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Communication skills

MCM301

Course Handouts

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COMMUNICATION Skills
MCM301

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Lesson 01

Communication

Communication is derived from the Latin word 'Communico' which means "to share". Hence the word "communication" means: the process of sharing. One may ask, sharing what? Obviously – sharing information, which could be facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings, needs, etc. This sharing takes place from one person to another so that it is understood. This process involves systematic and continuous process of speaking, listening, and understanding. Therefore,

Communication is a process, which involves sharing of information between people through a continuous activity of speaking, listening, and understanding.

Why is Communication Important?

Communication is a learned skill. Most people are born with the physical ability to talk. But in order to speak well and communicate effectively you have to learn the art and improve upon your ability to talk. Speaking, listening, and our ability to understand verbal and nonverbal meanings are the skills we develop in various ways. We learn basic communication skills by observing other people and changing our behaviors based on what we see. We also learn communication skills directly through education, practice and constant evaluation of the responses we get from people around us.

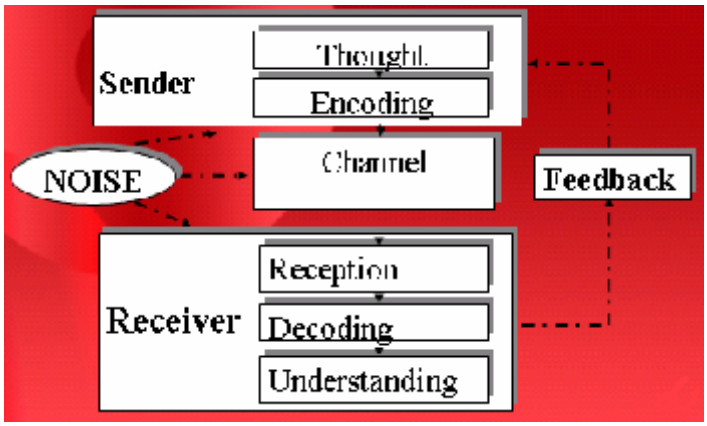
Importance of communication has always been realized in all times because it is the most vital means by which people are connected together in the society. However, today communication plays a crucial role in almost all aspects of life. Work in business, government or organizations are impossible without communication. People have to communicate with each other, exchange information, make decisions, talk about new ideas, plans, proposals etc. They also have to communicate externally with foreigners and people of other races and languages.

For a moment, turn your eyes inward and see how much of your waking hours you spend in communication. Nearly 70% – writing, reading, speaking, & listening. As a college student, 69 percent of your communication time is spent on speaking and listening. You spend 17 percent of your communication time on reading and 14 percent writing.

Don't forget, therefore, that communication is inevitable in one's life. Today, in this age & world, a successful person is the one - who can communicate effectively.

Pick up any newspaper and scan the jobs wanted advertisements. You will find that communication skills are one of the essential prerequisites in most of the occupations. Be it engineers, business managers, sales officers, operators, etc. Any vocation you choose- oral communication skills are identified as valuable for both obtaining employment and successful job performance. Big corporations and multinational organizations need better communication skills in their employees so that they are able to work in teams and with people from diverse backgrounds.

Remember we are living in a communications revolution; we are living in an age of increasing talk. When we have to talk, we might as well talk well, and talk wise.



The Communication Process or Cycle

Many of the problems that occur in an organization are the direct result of people failing to communicate. Faulty communication causes the most problems. It leads to confusion and can cause a good plan to fail. Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another. It involves a sender transmitting an idea to a receiver. And effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intends to transmit.

Studying the communication process is important because you coach, coordinate, counsel, evaluate, and supervise through this process. It is the chain of understanding that integrates the members of an organization from top to bottom, bottom to top, and side-to-side.

Let us look into the details and see:

What is involved in the communication process?

The steps involved in this process are:

1. Idea: Information exists in the mind of the sender (who is the source). This can be a concept, idea, information, or feelings.

2. Encoding: The source initiates a message by encoding the idea (or a thought) in words or symbols and sends it to a receiver.

The message is the actual physical product from the source encoding. When we speak, the speech is the message. When we write, the writing is the message. When we gesture, the movements of our arms and the expressions of our faces are the message.

3. The Channel: The channel in the communication process is the medium that the sender uses to transmit the message to the receiver. Care needs to be exercised in selecting the most effective channel for each message. Even though both an oral and a written medium may be appropriate to transmit a particular message, one medium may be more effective than the other. To illustrate, let's assume that an individual desires an immediate reply to a question. Although the message could be in either an oral or a written form, the oral medium most likely will be more effective because of the immediacy, if required.

In selecting an appropriate channel, the sender must assess the following factors, as the situation demands:

-need for immediate transmission of message,	(Fax instead of letter)
-need for immediate feedback,	(Phone instead of fax)
-need for permanent record of the message,	(Written rather than oral)
-degree of negotiation and persuasion required,	(Personal meeting – face-to face)
-the destination of the message, and	(Far flung area – letter only)
-the nature of the content of the message.	(Has to be a contract –written)

In addition, the sender should take into consideration his/her skill in using each of the alternative channels, as well as the receiver's skill in using each of the channels.

Communication rarely takes place over only one channel; two or three even four channels are normally used simultaneously.

Example: in face-to-face interactions, we speak and listen but we also gesture and receive these signals visually.

4. Decoding: It is the act of understanding messages (words or symbols). This is known as Decoding. When the sound waves are translated into ideas, we are taking them out of the code they are in, hence decoding. Thus, listeners and readers are often regarded as Decoders.

During the transmitting of the message, two processes will be received by the receiver. Content and Context.

Content is the actual words or symbols of the message which is known as *language* – i.e. spoken and written words combined into phrases that make grammatical and semantic (meaning) sense. We all use

and interpret the meanings of words differently, so even simple messages can be misunderstood (Are you going to give me or not?). And many words have different meanings to confuse the issue even more (You are smart.).

Context is the way the message is delivered and is known as *Paralanguage* - tone of voice, the look in the sender's eye's, body language, hand gestures, state of emotion (anger, fear, uncertainty, confidence, etc.). Paralanguage causes messages to be misunderstood as we believe what we see more than what we hear; we trust the accuracy of nonverbal behaviors more than verbal behaviors.

Many managers think they have communicated once they told someone to do something, "I don't know why was not the work done?...I told my Secretary to do it." As a matter of fact, the secretary misunderstood the message.

Remember: A message is never communicated unless it is understood by the receiver.

Question arises then, how do you know a message has been properly received?

5. Feedback: By two-way communication or feedback. This feedback will tell the sender that the receiver understood the message, its level of importance, and what must be done with it.

So the feedback loop is the final link in the communication process. Feedback is the check on how successful we have been, in transferring our messages as originally intended. It determines whether understanding has been achieved or not.

The purpose of feedback is to change and alter messages so the intention of the original communicator is understood by the second communicator. It includes verbal and nonverbal responses to another person's message.

There are five main categories of feedback. They are listed in the order in which they occur most frequently in daily conversations.

1. **Evaluation:** Making a judgment about the worth, goodness, or appropriateness of the sender's statement.
2. **Interpretation:** Paraphrasing - attempting to explain what the sender's statement means.
3. **Support:** Attempting to assist or support the sender.
4. **Probing:** Attempting to gain additional information, continue the discussion, or clarify a point.
5. **Understanding:** Attempting to discover completely what the sender means by his/her statement.

Noise: The presence of noise can result in fairly significant problems in the communication process.

Unfortunately, communication is effected by noise, which is anything – whether in the sender, the transmission, on the receiver – that hinders communication.

For example:

- A noisy environment may hinder the development of a clear thought.
- Encoding may be faulty because of the use of ambiguous symbols.
- Transmission may be interrupted by noise in the channel, such as a poor telephone connection, misprinted text, or maybe a typographical mistake.
- Inaccurate reception may be caused by inattention.

Lesson 02

Levels of Communication

There are five levels of communication:

1. Intrapersonal Communication
2. Interpersonal Communication
3. Mediated Communication
4. Person-to-Group Communication
5. Mass Communication

Intrapersonal Communication

When you think, you use intrapersonal communication. You initiate, receive, and process messages within yourself. You are playing both the roles of: sending & receiving. Human growth depends on this internal communication. Through it you know yourself and develop your self-concept, self-determination, and self-motivation.

For example, each morning you decide how to dress, what to eat, where to go, etc. This kind of internal communication forms the foundation for the other four levels of communication.

The word - "Intrapersonal" - means within the person. Intrapersonal communication processes happen inside of you. Some people equate these processes with thinking. Although thinking is part of the process, intrapersonal communication includes more than what we think. More importantly intrapersonal processes include the way we think and the way we communicate with ourselves. Intrapersonal communication affects the way we receive messages from others and affects the way we send messages to others.

The Self: The role the self plays in communication is vital and complex. In order to be able to identify the complex levels of the self, you first need to understand how such complexity becomes such an intimate part of the communication process. We need to recognize the complex role of the self, and how the self plays into how we communicate.

At the center of how you communicate, is how you see yourself, or your sense of who you are. This sense of self is central to how you communicate with others. The term for that sense of self is self-concept.

Self-concept is your image of who you are. Put another way, self-concept is the total picture of who you are. Or how you see your whole self. It is your psychological self, your physical self, your spiritual self, your social self, and your intellectual self. Self-concept is how you perceive the different parts of yourself that combine to form a total picture.

At the same time self-concept also means knowing how others see you, how your colleagues see you, how your parents see you. When you interact with different groups and individuals and they see you and react to you, you pick up signals and eventually you change yourself as a result of this feedback. In fact, what research reveals is that most of our sense of self, thus, comes from interactions with other people (family, friends, co-workers).

Through feedback from the process of communicating with other people, or the sending of verbal and nonverbal indicators through involvement with friends and family, you acquire a sense of how others feel about you, how they perceive you, and what they like and what they don't like about you. And as a result of this feedback, you develop a sense of self over the course of your life, this big picture of who you are, based on all of the human interactions that you've had in life. And you are also constantly modifying your sense of self. Until the day you die, you will constantly modify your self-concept. This is because we are always interacting with other people, and because we are always communicating with others, we are therefore always learning more about ourselves.

Self-concept is made up of two components, **self-image**, and **self-esteem**.

Self-image is literally a picture, or image, of who you are. Self-image describes you. If you take out a piece of paper and list the various roles that you play in life, you could come up at least six, eight, maybe ten different roles that you assume in your daily life. For example, the different roles that you play in life could include, you are a student, you are a son, you are a brother, you are a colleague, you are a friend……these are all different roles that you play in life.

Most of our roles can be categorized in one of two categories – either achieved roles, or ascribed roles. Achieved roles are roles that you work to accomplish or to achieve, such as, professor, honor student, etc. Ascribed roles are roles that you are born into, son, brother, and sister.

What's important about identifying the different roles you play in life is that you communicate differently in each one of these roles. To be an effective communicator, you should.

So self-image is how you see yourself and how you describe the roles that you play in life. Self-esteem is also how you evaluate yourself in those roles. How do you see yourself as a brother, as a friend, as a best friend? How do you rate your performance in the various roles you play in life? On a scale of one to ten, are you good to bad, great to terrible, positive to negative, effective to ineffective? No matter what evaluative scale you want to use, self-image is measured by how you evaluate yourself in those roles. **Self-esteem** is the process of self-evaluation; it is how you feel about yourself in each of those roles.

Self-esteem is certainly affected by how others evaluate your performance in a particular role. To be found lacking in the performance of a particular role results in hurt feelings and diminished self-esteem.

Intrapersonal communication processes depend upon communicators':

1. Frame of reference
2. Creativity
3. Self-talk
4. Risk-taking behavior

1. Frame of Reference

Your frame of reference refers to the way you view your world. Your frame of reference is your structure for encoding and decoding messages. Your frame of reference consists of all that you bring internally to the communication situation: your beliefs, attitudes, and values; your memory of experiences; your cultural background; your stereotypes and expectations; your self-concept; your feelings and level of stress; your thinking patterns; and other psychological factors. As a speaker, understanding the frames of reference of your listeners will allow you to adapt your message for high levels of clarity and/or persuasive impact. As a listener, attempting to understand the way the speaker's frame of reference may differ from your own can help you to better understand the speaker and your reaction to the speaker.

2. Creativity

One of the most important skills you can shape is that of creativity. Basically, creative thinking involves visualizing something in an innovative, new, or unique way. Humans have long valued artists because their creativity provides new ways of imagining or conceptualizing our world. In our personal and work lives, creativity can be important to each of us, particularly when solving problems. You can increase your creativity by learning to think in less traditional ways. Habitual and routine thinking patterns and structures prevent free, open problem solving. The extent to which you have developed your creative thinking affects the way you send and receive messages, the way you interact with others, and your potential for success in new situations.

3. Self-talk

Another key aspect of intrapersonal communication is sometimes called self-talk or imagined communication. In imagined communication, individuals talk to someone else or to themselves as if they were another person. However, the communication takes place in their minds (internally instead of externally).

Practical example of imagined conversations could be of students imagining communicating before it takes place. For example, while they plan their classroom presentations, they see themselves in front of the audience, imagine how fantastic they look, see some classmates listening attentively, and picture their instructor making a positive response.

This approach, by the way, can help most speakers to succeed in public communication situations by reducing their anxiety.

Imaginary communication is a phenomenon that most people avoid discussing. Most of us learned at an early age that people who talk to themselves are crazy. Yet, it happens with people often.

Although you may not be taught to communicate interpersonally, you discover that it helps you to prepare for future communication, deal with your feelings, and learn from past communication. Imagined communication is an important aspect of your intrapersonal communication processes.

4. Risk-taking Behaviors

Your willingness to take risks is largely dependent on your interpretation of past experience. If you have found risk-taking to be fun, adventure-some, or thrilling, then you are more inclined to make risky moves. At least a minimum amount of risk is necessary for growth and development.

Some people consider as risk-taking behaviors only ones that are life-threatening, such as driving fast cars, or doing dangerous stunts. For our purposes, we are focusing on risk-taking in communication. When we communicate, we risk rejection by others. Additionally, behaviors that threaten our self-concept or intrapersonal processes are "risky." Often before you speak, you consider the communication in terms of risk. When you talk in class, express your ideas in a business meeting, give a presentation, or decide to communicate (or not communicate), your behaviors will be interpreted by others. Others may agree or disagree, be interested or bored, understand or misunderstand, be persuaded or argue. Because the frame of reference is different for every individual, you never really know completely how other people will react to you. But effort on your part to understand and adapt to your listeners will reduce the risk of rejection. The way we communicate is closely linked to our self-image. Most individuals find risky and threatening any efforts to change their self-image.

Your intrapersonal processes about risk-taking are influenced by your past experiences and interaction with others. Your decisions about whether or not you should, or how you will, choose to interact with others are major areas of your internal or intrapersonal communication processes.

Lesson 03

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication occurs when two (or a few) people talk face to face. Conversations, dialogues, and small group discussions are interpersonal exchanges. Each person also operates interpersonally during the exchange. Thus, an exchange with just two people involves at least three communication elements – the unique thinking done by each person and the overriding process created by the interpersonal exchange.

For example, imagine that you accidentally met your friend after a long time. You had a brief chat with him. But you think of meeting him again next evening. Your friend at the same time too thinks of having another meeting with you, in the afternoon, as he is leaving by the evening flight. After some discussion you agree to meet at the breakfast time as you have a busy schedule the whole afternoon.

Behavior and Interpersonal Communication

In its simplest form, interpersonal relations are the interactions between two or more persons. We keep coming in contact with other people for personal, professional, social or business reasons. Whatever the context, there is an interaction between personalities in all these situations. Our perception about each other is based on the displayed behavior. The environment in which personal interaction takes place is largely determined by the behavior of the parties involved.

All behaviors are motivated. The motives however, may be known or unknown, clear or unclear, controlled or uncontrolled. The net result is the variety in behaviors. Behaviors determine the quality of interpersonal relationships by directly influencing every transaction in interaction. In the organizational context, interpersonal relations become extremely important for smooth functioning of the system, greater coherence, and convergence of effort and minimization of conflict.

To communicate well, we need to know our frames of reference and ourselves and to be able to assess other people. Only then can we hope to find the best ways in which to communicate effectively with them, both to pass information and build relationships. Some of the reasons we do not assess other people well are given below:

- We assume that people would behave the same way in every situation.
- We try too hard to put everyone into consistent categories.
- We are too influenced by first impressions.
- We are positively influenced where we have common characteristics with other people, e.g. same school, same function.
- We are too influenced by apparent negative points, e.g. if someone is not very good at short-term decision making, we might assume that he/she is not going to be good at long-term planning either.
- We make constant errors because of our own limited frames of reference and self-concept.

The Contextual View

Interpersonal communication differs from other forms of communication in that there are few participants involved. The interact-ants are in close physical proximity to each other, there are many sensory channels used, and feedback is immediate. An important point to note about the contextual definition is that it does not take into account the relationship between the interact-ants.

Interpersonal communication is contextual

In other words, communication does not happen in isolation. There is:

- **Psychological context**, which is who you are and what you bring to the interaction. Your needs, desires, values, personality, etc., all form the psychological context. ("You" here refers to both participants in the interaction.)
- **Relational context,** which concerns your reactions to the other person--the "mix."
- **Situational context** deals with the psycho-social "where" you are communicating. An interaction that takes place in a classroom will be very different from one that takes place in a restaurant.
- **Environmental context** deals with the physical "where" you are communicating. Furniture, location, noise level, temperature, season, time of day, all are examples of factors in the environmental context.
- **Cultural context** includes all the learned behaviors and rules that affect the interaction. If you come from a culture (foreign or within your own country) where it is considered rude to make long, direct eye contact, you will out of politeness avoid eye contact. If the other person comes from a culture where long, direct eye contact signals trustworthiness, then we have in the cultural context a basis for misunderstanding.

The Developmental View

We have many different relationships with people. Some researchers say that our definition of interpersonal communication must account for these differences. These researchers say that interacting with a sales clerk in a store is different than the relationship we have with our friends and family members. Thus, some researchers have proposed an alternative way of defining interpersonal communication. This is called the developmental view. From this view, interpersonal communication is defined as communication that occurs between people who have known each other for some time. Importantly, these people view each other as unique individuals, not as people who are simply acting out social situations.

Interpersonal channels include conversations and dialogues, interviews, and small groups.

Conversations involve unstructured, informal, and slightly purposive communication transactions. They may not relate directly to business, but nonetheless contribute to smooth business functioning. Dialogues introduce purpose in relatively structured and formal transactions. The interview is a special type of dialogue. It involves purposes such as appraising an applicant for a job or disseminating information to the media.

In the directive interview, the interviewer commands the transaction. In the nondirective interview, both parties give direction to the interview. The stress interviewer uses emotion-laden questions to determine how well the stress interviewer handles stress. The depth interview involves a directive probe into the topic.

Small groups include four to ten people, with location, time, topic, purpose, formality, designation, and cohesion having an impact on the transaction. Methods for conducting group meetings include problem-solving, educating, brain storming, and role-playing.

Functions of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is important because of the functions it achieves. Whenever we engage in communication with another person, we seek to gain information about them. We also give off information through a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal cues. The various functions of interpersonal communication are:

Gaining Information

One reason we engage in interpersonal communication is that we can gain knowledge about another individual. Social Penetration Theory says that we attempt to gain information about others so that we can interact with them more effectively. We can better predict how they will think, feel, and act if we know

who they are. We gain this information passively, by observing them; actively, by having others engage them; or interactively, by engaging them ourselves. Self-disclosure is often used to get information from another person.

Building a Context of Understanding

We also engage in interpersonal communication to help us better understand what someone says in a given context. The words we say can mean very different things depending on how they are said or in what context. Content Messages refer to the surface level meaning of a message. Relationship Messages refer to how a message is said. The two are sent simultaneously, but each affects the meaning assigned to the communication. Interpersonal communication helps us understand each other better.

Establishing Identity

Another reason we engage in interpersonal communication is to establish an identity. The roles we play in our relationships help us establish identity. So too does the face, the public self-image we present to others. Both roles and face are constructed based on how we interact with others.

Interpersonal Needs

Finally, we engage in interpersonal communication because we need to express and receive interpersonal needs.

The three identified needs are:

1. Inclusion: the need to establish identity with others.
2. Control: the need to exercise leadership and prove one's abilities. Groups provide outlets for this need. Some individuals do not want to be a leader. For them, groups provide the necessary control over aspects of their lives.
3. Affection: the need to develop relationships with people. Groups are an excellent way to make friends and establish relationships.

Lesson 04

Communication in the Organization
Guiding Principles

1. People are not mind readers. They judge you by their behavior & not by your intent
We cannot communicate. The very attempt not to communicate communicates something. Through not only words, but through tone of voice and through gesture, posture, facial expression, etc., we constantly communicate to those around us. Through these channels, we constantly receive communication from others.

2. A word is like an arrow, once out of the bow never returns
You can't really take back something once it has been said. The effect must inevitably remain. Despite the instructions from a judge to a jury to "disregard that last statement the witness made," the lawyer knows that it can't help but make an impression on the jury.

3. We don't exchange ideas; we exchange symbols that stand for ideas
Words (symbols) do not have inherent meaning; we simply use them in certain ways, and no two people use the same word exactly alike.

Mediated communication

This level of communication occurs when two (or a few) people use some intermediate means for carrying their messages. They do not communicate face to face and thus do not have direct feedback. Mediated communication often uses a mechanical or electrical device to transmit or receive messages. Examples include the telephone, closed-circuit television, radio, radar, and the communication satellite. Mediated communication also occurs through letters, reports, forms, and interoffice memoranda.

Person-to-Group Communication

The person-to-group level involves one speaker and audience. The speaker usually faces the audience, and the audience usually contains people with similar interests. A small, private person-to-group situation often has some of the characteristics of interpersonal communication. However, for large public groups, the person-to-group level lacks the benefits provided by interpersonal exchanges.

The traditional speaker and audience setting may include microphones, projectors, and tape player.

Mass Communication

Mass communication includes messages sent to large, public, dissimilar, anonymous, distant audiences using some intermediate instrument of transfer. The instruments include electronic (for example, radio, television, tape, and film) and print (for example, newspaper, magazine, book, pamphlet, brochure, direct-mail campaign). The restricted opportunity for feedback is the most serious barrier to effective mass communication.

The "mass media," as they are often called, have grown to include the print media of books, newspapers and magazines, the electronic media of television, radio, and audio/video recording, and the new media of computers and computer networks. While these media differ in many ways, they all share the characteristics by which scholars define mass communication.

COMMUNICATION IN THE ORGANIZATION

Communication is used extensively in the managerial functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Virtually every task that a manager performs requires the use of communication in one form or another.

The nature of communication in the modern organization can be studied by examining the direction of communication flow and the destination of the communication. While communication in the modern organization flows downward, upward, and the horizontal, its destination can be either internal or external.

Downward Communication

Downward communication flows from people at higher levels to those at lower levels in the organizational hierarchy. The primary function of downward communication is to inform employees about things important to them such as:

- Information about their jobs
- Organizational policies and procedures
- Feedback about their performance
- Organizational goals and objectives

The types of downwards communication may include instructions, speeches, meetings, announcements, memos, notifications, letters, hand-books, pamphlets, company newsletters and periodicals, bulletin boards (notice boards) policy statements, and procedures.

For downward communication some use written communication, others use oral communication.

Why is this needed?

When employees receive appropriate downward communication from management, they can be better motivated and become more efficient.

While the employees need clear job directions and safety rules, they also need to know facts about organizational strategy, products, and viewpoints on important controversial issues.

Employees want to know about their benefits - health care, insurance, promotions, pensions, training, work environment, retirement, etc. etc.

In a way the employees, through their collective pressure, force their employers to be accountable for their decisions through effective downward communication.

