Were there terms that needed further explanation.
4. What suggestions do you have for better delivery of the content?
5. Do you feel the activities and assessments being adequate?

Unit Readings and Other Resources

The readings in this unit are to be found at course level readings and other resources.

- <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=define+business+communication>
- <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=information+flow>
- <http://www.notesdesk.com/notes/business-communications/types-of-communication/>
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Sources

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- Flink, H. (2007, March). Tell it like it is: Essential communication skills for engineers. *Industrial Engineer*, 39, 44–49.
- <http://www.nywici.org/features/interview/power-story-business>
- http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/15014.Crucial_Conversations
- <http://www.inc.com/encyclopedia/written-communication.html>collinsKaren Pamela Hubbell
- P.2016) http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/7?e=collins-ch08_s05<http://www.cgu.edu/pages/852.asp>
- <https://alison.com/courses/Business-Communication-Fundamentals-of-Business-Writing>
- http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/5?e=carpenter-ch12_s03#ftn.fn-5
- <http://www.subliminalhacking.net/2012/10/12/proxemics-have-you-heard-of-personal-space/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minutes>

Unit 3. Forms of Communication in The Business Setting

Unit Introduction

In this section we are going to look at how technology has revolutionised the world. It has altered modern life in many ways, especially in the workplace. The invention of computers, the miniaturization of electronics and the development of wireless communication have all altered the business world. Business communication, in particular, has seen some of the greatest advancements due to technological developments which we look at shortly

Unit Objectives

Upon completion of this unit you should be able to:

- Define communication technology
- Discuss the benefits of technology in business
- Advise on the best forms of technology relevant the business world.

Key Terms

Business technology: Business technology (BT) is the ever-increasing reliance on information technology by businesses of all types to handle and optimize their business processes.

Information technology: is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, often in the context of a business or other enterprise.

Learning Activities

Activity 1 - What is business technology

Introduction

We are going to discuss the various technological trends available in the business world. It is important to be aware of the current technological trends in order to operate well in the business world. You should be able to know most of the technological advances.

As we read in section 2 the communication process is multifaceted. It is made of various components which include channel, medium, forms etc. These are the things that make the transfer of information effective. In other words the transmission of messages or information from the encoder (sender) to the decoder (receiver). If a person wants to share information, he or she will decide how to send that information- face to face, by phone, fax, email, video conferencing or hard copy letter and so on. These channels or methods or mediums of communication are often machines and as such are influenced by developments in technology. It keeps on changing to suit the need of the business. It is upto an organization to work hard to be in line with the pace. Technology presents a lot of tools and machines that aid communication. These tools and machines present both advantages and disadvantages for oral and written communication. Information technologies are tools and techniques that support the development of information systems.

Activity Details

The technology tools are as follows:

Computer

An electronic device that stores and manipulates information. A computer can perform the following functions in a business organization:

- Word processing
- Creating documents
- Desktop publishing
- Planning documents
- Research audience and contents
- statistical analysis
- Creating powerpoint
- E-mail and distributing documents

Printer

A printer is a peripheral machine which produces a text and/or graphics of documents stored in electronic form, usually on physical print media such as paper or transparencies.

Fax machine

A fax (short for facsimile) is a document sent over a telephone line. It is playing very important role in business communication for a very long period.

Internet

The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer network that use the standard Internet protocol suit(TCP/IP) to serve billions of users worldwide. Today's communication is so much dependent on internet. In business communication it plays more important role. This technology facilitates other medias like – E-mailing Instant Messaging Teleconferencing and Videoconferencing.

Multimedia

Multimedia is media and content that uses a combination of different content forms. It Multimedia is usually recorded and played, displayed or accessed by information content processing devices, such as computerized and electronic devices.

E-mail

- Reading and Replying to EMail
- Scan all messages before replying to any
- Print only when necessary
- Acknowledge receipt
- Don't automatically return the sender's message
- Revise the subject line if the topic changes
- Provide a clear, complete first sentence
- Never respond when you're angry
- Check response before hitting "Send"
- Assume that all emails are monitored

Instant Messenger

Instant messaging (IM) is a collection of technologies used for real-time text- based communication between two or more participants over the Internet, or other types of networks. Instant messaging is used widely as informal communication tool.

Intranet

An intranet is a private computer network that uses Internet Protocol technology to securely share any part of an organization's information or network operating system within that organization.

