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**BHT 1101: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

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**P/B E1**

**Lusaka**

(i)

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**Study Skills**

As distance student, you shouldn’t expect to sit behind the chair and learn everything from the lecturer who contributes only 25% towards your learning. You are expected to be resourceful and to find time to study and research as an individual or as a group. The lecturer is only there as a guide or facilitator each time you come for contact sessions. Take advantage of the presence of lecturers and your fellow students to cover as much work as possible.

**Need Help**

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**Assessment**

Continuous Assessment **50%**

* Assignments, presentations, Quizzes 25%
* Class Tests 25%

Final Exam **50%**

**Total**  **100%**

(iii)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

* Definition of Communication
* Functions of Communication
* Communication process and channels of communication
* Inter/intra communication
* Channels of communication
* Barriers to effective communication
* Guidelines to overcome communication barriers

**UNIT 2: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

* Overview of written communication
* Types of writing
* Choosing and shaping business messages
* Three step writing
* Essay writing
* Information reports
* Business report
* Harvard Referencing System

**UNIT 3: SPOKEN COMMUNICATION**

* Spoken communication
* The need to communicate
* Public speaking
* Major requirements for public speaking

**UNIT 4: ROUTINE VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

* Verbal communication
* Routine verbal communication
* Vocabulary
* The value of oral business communication
* Listening

(iv)

**UNIT 5: FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN AND BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS**

* Communication in business setting
* Internal and external communication
* Organizational formal and informal communication
* Benefits of communication
* Characteristics of business messages,
* Communication in work place

**UNIT 6: RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS**

* Definition of resume
* Definition of cover letters
* Preparation of resume
* Preparation of cover letters

**UNIT 7: INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDS: ACCESSING, EVALUATING AND PROCESSING INFORMATION**

* Sources of Information
* How to access, process and evaluate information
* Tacit and Explicit knowledge
* Knowledge in functional areas

**UNIT 8: COMMUNICATING IN TEAMS**

* Teams and team work
* Types of teams
* Advantages and disadvantages of teams
* Characteristics of effective teams

**UNIT 9: COMMUNICATING WITH MANAGEMENT**

* Communicating with managers
* Classification of reports
* Media report
* Advantages and disadvantages of electronic reports
* General format of reports

(v)

**UNIT 10: COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS AND NETWORKING**

* Networking
* Three Step Process in Writing
* Culture

(vi)

**UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

Whether an organization is large, small, or virtual, sharing information among its parts and with the outside world is the glue that binds the organization together. The moment you join a company, you become a link in its information chain. Whether you are a top manager or an entry-level employee, you have information that others need in order to perform their jobs and others have information that is crucial to you. In fact, communication is the lifeblood of an organization.

**Introduction**

This unit discusses the definition of communication and its functions, and communication process and formal and informal communication channels. It further covers barriers and guidelines to overcome communication barriers.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Define communication and its functions
2. Describe the communication process within and between organizations
3. Distinguish between formal and informal channels of communication
4. Identify barriers to effective communication and guidelines on how to overcome them

**TOPIC ONE: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND ITS FUNCTIONS**

Communication is the transmission of information, ideas, emotions and skills through the use of symbols, words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc. Communication is the enlisting of a response through verbal symbols i.e. the sender chooses symbols of communication and sender receives. Communication is said to occur when human beings respond to the symbol, i.e. communication occurs when human beings manipulate symbols to stimulate meaning in other humans. Bovee, et al. (2006) defines communication as the process of sending and receiving messages.

1

However, communication is effective only when the message is understood and when it stimulates action or encourages the receiver to think in new ways. In order to communicate effectively you need to have communication skills which enable to overcome barriers to effective communication. Communication occurs in the following manner:

* Face to face
* Two-way process
* Engaging
* In various forms
* Frequent
* Repeated 5 to 7 times before message is encoded. (Prosci 2012)

**Rhetorical Sensitivity (Trait Theory)**

This is one of the theories which help with giving the theoretical basis of what constitutes effective communication and it states as follows:

* Effective communication arises from sensitivity and care in adjusting to what you say to the listener
* Noble selves stick to their personal beliefs without adapting to others
* Rhetorical reflectors mold themselves to others wishes
* Rhetorically sensitive people moderate these extremes
* Embodies concern for others, concern for self, and a situational attitude
* Leads to more effective understanding and acceptance of ideas
* Adjusts to what they say to the level, mood and beliefs of the other person
* People have varying degrees of the three types, it alters with age and situations

Thus, in general, communication takes place between two people or among more people when the contents of one person’s mind (or of the minds of one group of people) are shared. Contents which could be made up of thoughts, ideas or feelings – are transferred to the mind of the other person or to the minds of the other people.

2

So, whenever we converse with or gesticulate or signify something to other people, we are engaged in communication. Thus, human beings are constantly engaged in communication.

The medium or agency of the transfer of the contents of one person’s mind to that of the other could be (as already implied), a gesture of some kind (such as a wave of the hand, a nod of the head or a twitching or blinking of the eye) or a sound of some sort made without the use of words (such as the sounds made by the animal world).

**Functions of communication in an organization**

Communication has four key purposes in organizations. These are control, motivation, emotion expression and information. Communication acts to control employee behaviour in a number of ways. Organizations have authority and formal guidelines which employees need to adhere to. When employees raise a grievance, or have to comply with the organizations’ policy, communication performs this controlling role. Informal communication can also be used to control behaviour e.g. a group of employees can harass an individual who is outperforming them in order to force that individual to be less productive. They have thus communicated informally and have controlled that employees’ behaviour.

Communication also leads to motivation. This is achieved when employees have had the clarity of what they must do, how well they are doing and how to improve performance if it is below standard. This is in line with the goal-setting and reinforcement theories of communication which are discussed in the relevant subsequent courses. Motivation is stimulated through communication.

Communication further provides a platform for emotional expression. The work group is a source of social interaction for many employees. Communication within a group is a mechanism by which employees show their satisfaction and frustration.

Last but not the least, communication provides the information needed by individual groups of decision making. All the four functions are important in that for groups to perform they need to perform some form of control over members, stimulate members to perform, provide a means of expression and make quality decisions.

3

**Activities:**

1. Compare and contrast communication and effective communication
2. Discuss the major functions of communication

3 Describe how any two of them contribute to the productivity of a company

**TOPIC TWO: COMMUNICATION PROCESS AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION**

Communication does not occur haphazardly in organizations. Nor does it happen all at once. It is more than a single act. Communication is a dynamic, transactional (two- way process). It is broken into seven parts, namely the message itself, encoding phase, the channel used, the decoding phase and the receiver. Let us look at the details associated with each of these parts.

**Sender:** the source of the message is the sender. The sender must know why the communication is necessary and what result is expected. In other words, before communication can take place an idea and a desire to share it is conceived and it is put in a message. When a sender puts his or her idea into a message that a receiver will understand, he or she is encoding it. The sender’s decision on the message’s form (word, facial expression, and gesture), length, organizations, tone and style largely depends on his or her idea, audience, and personal style or mood.

**Encoding**: this is the process of taking your message and transferring it into proper format for sharing it with the audience. It requires knowing your audience and ensuring that your message provides all of the information your audience needs.

**Channel**: this is the method of communication that you must choose such as face to face, telephone, e-mail or notice board. To physically transmit your message to your receiver, you select a communication channel (verbal or nonverbal, spoken or written) and a medium (telephone, letter, memo, e-mail, report, face-to-face exchange). This choice depends on your message, your audience’s location, your need for speed, and the formality required.

**Decoding**: this is the process of receiving the message accurately and requires that the audience have the means to understand the information you are sharing. For communication to occur, your receiver must first get the message.

4

If you send a letter, your receiver has to read it before understanding it. If you are giving a speech, your listeners have to be able to hear you, and they have to be paying attention.

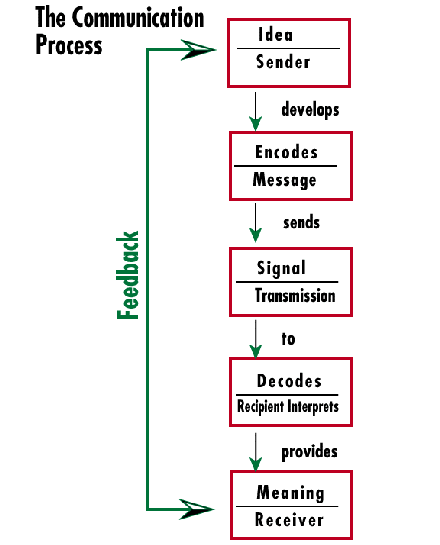
Your receiver must decode (absorb and understand) your message. The decoded message must then be stored in the receiver’s mind.

**Receiver:** you have expectations for a response from the receiver when you send a message. You can increase the chances of getting this result by addressing your audience’s concerns or addressing specific benefits as part of your communication. The receiver interprets your message correctly, assigning the same meaning to your words as you intended and responding in the desired way.

**Feedback**: this allows you to gauge how successful you were at communicating. It also offers a chance to adjust your communication process for the future. After decoding your message, the receiver responds in some way and signals that response to you. This feedback enables you to evaluate the effectiveness of your message. If your audience does not understand what you mean, you can tell by the response and refine your message.

**Context**: this is the situation in which you are communicating. It includes the environment in which your audience is. It also involves your audience and the culture of your organization. The communication process is repeated until both parties have finished expressing themselves. Moreover, effective business communicators do not cram too much information into one message. Instead, they limit the content of a message to a specific subject and use this back-and-forth exchange to provide additional information or details.

5



Adopted from Bovee 2006

**Communication Direction**

Communication can flow vertically or laterally.

Vertical communication can either be upward or downward.

**Downward communication** is from the top (management) to the bottom (employees). This can represent managers or supervisors talking to their subordinates. It is used to assign goals, targets, and job instructions, disseminating rules, policies, guidelines, procedure and problems needing attention.

6

Upward communication flows from the bottom (employees) to the top (management). It is usually used for purposes of passing on information to higher groups. This could be employees giving feedback on how they feel about certain issues to management. This feedback is useful as it enables managers to get information on how things could be improved in the organizations.

**Lateral communication** is a form of communication which occurs among members of the same work group at the same level or among any horizontally equal colleagues. This type of communication is necessary to save time and it facilitates coordination. There is a danger here as this type of communication can cause conflict if the vertical channels are violated when members go above or around their superiors to get things done.

**Channels of communication**

There are several types of communication channels to choose from. Channels differ in their capacity to convey information; thus, care has to be taken in choosing which channel to use for a particular audience. Research has shown that face-to-face is very effective and has high channel richness.

**Types of Channels**

**Formal channels** are established by the organizations and transmit messages that are related to professional activities of members. Formal information sources i.e. constitute documents, journals and texts that are easily obtainable from the library.

**Informal channels** are used to transmit personal or social messages in the organizations. These informal channels are spontaneous and emerge as a response to individual choices. The various channels one can use include: formal reports and bulletins, pre-recorded speeches, memos, letters, electronic mail, online discussions, live speeches, telephone conversations, video conferencing and face-to-face conversation. **Informal communication** is characterized by unpublished research.

7

Ongoing research may be first communicated through discussions, emails etc. amongst colleagues and friends. Once the research findings are complete the information can then be published.

An informal source is an individual or organizations whose area of expertise is that particular topic. This information can be obtained by interviews, letters, email, or phone calls. Of course, you may need a combination of both formal and informal sources to identify the full range of information. Keep in mind that informal sources are an excellent complement to formal sources when the latter cannot supply crucial information.

**TOPIC THREE: FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION**

1. Communication makes co-operative and collective action among people possible. The Biblical story of the Tower of Babel confirms the indispensability of words for knitting people together in co-operative action.

2. Communication provides the vehicle and means for motivating and directing people in an enterprise or undertaking.

3. Communication helps to mold attitudes and to impart beliefs for the purpose of convincing and persuading people and influencing their behaviour.

4. Communication is the means by which people can be introduced and orientated to their environment.

It is hardly possible to isolate all the ways in which communication is useful to human beings. It is obvious that, without it, human group life (such as in business) cannot go on and that all the concerns, interests and enterprises of man’s existence cannot be carried out. Therefore, no effort at perfecting human communication (for our purpose in this course, at the business place) can be seen as a waste of time, energy or resources.

**Barriers to Effective Communication**

Communication barriers block the communication process. These include following:

1. Perceptual and language differences entail image different. Perceptions are unique. As a sender you chose what is important to you i.e. selective perception.

8

As a receiver you fit details in your existing pattern. If it does not fit, you are inclined to distort. Language is a code that depends on shared definitions. The more experiences people share, the more likely they will be able to understand each other.

1. Restrictive environments. Every link in the communication chain is open to error. By the time a message travels all the way up or down the chain it may bear little resemblance to the original idea. If communication network limits the flow of information in any direction (upward, downward or horizontal) communication becomes fragmented. Lower-level employees may obtain only enough information to perform their own isolated tasks learning little about other areas, so only people at the top can see the big picture. When managers use authoritarian leadership style, information moves down the chain of command but not up.
2. Distractions. Physical distractions such as bad connections, uncomfortable chair, illegible copy, poor lighting, health problems and other irritating conditions can block an effective message. Emotional distractions can get in way of your message e.g. upset, hostile, fearful. You have a hard time shaping an objective message.
3. Deceptive tactics. Deceptive communication may exaggerate benefits, quote inaccurate statistics or hide negative information. They may state opinion as facts, leave out crucial information or portray graphics data unfairly. Some communicators may seek personal gain by making others look better or worse than they are. They may allow personal preference to influence their own perception and the perception of others. Using deceptive tactics to manipulate receivers block communication and ultimately leads to failure.
4. Information overload. Today’s business people are plagued by message overload e.g. cell phone, pagers, and computer.