Upward Communication

Upward communication travels from subordinates to superiors and continues up the organizational ladder.

Upward communication is extremely important, as upper management needs to know specifically about:

Production performance, marketing information, financial data, what lower-level employees are thinking, and so on.

The better the quality of information they receive, the more useful and effective it will be in their decision-making efforts.

Unfortunately, this flow is often hindered by people in the communication link who filter the messages and do not transmit all the information, especially unfavorable news to their bosses.

Types of media used to direct information upward are reports, interoffice memos, supervisor subordinate conferences, suggestion systems, and grievance procedures.

Upward internal communication is becoming increasingly important day by day. Today many executives sincerely seek frank comments from employees, in addition to the usual periodic reports. Successful managers listen closely to opinions, complaints, problems, and suggestions especially when they are

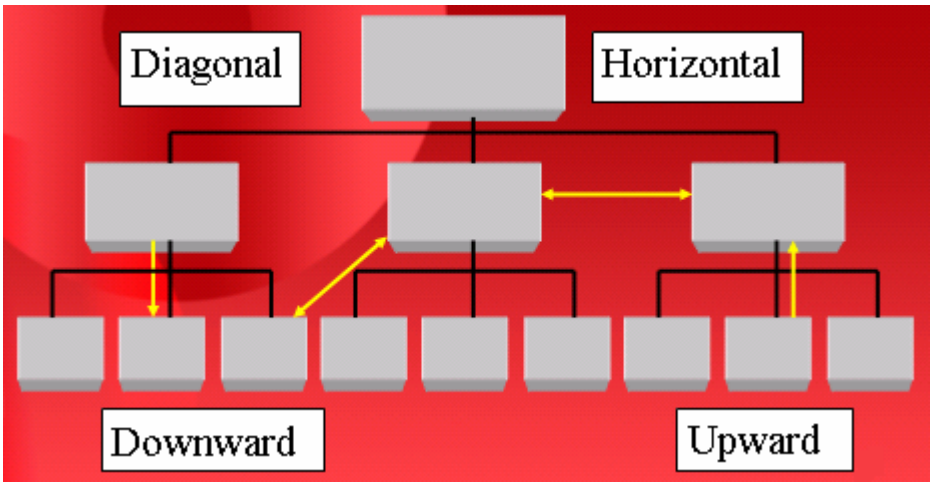
clearly and effectively stated. As a response to increasing global competition, some companies are developing new management styles, which make input form employees an integral part of important decisions affecting the company.

Lateral Communication

It includes horizontal flow of information, with people on the same or similar organizational levels, and diagonal flow, with people at different levels who have no direct reporting relationships. The lateral communication is used to speed up information flow, to improve understanding, and to coordinate efforts for the achievement of organizational objectives.

Effective lateral communication between peers is essential in organizations to solve problems, perform job duties, prepare for meetings, listening to and making requests, writing notes and memos, and discussing and writing about projects.

Most lateral communication is of an oral nature, involving a conference between the participants. In some instances the conference is conducted by telephone.



Lesson 05

Communication Destination

The destination of communication is either internal or external. The ratio between internal and external communication varies from organization to organization. As the size of the organization increase, the amount of internal communication tends to increase at a faster rate than the amount of external communication.

Internal Communication
Each of the communication mediums discussed earlier in the downward, upward, and lateral communication sections is also classified as an internal medium. Interoffice memos, reports, and conferences are the most commonly used internal mediums within the modern organization.

Effective internal communication—downward, upward, and horizontal helps increase job satisfaction, safety, productivity, and profits and decreases absenteeism, grievances, and turnover.

External Communication
Because most modern organizations have close ties with various publics – in fact they often depend on these publics for economic survival - external communication plays a significant role in their operations. Examples of publics that organizations communicate with are consumers, stockholders, governmental agencies, foreign suppliers, wholesalers, and retailers.

Types of media used to communicate externally are: letters, reports, stockholder reports, proposals, stockholder meetings, telephone conversations, and conferences.

While informal reports tend to be used commonly within the organizations, formal reports are more commonly use externally. Employees in many organizations are now finding that their responsibility for report preparation is increasing.

Organizations that have stockholders hold annual stockholder meetings to conduct official business—such as electing individuals to the board of directors—as well as to present information of interest to the stockholders. These meetings, although comprised mostly of oral communication, also use some written communication.

An increasing amount of organizational business is conducted over the telephone. Although the use of the telephone should result in the effective use of time, many employees are now finding that the telephone has been a fairly significant time waster, especially when several calls have to be made before the caller is reached. Excessive amounts of small talk during phone conversations can also waste time. Especially wasteful of time, human resources, and monetary resources is the practice of providing a written document to confirm the substance of the phone conversation. When this happens, the primary reason for using the phone in the first place—to save time—actually takes more time because of the duplicate effort involved in making the phone call and then preparing the written documentation.

A certain number of employees in most organizations spend part of their time engaged in face-to-face conferences with individuals outside the organization. Included among these individuals are purchasing agents, sales representatives, upper-level managers, and department managers. Considerable good will can be lost easily—which may be very costly to the organization and to the outsider—unless both parties treat each other with courtesy and respect.

Benefit of Communication: Employees
Specific communication skills that a person may require in any organization will vary from job to job. The possession of a certain degree of communication skills will, however, pay rich dividends throughout one's career. Not only will it lead to a more satisfying employment experience, but also increase the chances of promotions throughout one's working life.

The following list identifies a number of communication and related skills that will greatly benefit the employees of an organization:

1. Conflict resolution

Conflict is a normal part of doing business because organizational members have different and often opposing goals. However, these differing goals keep the organization vital by stimulating creativity, promoting innovation, and bringing about change. Organizations totally devoid of conflict would become apathetic, stagnant, and unresponsive to change.

Conflict resolution is a process whereby individuals resolve issues in an informal or formal atmosphere, or where issues are resolved as part of the ongoing interaction between individuals.

Effective resolutions of conflict, which involves good communication, result in fewer formal grievances, improved morale, and more effective use of human resources.

Conflicts are inevitable; however anger, grudges, hurt and blame do not have to be. While unmanaged conflicts, disagreements and out-of-control emotions can harm important work and professional relationships, effectively managed conflict can actually promote cooperation and build stronger relationships. Most conflicts can be resolved fairly and in a way that actually benefits all concerned.

An effective conflict resolution process leads to unity by addressing concerns or issues rather than suppressing them; can get people talking to each other (instead of about each other); and enable people to be part of a team that cares. This process promotes compromise or collaboration as people learn how to work harmoniously, develop creative solutions to problems and reach outcomes that mutually benefit those involved.

2. Motivation

Motivation is the process of satisfying internal needs through actions and behaviors. Motivation is not something a person is born with or without, but rather is something that can be enhanced or developed. Motivation affects individuals differently, so one must understand the process, theories, and fundamental components of motivation in order to motivate effectively. To understand motivation, it is also necessary to recognize differences among people and be cautious not to assume they share similar preferences.

Motivation comes from within, from a person's own psyche, secret desires and deep-rooted needs which motivate us towards their satisfaction.

To increase organizational productivity and employee performance, there are several motivational techniques that one needs to learn & use. And communication is the needed tool.

3. Problem solving

In a business set up you need to work with other employees as well as get people working together in a friendly smooth environment. Coming from different backgrounds, having different experiences, beliefs, and expectations it is not always easily achieved. People working together are bound to develop differences & have problems working together. An objective and practical way out to such a situation is to identify the real problem and find an amicable way to correct it. Unfortunately, as is the case for most of the work we do, it can be very difficult to establish criteria that aren't subjective. But if one can reach a consensus on the perceived problem and establish how to measure the results of the steps one takes to address the problem, then there is a sound basis for solving the problem. Regular communication, active feedback, and carefully monitoring of the results are all what constitutes creating such a consensus.

4. Public relations

Good public relations help an organization and its employees adapt mutually to each other. Often, it is termed as an indicator of an organization's performance and a program of activities.

The public relations function takes many forms in different organizations, including public information, investor relations, public affairs, corporate communications, employee relations, marketing or product publicity, and consumer service or customer relations.

Basic to all public relations, however, is communicating. Well-planned, effectively handled communications are increasingly seen as essential to the success and even existence of organizations in today's changing world. Every organization - government, business, labor, professional, trade, health, cultural, financial, recreational, educational and public service - depends on people. Their attitudes, attention, understanding, and motivation can be critical to the success or failure of an organization or idea.

Benefits of Communication: Organization
Effective communication benefits the organization by:

1. Creating positive image,
2. Reducing cost,
3. Improving employee moral, and
4. Increasing employee productivity.

In many instances, putting a little more effort into the communication process provides rich dividends for the organization.

Positive Image
The image outsiders have of many organizations is negative because of ineffective communication by employees. In some cases, employees knowingly use ineffective communication, but in other cases they do not realize that what they say or write produces damaging results. Employees, when using either a written or oral communication medium, have an almost infinite number of opportunities for spoiling the organizational image. The damaging situations can range from failing to answer a question to an outsider or communicating totally incorrect information.

Effective communicators are concerned about the impact of what they say or write to the listener or reader. In many cases, the implication of what was said – rather than what was actually said – produces damaging results. (e.g. I have not received your cheaque vs. your cheaque is not received by me. It is with someone else in the office.)

An unfortunate situation arises when the listener or reader receives a totally incorrect perception of what the speaker/writer intended.

Cost Reduction
Effective communication skills make a significant contribution to organizational cost reduction. To illustrate, consider the cost of preparing a typical business letter. Supposing it is rupees 50. If an employee prepares a letter that is not effective – one that results in the need for additional correspondence – the organization's profitability is reduced.

Let's take another example. Consider an organization with 10,000 employees. If each employee on the average wastes 10% of his/her daily working hours in inefficient communication, and if that 10% is equivalent to 100 rupees, then the total amount lost would be of around one million rupees per annum.
Employees Morale

In many instances, managers unknowingly contribute to employee morale problems because they fail to communicate effectively with their subordinates. Managers frequently underestimate the amount of communication employee's desire from them. As a result, information that employees would find useful simply does not get communicated. This lack of communication, in turn, creates an impression among the employees that their managers are not concerned about them or the positions they hold. When this impression is created, employee morale deteriorates.
Essential for Employee Productivity
Many organizations are presently concerned about their inability to improve their productivity, a necessity for their economic well-being. A variety of factors can be identified that negatively affect organizational productivity, including ineffective communication.

In some organizations, employees are not as productive as they might be because management fails to communicate its expectations to them. Some employees have difficulty improving their productivity when they have not been made aware of what management expects of them or when they have not been fully informed how certain job tasks are to be performed. Management's failure to communicate its goals and objectives to employees is another factor that may contribute to decrease productivity.

Misconceptions about Communication

The imprecise way people use the word "communication has given rise to many misconceptions, which are:

We need more communication
One of the most common complaints we have heard working with organizational personnel is that there is not enough communication in the organization. Top managers complaint that they seldom hear from middle managers, middle managers complain that they have been isolated from the top executives and so on.

More often than not, these complaints are justified. But is the problem one of not enough communication or one of quality? The truth of the mater is that most of us are confronted by too much rather than too little communication. From the moment we awaken, we are bombarded with messages from those with whom we live, those with whom we come in contact at college, people at work, and the mass media. The problem is that we are not psychologically equipped to handle all of these messages. While the eye is capable of processing somewhere in the neighborhood of 500-million bits of information per second, the brain only can compute about 500 bits of information per second. As a result, the probability of misinterpreting communication or communicating in an inappropriate manner is quite high.

The point is that the quantity of communication that characterizes an environment has little to do with the quantity of communication in an environment. While there can be little doubt that we need to improve the quality of communication in our lives, we do not necessarily need more communication.

Communication solves all problems

Communication is not a cure-all for the problems we experience. If we are properly skilled in communication, it can be a highly effective medium for the resolution of problems or conflicts. Unfortunately, many of us have failed to acquire sufficient skill in this regard. To assume we can eliminate problems effectively simply by being open and candid communicators, therefore, may be a mistake because communication has the potential for creating or intensifying problems, as well as the potential for eliminating problems.

Communication breakdowns

The idea that communication can break down is widely accepted. Generally, people assume that communication has broken down when one person has failed to accurately interpret the communication behavior of another person. While this frequently happens, it does not mean communication has physically broken down. Rather, it means that we have been ineffective in communicating.

Ineffectual communication usually is symptomatic of some deep-seated problem between the communicators. When we accept the idea that communication can break down, however, we assume that communication is the problem. As a result, we are apt to try to treat the symptom of the problem – ineffective communication – rather than directly confront the problem. Trying the symptom instead of the real problem may accomplish little in the way of making us more effective communicators.

Meanings are in words

One of the most common mistakes that we make as communicators is to assume that the meaning we attach to a word will be the meaning everyone else attaches to the word. This is not always the case. The meanings we associate with words are a function of our individual backgrounds and experiences with other people. Because we cannot duplicate another's background or experiences with people, the meanings we have for the same words sometimes are quite different. To assume a word has only one meaning, therefore, may affect negatively our communication with people.

"Words don't mean – people mean." This is to say, meaning can be subjective. Consequently, you should not automatically assume that the meaning you associate with a word will be shared by those with whom you communicate. The degree to which you and others share common meanings for words will depend on the extent to which you share common backgrounds and experiences.

Lesson 06

Listening

Type of communication	Percent of time
Writing	11
Reading	15
Speaking	32
Listening	42

We spend more time listening than we spend at any other method of communicating. College students averaged 53 percent of their waking hours listening. Of the four communicating behaviors—speaking, writing, listening and reading—listening was second only to reading as the least arousing of the four activities. Listening is like physical fitness or wearing seat belts. Everybody knows it is desirable but finds it difficult to do on a regular basis. Most of us are unable to give close attention to what's being said for more than sixty seconds at a time.

Listening is an active pursuit. It's demanding, hard work. Most of all, when someone is truly listening, it takes time away from the listener's most important focus—himself.

Listening goes beyond hearing. It involves making a conscious effort to hear, to give heed, take advice. Listening is the process by which spoken language is converted to meaning in the mind.

Applying listening to business it is the conscious, active process of eliciting information, ideas, attitudes, and emotions in interpersonal, oral exchange for the purpose of increasing the listener's capacity or planning and decision-making.

Involving your listeners in what you have to say is the key to effective communication. The speaker and the listeners are interrelated. An effective listener therefore must assume some of the responsibility for effective communication. Good listeners become good communicators, and skillful listeners learn from others. Good listeners exert a positive effect on a speaker, helping to improve the speaker's effectiveness.

Listening

When listening is mentioned, we think primarily of the act of sensing sounds. In human communication, of course, the sounds are mainly spoken words.

Listening perceives sounds from the speaker, attaching meaning to the words, and designing an appropriate response, which involves remembering what the speaker has said long enough to interpret what, is meant. Listening involves grasping what the speaker means by seeing the ideas and information from his/her point of view.

Listening is an active search for meaning. In listening, two people are thinking, sender and the receiver. Truly effective communication can't be a monologue in which only the sender is at work. To persuade, inform, or change the listener, both parties—the speaker and the receiver (be it one or many)—must be actively involved. So true communication must be a dialogue, an exchange between you and your receiver. Two (or more) people actively engaged in the same period.

The Process of Listening

1. **Receiving/Hearing**

The first element in the listening process is hearing, which is the automatic psychological process of receiving aural stimuli.

Sound waves are received by the ear and stimulate neurological impulses to the brain. We place these sounds in a meaningful order or sequence so that they may be recognized as words. We recognize words in a pattern that constitutes a language, which then helps to convey the message from the communicator to us.

Another factor in hearing is the speaker's rate. The average speaker's rate is between 100 to 150 words per minute. However most of us are able to comprehend rates up to 400 to 500 words per minute.

Hearing is something that just happens when you open your ears or when you get within earshot of some auditory stimuli.

Unlike listening, hearing begins and ends with this first stage of receiving. Listening begins (but does not end) with receiving the messages the speaker sends. The messages are both verbal and nonverbal.

The English language retains two words which depict a similar auditory function: hearing and listening. Hearing is the faculty of perceiving sounds. It is believed to be the first active sensory organ in human beings, even before birth: it has been established that babies in the womb hear external sounds as early as the fifth month. Interestingly enough, hearing seems to be the last sense to cease its activity before death, and there are many examples of dying people who although cannot speak or see anymore, can still hear what is being said to, or around, them. The fact that hearing is the first and last of our senses may induce us to ask ourselves whether there is a specific reason why this is so. Indeed, it would seem rather logical to interpret this as a natural circumstance that must have some significance for our cognitive system.

The fact that we are hearing does not necessarily imply that we are listening. If hearing may be defined as the physiological function of our auditory sense, e.g. that we all have the possibility of physically detecting the sounds of our environment, listening may be depicted as the psychological attribute which is in action when we want to discern the sounds heard. Listening is, therefore, hearing the sounds of our environment and responding to them actively. For this reason the definition of 'Listening Skills' implies a cognitive approach to all the kinds of sounds we hear in our daily surroundings.

As we become increasingly familiar with the notion that listening, unlike hearing, implies an active response to the sounds we hear around us, a new cognitive dimension opens up for us. We may begin to realize the importance of such a skill in everyday life and the need to find new ways to promote it effectively. Furthermore, by extending this awareness towards all auditory sources in our environments an authentic revelation may take place in our life. Our cities, fields, woods are an immense source of all possible kind of sounds, most of which we have never discerned before.

2. Filtering.

Filtering is the process of giving symbols meanings through the unique contents of each person's mind.

3. Understanding.

Understanding is the stage at which you learn what the speaker means.

4. **Remembering**.

Messages that you receive and understand need to be retained fro at lease some period of time. What you remember is actually not what was said, but what you think (or remember) was said. Memory for speech is not reproductive. Rather, memory is reconstructive.

5. **Evaluating**.

Evaluating consists of judging the messages in some way. At times you may try to evaluate the speakers' underlying intent. Often this evaluation process goes on without much conscious thought. Evaluation is more in the nature of critical analysis.

6. Responding

Responding occurs in two phases:

ii. Responses you make after the speaker has stopped talking.

These responses are feedback. E.g. "I see", "yes", "uh-huh" etc. etc.

Levels of Listening

1. **Active Listening**

Active listening is a special kind of listening. It is a process of sending back to the speaker what you as a listener think the speaker meant—both in content and in feelings.

Active listening is less common but more beneficial and in order to get good grades, you have to be able to really listen to what is being said in the classroom. The most practical reason for a college student to improve listening skills is that good listeners are not only better students, but they also spend less time on their studies and enjoy them more than do students who are poor listeners. Students who are attentive in class and attend class regularly are far more likely to receive higher grades and to learn more.

Characteristics of Active Listeners

1. Active listeners are willing to give the speaker a chance to develop his or her ideas.
2. Active listeners are open-minded about people who look or sound different from themselves.
3. Active listeners can follow several methods of organization—even poorly organized material will be listened to with some degree of tolerance.
4. Active listeners are likely to listen even more attentively when the material becomes difficult. It becomes a challenge to them.

2. Protective Listening

Listeners may not listen to a speaker because they have learned to tune out certain kinds of stimuli. Listeners become speakers, and speakers become listeners and the sequence goes on. As a listener, you will sometimes hear negative and even hostile expressions aimed directly at you. While no one really likes to be subjected to hostile remarks, you have to control protective listening so verbal attacks are perceived without your having to defend or retaliate.

3. Partial Listening

Listening must be a complete process where all the communicative stimuli transmitted by the speaker are acknowledged and evaluated. Responding to some of the stimuli while ignoring others will make a listener miss important facts and points that are needed for clarity and understanding.

A speaker's voice, mannerism, grammar, and pitch will increase or decrease the listener's tendency for partial listening. As a listener and a positive speaker, you should consciously control the urge for partial listening. This will help create an environment that produces greater understanding, and, in turn, more effective oral communication.

4. Preferential Listening

Listening that is directly affected by a person's beliefs, interests, or emotions is preferential listening. Just as people may see what they expect to see, listeners may listen for what they want to hear. Personal background, experiences, habits, and family tradition will many times change or distort the speaker's intended meaning into what the listener really wants to hear. Miscommunication is usually the result of preferential listening.

Types of Listening

1. Critical Listening

Critical listening is usually needed when we suspect that we may be listening to a biased source of information. Critical listening is also associated with being able to detect propaganda devices employed by a communicator.

- Keep an open mind.
- Avoid filtering out difficult messages.
- Recognize your own biases.
- Avoid uncritical listening when you need to make evaluations and judgments.
- Recognize and combat the normal tendency to sharpen.
- Analyze the audience and adapt the message to the listeners.
- Clearly organize the speech so that the listeners can follow the train of thought.
- What is the speaker purpose? What does the speaker want from the audience? Is the overall, general purpose to inform or to persuade?
- An intelligent, active listener is aware of the many possible meanings of words and attempts to place those words in the correct context.
- Can the speech survive tests of evidence and reasoning? Are the main points supported by relevant facts and opinions? Has the speaker reasoned clearly and logically?
- Does the speaker seem to know or care about what he or she is saying?
- Are the speakers' verbal and nonverbal messages consistent? Do the nonverbal messages reinforce the speakers' thesis?
- Does the speaker establish his or her credibility and behave in ways that enhance credibility?
- Is the material presented relevant? Is there a point to the speech? (Or do you, the critical listener, feel like saying "So what?" at the end?
- What is your overall impression of the speech?

2. Empathic Listening

As the term suggests, the listener tries to demonstrate *empathy* for the speaker. It can also be described as listening "between the lines". When we listen between the lines we heighten our awareness and interpersonal sensitivity to the entire message a person may be trying to communicate.

Empathy is perception and communication by resonance, be identification, by experiencing in ourselves some reflection of the emotional tone that is being experienced by the other person.

Empathic listening serves as a reward or encouragement to the speaker. It communicates your caring and acceptance and reaffirms the person's sense of worth. This style of listening seems to be most important in terms of strengthening or improving a positive interpersonal relationship between the parties involved.

Empathic listening often requires the opposite frame of mind from that required for critical listening. Empathic listening implies a willingness not to judge, evaluate, or criticize but rather to be an accepting, permissive, and understanding listener.

Becoming an empathic requires focusing on the following guidelines:

- A greater emphasis on listening than on talking.
- Responding to that which is personal rather than abstract.
- Following the other in his exploration rather than leading him into areas we think he should be exploring.
- Clarifying what the other person has said about his own thoughts and feelings rather than asking questions or telling him what we believe he should be thinking, seeing, or feeling.
- Responding to the feelings implicit in what the other has said rather than the assumptions or "content" that he has talked about.
- Trying to get into the other person's inner frame of reference rather than listening and responding from our own frame of reference.
- The speaker is more apt to keep talking (vs. defending, blaming, shutting down, or withdrawing). This can build trust, intimacy, and relationships, over time.

- Listen respectfully
- Minimize misunderstandings.
- Recognize and identify emotions.

Are you an active listener?

Read the questions below and rate yourself on each of the listening characteristics using the following scale:

Always	= 4 points
Almost always	= 3 points
Rarely	= 2 points
Never	= 1 point

Listening Characteristics	**Responses**
1. Do I allow the speaker to express his or her complete thoughts without interrupting?	4 3 2 1
2. Do I listen between the lines, especially when conversing with individuals who frequently use hidden meanings?	4 3 2 1
3. Do I actively try to develop retention ability to remember important facts?	4 3 2 1
4. Do I write down the most important details of a message?	4 3 2 1
5. In recording a message, do I concentrate on writing the major facts and key phrases?	4 3 2 1
6. Do I read essential details back to the speaker before the conversation ends to insure correct understanding?	4 3 2 1
7. Do I refrain from turning off the speaker because the message is dull or boring, because I do not personally know or like the speaker?	4 3 2 1
8. Do I avoid becoming hostile or excited when a speaker's views differ from my own?	4 3 2 1
9. Do I ignore distractions when listening?	4 3 2 1
10. Do I express a genuine interest in the other individual's conversation?	4 3 2 1

If you scored 32 or more points, you are excellent listener – a positive receiver of ideas through listening. A score of 27 to 31 makes you a better-than-average listener. A score of 22 to 26 points suggests that you need to consciously practice listening. If you scored 21 points or less, many of the messages that you receive are probably garbled and are not likely to be transmitted effectively.