Telephone

The telephone, often colloquially referred to as a phone, is a telecommunications device that transmits and receives sound, most commonly the human voice. For oral communication this is the most common technological equipment.

Voice-Mail

Voicemail (also known as voice-mail, VMS, or message bank) is a centralized system of stored telephone messages that can be retrieved later. The term is also used more broadly to denote any system of conveying a stored telecommunications voice message, including using an answering machine. Most cell phones have voicemail as a basic feature, and many land line phones and corporate PBXs have their own voicemail options.

Teleconferencing

A teleconference or teleseminar is the live exchange and mass articulation of information among several persons and machines remote from one another but linked by

- A telecommunications Teleconferencing Equipment.
- Computer with online connection
- Camera hooked up to computer
- Software – CU-SeeMe – NetMeeting – Skype – Yahoo Messenger

These are the various forms of technology that are very important in a business organization however technology keeps changing.

Conclusion

This section has enabled us to understand what technology is and its relevance to the business environment. We have also seen the various technological devices which can be used to enhance business. At this level you should be able to choose the devices that best suits an organization.

Assessment

1. What is business communication technology?
2. Discuss the various tools and devices used in information technology giving the benefits of each.

Activity 2 - The Role of IT in Business Success

Introduction

IT has changed lives both for individuals and organizations. For example we have social networking, digital marketing, social networking cloud computing and many others. "Now accurate business planning, effective marketing, global sales, systematic management, real time monitoring, instant customer support and long term business growth cannot be achieved at the optimum level without IT".

The importance of IT in Business

The success of every business depends on accurate choice of technology beyond reasonable doubt. Information technology provides organizations with the opportunity to analyze specific data and plan their business appropriately. It also enables business organizations to plan the future in relation to real and achievable growth. In the present times digital marketing has enabled people to shop even at their doorsteps.

Cloud computing and modern communication has also enabled people and to manage businesses wherever they are located in the world. Digital marketing is an umbrella term for the targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing of products or services using digital technologies to reach and convert leads into customers and retain them. The key objective is to promote brands, build preference and increase sales through various marketing techniques medium, in addition to mobile and traditional TV and radio.

Importance of IT in Business Marketing:

Decision making in organization

It provides Speed and accuracy when it comes to decision making. For a business organization to succeed it has to carry out a comprehensive market research process. This will enable the managers to make informed decisions. Market research can be done in many ways through online surveys, forums, blogs, and group discussions using World Wide Web and of course through in-person interviews as well. Online tools like, Google Analytics and Microsoft CRM Dynamics nowadays help analyze big data which enhances quick decision making and afford genuine time responses from the potential viewers but also ensure the precision of data by reducing the risk errors.

Marketing and Business Growth

Successful businesses are a result of marketing which enables the management to identify its target audience first and then observe their trends and needs. Marketing in itself includes public relation, advertising, promotion and sales which aid growth. Many types of marketing can help you reach your potential customers. Technology has helped in marketing; this is the era of digital marketing. It enables one to market products all over the world. You are aware of terms like search engine optimisation (SEO), pay per click (PPC), blogging, discussion forum, email shot, SMS, MMS, social media marketing and Smartphone app advertisement etc which are current trending because organizations have understood the unlimited usage of internet. Thus technology has really aided marketing hence productivity.

Customer Support and Satisfaction

Businesses succeed because of knowing and being in touch with its customers. Internet technology has helped organizations to best tool to understand their million customer demands, problems and their solutions. IT channels like the email, webinar, social media, member portals, online newsletters and text or multimedia messaging through the smart phone are the many ways customer link is provided. Customer relationship management systems (CRM) are important for analyzing customer behavior and needs.

Resource Management and Globalisation

Resource mobilization refers to all activities involved in securing new and additional resources for an organization. It also involves making better use of, and maximizing, existing resources. It becomes more complex for large organizations to manage resources like human and finances manually.

IT plays an important role in automatic such complex situations; hence most of the resources are now sored with the help of cloud technology. Organization can now invest and manage their resources in any part of the word by using cloud based solutions.

What is the future of IT? Resource management plays a crucial role in business success. When it comes to medium or large organization, multinational companies (Microsoft, Google, Amazon, McDonalds etc) in the world use these cloud based solutions to manage their virtual or physical offices and staff worldwide.

Conclusion

It seems very clear from the above roles that an organization cannot attain success without the of information technology in this digital age. As much as it's costly it is inevitable. The companies have to bear a reasonable cost to o invest in IT.

