

Business communication

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



BUSINESS COMMUNICATION 1 C O N T E N T S Blocks/Units Details of Topics
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 Communication skills have emerged as the most powerful set of skills to
 possess for accelerating one's career trajectory and speed of
 accomplishment in every walk of life. To prepare yourselves for a rewarding
 career in the broad field of management, it is even more essential to
 acquire, practise and exhibit high levels of communication skills in normal
 and crisis situations. Effective communication skills provide the ladder to the
 managers and leaders for rapid progression in their careers. This block
 focuses on the basic concepts of communication and how relevant they are
 to budding managers and leaders. It covers the followings: Unit 1 Unit 2 Unit
 3 Significance of Business Communication Overcoming Barriers to
 Communication Strategic Relevance of Communication 3 UNIT 1

SIGNIFICANCE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE 1. 0 1. 1 1. 2 1. 3
 1. 4 1. 5 1. 6 1. 7 1. 8 1. 9 1. 10 1. 11 1. 12 Objectives Scope of
 Communication Types of Communication Communication 24 x 7 Significance
 of Communication Skills Communication Process Process at
 Communicatorsâ€™ End Process at Communicateesâ€™ End Communication
 Model Summary Keywords Self Assessment Questions Suggested Further
 Readings 1. 0 OBJECTIVE After perusing this unit, students should be able to:
 i. i. i. i. i. i. i. i. Appreciate the vast scope of communication in modern
 world Distinguish between the process of communication and exercise of
 power Understand that one-way flow of information is a part of the overall
 process of communication Identify different types of communications Grasp
 the importance of communication skills in the life of an individual and
 enterprise Recount the dividends that accrue from acquiring effective
 communication skills Understand the sources that lead to multiple
 interpretations of oral and written communication 1. 1 SCOPE OF
 COMMUNICATION Communication as a subject of study has a very vast
 canvas. To different people, communication implies various areas of study,
 research and application: (1) It is a means of transportation from one place
 to another viz., moving men, machines, materials etc by surface transport
 like railways, roadways or by air or by sea. It is not uncommon to describe a
 region or a country backward in terms of means of communication because
 it is not serviced or well connected by railways, roadways, airways or
 seaways. 4 (2) It also relates to means of sending / receiving messages,
 packets or parcels through post, telephone, telegram, radio, wireless or
 Internet. These means of communications have undergone rapid changes

during the last few decades. Postal services have been revolutionized by courier services — same-day delivery, next-day delivery etc. Telephone services have become commonplace — one can talk to a person anywhere even one orbiting in a satellite without shouting. The mobile telephony and use of Internet has changed the way people talk and communicate with one another. They are changing the way business is done. Communication is a major focus of attention for artists — singers, dancers, actors, painters, sculptors etc are all trying to communicate with their audiences. They endeavour to win their attention and appreciation so as to secure attractive returns for their efforts. (3) In managerial or business context, it is the science and art of communicating. Etymologically, communication as a word is derived from the word „ commonâ€™ in English or „ Communisâ€™ from Latin. It means „ shared byâ€™ or „ concerning allâ€™. Thus communication is a process of „ influencing othersâ€™ to achieve common, shared objectives. These goals could be that of individuals, families, teams, departments / functions and companies. Communication has emerged as a very powerful personal skill that individuals must acquire to be able to perform their duties and become efficient managers and effective leaders. (1) Communication and Power Communication is also the most powerful input resource in an enterprise. The various resources, just to recount, are as below: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Men Money Materials Machines Methods Management Measurement Message covering both information and communication flows Motive Power Motivational Leadership Messaging has emerged as the most important resource for, without it, nothing can be transacted anywhere. It is the lifeline of any society. It is the glue that holds

companies, communities and countries together. There is another process that is also used to influence others — it is the use of authority or power. They say if person has power it shows because it quickly shows his influence or hold on others's opinion. However, it must be understood in its proper perspective. Power has been described as „ a process of influencing others to do some thing that, left to themselves, they will not do. This process is, then, quite different from that of communication where we influence others as equals - members of the family, members of the inter-departmental teams or customers or fellow members of an association. The process of communication is greatly dependent on the skill of individuals who, as equal members, are in a position to influence others so as to compel, propel or impel them to work together to achieve common goals! (2)

Communication as a two-way process Communication is a complete process - it starts with communicators sending messages to receivers, the „ communicatees. An experienced sender of message, whether oral or written, would think of the audience as his customer. He would try to gauge or guess the kind of level of communication the receiver is comfortable with. Thereafter, he would craft his message in a manner and in the language, words, phrases and idioms that the receiver is familiar with. Each receiver of message is really a customer whose needs and wants should be as well known to the sender as it happens in a market place. Obviously, like the sender who chooses words, phrases and idioms from his vocabulary depending on own learning, experience and exposure, receiver also has his own mental filter that is the product of his learning, experience and exposure. To absorb the message in his mind, he does the abstraction of the

message in to words, phrases and idioms that he is familiar with or has command over. This leads to his formulating his response to the message received. Once again, it goes through the mind filter and ultimately comes out of the communicatee and starts its return journey to the sender of the message. It conveys back what is understood by the receiver. A sensitive speaker is able to judge the reaction of his audience from the gestures, sounds and expressions of the audience — the way they sit, the way they yawn or the way they twitter their fingers etc. It is thus a complete cycle because it is a two way process. Until the full process has been gone through the process of communication is considered to be incomplete. (3)

Information as a one-way process Information flow is another related process. Information is knowledge; it comes from the processing of raw data which records the events as they take place in every miniscule of an organization or an institution. Knowledge is power. The flow of information is considered to be an extremely powerful tool at the disposal of men at all levels of a business enterprise. However, difference between communication and information flows must be understood clearly. Whereas communication is a two way process, information is a one-way process. It is, therefore, half of the process. Yet it is used very extensively in organizations. As businesses grow in size, complexity and dynamics, it is very difficult to ensure two way process all the time. Much of the time, information flows one way — downwards, upwards or horizontal along formal lines of command. These lines of command become the channels of information flows and serve as the cornerstones of communication, coordination and control.