Lesson 07

Improving Your Listening Skills

The success of many of our business activities depends on how well we listen. Studies show that we spend about 80 percent of our waking hours communicating, and at least 45 percent of that time listening. But although listening is so critical in our daily lives, it is taught and studied far less than the other three basic communications skills: reading, writing, and speaking. Much of the trouble we have communicating with others is because of poor listening skills. The good news is that listening efficiency can be improved by understanding the steps involved in the listening process and by following some basic guidelines.

How to Become a Better Listener

When it comes to listening, many of us are guilty of at least some bad habits. For example:

- Instead of listening, do you think about what you're going to say next while the other person is still talking?
- Are you easily distracted by the speaker's mannerisms or by what is going on around you?
- Do you frequently interrupt people before they have finished talking?
- Do you drift off into daydreams because you are sure you know what the speaker is going to say?

All of these habits can hinder our listening ability. Contrary to popular notion, listening is not a passive activity. It requires full concentration and active involvement and is, in fact, hard work.

The following tips can help you become a better listener:

Don't talk--listen. Studies show that job applicants are more likely to make a favorable impression and get a job offer when they let the interviewer do most of the talking. This demonstrates that people appreciate a good listener more than they do a good talker. Why is this so? Because people want a chance to get their own ideas and opinions across. A good listener lets them do it. If you interrupt the speaker or put limitations on your listening time, the speaker will get the impression that you're not interested in what he is saying--even if you are. So be courteous and **give the speaker your full attention**.

Keep an open mind. Don't just listen for statements that back up your own opinions and support your beliefs, or for certain parts that interest you. The point of listening, after all, is to gain new information. Be willing to listen to someone else's point of view and ideas. A subject that may seem boring or trivial at first can turn out to be fascinating, if you listen with an open mind.

Don't jump to conclusions. Many people tune out a speaker when they think they have the gist of his conversation or know what he's going to say next. Assumptions can be dangerous. Maybe the speaker is not following the same train of thought that you are, or is not planning to make the point you think he is. If you don't listen, you may miss the real point the speaker is trying to get across. Listen "between the lines." Concentrate on what is not being said as well as what is being said. Remember, a lot of clues to meaning come from the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. People don't always say what they mean, but their body language is usually an accurate indication of their attitude and emotional state. Ask questions. If you are not sure of what the speaker is saying, ask. It's perfectly acceptable to say, "Do you mean...?" or "Did I understand you to say...?" It's also a good idea to repeat what the speaker has said--in your own words--to confirm that you have under- stood him correctly.

If you must speak, ask questions. The goal is to get more specific and better refined information. To do so, you will have to continue questioning your counterpart. Your questioning sequence will be moving from the broad to the narrow, and eventually you will have the information to make the best decision. The second reason to continue asking questions is that it will help you uncover your counterpart's needs and wants.

Don't let yourself be distracted by the environment or by the speaker's appearance, accent, mannerisms, or word use. It's sometimes difficult to overlook a strong accent, a twitch, sexist language, a fly buzzing around the speaker's head, and similar distractions. But paying too much attention to these distractions can break your concentration and make you miss part of the conversation. If outside commotion is a problem, try to position yourself away from it. Make eye contact with the speaker, and force yourself to focus on the message, not the environment.

Take advantage of your brainpower. On the average, you can think four times faster than the listener can talk. So, when listening, use this extra brainpower to evaluate what has been said and summarize the central ideas in your own mind. That way, you'll be better prepared to answer any questions or criticisms the speaker poses, and you'll be able to debate much more effectively.

Provide feedback. Make eye contact with the speaker. Show him you understand his talk by nodding your head, maintaining an upright posture, and, if appropriate, interjecting an occasional comment such as "I see" or "that's interesting" or "really?" The speaker will appreciate your interest and feel that you are really listening. Motivation is an essential key to becoming a good listener. Think how your ears perk up if someone says, "Let me tell you how pleased I am with that report you did," or "I'm going to reorganize the department, and you are in line for a promotion."

To get the most out of a meeting, speech, or conversation, go in with a positive attitude. Say to yourself, "What can I learn from this to make me more valuable in my industry and to my company?" You might be surprised at what you can learn, even from routine meetings and bull sessions at the water fountain.

Fight off distractions. When you are speaking or negotiating, try to create a situation in which you can think clearly and avoid interruptions. Interruptions and distractions tend to prevent communication from proceeding smoothly or may even cause a setback. Employees, peers, children, animals, and phones can all distract you and force your eye off the goal. If you can, create a good listening environment.

Lesson 08

Nonverbal Communication

Another important element of the communication process is nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is interpersonal communication through nonlinguistic means. In the verbal communication process, the verbal and nonverbal messages need to be consistent with one another, when they contradict with one another; the nonverbal message typically expresses true feelings more accurately than does the verbal element.

The nonverbal element of the communication process is comprised of several factors including appearance, facial expressions, eye contrast, gestures, touch, posture, voice, silence, time, and space.

Non-verbal communication is everything except your words.

Appearance

Appearance is one aspect of nonverbal communication that has important implications for both written and verbal communication.

In verbal communication one's physical appearance affects the message. Elements such as clothing, hairstyle, overall cleanliness, jewelry, cosmetics, body size, and body shape transmit messages. A person's physical appearance can affect the impression others receive of his/her credibility, honesty, trustworthiness, competence, judgment or status.

Facial Expressions

One's facial area (eyes, eye brows, forehead, mouth, and chin) is more capable of communicating nonverbally than any other part of the human body. The face sends messages about one's happiness, sadness, anger, frustration, disgust, fear, or surprise. In fact, we generally do not have to ask people if they are happy or sad – their faces reveal their present emotional state.

Eye contact

While eyes play an important role in communicating emotions, eye contact is used in quite a different way in the communication process. Establishing and/or maintaining eye contact signals that a person desires to communicate – that the communication channel is open. Eye contact can also be used to signal a person's desire to be included in a conversation, as well as to make another person somewhat uncomfortable by putting him/her under stress.

Breaking eye contact also sends several signals. Among these are the telling of an untruthful statement, an uncomfortable with the communication topic or situation, a desire for the communication encounter to end, or an acknowledgement of status difference between the sender and the receiver.

Direct eye contact is a compliment to most people and builds trust. But be aware of the customs of people from other countries. It may be a sign of disrespect.

Eye contact is one of the most important aspects of dealing with others, especially people we've just met. Maintaining good eye contact shows respect and interest in what they have to say.

Eyes can tell you a lot about someone, so watch eye movements when you ask someone a question. It is usual that if someone goes de-focused or looks up, they are going into a memory or into imagination. If they look down and to the right, they are going into a feeling. If their eyes move to the right or left, they are often talking to themselves or listening very carefully. It's useful to pick up eye clues, because it can help you know where another person is going in his thinking!

Eyebrow muscle draws the eyebrows down and toward the center of the face if someone is annoyed. If someone is empathetic and caring during dialogue the eyebrows will not show the annoyed facial grimace.

Gestures

The use of gestures in the verbal communication process can also add meaning to the message that the sender is transmitting. While some gestures (clenched fist, four stomping) indicate anger, others can indicate nervousness (foot tapping, finger tapping). Head nodding indicates agreement while head shaking indicates disagreement. Head nodding also signals the receiver's desire for the sender to continue talking. Keeping one's arms closed tends to signal uncomfortable ness while open arms tend to reveal openness and acceptance.

The thumbs-up gesture is a positive sign in most of the world, but in some cultures it considered a rude gesture.

Gestures do not have universal meaning in all cultures. For example, an "A-OK" gesture (circle made with the thumb and forefinger) is considered by Latin Americans to be a sign of contempt.

The V-shaped hand gesture with the index finger and middle finger may mean victory or peace in the United States, but in some countries it could be interpreted as an obscene gesture.

Shaking your head up-and-down means "yes" in the United States and left-to-right means "no." In some parts of the world the meanings are just the opposite.

Touching

This involves the use of touch to impart meaning as in a handshake, a pat on the back, an arm around the shoulder, a kiss, or a hug. Touch can communicate many different things, such as affection, playfulness, hostility, decisiveness, solidarity, assurance and urgency, to name just a few. There are four universally recognized aspects of touching, all of which communicate varying emotions and intentions. The first is the **professional touch**, used, for example, by businesspeople, between a professor and his/her students and two people meeting for the first time. The second is the **social/polite touch**, used by acquaintances who wish to convey friendly but slightly detached appreciation and affection. The third is the **friendly touch**, which could be used by close friends or close businesspeople and colleagues congratulating one another on an accomplishment. The fourth and most intense touch is known as **intimate touch**, which is usually reserved for couples expressing love and affection through kissing, hugging, or caressing. The amount and nature of touching considered appropriate for the situation varies from culture to culture.

Individuals from an English, German or Swedish culture tend to use touch less as a rule, and rely upon the physical setting to set the tone of a given situation. However, those with Asian, African American, Italian or Latino heritage incorporate a much larger amount of touch into their personal exchanges, using elaborate, extended handshakes, embraces or even kisses to convey their affection and gratitude. Many misunderstandings and much discomfort can arise from a situation that places two people from drastically different cultures together. It is always best to attempt to adapt oneself as comfortably as possible to a situation to decrease the possibility of personal insult and awkwardness.

Posture

The posture displayed by individuals in the communication process also transmits signals about a variety of things, including status, confidence, interest, and openness. Higher-stature people often stand more erect and hold their heads higher than do lower-status people. In a sitting position, however, higher-status people are likely to have a more relaxed posture than lower-status people who tend to sit in a rather rigid, erect position.

Self-confident individuals usually stand more erect than those lacking confidence. Those interested in a conversation tend to lean forward toward those with whom they are communicating, while those lacking interest may slump down.

Voice

The meaning of words can be altered significantly by changing the intonation of one's voice. Think of how many ways you can say "no"-you could express mild doubt, terror, amazement, and anger among other emotions. Vocal meanings vary across cultures.

In many cases, voice mannerism – pitch, rhythm, range, rate, non words (such as “ah,” “um,” “uh”), and pauses – communicate more than the actual words.

Voice mannerism also communicates messages about the sender’s emotional state. Excitement is communicated by a high-pitched voice and rapid rate of speaking. Messages communicated in anger are often accompanied by a loud speaking voice, while seriousness and sadness are communicated by a low-pitched voice. Pauses may indicate uncertainty on the part of the sender.

The nonverbal messages communicated by the sound of the human voice can provide valuable information during communication. There are eight attributes of speech that provide especially important vocal cues to the listener;

Loudness. Without enough loudness you cannot be heard. However shouting or a harsh voice may be perceived as disruptive or insulting. Many times, lowering your voice almost to a whisper will help you make a point better than shouting.

Pitch – Most factual communication includes moderate changes in the pitch of your voice. A monotone involves little or no change and may be perceived as indicating apathy or boredom. A high pitch voice may be perceived as indication excitement. A low-pitched voice may be perceived as indicating anger.

Rate –A slow rate of speech may frustrate the listener. An increasing rate may be perceived as the result of increasing intensity. A fast rate may be perceived as an indicator of nervousness and it may be difficult to understand.

Quality – This is the characteristic that permits you to differentiate one voice from another.

Regularity – The regular or rhythmic voice will normally make you sound more confident or authoritative. Irregular speech might be perceived as more thoughtful or uncertain depending on your words and other nonverbal messages.

Articulation – Speaking each word clearly makes you easier to understand.

Pronunciation – To be understood, you must also use the correct sounds and emphasis in pronouncing each word. Mispronouncing a word might be perceived as indicator of ignorance or incompetence.

Silence – The absence of sound can also send a strong message. Silence gives you an opportunity to listen. You can obtain useful information from the listening to what one says and how he/she says it.

Silence

As a type of nonverbal communication, silence has implications for both written and verbal messages.

In verbal encounters, silence on the part of the receiver can communicate several things. It can communicate that the receiver wishes the sender to continue talking. A receiver who outranks the sender in the organization might use silence to make the sender feel uncomfortable. A receiver’s silence can also signal that he/she is contemplating a response before verbalizing it.

Time

The way individuals use their time also communicates nonverbally. Arriving late for an appointment may diminish the importance that the visitor is perceived to attach to the appointment. Making someone wait

for a scheduled appointment can also be interpreted to mean that the visitor is not very important to the person with whom he/she has the appointment.

Cultures vary widely in the way they interpret the meaning attached to the use of time. Americans believe in arriving on time for an appointment. People of some other cultures are not affected by a visitor who arrives an hour late for an appointment.

Space

People in different cultures require different amounts of physical distance for communication. Too little or too much space between people can have a negative effect.

- A space closer than 1.5 feet is normally considered to be for intimate communication. If you attempt to conduct any significant communication from any distance closer than 1.5 feet with somebody not very close could annoy or even make him/her nervous.
- Allow a distance of 1.5 to 4.0 feet for close interpersonal contact only.
- Allow a distance of 4.0 to 12.0 feet for most business transactions or consultations. Note that four feet is about the distance across the typical conference table.
- Communicate only briefly or formally at a distance beyond 12.0 feet.

Lesson 09

Barriers to Communication

In the process of communication, caution needs to be exercised as barriers to communication are either consciously or unconsciously erected by the sender or the receiver. These barriers hamper the growth of communication and relegate it to the status of a conversation where feedback is not expected. If either the speaker or the listener has problems in adjusting his frequency with the co-interacting, barriers would automatically be erected.

Some of the barriers to communication are discussed below:

- **Over-communication:** The quantum of the material to be communicated should be just right. Too much of it can confuse the receiver. His mental level or professional expertise requires a certain amount of information to be transmitted. In the context of communication, excess of it can lead to what is commonly termed as "information load". The receiver would be able to comprehend and absorb only a certain amount of information beyond which he would be a passive recipient to the ongoing proceedings. Therefore, if one desires to be effective as a speaker one needs to be precise in delivering the spoken material. This will not exhaust or close the mind of the receivers.

Conflicting Information: The receiver already has some information on which he expects to build up an idea after his communication with the speaker. If, unfortunately, the two pieces of information are diametrically opposite the receiver is left pondering over the reliability and validity of the original and current piece of information. He can definitely improve upon his existing stand by raising queries and sorting them out with the current speaker. But if he feels he is not in a position to ask questions or is thoroughly convinced with his existing knowledge he will not be receptive to the ongoing proceedings.

Language Differences: Language itself is probably the most common barrier to effective communication. Among the problems in the use of language for communication are *differences in interpretation of statements.* We have all said things that we thought were perfectly clear and simple, only to have them completely misconstrued. This happens for various reasons. Sometimes it is simply the result of misunderstanding. Or it may be due to an unconscious desire not to carry out someone's request. Or perhaps the speaker has chosen a word that conveys a meaning different from that intended. Although *fee, salary, wages, payment, stipend,* and *emolument* are synonymous each has a different connotation.

Language uses words to convey ideas, facts, and feelings. Sometimes semantic problems arise in the interpretation of words because the meanings are not in the words but in the minds of the people who receive them.

Meanings of concrete words do not vary too much from one person to another. There is little possibility for confusion when we speak of pencil or paper or book. But as words become more abstract (democracy, honesty, happiness), they are more likely to be misunderstood. This is also true of words that carry emotional overtones in a specific society. What *liberal, radical, virtue, morality,* and *integrity* means to the speaker may not agree at all with the listener's concept of the same word.

Another verbal barrier is *inadequate vocabulary.* If our stock of words is poor, forcing us to fumble and bumble as we attempt to express our ideas, our ability to communicate will be limited. It is important to build up our vocabularies so that we can express our ideas clearly, forcefully, and with facility rather than with second choice words.

We should also make every effort to avoid *errors* in speaking and writing. Whether it is in spelling, dictation, grammar, or pronunciation, an error immediately forces the reader or listener to focus on the mistake.

Remember also to choose the *proper level* of language when you communicate with others. To speak above their heads or down to them condescendingly is to invite misinterpretation, irritation, and confusion.

Interests and Attitudes: If the interests and attitudes of the receiver clash with those of the sender once again problems arise. Transmission and reception of the message are contingent upon the mental frame of the sender and the receiver. If there is variance in the interests and attitudes of the speaker and the receiver effective communication is sure to be hampered. It is primarily for this reason that a profile of the co-participant is sought prior to making presentations.

Tendency to Evaluate: Listening primarily with the purpose of evaluating the spoken material or with a tendency of a similar nature, will, to a great extent, affect the understanding of the message. Part of the concentration is lost in weighing the pros and cons of the spoken material. The time and energy which should have been utilized in assimilating the spoken contents of the sender is being used for evaluating the message and the manner of presentation. The listener should have total concentration and listening skills should be honed, if the listener is desirous of making a mark in the effective communication process.

Lesson 10

Barriers to Communication

Badly Expressed Message: Improper formulation and presentation of message can prove to be detrimental to the growth of communication and therefore its impact on the receiver is sure to be negative. As there is lack of comprehension on the part of the listener it leads to misunderstanding and subsequent erection of barriers in the process of communication.

Loss in Transmission: While speaking or delivering an important point, part of the message might be lost due to problems in the medium of transmitting the message. For example, speaking on the telephone. It might happen that just when you wish to communicate an essential item of information disturbance in the line might make the receiver miss out on an important part of the message. This would deprive the message of the communicative impact.

Poor Retention: Poor retention either on the part of the sender or on the part of the receiver can create problems or lead to misunderstanding. If it is the speaker he might posit contradictory points of view which would often lead to a warped sense of understanding of the message. The receiver's past or present experiences with the sender prepare him for what is to follow. If ideas contrary to his expectations are presented they create a sense of uncertainty in the mind of the receiver. Similarly if the receiver has poor retention power he would, more often than not, get confused and this would lead to misunderstanding of the message.

Inattentive Listening: Partial or marginal listening can distort the intent of the message. The receiver could be paying heed partially to the spoken material and partially to his thought processes. In such instances he is sure to misunderstand the intent of the spoken material. Listening is a process which demands that full attention be paid to the spoken material. Any kind of noise or distraction may make the receiver lose out on an important aspect of the spoken material. As a result of this, misunderstandings in the process of communication are bound to arise.

Differing Status, Position and Self-expression: It is always easier to communicate at the peer level or with friends. The primary reason for this is that the mental faculties or the levels of experience of the speaker and the listener match. In case there is too much of a difference between the sender and the receiver by virtue of their status or position or even experience which neither has attempted to bridge, different frames of references would come to the fore. Trying to incorporate ideas posited in course of the interaction within one's own frame of reference would lead to discrepancies in the understanding of the message. As a result of this, there arises a mismatch in the transmission and acceptance of ideas and concepts floated.

Prejudices: Prejudice can also seriously impede the transmission of ideas. An unreasonable bias rejects ideas without consideration. Although we usually relate prejudice to race, religion, and color, most of us encounter it in a dozen other ways. It may be a simple but strongly held viewpoint (or perception) on the part of the Chief Executive, or it may be the classic statement of the foreman: "Well, I've been here 28 years; we never tried it before, and I 'm sure it won't work now."

Of all the barriers to the clear communication of ideas, bias and prejudice are probably the most difficult to eliminate. The usual answer is education, but that is a lengthy and sometimes frustrating job. Perhaps a better way to overcome deep bias is to shoe people how they will benefit by following a specific course of action. People can adjust their prejudices fast when their self-interest is at stake.

"I" Attitude: Too much usage of "I" can lead to an "I-syndrome". Whenever we enter into any kind of discussion it should be well-borne in mind that the co-interacting also needs to be included in the discussion. If the "I-attitude" is changed to a "You-attitude" or "We-attitude" issues are going to get relatively simplified. This would enlist the whole-hearted cooperation of the co-participant by inculcating

in him a feeling of being part of the entire discussion. The impression conveyed is that the speaker is not leading the interaction or speaking from a higher pedestal.

Resistance to Change: Change is a process of life. One has to accept change. Similarly one needs to change or reinforce the existing ideas in communication which is an ongoing activity. If fixed ideas are entrenched in the mind and the receiver refuses to accept the change, positing of new concepts will be ineffective. Being resistant to issues which are contrary to already existing ideas hampers the process of communication.

Refutations and Arguments: Gearing oneself for refutations and arguments merely to score victory over the speaker can divert the concentration of the receiver. Instead of listening attentively his interest will be focused on attempts to prove the speaker incorrect. In the process of communication, discussions if they are posited merely for the sake of making one's presence felt in the course of communication.

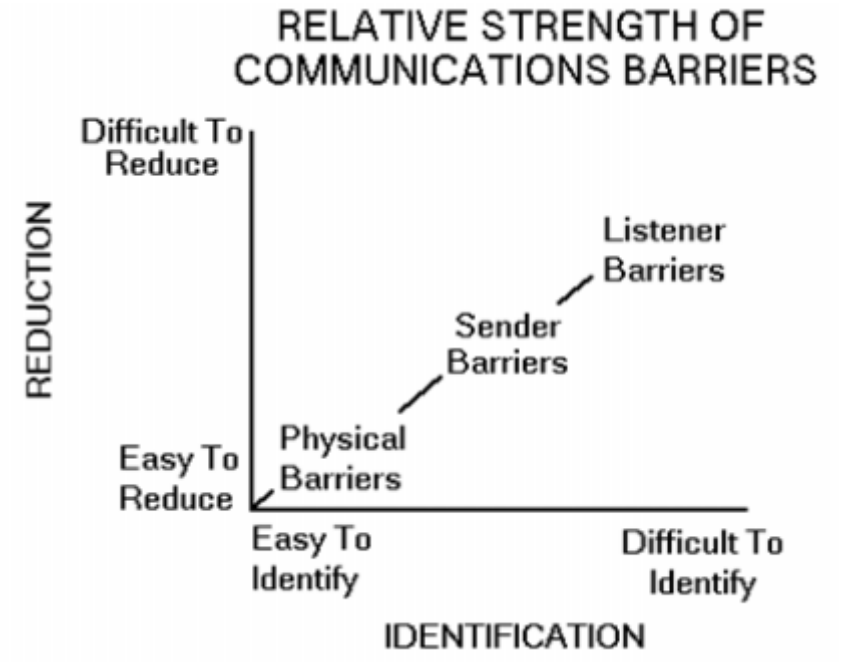
Miscommunication can take a heavy toll of the participants who are interacting with each other. In the corporate sector, the cost of miscommunication is high in terms of efficiency, time and money. It could lead to indiscipline, misunderstanding, hostility and distortion of relationships. In instances such as these, the level of work input is comparatively low and hence the output is also negligible. One is not able to solicit the best out of the interact-ants or the participants. Hence, it is imperative that the moment miscommunication creeps in; it should be rectified so that greater harmony in relationships at the work front is maintained.

Lesson 11

Overcoming Communication Barriers

In order to overcome communication barriers it is important first, to recognize the most common communication barriers and then, understand their negative impact on communication.

Broadly classifying the barriers: there are three kinds of communications barriers, which are: Sender-message, physical, and listener-receiver. When effective exchange of understanding is not taking place, one or more of these barriers is getting in the way. When a barrier is present in a communication exchange, communication will suffer to some degree. The figure below illustrates the strength of the three barriers in relationship to our attempt to identify and reduce them. The figure illustrates that physical barriers are the easiest to identify and reduce or eliminate while the listener barriers are most often the hardest to identify and reduce or eliminate.