Assessment

1. What are the current IT innovations in the market?
2. What is the importance of IT in an organization?
3. Can you think of any more area where IT is helpful in business success?

Activity 3 - Digital and information Literacy

Introduction

This section discusses digital information literacy. This involves how to help members of an organization to be in line with IT. The digital framework model helps us understand the ideology of literacy.

Literacy in the sense of this unit implies being able to read and write. In another sense it also means having the knowledge or competence in computers. Graduates need to demonstrate they can communicate clearly, verbally and in the different written formats used at work which we saw in the previous sections but also being IT compliant. The ability to communicate well with people at every level with technology is key in building good working relationships. Digital literacy includes the ability to find and use information (otherwise known as information literacy) but goes beyond this to encompass communication, collaboration and teamwork, social awareness in the digital environment, understanding of e-safety and creation of new information. Both digital and information literacy are underpinned by critical thinking and evaluation.

Activity Details

Digital Literacy process

Beetham and Sharpe (2010) describe digital literacy as a development process from access and functional skills to higher level capabilities and identity. However, this will change depending on the context so it also reflects how individuals can be motivated to develop new skills and practices in different situations.

This is because as much as organizations will want to utilize current trends in technology, employees need to be literate as technology keeps revolutionizing. Therefore organizations need to adopt the best literacy policies. Example below is an illustration of the digital process:



Figure 3.1: Beetham and Sharpe 'pyramid model' of digital literacy development model (2010)

According to this process employees have to be sensitized. This is by being made aware of the technological trends. Secondly is for them to have the skills or be literate. Thirdly is to practice in the organization and finally be able to identify with the skill and own. This is what all business organization should endeavor to do. ICT proficiency is widely seen as a pre-requisite for or backbone of all the other capabilities

For build capacity for trainers and organizations the following can be done to boost digital literacy

Effective use of digital technology by university and college staff is vital in providing a compelling student experience and in realizing a good return on investment in digital technology.

Working with stakeholders and sector bodies, we intend to provide clear guidance over what digital skills are required, and equip leaders and staff with the tools and resources they need to improve digital capability at a local or institutional level.

A digital capability framework which describes the skills needed by staff in a wide range of academic, administrative and professional roles to thrive in a digital environment. This will provide a structure to help managers and individuals understand what is needed and support the development of tools. This will bring harmony in the organization.

Conclusion

Digital literacy is a process where employees are sensitised on the various trends in technology. As a result, as seen in the Beetham and Sharpe theory the employees feel that they are part of the business and hence identify with it.

Assessment

1. Define digital literacy
2. Basing your discussion on Beetham and Sharpe (2012) discuss how digital literacy contributes to identity.

Unit Summary

As a learner what is your assessment of this section? Are you satisfied with the content?

Unit Assessment

1. Define digital literacy
2. Basing your discussion on Beetham and Sharpe (2012) discuss how digital literacy contributes to identity.

Grading Scheme

The assessment constitutes 5% of the total assessment

Answers

1. In your opinion how well is the unit developed or delivered?
2. Which areas do you think needed more clarity?
3. Were there terms that needed further explanation.
4. What suggestions do you have for better delivery of the content?
5. Do you feel the activities and assessments being adequate?

Unit Readings and Other Resources

The readings in this unit are to be found at course level readings and other resources.

- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/role-information-technology-business-success-abid-afzal-butt?articleId=6004531558055178241#comments-6004531558055178241&trk=prof-post>
- http://employability.uelconnect.org.uk/pages/standing_out/160/communication_and_literacy_skills.
- <http://digitalcapability.jiscinvolve.org/wp/files/2015/06/1.-Digital-capabilities-6-elements.pdf>

Unit 4. Team Building in Business Communication

Unit Introduction

Businesses of all sizes need dedicated employees that understand the importance of team work in achieving goals and objectives. In this unit we are going to discuss the meaning of team building, We shall also identify the different activities in team building and finally we discuss the strategies used in team building to motivate employees in business setting.

Unit Objectives

Upon completion of this unit you should be able to:

- To define team building
- Identify various techniques employed to motivate people in an institution
- Give various strategies used in team building.

Key Terms

Team building is a collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks. It is distinct from team training, which is designed to improve the efficiency, rather than interpersonal relations.

Team building activities: These are activities that are designed to help the groups develop effective communication and problem solving skills.