6 1. 2 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication can be classified as below: Communication

Verbal Communication Non-verbal Communication Oral Communication
Written Communication Body Language (1) Verbal communication Verbal communication happens through the use of words. It must be understood that communicator has to depend on the language that has been designed, developed and propagated by humans. As a result, it suffers from a lot of limitations despite the fact that some languages of the world are very developed and command a vast vocabulary. Verbal Communication, in turn, can be further divided in to two groups: (i) Oral Communication Oral communications are the messages that come through words, phrases and idioms from the mouth of the speaker. His appearance, mannerism, body language and the way he throws his voice can make significant difference in impacting the audience, their attitude and performance. It is a very convenient form of expression and presentation. It is almost instantaneous, quick and least expensive. (ii) Written Communication This requires preparation and can be thought out properly before committing in writing. It takes time and is expensive. However, it is more accurate and is the norm for technical, legal and most diplomatic communications. With increase in the size of organizations, their complexity and dynamism, many a times written communication is the only way to communicate. With technological advancement in our ability to send / receive emails, fax messages, short messaging service (SMS) on mobile phones, instant messaging etc, written messages have become very common and popular. Ability to send online reports across continents has won the race against time and distance. It is significantly influencing the way people shall do business in the twenty-first century. 7 (2) Non-verbal communication Non-verbal communication uses

signs, signals, gestures, expressions and sounds. It is God-made language and, as a rule, should not suffer from any limitations excepting the fact that our knowledge about the language is limited by our lack of understanding of nature's ways of communication! In common parlance, non-verbal communication is also called body language. As a rule, it does not lie or mislead unless someone has mastered the art of deceit or camouflaging. It is the richest language known. During the last few decades a lot of research has been done to identify and isolate all the signs, signals, gestures, expression and sounds among humans. The non-verbal communication has changed the way we look at the subject of communication. We seem to be communicating all the time through gestures, expressions, sounds, signs and signals. Every one can recall the personal experience they would have gone through when they had to ask for a favour from mother, father, elder brother or even boss. When they went to speak to the person on the appointed date and time, one quick look at the person made them change their mind, thinking that the day and time was not propitious for seeking favour because of the mood he was emoting. The interaction would have been very upsetting but they could avoid it because they could observe from the body language of the person that the response would not be favourable. Similarly, it is said that we emote even when we are asleep! We have also read a story in Mahabharata that Abhimanyu, son of Arjun, had picked up the art of entering a kind of warfare known as Chakarvyu while in the womb of his mother. It has been thought to be rather unbelievable phenomenon. The recent advances in medical history confirm that a child has already well developed five senses and mind as early as the seventh week of its

conception when even mothers may not have become aware of their pregnancy! Another thing students must appreciate is the body language is not man-made; it is God's own creation. Studies are directed to observing those gestures, expressions, sounds etc and record their meaning for its students to understand the language. Body language rarely lies and if one can master it, it will propel them on fast track to become good communicators. Another well-known story common in India is that good vaids of ayurvedic medicines were able to diagnose the type of ailment from the feel of the pulse and general examination of their patients! 1. 3

COMMUNICATION 24 X 7 Knowledge and understanding of the subject of communication is growing very rapidly. Considering that people communicate all the time, round the clock or at least during their waking hours, they must learn how to use this abundant resource for business, personal life and society to their greatest advantage. By doing so, they shall be able to achieve their objectives proactively. 8 In business, this ability, if harnessed fully, will help managers / leaders understand their customers, colleagues and competitors better and will enable them to reorient their strategies, policies and tactics in every day working. As a result national economy and global market shall benefit considerably, enabling them to take the benefits of economic development to the remotest and the most disadvantaged segments of our planet. ACTIVITY The readers must pause and think of a time when they wanted to seek a personal favour from dad or mom or teacher or boss and decided to do that on a particular morning. However, when they went to see him / her, they came back without asking for the favour.

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..... Think what happened and why they changed their mind for seeking favour. 1. 4

SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS Conversing and corresponding with people around is such a common activity that most of individuals are so pre-occupied with their daily routine that they do not stop and ponder over the immense advantages that business enterprises can derive from mastering the art and science of communication. Following payoffs are only suggestive: (1) Communication is the life blood of an organization Organization cannot function without people interacting, conversing or corresponding with one another. All enterprises require human beings working for it or with it, to:

- Interact and react
- Make assumptions about future or forecast future events
- Plan or draw up a rough blueprint for the future
- Organize / design a format of how to get resources together to achieve the plan
- Staff or gather / recruit people and get them to desired locations
- Lead or direct people, and devise their jobs so as to adhere to the plan
- Exchange information, ideas, plans and proposals
- Measure and monitor
- Coordinate and control

Communication has been described as the „ glue“ that holds the entire organization together as one entity. Without communication, managers / leaders are not able to influence the attitude and behaviour of people to achieve the common objectives. 9 (2) Internal communication Before the end of nineteenth century, businesses were small; they started growing in size from the beginning of twentieth century. Contemporary business enterprises are very large and have not only become multinational but also transnational in character. Besides, they have grown

in complexity in terms of a wide array of products and services they deal in and the number of countries and continents they are operating in. Also, arising from liberalizing of many national economies, global competition has intensified and the rate of change in market place has accelerated. Market forces have also become very dynamic, almost verging on chaos. With business becoming very large in size, complex in nature and rapidly changing dynamics, enterprises must put in place effective internal communication so that every one can be kept informed of happenings within the large corporation. It is the only way managers / leaders can build understanding among people located in far off communities, countries and continents — stringing them together in to a beautiful necklace that everyone can be proud of. (3) External communication As a business enterprise in the modern society, it has to interact, pro-act or react to happenings in other institutions viz. i. Government bodies, statutory / regulatory agencies, municipal authorities etc Distributors, dealers and retailers Customers, community and society at large Reputed organizations are concerned about their public image, goodwill and trust. In order to further reinforce their reputation, they participate in a number of activities: i. Public speeches by senior executives Tactful responses to comments and criticisms in the media Preparation and distribution of informative pamphlets about the firm Marketing communications or advertisement / publicity Production and dissemination of product catalogues, videos etc Because of their importance, these activities are centralized in the Public Relations and Corporate Communications department of large corporations. These activities have emerged as

specialist skills of critical importance to the well being of the company.