Acceptance of the responsibility of communication breakdown is quite a different matter. It is difficult to get anyone to admit that they might be the cause of ineffective communication. A sender feels that most communication problems are the fault of the listener or receiver. These people are not anxious to confess that they might be the cause of communication barriers. The same is true with the listeners. A listener feels that most communication problems are a result of sender or message caused communication barriers. They show little interest in accepting responsibility for poor or inadequate communication.

LISTENER BARRIERS

These barriers relate to the listeners mind set. Typical mind sets of listeners include not paying attention or daydreaming. The listener generally exhibits resistance toward the sender and/or the message. Listener resistance can also be characterized as uneasy communication, perhaps even confrontational communication.

Examples of listener barriers include:

1. Listener jumps to conclusions.
2. Listeners tend to see and hear what they want to see and hear. This usually means they listen to that which seems to agree with their own preconceived ideas
3. Listeners tend to reject any message that contradicts their beliefs and assumptions.
4. Listeners may have emotional problems that cause their minds to be preoccupied.
5. Listeners do not ask questions to clarify when they do not understand a point. They tend to fill in with their own ideas.

Listener barriers that arise in situations where communication is taking place for the first time usually happen by surprise after the exchange process starts. In situations such as disciplinary reviews, accident

reviews or review of inadequate performance, the receiver may feel resistance at the start of the exchange process.

The title Listener Barrier fixes ownership of this barrier with the listener. Even so, it is the sender's responsibility to achieve understanding and therefore, the sender's responsibility to recognize and take action to overcome these barriers. Because the ownership of this barrier is with the listener, there tends to be reluctance by the sender and receiver (listener) to deal with (neutralize) this barrier.

Following are some reasons:
- Sender may not discover listener resistance.
- Sender may be aware of listener resistance, but not know what to do about it.
- Sender may dislike or be disliked by the receiver.
- Sender may be aware of their resistance and not want to do anything about it.
- Listener feels resistance and does not understand why.

No matter what the cause of listener resistance or the reluctance to overcome it, it is necessary to neutralize listener resistance to achieve commitment.

SENDER-MESSAGE BARRIERS
These barriers generally relate to style and content of communication, both of which originate with the sender.

Examples of sender barriers include:
1. Sender has not decided or specified precisely what listener response is expected.
2. Sender incorrectly assumes the listener has adequate knowledge to understand the message.
3. Sender uses words and examples unfamiliar to the listener.
4. Sender continues talking when the listener's attention has been distracted (i.e. noise, uncomfortably cold or hot, other people, dangerous objects, etc.).
5. The sender may say the message in a way that turns of the listener or may even antagonize the listener to cause a totally different message to come through than the one intended.
6. The 500 most commonly used words in the English language have 14,070 dictionary meanings. They mean different things to different people.
7. More words are used than are necessary to convey the message, which forces the listener to make conclusions about which words carry the real meaning of the message.
8. More than one issue is included in a single message, which confuses the listener.
9. Illustrations or examples used may not be appropriate to get the point across to the listener.
10. The sender may intentionally beat around the bush and never get to the point of the communication.

Sender-message barriers start to develop before there is any attempt to exchange understanding with anyone else. They continue throughout the exchange whether the exchange is written, spoken, or a combination of both.

The title Sender-Message fixes ownership and responsibility for this barrier with the sender. Oftentimes, there is a reluctance to deal with (overcome) this kind of barrier for the following reasons:

- Sender may not be aware of the barrier's existence.
- Sender, in a supervisory position, may feel that the receiver is responsible for understanding.
- Senders may be aware of their existence, but not know what to do about it.
- Senders may be aware of their existence, but feel that the urgency is too great to spend sufficient time to overcome it.
- Receivers may not be aware of their existence.
- Receiver may realize that a message is unclear or that the method or style of presentation is causing the barrier, but hesitates to take a risk and mention it to the sender.

It is the sender's responsibility to achieve understanding and, therefore, the sender's responsibility to take action to overcome sender-message barriers and achieve commitment from the listener to respond as expected. Sender-message barriers are by far the most common barriers and contribute to more communication failures than physical and listener barriers combined.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

These barriers usually relate to environmental factors that affect communication. In relation to the sender or the receiver of the communication, these barriers are neutral. They are not originated by the sender or the receiver.

Common examples include:

1. Noise may make hearing difficult.
2. Listener hearing loss.
3. The temperature is uncomfortably cold or hot.
4. The communication may be taking place where there is danger.
5. Distracting activities may be going on nearby.

Physical or environmental barriers most often begin at the start of the communication exchange. They are usually fairly obvious and because they are neutral, there is not risk to anyone's ego for either the sender or receiver to mention physical barriers when they exist. It usually is a very simple matter to overcome them once they are acknowledged.

Even though physical barriers are neutral, and even though listeners commonly initiate action to overcome them, it is the sender's responsibility to achieve understanding. It is, therefore, the sender's responsibility to initiate action to overcome physical barriers to achieve commitment from the listener to respond as expected.

Barriers that stop you from communicating with people around you

Here is a list of barriers to communication, or reasons why we sometimes find it difficult to take the risk and communicate our true attitudes and feelings to one another. Tick the ones you see as relevant in your relationship.

- Fear of appearing low in the listener's eyes.
- Fear of exposing your feelings and weaknesses.
- Fear of hurting others or getting hurt.
- Fear of being rejected, blamed, or condemned.
- Fear of not receiving a positive response.
- Fear of a potential conflict.
- Fear of risking self-disclosure.
- Fear of appearing self-centre.
- Fear of appearing stupid.
- Fear of not being taken seriously.
- Fear of not getting the help you think you need.
- Fear of ruining a good situation.

Lesson 12

Speech

A key rule to make a good speech is to keep in mind that audiences care most about things that directly affect them. An effective speaker understands the nature of audiences and adapts speeches to audiences. In order to do this, you must learn everything you can about your particular audience. Then make sure to keep the audience in mind in every decision you make in the speech development process. When you plan your speech this way, you engage in "audience-Centered" approach, which is vital for success.

When centering on the audience, you start by finding common traits that enable you to identify with them. Since audiences are concerns with things that they believe will directly affect them, it's your job to find as many different ways that your topic relates to your particular audience. The more ways you can find to connect with the audience, the more reasons they have to listen to you. Whenever possible, you will want to obtain the following information about the audience and the location where you will be speaking.

Using the word "A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E" as an acronym, you can get the survey done for the audience analysis.

A-udience: Who are the members? How many will be there at the event? Size of the meeting? Formal or informal meeting? A larger audience also means that you may have to work with a microphone and that you may need some way of making your visual aids large enough to be seen.

U-understanding: What is their (audience) knowledge about the topic? How much does the audience know about the topic? If they know nothing, you have to worry about getting over their heads. If they know a lot, you will have to worry about not boring them.

D-demographic Factors:

Age An audience in their 20's will have different interests and motivations than one in their 70's.

Education levels Is your audience filled with people holding advanced degrees, or are they mainly high school graduates?

Occupation What does your audience do for a living? Do they all share similar jobs or work for the same company? Can you somehow connect your topic to their jobs?

Gender While gender differences may be diminishing, it is important to know the gender balance of the audience. For example, it would be a good bet that a speech that uses only examples from sports would be less effective for an all female audience.

Marital status Is your audience mainly married or single? These groups will have different values and motivations. How about children? Some issues, like safety, become more important to audience members who are parents than an audience composed of single people.

Religion Does a majority of the audience share certain types of religious beliefs? Knowing this ahead of time can avoid offending people based on their faith. For example, using quotations from the bible might not be very effective for an audience composed of mainly of Muslims. In addition, don't make the mistake of assuming that just because your audience is American that it will be a Christian audience.

Racial/cultural/ethnic background Stereotyping can lead to problems such as patronizing the audience, but it is helpful to know if the audience shares any racial, cultural, or ethnic similarities. For example, is your audience rural or urban? You always want to be sensitive and respectful.

Group membership Are there any specific groups that your audience might belong to? For example, if a majority of the audience belongs to an Engineering Association, then you will want to take special care discussing a controversial issue concerning the organization.

Hobbies/Interests Does your audience share any hobbies or interests? If so this gives you a way to find common ground. For example, if the audience is composed of people who all share a passion for computers, then using examples from the computer industry will strike a common chord in the audience.

Interest: Who asked the audience to be there? Why will they be at the event? Why is the audience attending the particular occasion? Will the audience be coming voluntarily or will they be required to attend? An audience whose attendance is mandatory would require you to convince them that your speech is worth their attention. Is the audience naturally interested in your topic? Or will you have to find ways to make it interesting to them? If they normally would not find the topic interesting, then you will have to put some work into adjusting the topic to their interest.

Environment: Where will you stand when you speak? Will everyone be able to see you?

Formal or informal setting: Are you going to speak in a formal lecture hall or a banquet hall? Will you be standing up at a meeting? The formality of the setting will have a definite effect on the expectations of the audience and also how you should approach your speech.

Seating and Visibility: How physically close are you to the audience will affect how close you can get to them psychologically. How will the audience be seated? Will you be speaking from an elevated level? Are there any obstructions that will keep the audience from seeing you or your visual aids?

Temperature: The temperature of the room will have a major effect on the audience. If the room is too warm, then the audience will have an increased tendency to be lethargic and sleepy. If the room is too cold, they will be constantly shivering and shifting in their seats. In either case you should not plan on a long speech or add a lot of attention getting devices to keep the audience tuned in.

Distraction: Noises cause distraction. A large window, where people will be passing by, could be another reason of audience's distraction. An interesting wall decoration in the meeting hall could be another.

N-eeds: What are the listeners' needs? What are your needs? What are the needs of the person or the organization that hired you?

C-ustomized: How can I custom fit my message to the audience?

E-xpectations: What do the listeners expect to learn from me? What does the audience expect of you on the occasion?

Lesson 13

Selecting a Topic

The topic is an often overlooked part of a speech. This is a grave mistake because your topic is the first part of a speech with which the audience comes into contact.

To select a good topic, follow the guidelines below:

- **A topic should be appealing.**

In other words, a topic itself should be interesting, and that it should make people want to hear your speech

- **A topic should be intriguing.**

A topic should tell the audience just enough about your speech to get them wondering what it is going to be about.

- **A topic should not tell too much about a speech.**

Simply stating the subject matter is not a good idea for a topic. Something like, "Money Politics" or "International Trade" not only tells the audience what the speech is going to be about, but they also suggest the reasoning and the conclusion.

- **A topic should be an integral part of a speech.**

Although this is not an absolute requirement, I think it shows good form if you can somehow work your topic into your speech; e.g., going back to your topic at the conclusion of the speech, or even closing the speech by repeating the topic.

- **A topic should not be too vague.**

A problem which has become common or too much has already been talked about. For example, co-education, corruption.

Rules of Finding a Topic of Speech

In real life your topics will be determined by the situation or your boss. For example, you may be asked to give a presentation about how to fund a new project or you may be asked to speak at an awards banquet for writers. In other cases, such as an after-dinner speech, you may choose your own topic.

Begin early

Deciding on a topic early will give you more time to prepare and think, both consciously and unconsciously, about what you want to say. Although beginning early may cause initial stress that could be alleviated by procrastination, an early start will lower your stress level when you give your speech--when you really need to be as relaxed as possible.

Choose a topic you're interested in

If you are bored with or not interested in the topic, your audience will be even more bored--not because of the topic, but because of how you present it. Chances are, your lack of interest will show, and you will lack credibility. On the other hand, many people make the mistake of thinking that people are not interested in what they are interested in. This may be true, but a dynamic presentation can get people interested.

Select a topic you know about or easily research

Make certain that you choose a topic that is easily researchable. Research is becoming easier as a result of computer assisted communications such as the World Wide Web.

Researching Your Topic

As you begin to work on your informative speech, you will find that you need to gather additional information. Your instructor will most likely require that you locate relevant materials in the library and cite those materials in your speech.

A number of strategies and techniques can be used to gather and organize source materials for your speech.

Gathering Materials

Gathering materials can be a daunting task. You may want to do some research before you choose a topic. Once you have a topic, you have many options for finding information. You can conduct interviews, write or call for information from a clearinghouse or public relations office, and consult books, magazines, journals, newspapers, television and radio programs, and government documents. The library will probably be your primary source of information. You can use many of the libraries databases or talk to a reference librarian to learn how to conduct efficient research.

Taking notes

While doing your research, you may want to carry note-cards. When you come across a useful passage, copy the source and the information onto the note-card or copy and paste the information. You should maintain a working bibliography as you research so you always know which sources you have consulted and so the process of writing citations into the speech and creating the bibliography will be easier. You'll need to determine what information-recording strategies work best for you. Talk to other students, instructors, and librarians to get tips on conducting efficient research. Spend time refining your system and you will soon be able to focus on the information instead of the record-keeping tasks.

Sources of material research: **Books, encyclopedias, yearbooks, Periodicals (journals, magazines, newspapers), government publications, computerized databases**

Journals publish articles written by scholars and researchers. Journals are often published by professional associations. Articles in journals usually include bibliographies.

Magazines publish articles written for a general audience. Articles in magazines rarely include bibliographies.

Newspapers, like journals and magazines, are a type of periodical. **Periodical indexes** allow you to find articles from newspapers. A search of a periodical index results in **citations**. Citations identify the actual **articles**.

In general, there are **three kinds** of newspaper indexes:

Individual newspaper indexes;

Newspaper indexes that include more than one newspaper;

General periodical indexes that include one or more newspapers, and often include the **full-text** of newspaper articles.

Newspaper and Magazine Articles: Journals and magazines usually provide the most current information on a topic. Journal articles are more scholarly or professional while magazine articles tend to be shorter and more general. Newspaper articles, while not usually scholarly or professional, can give you the most current news and some additional facts on your topic.

Books: Books can provide a broad overview of a topic or in-depth information. You can search for books by author, title, subject, or keyword. It is often best to do a *Word* search to find books on your topic.

Periodicals: Also called **serials** are publications printed in intervals that continue to be printed for an indefinite period of time. **Journals**, **magazines**, and **newspapers** are types of periodicals.

Citation: A **citation** is a reference to a source used in an article, essay, book, etc.

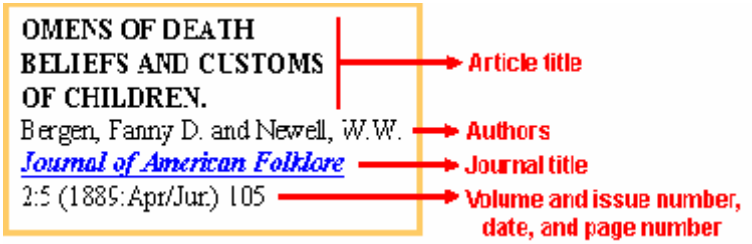
In most periodical indexes, citations include the following information:

Author
Article title
Journal or magazine title
Volume number of the journal or magazine
Date of publication
Page number of the beginning of the article

Section or column number (for newspaper citations)
In some periodical indexes, citations include **abstracts**. Abstracts are brief summaries of articles.
Periodical indexes: Also called research databases allow you to find articles from journals and magazines. A search of a periodical index results in **citations**. Citations identify the actual **articles**.

Electronic Periodical Indexes: Electronic periodical indexes (also called **research databases**) are available via the World Wide Web, CD-ROM, and online systems.

(**IMPORTANT** Note for Ms. Saba: Pl. get the matter in the box changed as follows:
Researching the Topic ….. as Article Title
M. Nazim ……..as Author
Journal of Speech Writing …as Journal Title
2.5 (1889 Apr/Jan) 105 ……..as Volume & Issue Number)



2:5 = volume 2, issue 5
1889 = year of publication
Apr/Jun = months of publication
(This journal was published 6 times per year.)
105 = first page of the article

Reference librarians: **Virtually every library has a librarian designated as a reference librarian. Librarians in general are helpful, but helping you research is the specific job of the reference librarian, who would happily answer questions or offer research suggestions.**

Keep organized notes: **Keep your notes in an outline form, or any form that you'll be able to easily find later. You don't have to get overly organized about it; just have well-marked notebooks or files with clearly defined categories.**

Plan your time for the research: **For most topics, you could go on and on, and research right up until the moment you have to give the speech. But decide on a time when you stop researching and actually create the speech.**

Stay organized & build your note files: **There is one important technique to staying organized so that you can find information quickly when writing: Organize as you go. Build your note files as you go. To do this, have a separate folder for research. Then create sub-folders.**
Your notes should be a trail that always leads inevitably to the information you need. There's nothing worse than not being able to find important information because it's not in the correct folder or file. Use logic. Take the broadest categories and break them down.
For example, if you desire delivering a speech on "public speaking", make a folder called "public speaking basic speech." Then a subfolder labeled "all techniques." As you gather more information, divide the folder further into subfolders called "stage fright techniques and causes," "general public speaking techniques" and "acting techniques."
The idea is to have your search lead inevitably to the information you need, so title the folders and subfolders for easy recognition and retrieval. Be specific with the titles of the subfolders. The additional benefit is that when you have files and folders with specific names on them, the speech virtually writes itself. For one version of the speech, you'll be able to take certain sections, and leave certain files for another speech.

Narrowing/refining your research topic **(Time period, geographic region or country, particular aspect). A topic that covers too much material is a common problem for students. Depending on your interests, a general topic can be focused in many ways. For example, if you want to do a paper on government funding of the arts, consider the following questions:**

What do you already know about this subject?

Is there a specific time period you want to cover?

Is there a geographic region or country on which you would like to focus?

Is there a particular aspect of this topic that interests you? For example, public policy implications, *historical influence, sociological* aspects, psychological angles, specific groups or individuals involved in the topic, etc.

Lesson 14

Thesis Statement

What is a thesis statement? A thesis statement is a declarative statement in sentence form. It is a complete thought; it is not a question. It is a simple sentence that makes a statement or expresses an attitude, opinion, condition, position, or feeling about the subject.

Suppose you begin with a topic, the general subject matter, and, after considering your audience and researching your subject, you formulate a statement about the topic. For example:

Topic: Fast foods
Thesis: Fast foods are a serious problem for heart patients

You have made a complete declarative statement. This statement expresses a condition about the relationship that exists between fast foods and heart patients. However, consider the next example.

Topic: Fast foods
Thesis: Does fast foods cause a serious problem for heart patients?

This sentence is not a thesis statement. It does not express a feeling, condition, opinion, or an attitude. The sentence is a question; it does not declare or tell anything -- it only asks. This sentence would not give focus to your message for the audience. It would only pose more questions.

The thesis statement, then, is a complete declarative sentence that expresses an opinion, condition, value, attitude, or feeling.

Purpose of the thesis

What is the purpose of the thesis sentence in a communication situation? Why is one necessary? A thesis statement is the focus of the speech, lecture, conversation, or discussion. It is the main idea or purpose of the entire message, expressed in a single sentence.
For example:

Topic: Inflation
Thesis: Inflation has seriously affected the housing market.

The entire speech, then, should be spent developing the thesis. You should show how the housing market has been seriously affected by inflation, Every statement, fact, opinion and example expressed should be concerned with developing the concept that inflation has affected the housing market.

Appropriateness of the thesis

The thesis must not only be a declarative sentence; it should also be appropriate for the audience. Formulate a thesis that you are interested in and well informed about, and also one that will interest and inform the audience. Will the thesis be new and interesting to them, or are your going to "inform" the audience about something they already know?

Is your thesis appropriate for the occasion and place? A topic and thesis might be interesting but simply not appropriate for the audience at that particular time. Selecting a thesis that is inappropriate constitutes a failure to adapt to the audience.

Scope of the thesis
Next ask yourself if the thesis is well designed. You have already partially answered this question if you

have considered the level of interest and of prior information of your audience.

You should also consider the scope of your thesis sentence. Have you limited the thesis adequately? Do you have the time and information necessary to discuss the thesis you have designed? Is your thesis too general and too broad to be of interest or to be informative to the audience?

For example, you have been assigned to present an 8- to 10-minute persuasive speech. You select and research your topic. You formulate the thesis: "Inflation is a serious problem in this country." Is your thesis well designed? No, because the thesis is too broad. How could you develop and support this thesis in 8 to 10 minutes? The sentence needs to be limited, and it could be limited in a variety of ways, such as:

Inflation is a serious problem for:

- the young married
- the farmer
- the housewife

The list is endless. How many specific groups can you add to the list?

After thinking of all the possible ways to complete the statement, you can see just how broad the original thesis is, and how impossible it would be to develop it effectively for the audience.

Concreteness of the thesis

Besides being limited in scope, a thesis must also be concrete in its wording. For example, the thesis "Preventive dentistry is good" is, not well designed. This thesis needs to be more concrete. "Good" is a vague term; it needs definition. A more effective thesis for our audience might be: Preventive dentistry is an effective means of controlling tooth decay:" This statement indicates why preventive dentistry is important.

Development of the thesis

After you have formulated your thesis statement, the next step is to develop it by stating your main points. Suppose your thesis is “Improving communication skills are essential for every business student.” What are your reasons for making this statement - good communication skills help make good presentations, improved communication ensures future success? Your reasons for believing that improving communication skills are essential for every business student are your main points and are the means of developing your speech for the audience.

Your main points should always be:

- Clear
- Logical
- Equal in value
- Distinct
- Central to the issue

Clarity

Are your main points clearly worded? Have you used simple terms? Are the words concrete and precise? Are you constructing simple sentences?

It is important to make your reasons clear for the audience. For example, if the thesis statement is

"Everyone should take a first-aid course in high school" a clear reason, stated concretely in a simple sentence, might be:

Students need courses that have a practical application.

A reason that is not as clear, concrete, or simply constructed would be:

> Students need not only theatrical courses, but also they need courses that are practical and have direct correlation with their lives and immediate situations.

Which statement would the audience more readily understand?

Logic

Are your reasons logical? Will they make sense to the audience? Will they seem reasonable to them? Will it be apparent to the audience that your reasons follow logically from your thesis?

If your thesis is "Everyone should take a first-aid course in high school," two logical, reasonable statements that support the thesis are: "Students need courses that are relevant," and "Students can learn to save lives." Unreasonable arguments would be: "The Red Crescent wants you to take the course."

Equal in value

Are your reasons of equal value, or is one statement significantly more important than the other? Is one statement simply not as important a reason or consideration as the other?

Main points should be of equal importance if at all possible. For example, if the thesis statement is "Every one should go for a morning walk." Two important reasons might be: "Walking is a good exercise," and "Walking is good for health." The statement "Walking is a good exercise because I like it" is neither logical nor as important as the other reasons for walking.

Distinct

Are your main points distinct from each other, or do some main points restate or overlap other statements?

For instance, suppose your thesis is "Crimes against women is a serious issue in this country" Two distinct supporting statements might be: "Teenage gangs are terrorizing women," and "Women living in big cities are the victim." These points are distinct because the first emphasizes who is causing the assaults and the second emphasizes the place where the assaults occur.

Two main points that relate to the same thesis and are not distinct might be: "Women are the victim of terrorism in big cities" and "Women are seldom hurt in small cities." These are not distinct statements. They both say the same thing, but from different vantage points.

Central to the issue

Will the main point answer the central question for the audience? In persuading your audience to play cricket, you might use as main points that cricket will make you thinner, healthier, and happier. These reasons are central to the issue. However, if your reasons for advising a person to play cricket include that cricket is played in different countries and that Mr. X is an excellent cricket player, your main points are not central to the issue.

In summary, your main points should be statements that are clear, logical, equal in value, distinct, and central to the issue.

Lesson 15

Introduction

Before you reach this step you have decided upon your topic, designed your thesis, formulated your reasons, and collected your supporting material. The next few steps consist of putting your ideas in order.
In preparing your speech, you have worked very hard gathering information. You know what the information means to you.
Now you need to create meaning for the audience. Putting your information in order will help to create meaning for the audience.