**Guidelines for overcoming communication barriers**

1. Adapt an audience centred approach; keeping your audience in mind
2. Foster an open communication channel i.e. corporate culture – values, tradition, and habit. An open climate can be created by:

9

1. Modifying the number of organizational levels – the fewer the links in the communication chain the less likely it is that misunderstandings will occur. Have a flat structure (fewer levels) and a wider span of control (more people reporting to a supervisor). Flatter structures enable managers to share information with colleagues and employees and to include employees in decision making, goal setting and problem solving. The few channels may create an overburden and block effective communication.
2. Facilitate feedback. Giving your audience a chance to feedback is crucial to maintaining an open communication climate.
3. Commit to ethical communication and avoid for instance;
   * Plagiarism: stealing someone’s words
   * Selective misquoting: deliberate omitting damaging comments or paint a better picture
   * Misrepresenting numbers: increasing or decreasing numbers, altering statistics, committing numerical data
   * Distorting visuals: making a product look bigger or concealing differences

Making ethical choices by asking questions such as;

* + Is this message legal?
  + Is this message balanced?
  + Is it a message you can live with?
  + Is this message feasible?

Motivate ethical choices by the following actions;

* + By formulating a written code of ethics
  + By using ethics audit
  + By setting a good ethical example

1. Create lean efficient messages through the following measures;

10

* 1. Reduce the number of messages. Only send necessary message
  2. Minimize distractions: eliminate physical distractions e.g. appearance, overcome emotional barriers before you block the message. As a listener overcome listening barriers by paraphrasing what you hear. Do not jump to the conclusion. Listen without asking questions. As a speaker connect subject to audience needs, and the use language that is clear.
  3. Fine tune your business communication skills. Improve communication skills by creating lean, efficient messages. Companies can offer seminars, workshops.

You can shape the impressions you and your company make on colleagues, employees, supervisors, investors and customers in addition to perceiving and responding to the needs of stakeholders through effective communication. Without effective communication, people misunderstand each other and misinterpret information. Ideas misfire or fail to gain attention, and people and companies flounder or stumble. In fact, studies show that on average, 14 percent of each 40-hour work week is wasted because of poor communication between staff and management. (Amour S, 1998).

**Activities:**

1. What are communication barriers?

2. How can communication barriers be overcome?

3. Discuss the key functions of communication

11

**UNIT 2: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

**Introduction**

In this unit you will be introduced to written communication, composing and shaping a message, writing business correspondence and types of essays, writing information and business reports.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of this unit students should be able to:

* 1. Define written communication
  2. Identify the conditions under which the use of written communication is important in a business setting
  3. Apply the various types of writing
  4. Know how to write various types of business correspondences

**TOPIC ONE: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Written communication should be used when the situation is formal, official, or long term; or when the situation affects several people in related ways. Interoffice memos are used for recording informal inquiries or replies. Letters are formal in tone and addressed to an individual. They are used for official notices, formally recorded statements and lengthy communications. Reports are more impersonal and more formal than a letter. They are used to convey information, analyses, and recommendations. Written communications to groups include bulletin-board notices, posters, exhibits, displays, and audio and visual aids.

Communication and the need to exchange information are no longer constrained by place and time. Email, voice mail, and facsimile have facilitated communication and the sharing of knowledge. Email is the computer transmission and storage of written messages. Voice mail is the transmission and storage of digitized spoken messages. Facsimile (fax) is the transmission of documents.

12

**TOPIC TWO: COMPOSING AND SHAPING A MESSAGE**

This can be achieved through:

- Controlling your style and tone

* Using a conversational tone; this entails avoiding obsolete and pompous language, avoid intimacy, avoid humour, avoid preaching and bragging
* Using plain English
* Selecting active or passive voice
* Selecting the best words
* Using functional and content words correctly
* Finding words that communicate: that is choose strong words, choose familiar words, avoid clichés, use jargon carefully

**Routine, Good news and goodwill message**

When you are writing good news and goodwill messages begin with the main idea, the request or the good news. Provide necessary details. Close with a cordial comment, a reference to the good news or a statement about the specific action desired. The audience could be pleased or neutral. You can use a direct approach.

**Bad news**

The audience is displeased. Use an indirect approach. Begin with a neutral statement that acts as a transition to the reasons for the bad news. Give reasons to justify a negative answer. State or imply the bad news and make a positive suggestion. Close cordially.

**TOPIC THREE: WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES** Most business communicators experience the challenge of composing messages that their audiences can easily understand. People tend not to remember isolated facts and figures, so successful communicators depend on good organizations to make their messages meaningful.

13

Does it really matter whether a message is well organised as long as its point is eventually made? Why not just let your ideas flow naturally and trust your audience to grasp your meaning? One thing which is true is that misinterpreted messages lead to wasted time of reading and rereading, poor decision making, and shattered business relationships. When you consider such costs, you begin to realize the value of clear writing and good organizations of business messages.

Therefore, before you begin to write, think about what you are going to say and how are you are going to put it across to your audience. Good organizations help save your time. In addition, to helping you, good organizations also help your audience in three ways:

* Good organizations help your audience understand your message. By making your main points clear at the outset and by stating your needs precisely, your well-organized message will satisfy your audience’s need for information.
* Good organizations help your audience accept your message. Even when your message is logical, you need to select and organise your points in a diplomatic way. By softening refusals and leaving a good impression, you enhance your credibility and add authority to your messages.
* Good organizations save your audience time. Well organised messages are efficient. They contain only relevant ideas, and they are brief. Moreover, all the information in a well–organized message is in a logical place. Audience members receive only information they need, and because that information is presented as accessibly and succinctly as possible, audience members can follow the thought pattern easily.

To organize a message, you need to do the following:

* Define your main idea
* Limit the scope
* Structure your message
* Choose the direct or indirect approach

14

**Definition of main idea**-in addition to having a general purpose and a specific purpose, all business messages can be reduced to one main idea i.e. one central point that sums up everything. The rest of your message supports, explains, or demonstrates this point. Your main idea is not the same as your topic. The broad subject of your message is the topic and your main idea makes a statement about that topic.

**Limit the scope** of your message i.e. Length and detail must match your main idea. Whether your audience expects a one-page memo or one hour speech, you must develop your main idea with major points and supporting evidence within that framework.

Structure your message-once you have narrowed the scope of your message, you must provide your supporting details in the most logical and efficient way.

**Choose between direct and indirect approaches-** once you have defined your ideas and outlined the structure of your message, you are ready to decide on the sequence you will use to present your points.

**TOPIC FOUR: BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCES**

**Business letter**

The conventions of business correspondence should be understood and followed, but it should also be understood that *a good business letter is primarily a good composition”* (emphasis, mine). What you say in a letter (the content of your letter), as opposed to how you say it (the style of your letter or how you present your content) is essentially a function of the culture (or more narrowly, the business culture) of the society and community in which you live and of your own personality make-up or disposition. Some communities and societies display much abstractness or impersonality of outlook and some persons are peevish, arrogant and discourteous by nature.

On the other hand, in some communities and societies, politeness rules inter-personal relationships and scoffing, snubbing, haughty, aloof, uncaring and rude people are seen as an abnormality or a misnomer.

15

Style is essentially a means of bringing into play an inner disposition in a person or an orientation in a community or society. Language cannot reverse this fact. Language which attempts to do that as we often encounter in politics, in war or in some other kind of conflict or in some kinds of literature or in advertisements is what is called propaganda, i.e., presenting falsehood to sound like truth.

So, while we shall, in this unit, identify some forms of business letters and exemplify them, my advice is that students master their language use well and cultivate their personality outlook appropriately, so that, with regard to both content and style, they can produce the kinds of letters which we shall be highlighting here and, indeed, in other letters.

**The Memorandum**

Memoranda (plural of memorandum) are the common means of carrying on written communication within an organization or in an office. A memorandum is used for ensuring that there is, in an office, a documented record of communication, which can often entail weighty instructions concerning, for example, expenditure of money or use of material, disciplining or promoting of staff, and so on. It is very popular in the civil service because of the great importance which the civil service places on the need for a person to have the right authority to carry out any action. In content, it is really a letter and it should actually be characterized by the same kind of courtesy in tone as we have advocated for business letters in general. However, because of the familiarity between senders and recipients, there is usually no need for undue scrupulousness over courtesy once normal social civility and decorum have been observed.

You can communicate with management with the use of memos which look like the one below:

**MEMO**

**TO:**

**FROM**

**DATE**

**16**

**SUBJECT MATTER**

**CC**

Memo which are personal end with regards.

**TOPIC FIVE: TYPES OF ESSAY WRITING**

**Descriptions:** Are written with the purpose of making the reader have the same picture that the written text has. Descriptions have major functions of making clear the objects presented. There is no room for entertainment in a description. Two types of descriptions are narrative and non-narrative. A narrative description is commonly used in stories where the narrative tells what happened whereas a non-descriptive is commonly used to describe objects being discussed.

**Explanation:** This is an account which tries to communicate meaning usually by answering the questions how or why. Give an account of the events and clarify details. When writing a text, you must understand the cause and purpose.

**Argument:** This is a point or set of reasons you use to try and convince people about something. You support your view with evidence which demonstrates the nature and scope of the issue. In essay writing, the main point has major idea you wish to make and the supporting details can be facts or information gathered from reading books.

**Essay Writing**

* **Introduction**

Your introduction is like a signpost at the beginning of a trail. It tells readers where you are going to take them, and what they will see along the way.

As you think about your introduction, ask yourself:

* What is my main idea or thesis?
* Who are my readers?

17

* Why is my idea important here and now?
* **Body**

The body of the essay moves the reader along toward the destination or goal. It might have one paragraph, but usually it has several. Each paragraph is related to one of the points you want to show the readers along the way. Some points may take more than one paragraph to develop completely. There should be connections and transitions between the points you show the reader.

As you think about the body of your paper, ask yourself:

* What points do I want to make to help my readers understand?
* What examples can I use to help the reader understand each point?
* What evidence do I have that each point is true?
* How can I keep the reader interested in following my ideas?
* Conclusion

The conclusion is the end of the journey. It looks back on the points you have shown the reader, and reinforces, but does not necessarily repeat, the main idea. It also should create a feeling of ending, a farewell to the reader.

As you think about your conclusion, ask yourself:

* How has the reader's mind been changed by following my points and examples?
* If we continued this journey, where would we go next?
* If the reader ignores the points you have made, what might happen?

## Overview of the ten Essay Writing Steps

The ten-essay writing common steps are briefly as follows:

1. **Research:** Begin the essay writing process by researching your topic, making yourself an expert. Utilize the Internet, the academic databases, and the library. Take notes and immerse yourself in the words of great thinkers. 18

2. **Analysis:** Now that you have a good knowledge base, start analyzing the arguments of the essays you're reading. Clearly define the claims, write out the reasons and the evidence. Look for weaknesses of logic, and also strengths. Learning how to write an essay begins by learning how to analyze essays written by others.

3. **Brainstorming:** Your essay will require insight of your own, genuine essay-writing brilliance. Ask yourself a dozen questions and answer them. Meditate with a pen in your hand. Take walks and think and think until you come up with original insights to write about.

4**. Thesis:** Pick your best idea and pin it down in a clear assertion that you can write your entire essay around. Your thesis is your main point, summed up in a concise sentence that lets the reader know where you're going, and why. It's practically impossible to write a good essay without a clear thesis.

5.**Outline:** Sketch out your essay before straightway writing it out. Use one-line sentences to describe paragraphs, and bullet points to describe what each paragraph will contain. Play with the essay's order. Map out the structure of your argument, and make sure each paragraph is unified.

6**. Introduction:** Now sit down and write the essay. The introduction should grab the reader's attention, set up the issue, and lead in to your thesis. Your introduction is merely a build up of the issue, a stage of bringing your reader into the essay's argument.

(Note: The title and first paragraph are probably the most important elements in your essay. This is an essay-writing point that doesn't always sink in within the context of the classroom. In the first paragraph you either hook the reader's interest or lose it. Of course your teacher, who's getting paid to teach you how to write an essay, will read the essay you've written regardless, but in the real world, readers make up their minds about whether or not to read your essay by glancing at the title alone.

1. **Paragraphs:** Each individual paragraph should be focused on a single idea that supports your thesis. Begin paragraphs with topic sentences, support assertions with evidence, and expound your ideas in the clearest, most sensible way you can. 19

Speak to your reader as if he or she were sitting in front of you. In other words, instead of writing the essay, try talking the essay.

8. **Conclusion:** Gracefully exit your essay by making a quick wrap-up sentence, and then end on some memorable thought, perhaps a quotation, or an interesting twist of logic, or some call to action. Is there something you want the reader to walk away and do? Let him or her know exactly what.

9.**Style:** Format your essay according to the correct guidelines for citation. All borrowed ideas and quotations should be correctly cited in the body of your text, followed up with a Works Cited (references) page listing the details of your sources.

10**. Language:** You are not done writing your essay until you've polished your language by correcting the grammar, making sentences flow, incorporating rhythm, emphasis, adjusting the formality, giving it a level-headed tone, and making other intuitive edits. Proofread until it reads just how you want it to sound. Writing an essay can be tedious, but you don't want to bungle the hours of conceptual work you've put into writing your essay by leaving a few sloppy misspellings and poorly worded phrases.

**TOPIC SIX: WRITING INFORMATION REPORTS**

Information reports are the easiest to organize because they provide nothing more than facts. When writing information reports, reader reaction is not usually an issue. Most readers will presumably respond unemotionally to your material, so you can present it in the most direct fashion possible. What you need to be concerned about, however, is reader comprehension. The information must be presented logically and accurately so that readers will understand exactly what you mean and be able to use your information in a practical way.

When writing an information report, you can let the nature of whatever you are describing dictate your structure. For example, if you are describing a machine, each component can correspond to a part of your report.