Successful messaging can: 1. Eliminate unnecessary

correspondence Save time and expense Build favourable impression in

public mind Enhance reputation and goodwill Help increase company profits

and profitability Communication skills as vital job requirement 10 Human

beings are communicating all the time. Ability to express powerfully and

influence the attitude and behaviour of people for giving better performance

on their jobs, has emerged as a job skill of critical importance for managers /

leaders at all levels of management. Thus all employees are expected to: 1 2

3 4 5 Write good correspondence Be good in oral conversation Develop and

cultivate powerful body language Be able to sell ideas and products

effectively Be very good in weaning away customers from competitor and

retaining them It is now increasingly understood that even specialists like

accountants, engineers, technicians etc should have good communication

skills. In the present day knowledge society, competitive advantage of

acquiring excellent communication skills cannot and perhaps need not be

emphasized! (5) Communication skills essential for promotion

Communication skills have emerged as the most critical prerequisite for

promotion to senior executive positions in the industry. Consequently,

managers at lower rungs of organizations should also have good command

over the spoken and written language of the business. As a general rule,

managers should have the ability to make their communications heard, read

or understood. Individuals who have had quick rise to senior level positions,

attribute it to their being good in conversation and in articulating topical

issues besides being very good in written communications - be it in writing

persuasive letters or producing concise and compelling reports. (6)

Communication skills aid problem solving A person can become a good communicator only when he is a clear and systematic thinker. Acquiring effective communication skills adds to one's self esteem and confidence.

This helps managers to be able to collect relevant information and get around people quickly that are essential prerequisites for any problem solving effort. (7) Communication skills ignite enthusiasm If a person is able to articulate viewpoint of the group he belongs to, it enthuses him because he becomes the automatic choice as their representative. The person becomes more spirited and involved and his group activities increase manifold. People rally around such persons more readily and they progress in to more important roles. (8) Communication skills enhance motivation

People who have good oral or written communication skills usually develop into very good listeners. Listening to others leads to added learning that influences their attitude and behaviour. It goes a long way in re-orienting their mindset towards work and enhancing their performance. Such persons become more aligned to firm's objectives and are motivated to accomplish them. 11 (9) Communication skills are advantageous in personal

life As private citizens, individuals take part in a lot of activities like sports, club work, social work, community work etc. People also participate in other social, cultural and religious activities. If they are good communicators, they get noticed quickly and can be appointed or nominated to many such activity groups. Before long, they become well-known and prominent member of the community. (10) Communication skills hone leadership traits From the foregoing discussions, it is easy to understand that all leaders in business,

industry or political arena, have notably better skills in communication. They are able to deliver informative and persuasive speeches to audience at large. They are able to draw up, compose and distribute most effective posters, banners and circulars. Thus effective communication skills propel them to positions of leadership. (11) Dividends from effective communication skills

Communication skills have come to be recognized as integral part of one's upbringing and personality. His choice of words and phrases and their use is quite unique to him and can directly give clues to his personality. In the modern age of knowledge society when education, training and skills are being formally taught, communication skills have become of critical importance in every day life. It is said that it is no use having brilliant ideas if one cannot put them across properly, accurately and lucidly. Following illustration highlights the strategic importance of role and importance of communication skills:

Effective Communications Enhance

A. WILL TO WORK

(1) Improves attitude (2) Improves involvement (3) Improves values (4) Improves morale (5) Improves motivation

B. SKILL TO WORK

Improves information Improves knowledge Improves training Improves education Improves self esteem

C. THRILL TO WORK

Improves teamwork Improves belongingness Improves loyalty Improves enthusiasm Improves spirits

Employees Enjoy working Get satisfaction Get happiness

12 ACTIVITY Think of persons around you in school, office or social circle. Readers would always be able to spot some persons who have above average communication skills – some might be very good in speaking and others have a winning style of writing. They often exhibit a sign of confidence within and outside their circle of friends. They project an image and are liked better by friends / relatives

who appreciate their accomplishment.

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..... Think objectively about them. They are liked by their classmates and peers. They are the ones who are appointed as captains, prefects and leaders although they may not be more intelligent than many others around. 1. 5