Learning Activities

Activity 1 - Understanding Team Building

Introduction

In a business setting people work in teams. It's important for us to know the rules and activities that can be used to motivate team members. In this unit we are going to look at team building activities, strategies used in forming teams and the various activities. Enjoy the course.

People who work together must communicate with one another in ways that promote bonding and their ability to understand one another. Effective communication builds trust, message clarity and loyalty. Communication which is poor and not structured erodes trust and motivation. In this technological age, team members must develop appropriate communication skills for the many communication platforms businesses use today. In the USA today the style of management is where everybody participates. The participatory management style requires teams to communicate frequently with a variety of, often culturally diverse, colleagues.

A person's ability to effectively communicate with others influences the way they perceive him and whether they take action based on the communication. Closely knit team members have good interpersonal communication skills. People with these skills use active listening and positive reinforcement techniques, understand personality dynamics, and the patterns and habits of others. Successful teams manage conflict quickly and fairly, and work well with others from diverse cultures.

Benefits

A cohesive team that communicates well with others creates an environment where people feel free to express new ideas and creative solutions. Employee teams with good communication skills enhance the customer experience, leading to possible improved retention of clientele and referrals. Good workplace communication skills allow team members to focus on prioritizing tasks and achieving objectives rather than chasing down an explanation for unclear communications and directives. Some of the benefits are:

- **Better Outcomes:** Teamwork can lead to better business outcomes because the team can bring more resources to bear against a challenge and there is more oversight to reduce risk of poor individual contributions. For example, in healthcare teamwork is associated with increased patient safety.
- **Efficiency:** When a team is able to work well together they accomplish more than individuals can do alone. This helps a company save money while being more competitive in their market.
- **Better Ideas:** A good team is made up of diverse members. When these members apply different skills to the same problem, they come up with a more effective solution than one person working on the same problem.
- **Mutual support:** When teams work well together they are supportive of one another. Mutual support can encourage people to achieve goals they may not have realized they could reach on their own.

- **Sense of Accomplishment:** When members of a team work to achieve specific goals, there is often a greater sense of accomplishment than what an employee may feel when working on their own.

Therefore in order for teamwork to achieve these benefits, individual members must work well together. They need to be able to put thoughts of their own accomplishments aside to work for the benefit of the team and the organization at large.

Conclusion

This is the end of this section. You have been able to define team building. We also looked at benefits of people working in teams. This shows that organizations need to encourage teamwork in order to maximize the benefits.

Assessment

1. Define team building
2. What are the strategies of team building?
3. Discuss the benefits of team building in any business enterprising

Activity 2 - Team Building Activities

Introduction

There are many different reasons why companies use team building activities. A small sampling of these reasons include: Improving communication, boosting morale, motivation, ice breakers to help get to know each other better, learning effective strategies, improving productivity, learning about one's strengths and weaknesses and many others.

Team building activities can be used by any business, large or small, to promote better teamwork in the workplace, and as most business owners and managers know, great teamwork is one of the key factors associated with a company's success. The idea is to perform various activities that are both fun and challenging, and that also have the "side effect" of building teamwork skills that can help improve employee performance and productivity at the office.

Below are the examples of the team building activities:

Two Truths and a Lie

Time Required: 15-30 minutes

Start out by having every team member secretly write down two truths about themselves and one lie on a small piece of paper – Do not reveal to anyone what you wrote down! Once each person has completed this step, allow 10-15 minutes for open conversation – much like a cocktail party – where everyone quizzes each other on their three questions. The idea is to convince others that your lie is actually a truth, while on the other hand, you try to guess other people's truths/lies by asking them questions. Don't reveal your truths or lie to anyone – even if the majority of the office already has it figured out! After the conversational period, gather in a circle and one by one repeat each one of your three statements and have the group vote on which one they think is the lie. You can play this game competitively and award points for each lie you guess or for stumping other players on your own lie. This game helps to encourage better communication in the office, as well as it lets you get to know your coworkers better.

Life Highlife Highlights Game

Time Required: 30 minutes

This is an excellent icebreaker activity that's perfect for small and large groups alike. Begin by asking each participant to close their eyes for one minute and consider the best moments of their lives. This can include moments they've had alone, they've shared with family or friends; these moments can pertain to professional successes, personal revelations, or exciting life adventures. After the participants have had a moment to run through highlights of their lives, inform them that their search for highlights is about to be narrowed. Keeping their eyes closed, ask each participant to take a moment to decide what 30 seconds of their life they would want to relive if they only had thirty seconds left in their life. The first part of the activity enables participants to reflect back on their lives, while the second part (which we'll discuss in a moment) enables them to get to know their coworkers on a more intimate level. The second portion of the game is the "review" section. The leader of the activity will ask each and every participant what their 30 seconds entailed and why they chose it, which will allow participants to get a feel for each other's passions, loves, and personalities.