20

If you are describing an event, you can approach the discussion chronologically. And if you are explaining how to do something, you can describe the steps in a process. Information reports use a **topical organization,** arranging material according to one of the following:

* **Importance**. If you are reviewing five product lines, you might organise your study according to sales for each product line, beginning with the line that produces the most revenue and proceeding to the one that produces the least.
* **Sequence.** If you are studying a process, discuss it step by step---1, 2, 3, and so on.
* **Chronology**. When investigating a chain of events, organize the study according to what happened in January, what happened in February, and so on.
* **Spatial orientation**. If you are explaining how a physical object works, describe it from left to right (or right to left in some cultures), top to bottom, outside to inside.
* **Geography**. If location is important, organise your study according to geography, perhaps by region of the United States or by area of a city.
* **Category**. If you are asked to review several distinct aspects of a subject, look at one category at a time, such as sales, profit, cost, or investment.

There are other bases for organizations. Because some information reports, especially compliance reports and internal reports are prepared on preprinted forms, they are organised according to instructions supplied by the person requesting the information.

**Structuring Analytical Reports**

It is more difficult to organise analytical reports that contain analyses and that are designed to lead the audience to specific conclusions and recommendations. Your choice of structural approach depends on the reaction you anticipate:

* Receptive audiences. When you except your audience to agree with you, use a structure that focuses attention on the rationale behind your conclusions and recommendations.

The three most common structural approaches for analytical reports are:

21

* Focusing on conclusions
* Focusing on recommendations
* Focusing on logical argument

**Focusing on Conclusions**

When writing an analytical report for people from your own organization who have asked you to study something, you are writing for your most receptive readers. They may know from experience that you will do a thorough job, and they may trust your judgment. If they are likely to accept your conclusions, you can structure your report around conclusions using a direct approach.

However, a direct report does have some drawbacks. If your reader has reservations about either you or your material, strong statements at the beginning may make everything seem too simple. Your readers could criticize your report as being superficial. You are generally better off taking the direct approach in a report only when your credibility is high---when your readers trust you and are willing to accept your conclusions.

**Focusing on recommendations**

A slightly different approach is useful when your readers want to know what they ought to do (as opposed to what they ought to conclude). You will often be asked to solve a problem rather than just study it. So, the actions you want your readers to take become the main subdivisions of your report.

When structuring a report around recommendations, use the direct approach as you would for a report that focuses on conclusions. Then unfold your recommendations using a series of five steps:

1. Establish the need for action in the introduction, generally by briefly describing the problem or opportunity
2. Introduce the benefit that can be achieved, without providing any details.
3. List the steps (recommendations) required to achieve the benefit, using action verbs for emphasis.

22

1. Explain each step more fully, giving details on procedures, costs, and benefits.
2. Summarize the recommendations.

**Focusing on logical argument**

Focusing on conclusions or recommendations is the most forceful and efficient way to structure an analytical report, but it is not the best solution for every situation. You can sometimes achieve better results by encouraging readers to weigh all facts before you present your conclusions or recommendations.

When your purpose is to collaborate with your audience and solve a problem or to persuade them to take a definite action, your structural approach must highlight logical arguments or focus the audience’s attention on what needs to be done. When you want your audience to concentrate on why your ideas make sense, use logical organization. Arrange your ideas around the reasoning behind your report’s conclusions and recommendations. Organize your material to reflect the thinking process that will lead readers to your conclusions.

Three basic structural approaches may be used to argue your case: 2+2=4 approach, the scientific method, and the yardstick approach. These three are not mutually exclusive. Essentially, you choose an approach that matches the reasoning process you used to arrive at your conclusions. That way you can lead readers along the same mental pathways you used, in the hope that they will follow you to the same conclusions.

In a long report, particularly, you may find it convenient to use differing organizational approaches for various sections. In general, however, simplicity of the organization is a virtue. You need a clear, comprehensive argument in order to convince sceptical readers to accept your conclusions and recommendations.

**The 2+2 =4 Approach**

This approach essentially convinces readers of your point of view by demonstrating that everything adds up.

23

The main points in your outline are the main reasons behind your conclusions and recommendations. You support each reason with the evidence you collected during your analysis.

Because of naturalness and versatility, the 2+2= 4 approach is generally the most persuasive and efficient way to develop an analytical report for sceptical readers. However, not every problem or reporting situation can be handed with this organizational approach

**The Scientific Method**

When you are trying to discover whether an explanation is true, whether an option will solve your problem, or which one of several solutions will work best, you are likely to find the scientific method useful. Reports based on scientific method begin with a statement of the problem and a brief description of the hypothetical solution or a list of possible solutions. The body of the report discusses each alternative in turn and offers evidence that will either confirm the alternative or rule it out. Because several have multiple causes and complex solutions, many alternatives may be relevant.

**The Yardstick Approach**

One way to reduce the confusion presented by having a lot of alternatives is to establish a yardstick for evaluating them. You begin by discussing the problem as with the scientific problem. These are the criteria against which you evaluate all possible solutions. The body of the report evaluates the alternatives in relation to the criteria. The main points of the outline are either the criteria themselves or the alternatives.

Yardstick reports are similar in some respects to those based on scientific method, but in criteria-based reports, all the alternatives are reviewed against the same standards. Another distinction is that criteria-based reports can be used to prove the need for action. The current situation can be measured against the criteria and shown to be wanting.

The yardstick approach is useful for certain kinds of proposals because the client who requests the proposal often provides a list of criteria the solution must meet.

24

The yardstick has one drawback in the sense that it can be a little boring.

**TOPIC FIVE: BUSINESS REPORTS**

Business reports can take different forms. Generally, they are concise documents that first inform by summarizing and analyzing key facts and situations and then make recommendations to the person or group asking for the report. Before writing this or any report, you must ask yourself two important questions:

1. **Who is my audience?** (In business, this is likely to be either your supervisors or clients -who will read your report.)

2. **What is my purpose?** (This is what your readers need to know to do their job.)

If you don’t understand your audience and purpose, you are not likely to create a report that meets the needs of those who will be reading it.

**Audience:**

Whoever they are, you need to ask and answer the following: What do they already know before they read your report? What do you want them to know after they have read it? What are their backgrounds? What are their likely biases? How do they approach problems?

**Purpose:** Once you fully understand the audience for your report and re-consider your

assignment with them in mind, your purpose (goals) should become clear. Most likely, your writing goals will be to inform by summarizing key information; analyze by comparing costs, or strengths and weaknesses; and possibly recommend certain actions based on the facts and data you have presented.

When you inform or analyze for a business report, your job is not to dazzle with vocabulary, jargon, or complex sentences. Creative, adjective-filled prose does not belong in a business report. You can generally use “you,” but should avoid “I,” as well as slang or contractions. What your clients want is prose that is objective, succinct, non-emotive, and above all, factual.

Consider the connotations of language in the following sentences:

* Avoid subjective and emotive writing:
* Use objective and unbiased writing:

25

Let your facts and clear writing—not loaded words—do the persuading.

**How can I make my writing fit my audience and purpose?**

1. First, read your assigned task carefully and then do some important pre-writing:

a. Determine your audience: what are their needs and how much background do they

have? This last point is really important because you do not want to bore readers with

information they already know or summaries of every little detail. At the same

time, you do not want to skip key points or write over their heads by ignoring

important definitions. Jot down what you think your readers will know or believe

before they read your report.

b. Next, define your purpose. Write down what you want your readers to know after

reading your report—this is your writing goal.

2. Draft your report carefully, being certain to respond to all of the things you have been

asked to include. Subheadings help readers follow your ideas. Typical short reports have the following sections: Terms of Reference, Procedure, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

You, however, may be asked to use different subheadings or decide on other subheadings that best reflect and organize the report.

a. Each section reflects a different goal.

b. Within a section, each paragraph should explore a single main idea—start each

paragraph with a strong, unifying sentence, one that summarizes its main point.

3. Consider charts, graphs, or short bulleted lists that can quickly communicate important information to your readers.

4. Put the draft aside for at least a day. If you can, send it to others for a review:

a. Do not reveal the audience; instead, ask your reviewers who they think the

audience is. If they cannot pinpoint your intended audience, something is off base

in your report.

b. Ask them to write down your three most important points. If they name three

things that are not what you think are most important, you have work to do.

c. Also ask them to note where things that are unclear, “fluffy,” or out of place.

26

d. Finally, because you want to be as objective as possible, ask your reviewers to

circle words or passages that seem subjective or too emotive.

Consider reviewers’ comments with an open mind. You may think you have communicated what you intended, but it may not have come out that way. Don’t take it personally.

5. Before you revise your draft, re-read your assigned task one final time. Often in the heat of writing, we get off track and include things that aren’t required or neglect to provide information that we’ve been asked for.

6. Revise for wordiness. Consider the following:

a. In my opinion, the main problem is….(revise to “The main problem is…”)

b. There are numerous considerations that will influence your decision (revise to

“Numerous considerations will influence your decision.”)

c. In today’s business world, accountants are maintainers of corporate productivity

(revise to “Accountants today help maintain corporate productivity.”)

Cutting two or three unneeded words per sentence does not create dull writing; rather, it

creates tight, easy-to read reports that will be welcomed by busy readers.

Proofread carefully—reading slowly and out loud helps catch things your eye might skip.

**TOPIC SIX: WHAT IS REFERENCING AND WHY SHOULD IT BE USED?**

Academic work demands that you read widely and consider the work of other writers and researchers when you are preparing your essays and other assignments. To use this work without acknowledgement is to steal the ideas of other people and is called **plagiarism.** It is, therefore, very important that you acknowledge these ideas and opinions as belonging to a particular author, as they are considered to be that author’s intellectual property. This procedure is called citing or quoting references. By doing this you are making it possible for readers to locate the source material that you have used. This system of referencing is known as Harvard Referencing System.

The Harvard system consists of three elements:

* Providing the name of the author(s) and the year of publication in text and giving details of where to find the reference in a separate cited reference list.

27

* Providing an additional list, bibliography, of any additional list to highlight the breadth and depth of a student’s preparatory work.

Therefore, you may need to produce two separate lists, a cited reference list and a bibliography, in addition to the brief citation made within the body of the essay. The system varies slightly for books and journal articles and there are some more complicated instances such as websites and government reports. You should always provide references in the following cases:

* Direct quotations from another source.
* Paraphrased text which you have rewritten and /or synthesized but have based on someone else’s work.
* Information derived from other studies
* Statistical information.
* Theories and ideas derived from other authors.
* Interpretations of events or evidence derived from other sources.
* Facts which are not common knowledge

Consistency and accuracy are important. The same set of rules should be followed every time you cite a reference. This guide tries to explain what to do, and is arranged in two sections:

A, Citations in the text.

B. Listing references in the bibliography and cited reference list.

**Section A: Citations in the Text**

All statements, opinions, conclusions and so on taken from another writer’s work should be acknowledged, whether the work is directly quoted, paraphrased or summarized.

In the Harvard system there are some general guidelines for citing references in the text;

**Quotations**

* As a general rule in the university, if the quote is less than a line it may be included in the body of the text in quotation marks.

28

* Longer quotations are indented and single-spaced. Quotation marks are not required.
* For citations of particular parts of the document the page numbers etc. should be given after the year in parentheses ( e.g., Zambian Bureau of standards 2011)
* Summaries or paraphrases- Give the citation where it occurs naturally or at the end of the relevant piece of writing, page numbers are not required.
* Diagrams, illustrations -these should be referenced as though they were a quotation if they have been taken from published work a published work.
* Page numbers- if details of particular parts of a document are required, for example Page numbers, they should be given after the year within the parentheses.
* Electronic Sources-Rules for citation in text for printed documents also apply to electronic documents except where pagination is absent. If an electronic document does not include pagination or an equivalent internal referencing system, the extent of the item may be indicated in terms such as the total number of lines, screens, etc., for example” [35 lines]” or [approximately 12 screens]”

**Cited publications are referred to in the text by giving author’s surname and year of publication in one of the forms shown below:**

1. If the author ‘s name occurs naturally in the sentence the year is given in parentheses

Note: if you use a quotation you must include the page number/s. If you referring to a study as a whole then page numbers are unnecessary.

Examples:

* In a popular study Harvey (1992) argued that we have to teach good practices…
* As Harvey (1992 p.27) aid, Good practices must be taught”, and so we…

29

1. **If the name does not occur naturally in the sentence, both name and year are given in parentheses**.

Examples:

* A more recent study (Stevens.1998) has shown the way theory and practical work interact.
* Theory rises out of practice, and once validated, returns to direct or explain the practice’ (Stevens, 1998, p, 468).

1. When an author has published more than one cited document in the same year these are distinguished by adding lower case letters (a, b, c, etc.) after the year and within the parentheses

Example

* Johnson (1994a, p31) discussed the subject.

1. **If there are two authors the surnames of both should be given**

**Examples**

* Mathews and Jones (1997) have proposed that…
* Weir and Kendrick (1995, p88) state that “networking is no longer solely within the male domain…”

1. **If there are more than two authors the surname of the first author only should be given followed by et al**

Example

* Office costs amount to 20% of total costs in most businesses (Wilson et al 1997)
* Wilson et al. (1997) concluded that office costs….

Note: A full listing of names should appear in the bibliography (see section B)

1. **If you refer to an author of a chapter in an edited book, the surname of the chapter author is given with the year.**

30

Example

* Describing the requirements of occupational therapy Yerxa (1983) indicated that

**Note:** Section B describes how this should be referred to in the bibliography.

1. **If you are citing more than one reference at the same place in the text, they should be listed in chronological date order, with the earliest first.**

Example

* Isaac (1988), Jones (1994) and Atkinson et al (1996) inform us that….

1. **If the work is anonymous then “Anon” should be used.**

Example

* In a recent article (Anon, 1998) it was stated that…

1. **If it is a reference to a newspaper article with no author the name of the paper can be used in place of “Anon”**

Example

* More people than ever seem to be using retail home delivery (THE TIMES OF ZAMBIA, Tuesday, 10th May 2009, p3)

**Note:** You should use the same style in the bibliography.

1. If you refer to a source quoted in another source you cite both in the text.

Example:

* A study by Smith (1960 cited in Jones 1994, p24) showed that….