COMMUNICATION PROCESS In order to develop a deep understanding of the subject of communication, it is important that everyone understands the complete process of communication. Broadly, it has two parts: i. Process at communicator’s end (Senders’ Part) Process at communicatee’s end (Receivers’ Part) These have been described below: PROCESS AT COMMUNICATORS’ END (SENDERS’ PART) 1. 6 The process at

communicator’s end can also be looked at in two halves as below: (1) Inward journey It entails the following steps: (i) As received by senses A human being perceives the world around him from spoken words, written words, visuals and cues from body language in terms of sounds, gestures, expressions, signs, signals etc through the five human senses of seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and touching. These are the external five senses — our antennas. However, ultimately senses only capture feelings, images etc and convey them to the human brain which is main receptacle of what is perceived by the five senses. That is why it is said that it is not the eyes that see but the brain; it is not the nose that smells, it is the brain; it is not the ears that hear, it is the brain; it is not the tongue that tastes, it is the brain and it is not the skin or hands that feel, it is the brain. 13 All that is captured by the human senses from environments are far from ideal i. e., without

noise or distractions. On the contrary all kinds of distractions intervene and messages transmitted to the brain are far from perfect. Additionally, there is also the problem of sensitivity of the senses. How sensitized they are varies very widely from one person to another. Someone remembers a scene from a movie very vividly after many years and another person cannot recall the scene from a movie seen a few minutes ago. Some people can detect a smell from long distance while others would not notice it even when they are passing besides its source. Some singers can hear a small variation in a note very clearly while others cannot. Thus this process of perceiving is very heavily dependent upon the faculty of receivers. Human beings vary widely in their ability to perceive different sensual inputs. (ii) Influence of sources of distraction If one is hearing music, even a small level of noise can be very disparaging — no wonder, music recording studios are noise proof. Similarly, speech delivered in noisy circumstances can be very difficult to understand and absorb. Noisy classrooms can be lethal for good learning. Even visuals placed in noisy room fail to make the impact they are intended to. Similarly, listeners may miss many cues from the body language that normally forms a major chunk of the message being delivered. A shabbily dressed person cannot make as good an impression as a well-dressed one. If there are too many distractions behind or besides the speaker, the message may fall flat. The situation is similar to a young man having gone to see a bride at a place where there are many more beautiful girls present, finds very difficult to decide! (iii) Receiving information by the brain When information arrives at the brain, it passes through a kind of sieve that separates out difficult, strange or awkward words and simplifies them into

familiar words. This is a part of the process of abstraction that takes place before the message is classified and stored (iv) Searching for similar material in the brain memory This is the second part of the process of abstraction that goes on in the brain — it is somewhat like classifying the message before storing. Once this search is completed, the material is stored next to the similar stuff already in the memory. Rarely, one can get identical material and one should be happy to get as near to the one in memory as possible. If it is totally new or alien material, it may not be possible to retrieve it when required! (v) Storing the material in the brain This is a complex stage. Needless to say that human memory is still the fastest to retrieve and recall. Owing to overload or bounded rationality, there is always a limit to what and how much can be stored in the human memory. This faculty or capacity to store also varies widely among individuals and has a significant influence on one's competence to communicate. (2) Outward journey When an individual has the need to communicate with others, the process starts with the happenings in the brain of the sender who is already subjected to a lot of experiences, emotions, knowledge and opinions. (i) Retrieval of information from human memory This is very much like pulling a file from the filing cabinet. Since it is in response to a need, the file pulled out may not always be the one most appropriate to the stimuli. This may bring in variations in interpreting the message received. (ii) Choosing the right words and phrases This stage is highly subjective and is greatly influenced by the mastery of the sender over the language used for communication. Besides, linguistic competence extends to proper use of form of verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc (iii) Delivery of message Role of sender continues to be important as the

style, speed and manner of speaking decide the impact of the message. The body language and ability of the sender to throw his voice towards the audience form the major part of the message delivered. (iv) Sources of distraction Once again, the message passes through a medium that may have one or several sources of distraction, impairing the message as received by the communicatee. PROCESS AT COMMUNICATEES' END

(RECEIVERS' PART) 1. 7 The entire process at the communicators' end repeats in two parts: i. Inward journey Outward journey The process follows all the steps as described above.

1. 8 COMMUNICATION MODEL In managerial terms, the process of communication follows the following six steps: 15 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sender has a idea to communicate (Conception) Idea becomes a message (Encoding) Message is transmitted through a medium (Transmission) Message is received by the other person (Decoding) Message is interpreted by the receivers' mind (Interpretation) Receiver responds and give a feedback to the sender (Feedback) This is illustrated as below: (1)

Conception (i) Mental images All individuals are continuously bombarded by information flowing from i. Sights (Scenes) Sounds Scents These streams of sensation are conveyed to the human mind. Each individual has a unique „ mental filter“ because of own experiences, exposures, emotions etc. The mental filter converts these streams of sensation in to a mental map of the event that becomes the basis of perception of the reality. No two mental images of the observers of the same event will be identical! All sensations received in the mind go through the process of abstraction and simplification. (ii) Psychological factors 16 A person tends to hear what he wants to and rejects what he does not want to hear. This is because of

several factors as below:

- Sensory factors
- Demographic factors
- Psychographic factors
- Loyalty of individuals
- Personality of individuals

Technical aspects (iii) These days communication is greatly influenced by the technology and choice of the medium of transmission. Followings should be taken in to account:

- Transmitter
- Transmission process
- Receiver

In most cases, a certain amount of repetition may be desirable to ensure that the message is not mutilated. (iv) Role of being logical and systematic The message, to be effective, should be logical and conveyed in a systematic manner. Messages suffer from:

- Logical errors
- False analogy
- Concluding from limited data
- Understanding syllogism (Deductive logic)
- Arguing in circles

Usually in such cases, the middle of the message remains undisturbed but most receivers tend to get misled. (v) Conclusions Arriving at the conclusion from the various conflicting and diverse factors is the real issue. As a rule, four possible conclusions are:

- Valid and true
- Valid and false
- Invalid but true
- Invalid and false

Communicators have to avoid the pitfalls and look for valid and true conclusions. 17 (2) Encoding The process of how the mind converts an idea into words is not yet fully understood. Choice of words by the speaker depends up various factors as below:

- Subject
- Purpose
- Audience
- Personal style
- Mood

Besides, length of the message, tone and style are influenced by:

- Message
- Audience
- Need of speed / urgency
- Situation

In all cases, it is important to control the transmission link. This not only ensures its availability but also avoids distortion and level of noise. Also,

remember that longer the chain of communication, bigger is the problem of ensuring correct transmission of the messages. (4) Decoding The receiver has to read or hear the message before he can understand it. One of the most common barriers to communication is the lack of attention by the receiver. Human mind tends to drift when it is forced to hear something. It is said that mind is like a horse; it is very difficult to control it. Usually, a person's mind has around 6, 000 ideas flashing across in one day! There are many words in all the languages with multiple meanings. To be able to understand the correct meaning in the context of the message or the way sender has used it to convey his intent is quite a challenge. (5) Interpretation If the background and the experience of sender and receiver vary considerably, understanding of the message can be very different. Following three diagrams show pictorially the impact on getting the meaning and understanding of the message:

18 Little amount of shared experience	Average amount of shared experience	Large amount of shared experience
Dissimilar meaning	Misunderstanding	Similar meaning
Average degree of understanding	Very similar meaning	High degree of understanding

(6) Feedback Communication is a two way process. The communication loop is not complete until the sender of the communication receives a feedback from the receiver. The feedback may be verbal or non-verbal through the body language. Many a times, audience conveys through expressions, gestures or sounds. A sensitive speaker can always understand the feedback from the way the receivers stoop forward or backward, the way they yawn and the way they twitters their fingers. There are a large numbers of cues, signs and signals to pick up and interpret!

a vast subject; it stands for connectivity and networking in its broadest sense. In the context of an enterprise, business communication is the process of influencing others to achieve common, shared objectives. Communication is a two way process and is completed only when the feedback is received by the sender. Information flow is a one way process. Communication can be verbal covering oral and written form and non-verbal that uses a large number of signs, signals, gestures, expressions and sounds. As learning about the non-verbal communication increases, it is changing the way people look at both the oral and written communications. Everyone seems to be communicating all the time especially during waking hours. By mastering the art of observing and interpreting body language and related aspects of communication, every one can become a better communicator! Business communication is not only the life blood an organization but also the heart of its internal and external communications. Effective communication skills form vital part of a job requirement, are prerequisite for promotion to higher positions and are essential to all problem solving. They ignite enthusiasm, enhance motivation and hone traits of leadership. Communication skills are also advantageous in personal life and 19 community work. They enhance will to work, skill to work and thrill to work. They promote joy at work, impart satisfaction and happiness. A deeper understanding of the process of the inward and outward journey at the senders' and receivers' ends goes a long way in students' ability to draft and deliver effective messages. The six-stage model of business communication would enable them to gain deeper knowledge of the subject and acquire more effectiveness in communication skills — the strategic asset

they must possess before they can move in to senior corporate positions. 1. 10 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) KEYWORDS Communication — It is the process of influencing others to achieve common, shared objectives. Power — It is the process of influencing others to do something that left to them-selves they would not do. Oral Communications — These are the messages that come through words, phrases and idioms from the mouth of the speaker. Written Communications — These messages require preparations and can be thought out properly before committing in writing and are more accurate. Non-verbal Communications or Body Language — These are the messages that humans send out by using signs, signals, gestures, expressions and sounds and convey meanings provided the receiver can learn to understand them. 1. 12 1 2 3 4 5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS Describe the broad scope of communication and what are the specific areas of knowledge it covers? Distinguish between „ communication“ and „ power“ as the methodologies of influencing other persons. Detail the different types of communications and describe them briefly. How does communication differ from information and highlight their respective importance and relevance? Justify that people seem to communicate all the time especially during waking hours. 20 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 Explain how communication forms the lifeblood of an organization. Compare and contrast internal communication with external communication. Explain why communication skills should be treated as the essential job requirements at all levels of an organization. Justify that effective communication skills propel a person in the progression of his career. Explain why good communication skills are necessary pre-requisites for problem solving and decision making in

an organization. Highlight the importance of effective communication skills in igniting enthusiasm, enhancing motivation, attitude and performance.

Describe the returns that firms can hope to achieve by actively promoting effective communication skills. Describe the communication process and explain it with respect to the senders' part of the communication process?

Describe the receivers' part of the communication process and comment on its similarities with the senders' part of the communication process.

Justify with suitable illustrations why everyone's communication process will be similar. What are the possible variations at each stage of the communication process? Justify how comprehension level of a message varies considerably although everyone has the same communication process. Explain with the help of a diagram a typical communication model.

What are the possible sources of distraction in a typical classroom of a business school? What is the role and importance of the stage of interpretation in business communication? Can a speech be understood differently? Give reasons in support of your answer. Without securing feedback, can we depend upon the content of the message? What are the likely pitfalls of doing business without a feedback? 1. 13 SUGGESTED

FURTHER READINGS 1 2 3 Herta A Murphy, Herbert W Hilderbrandt (1991). Effective Business Communications. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Inc. Pal Rajendra, Karahalli, JS (1997). Essentials of Business Communication. New Delhi, India: Sultan Chand & Sons. Lesikar, Pettit & Flatley (2006). Basic Business Communication. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill International Edition.

21 UNIT 2 OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE 2. 0 2. 1 2. 2 2. 3 2. 4 2. 5 2. 6 2. 7 2. 8 2. 9 2. 10 2. 11 Objectives Overcoming

Barriers to Effective Communication Types of Barriers to Communication

Personal Barriers to Communication Group Barriers to Communication

Organizational Barriers to Communication Gateway to Effective

Communication Principles of Good Communication Summary Keywords Self

Assessment Questions Suggested Further Readings 2. 0 OBJECTIVES After

completing this unit, students should be able to: i. i. i. i. i. i. i.