Every speech has these general parts. Usually it is organized by dividing it into these three areas:

1. Introduction
2. Body
3. Conclusion

Every speech, no matter how poorly constructed and poorly organized, has some kind of introduction (you have to begin), some middle section (the body), and some kind of conclusion (at some point in time you have to finish).

Introduction

An introduction is a beginning. It is a very important part of the speech process because it is during the introduction that the audience first sees you and learns about your topic.

At what point does an introduction begin? It begins the moment you address the audience. The moment you turn to look at the audience and utter your first sounds or communicate something nonverbally, you have: begun your introduction. In the introduction phase, the audience may decide if you are credible and if your speech will be worth their attention.

Your introduction should have four purposes:

1. Getting the audience's attention
2. Introducing your thesis
3. Adapting to the audience
4. Establishing your rapport or credibility with the audience

Getting the audience's attention

It is obvious that you must get the audience's attention before you can inform them or persuade them about your subject matter. There are many methods for getting people's attention. Before you decide on a method, you must consider the audience, their background, interests, attitudes, and the tone of your subject. The device you use to get the audience's attention must be appropriate for the audience and the subject, matter. If you are talking to an audience of intelligent, mature adults about the problems caused by inflation, you could get their attention by walking into the room and beginning to shout. The loud unexpected noise would certainly get their attention initially, but if the loud noise did not have anything to do with the subject, you would quickly lose their attention, and your credibility with that audience might suffer greatly.

There are several more desirable tools for getting the audience's attention:

- Startling statements
- Stories

- Rhetorical questions
- Quotations
- Style of delivery
- Humorous anecdotes
- Reference to the subject or occasion
- Personal reference

A startling statement is a strong statement designed to evoke a powerful emotional response. It gets attention by creating suspense, conflict, humor, or by the sheer intensity of the statement. Many stories, magazines, or advertisements use startling statements to get the audience's attention.

"Calories can kill" is a startling statement. It encourages you to ask how or why, "Every day you are being poisoned" is a strong statement designed to get your audience's attention. This statement might alarm you, so you will probably listen to reduce your fears or simply to find out what the statement means.

All of us like stories; we generally relate best to information that is real, exciting, or familiar to us. If you are talking about child abuse, a story of such an occurrence makes an effective beginning. The story makes the situation real; it brings us closer to the situation by making the information personal. The story makes us pay attention.

For example, if your thesis statement is "Child abuse is a serious problem in this country," you might begin your speech with the following story:

"A sick baby is crying. It is four o' clock in the morning. A young, tired woman gets out of bed for the third time tonight in a week, of sleepless nights. She picks up the child trying to comfort her, but the sick child begins to scream louder. The woman tries again to quiet and comfort the child but is unable to do so. Finally the woman begins to smack, then hit, and eventually to beat violently the sick child. Thirty minutes later the child is finally, permanently still."

This defenseless child was one of many small children who were seriously harmed or murdered in the past year as a result of child abuse. Child abuse is a serious problem in this country.

The story, horrible as it is, does get your attention.
A third introductory technique is to ask your audience a rhetorical question. This encourages them to think about the subject and become involved with the speech. For instance, "How many of you know what the prime cause of divorce is?" You are not expecting an answer; you are really just asking them to think about it.

If, however, someone does decide to answer aloud, do not get angry or lose your composure: just incorporate the response, whether accurate or not, into your speech. Remember that the member of the audience who vocalizes his response is paying you, the speaker, a compliment by being interested enough in your message to respond.

A quotation is also an effective means of beginning a speech, providing it is effectively worded and appropriate for the subject matter. You should select a quotation whose source has a positive, or at least a neutral, effect on the audience. If the audience reacts negatively to the source of the quotation, the quotation itself may be discounted.

Your style of delivery may be an attention-getter in itself. The vocal tones, pauses, facial responses, and body positions that accompany your verbal message may be means of getting your audience's attention.

with a low solemn tone and a serious facial expression. These behaviors would suggest that the subject is important.

The style of delivery may set the tone and mood of the speech. It may get the attention of the audience, but it is helpful to couple this device with one of the other attention-getting devices.

Most of us like to laugh and have fun. We enjoy stories, jokes, and witty remarks. These humorous anecdotes are a delightful way of beginning a speech, introducing your thesis, and getting your audience's attention.

However, humorous anecdotes are effective only if they are in good taste and if they reflect the tone and mood of the entire speech. People who are unaccustomed to giving speeches sometimes call us for suggestions. They often request a joke with which to begin their speech; when asked what the subject matter is, they will say it is not important, "I just want a joke."

Someone somewhere said that a joke is always a good way of beginning a speech. It is a good way, but if and only if you are comfortable telling the joke, if the audience will probably appreciate it, and if it is appropriate to the subject. You wouldn't tell a joke to introduce a very serious or sad subject, it wouldn't be appropriate because it wouldn't be in keeping with the subject.

You can begin your speech by a reference to the subject or to the occasion itself. For example suppose you were going to talk about the new television programs for the fall. You might begin your speech by stating, "Tonight I would like to give you a glimpse of the exciting new television season for the fall."

All of us have heard a speaker refer to the occasion as an attention-getter. These are statements like "it's nice to be here in Lahore during Spring time," or "Tonight at graduation, I am proud to… " and so on.

You may also begin your speech with a personal reference that relates to the subject. For instance, at a recent graduation the speaker began the commencement address by stating that the speech was the first one she had given to such a large audience. She went on to say that, prior to taking a speech course, she would never have been able to give a commencement address. Her personal reference was an appropriate attention-getter because her topic was 'The value of continuing one's education."

Introducing your thesis

The second purpose of the introduction is to indicate to the audience what the subject of the speech is. The thesis sentence is typically stated in the introduction.

All the purposes of the introduction serve to reinforce each other but especially to reinforce the second purpose-to introduce the thesis.

Refer back to the story concerning child abuse. The story was designed to introduce the thesis, child abuse is a serious problem, as well as get the audience's attention.

Check your introduction. Does your introduction get the audience's attention? Does it also clearly introduce your thesis to the audience?

Adapting to the audience

Your attention-getting device should be clear and memorable, and your thesis should be a clearly designed, appropriately limited, declarative sentence. In order for both to be really effective, you must design them with your audience in mind.

When you construct your attention-getting step and design your thesis statement, make sure they are appropriate for the audience.

Ask yourself if your attention-getting device will get your audience's attention. Will they find it interesting, thought-provoking, witty, or memorable? Does it relate to or deal with the audience's

interests, needs, or reasons for listening to the speech? If it does, then it will probably be of interest to the audience.

Now examine your thesis statement. Is it designed for your particular audience? Does the thesis involve them or relate to their needs or interests? Is it worded in such a way that it will hold the audience's interest? Reread your thesis statement. Now ask yourself if there is any reason why your audience might not want to listen to your thesis. If you can answer "No," then you have accomplished your purpose-you have adapted your introduction to the audience.

Establishing rapport with the audience

In the introduction, the audience has the opportunity, to see and hear you for the first time. In those first moments you have the opportunity to establish rapport or a sense of good will with the audience. In those moments the audience may decide that they will or will not want to listen to you.

Lesson 16

The body

Before you select a specific organizational pattern for the body of your speech, you can begin organizing your speech by outlining your information. Since you have by this point selected your topic, designed your thesis, and selected your main points, the necessary information for the body of your speech is complete.

Now construct an outline. An outline serves three purposes for a speech:

1. It helps put order to the information.
2. It serves as a model to check your work.
3. It serves as a guide from which to deliver your speech.

Figure below shows one general format you might use in constructing your outline.

Next you need to select a specific organizational pattern. Some organizational patterns that will help create meaning for your audience are:

- Spatial
- Chronological
- Topical
- Logical

Topic:

Thesis:

Introduction:

Body:

I. .Main point # 1
  A. Supporting statement
    1. Supporting information
    2. Supporting information
  B. Supporting statement
    1. Supporting information
    2. Supporting information

II. Main point # 2
  A: Supporting statement
    1. Supporting information
    2. Supporting information
  B. Supporting statement
    1. Supporting information
    2. Supporting information

Conclusion:

Spatial order is the pattern of attaining material by taking into consideration the physical properties of

your topic. For instance, if you are describing a building, you might describe it from the roof to the basement or from the basement to the roof; you are thus organizing the information by considering its physical properties.

If you are describing a movement, a trend, or a custom, you might arrange your material to describe the movement as it moved from east to west or from north to south. For example:

Topic: Accents
Thesis: Accents are different throughout the country.

Spatial order:

I. Accents in the East have certain characteristics.
II. Accents in the West have certain characteristics.
III. Accents in the North have certain characteristics.
IV. Accents in the South have certain characteristics.

Topic: Safe Deposit Schemes (SDS)
Thesis: SDS are offered throughout the country

I. 1st main point discusses the Peshawar branch
II. 2nd main point discusses the Islamabad branch
III. 3rd main point discusses the Lahore branch
IV. 4th main point discusses the Karachi branch

Chronological order

Chronological order is the method of arranging your subject's main points in a time sequence. Some information, such as a message about a historical movement or process, lends itself to chronological ordering, For example:

Topic: History of Lahore
Thesis: Our city has changed a lot in the last ten years

I. 10 years ago all the major roads were reconstructed
II. Five years ago they were connected to the motorway
III. Today it is considered to be one of the best cities of the country

Topic: Earth quake victims
Thesis: The Band-Aid Benefit Concert helped a lot towards their rehabilitation

I. 1st main point focuses on the creation of the event
II. 2nd main point focuses on the planning
III. 3rd main point focuses on the actual performance/concert
IV. 4th main point focuses on donation & assistance that resulted from the entire process

Topical order

Topical order is a method of arranging information by dividing it into parts. Each part or division becomes a main point in the speech. For example:

Topic: Earth quake victims
Thesis: The Band-Aid Benefit Concert helped a lot towards the rehabilitation

I. 1st main point discusses Band-Aid administration
II. 2nd main point discusses performers
III. 3rd main point discusses sponsors
IV. 4th main point discusses audience

Logical order

There are several types of logical order:

- Problem/solution
- Cause/effect
- Deductive
- Inductive

The problem/solution method is an effective organization pattern to use if you want to persuade your audience that a problem exists for which you have a solution. The following steps are involved in problem/solution organization:

I. Define the problem.
II. Show the possible solutions.
III. Propose the best solution to the problem.

Let us briefly go through each step. We will use as an example the topic "Fad Diets" and the thesis "Fad diets can be dangerous to your health."

Step l: define the problem

In the first step, you should describe the current situation, indicating that it is a serious problem affecting many people. For instance, you could begin by describing the current emphasis on being thin as a means of preserving one's health and maintaining one's physical attractiveness. The need to be thin has encouraged people to try fad diets that promise quick and dramatic results.

You would next explain to the audience that these fad diets can create serious health prob1ems. You would support this assertion with facts, statistics, and examples.

Finally, you would describe how widespread the problem is. At this point you might have involved the audience already by asking them rhetorical questions about their own dieting habits.

Step 2: show the possible solutions

In the second step, discuss two or three possible solutions. You might explain that we have several alternatives to fad dieting that are healthier and safer. These include counting calories, counting carbohydrates, and increasing the amount of physical exercise we engage in.

Step 3: propose a solution to the problem

In the third and final step, propose your solution, indicating that it is the best solution and that it will not

The completed outline for our example, then, looks like this:

Topic: Fad Diets
Thesis: Fad diets can be dangerous to your health.

I. Fad dieting is a serious, widespread problem affecting people's health.
II. There are alternative solutions to the problem of being overweight.
III. People should seek professional medical advice in selecting the best way for them to lose weight.

A second logical arrangement is the cause/effect pattern or organization. With this pattern you can arrange your material by deve1oping the cause and then explaining the effects, or vice versa.

This pattern is especially effective if the audience already knows that the problem exists. For example:

Topic: Assertion
Thesis: People are taught to be non assertive.

Cause/effect pattern:
Cause { I: People are punished for assertive behaviors by superiors.
Cause {II: People often have role models who are nonassertive.

Effect {III: People learn to be passive.
Effect {IV: People learn to be aggressive.

A deductive ordering is the pattern of beginning with a general statement that is commonly accepted by the audience and then introducing more specific statements that will develop and lead to the main point of your speech, You reason from the general statement to the more specific statements to your conc1usion or resolution. For example, your general statement is: "Reading is an important skill for every college student to have." You begin with this general statement, then list specific instances of the importance or reading to the college student (with examples that illustrate the results of an inability to read well) because you wish to persuade your audience that "every college student needs to take a course in reading."

Inductive ordering is just the reverse of the deductive. In the inductive pattern, you begin with specific examples, facts, and supporting evidence, then move toward more general arguments, and, finally, conclude with your general statement or thesis. One reason for using the inductive approach is to allow the audience to think through the process with you. Or if the audience feels negatively about your general statement, you need 'to .begin with specific information that will be less threatening to them.

For instance, suppose the general statement or thesis is "Every child needs a dog." Maybe your audience is composed of parents who do not wish their children to have a dog for various reasons. You don't want to make the audience feel defensive. You might begin by stating that (1) my daughter has a pet; (2) many children in the neighborhood have pets; (3) Children are required to engage themselves by playing with them, taking care of them; (4) It is not only fun, but also builds confidence, responsibility in children; and finally (5) every child needs a pet.

In this instance, you started with a specific example, you progressed to a more general statement, and you concluded with the thesis. Hopefully, by the time you are ready to conclude, the audience will feel favorably toward your thesis. The inductive ordering begins with the specific and progresses toward the general; with deductive ordering, you would begin with the general statement "Every child needs a pet" and then develop the speech by stating specific reasons.

Conclusion

The final step in putting the speech together is to design a conclusion. A conclusion should focus attention on the thesis, leave the audience in an appropriate mood, and give the audience a sense of completion. A conclusion is not simply stopping when you are tired of talking. There are several methods that can be used to conclude a speech:

- Summary
- Quotation, story, or example
- Statement of personal intention
- Call to action

You might use one or a combination of them to conclude your speech.

Summary

You might conclude your speech by simply summarizing the information presented or restating your thesis. You have probably heard speakers who conclude their speeches with phrases that begin with "in summary," "to summarize my main point," or "to conclude, what I want you to remember is . . ."

There are many artful ways of summarizing your information. You do not simply stop. You put your speech in focus with a summary. By restating your thesis or summarizing the main points: the audience will leave with your main idea still fresh in their minds.

Quotation, story, or example

You might conclude your speech by illustrating your thesis with a quotation, story, or example. The audience will then leave the speech situation with a memorable example or illustration of your thesis.

Statement of personal intention

Another method of concluding is to state what you intend to do with regards to the subject, situation, or problem. For example, suppose your subject is child abuse. You might conclude your speech by stating what you intend to do about the problem.

Call to action

You might ask the audience to do something. You might ask them to demonstrate that they understand or agree with your thesis by doing something new. If your thesis was concerned with the danger of smoking, for example, you might ask them to give up smoking or you might ask them to campaign against it. The point is that you conclude by asking the audience to take action – to get involved, to participate, or to change a behavior.

Guidelines

- Conclusion should be worded strongly
- Conclusion should be phrased in a way that it shows your conviction
- Present a plan, proposal, or solution
- Ask the audience to do something tangible
- Your audience must be able to relate to your conclusion
- Your conclusion should be practical

Lesson17

Modes of Delivery

There are four modes of Speech Delivery

Reading from a manuscript

Reading from a manuscript is the most formal type of delivery. It is also an effective choice when you want to have the greatest control of the wording of your speech.

You will probably use a manuscript when speaking on a highly sensitive topic for which it is important to have precise wording. Or, if you have spent special effort embellishing your speech with stylistic elements, reading from the manuscript will ensure that you speak the phrases just as you wrote them.

Often, however, reading your speech will rob the presentation of spontaneity and the conversational dynamics that effective speakers strive to achieve.

To compensate for that, you will need to practice your reading to give it the feeling of being spoken for the first time. Skillful manuscript readers will also make spontaneous changes in their speech at the moment of delivery.

Reading from manuscript seriously limits your ability to:

1. exhibit a natural style,
2. maintain eye contact,
3. observe and evaluate feedback, and
4. adjust the messages.

Therefore, never use the written style just out of fear of facing an audience, of forgetting the material, or of encoding messages improperly. Overcome that fear through practice and experience.

If the formality or complexity of an occasion demands the use of the manuscript, observe these important procedures:

- Write a draft of the speech according to sound writing principles.
- Revise by reading the written speech aloud sentence by sentence and making adjustments necessary to convert a readable piece into a speak-able piece.
- Type the revised manuscript in double- or triple-spaced, wide-margined form on only one side of the paper, possibly all in capital letters.
- Practice reading aloud several times before a videotape camera, friends, or a mirror to improve delivery, eye contact, etc.
- Mark the points of some of your important pauses, phrases, emphases, and other nonverbal cues directly on the manuscript. Practice several more times.
- Apply all of the suggestions for good verbal and nonverbal presentations.

Presenting from memory

Unless you have had training and practice memorizing long passages of text, the memorized mode is the hardest to pull off. Freed from a manuscript or notes, you are likely to have the added anxiety of forgetting what you wanted to say.

A memorized speech can also sound "canned" and lacking in spontaneity. Some speakers, however, are extremely skillful at memorizing. Others, who have presented the same ideas a number of times, will memorize their lines whether they intended to or not. Each time they speak on that or a similar topic, they can draw from memory.

The memorized speech may lead to the poorest delivery of all. Speakers must concentrate so completely upon recalling memorized material that they do not make contact or observe, evaluate, and adjust to feedback. Additional flaws exist in the memorized approach, which are:

1. the difficulty of memorizing more than a few paragraphs,

2. the possibility of forgetting material during the speech, and
3. the difficulty to presenting a memorized speech in a no mechanical manner

Speaking extemporaneously

When you speak extemporaneously you are literally making up the words of your speech as you go. That does not mean that you do not do preparation. Rather, as you rehearse you work from an outline or speaker notes that remind you of the progression of ideas in your speech.

Because you are choosing the words at the spur of the moment, an extemporaneous speech is likely to be very dynamic and sound spontaneous and fresh.

Choose the extemporaneous style all of the others. It has the advantages pf preparation, naturalness, flexibility, spontaneity, and full interaction with the audience. To develop an extemporaneous speech:

- Develop the speech by first writing and revising an outline. Write only a few sentences – and perhaps the opening and the closing.
- Place the outline or key words and phrases, possibly all in capital letters, on only one side of note cards. Leave plenty of space around and between lines.
- Using the note cards only when necessary, practice speaking aloud several times before a videotape camera, friends, or a mirror to improve delivery, sentence construction, eye contact, etc.
- Avoid practicing to the point that you memorize a fixed pattern of words. Practice only you know that you will speak in a coherent but spontaneous manner.
- Apply all of the suggestions for good verbal and nonverbal presentations.

Impromptu speech

The impromptu speech occurs with little or no time for preparation. The reduced chances for analyzing the audience, organizing, and encoding require a fast-thinking speaker. When delivering an impromptu speech, use these suggestions:

- At even a hint that you may have to speak, begin to apply the guidelines, even while walking or turning to face the audience.
- Move the planning directly to the specific topic, objectives, and key points. Write them on paper if you have the seconds necessary to do so.
- When first facing the audience, take a few seconds to form the first words silently before speaking them.
- Watch for feedback to know when to repeat or clarify.
- Speak briefly, and conclude firmly.
- If appropriate, ask if the audience has questions.

Lesson 18

Strategies for Effective Oral Delivery

VOCAL CUES

A voice communicates a great deal more than words alone. A presenter's voice is a potentially powerful tool to make an oral delivery effective and impressive. Professionals whose careers depend on skilled communication take seriously the need to develop positive and powerful vocal attributes.

The quality of a speaker's voice is determined by four characteristics: pitch, volume, rate, and tone. An effective speaking voice is well modulated, meaning the pitch, volume, rate, and lone are altered to give appropriate and interesting expression to the message. A voice that is pleasing and easy to listen to is mellow, meaning it is rich in tone and sounds fully mature. It is moderate; the pitch is not too low or too high, volume is not too loud or too soft, and the rate of speech is neither too fast nor too slow.

To add to the effectiveness of a delivery, the qualities of a speaker's voice should be varied and congruent with the message. Vocal qualities should also be varied to provide contrast. In addition, since it is often perceived that the nature of a person's voice reflects something of the nature of the person, a presenter should develop and communicate with a steady, resonant, and mature voice.

Pitch

The term pitch refers to the degree of highness or lowness of a sound. Every voice has a normal pitch in terms of what is "normal" for the speaker. The norm for an effective communicator is a pitch that can be raised a few levels without sounding squeaky and lowered a few levels without sounding grimly. Such a range allows a speaker to vary pitch for contrast while maintaining a vocal quality that is pleasing to the ear.

Pitch has a notable impact on how a presenter is perceived. In every species that makes audible sounds, the young have higher-pitched voices than do grown adults. Consequently, a high-pitched voice is associated with immaturity. An excessively high-pitched voice is shrill and unpleasant to listen to for long. A person who speaks in a high-pitched voice will be taken more seriously if the pitch is lowered.

An effective presenter uses pitch changes to indicate a change in the message. At the end of a sentence, dropping the pitch signifies a statement; raising the pitch signifies a question. For that reason, repeated lifts in pitch ac the end of declarative statements create an impression of a speaker who is uncertain. Occasional and appropriate variations in pitch can be used to accentuate meaning. Rapid, frequent, and meaningless changes in pitch make it difficult for an audience to listen attentively, and may suggest that the speaker is highly emotional or frantic.

Volume

Listeners want to clearly hear a speaker without straining to do so and without being blasted out of their chairs. A presenter who speaks too loudly may be perceived as bombastic, aggressive, or insensitive to listeners. On the other hand, one who speaks too softly may convey the impression of being passive or insecure.

It is commonly thought that. a point is emphasized by voicing it more loudly. The reverse is true. An audience is more attentive to a point that is stated at a lower (but still clearly audible) volume. Emphasis is added by lifting the pitch, slowing the rate, and/or changing the tone of voice. (Vocal emphasis is further strengthened with appropriate visual cues.)

Rate

An average rate of speech is 140 words per minute. As with other vocal characteristics, the rate of speech should be varied during a presentation. For emphasis, a speaker may periodically slow down to less than 100 words per minute to voice a point in a deliberate manner. To elevate the level of energy or quickly

convey a point of lesser importance, a speaker may occasionally accelerate the rate to more than 170 words per minute.

A consistently slow rate of speech conveys fatigue or disinterest. Flailing speech can suggest that the speaker has difficulty formulating thoughts. Presenters who consistently speak at a rapid rate may be perceived to be nervous, impatient, or hurried.

Tone

The quality of tone is a combination of pitch, strength, and character. Character refers to the sense or meaning a particular tone conveys. For example, a tone of voice may be described as gentle, angry, sarcastic, childish, or serious. The tone of voice with which a speaker expresses a point says more to an audience than the words themselves. As with other vocal characteristics, tone also says something to an audience about the speaker. A faltering tone of voice is perceived as timid or indecisive, a harsh tone of voice as aggressive. A nasal lone lacks the depth that adds authority to a voice. A monotone or flat tone that lacks variations suggests a lack of interest or energy.

Speech Patterns

The term speech pattern refers to any vocal trait that is habitual. Although usually learned behavior, speech pattern are sometimes a reflection of a psychological or emotional condition. A person who repeatedly voices the phrase like “you know" may have acquired the habit from a peer group, or the pattern may signal that the person is nervous when speaking before a group.

Like the characteristics of vocal quality (pitch, volume, rate, and tone), speech patterns can either contribute to or detract from a presenter’s effectiveness.

Some speech patterns are very pleasing and add to the clarity and meaning of a message, others are very distracting or muddle a message. The speech pattern with which presenters are most concerned arc inflection articulation, fillers, pauses, and accents.