**Note:** You should list only the work you have read, in this case Jones, in the bibliography.

1. **If you refer to a contributor in a source you cite just the contributor**

31

Example

* According to Bantz software development has been the cornerstone in this industry (1995, p99).

**Note:** See section B for an explanation of how to list contributions (chapters in books, articles in journals, papers in conference proceedings) in the bibliography.

1. **If you refer to a person who has not produced a work, or contributed to one , but who is quoted in someone else’s work it is suggested that you should mention the person’s name and cite the source author.**

**Examples**

* **Richard Hammond stressed the part psychology plays in an interview with Marshall (1999).**
* **In recent article by Marshall, Richard Hammond said” Advertising will always play on people’s desires”, (1999, p67).**

**Note:** You should list the work that has been published, in this case Marshall, in the bibliography.

**Section B: Listing References in both the bibliography and cited reference list**

**Books**

1. **A book by a single author:**

Recognised format:

Author’s Surname initials. (Year of publication) Title, Edition (if not the first), Place of publication: Publisher

Examples:

* Charles, E.A. (1986) stress management, London: Souvenir Press.
* Fonteyn, D. (1985) Classroom control, London: Methuen/ British Psychological society.

32

* Torkildesen,G. (2005) Leisure and recreation management,5th Ed..London: Rutledge
* Gottfried, R.S (1983) The Black Death: Natural and human disaster in Medieval Europe” London: Macmillan.

1. **A book by two authors:**

Note: You should not use the abbreviation, “et al.” (= etalii =and others) in the full reference. But you should use it in brief in text references.

Recognised format

1st Author’s surname, first name initials, 2nd Author’s surname, first name initials. (Year of publication) Title, Edition (If not the first), place of publication: Publisher.

Examples

* Burns, N and Grove, S.K. (1997) the practice of nursing research: Conduct, critique and utilization,3rd Ed., London: Saunders.
* Ponton, G. and Gill, P. (1993) Introduction to Politics, 3rd ed., Blackwell.
* Mercer, P.A and smith, G. (1993) Private view-data in the UK, 2nd ed., London: Longman.
* Grey, H and Freeman, A (1988) teaching with stress, London: Chapman.

1. **A book by more than two authors**

**Note**: You should not use the abbreviation, “et al” (=etalii=) and others in the full reference. But you should use it in brief in-text references.

Recognised format

1st Author’s surname, first name initials, 2nd Author’s surname, first name initials, and the author’s surname, first name initials. (Year of publication) Title, Edition (if not the first) place of publication: Publisher.

33

Examples:

* Hall, C.M., Timothy, D.J and Duval, D.T. (2004) Safety and security in tourism: Relationships management and marketing, Binghamton: Haworth.
* Tesson, M.,Degenhardt, L and Hall,W.(2002) addictions, Hove: Psychology Press.

1. **An edited book**

Recognised Format:

1st Author’s Surname, First name initials and 2nd author’s name initials. eds (year of publication) Title, Edition (if not the first), place of publication: publisher.

Examples:

* Basford, L. and Slevin,O eds., (1995) Theory and practice of nursing and integrated approach to patient care, Edinburgh: Campion
* Sign, B.R. ed. (1994) Improving gender and ethnic relations: strategies for school and further education, London: Cassell.

1. **A chapter from an edited book**

Recognized format

Contributing author’s Surname, initials. (Year of publication) Title of contribution, followed by In: surname and initials of editor(s) of publication by ed. Or eds. If relevant Tile of book, place of publication: Publisher, page number(s) of contribution.

Examples:

* Bantz, C.R (1995) Social dimensions of software development, In: Anderson, J.A. ed. Annual review of software management and development, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp502-510.
* Weir, P. 1995) Clinical practice development role: a personal reflection, In: Kendrick, K, Weir and Rosser,E eds, Innovations in nursing practice, London: Edward Arnold.p5-22

34

* Ofee, C. and Ronge, V. (1982) Thesis on the theory of the state, In: Giddens, A. and held. eds classes, Power and Conflict, Basingstone, Macmillan, pp74-98.
* Forster D. (1995) Setting for health promotion, In: Pike, S. and Forster, D. eds. Health promotion for all, Livingstone, Edinburgh: Churchill, pp143-155.

**Journal articles**

1. **Printed journal**

Recognised format

Author’s surname, initials. (year of periodical issue in which article appeared) Full title of article, full title of journal, volume (issue if available), page numbers of whole article, including its notes and references)

**Note:** some journals do not specify an issue number, in these instances use the volume followed by the date shown on the journal.

Examples:

* Evans, W.A (1994) approaches intelligent information retrieval. Information processing and management,7(2), pp147-168.
* Michelson, L. and Wood,R. (1980) Behavioural assessment and training of children’s social skills. Progress in behaviour modification, Vol.9, August 1980, pp242-292.
* Stroud, L (2005) MMR-public policy in crisis: Whose tragedy? Journal of health organization and management, 19 (3), pp252-260.

1. **Online Journal**
2. **Accessed via online database**

Recognised Format:

Author surname, initial. (year) Tile of article. Journal title, Volume (issue), pages if given source: Data base [online], Volume, (issue), location within host (pages), Available from:<URL of document > [Accessed date].

35

Examples:

* Byrd-Bredbenner, C, Wong, A.& Cotte, P.(2000)Consumer understanding of US and EU nutrition labels. British Food journal,103(8), pp615-629, Source: Emerald Full text [online].
* Redman, G.M. (1997) LPN-BSN: education,36(3), pp121-7.Source: CINAHL[online].

1. **accessed via a website**

Recognised format:

Author Surname, Initial. (Year) Title of article, journal title [online], Volume, (issue),  location within host(pages),Available from:<URL of document>[Accessed date].

Examples:

-Caspsi, A. & Gorsky, P. (2006) online deception: prevalence, motivation and emotion. Cyber-Psychology and Behaviour, [online],9/1, pp 46-53. Available from: <http://www.liebertonline.com/toc/cpb/9/1>[Accessed 5 July 2006].

-Martin, E. W. (1996) The legislative and litigation history of special education, the Future of children[online],6

**Activities**

1. Briefly discuss the circumstances under which the use of written communication in an organization becomes necessary?

2. Differentiate information from business reports?

36

**UNIT 3: SPOKEN COMMUNICATION**

Our lives depend largely on **verbal communication**. From the moment we wake up in the morning until the evening and we go to bed, we need to communicate. We need to communicate in order for us to be understood by others, convey our feelings and emotions as well as our thoughts, we need to communicate to understand other people and the things that surround us, and most importantly, we need to communicate in order to survive.

**Introduction**

In this unit students will learn about spoken communication, the need to communicate, and public speaking and major requirements for public speaking

**Learning outcomes:**

At the end of this Unit, students should be able to:

* 1. Understand what is meant by spoken communication
  2. Differentiate spoken communication from written communication
  3. Appreciate the importance of spoken communication within the corporate environment
  4. Know the importance of public speaking within the corporate environment

**TOPIC ONE: SPOKEN COMMUNICATION**

Spoken communication includes informal staff meetings, planned conferences, and mass meetings. Voice and delivery are important. Informal talks are suitable for day-to-day liaison, directions, exchange or information, progress reviews, and the maintenance of effective interpersonal relations. Planned appointments are appropriate for regular appraisal review and recurring joint work sessions. Planning for an appointment includes preparing, bringing adequate information, and limiting interruptions. Telephone calls are used for quick check-ups and for imparting or receiving information.

37

Verbal communication is the most obvious form of communication. However, research has shown that people pay much less attention to the words that are said and much more attention to the actions and non-verbal cues that accompany those words. Non-verbal cues include facial expressions, use of hand motions, body posture and eye movements. Leaders should strive to always match their non-verbal cues to their words; when they do so, they are more believable and trustworthy.

Hence, knowing the importance of effective communication is the same way as knowing the importance of living. Since communication is vital of being alive, we need to fully understand how to communicate effectively to live peacefully with our peers and deal with the rest of the world.

From whatever perspective you view it, the art of communication has become one of the crafts that were mastered by mankind. Being the most sophisticated creature ever lived, humans need to master the art of communication in order to adapt to the world he is living. From the nomads down to the contemporary people, communication has played an important role for their survival.

However, in today’s society, where man-made gadgets tend to create a gap between men and his peers, communication seems to be a lesser priority. With gadgets on hand, people tend to cling on high technology gadgets as replacement for spoken communication. With cellular phones, tablets, computers, facebook, and other latest trends that create a gap between men’s communication channel, communication is on the verge of collapsing.

Regardless of the mode and means of communication, surviving today’s competitive environments remains to be the top reason why people have to communicate. And regardless of either it is through different modalities, nothing can replace communication.

However, since the importance of communication has been discussed, the next question would be how to develop effective communication.

You need to evaluate the content of your message and edit your remarks for clarity and consciousness as you would for any business.

## 38

## TOPIC TWO: THE NEED TO COMMUNICATE

Whether you like it or not, we need to communicate—that is something that cannot be disputed. We need it to effectively function as civilized human beings. Thus, it is of great concern that people should know ways on how to effectively communicate verbally.

Vocabulary or the ability to use a stored word in a context of a sentence is one of the most important points. One must know how to develop or enhance his/her communication. Without a good grasp of words and not knowing how and when to use them, one can’t effectively communicate verbally or even in writing.

Knowing where, when, how, and what word to use is the basic thing that one must develop to improve one’s communication skills. It is true to all types of communication. A proper application of the word on the proper occasion is the key to effective communication. Expanding your vocabulary can help you enhance your communication skills.

Since communication is universal, it is not exclusive to a certain language, speakers or even race. People who speak whatever language need to communicate—that’s a universal fact.

There are different exercises that have proven effective in enhancing one’s vocabulary skills. Different vocabulary enhancing exercises vary from depending on the level of one’s language proficiency and vocabulary. There are actually several means of enhancing communication skills that one can work on.

Since communication is a very important ingredient to this civilized world, many still don’t fully understand how important communication is. More often than not, all problems in the world are caused by poor communication. Either on the part of the one who is speaking or the receiving end, two channels must work equally to meet the end point.

From the personal level, almost all problems in the family are rooted from a poor way of communicating between the family members. A problem within a family can be amplified by lack of communication or too much of it. 39

Anything that is too much and too little is harmful so it is in communication. As regards the professional level, most conflicts within a workplace are caused by either a poor communication or an absence of it.

Verbal or spoken communication includes informal staff meetings, planned conferences, and mass meetings. Voice and delivery are important. Informal talks are suitable for day-to-day liaison, directions, exchange or information, progress reviews, and the maintenance of effective interpersonal relations. Planned appointments are appropriate for regular appraisal review and recurring joint work sessions. Planning for an appointment includes preparing, bringing adequate information, and limiting interruptions. Telephone calls are used for quick check-ups and for imparting or receiving information.

**TOPIC THREE: PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Presentations include public speaking of all kinds (such as speaking at political rallies, at trade union meetings, in parliaments, addressing different groups of people on varied occasions, or undertaking similar speaking engagements), as well as presentation of commodities and services by salesmen and service providers to potential customers and clientele at sales promotion gatherings. The topics on which people can speak are so varied that, in a general treatment of the kind which we are offering here, only the broad principles guiding public speaking as a whole can be covered.

A writer whose identity I can no longer trace has treated this topic very extensively, and I am, with gratitude, borrowing very considerably from him/her. The topic can be adequately covered under the different sub-headings used below.

**Major Requirements for Successful Public Speaking**

The key to effective speaking consists of the following actions: -

(i) controlling nervousness; (ii) thorough preparation, and (iii) good delivery.

**a) Controlling Nervousness**

It is to be noted that a reasonable amount of nervousness (which really means worry about, and concern for success) produces a positive effect, but excessive nervousness is harmful and can jeopardize success and, therefore, must be controlled.

40

A number of specific actions should be taken to control nervousness: -

(i) One should practice speaking in public, taking advantage of every opportunity to do so and inviting objective criticism of one’s performance. One can also speak into audiotapes and record oneself on videotapes in order to monitor one’s elocution and carriage and, so, gain courage.

(ii) One must know and master one’s subject thoroughly. All the facts and examples and illustrations required for putting one’s point of view across must be conscientiously collected.

(iii) One must, if possible, know one’s audience – obtain information about the persons expected in the audience and about what they expect to hear from one.

(iv) One must be clear about one’s objective. We have pointed out elsewhere in this course that, while aims are broad statements of intent in any undertaking, objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound.

Ascertainable results expected from an undertaking. One must be sure of such an objective or objectives. One should ensure that everyone leaving the scene goes away with a feeling of satisfaction that he/she has received from the speech a piece or some pieces of information that can contribute to his/her becoming a better performer in a given task, a more knowledgeable person or a better personality as a whole.

(v) As already mentioned, one must prepare. Acquiring general knowledge about a subject is different from making a specific preparation for a speaking engagement. Preparing means of selecting relevant points from one’s general knowledge and building such points into a coherent and logical piece for presentation.

(vi) Finally, one must rehearse the anticipated presentation. Even the best of speakers still need to visualize actually putting across their points while facing the audience, anticipating their reaction and maintaining one’s posture confidently.

**b) Preparation**

An essential factor in efficient preparation is to leave oneself enough time at *two stages* to prepare for a presentation. One of the two stages is what our unnamed writer calls “low pressure” time, i.e., a long enough time from the time of the presentation in which one can think in a relaxed manner without much anxiety about the subject in more or less every place. Then, one must leave oneself enough time for the second stage of the preparation, i.e., the specific preparation of the presentation.

41

For this second stage, some writers have identified eight stages, namely: -

(i) Accepting the invitation to talk: Because one has ideas on the subject or, at least, can generate or gather such ideas from accessible sources.