Coin Logo

Time Required: 5-10 minutes

Begin by asking all participants to empty their pockets, purses, and wallets of any coins they may have and place them on the table in front of them. If someone doesn't have any coins or only has very few, others in the room can share their coins with them. Instruct each person to create their own personal logo using the coins in front of them in just one minute. Other materials they may have on them, such as pens, notebooks, wallets, etc. can also be used in creation of the logo.

If there is a particularly large group, people can be broken up into teams of 3-6 people and instructed to create a logo that represents them as a team or the whole room can gather to use the coins to create a logo for the organization/group/department/etc. Each solitary participant can explain their logo to the group or if the room was split into groups, the leader can have each group discuss what led to the team logo and what it says about them. Not only does this activity promote self and mutual awareness, but it also enables participants to get to know each other on a more personal level.

The One Question Ice Breaker Activity

Time Required: 15-20 minutes

This icebreaker not only gets coworkers talking to each other, but it also gets them working with one another. It's quite simple: the leader gets to decide the situation the question will pertain to. Example situations include babysitting, leading the company, or being married. After pairing participants into teams, the leader will pose this question: If you could ask just one question to discover a person's suitability for (insert topic here), what would your question be? Say the leader chose to go with a marriage situation. That means each person in a two-person team would come up with one question that would help them discover whether or not their partner was suitable to be married to them. If the topic was babysitting, each team member would have to come up with just one question whose answer would help them determine whether or not the person was suitable to babysit their child. This icebreaking activity can also get mixed up by issuing one situation for the entire group or allocating a different situation to each team member or pair to work on. Depending on the situation chosen, the activity can be very fun, but it can also demonstrate that crucial questions should be developed properly.

Classification Game

Time Required: 10-15 minutes

The classification game can be a quick icebreaker or a more complex activity. For the purposes of this example, we will treat this activity as a quick icebreaker. Before splitting the room into teams of four, explain the concept of "pigeon-holing someone," which means classifying someone as something or stereotyping someone. It should be made clear that this type of classification is subjective and unhelpfully judgmental.

Instruct the participants to introduce themselves to those in their team and quickly discuss some of their likes, dislikes, etc. After the introductions, reveal to the teams that it will be their job to discover how they should classify themselves- as a team- into two or three subgroups by using criteria that contains no negative, prejudicial, or discriminatory judgments. Examples of these subgroups can include night owls and morning people, pineapple pizza lovers and sushi lovers, etc. This activity encourages coworkers to get to know each other better and enables them to collectively consider the nature of all individuals within the team.

Problem Solving

Picture Pieces Game

Time Required: 30 minutes

This problem solving activity requires that the leader choose a well known picture or cartoon that is full of detail. The picture needs to be cut into as many equal squares as there are participants in the activity. Each participant should be given a piece of the “puzzle” and instructed to create an exact copy of their piece of the puzzle five times bigger than its original size. They are posed with the problem of not knowing why or how their own work affects the larger picture. The leader can pass out pencils, markers, paper, and rulers in order to make the process simpler and run more smoothly. When all the participants have completed their enlargements, ask them to assemble their pieces into a giant copy of the original picture on a table. This problem solving activity will teach participants how to work in a team and it demonstrates divisionalized ‘departmental’ working, which is the understanding that each person working on their own part contributes to an overall group result.

Sneak a Peek Game

Time Required: 10 minutes

This problem solving activity requires little more than a couple of sets of children’s building blocks. The instructor will build a small sculpture with some of the building blocks and hide it from the group. The participants should then be divided into small teams of four. Each team should be given enough building material so that they can duplicate the structure you’ve already created. The instructor should then place their sculpture in an area that is an equal distance from all the groups. One member from each team can come up at the same time to look at the sculpture for ten seconds and try to memorize it before returning to their team. After they return to their teams, they have twenty-five seconds to instruct their teams about how to build an exact replica of the instructor’s sculpture. After one minute of trying to recreate the sculpture, another member from each team can come up for a “sneak a peek” before returning to their team and trying to recreate the sculpture. The game should be continued in this pattern until one of the team’s successfully duplicates the original sculpture. This game will teach participants how to problem solve in a group and communicate effectively.