Inflection.

Proper inflection is the practice of altering the tone and/or pitch of voice to more clearly express or magnify meaning. It is an effective communication technique that can help to sustain audience attention and make a message more memorable. Proper inflection is a speech pattern of skilled speakers who deliver each point in just the right pitch and tone that exactly conveys the conveys of the information, how the speaker feels about the point, or how the speaker wants the audience to feel in response.

Meaningless or misplaced inflection is a barrier to effective communication. For instance, a sing-song (roller-coaster) effect is produced by a repeated pattern of gradually raising pitch when voicing the first phrase of a compound sentence; peaking mid-sentence at the conjunction (and, or, but); then dropping the pitch as the second phrase is voiced. It is meaningless to repeatedly begin sentences with a booming volume, and then allow the volume to trail off at the end, with little or no inflection on selected words.

Articulation

Articulation is the skill of speaking in distinct syllables. Articulate speech is characterized by correct pronunciation and clear enunciation. More articulate speech is developed by listening to articulate speakers and emulating their speech patterns, checking a dictionary when in doubt about the pronunciation of a word, and practicing enunciation exercise. Enunciation exercise stress movement of the mouth; relaxation of the lips, tongue, and jaw muscles that are used to form words; and voicing consonants clearly and distinctly.

Mumbling is a speech pattern lacking articulation. Speakers who mumble do not convey vocal vitality, they lose the advantage that skillful inflection adds to a presentation, and they may be perceived as disinterested or timid. Articulation can, however, be overdone. Precise and obviously deliberate attention

to every detail of' sound and syllable suggests the speaker is making too much of an effort to speak correctly, which may sound contrived to an audience.

Fillers

One of the more distracting patterns of speech is the use of fillers unnecessary words or phrases that are repeatedly interjected into a message. Expressions such as "uh," "um," "you know," "basically," and "it's kind a like" add no meaning. Fillers interrupt the continuity of communication. They signal uncertainty or nervousness on the part of a speaker who tries (often unconsciously) to fill up every silence with sound.

The speech pattern of voicing fillers can be overcome by practicing the techniques listed below.

Speak in shorter sentences. Avoid run-on sentences that string together several phrases joined by conjunctions. Speakers who make excessive use of conjunctions are more likely to develop a habit of attaching a filler to every conjunction, as in "and um" or "but uh."

Concentrate on bringing each sentence to an end (period).

Pause to breathe.

Prepare. Know the message so well that the material comes to mind quickly and easily. Frequently, fillers are an attempt to "fill in" a gap between one idea and the next. A well-prepared speaker is less likely to experience mental gaps.

Practice alternate words and phrases that can be used in place of fillers, such as "in addition," "on that point," and "however."

A speech pattern similar to the use of fillers is the repeated use of superlatives: exaggerated expressions such as "awfully," "enormously," "terrific," "amazing," and "awesome." Rather than adding meaning to a message, the frequent injection of superlatives can be distracting and may detract from the speaker's credibility.

Pauses

At one time, a soft drink was advertised with the slogan, "The pause that refreshes." Pauses in a presentation can have the same effect. While a presenter is speaking, the audience is working at listening. A moment of silence gives listeners an opportunity to digest what they have heard. Pauses help a speaker avoid the use of fillers. They can serve to slow a too-rapid rate of speech. Intentional pauses can add importance to a message. Inserted after a key point or after a particularly striking or insightful statement, a pause allows the audience a moment to reflect. "The right *word,"* Mark Twain noted, "may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause."

Accented Speech

Every speaker has an accent. How pronounced an accent sounds depends upon how much the presenter's speech varies from that of the listener. Some accents are pleasing to listen to. They add a distinctive flavor to a presentation and enhance how the presenter is perceived. In other cases, accented speech is difficult for an audience to understand. Accented speech is problematic only if it inhibits a person from pursuing opportunities to present, or if it interferes with the clarity of communication. Usually, an audience indicates if a message is not clear by their feedback: quizzical facial expressions, gestures that signal uncertainty, or frequent questions that ask for clarification.

Since they are regional or ethnic in origin, accents suggest something of a speaker's background. As with other vocal characteristics and speech patterns, accented speech may influence how an audience perceives a presenter. Concern about the affect of an accent on the audience is alleviated by delivering a dynamic presentation that leaves people wanting to hear more. Presence, positive vocal qualities, and articulation offset the potential drawbacks of accented speech.

VISUAL CUES

People in an audience are viewers as well as listeners. They see a speaker before they hear the first words of a message. As with vocal cues, visual cues convey meaning, spark attention and response from the audience, and shape audience perceptions of the presenter. Skilled presenters are alert to what they communicate by facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, movement, and attire.

Facial Expressions

Standing before an audience, a presenter looks at the expressions on people's faces to ascertain audience reactions. Mentally, the presenter checks, "How does the audience feel about this point?" Likewise, an audience observes the presenter. From facial expressions, an audience derives a sense of how a presenter feels about a point and about them. Is the presenter smiling? Serious? Or wearing an expression of bland indifference? Is she grim or glad to be here? Does he appears confident or uncertain? Does the presenter appear relaxed and naturally expressive or tense and restrained? Some persons, nervous about speaking before a group, suppress their feelings in an attempt to exert self-control. The result is rigid and inhibited behavior that lacks expressiveness facially and in other respects as well. It is only by expressing how one feels about a subject that a presenter can hope to instill those same feelings in others. It does not suffice to express oneself in words alone. To have the greatest impact on audience, a presenter must express feelings visually. The excitement on a speaker's face generates excitement in an audience. An expression of concern prompts an audience to respond with concern. A facial expression that reveals anxiety causes an audience to feel anxious and uneasy.

With respect to facial expressions in particular, it is helpful to address a group as though speaking to a trusted friend one-on-one. Many people who mask their feelings when presenting are animated communicators when they "just talk" showing a range of facial expressions that would move an audience to applaud.

Eye Contact

Of all the features of the face, none has more potential for expression than a person's eyes. Making eye contact with people in an audience is important because it sends a signal that the speaker is connecting with them. Attention to eye contact forces a presenter to become sufficiently prepared so as not to be dependent on reading from notes. Meaningful eye contact distinguishes relational presenters from information-bound speakers.

To make and maintain eve contact entails more than merely looking at people. How a speaker looks at people in an audience is telling: the expression in and around a person's eyes is self-disclosing. A message and perceptions of the presenter are enhanced by meaningful and focused eye contact—meaningful in terms of being expressive, focused in terms of attentiveness to persons in the audience.

Depending on other visual cues conveyed, shifting one's eyes creates an impression of being either nervous or devious. Presenters want to avoid being perceived as "shifty-eyed," a term used to describe someone who is not straightforward. Rolling one's eyes can communicate uncertainty, frustration, or annoyance traits that are not appealing in a professional presenter. A presenter should also refrain from fixated eye contact; that is, unrelentingly fixing one's gaze on any one point or person in the room. A speaker who concentrates on notes, the top of a podium, or on visual aids neglects the audience. Fixing one's gaze on one person can make that person feel uncomfortable.

It is easier to make focused and meaningful eye contact with everyone in a meeting room when presenting to a small group. When presenting to a large audience, eye contact is made by "sweeping" the room with the eyes (similar to the way hands sweep the face of a clock). The technique is described below.

Picture that people in the audience are seated on the face of a clock. Periodically focus on different points of the "clock": to 12 (the back of the room), 3 (the side of the room to your right), 9 (the side of the room to your left), 6 (the front of the room nearest you). Move your glance to the center of the clock, and then sweep the room again. To avoid following a pattern that becomes predictable to the audience, alter the direction in which your eyes sweep the room. Although the sweeping technique does not ensure that a speaker will make eye contact with every person in a large audience, it does promote the perception that the speaker is doing so.

Presenters who refer to notes must develop skill at maintaining eye contact while handling notes. A technique practiced by newscasters is useful. Notes are placed unobtrusively at waist height. The speaker

glances down to check facts (but doesn't drop the head too much), and quickly resumes eye contact with the audience. When changing from one sheet of notes to the next, the top sheet (or note card) is moved inconspicuously to the side and slipped under the bottom—without lifting, waving, or rattling pages in n distracting manner. Being very well prepared for a presentation minimizes the need to look at notes and frees a speaker to look at the audience with focused, meaningful eye contact.

Gestures

Natural, spontaneous gestures are an asset to a presentation provided they are consistent with the meaning a speaker intends to convey (and provided they are culturally correct). Appropriate gestures give physical expression to the spoken word. They are symbolic in nature, in that the meaning of many gestures is commonly understood among members of the same culture. What does it mean, for example, when a person responds to a question by shrugging the shoulders? In the United Stales, the gesture indicates, "I don't know." It could mean differently in a different country.

In a business presentation, speaker should refrain from gesturing in ways that trigger negative responses from an audience. Pointing or wagging the index finger, for example, is impolite and potentially offensive. Pointing is perceived as parental and is often associated with scolding. Instead of pointing, emphasis can be added by gesturing, with an open hand, fingers together, palm and inner wrist turned slightly toward the audience, forearm slightly bent and extended at about a 45-degree angle to the side (not aimed directly *at* the audience). A point can also be accentuated by slightly raising the forearm and cupping the hand with fingers touching (in a manner that suggests the point is perched on the fingertips). When gesturing, fingers should be together (splayed fingers make hands appear larger and gestures more aggressive). The palm should be relaxed (slightly curved, as opposed to a flat and rigid palm).

Hands should never be used to grip a podium. Doing so inhibits gesturing and conveys tension. A speaker should refrain from placing hands on hips with arms bent at the elbow a stance perceived as aggressive. In most situations, hands should be out of a speaker's pockets. Speakers who put their hands in their pockets often do so because they don't know what else lo do with them. From nervousness or lack of awareness, they jingle coins or rattle keys and distract the audience from the message. On occasion, when the setting is casual and a speaker wants to convey the impression of being "just one of the folks," placing hands in one's pockets (briefly) can be a gesture that puts an audience at ease. However, it is a gesture that should be done intentionally, sparingly, and only when appropriate to the setting.

Gestures are more natural when arms and hands are relaxed. When not gesturing, arms may drop loosely to one's sides, or hands may be comfortably folded (not tensely clutched) in front of the body in a manner that curves the arms forward. When a presenter uses gestures to accentuate a message, arms and hands will not stay in any one position for long.

Very expressive speakers need to lake care to avoid gesturing excessively. On the other hand, stoic speakers need to add gestures to their repertoire of presentation skills. When presenting to large groups, gestures need to be expressed more expansively or they will not be seen by people seated, at a distance from the platform.

Movement

The influence of television has accustomed people to viewing visual images in action. A presenter is a visual image. As a rule, when a speaker remains stationary, as though locked in one place on the platform, the interest of the audience wanes. When a speaker doesn't move. People in the audience don't move—their heads, their eyes, or their position while seated. Remaining sedentary for long is tiresome, and the last thing a presenter wants to create is the impression of being tiresome.

Head Movement

A speaker's head should move. How? In a manner that reinforces the meaning the speaker wants to convey. Nodding the head up and down communicates affirmation. Shaking the head side to side signifies disagreement. Cocking the head to the side signals uncertainty, or suggests that a person is thinking.

Body Movement

A speaker's body should move. Body movement adds more than expressiveness to a presentation. It adds energy as well. Effective presenters make use of the entire platform available to them as a means of expanding their presence before a group. From the perspective of the audience, a speaker who remains in one spot is present on that one spot only. Where as presenters who move around fill the meeting room with their presence. Movement suggests that a speaker is at ease comfortable, and confident in the presentation environment. Movement also enables a presenter to relate to an audience more effectively. By moving alternately to both right and left sides of the platform and forward toward the audience, a speaker can better make meaningful eye contact and convey connection with the audience.

The attentiveness and energy of both speaker and audience are heightened when a speaker stands. Standing, a speaker can move and gesture more freely than when seated. Standing, a speaker can breathe more fully then when seated. A person thinks faster when standing and more easily maintains a posture that appears alert.

Posture

On the matter of posture, the most becoming posture is upright (not rigidly erect), shoulders back and squared, head held up. A slouching or slumped posture suggests disinterest or low self-esteem. A presenter wants to appear at ease and, at the same time, attentive and on the ready. Good posture is an attribute that contributes to a speaker's presence.

Skilled movement avoids actions that are potentially distracting or irritating to an audience. Pacing repetitively back and forth, back and forth from one side of the platform to the other is distracting. So is rocking on the feet or swaying from side to side. Effective presenters refrain, whenever possible, from standing behind a podium.

A podium places a barrier between a presenter and people in the audience. If a podium is required, it is preferable to place it to one side of the platform, leaving the platform open for the presenter to be "out front" and "up front" with people in the audience. The speaker can move back toward the podium to refer to notes when necessary. Placing a podium at the center of a platform increases the temptation to stay behind it, which inhibits a presenter's gestures, movements, and relationship to the audience. In formal settings, the use of podiums persists. When a presenter must speak from behind a podium that restricts full-body movement, other vocal and visual cues take on even more significance than usual.

Attire

Few things about a presenter are as visible as attire. It is the first and most visible thing an audience sees and something they view throughout a presentation. The preferred attire, accessories, and grooming for a business presentation enhance audience perceptions of the presenter. They convey that the speaker is a credible, competent, first-class professional. Attire, accessories, and grooming should not distract from the presentation, of the message. A persuasive presenter wants people thinking and talking about what was said not about how the speaker looked or what the speaker wore. For these reasons, a presenter's attire should be clean, neat, and understated. The guidelines described below are consistent with the standards commonly accepted by successful professionals.

Refrain from overdressing or under dressing. In a business setting, a conservatively tailored suit of a dark color is preferable. For men a while shirt remains the standard. A white, cream, or pastel shirt is preferable for women. Loud colors or busy patterns should be avoided. Clothing should be clean and pressed. Shoes should be shined and in good repair.

Few accessories should be worn. Those that are should be relatively inconspicuous. Audience attention should be on the presentation, not distracted by large or flashy jewelry, such as glittery rings and watches or dangling necklaces and ear rings.

Hair should be clean and neatly styled. Hair that is too long, too fluffed, unkempt, or that falls across the face is distracting and detracts from a professional appearance. Fingernails should be clean, well manicured, and trimmed to a moderate length. Pale nail polish is preferred. Very long fingernails painted in bright or dark colors can distract an audience when a speaker gestures.

Clothing of very bold or bright colors should be avoided. Hot pink or neon green may be stylish and attractive to wear to a party, but will not create a favorable impression during a business presentation.

Appropriate attire for a business presentation is not based on personal preference or styles that are currently in vogue for social occasions. The purpose of a business presentation is not to make a fashion statement. It is to deliver a message that the audience will take seriously. They will be more inclined to do so if the presenter looks like someone to be taken seriously.

Avoid distracting habits

Some behaviors do not belong on the platform of a business presentation, among them those listed below.
Never chew gum in a business presentation.
Never smoke in a business presentation.
Refrain from fiddling with clothing, jewelry, hair, fingernails, audio-visual equipment, or in any manner that could distract the attention of the audience.

A professional's platform behavior is always governed by good manners and courteous regard for the people in an audience.

Lesson 19

Making a Good Speech

▪ **Keep your audience in mind**: Because your audience cannot "rehear" ideas, once you have stated them, look for ways to help your audience easily follow your ideas.
▪ **Speak slowly, vigorously, and enthusiastically**. Be sure you enunciate your words carefully, particularly if you are addressing a large group. Maintain a conversational style. Talk with the audience, not at them.
▪ **Use gestures to accentuate points**. Move your body deliberately to aid you in announcing major transition points. In short, avoid standing transfixed before your audience.
▪ **Maintain eye contact with your audience**. Doing so helps you keep your listeners involved in what you are saying. If you look at the ceiling, the floor, the corners of the room, your audience may sense a lack of self-confidence. Lack of eye contact also tends to lessen your credibility. In contrast, consistent eye contact enhances the importance of the message. By looking at your audience, you can often sense their reaction to what you are saying and make adjustments in your presentation if necessary. Be careful; do not lock eyes with individual members.
▪ **Do not memorize your presentation**, and do not write your presentation. Otherwise, your speech will sound as if you are reading it. Use brief notes, written on one page, if possible. Use colored pens to highlight points. Avoid note cards and several pages of notes. If you suddenly forget what you are trying to say, and if you have several pages of notes, you can easily lose track of where you are in your notes. If possible, type the outline of your presentation on one sheet of paper. If you do forget what you are going to say, a quick glance will usually refresh your memory.
▪ **Rehearse your presentation until you are comfortable**. Try walking around, speaking each segment and then speaking aloud the entire presentation. Rephrase ideas that are difficult for you to say--these will likely be hard for your audience to follow. Be sure to time your presentation so that it does not exceed the time limit. Keep your presentation as short as possible. Therefore, avoid adding information to your presentation (and your outline) as your rehearse.
▪ **If possible, record your speech. Listen to what you have said as objectively as possible**. As you listen, consider the main issues of audience, purpose, organization, context, content, and style. Listen for tone, attitude, and clarity. Is the tone you project appropriate for your audience and your purpose? Is each sentence easy to understand? Are you speaking too rapidly? Are the major divisions in your presentation easy to hear? Are any sentences difficult to understand?
▪ **If possible, become familiar with the room** where you will give the presentation so that you will have some sense about how loudly you should talk and how people will be seated. Also check out for size, temperature, cleanliness, and proper lighting.
▪ **Try not to provide the audience handout material before you begin**. To do so encourages your audience to read rather than listen. If you must provide written material, be sure the material is coordinated with your presentation. That way, you have a better chance of keeping your audience's attention on what you are saying.

No matter what type of presentation you are giving, your ultimate success as a speaker and the success of the presentation depends on your establishing credibility with your audience. Guidelines on planning, structuring, and delivering the presentations are important because they are designed to build your credibility with your audience. However, no amount of planning and organization will substitute for practice, which builds confidence. Practice also enhances and displays your planning and the value of your ideas.

Overcoming stage freight

Everyone experiences stage fright, speech anxiety, or fear of the audience. Surveys show that fear of speaking in front of people is one of the greatest fears people have.
The following lists some techniques people use for coping with this freight:

Know the room. Be familiar with where you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.

Know the audience. Greet some of them as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.
Know your material. If you're not familiar or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.
Relax. Ease tension by doing exercises.
Visualize yourself giving your speech. Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured. When you visualize yourself as successful, you will be successful.
Realize that people want you to succeed. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They don't want you to fail.
Don't apologize. If you mention your nervousness or apologise for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed.
Turn nervousness into positive energy. Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
Gain experience. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

Types of Speech

Informative Speech

Informative speaking offers you an opportunity to practice your researching, writing, organizing, and speaking skills. You will learn how to discover and present information clearly. If you take the time to thoroughly research and understand your topic, to create a clearly organized speech, and to practice an enthusiastic, dynamic style of delivery, you can be an effective "teacher" during your informative speech. Finally, you will get a chance to practice a type of speaking you will undoubtedly use later in your professional career.

The purpose of the informative speech is to provide interesting, useful, and unique information to your audience. By dedicating yourself to the goals of providing information and appealing to your audience, you can take a positive step toward succeeding in your efforts as an informative speaker.

Types of informative speeches: Objects, processes, events, concepts
These categories provide an effective method of organizing and evaluating informative speeches. Although they are not absolute, these categories provide a useful starting point for work on your speech.

In general, you will use four major types of informative speeches. While you can classify informative speeches many ways, the speech you deliver will fit into one of four major categories.

Informative speeches about objects
Speeches about objects focus on things existing in the world. Objects include, among other things, people, places, animals, or products.
Because you are speaking under time constraints, you cannot discuss any topic in its entirety. Instead, limit your speech to a focused discussion of some aspect of your topic.

Informative Speeches about Processes
Speeches about processes focus on patterns of action. One type of speech about processes, the demonstration speech, teaches people "how-to" perform a process. More frequently, however, you will use process speeches to explain a process in broader terms. This way, the audience is more likely to understand the importance or the context of the process.

Informative Speeches about Events
Speeches about events focus on things that happened, are happening, or will happen. When speaking about an event, remember to relate the topic to your audience. A speech chronicling history is informative, but you should adapt the information to your audience and provide them with some way to use the information. As always, limit your focus to those aspects of an event that can be adequately discussed within the time limitations of your assignment.

Informative Speeches about Concepts

Speeches about concepts focus on beliefs, ideas, and theories. While speeches about objects, processes, and events are fairly concrete, speeches about concepts are more abstract. Take care to be clear and understandable when creating and presenting a speech about a concept. When selecting a concept, remember you are crafting an informative speech. Often, speeches about concepts take on a persuasive tone. Focus your efforts toward providing unbiased information and refrain from making arguments. Because concepts can be vague and involved, limit your speech to aspects that can be readily explained and understood within the time limits.

Persuasive speech

Persuasive speech: A speech designed to change or reinforce the audience's beliefs or actions. The ability to speak persuasively will benefit you in every part of your life from personal relations to community activities to career aspirations. When you speak to persuade, you act as an advocate. Persuasion is a psychological process in a situation where two or more points of view exist. The points of view may be completely opposed, or they may simply be different in degree.

Persuasive speaking is complex & challenging. Audience analysis and adaptation is much more demanding than in informative speaking. You should enter a persuasive speaking situation with a realistic sense of what you can accomplish. If listeners are not strongly committed one way or another, you may be able to move some of them toward your side.

If listeners are strongly opposed to your viewpoint, you are successful if you cause a few listeners to reconsider their views.

A persuasive speaker must have a strategy to win the audience to his or her side.

Kinds of persuasive speeches

- **Question of Fact** - a question about the truth or falsity of an assertion.

Your goal in this speech is to persuade us to accept a particular view of the disputed facts. If the facts are not in dispute, there is no reason for you to try to persuade us. Your topic may address past, present, or future facts.

- **Question of Value** - a question about the worth, rightness, morality, and so forth of an idea or action.

Your goal in this speech is to persuade us to agree with your value judgments about an issue. These judgments deal with the relative worth of things; good or bad, right or wrong. You must justify your opinions by establishing standards by which we can measure the issue.

- **Question of Policy** - a question about whether a specific course of action should or should not be taken

Your goal in this speech is to persuade us what course of action should or should not be taken. Tell us what needs to be done. Again be very specific-Who should do what? Who is accountable? How can we participate in this change?

Organizing persuasive speeches

- **Problem-Solution** - first, show the existence of a *problem*, then present a *solution*
- **Problem-Cause-Solution** - identify the *problem*; analyze the *causes* of the problem; present a *solution*
- **Comparative Advantages**- each main point explains why a speaker's solution to a problem is preferable to other proposed solutions (used when the audience agrees a problems exists)
- **Motivated Sequence**- good for speeches that seek immediate action

Principles of persuasion

While preparing persuasive speeches, keep in mind that people are more likely to change their behavior if:

- the proposition asks for a small change rather than a large change in their lives (e.g., trying one vegetarian meal rather than becoming total vegetarians).

- the change will benefit them more than it will cost them. Consider the costs to the audience in terms of money, time commitment, energy, and skill.
- the change meets their needs. Needs vary in different communities, in different schools, and in different individuals.
- suggested change is approached gradually in the talk. Move from arguments which the audience will find most acceptable to those which the audience will find more difficult to accept.

Ceremonial Speeches

Such speeches are: tributes, acceptance, inspiration, after-dinner, & master of ceremonies.