Understand the universal nature of barriers to communication Identify

different types of barriers to communication Become aware of the barriers to

communication at personal / individual level Distinguish barriers to

communication in team / group interactions Recognize organizational

policies, practices and procedures that come in the way to effective

communication Acquire knowledge of commandments to good

communication Describe 7 C's and 4 S's of good communication 2. 1

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION Barriers to

communication arise from the inherent process involved in sending and / or

receiving messages among human beings. Imperfections creep in from: i. i.

i. i. i. Different levels of thinking of individuals Different mental filters

arising from individual mental filters conditioned by their knowledge,

experience and opinions Less than perfect mastery over the language of

expression Inadequacy of the language Limitations arising from bounded

rationality This has been beautifully captured by one of our folklores — there

always exists a vicious triangle in each individual so much so that it is an

integral part of ones' being. The triangle has three apexes — Thinking

(Vichar), Saying (Upchar) and Doing (Achar). 22 i. i. What we think, we do

not say (Human inadequacy, imperfect language and insufficient linguistic

capability) What we say, we do not do (Semantic and psychological deficiencies) Just as the apexes of a triangle do not ever meet, this triangle would always exist. However, through better awareness and continual efforts for improving own personal skills, size of this triangle can be reduced as shown below:

Thinking Thinking Saying Doing Saying Doing If individuals become aware of their deficiencies, they start looking for ways to overcome them.

2. 2 TYPES OF BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Communication capability is a personal skill. Barriers to effective communication within organizations happen at the following three levels:

- Personal barriers to communication
- Group barriers to communication
- Organizational barriers to communication

These have been described further:

2. 3 PERSONAL BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

These barriers can be at individual employee level, senior or subordinate levels:

- Barriers at the individual level These are the obstructions caused in the process of sending and receiving messages during the encoding or decoding of ideas, words and phrases. In most languages, a word has different meanings, depending upon the context in which it is used. Each word has many synonyms but which one is the most suitable in the given situation, is always an issue. These are known as semantic barriers and may take the following forms:
 - Badly expressed message
 - Lack of clarity
 - Lack of precision
 - Poorly chosen words and phrases
 - Careless omissions
 - Lack of coherence
 - Poor organization of ideas
 - Use of jargons
 - Inadequate vocabulary
 - Awkward sentence structure
 - Assumptions not clarified
 - Messages are normally based on some assumptions that, if not communicated to the receiver, may lead to incomplete message or wrong interpretation of the message.
 - Faulty

translation Messages must use words and phrases that receiver is familiar with so that he can understand and respond to them. This calls for a great mastery and flexibility in the use of language on the part of the sender. In the absence of suitable choice of vocabulary, the message may not invoke the desired response from the receiver. (iv) Use of specialist language Each specialist uses a lingua that is peculiar to that profession. For example, MBAs use a different language than an engineer and a technician uses a different language than an ordinary workman. Illiterates use a different language than the educated. Similarly, city dwellers use different words and phrases than village folks. These act as roadblocks for effective communication among them. (2) Barriers at the levels of seniors These could be: (i) Attitude of the seniors If attitude of the seniors is not helpful either owing to lack of awareness or because of personal agenda, messages will not flow freely to or from them unlike what should happen in a well-lubricated organization structure. (ii) Insistence on proper channel of communication 24 Some seniors like to stay within the confines of the lines of communication as depicted in a formal organization chart. They do not like bypassing these lines of communication and think that these would amount to thwarting of their authority (iii) Fear of challenge to their authority Some seniors tend to hoard information going down / up as it may disclose their weaknesses. They may also think if they do not share the information, they would become more important. (iv) Lack of confidence in the subordinates Some seniors perceive their subordinates to be less competent and do not like the information going downwards for the risk of its leakage and misuse. (v) Ignoring communication Some seniors ignore the information from their subordinates

deliberately in order to maintain their importance. This can create a barrier in the minds of subordinates who may loathe to provide information to seniors. (vi) Lack of time Some seniors are overburdened with work and consequently have no time to provide information downwards, upwards or horizontally. (vii) Lack of awareness Some seniors do not appreciate the critical importance and significance of maintaining a smooth flow of information in all directions within and outside of the organization. This also acts as a blocker of flow of communication in the organization. (3) Barriers at the level of subordinates These are: (i) Unwillingness to communicate As a rule if an employee feels giving information may be embarrassing, he would not divulge it or would delay its flow as much as possible. They often modify the information so as to protect their interests. Wrong information can be very misleading too. Wrong information is worse than no information. (ii) Lack of proper incentive Lack of motivation comes in the way of flow of information up or down the lines of command and control. Similarly, if good suggestions from subordinates are ignored or do not evoke enough response or attention, it has a 25 snowballing effect in the organization. Subordinates do not feel enthused about giving suggestions for improvement of products, processes and systems. This has been the main reason for dismal failure of suggestion schemes in USA, Europe and India. 2. 4 GROUP BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATIONS These are interpersonal barriers to communication. These occur at the level of interaction within a group of employees — members of a section, department or team having members from different specialist functions of the organization. A few major barriers to communication are: (1) Premature evaluation of the sender This happens when the looks, dress or

initial introduction to the subject is not impressive or up to the preconceived standard and receivers have done premature evaluation of the sender. This can also happen when the credibility of the sender of message is low. Such barriers stop transfer of information as senders get a sense of futility.