Zoom

Time Required: 30 minutes

This problem solving activity requires the wordless, picture book entitled, “Zoom” by Istvan Banyai. This book features 30 sequential pictures that work together to form a narrative. The book should be fairly easy to find, as it’s been published in over 18 countries. The pictures can even be laminated to prolong their usage. Hand out one picture to each participant, making sure a continuous sequence is being used. Explain to the participants that they can only look at their own pictures and must keep their picture hidden from other participants.

Time should be given for the participants to study their pictures because each picture will contain important information that will help the participants solve the problem of putting them into order. The ultimate goal is for the group to place the pictures in sequential order without looking at one another's pictures. The participants can talk to each other and discuss what is featured in their picture. This activity brings coworkers together and gets them communicating with the common goal of solving a problem, but it also allows for leaders to emerge and take control of the task.

The Great Egg Drop

Time Required: 2 hours

This messy, yet classic and engaging problem solving activity requires splitting the room into two large groups with the task of building an egg package that can sustain an eight foot drop. A variety of tools and other materials should be provided to the teams. After the packages have been built, each team must also present a 30-second advert for their package, highlighting why it's unique and how it works. At the conclusion of the presentations, each group will have to drop their egg using their package to see if it really works. Aside from teaching the groups to work together and communicate, it also brings them together with the common goal of both winning the egg drop and successfully creating an egg package.

Create your Own Team Building Activities

Time Required: 1 hour

The group leader should present participants with this fake problem: The hour was going to be spent doing a problem solving activity, but as the group leader- you don't know any and you don't want to do one that the participants have already heard or tried previously. The goal- or problem- then, is to have each group of participants come up with a new problem solving activity that they've invented themselves. Groups should be no larger than four or five people and at the end of the hour, each group must come up and present their new problem solving activity. Aside from being a problem solving activity in and of itself, this activity also promotes creativity, communication, trust, and time management, among other thing.

Conclusion

By this time you should be able to understand team building in detail. Basically we have dwelled on the various team building activities. You can now compare them decide the contexts in which the activities are suitable.

Assessment

1. Pick at least four team building activities and discuss how best they fit to an organization of your choice.
2. Identify other team building activities not discussed here and describe how they operate.

Activity 3 - Strategies of Team Building

Introduction

This section looks at the strategies that can be used by organizations to build manageable teams. This is based on the team building theory. Furthermore, we will discuss how to plan and execute team activities.

Great teams in organizations make a huge impact. According to Gregor X-Y theory in communication, empowered teams get the best results. This includes behaviour and attitude towards employees. People who work for each other in teams surpasses skills policies and processes. The diagram below shows how Gregor conceptualized team building:

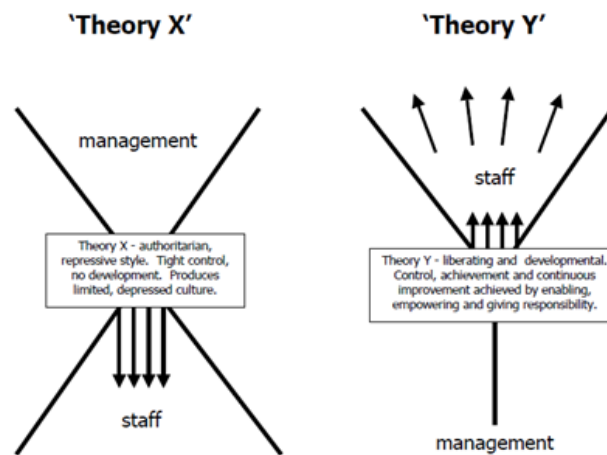


Figure 4.1: Gregors x-y theory

The diagram shows two groups of management styles. One gives the staff liberty to perform its duties whereas in y the staff plays a greater role in the organization,

Teamwork is fostered by respecting, encouraging, enthusing, caring for people, not exploiting or dictating to them.

At the heart of this theory is being able to love one another and some level of spirituality which in then helps bring mutual respect, compassion, and humanity to work. People working for each other in teams is powerful force, more than skills, processes, policies. More than annual appraisals, management-by-objectives, the 'suits' from head office; more than anything.

Teams usually become great teams when they decide to do it for themselves but not when somebody pushes another to work. Something inspires them but the ultimate decision is as a result of the team i.e team decides. The team will look out for each other and succeed. And then the team starts to move mountains.