Lesson 20

Handling Questions & Answers

Business presentations commonly include verbal feedbacks from the audience. This refers to questions, comments, or objections that are voiced by persons in the audience. A presenter can prepare effective responses by following the four steps as below:

1. **Anticipating**
2. **Answering**
3. **Revising**
4. **Rehearsing**

1. Anticipating

Questions and comments that an audience is likely to raise can be anticipated by considering:

- **Previous experience**
- **Common concerns**
- **Planning**
- **Input from associates**

Previous Experience

If a presenter has delivered the same or a similar subject previously, it is helpful to recall the questions or objections that were raised before. If the content of the message is essentially the same, it is probable that some questions and comments will be essentially the same from one presentation to the next. For instance: A consultant who makes oral presentations to prospective clients is regularly asked, "How do you propose we implement this program?"

Common Concerns

A presenter should expect questions or objections on issues that commonly interest or concern people. In broad terms, such issues pertain to time, cost, and impact. For example: people are likely to ask questions similar to those shown here:

- How much time will it take to develop, learn, implement, or gain a return?
- How much does it cost: short-term, long-term, per user, or compared to competitors?
- What is the impact if we do not act on the matter? What is the impact if we do?

Planning

Planning for a presentation can reveal questions and concerns that may be raised. These questions guide the planning process and help a presenter gain insight into the audience. By asking questions, a presenter can identify questions an audience may ask.

While planning and preparing, for a presentation for a prospective client the consultant reflects on the following questions. Who among this group is likely to raise questions? Or objections? What points in this presentation are subject to questions? What issues will this client be most interested in or concerned about? Are there any gaps or oversights in the message that the client will question?”

Input from Associates

Business associates can be a helpful source for identifying probable questions and objections. Associates who have more experience then the presenter in certain areas (the subject, the audience or a role the speaker has recently acquired) can serve as "advisors," alerting the presenter to the type of audience feedback to expect. If the presenter is as experienced as associates, it is still beneficial to solicit input from others who are likely to be more objective. An effective means of doing so is to deliver the presentation to associates who role-play members of the prospective audience and make note of questions or concerns that occur to them.

2. Answering

Write out answers to anticipated questions and objections. Anticipating audience feedback does not fully prepare a presenter to respond skillfully. A presenter must determine how each question or comment will be answered. Some speakers invest considerable time and effort preparing the content and audiovisuals for a presentation. They practice their platform behavior to deliver the message effectively. Then, when a member of the audience raises a question at the end, they hem and haw and stutter and slammer in response and sacrifice their credibility.

While preparing for a presentation, every anticipated question and objection should be written out. For each one, an answer is also written out. The best answers (like the best presentation content) will relate to the nature and needs of the audience, and will echo the core concept or a key point of the message. It is useful to prepare two options: summary answer and an expanded explanation. In most cases, it is preferable to answer in a summary manner (especially when time is limited). However, if summary answer does not satisfy the person who raised the issue, the presenter is prepared with a more detailed "back-up" answer.

3. Revising

Revise the content of the presentation. After anticipating questions and preparing answers to them, a presenter may find it advantageous to revise the content of the message. Doing so is recommended when a presentation is delivered repeatedly and, on almost every occasion, the same (or similar) questions and comments are raised. By rephrasing in existing point or inserting an additional point, the presenter addresses the issue before the floor is opened to questions.

Anticipated questions or concerns may be incorporated into the content by the use of rhetorical questions. The following questions are based on the earlier example that referred on a consultant's presentation. In this example, the presenter takes the initiative and beats the audience to the punch, so to speak, by integrating the issues into the message.

"How, you might ask, would you implement this program? That's the next point we'll consider."

"What impact can you expect? Understandably, many of our clients have asked that same question. They found..."

When anticipated questions or objections are addressed as part of the content of a message, the presenter is relieved of the pressure of having to formulate an answer on the spot. Moreover, people in the audience may perceive that the presenter is clever to have anticipated what is on their minds. They are favorably impressed when a presentation obviously is well prepared and relates specifically to their concerns.

It is *not* advisable to revise content to incorporate anticipated questions if one or more of these conditions exist:

- If doing so would interfere with the continuity of the message
- If the time available for the presentation is limited
- If the issue is potentially controversial and may not occur to an audience unless the presenter brings it up

5. Rehearsing

Rehearse a Q & A session.

Q & A is an abbreviation for the question-and-answer period that accompanies many presentations. Unless a presenter is proficient in fielding questions, and the presentation is one that has been done before, the presenter should rehearse a Q&A. Although the attention of an audience may vacillate during

a presentation; all eyes and ears are on the presenter as soon as someone raises a question or objection. Vocal and visual cues are especially telling when a speaker is "on the spot" responding to audience feedback. It is essential to maintain a confidence presence, which is developed by practice.

In a simulated Q & A session, associates play the role of members of the audience to whom the presentation will be given. The presenter responds to questions and objections posed by associates. Rehearsing in this manner helps to develop self-assurance. In addition, it brings to light any answers that are vague, ambivalent, or that could be better worded to make a stronger case.

Inviting Questions & Comments

Types of verbal feedback to anticipate. Recognizing that thinking and communication patterns differ, a presenter should be prepared for verbal feedback that ranges from conceptual to concrete. Visionary people (those who look at the "big picture") typically ask questions that are broad in scope, such as "What are the implications? Or "What are your 10-year projections?" Detail-oriented people will focus on specifics and ask questions like, "How would this apply to assembly-line workers?" Or "How do your projections break down on a monthly basis per workstation?" Presenters who are inclined to be conceptual thinkers sometimes overlook preparing for detailed questions from others. Conversely, those who tend to think in concrete terms may neglect to anticipate questions of a broader nature. Both types concrete and conceptual should be considered.

Inviting audience feedback before a presentation

When it serves the purpose of a presentation to encourage audience involvement at the outset, a speaker can elicit questions or comments before delivering the body of the message. Audience feedback can, in fact, serve as the opener to a presentation. One sure way to capture people's attention is to get them talking. If the presenter has not yet delivered the message, what feedback can the audience members offer? They can voice feedback from their experience or ideas. The following example illustrates how the technique works. It is beneficial to make use of a flip chart or blank overhead transparencies to write keywords of the points people raise.

In a presentation to civic leaders, an urban development specialist opened his presentation by inviting comments from the audience. "I know you're all eager to hear our proposal for redevelopment of the downtown area. Before I relate what we have in mind, I'd like to take a few minutes to hear what is on your minds." (Knowing that people are sometimes reluctant to speak, up, the presenter volunteered the first comment to encourage feedback from the group.) "For example, if I were seated where you are, I'd want to know about the cost of the project. Is cost an issue some of you want to hear about?" (Of course it was and the audience nodded their heads in agreement.) "What else….?"

One person posed the question. "Will your plan stimulate business in the area?" (On a flip chart, the presenter wrote 'New Business.") Another member of the audience offered. "I'd like to see a plan that will add beauty to the downtown area." (The presenter wrote "aesthetics.") In minutes, half a dozen items were listed. Resuming his speaking role, the presenter went on to say. "Thank you these are all good point. And, as you'll soon discover, they are the very points that our plan addresses."

Questions and comments during a presentation

To invite questions or comments during a presentation requires a sufficient time frame, a setting in which participation is an acceptable norm, and a presenter who can maintain control of the situation. These conditions occur primarily in the Interactive mode. Typically, a presenter would not invite questions from the audience during a 15-minute speech at a service club luncheon. It might be appropriate and useful to do so during a one-hour sales demonstration. It is highly recommended to actively engage the audience during a full-day seminar or a three-day training session.

There are drawbacks to inviting verbal feedback during a presentation. It can interrupt the orderly progression of the message and consume valuable time. It can disrupt a speaker's agenda, especially if an aggressive person tries to monopolize the Q &: A session. Nevertheless, including the audience adds a high degree of relational value to a presentation.

When done during a presentation, the best time to ask for questions or comments is after each key point. In that way, the presenter and the audience are less likely to lose the "train of thought" Before resuming the presentation, the speaker would make a transition statement: a brief summary (of the previous point) and preview (of the next point) that helps to bring the audience back on track with the subject

One potential drawback to taking comments during the course of a presentation is the risk of losing control of people in the audience or of the time allotted for the program.

When a speaker opens the floor to audience feedback during a presentation, it sometimes happens that a debate occurs between two or three people in the group. It is the speaker's responsibility to exercise command of the situation and assertively bring any debate to an end. A speaker can intervene with a statement like, "I appreciate your obvious enthusiasm for this subject. You have both offered some valid points. Since the next point will shed additional light on the issue, let's consider that now."

Q & A at the end of a presentation

In more structured setting, with larger audiences, or with a limited time trame, it is customary to defer audience comments and questions until the end of a presentation. A presenter should let the audience know at the outset if there will be a Q &A session at the end. After the introductory opener and preview, the speaker would add. "At the end of the program, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have." If a Q & A session is promised, it is imperative to finish the presentation early enough to allow sufficient lime for questions. Many speakers signal that they will take comments from the audience by asking, "Do you have any questions?" It is a closed question, which often elicits no response. This *open* question conveys that the speaker presumes people will have questions, and suggests that the speaker is receptive to hearing them.
After inviting questions from the audience, a presenter should pause at least 30 seconds. Presenters who immediately start talking after asking, "What questions do you have?" signal that they are not really interested in hearing from the audience. If no one in the audience responds, the presenter should voice a question to encourage the audience to speak up, saying something like, "One question I'm often asked is..." (And then volunteer a question that can be answered in a simple sentence or two).

A Q & A period should never end a presentation. The final question or comment from the audience could be such that it would end the presentation on a sour note. In addition, it is more awkward for a presenter to bring a program to a close when it ends with audience feedback. It is preferable to insert a Q & A period after the last key point but before the speaker's summary and close, sandwiched in toward (but not at) the end of a presentation. In this way, audience attention can be refocused on the speaker and the subject, and the speaker can control the manner in which the presentation ends. It is effective to end with an inspiring, amusing, or compelling anecdote or verbal illustrations the core concept of the message and brings the presentation to a powerful close.

Lesson 21

Responding Questions & Answers

Planning and experience enable a speaker to anticipate most of what will occur during a presentation. However, no amount of planning or experience enables a presenter to predict or to prepare for every possible question, comment, or objection. When a speaker opens the floor to feedback from an audience, anything can happen. It is then that a speaker must exercise particularly good communication skills in term of both receiving and sending.

The following four steps are essential to an effective response. In the first two, a presenter is in the role of "receiver." In the third and fourth, the presenter resumes the" sender" role.

1. **Listen**
2. **Discern**
3. **Affirm**
4. **Answer**

These four steps are essential to skillfully field questions or objections. In the terminology of sports, to field means to stop or catch a ball and throw it in to prevent the opposing team from scoring a point the term is aptly applied to presenting. Figuratively, to field a question or objection means to answer it so skillfully that the presenter does not lose an opportunity to score a "winning point" with the audience.

1. Listen attentively

Obviously, for a presenter to be effective, speaking skills are important. Listening skills are equally important. By listening attentively, a presenter *signals* interest in the audience and in what other people have to say. In addition, listening (or failing to listen) affects how a presenter responds to verbal feedback. When they ask a question or make a comment, some people do not communicate clearly. On the surface, what they say may not sound like it makes sense. By listening attentively, a presenter can sift through a confusing communication, clarify the point, and provide a satisfactory response.

When someone from the audience speaks, and the presenter is listening attentively, the presenter should:

- Make focused, meaningful eye contact with the person who is talking.
- Nod gently in n manner that suggests, "Yes, I hear you."
- Lean forward (slightly) to visually convey interest.
- Match facial expression to the nature of the question or objection. In some cases, a gracious smile is appropriate; in other cases an expression of genuine concern.

In addition, a skilled listener will:

- Listen for the meaning in the message. To extract the main point of a question or objection, concentrate on key words. Conjunctions (and, or, but) and modifying words (descriptive adjectives and adverbs) are extraneous to the real meaning.
- Listen to determine if the person communicates in a concrete or conceptual manner. Typically, concrete thinkers communicate in shorter sentences and use words like "bottom-line." (They prefer a succinct. "Bottom-line" response based on facts.) Conceptual thinkers tend to be more expressive and use words like "possibilities." (They prefer a more comprehensive response that conveys ideas.)
- Paraphrase (when appropriate). A paraphrase restates in abbreviated form what a person has said. It begins with wording such as that shown in the following examples.

"Let me be sure I understand. You are asking ... Is that right?" "Am I correct in understanding that you are concerned about...?" "So. What you're saying is ... Yes?"

Paraphrasing serves to clarify a question or objection, and confirms that the presenter correctly understands what a person has said. It is especially useful when a question or objection has been stated

in a muddled manner. In addition, a paraphrase "buys time" when a speaker needs a moment to formulate a response.

2. Discern the nature and intent of verbal feedback

Persons who listens attentively is better able to discern the nature and intent of feedback from the audience. A question may sound simple but an attentive speaker may discern a complex issue within it. Another question may be worded in a complicated manner, but a discerning speaker will understand that the question is an easy one to answer in a straightforward manner.

Discernment is related to perception. A presenter perceives things about people in an audience in the same way an audience perceives things about a presenter: by watching and listening. When a member of the audience speaks up, a discerning presenter will observe visual cues and listen for vocal cues. Facial expression, gestures, and posture can indicate whether a question or an objection is motivated by genuine interest or by the intent to challenge and disprove the speaker. Tone of voice can convey intent. Generally (when considered in combination), vocal and visual cues express the attitude of the person who is a peaking.

3. Affirm the person

A skillful response consists of two parts; affirmation and answer. An affirmation is a relational technique that acknowledges and validates people. Even when a question or objection challenges a speaker, it is essential to maintain an affirmative relationship with the audience - *everyone* in the audience. How a speaker responds to one person is observed by the audience as a whole, and influences how an audience reacts to the speaker. The manner in which a presenter responds to audience feedback demonstrates finesse and professionalism or lack of it.

An affirmation is expressed before stating an answer. If the presenter knows the people in a group, they should be addressed by name. The statements shown below are examples of affirmations.

"That's an interesting question."
"You make a good point Aslam."

"It's obvious you have given this some thought."
"I'm glad you brought that to our attention, Marium."
"You've raised an important point."

While it is relational to affirm people, it is important to refrain from over-doing it. An affirmation will appear insincere if the wording or the presenter's tone of voice is out of proportion with the point a person raised. Gushing affirmations can encourage attention-seekers in an audience to raise questions and objections repeatedly Just for the sake of it. An appropriate affirmation is a brief statement the presenter can voice honestly. For example, there is a ring of falsehood to an exclamation expressed with undue excitement, such .is "What a wonderful question! I'm so glad you asked that!" It is more appropriate to simply state. "That's a good question."

Just as platform behavior is crucial when a presenter listens, so it is when a presenter starts to voice a response. Beginning with the affirmation and continuing through the answer, a presenter should appear confident and sound conversational. It is important to refrain from an authoritarian "know-it-all" tone of voice a rigid or "closed" posture, and vocal or visual cues that suggest the presenter is flustered or frustrated. A presenter wants to convey, "I am relaxed, receptive to your comment, and in command of the situation."

4. Answer the question, comment, or objection

The characteristics of effective communication apply to answering audience feedback. In other word, a presenter's response should be clear, correct, concise, and well considered.

Clear

A clear response is "on point." The audience clearly understands the answer because it pertains specifically to the question raised. The response is stated one point at a time, in short sentences, and in an uncluttered language. In addition, a clear answer clarifies misunderstandings. Circumstances that result in misunderstandings are described in the following examples.

- The presenter neglected to cover a point. A person in the audience is confused and asks a question. Usually, such questions are answered when the presenter states the point that was omitted.
- A question arises because the person was not listening attentively during the presentation. Such questions can be satisfied by summarizing the point the person missed.
- The meaning is not clear because of a difference in the way people think. A message delivered predominately in concrete terms may prompt questions from people who think conceptually, and vice versa. In this case, a point may be clarified by drawing a comparison to something with which the audience would be familiar, by restating the point in another way, or by illustrating the point with a visual aid.

Correct

Answers should be both factually and ethically correct. A factually correct answer is not only accurate; it is complete as well. For example, if someone asks, "How much does the product cost?" a factually correct answer would state. "A hundred rupees, plus applicable taxes and transportation charges." If the presenter said "a hundred rupees," the person may be disgruntled when the amount of the bill is more than they were led to believe.

Ethically correct answers are honest. A presenter who is not honest runs the risk of being caught in a contradiction, or worse, being caught in a lie. For the most part, people appreciate and value an honest answer. They may not agree with the answer; it may not be the answer they wanted to hear, but they will respect the integrity of the presenter. Honesty builds trust, and people are more inclined to deal with those they trust. If given reason to believe the presenter cannot be trusted, an audience is not likely to be persuaded. Dishonesty ultimately leads to a loss of credibility. Without credibility, a presenter might just as well pack up the visual aids, leave the platform, and go home.

Concise

A concise answer is "to the point." Some presenters are pontificators; they respond to every question in great detail and at great length. If asked a question as simple as "Where did you get your overhead projector?" they subject the audience to a 20-minute exposition on the technological development of audiovisual equipment. The principle that applies to verbal style applies equally to answering audience feedback: Keep it short and simple).

Well considered

Responses to questions and comments should reflect consideration of the setting, and the interests and expectations of the audience. Is the audience gathered for professional, political, social, or personal reasons? Does the setting call for a brief or an in-depth response? Is it more appropriate to offer a serious or a lighthearted answer?

Types of comments from an audience

When a member of the audience comments on some point of a presenter the comment will express one of the following:

- **Agreement**
- **Addition**
- **Objection**

As with questions, attentive listening skills help a presenter discern the nature of a comment, which conditions the presenter's reply.

Comments of agreement

A comment of agreement expresses concurrence with a point made during a presentation. Such comments characteristically reflect a desire to be heard or an interest in having the presenter's proposal adopted. Statements such as I like what you said about and you've presented some good ideas for are comments of agreement. The appropriate response to a comment of agreement is to say, simply, "Thank you." Agreement from the audience does not require any further commentary from the presenter.

Comments of addition

A comment of addition also implies agreement, but adds to what the presenter has said. The following statements are examples of comments of addition.

"1 like what you said about reducing costs. In fact, I think we could apply your recommendations to the distribution group as well."

"You've presented some good ideas for increasing productivity. We could computerize the learning labs, too."

The appropriate reply to a comment of addition is to offer a brief acknowledgment such as, "Thank you. That's a very good point" or "I appreciate your bringing that up."

Objections

The term objection is commonly understood to mean disagreement or disapproval. Comments that sound like objections may, in fact, express a genuine interest in seeking further information or clarification. They may express an opinion that differs from the presenter's as a result of a difference in experience or understanding of the facts. When responding to objections, it is helpful to bear in mind that disagreement on an issue need not (and should not) spark a disagreeable altitude toward the person who voices an objection. Effective presenters consider it more important to remain in a right relationship with the audience than to be proved right on every point.

The key to ridding objections skillfully is to refrain from taking objections personally. Objections must be handled with composure and tact. The objective is to dissipate the issue, not to dispute the other person's point of view.

It is imperative to avoid engaging in a verbal battle of wits. A presenter who becomes defensive or argumentative will lose credibility.

There are three appropriate responses to an objection:

- **Agree**
- **Re-approach**
- **Arbitrate**

In every case, the person who voices an objection should be affirmed and not confronted. Negative words (like *don't, no,* and *not)* fuel confrontation. The following examples show a confrontation response in contrast to an affirming response.

Confronts: "I don't agree with you."

Affirms: "That's an interesting point. There is another aspect to consider, though."

Confronts: "No, that's not right."

Affirms: “I can see where that might seem to be the case. However, let’s consider this in terms of …”

Agree. On occasions, someone in an audience will raise a point that is correct – even though it expresses disagreement with the presenter. If the objection is not an obstacle to acceptance of the message, the appropriate response is to acknowledge that the person is right. A presenter should never put an entire presentation at risk by insisting on “the right to be right.” It is preferable to say, “Thank you for bringing that to our attention. I wasn’t aware of those findings.” Or simply state, “You’ve made a good point.”

Re-approach. When someone voices an objection but the point is not valid, approaching the issue from another perspective can resolve the objection. People sometime object, not to what has been said, but to how the point was put. Presenting the matter in different terms may prompt agreement. A re-approach is phrased, “You’ve brought up an interesting point. However, let’s consider this from another angle.” The point is then explained in a manner other than how it was first stated. The “other angle” may be presented through the use of a comparison, analogy, rhetorical question, or a scenario that describes a situation to which the objector may be better able to relate.

Arbitrate. Objections can be resolved with the use of a “feel-felt-found” response. The presenter states, “I can understand why you would *feel* that way. I worked with someone recently who *felt* the same way, until they *found* that ….” After “found that,” the presenter describes the value that offsets the objection.

This method diffuses the potential for conflict. The “feel” phrase acknowledges the person who voiced the objection. To achieve the point of disagreement in an agreeable way, the “felt” phrase introduces (hypothetically, in some cases) an objective third party. The “found that” conclusion suggests the benefits of accepting the point. The example below indicates how the “feel-felt-found” response works.

In a presentation to plant managers, a sales representative proposed upgrading factory operations with the installation of state-of-the-art automated equipment. At the end of the presentation, one manager remarked, “I like some of your ideas, but the equipment is too costly. We can’t afford that kind of investment.” The presenter replied, “I can see how you might *feel* that way, I worked with a company last year that *felt* the same way, until they *found* that they gained a considerable return on their investment as a result of safer working conditions, improvements in product quality, reduced turnaround time, and an increase in the value of the business.”

The Appropriate Response to Disruptions

Naturally, how a presenter responds will vary depending on the nature and
degree of the disruption. In general, as the person on the platform who commands the attention of the audience, a presenter should demonstrate leadership. Audience members look to the presenter for cues. They wonder, "What is going to happen next?" and expect the presenter to deal with the situation. Skilled presenters do so with aplomb, which is best described as "grace under pressure." With confidence and poise they remain in control of the presentation event by following the three steps listed below.

- **Remain calm**
- **Take action**
- **Be flexible**

Remain Calm

A presenter who becomes visibly upset or flustered by a disruption may aggravate the situation. Staying calm and composed keep the mind clear to consider how to handle the disruption, and has a reassuring effect on an audience. When it is appropriate to the situation, humor is useful to relieve the tension that often accompanies a disruption. Humor can make an awkward moment enjoyable for both the audience and the presenter. A disruption can be turned to advantage by finding something amusing in it. People are inclined to respect the presenter who remains sufficiently composed to laugh at a difficult situation.

Take action

An incident or behavior may be so minor that only the speaker is aware of it, and the presentation can proceed as planned. However, when something threatens to disrupt others, action must be taken to minimize the degree to which the disruption detracts from the presentation. The action is determined by whether the disruption is related to an incident or to behavior.

Be flexible

Responding to unforeseen situations often requires flexibility. Speakers find they have to adapt to disruptions as varied as last-minute changes in time frame, more or fewer people than expected, a heckler in the audience, or a power failure the meeting room. Disruptions are handled with greater ease when one is very we well prepared. A presenter who is not preoccupied with a script is free to be flexible.

Disruptive incidents

Three tactics can be employed for dealing with disruptive incidents: detour, delay, or dismiss.

- **Detour**
- **Delay**
- **Dismiss**

Detour

A detour is a way around a disruption that enables a presenter to still reach the objective of a presentation. In the following situation, the presenter took a detour around a potential disruption.

Amjad had an appointment to deliver a presentation at 9:30 A.M. in the conference room of a client's office. Mid-afternoon the day before, the client telephoned to cancel the presentation because another department needed the use of the meeting room. After confirming that the people scheduled to attend his presentation were still free to do so, Amjad arranged for an off-site meeting at a facility near the client's office.

Delay

Out of respect for the audience, a presentation should always start on time. However, it may not proceed as planned. As the following situation shows, a disruptive incident may cause a delay.