Such barriers can be overcome by: (1) Senders developing empathy for the receivers and modifying the message to make it more acceptable to them (2) Receivers listening to the speakers free from prejudice and

commitment
 Inattentive listening If the receiver is preoccupied with something else and is concerned with other issues, he may fail to react to the message, talk, bulletin, notice or circular. Since the receiver is not able to give sufficient attention, the message may fail to register in his mind. (3)

Loss during transmission of message A message that has to pass through several layers of organization structure or many stages before it reaches the target may lose its accuracy. For oral messages, it is estimated that accuracy is lost at every stage of its transmission or relaying. Even in written messages, loss occurs because of differences in interpretation, meanings and translation. (4) Loss of retention Retaining messages in the memory is a difficult process. It applies to both oral and written messages that are

circulated. However, if a copy of the written message is available, persons can refer to it again and again. It is said that people remember: 10 % of what they read 20 % of what they hear 30 % of what they see 50 % of what they see and hear 26 % of what they say (5) 70 % of what they say 90 % of what they say as they perform the task Undue reliance on written words Senders often place undue importance to written message. In spite of the message being well drafted and presented, it may fail to make the necessary impact

because of lack of trust and confidence between the parties. Messages, apart from being very good, should be consonant with the organizations' purpose and employees' own interest. (6) Distrust of the communicator If the person who is sending the message is prone to frequently countermanding, it leads to delayed responses from recipients. Besides, they may not act enthusiastically, perhaps, because they are waiting for amendment to the original message! (7) Failure to communicate Arising from lethargy or any other reason, managers may fail to inform the concerned person(s). In such cases, even a subsequent message may not invoke the right response because of the missing link!

2. 5 ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Organization structures of firms are designed to support company's objectives. Besides, organizations prescribe systems — a set of policies, procedures and norms of behaviour (code of conduct) to reinforce achievement of corporate objectives. These are further supplemented by a comprehensive system of performance appraisals, rewards and punishment. A few major organizational barriers are: (1) Organizational policy Policies underpin strategy and facilitate their implementation. Organizational policy should support flow of information in all directions — external and internal communication covering downward, upwards and horizontal communications. If flow of communication is not supported by firms' policy, it will not be smooth and adequate for the healthy functioning of the organization. (2) Organizational rules and regulations Some rules and regulations of the firm may come in the way of free flow of communication and may require provision of proper channels of communication. Such rules and procedures may inhibit the flow of

communication and need to be updated to bring them in line with the demands of strategies and their accomplishment. (3) Status relationship
 Greater the difference in the level of status of the functionaries, greater is the possibility of breakdown of communication between them. If a person has to be frequently interacting with senior personnel, his job gradation needs to be reviewed. (4) Complexity of organization structure Tall organizations comprising of many layers of organization structure, delay flow of messages from sender to the receiver. It increases the risk of distortion of the message en route. In such firms, usually upwards communication suffers very badly. (5) Organizational facilities Firms must provide facilities for meeting and conference rooms, complaint / suggestion schemes etc. They should encourage open door policies by senior managers and executives. Companies should also organize gatherings for social, cultural and sport activities as they also contribute to better flow of information at both informal and formal levels. 2. 6 GATEWAY TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Developing a deep understanding of the various barriers to communication must lead the management to devising ways and means of overcoming these barriers. Besides, every communicator must take specific steps to improve conditions and eliminate roadblocks to effective communication. American Management Association has formulated the following commandments for effective communication: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Clarifying ideas before communication Knowing purpose of communication Understanding physical and human environments of communication Consulting others in planning communication Contents and overtones of communication Value of communication to the receiver Follow up action

Importance of communication Actions congruent with communication Good listening

2. 7 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Communication is directly influenced by the ability to articulate issues concisely and convey to receivers in words and phrases they are familiar with so as to persuade them to the intended course of action. It is, therefore, a powerful skill to cultivate. Following checklist comprising of 7 Cs and 4 Ss should serve as good guideline for budding managers and leaders:

(1) Seven Cs of communication

28 (i) **Completeness** Complete messages achieve the desired results without having to incur additional time and expenses by seeking clarifications and getting piece-meal replies. Complete messages from the sender help to build his image, goodwill and credibility. It saves time and cost. Following guidelines are useful:

- (ii) **Check 5Ws (What, When, Where, Who and Why) and IH (How) of the message** Answer all questions raised meticulously Give some extra information rather than holding it back

Conciseness Conciseness is saying message in the fewest words without sacrificing understanding by the receivers. It is the opposite of wordiness or verbosity. By eliminating unwanted words, importance and emphasis of messages is increased. Remember that „ brevity is the soul of wit“.

Following guidelines would serve better:

- Omit hackneyed expressions
- Avoid repetition and long winding sentences
- Include relevant facts but with courtesy

Organize message logically and effectively

(iii) **Consideration** Always prepare message keeping receivers in mind. Ideally, senders should put themselves in receivers’ position and then visualize their needs and wants. Thereafter, they would be able to craft messages that are more in tune with receivers’ requirements. One should gift wrap whatever one

wants to say or write. This requires an attitude, empathy and human touch. It leads to better understanding of the human nature. Following directions should be useful: i, ii, iii, (iv) Focus on „ you“ instead of „ I“ or „ we“ Highlight benefits of the message to the receiver Emphasize positive and pleasant aspects of facts Imbibe integrity in to the message Concreteness The message should be specific, definite and vivid. Communicators should conscientiously avoid vague and general statements. Some good rules to follow are: i, ii, iii, Choose vivid and image building words in the message Use direct and action verbs Use specific facts and figures 29 (v) Clarity Special efforts are required to see that messages getting across are fully understood by receivers although they may not have identical experience, education and opinions. Every individual has a unique mental filter that gives different meanings to messages although the text is the same. Following tips will be useful: i, ii, iii, (vi) Always choose short, familiar and conversational words and phrases Endeavour to achieve appropriate lengths for sentences and paragraphs Support the message with examples, illustrations and audio-visuals Courtesy Courtesy comes from ones innate desire to respect others. Courtesy brings in new friends and strengthens old friendships. However, one has to develop a „ you-attitude“ and being sensitive to others. A few good rules are: i, ii, iii, iv, Omit expressions that hurt, are irritating and be-little Apologize in good faith Answer mail regularly and properly Be appreciative, thoughtful and honestly factual Correctness (vii) Messages done in a perfect way grammatically may fail to achieve their purpose because receivers found them insulting, humiliating and overbearing. Correctness can be ensured by adopting following rules: i, ii, iii,