(ii) Informing oneself on the subject: By collecting facts and arguments from all available sources for one’s talk from many sources and writing such points down as they occur without undue concern about organizing the points at this stage.

(iii) Determining the substance of one’s presentation: By one’s defining of one’s objectives: is it to inform, persuade, interest or inspire?

(iv) Structuring the talk: The classic method of structuring a talk is recognised to be: - (i) tell them what you are going to say; (ii) say it, and (iii) tell them what you said. That means that one should give an introduction or overview of what one is going to cover in a presentation, then, make the presentation and review, revise or summarize what one has said.

The rule taught in school that an essay should have a beginning, middle and an end should also apply to a talk. The handling of these different parts should proceed as follows: -

(i) Tackle the middle of the talk first, adopting the following procedure: -

1. Write the main messages on separate postcards, an approach which will prevent you from displaying slavish dependence on your text.

2. List against each main message the points to be made on it.

3. Illustrate the points with facts, evidence, example, introducing local colour into the presentation.

4. Arrange the cards in the appropriate sequence for achieving impact and a logical flow of ideas.

(ii) Now, one turns to the opening of the presentation. The objectives in the opening are to win attention, arouse interest and inspire confidence. The following procedure should be adopted: -

1. Give the audience, so to speak, “a trailer” to what one is going to say.

2. Underline the main objective of your presentation, i.e., the main message being passed on.

(iii) Finally, one thinks about the end of the presentation, remembering that first and last impressions are very important. Therefore, one should end on a high note.

(iv) In general, with regard to structuring the presentation, one should think carefully about length, reinforcement and continuity. Therefore, the following considerations should guide one:

42

1. Never talk for more than forty minutes at a time. Indeed, twenty or thirty minutes is better. Few speakers can keep people’s attention for too long. An audience is usually keen at the beginning (unless one muddles up the beginning), but its interest wanes steadily until they realize that the speaker is approaching the end and they pick up interest again. This is why the conclusion is very important.

**Activities:**

1. What is spoken communication?
2. Differentiate between spoken and written communication.
3. What is the significance of public speaking in a corporate environment?

43

**UNIT 4: ROUTINE VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

**Introduction**

In this unit you learn about verbal communication, routine verbal communication, listening skills, vocabulary, etc.

**Learning outcomes:**

At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Define verbal communication

2. Understand the importance of effective listening

3. Appreciate the value of vocabulary to verbal communication

4. Know the importance of routine verbal communication to proper functioning of an organizations

**TOPIC ONE: VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Although you can express many things nonverbally, there are limits to what you can communicate without the help of language. If you want to discuss past events, ideas, or abstraction, you need symbols that stand for your thoughts. Verbal communication consists of words arranged in meaningful patterns. To create a thought with these words, you arrange them according to the rules of grammar, putting the various parts of speech in the proper sequence. You then transmit the message in spoken or written form, anticipating that someone will hear or read what you have say.

**Merits**

Given a choice, people would rather talk to each other than write to each other. Talking takes less time and needs no composing, keyboarding, rewriting, duplicating, or distributing.

44

Even more important, oral communication provides the opportunity for feedback. When people communicate orally, they can ask questions and test their understanding of the messages; they can share ideas and work together to solve problems.

**Demerits**

Nonetheless, oral communication has its drawbacks. You have far less opportunity to revise your spoken words than to revise your written words. You cannot cross out what you just said and start all over. Furthermore, at times written forms, such as letters, memos, reports, and proposals, are more appropriate and effective: when the information you are conveying is very complex, when a permanent record is needed for future reference, when the audience is large and geographically dispersed, and when immediate interaction with the audience is either unimportant or undesirable.

**The Value of Oral Business Communication**

This is self-evident. Evans (1983:147) calls face-to-face communication the “oxygen” in the life-blood of business and public service organizations. New telecommunications inventions – valuable as they are – cannot be a substitute for the warmth and efficacy of people’s talking and reacting in close, direct contact.

We may note its other more specific advantages:

1. This medium best provides interactors with “a total impression” in a way that written communication or a telephone conversation cannot. This impression emanates from both what is being said and the whole manner of a person’s delivery, including non-verbal communication factors.

2. The medium permits instant feedback because it provides the means and opportunities for asking snap questions for clarification of points and, sometimes, for obtaining prompt answers.

3. In face-to-face communication, many “tools” of communication work in concert: intonation of the voice; facial expression; gesture; posture; movement, etc., all of which help to provide a fuller and more accurate indication of the import of a message.

**Characteristics of Oral Communication**

The characteristics of oral communication refer to levels of formality (itself determined by many factors) with which a piece of communication is carried out.

45

Those factors which determine the level of formality of oral communication include the following: • degrees of familiarity between/among those involved;

• nature of the subject;

• the occasion or context of the communication;

• type of relationship between the interactors (business, social, etc.)

The degree of formality itself determines the type of language that is employed, i.e., the level of formality or informality of language to be employed. (Custom and common practice should guide behaviour here). We need not go into the details of informal language which, I believe, students should have learnt in their other language courses.

**Guides to Effective Inter-personal Communication**

**Articulation (Pronunciation*):*** Variations in pronunciation are many, arising either from personal habits or from localization of English forms. Avoiding artificialisation and “snobbish” dogmatism, one’s need is for one’s speech to be understood, not just by a close circle of friends and family members, but by people from geographically distant national regions and even from other countries.

**Accentuation:** Accent strictly refers to the raising of the voice in speech at a syllable or whole word to indicate a natural stress or a deliberate one to mark emphasis (today; ascend; manifest; manifest). However, it is also often used generally to refer to modulation or tone of voice or modes of utterance characteristic of a region, social class or an individual. Accentuation indicates “polish” in use of English, but artificialisation is more offending than a natural (even though a poorly accentuated) speech pattern.

**Projection*:*** This refers to making oneself heard, especially in a large gathering, but even in a close conversation, it is important to avoid torturing the ears of your listeners.

Evans (1984:148-149) offers additional guides for effective inter-personal communication.

**Routine Oral Communication (e.g., in Offices, Shops, etc)**

Routine and communication in offices and similar places refers to the use of the social greetings (good morning, good afternoon, etc.), use of deferential words (*Sir*, etc.), and receiving people in offices, referring to people in their presence, and making requests and giving instructions.

46

We cannot discuss these here because, again, I hope that students have learnt something about these in their other English Language courses.

**TOPIC TWO: LISTENING SKILLS**

People spend more time receiving information than transmitting it. Listening and reading are every bit as important as speaking and writing. Most of us are not good listeners. A major reason is that we are distracted by a number of challenges in the workplace.

**Verbal Communication** bridges the gap between men and without it, life can be tough and chaotic. Language is made up of words and grammar. Most people would rather talk than write. Spoken words are more difficult to revise than written ones. The ability to listen is a virtual skill in business.

Teams using information technology have access to information, share knowledge, and construct documents. Meetings take place electronically from multiple locations, saving the organization's resources in both the expenses of physically bringing people from different locations together, and the time lost by employees traveling. Teleconferencing is simultaneous group verbal exchanges. Videoconferencing is group verbal and visual exchanges.

**TOPIC THREE: VOCABULARY**

From whatever perspective you view it, the art of communication has become one of the crafts that were mastered by mankind. Being the most sophisticated creature ever lived, humans need to master the art of communication in order to adapt to the world he/she is living in. From the nomads down to the contemporary people, communication has played an important role for their survival.

Regardless of the mode and means of communication, surviving today’s competitive environments remains to be the top reason why people have to communicate. And regardless of either it is through different modalities, nothing can replace communication.

47

However, since the importance of communication has been discussed, the next question would be how to develop effective communication.

Vocabulary or the ability to use a stored word in a context of a sentence is one of the most important points that one must know on how to develop or enhance your communication. Without a good grasp of words and don’t know how and when to use them, you can’t effectively communicate verbally or even in written.

**Meetings, Conferences, Seminars**

Preparing for meetings

* Select participants
* Chose an appropriate location
* Set and follow an agenda

Conducting and participating in meeting

* Keep the meeting on track
* Follow procedure
* Encourage participation
* Close effectively
* Follow up

**Meetings** are of several types: committee meeting, management meeting, annual general meeting, and departmental meeting

Minutes are a written record of what transpired**.** Meetings could be electronic. For any meeting there should be a secretary and chairman. The secretary records the proceedings of a meeting. The chairman controls the meeting. Participation should be encouraged. The meeting should keep to the agenda. Minutes should have a date and time meeting ended and started. Venue should also be indicated.

48

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* Follow procedure
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* Follow up

Meetings are of several types: committee meeting, management meeting, annual

**MINUTES**

**Planning Committee Meeting**

**Monday 1stNovember 2021**

**PRESENT**

**ABSENT**

**THE BODY**

Have an agenda. An example of agenda

49

1. Chairman’s opening remarks

2. Apologies

3. Approval of agenda

4. Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting

5. Matters arising

6.Progress on assignments

7. Report

8. Any other Business

The date of the next meeting should be decided. Minutes should be brief but comprehensive. You do not have to write all the debate just indicate what was resolved after the debate. Avoid using names of person if a sensitive matter is involved. Say the meeting decided. After all it is the views of the members that matter. The secretary and chairman should sign the minutes and date them.

**Activities**

* 1. What is routine verbal communication?
  2. Why is efficient listening important in relation to verbal communication?
  3. Discuss the merits and demerits of verbal communication.

50

**UNIT 5: FOUNDATIONS OF WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION**

**Introduction**

This unit introduces you to Communication in business setting, Internal and external communication, organizational formal and informal communication, benefits of communication and characteristics of business messages.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of this unit students will be able to:

1. Understand what communication in business setting entails.

2. Distinguish between internal and external communication

3. Understand the organizational formal and informal communication network

4. Know the benefits of business communication and its characteristics

* 1. Appreciate the importance of effective communication in a workplace

Communication enables organizations to function. Achieving success in today’s workplace is closely tied to the ability of employees and managers to communicate effectively with each other and with people outside the organizations.

Major developments in the workplace that are intensifying the needs to communicate effectively include the following:

* Advances in technology e.g. internet, email, voicemail, fax, pager, wireless devices
* Globalization and culturally diverse workforce: crossing national boundaries to compete on a global scale.
* Team bases organization: the command-and-control style of traditional management structure is ineffective in today’s environment.

**51**

**TOPIC ONE: COMMUNICATION IN A BUSINESS SETTING**

Communication can be either your best friend or your worst enemy. It will improve your overall workplace culture. Another positive is that good solid organizational communication eliminates barriers and resolves problems while at the same time building stronger workplace relationships for increased productivity.

There are many potential problems that can be caused by poor communication skills. For example, increased amount of employee turnover, high amounts of call outs, poor customer service skills, diminished productivity and the lack of focus. These are just to name a few.

So why does poor communication in the workplace cause these issues. Some surveys and discussions have acknowledged that lack of information is a cause.

**Business ethics in the workplace** and **poor workplace behaviour ethics** can be directly related to ineffective communications. Understanding ethics in the workplace and workplace behaviour ethics is the all important first step.

As you exchange information with people inside and outside the organization, you use a variety of forms of communication such as internal communication and external communication.

**TOPIC TWO: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

**Internal Communication**

Internal communication refers to the exchange of information and ideas within an organization. As an employee you are in a position to observe things that your superior and co-workers cannot see: a customer first’s first reaction to a product display, a supplier’s brief hesitation before agreeing to a delivery date, an odd noise in the flow of customer. Manager and co-workers need the information in order to do their jobs. Information can be exchanged internally by phone, email, fax, memo, and intranet. Internal communication help employees do their jobs, develop a sense of the organization mission.

52

**External Communication**

External communication carries it into and out of the organizations. Companies constantly exchange messages with customers, vendors, distributors, competitors, investors, and community representatives. Sometimes this external communication is carefully orchestrated –especially during a crisis. At other times it occurs informally as part of routine business operations.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Internal** | **External** |
|  | Planned communication among insiders (letters, reports, memos, e-mail) that follows the company’s chain of command | Planned communication with outsiders  (letters, reports, memos, speeches, websites, and news release) |
|  | Casual communication among employees(e-mail, face –to-face conversations, and phone calls that do not follow the company’s chain of command | Casual communication with suppliers, customers, investors and other outsiders (face-to- face conversations, email and phone calls) |

Adopted from Bovee, et.al, 2006

Managers’ ability to communicate effectively increases productivity. With good communication skills, you can anticipate problems, make decisions, coordinate workflow, supervise others, develop relationships and promote products and services. You can shape the impressions you and your company make on colleagues, employees, supervisors, investors and customers in addition to receiving and responding to the needs of stakeholders. Without effective communication, people misunderstand each other and misinterpret information. Ideas misfire or fail to gain attention and people and companies flounder or stumble. Studies show that 14% of our work time is wasted because of poor communication between staff and management.

53

**TOPIC THREE: ORGANIZATIONAL FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION**

Formal communication is typically vertical and follows the authority chain and is limited to task-related communications.

Robbins and Judge (2011) observe that formal channels are established by the organizations and transmit messages related to the professional activities of the members. They follow the authority chain within an organization.

Though there are exceptions, written communication is the common choice when the level of formality between two parties is high, e.g. when dealing with customers, formal communication is used such as contracts, sales agreement and account information. (MTD training, 2010).

**Formal communication network**

The formal communication network shows an organization chart. Chart summarizes the lines of authority; a link in the chain of command and a forward channel for transmission of official messages. Information travel down, up and across an organization’s formal hierarchy.

**Informal communication network**

Every organization has an informal communication network – a grapevine that supplements official channel. People have casual conversation. About 80% of the information that travels along the grapevine pertains to business.

**Downward communication**

Organizations’ decisions are usually made at the top and then flow down to the people who will carry them out. Most of what filters downward is geared towards helping employees do their jobs. From top to bottom each person must understand each message, apply it and pass it along.