Planning team-building activities

All people in a business should be involved designing and deciding the activities. It important to assign the people various roles. This is because the organization will benefit if the activities are geared towards developing people's own potential. As a result, it's good to find out what people enjoy doing and learning.

The following are various ways the activities can be planned:

When you ask people commonly you'll have several suggestions which can be put together as a collection of experiences that people attend or participate in on a rotating basis during the day or the team-building event. Perhaps you have people among your employees who themselves have special expertise or interests which they'd enjoy sharing with others; great team activities can be built around many hobbies and special interests.

If you are planning a whole day of team-building activities bear in mind that a whole day of 'find ways to provide a mix of activities that appeal and help people achieve and learn. The exercises should focus on one or two real work challenges or opportunities.

Perhaps involve a few employees in planning the day as this will be good for their own development and will lighten your load. Provide also a guide who will take the teams through the activities.

Conclusion

Team building has various activities that can be utilized in an organization. Gregor X-Y theory explains the fact that a motivated staff is more efficient as opposed to when the management is knowing it all. When all staff are involved it turns out to be better.

Assessment

1. What is team building?
2. Discuss Gregor X-Y theory stating how it is relevant to an organization of your choice.
3. Giving relevant examples discuss the strategies used to make a team

Unit Summary

This unit gives us a definition of team building. It also looks at the strategies used to develop teams. The strategies have to be clear and follow ethical considerations. In addition, the unit discusses the various activities which organizations can utilize. These activities are many. As a student you can also invent others which you can copy right.

Unit Assessment

1. Imagine you have been tasked by organization x to organize a team building event for the end of year party. Write an essay detailing how the event will be planned and execute. (20marks)

Grading Scheme

The mark indicated is 20% and constitutes 5% of the total assessment mark

Answers

Learners write a well laid out activity of their choice for an imaginary organization.

Unit Readings and Other Resources

The readings in this unit are to be found at course level readings and other resources.

- <http://www.teambuilding-kenya.com/>
- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/team-building-communication-skills-4832.html>
- Sahin, F. (2012). "The mediating effect of leader-member exchange on the relationship between Theory X and Y management styles and affective commitment: A multilevel analysis." *Journal of Management and Organization*, 18(2).
- <http://www.businessballs.com/love.htm>

Module Summary

This module is about communication and team building.

In unit 1, we looked the meaning of communication in general and the various aspects of communication. We saw that communication is a process Which has various elements for example the sender, message, channel medium etc. Effective communication in discussed in this unit. More so there are various directions for example upward downward and horizontal. It also dwells on the various forms of communication like written and non written communication. We discussed the various aspects of the forms and how they are relevant in the organization.

Unit 2 we looked at the various means through which organizations disseminate information. People also have to share ideas, solve problems emotions etc. There are channels available for such kind of communication. This include presentations, minutes speech etc. All these are discussed in this section.

Unit 3 we discussed IT and its revolution in the area of communication. We looked at the forms of IT devices and how they support communication in the workplace. Thus institutions have seen some of the greatest advancements due to technological developments.

Unit 4 was the idea of team building. Business environments, institutions and all work bring together people of all cadres. This people have to work together hence teamwork is mandatory. This section unpackaged the strategies used to create teams and also some of the activities available for team building. Students are also encouraged to use their creativity and come up with other forms of activities.

I hope you enjoyed the module.

Course Assessment 1

Instructions

Answer all questions

Marks have been indicated for each question

1. **Knowledge and application**
 - (a) Using the aid of a diagram, describe the communication process. (20 marks)
 - (b) Using any three different situations, explain how you would overcome communication barriers. (5 marks)
2. **Knowledge and synthesis**
 - (a) Make a distinction between note taking and note making. (5marks)
 - (b) Imagine you are going to make a business presentation to you clients. Use 5 writing devices. (5marks)
3. **Comprehension and analysis**
 - (a) Classify the various forms of communication detailing how each is applicable in a business set up. (10marks)
 - (b) Write a business letter to an organization of your choice requesting the CEO to give a you a contract to install some software packages. (10marks)
4. **Knowledge and application**
 - (a) Discuss any three benefits and three challenges of teams building in an organization groups. (18 marks)
 - (b) Outline any five qualities that reflect an efficient team. (5 mark)
 - (c) Read the passage below and answer the questions

John Riley Writes a Memo

John Riley supervised the assembly room of a television-manufacturing plant. He oversaw the mounting of the sets in cabinets and the installation of the fittings –knobs, handles, and labels. He noticed that out of every dozen or so sets that came into his facility, one had screw holes on the bottom that were slightly misaligned enough so that someone had to jiggle the set to match up with the cabinet holes for final mounting.