i. (2) Using correct level of language in tune with the receivers Incorporating only accurate data and evidence Choosing the right words, phrases and sentences Organizing matter systematically in to paragraphs of appropriate size Four Sâ€™s of communication Besides the above, following four principles have become popular: (i) Shortness Shortness „ economizesâ€™ on words. Message should be as brief as possible. Good rules are: i. i. i. Avoid high sounding and bombastic words Do not use complex words, phrases and ideas Use simple, common and popular vocabulary 30 (ii) Simplicity Simplicity impresses. There is a famous „ KISSâ€™ principle in communication — it says that the message should be kept short and simple. A few golden hints are: i. i. i. Choice of simple words and ideas comes from clarity of tellersâ€™ thoughts Confused persons employ confusing words that leave the reader in a maze Clarity of ideas germinate use of simple words and phrases Strength (iii) Strength of message „ convincesâ€™ receivers about the desirability of the idea(s). Messages should deliver the conviction of the teller. Guidelines are: i. i. i. (iv) Half-hearted statements add a touch of falsehood to the message If sender is convinced, the message carries the strength of his conviction Strength of the message comes from sendersâ€™ credibility Sincerity The quality of sincerity „ appealsâ€™ to everyone especially the receivers of messages. If receiversâ€™ keen sense of observation senses a situation of makebelieve, the entire process of communication would fall through. Adopting the following rules will go a long way: i. i. i. A sincere approach becomes evident to receivers Sincerity gets reflected in the way they communicate Sincerity adds to the credibility of senders 2. 8 SUMMARY Barriers to communication arise from the inherent

process of sending / receiving of messages among humans. Invariably gaps exist between individuals' thought, speech and action forming a kind of vicious triangle among three apexes of „ thinking“, „ saying“ and doing. Smaller the size of this triangle, higher would be the credibility of the individual or the organization. In enterprises, barriers to communication arise at three levels — individual, group and organizational. At individual level, barriers arise from badly crafted messages, unclear assumptions, faulty translation / interpretation and use of specialist language. Among seniors, barriers manifest from attitude towards people, insistence of proper channels of communication, fear of challenge to their authority or lack of confidence in subordinates. These might also emanate from lack of time or lack of awareness of the importance of communication or ignoring the need to communicate. Among subordinates, barriers may arise from lack of ability, unwillingness or lack of incentive to communicate. 31 At group level, barriers crop up from premature evaluation of sender, inattentive listening and loss of content during transmission. Barriers also result from loss of retention of content, distrust of the sender and failure to communicate. Organizational barriers may spring up from policies that do not support upward, downward and horizontal communications, inhibiting rules and regulations, promoting status centric relationships and complex organization structures. Lack of facilities for free and frank interactions on professional, social or cultural issues can add to barriers to communication. Students should align their communication skills with 7 C's of completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy and correctness and 4 S's of shortness, simplicity, strength and sincerity. 2. 9 (1) (2) (3) KEYWORDS

Barrier — It is anything that holds apart, obstructs or prevents going ahead.

Personal Barrier — It is a shortcoming or a deficiency that is individual,

private and peculiar to a person. Group Barrier — It is the obstacle that crops

up when a number of persons are gathered closely together because of

common characteristics or community of interests forming a recognizable

unit. Organizational Barrier — It is the fence or wall that is created when a

body of persons is organized for some specific purpose reflecting the

administrative, personnel and executive structure of business, club, union

and society. Attitude - It is a manner of showing or meaning to show a

mental state, emotion and mood. It is showing through acting, feeling or

thinking one's disposition, opinion etc. Evaluation — It is to find,

determine and appraise the value, worth or amount and express them in

numerical terms. (4) (5) (6) 2. 10 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SELF-ASSESSMENT

QUESTIONS What is the vicious triangle in communication and how can we

reduce the gap between thought, speech and actions in an organizational

setting? Gaps between thought, speech and actions are equally applicable at

the individual level. Suggest ways and means of minimizing these gaps.

Describe the personal barriers to communication and how individuals can

overcome them. Describe the group barriers to communication and suggest

strategies to overcome them. Describe the organizational barriers to

communication. What remedies would you suggest for removing the

organizational roadblocks to communication? List out the ten

commandments of good communication and describe their importance in

overcoming barriers to communication at all the levels of the organization

What are the guiding principles of good communication? 8 32 9 10 11 12 13

Describe any five principles of effective communication and support your answer with suitable examples. Describe the principles of conciseness, correctness, concreteness and clarity and explain the differences by citing suitable examples. Explain the principles of consideration and courtesy for good communications. Support your answer by giving examples. Describe the 4-S principles of communication giving appropriate examples. Evaluate the role of principle of sincerity for effective communication in ones ability to influence other persons.

2. 11 1 2 3 SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS Bovee, Courtland L., Thill, John V. (1992). Business Communication Today. New York, NY, USA: McGraw Hill Inc. Pal, Rajendra, Karlahalli, JS (! 997). Essentials of Business Communication. New Delhi (India): Sultan Chand & Sons. Kreps, Gary L. (1996) Organizational Communication: Theory & Practice. London, Longman.

33 UNIT 3 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE OF COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE 3. 0 3. 1 3. 2 3. 3 3. 4 3. 5 3. 6 3. 7 3. 8 3. 9` 3. 10 3. 11 3. 12 Objectives Becoming a Powerful Communicator Crafting Effective Communication Creating and Delivering the Message Minimizing Noise during Transmission Facilitating Feedback Strategic Relevance of Communication Strategic Framework of Communication in an Enterprise Communication and Society Summary Keywords Self Assessment Questions Suggested Further Readings 3. 0 OBJECTIVES After studying this unit, stud