54

**Upward communication**

To solve problems and make intelligent decisions managers must learn what is going on in the organization. They cannot be everywhere and so they depend on lower-level employees to furnish them with accurate timely reports on problems, emerging trends, opportunities for improvement, grievances and performance.

**Horizontal Communication**

Horizontal communication flows from one department to another either laterally or diagonally. The horizontal communication helps employees share information and coordinate tasks and it is specifically useful for solving complex and difficult problems.

**Informal communication network**

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**Formal external communication**

Companies use external communications e.g. letter, website, fax, internet, videotape to create a favourable impression. The way a company handles a crisis can have a profound effect on the organization’s subsequent performance.

**Informal external communication**

Informal contacts with outsiders are important for learning about customer needs. Every employee informally accumulates facts and impressions that contribute to the organizations’ collective understanding of the outside world. Much of the top management gathering of information involves networking. Opportunities must be created by talking with anybody getting feedback from customers and employees. Receiving feedback is a key phase of the communication process.

55

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**Formal organization networks** can be complicated. There are three common small group networks identified. These are the chain, the wheel and the all–channel.

The chain rigidly follows the formal chain of command. This is usually between a manager and a subordinate. The wheel relies on a central figure to act as conduit for all communication. This is often found and used in a team with a strong team leader. The all-channel permits all group members to actively communicate with each other. This is usually used by the problem-solving task team, where all members are free to contribute.

**Networks and Effective Criteria**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Small** | **Group** | **Networks** |
| **Criteria** | **Chain** | **Wheel** | **All-Channel** |
| Speed | Moderate | Fast | Fast |
| Accuracy | High | High | Moderate |
| Emergency of a leader | Moderate | High | None |
| Member satisfaction | Moderate | Low | High |

56

Adapted from Robbins and Judge 2011

**Informal communication network**

The informal communication network in an organization is called the grapevine. It is free to move in any direction, skip authority levels, and is likely to satisfy the group member’s social needs. Though it is formal, it is an important source of information. Research findings found that 75% of the employees get their information from the grape vine first and that about 75% of the information flowing through the grapevine is accurate.

**The Grapevine**

|  |
| --- |
| **Three Main Grape Characteristics:**   1. Informal, not controlled by management 2. Perceived by most employees as being more believable and reliable than formal communications    1. Largely used to serve the self-interests of those who use it   **The grapevine results from:**   * 1. Desire for information about important situations   2. Ambiguous conditions   3. Conditions that cause anxiety   **The grapevine give useful insights to managers**  **The grapevine serves employee’s social needs** |

***Adapted from Robbins and Judge, 2011***

57

The grapevine has three characteristics; it is not controlled by management, most employees perceive it to be more reliable than formal communication from management and it is used to serve the interests of people within (Robbins and Judge, 2011).

Rumours in an organization emerge because of situations that are important to employees, where there is ambiguity, and under conditions which arouse anxiety. The secrecy surrounding many organization decisions explains why rumours flourish in the organizations.

**TOPIC FOUR: BENEFITS OF COMMUNICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS MESSAGES**

**Benefits of effective communication**

These include the following:

* + - - Quick problem solving
    - - Stronger decision making
    - - Steadier workflow
    - - Increased productivity
    - - Stronger business relationships
    - - Clearer promotional materials
    - - Improved stakeholder response

**Characteristics of effective business messages;**a**) Provide practical information**: business communication usually describe how to do something, explain why a procedure was changed, highlight the cause of a problem or a possible solution, discuss the status of a project or explain why a new piece of equipment should be purchased.

**b) Give facts rather than impressions.** Business messages use concrete language and specific details. Information must be clear, convincing, accurate and ethical.

58

You must present hard evidence.

**c) Clarify and condense information**: business messages frequently use tables, charts, photos or diagrams to clarify or condense information, to explain a process or to emphasize important information.

**d) State precisely the responsibilities**. Business messages are directed to a specific audience

**e) Persuade others and offer recommendations**. Business messages frequently persuade employers, customers or clients to purchase a product or service or adopt a plan of action. To be effective persuasive, messages must show readers how a product, service or idea will benefit them specifically.

**TOPIC FIVE: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN WORKPLACE**

**Business ethics in the workplace** and **poor workplace behaviour ethics** can be directly related to ineffective communications. Understanding ethics in the workplace and workplace behaviour ethics is the all important first step.

Effective communication in the workplace plays a prominent role in developing long lasting employee motivation. One of many positive benefits gained from well-established organizational communication is improved relationships. Improving relationships between management and staff is quite important and is often overlooked. Things will go smoothly when everyone is on the same page, understanding of goals and the direction a company is going. The best process of communicating here is well thought out emails that follow the chain of command and face to face interactions.

Good communication skills will help you improve time management in the workplace. The ability will exist for you to manage your own time as well as keeping your staff focused on deadlines. Understanding the communication process will open many doors to improve productivity. Read this article on understanding and improving time management in the workplace.

59

Another positive result is that employees feel important. Many employees have complained about how they are just a number. Providing a little feeling and personality to emails will reverse this complaint. Use this technique when providing recognition or when it involves a sensitive issue. Express your concerns about their feelings and they will feel important. Face to face interactions work best here, though email communicating is also considered effective.

**Barriers to Effective Business Communication**

There are **barriers to effective business communications**. Removing those barriers will improve your ability to motivate workers. Managers must Understand and be able to recognize barriers that hurt the communication process. This is another positive result of proper communication in the workplace. Some of the common barriers include:

* **Not Listening**

One of the most common barriers to communication is poor listening skills. So why does not listening happen? Well, there are a few reasons. You may have no involvement or concern with the topic. You will then have no desire to take part in the conversation. There also may be distractions. For example, working in an area that is loud and noisy.

Here are a couple more reasons for lack of listening. First there might be differences in opinions regarding the topic. And this is the one I have seen many times. Passive listening instead of taking an active role in it. In this case you are involved in something else at the same time.

* **Making Assumptions**

How many times have you made a decision based on assuming something will happen? Only to find out that it didn't go as planned. We all know that we shouldn't make assumptions. But we still do it anyway. Assumptions a lot of times will be made to speed up a process or task.

60

Assumptions are made to cut corners and save time by ignoring the path of communication. The major problem with making assumptions is that 9 times out of 10 it doesn't work out. Also, by making assumption you will likely miss out on important information.

* **Body language**

Non-verbal signals have the potential to block effective communication in the workplace. Negative body language like waving your hands, raising your arms in discussion and even shaking your head will send negative messages. It is all about interpretation. The impacts of these traits can affect workplace relationships and your willingness to take part in communicating. The best action a leader can take is to understand your own body language.

* **Ineffective Questions**

Quite often people ask questions that lack details. The whole point of asking questions in the first place is to confirm what has been communicated. Asking the right types of questions will provide effective communication in the workplace. Make sure you use open ended questions to get the proper answers you seek. This type of question includes details like who, what, where, when and how.

* **Information Overload**

Many times, effective communication in the workplace is blocked by the overwhelming amount of information. How many times have you seen the same email covering the same information just from a different sender? What ends up happening is that many employees start to ignore those emails. The problem is that some of the emails will have prominent details that were not included in the original document. The best way to avoid this is to provide new emails, just do not cc and forward emails

* **Emotional Distractions**

61

Emotions play a big role in how we approach and accomplish things. Outside factors like a death or illness can keep your mind out of focus. Sometimes a listener may interpret a communicator as angry. This in turn will make the listener react in a negative light.

The same happens if the communicator message is interpreted to be positive. The listener will like the message and listen closely.

* **Conflicting Messages**

Communication can be sometimes conflicting and this will cause the communication process to breakdown. Inconsistent body language tells the story of one thing, but the message discussed is different. This will create confusion for the receiver of the message. The resulting confusion may lead to the message being ignored.

* **Physical Barriers**

This might be the most common type of barrier that blocks the communication process. Anything that can physically distract you is part of this barrier. Some examples like temperatures, phones, or even the building itself can be a distraction.

* **Perception**

There has always been one consistent with communication in the workplace. That one consistent is called perceptional barriers. The main problem with perception is that we all look at the world differently. One way to avoid perceptional barriers is to remember there are other views, points and opinions. Also keep your mind open to new ideas and approaches from these viewpoints. You never know when there's a good idea on the horizon.

* **Cultural**

Dealing with different cultures can sometimes be difficult to navigate. Many times it is a difference in approach or a process of doing things.

62

All cultures have different beliefs and customs. They often can clash and build up walls that negatively affect the communication process.

* **Language**

Differences in languages that are spoken in the workplace can affect your ability to communicate. Words can be misunderstood and misconstrued that in turn can cause negative communication barriers.

* **Workplace Stress**

Dealing with stress in this day and age is a 24/7 activity. It shouldn't be a surprise of its strong effect on the communication in the workplace. The results of stress on employees can range from change in attitudes, lack of focus and even calling out. These issues can lead to missing deadlines, decreased productivity and weakened communication between employees. Understanding the ins and outs of stress management in the workplace can provide you ways to handle workplace stress.

**Activities:**

1. Differentiate between internal and external communication

2. Explain the major causes of communication breakdown in a workplace.

63

**UNIT 6: RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS**

**Introduction**

In this unit, you will learn about how to define and prepare a resume and cover letters.

**Learning outcomes:**

At the end of this unit students should be able to:

* 1. Define a resume and cover letter
  2. Demonstrate enough ability to write a good resume
  3. Appreciate the difference between cover letter and other types of business letters
  4. Demonstrate sufficient ability to write a good cover letter

**TOPIC ONE: RESUME**

A resume is a structured, written summary of a person’s education, employment background and job qualifications. Although several people have misconceptions about resumes, the fact is that a resume is a form of advertising. It is intended to stimulate an employer’s interest in you. A successful resume inspires a prospective employer to invite you to interview with the company. Thus, your purpose in writing your resume is to create –not to tell readers everything about you. In fact, it may be best to only hint at some things and leave the reader wanting more. The potential employer will then have even more reason to contact you (Bovee, 2006).

**Preparing resumes**

While one is looking for employment he or she will need to send out messages such as resumes, application letters, job inquiries and follow-up letters. Whenever you send out such employment messages, you have an opportunity to showcase your communication skills- skills valued highly by majority of employers. So, write these messages carefully by following the three-step writing process illustrated in the figure below:

64

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLANNING** | **WRITING** | **COMPLETING** |
| **Analyze**  Study your purpose and your audience to tailor your message for maximum effect | **Organize**  Use the AIDA approach in letters and choose the most appropriate resume format to highlight your strongest points | **Revise**  Evaluate content, revising for both clarity and conciseness |
| **Investigate**  Gather relevant information about you and the about the employer you are targeting | **Compose**  Make your letters friendly, business like, and slightly more formal than usual. For resumes, use action verbs and make your style direct, brief and crisp | **Produce**  Ensure a clean, sharp look whether your message is printed, e-mail or online |
| **Adapt**  Establish a good relationship by highlighting those skills and qualifications that match each employer |  | **Proof read**  Look carefully for errors, spelling and mechanics that can detract from your professionalism |

**Investigate pertinent information**

To provide all the information your audience will need, gather every scrap of pertinent personal history you can think of including all the specific dates, duties, and accomplishments of any previous jobs you have held. Collect every piece of relevant educational experience that adds to your qualifications, such as formal degrees, skills, certificates, academic awards or scholarships.

65

Also gather any relevant information about your personal endeavours: dates of your membership in an association, any representation, offices you may have held in a club or professional organization, any presentations you might have given to a community group. You will want to have every bit of this information at your fingertips before you begin composing your resume.

**Adapt your resume to your audience**

Because your resume will have little time to make an impression, be sure to adopt a “you” attitude and think about your resume from the employer’s perspective. Ask yourself: What key qualifications will this employer be looking for? What quality would set you apart from other candidates in the eyes of a potential employer? What are three or four of your greatest accomplishments, and what resulted from these accomplishments?

A good resume is flexible and can be customized for various situations and employers. For example, if you are applying for a marketing job at an international company such as Hewlett-Packard, the first skill on your list might be your ability to speak French. However, if you are applying for a sales position at Frito-Lay, the first skill on your list will be probably be your summer job building product displays at a local grocery store. It’s perfectly fine to have several resumes, each tailored for a different type of position or company.

It’s up to you to combine your experiences into a straightforward message that communicates what you can do for your potential employer. Think in terms of an image or theme you would like to project. Are you academically gifted? A campus leader? A well -rounded person? A creative genius? A technical wizard? Do not exaggerate, and do not alter the past or claim skills you do not have. However, do not dwell on negatives, either. By knowing yourself and your audience, you will focus successfully on the strengths needed by potential employers.

**TOPIC TWO: WRITING YOUR RESUME**

To write a successful resume you need to convey seven qualities that employers seek. You want to show that you (1) think in terms of results, (2) know how to get things done, (3) are well rounded, (4) show signs of progress, (5) have personal standard or excellence, (6) are flexible and willing to try new things,

66

(7) possess strong communication skills. As you organize and compose your resume think about how you can convey these seven qualities.

**Organize your resume around your strengths**

Although you may want to include a little information in all categories, emphasize the information that has a bearing on your career objective, and minimize or exclude any that is irrelevant or counterproductive. To interest potential employers in your resume, call attention to your best features and downplay your weaknesses- but be sure you do so without distorting or misrepresenting the facts. Do you have something in your history that might trigger an employer’s red flag? The following are some of the common problems and some quick suggestions for overcoming them:

* Frequent job changes. Group all contact and temporary jobs under one heading if they are similar.
* Gaps in work history. Mention relevant experience and education gained during time gaps, such as volunteer or community work. If gaps are due to personal problems such as drug or alcohol abuse or mental illness, offer honest but general explanations about your absence (e.g. I had serious health concerns and had to take some time off to fully recover).
* Inexperience. Do related volunteer work. List relevant course work and internships. Offer hiring incentives such as “willing to work nights and weekends”.
* Over qualification. Tone down your resume, focusing exclusively on pertinent experience and skills.
* Long-term employment with one company. Itemize each position held at the firm to show “internal mobility “and increased responsibilities. Do not include obsolete skills and jobs.
* Job termination for cause. Be honest with interviewers. Show you are a hardworking employee and counter their concerns with proof such as recommendations and examples of completed projects.