This process took extra time and thus reduced the productivity of his group. He also feared that the rough handling of the sets required for the alignment would cause damage and result in rejection by the quality control department, to which the sets were shipped when they left his assembly room.

Riley decided to call the engineering design department, which he knew had final authority over the design of the sets. A junior engineer to whom he spoke there told him to write a memo about the problem to the senior designer. He did so, but two months later he still had no response. Riley discussed the problem at lunch with a fellow supervisor in the chassis room, from which the sets came directly to the assembly room. This person was surprised that Riley had even bothered to contact engineering design at all. He said that Riley should just have mentioned the problem to him directly, and he would have followed up on it right in the chassis room. Engineering design, he said, never liked to deal with production people. Even if they got involved it would take months of study before they would agree to a design change, whereas he, as supervisor of the chassis room, could modify procedures on his own to correct the problem.

Questions for Discussion

1. Whom should Riley have contacted when he first spotted the problem? Should he have communicated orally or in writing?
2. Should the junior engineer in engineering design have told Riley to write the memo? Why or why not?
3. Should Riley have waited two months for a response to his memo? What alternatives did he have?

Course Assessment 2

Instructions

Answer all the questions.

1. **Knowledge**
 - (a) What is the communication process? (2marks)
 - (b) Using relevant examples discuss 4 elements of communication. (18marks)

2. **Knowledge and application**
 - (a) Noise makes it difficult for people to communicate in an organization. Identify various types and give a remedy for each. (5marks)
 - (b) What is it to be an effective communicator? Give 5 characteristics (15 marks)

3. **Knowledge and application**
 - (a) Discuss the merits and demerits Of verbal and non-verbal communication
 - (b) Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow

CASE 4 : Lisa Dobbins Anticipates a Change

Lisa Dobbins prided herself on being well organized and efficient. She hated to get behind in her work. When her company decided to implement a new flex time plan that would allow the word-processing operators in her department to schedule their hours to fit personal needs, she immediately called a staff meeting to describe the plan, even though it was not scheduled to take effect for four months. She wanted all her employees to understand the new system and to prepare for it.

During the week after her staff meeting, eight persons in her group started coming in earlier and leaving earlier, and three stopped taking lunch hours so they could go home earlier. She had to remind them that the flextime schedule was not yet officially in place. The week before the schedule was to start, she made some remarks to some workers about getting their schedules to her in writing. They said they hadn't realized the new schedules had to be submitted to Dobbins for approval. She curtly reminded them that she had discussed this requirement at the staff meeting nearly four months before. When individuals came to her to ask for more information, she realized that she would have to set up another meeting. She was annoyed because, as she said, she would "have to go over it all again"

Course References

- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/team-building-communication-skills-4832.html>
- <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=define+business+communication>
- Dorothy Denning. A lattice model of secure information flow. Communications of the ACM, 19(5):236-242, 1976.
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- Pamela Hubbell P(2016) http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/7?e=collins-ch08_s05<http://www.cgu.edu/pages/852.asp>
- <https://alison.com/courses/> Business-Communication-Fundamentals-of-Business-Writing
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- <http://www.subliminalhacking.net/2012/10/12/proxemics-have-you-heard-of-personal-space/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minutes>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/role-information-technology-business-success-abid-afzal-butt?articleId=6004531558055178241#comments-6004531558055178241&trk=prof-post>

The readings in this unit are to be found at course level readings and others

Section 3

- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/use-vlookup-different-sheets-excel-40058.html>
- <https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=technology+in+oral+communication>

Unit 4

- <http://www.teambuilding-kenya.com/>
- <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/team-building-communication-skills-4832.html>
- Sahin, F.(2012). "The mediating effect of leader-member exchange on the relationship between Theory X and Y management styles and effective commitment: A multilevel analysis." Journal of Management and Organization, 18(2).
- <http://www.businessballs.com/love.htm>
- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/academic-proposal>
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- <http://image.slidesharecdn.com/usesoftechnologyinbusinesscommunication-120124120500-phpapp02/95/uses-of-technology-in-business-communication-21-728.jpg?cb=1327407107>
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- <http://www.teambuilding-kenya.com/>
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