67

* Criminal record. Consider sending out a “broad letter” about your skills and experience, rather than a resume and cover letter. Prepare answers to questions that interviewers will probably pose. (You may wonder whether I will be a trustworthy employee. I would like to offer you a list of references from previous bosses and co-workers who will attest to my integrity. I learned some hard lessons during that difficult time in my life, and now I am fully rehabilitated).

**TOPIC THREE: BUSINESS LETTERS**

* For letters one need to have an inside and outside address
* For letters if you start with Dear Sir or Madam you should end with yours faithfully. If you personalize it and start with Dear David you should end with yours sincerely. The letter should have a subject matter. For some letters you may need a reference. If you are copying other people you should cc. Sometimes you may have to write a letter to the attention of someone.
* Cover letter: these will normally go with a report
* Job application: For job application attach a CV and education certificates
* Other types of letters you may be asked to write in an exam are;
* i. Regret:
* ii Recommendation
* iii. Job offer
* iv. Resignation
* Read more about this from your text book or any communication book.
* Curriculum Vitae is a structured written summary of your education and employment background and shows your qualification for a job. The purpose of the curriculum vitae is to get you an interview. A CV should be neat, simple accurate and honesty. It should have your personal details including address, your qualification and experience and any other extra activities.

68

**UNIT 7: INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE NEEDS: ACCESSING, EVALUATING AND PROCESSING INFORMATION**

**Introduction**

In this unit you will learn about the sources of information, definition of information and what Primary, Secondary and Tertiary sources of information are all about. You will also cover what tacit and explicit information mean**.**

**Learning outcomes:**

At the end of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Identify the sources of information
2. Distinguish among Primary, Secondary and Tertiary sources of information
3. Demonstrate how to access, evaluate and process information
4. Follow the research process of accessing relevant information

**Topic One: Sources of information**

Let us now look at the various sources of information. But before we do that, let us deal with the difference between data and information. Data consists of raw facts or observations. Information is data that has been processed so as to be meaningful. Raw facts may be numerical, quantitative data or qualitative such as records of people opinions explanations of problems. Quality of information may depend on accuracy, timeliness and frequency.

**Primary and Secondary sources**

A **primary source** is first-hand information from a person who witnessed or participated in an event. It may also be scientific data, statistics, or an official transcript of a government proceeding. A secondary source is a description by a person usually not present at the event and relying on primary source documents for information. Secondary sources are usually associated with analyzed and interpreted information.

**69**

**Primary** sources are original, uninterpreted information.  
They contain raw, unprocessed and often unpublished information. They are associated with unedited, first-hand access to words, images, or objects created by persons directly involved in an activity or event or speaking directly for a group. This is information before it has been analyzed, interpreted, commented upon, spun, or re-packaged. Depending upon the context, these may include paintings, interviews, and works of fiction, research reports, sales receipts, speeches, letters, e-mails, and others.

|  |
| --- |
| Primary sources are original materials on which other researches are based. They are usually the first formal appearance of results in the print or electronic literature (for example, the first publication of the results of scientific investigations is a primary source.)  They present information in its original form, neither interpreted nor condensed nor evaluated by other writers. They are from the time period (for example, something written close to when what it is recorded happened. Primary sources present original thinking; report on discoveries, or share new data. |

**Secondary** **sources** bear information which is processed, analyzed, interpreted and usually published. However, the information they contain is more detailed than that which is found in tertiary sources of information. They are associated with commentary upon, or analysis of, events, ideas, or primary data. Because they are often written significantly after events by parties not directly involved but who have special expertise, they may provide historical context or critical perspectives.

**Primary sources** of information allow the learner to access original and unedited information. A primary source requires the learner to interact with the source and extract information. Secondary sources are edited primary sources, second-hand versions. They represent someone else's thinking.

70

Examples of Primary sources include:

* Person
* Interview
* E-Mail contact
* Event
* Discussion
* Debate
* Community meeting
* Survey
* Artifact
* Observation of object (animate and inanimate)
* Documents
* Experiment
* Training
* Workshops
* Suggestion box
* Open Day
* News letter
* Newspapers

Examples of Secondary sources include:

* Text book
* Reports
* Minutes
* Internet
* Project documents
* Documentaries
* Reference Material
* Book
* CD Rom

71

* Encyclopaedia
* Magazine
* Newspaper
* Video Tape
* Audio Tape
* TV

|  |
| --- |
| Scientific journal articles reporting experimental research results   * Proceedings of Meetings, Conferences and Symposia. * technical reports   Dissertations or theses (may also be secondary)  Patents, sets of data, such as census statistics  Works of literature (such as poems and fiction)  Diaries, autobiographies  Interviews, surveys and fieldwork  Letters and correspondence, speeches  Newspaper articles (may also be secondary)  Government documents, photographs and works of art  original documents (such as birth certificate or trial transcripts)  Internet communications on email, and newsgroups Some additional definitions of Secondary Sources: -They describe, interpret, analyze and evaluate the primary sources  -They comment on and discuss the evidence provided by primary sources  -They are works which are one or more steps removed from the event or information they refer to, being written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. 72Additional examples of secondary sources: bibliographies (may also be tertiary)  biographical works, commentaries  dictionaries and encyclopaedias (may also be tertiary)  dissertations or theses (more usually primary)  handbooks and data compilations (may also be tertiary)  history, indexing and abstracting tools used to locate primary & secondary sources (may also be tertiary), journal articles, particularly in disciplines other than science (may also be primary), monographs (other than fiction and autobiography), newspaper and popular magazine articles (may also be primary), review articles and literature reviews textbooks (may also be tertiary), treatises; works of criticism and interpretation  **Primary or Secondary sources**  The examples given below can be either primary or secondary sources depending on the context in which the they exist.   * Internet Web Site * Graph, chart, diagram, table  Tertiary Sources This is the most problematic category of all. Fortunately, you will rarely be expected to differentiate between secondary and tertiary sources. These contain information which is processed and even published. However, the information they contain is less detailed and often scanty and shallow compared to that which is contained in Secondary sources.Some additional definitions of Tertiary Sources:73 Works which list primary and secondary resources in a specific subject area. These are also works which index, organize and compile citations to, and show you how to use secondary (and sometimes primary) sources. materials in which the information from secondary sources has been "digested" - reformatted and condensed, to put it into a convenient, easy-to-read form.  Sources which are once removed in time from secondary sources Some Examples of Tertiary sources: almanacs and fact books  bibliographies (may also be secondary)  chronologies  dictionaries and encyclopaedias (may also be secondary)  directories  guidebooks, manuals etc  handbooks and data compilations *(*may also be secondary)  indexing and abstracting tools used to locate primary & secondary sources (may also be secondary)  textbooks (may also be secondary) |

**TOPIC 2: HOW TO ACCESS, PROCESS AND EVALUATE INFORMATION**

To find and access information you have to locate sources of information. You have to know what to look for. The research process entails:

1. Understanding topic and assignment
2. Find and access information
3. Evaluate and finalize sources

74

1. Process information
2. Analyse data
3. Interpret findings

Information can be accessed from the following sources:

1. Internal and External
2. Primary and secondary
3. Informal and formal

Since we have already discussed what primary, secondary, informal and external sources of information in the preceding sections, here we only briefly discuss what internal and external sources of information are all about.

**Internal and external**

**Internal sources**

Internal sources include:

* Personal
* Colleague
* Library

**External sources**

These include the following sources:

* Consultants and service providers
* Catalogues

Information may be in various forms and modalities including print publication computer files and the World Wide Web (the internet)

**Evaluating credibility of information**

For each piece of material ask the following questions:

-Does the source have a reputation for honesty and reliability?

75

-Is the source potentially biased?

-What is the purpose of the material?

-Is the author credible?

-Where did the source get its information?

-Can you verify the material independently?

-Is the material current?

-Do the source’s claims stand up to scrutiny?

**Processing Information**

This briefly involves the following process**:**

- Reading the material and taking notes

- Quoting and paraphrasing

- Documenting sources and giving credit

-Analyzing your data: quantitative

One way of looking at data is to find the average which represents a group of members. The mean is the sum of all the items in the group divided by the number of items in that group. The median is the midpoint, average. The mode is the number that occurs more often than any other in your sample. A correlation is a statistical relationship between two or more variables. Trend analysis involves examining data over time in order to detect patterns and relationship.

Interpreting your findings

-Drawing conclusions

-Developing recommendations

76

# TOPIC THREE: TACIT AND EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE

The concept of **tacit knowledge** comes from scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi. It is important to note that he wrote about a process (hence **tacit knowing**) and not a form of knowledge. However, his phrase has been taken up to name a form of knowledge that is apparently wholly or partly inexplicable.

By definition, tacit knowledge is not easily shared. One of Polanyi's famous aphorisms is: "We know more than we can tell." Tacit knowledge consists often of habits and culture that we do not recognize in ourselves. In the field of [knowledge management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_management" \o "Knowledge management) the concept of tacit knowledge refers to a knowledge which is only known to you and is hard to share with someone else, which is the opposite of the concept of explicit knowledge.

## Properties of tacit knowledge

The tacit aspects of knowledge are those that cannot be codified, but can only be transmitted via training or gained through personal experience. Tacit knowledge has been described as “know-how” (as opposed to “know-what” [facts] and “know-why” [science]). It involves learning and skill but not in a way that can be written down. The simplest example of the nature and value of tacit knowledge is that one does not know how to ride a bike or swim due to reading a textbook, but only through personal experimentation, by observing others, and/or being guided by an instructor. In fact, the rules for riding a bike can be articulated, but they are of no use to a learner - they are: to turn left on a bike, first turn slightly to the right; if you are falling to the left steer to the left. But being told this only confuses the learner. Another example, given by Polanyi, is our ability to quickly recognize the face of someone we know in a crowd of strangers.

A classic example of tacit knowledge is the very notion of language itself - nobody has ever learnt a language by being taught the rules of grammar - it was learnt as a child. Other languages are merely grafted on to this initial stereotype.

77

Similarly reading cannot be explicitly taught although methods such as learning the alphabet and synthetic phonemes create rich environments to acquire tacit knowledge about language and reading.

Tacit knowledge has been found to be a crucial input to the innovation process. A nation’s ability to innovate depends on its level of tacit knowledge of how to innovate (conduct research, develop prototypes of new products & processes, adapt these prototypes into models fit for mass-production) and of how to implement innovations into manufacturing, defence, communications, transportation, etc.

Eugene Gendlin, has developed practices for explicating 'what we know but can't yet say' - knowledge we 'feel' - for both theory development and self-exploration. His book 'Experience and the Creation of Meaning' describes seven ways in which 'explicit' and 'implicit' knowing come from each other. R K Wagner and R J Sternberg, authors of *Tacit knowledge inventory for managers* (Psychological Corporation, San Antonio, 1991) have also worked on methods for explicating tacit knowledge. Others, however believe it is not possible to explicate it.

An excellent discussion of tacit knowledge using algebra as an example is in:

H.M. Collins, The Tea Set: Tacit Knowledge and Scientific Networks, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Bath, reprinted in B. Barnes and D. Edge (eds.) Science in Context: Readings in the Sociology of Science, Open University Press, 1982.

“algebra cannot be reduced to a set of formal rules. “all types of knowledge, however, purely consist in part of tacit rules which may be impossible to formulate in principle. For instance, the ability to solve an algebraic equation includes such normally non articulated knowledge as that the symbol ‘X usually means the same whether it is written in ballpoint, chalk or print or spoken irrespective of the day of the week or temperature of the air. But in another sense, ‘X’ stands for anything at all and may only mean the same – exactly (e.g. 2.75 grams, 2.75 inches etc) on coincidental and unimportant occasions. Again, sometimes a capitalized X or an italicized X may have a distinctive meaning.

78

Capital X in the equation X = 5Y is the same as X in the equation 5Y = X, but is not the same as in X = 5Z, unless Y = Z. on the other hand, ‘X’ is being used in the same way in all the equations. This list of tacit rules as it is extended becomes more confusing and comes to resemble a list of all the examples of the uses of X which have ever been made. But such a list cannot serve at all as a guide to the use of X in the future, learning algebra consists of more than the memorization of sets of formal rules; it also involves knowing how do things (e.g. use ‘X’; correctly – use logical inferences) which may have been learned long before”

H.M. Collins, The Tea Set: Tacit Knowledge and Scientific Networks, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Bath, reprinted in B. Barnes and D. Edge (eds.) Science in Context: Readings in the Sociology of Science, Open University Press, 1982.

He went on to show in some detail how a particular laser (The TEA laser) was designed in America and the idea, with specific assistance, was gradually propagated to various other Universities worldwide. Even when specific instructions were sent, other labs failed to replicate the laser, it only being made to work in each case following a visit to or from the originating lab or very close contact and dialogue. It became clear that the originators while they clearly could make the laser work, they did not know exactly what it was they were doing to make it work and so could not articulate or specify it by means of monologue articles and specifications.

Other examples are the Bessemer process – Bessemer sold a patent to his advanced steel making process and was sued by the purchasers who couldn’t get it to work – in the end Bessemer set up his own steel company which became one of the largest in the world and changed the face of steel making.

It is clear that whether or not tacit knowledge can be explicated, it can be transmitted by Lateral media Information Routing Groups and lateral communication, albeit in an often-invisible way. This raises the question as to whether one should bother to explicate it - why not simply set up systems to transmit it and all will be well - unless a power entity seeks to capture, control and market it of course.

79

Tacit knowledge may seem a simple idea but the implications are huge and far reaching – all sort of enormous technological and social mistakes have occurred because people pushing certain policies – technical or social have lacked the vital tacit knowledge – either leading to misguided and therefore doomed policies, or misguided implementation of a good policy so still leading to failure.

For example it is clear that politicians, civil servants and managers in general, do not really understand how computers can and can’t be successfully applied to problems and which problems are or are not amenable to computerized solutions; also how people can and can’t be successfully organised – consider the examples of the old British local court paper based maintenance orders system compared to the fiasco of the centralized and computerized, but now disbanded Child Support Agency, or the disaster which was initially the centralized Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority only saved by having local checking centres.]

Similarly, in WW2 the RAF found that having radar plots going directly onto the WAAFS plotting room often gave unsatisfactory results. As a result, the Filter Room was introduced where experienced fighter pilot officers were installed to screen the incoming radar plots, which vastly improved operational efficiency – these experienced officers had the necessary tacit knowledge which could not be adequately conveyed to the WAAFS, their controllers, or put into a manual.

## Knowledge management

There are many implications for organizational learning and knowledge management, including:

* The difficulty inherent in tacit knowledge transfer is that subject matter experts and key knowledge holders may not be aware--hence, unable--to articulate, communicate and describe what they know. Thus, tacit knowledge can be a sustainable competitive advantage.
* Tacit knowledge is embedded in group and organizational relationships, core values, assumptions and beliefs. It is hard to identify, locate, quantify, map or value.

80

* Tacit knowledge is impossible to transmit through Central media but it can be transmitted by lateral media.
* Tacit knowledge is embedded in human capital. This makes it valuable as a strategic advantage over competitors in terms of innovations, trade secrets, ideas and new technologies.

**Explicit knowledge** is knowledge that has been or can be articulated, codified, and stored in certain media. The most common forms of explicit knowledge are manuals, documents, procedures, and stories. Knowledge also can be audio-visual. Works of art and product design can be seen as other forms of explicit knowledge where human skills, motives and knowledge are externalized

**TOPIC FOUR: KNOWLEDGE IN FUNCTIONAL AREAS**

-Marketing: the 4 Ps (Price, promotion, product, place)

-Human Resource: Employee welfare, payroll, Training and Development

-Finance: Management accounting and managerial accounting

-Operations: Inventory control

**Managerial Roles**

A manager is someone who has specialized knowledge in a particular field. According to Mintzberg a manager in his day-to-day tasks performs ten roles which can be grouped into three:

1. Decisional Roles

-Entrepreneur (improve unit)

-Disturbance handler (corrective action against unexpected)

-Negotiator (bargaining)

1. Interpersonal;

-Figurehead) represents organizations)

81

-Leadership (responsibility for coordination)

-Liaison (maintains information contact outside vertical chain of command to bring information). To be effective a lot of relationship is required.

In liaison role the manager yields information which enabling monitoring which enables planning and controlling and transmitting information.

* Informational

-Monitor

-Disseminator

-Spokesperson (speaks for the unit)

The manager as a monitor receives information in the informational role and as disseminator and spokesperson transmits information.

These roles are concerned with oral communication and communication network. Oral communication comprises telephone and meeting. Network with superior, subordinate and external.

**Decision making:**

The decisional roles make significant use of the information.  There are four decisional roles. In the entrepreneur role, the manager initiates change. In the disturbance handler role, the manger deals with threats to the organization. In the resource allocator role, the manager chooses where the organization will expend its efforts. In the negotiator role, the manager negotiates on behalf of the organization. The top-level manager makes the decisions about the organization as a whole, while the supervisor makes decisions about his or her particular work unit.

Organizations model:

* + Rational actor – maximize organizations benefits

82

* + Bureaucratic – follow standard operating procedures
  + Political: key groups compete and bargain
  + Garbage can – organizations not rational: solutions accidental

Individual model:

* + 1. Rational comprehensive, rationality, evaluate all alternatives
    2. Satisfying: bounded rationality, choose first “good” alternative
    3. Muddling: successive comparison marginal changes
    4. Psychological: cognitive types managers differ in how they make choices

**Levels of decision making**

1. Strategic: long term objectives, resources, policies – top (chief executive) i.e. making business sector organizations Competitor analysis

2. Management control: monitor use of resources: performance (administrative)- middle (manager) (Tactical) i.e. developing budgetary forecasts. Cash flow forecast

3. Knowledge based evaluate potential innovation, knowledge

4. Operational: how to carry out specific day to day tasks- first level (supervisors) Reporting daily sales ledger figures-sub operational producing an invoice. Team leaders. Sales order invoice.

The formal decision making process may be described in 7 steps:

* Defining the problem or opportunity (collecting information)
* Identifying limiting factors
* Developing potential alternatives (information about implications)
* Analyzing the alternatives
* Selecting the best alternative (collect information from all stakeholders)
* Implementing the decision (giving information)

83

* Establishing a control and evaluation system {Monitor performance} (collect information on new levels of performance)

**Knowledge based organization**

-Central productive/strategic asset

-Explicit (codified) tacit (know-how

-Involves information, social relations, know how, skills

-Change based on new information

-Firm creates value by integrating specialized knowledge

-Strategy: develop core competencies

84

**UNIT 8: COMMUNICATING IN TEAMS**

**Introduction**

In this unit you will cover the definition of team, types of teams, importance of teamwork, and significance of communicating in a team.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of this unit, students should be in position to:

1. Have a proper understand the importance of teamwork

2. Appreciate the various types of team

3. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of teams

**TOPIC ONE: TEAMS AND TEAMWORK**

A team is a unit of two or more people who work together to achieve a goal. The task may be to write a report, give oral presentations, produce a product, solve a problem or investigate an opportunity. Team members must communicate effectively among themselves and with people outside their team. Companies like to hire people who can work in a team effectively. Studies show that teams contribute to organizations good performance. Creativity is another reason that teams are important. Teams encourage creativity in workers through participative management – involving employees in the company’s decision making.

**Types of Teams:**

Companies can create formal teams that become part of the organization’s structure or they can establish informal teams which are not part of the formal organization but are formed to solve a problem work on specific activity or encourage employee participation as explained below.

* Problem-solving and task force which are informal teams that assemble to resolve specific issues and then disband once their goal has been achieved.
* Committees are long term and usually have a long-life span and can become part of the organizational structure. Committees deal with regularly recurring tasks e.g. grievance which may be formed as a permanent resource for handling employee complaints and concerns.

85

* Virtual teams bring together geographically distant employees to interact, share information and accomplish goals.

**Advantages and disadvantages of teams**

These are briefly:

* Increased sharing of information and knowledge
* Increased diversity of views
* Increased acceptance
* Higher performance levels
* Waste of time, unproductive, group think
* Hidden agenda
* High cost of coordinating

**Characteristics of Effective Teams**

* Have a clear sense of purpose
* Communicate openly and honestly
* Reach decisions by consensus
* Think creatively
* Remain focused
* Resolve conflict effectively

**Activities**

1. What are teams?
2. Discuss the reasons why communication is important to teams?

86

**UNIT 9: COMMUNICATING WITH MANAGEMENT**

**Introduction**

In this unit, you deal with the various classification of reports and be acquainted with analytical and information. You will be able to learn about how to classify business reports as well.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of this unit, students should able to:

* 1. Appreciate the significance of communicating with managers
  2. Discuss the various classification of reports

3. Understand analytical and informational reports

4. Appreciate the purpose of reports

**TOPIC ONE: COMMUNICATING WITH MANAGERS**

Communicating with management will be upward communication. This could be reports. Business reports help companies make decisions and solve business problems. Reports are generally factual, objective documents. They come in many formats including pre-printed forms, letters, memos and manuscripts. They vary in length. Always tailor your report to the audience. If the audience is receptive or open indeed use a direct approach by leading with a summary of your key findings, conclusion and recommendations. Later parts will provide complete findings and supporting details. However, if your audience is sceptical or hostile you may want to use the indirect approach. Introduce your complete findings and discuss all supporting details before presenting your conclusion and recommendations. The indirect approach gives you a chance to prove your points. By deferring the conclusions and recommendations you imply that you have weighed the evidence objectively without prejudicing the facts. Consider length before choosing direct or indirect report.

87

**TOPIC TWO: CLASSIFICATION OF REPORTS**

These are as follows:

1. Voluntary or authorized reports. Voluntary are prepared on your own initiative. They are usually more detailed than authorized reports. In a voluntary report you give more background information and you explain your purpose. An authorized report is responding to the reader’s request.

2. Routine or special reports. Routine reports are submitted on a recurring basis; daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. Examples are financial reports and reports on sales. Routine reports are less introductory.

3. Internal or external reports. Internal reports are for use within the organizations and are less formal than external reports. Short internal reports may b written in memo if say less than five pages or letter if external otherwise manuscript.

4. Short or long reports. A long report may require research.

5. Information or analytical reports. Information reports focus on facts and are intended mainly to explain something. In contrast analytical report are designed to solve a problem by convincing readers that the conclusions and recommendations are justified based on the data, analysis and interpretation.

**General purposes of reports:**

1. Monitor and control operations

2. Implement policies and procedures

3. Comply with legal or regulatory requirements

4. Document work performed for clients

5. Guide decisions on particular issues

88

**Media Report**

**This can be presented as**

1. Written report

2. Oral report

3. Electronic report

**Advantages and disadvantages of electronic report**

Electronic reports have advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages are:

1. Cost saving

2. Space serving

3. Faster distribution

4. Multimedia features (sound and video can be integrated)

5. Easier maintenance

Disadvantages are:

1. Hardware and software costs

2. Computer system incompatibility

3. Training needs

4. Risks to data security and integrity

**TOPIC THREE: GENERAL FORMAT OF REPORTS**

Text of a report has the following main sections:

1. Introduction

89

2. Main body

3. Conclusion

Components of a formal report includes prefatory parts which consist of the cover, title page, letter of authorization if direct request approach or letter of transmittal, table of content, list of illustration and an executive summary. Then we have the text then supplementary parts which consist of appendixes and bibliography.

For a long report, additions are: Establishing good relationship with your audience:

1. Use the “you: attitude

2. Emphasize the positive

3. Establish your credibility

4. Be polite

5. Use bias free language

6. Project the company’s image

You can communicate with management with the help of memos.

Activities

1. Describe five classifications of business reports

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of electronic reports?

90

**UNIT 10: COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS AND NETWORKING**

**Introduction**

In this unit, you will deal approach for communicating with customers, networking, three step process in writing and culture.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of this unit students should be able to:

* 1. Appreciate the importance of communicating with customers
  2. Appreciate the significance of networking in business setting
  3. Demonstrate how to use three step processes in writing
  4. Appreciate the importance of culture in communication

**TOPIC ONE: NETWORKING**

This refers to the ability to actively seek, identify and create effective contacts with others and to maintain those contacts for mutual benefit.

The purpose of networking is relationship, making yourself and company attractive to people in a way they had not realized before. Networking is about developing a particular business.

Network building involves creating contacts with other people and nurturing those contacts. It involves acquiring and maintaining information about people who might be useful contacts for specific purposes (e.g., seeking out people established in an industry or customers you need to interact with regularly). Using a contact in an ethical manner to help each of you meet specific goals (collaborating on projects of importance of both of you).

To communicate effectively with customers, you may need to use questionnaires or suggestion boxes. For networking the environment can be high or low uncertainty. Networking is for gathering data. If the environment is highly uncertain be proactive. This can be done through:

91

* Scanning and monitoring the environment
* Boundary spanning: this is interacting in specific ways with various stakeholders to gather and disseminate important information. People interact as they do their jobs e.g., sales person interact with doctors and hold public relations talks to newspapers and television
* Stakeholder Partnership
* Stakeholder management efforts such as conducting customer marketing research, encouraging competition among suppliers, establishing relationship departments, initiating public relations with pressure groups

Your business message must be:

* Purposeful
* Audience centred
* Concise

**TOPIC TWO: THREE STEP PROCESS IN WRITING**

This involves:

1. Planning
2. Writing
3. Completing

Analyzing your purpose and audience must be done in this manner:

* Define your purpose
* Develop an audience profile

Satisfying your audience’s information requires that you take these actions:

* Find out exactly what your audience wants to know
* Be sure the information is accurate
* Be sure the information is ethical
* Be sure the information is pertinent

92

Adapting your message to serve your audience and purpose means:

* Selecting the appropriate channel and medium
* Establish a good relationship with your audience
* Establish credibility
* Use bias free language
* Project the company’s image

With customers you will need to undertake surveys and in the process:

* Provide clear instructions
* Keep questionnaire short and easy to answer
* Formulate questions that provide easily standard or analyzed answers
* Avoid leading questions
* Ask only one thing at a time
* Pre-test the questionnaire

You may undertake an interview. This is discussed later. To contact stakeholders like customers you may use:

* Telephone
* Letter
* Electronic
* Survey
* Open day
* Training
* Seminar/workshop/conference
* Meeting
* Manual
* Newsletter
* Visit

93

**TOPIC THREE: CULTURE**

Communicating effectively entails taking accounting of culture. Communication between different cultural backgrounds lead people to interpret verbal and nonverbal signals differently. Advances in technology have led to globalization in the market place and a multicultural workforce. Culture is a shared system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations and norms for behaviour. Recognise cultural differences by undertaking:

* 1. Contextual differences in decision making, problem solving, negotiating differences
  2. Legal and ethical differences
  3. Social differences: attitudes, roles and status, manners, concept of time
  4. Nonverbal differences: use of personal space, use of body language
  5. Overcome ethnocentrism

To improve communication across culture is to study other culture and overcome language barriers. Improve your writing and oral skills.

ACTIVITIES

1. Explain the importance of communicating with customers.

2. Outline the significance of networking in business settings.

3. Comment on the importance of culture with relation to communication.

94

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95