During Nazim's presentation in a communication workshop, the electric power failed. Since the windows in the room let in enough nature light to continue, Nazim asked, "Before we go on, what question or comments do you have about what you have seen so far?" Nazim delayed by inviting questions from the group and initialing a discussion. When the power was restored a few minutes later, Nazim made a smooth transition back into the presentation. "I am glad that happened", he said. "It gave me a chance to communicate with you." He turned a delay to an advantage.

Dismiss

Although they rarely occur, some disruptions are best handled by dismissing the audience. Acts of nature such as fire and earthquakes are reasons to dismiss an audience, as are some medical emergencies. In a crisis it is imperative that the presenter remain calm to provide leadership and direction to the group.

Disruptive behavior

Few incidents disrupt a presentation as much as a person in the audience, who repeatedly interrupts, voices objections, contradicts the presenter, or jokes around. Disruptive behavior signals intent not to hear but to be heard. The disruptive person speaks out at every opportunity. Persons who behave in such a manner are "detractors." A detractor is someone whose behavior detracts from the quality of a presentation, from the attentiveness of other members of the audience, and from what the presenter is trying to accomplish. Detractors have a negative effect on an otherwise professional atmosphere. They diminish the value the majority of people in an audience might receive if they were allowed to hear the presentation without disruption. For the benefit of the audience as a whole, and to keep a presentation moving forward toward its objective, a presenter must deal with disruptive behavior—promptly and assertively.

Common reasons for disruptive behavior are:

- **Resistance to change**
- **Resentment of the presenter**
- **Repetition of behavior that is successful for the detractor**

Resistance to change

Frequently, a presentation delivers information and ideas that challenge customary ways of thinking or of doing things. Some people are not receptive to anything new. They feel threatened by new ideas, new information, new systems, new procedures, new policies. They are unwilling to consider attitude or actions that differ from those they have harbored for a long time. In such cases**,** disruptive behavior is a form of “self-defense." It is a means of counteracting ideas and information the detractor does not want to accept. A disruptive person may think (albeit subconsciously), "If I ask a question he can't answer, then this information is no good" or "If I raise an objection he can’t deal with then the proposal won't be approved.”

Resentment

During the course of presentation, an effective speaker fills a leadership role: leading the audience through material and managing the people in the group. An accomplished speaker exhibits enthusiastic attributes: organization and communication skills, energy and enthusiasm, presence and personal power.

There are those who may resent what they see and hear. Especially when a presenter is perceived to be an "outsider" (a consultant, salesperson, contract trainer, guest speaker, someone. from another department, or an upper-level executive), some people in the audience may feel that the presentation is an intrusion.

Repeating successful behavior

People are inclined to repeat behavior that has worked for them in the past. When they get what they want by acting in a certain manner, they will act that way again to get what they want

What a disruptive person wants is what every person wants: attention. A child throws a temper tantrum to gain attention. When the parent pays attention the child has succeeded and so throws temper tantrums again. In a similar manner, a detractor has learned that disruptive behavior succeeds in getting a presenter’s attention.

Most presenters are not pleased by the rude interruptions, sarcastic remarks, testy questions, and pointless objection that are trademarks of people intent on disrupting a presentation. (The majority of people in an audience are not pleased either.) It is easier to respond to such behavior when a presenter recognizes that it is not a "personal attack" but acting out of the need for attention.

Dealing with disruptive behavior

With an awareness of the reasons that underlie disruptive behavior, a presenter can more easily deal with it with aplomb by practicing these techniques:

- **Be courteous**
- **Exercise control**
- **Confront**

Be courteous

Detractors try to provoke presenters. If a presenter reacts to disruptive behavior with frustration, aggravation, or impatience, the detractor has” won" and will likely continue to disrupt the presentation. There for, a presenter’s first response to disruptive behavior should be to deal with the person with the same courtesy that a professional would extend to a courteous and reasonable member of the group. Courtesy is expressed by more than words alone. It is conveyed through vocal and visual cues: a pleasant tone of voice, a relaxed posture, a pleasant facial expression.

Exercise control

When a courteous response does not suffice to quell disruptive behavior, a presenter must next exert control over the situation. Maintaining control is one of the responsibilities of presenting. To give an audience a meaningful and memorable experience, the presenter needs to manage the setting in which that experience occurs. In a manner of speaking, a presenter is a "traffic cop" who monitors the actions and interactions of people within the group. The following phrases, stated assertively, are useful for expressing control.

“I’m pleased that you are interested in this subject, but in the interests of time, I’m going to have to ask you to hold any further questions until the end."

“To the benefit of the rest of the audience, I’d appreciate it if you would refrain from interrupting. I’ll be happy to discuss any other points with you during the break.

Confront

When a person persists in being disruptive, a presenter must confront the behavior. The experience of the many in the audience takes precedence over one or two detractors. If the situation allows, it is helpful to announce a brief refreshment break or to direct the group to engage in an activity (such as a work book exercise or discussion with persons seated nearby). A brief break provides an opportunity to deal with a disruptive person on an individual basis. In a steady tone of voice and maintaining focused eye contact, the disruptive behavior is addressed with statements like these:

"For the benefit of the group, please refrain from (specify the disruptive behavior) until the meeting is over."

"Frequent interruptions are distracting to the other people here. For that reason I’m going to have to ask you to please leave."

In view of the peer pressure that exists within any group, the first two tactics, courtesy and control, usually serve to bring disruptive behavior to a halt. However, on the rare occasions when it does not, it is preferable to confront a detractor than to allow one person to destroy a presentation. Phrases like "in the interests of time" and "for the benefit of the group" convey that the presenter’s response is not personal, but professional regard for others in the audience.

Lesson 22

Significance of the Setting

Setting is a significance consideration for the following reasons.

Psychological
Physical factors influence the audience frame of mind. People think, feel and respond much differently in a room that is light, spacious, cool, quiet, and fresh than in one that is dark, crowded, stuffy, noisy, or musty. An unpleasant_physical environment is detriment to the psychological environment. Since persuasion involves engendering good thoughts and feelings in people, the setting should feel like a good place to be.

Perceptual
A meeting room conveys a "message." A presenter communicates through vocal and visual cues, from which an audience forms perceptions. In a similar manner, every room contains visible and audible components, which likewise shape audience perceptions. When selecting and arranging the setting for a presentation, it behooves a presenter to ask, "What does this room 'say' about me, about the organization I represent, about the importance of my message? What do I want the setting to convey?

Speaker concentration
A setting may contain elements that disrupt a speaker's ability to concentrate. In distracting or disruptive situations, it is doubly difficult to conduct a productive presentation and bring about a successful outcome. While presenting, a speaker should not be concerned with having to overcome limitations of the setting, but should be free to give undivided attention to the dynamics of delivering the message.

Complementary characteristics
A setting should be selected on the basis of what will complement the presentation. A setting is most effective when it is comfortable for the audience, well suited to the intent of the presentation event, and serves the needs of the presenter in relation to the audience.

Comfortable for the audience
A primary factor to consider when deciding on the setting for a presentation is how to create the greatest degree of comfort for the audience. Presentations commonly introduce something new: a new produce, service, supplier, a new policy, new information, or a new approach. Frequently, people prefer co maintain the status quo, to leave things as they arc rather then adopt the unknown. A common cause of "buyer resistance is reluctance to commit to a decision that will bring about change. Since people initially may feel uncomfortable about making a change, it is crucial to provide comfortable setting.

In a comfortable setting, people in the audience can:

- **Sec clearly**
- **Hear clearly**
- **Sit comfortably**
- **Focus attentively**

They do not have to squint or lean or stretch to view the presenter and visual aids. They do not have to strain to listen, nor are they bothered by extraneous noise.

Seating considerations and room arrangements
When the presenter has the option to select the site and direct the set-up of the room, primary consideration should be given to audience seating. In addition to reflecting the characteristics of an effective setting, the seating arrangement is determined on the basis of the following factors.

Audience Size
How many people will be attending the presentation? In this situation, is it common for additional people to show up unexpectedly? (If so, extra seating should be available.)

Audience Composition
Who will be attending the presentation? Does the status of those who will attend influence how seating will be arranged?

Workspace
Will attendees need a workspace and, if so, for what taking notes, working with handouts, spreading out material for study or review?

Interaction
Will members of the group be asked to interact with one another and. if so, for what opening introductions, discussion, activities in breakout groups? Is it preferable to seat members of the audience so that their focus of attention is on the presenter. Or so they can exchange feedback and make eye contact with one another?

Duration
How long will people be seated? The longer a presentation, the more important it is to provide chairs that are comfortable for long-term seating, but firm enough to encourage people to remain alert.

Tables
How many tables (total) are needed for seating and for registration, refreshments, workshop materials, or displays? Will a table(s) be needed at the head of the room for the speaker or for placement of audio-visual equipment?

In some situations, presenters work from a head table on which they place an overhead projector, transparencies, and speaker notes. Rooms are commonly set up with the head table placed horizontal to the audience. If space permits, it is preferable to place a head table lengthwise (perpendicular to the audience) to reduce the barrier between presenter and audience. Doing so also allows greater freedom of movement for the presenter. To move across the platform directly in front of the audience, it is easier to simply step away from a table placed vertically than it is to have to walk around from behind a table situated horizontally. When a head table is placed lengthwise, materials can be kept out of view of the audience by setting them behind the projector (if one is used).

Aisles
Between seating, aisles need to be created to provide for a safe and smooth flow of traffic in and out of a room. Access for persons with disabilities must be considered as well.

Visibility
Seating should be arranged in such a manner that the presenter will be clearly visible to everyone in the audience. For a presentation to a large group meeting in an oblong room, it may be necessary to speak from a raised platform or riser. Every seat should also afford a clear view of visual aids.

The visibility factor must be taken into account when selecting a facility for a presentation to a large-audience. If people are seated in the back of a narrow and deep room, they may have to rise up out of their chairs and crane their necks to see the presenter. They may miss meaningful expressions and gestures. On the other hand, in a shallow room that is very wide, people seated at the far sides (along either wall) will be viewing visual aids from a severe and distorting angle.

Open Space
If the time frame is such that a presentation includes a break period(s). Consideration should be given to the area where people will gather during the break. Like other aspects of room and seating arrangements,

the space needed for a break area and how it is arranged will depend upon the size of the audience and the nature of the presentation. To remind people of their reason for being there and to reconvene on a timely basis, it is advisable to have open space for breaks in or near the meeting room. The space should be sufficient for the number of people in the audience to mingle comfortably, with freedom of movement.

Types of seating arrangements

As the diagrams that follow illustrate, audience seating can be arranged in a number of different ways.

Conventional theater style

With a theater-style arrangement, people in the audience are seated in rows and columns without tables. Theater-style seating is most common with Proactive presentation delivered to large audiences- Seating may also be arranged in this manner for a presentation to a smaller group that must meet in a room with limited space. As Figure indicates, if a podium is required, it should be placed to the side and toward the back of the platform (rather than in the center). Doing so opens up the platform for movement by the presenter, reduces the barrier a podium creates between presenter and audience, and discourages a presenter from dependence on the podium.

Theater-style seating is the least comfortable for an audience, especially for presentations that last longer than an hour. Many people feel constrained when seated shoulder-to-shoulder in closely packed rows. If the audience is seated in movable chairs and if space permits, the presenter may want to invite, people to move their chairs back, to the sides, or farther toward the front to gain more "elbow room' (provided a center aisle is kept open for exiting the room). To compensate for the possible discomfort of theater-style seating, a dynamic style of delivery is essential.

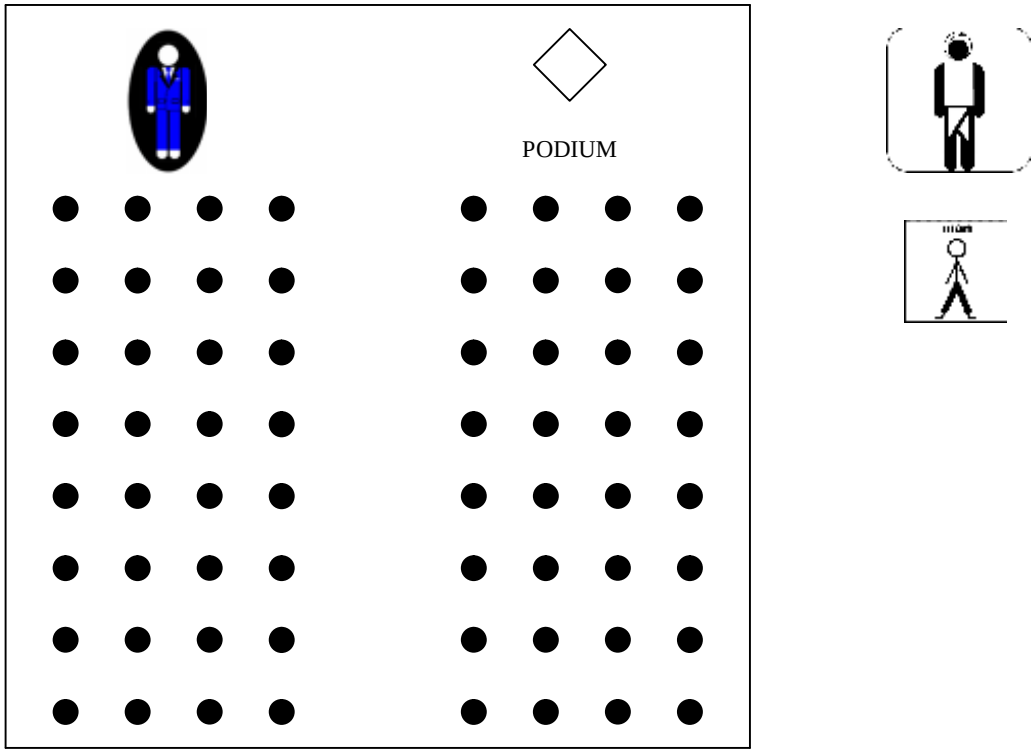


Figure – 1 Theatre Style

SEMI-CIRCLE

Each audience member can see everyone's face in the row. Audience is more comfortable to see the presenter standing. Many people will laugh just because they see others laughing.

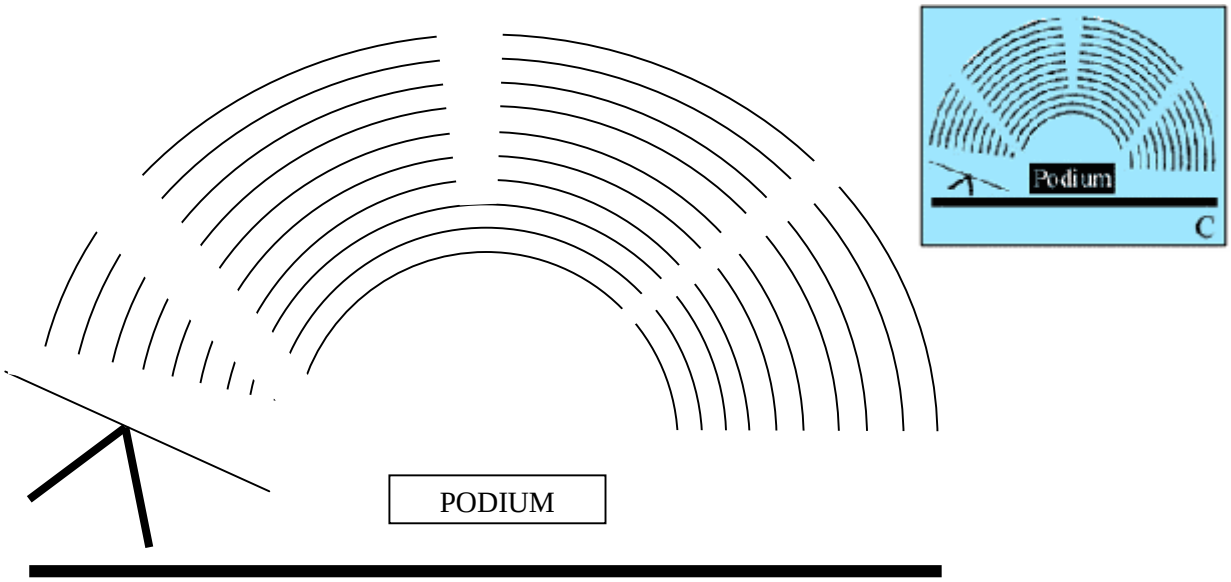


Figure – 2 Semi-Circle

Conventional classroom style

A conventional classroom style is so called because it first appeared in instructional settings where the primary intent is learning. People in the audience are seated at tables, which are arranged in columns and rows. The classroom style is used for presentations in both Proactive and Interactive modes. The figure shows the head table placed lengthwise (the advantages of which were pointed out earlier).

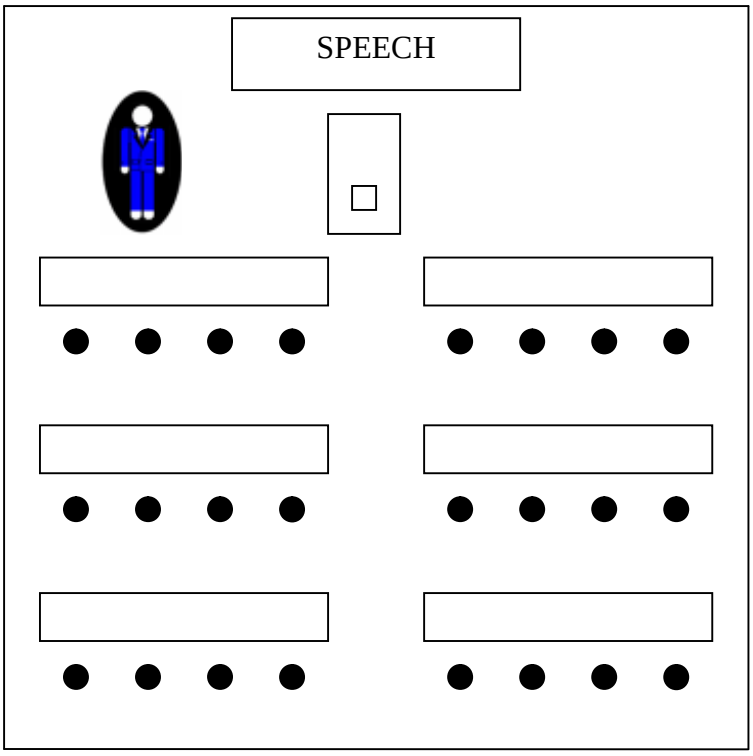


Figure – 3
Classroom Style

T-formation

Similar to seating at a conference table, the T-formation is suitable for presentations to smaller groups. People seated at the table(s) can alternately direct their attention toward the presenter or for purposes of discussion; they can turn to others seated nearby.

A table(s) is added across the back, perpendicular to the lengthwise table(s). when a "special situation "applies. In an instructional situation, for example, some persons may attend for the express purpose of auditing the presentation. In other instances, such as policy or product announcement meetings, managers already familiar with the message may want to step in for part of the presentation but not remain for all of it. Being seated at the back allows "visitors" to come and go without disrupting members of the group.

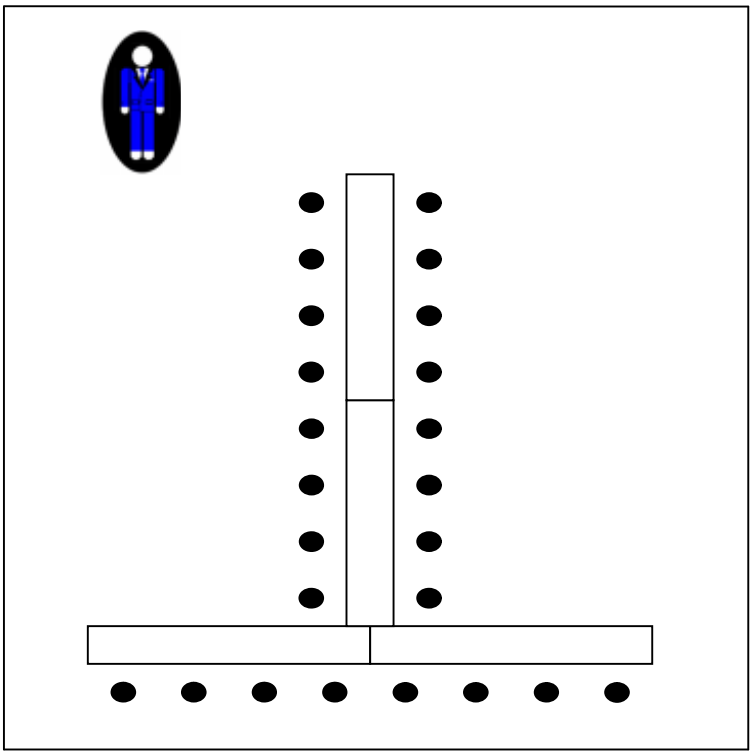


Figure – 4 T-Formation

Modified T-formation

This seating arrangement is an adaptation of the conventional classroom style. It is useful for Interactive presentation to smaller groups, especially those that involve breaking out into pairs or groups of four for activities. The pair of participants seated at each side of the table at the front can turn their chairs to join the pair immediately behind them, and so form a group of four. Likewise, the pairs at the third table back can join up with those seated at the last table. Tables placed lengthwise down the center of the arrangement can be used for the placement of materials or audiovisual equipment.

If the dimension of the meeting room permit, seating capacity is doubled by setting up two modified T-formations (preferably side by side and angled to provide better viewing of the presenter and visual aids). One advantage to the modified T-formation is that it creates a somewhat unexpected setting. Variety (even in seating arrangements) sparks interest.

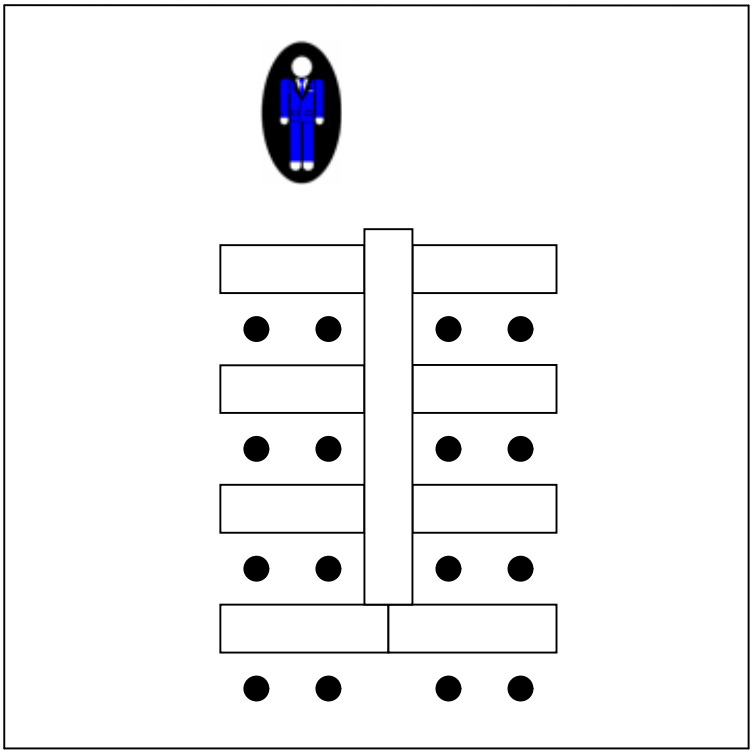


Figure – 5. Modified T-Formation

U-formation

The U-formation is suitable for both promotional and informational presentations in either the Proactive or Interactive modes. It *is* one arrangement that allows every person in the audience to view not only the presenter, but every other person in the audience as well. Accordingly, the U-formation tends to generate livelier group dynamics. The open area of the "U" at the front of the room gives a presenter access to every one in the group on a more "up close and personal" basis. Thus, it fosters a more relational presentation style, which commonly results in greater responsiveness from the audience. One potential drawback to the U-formation (as with the "T" and "modified T") is that seating capacity is limited.

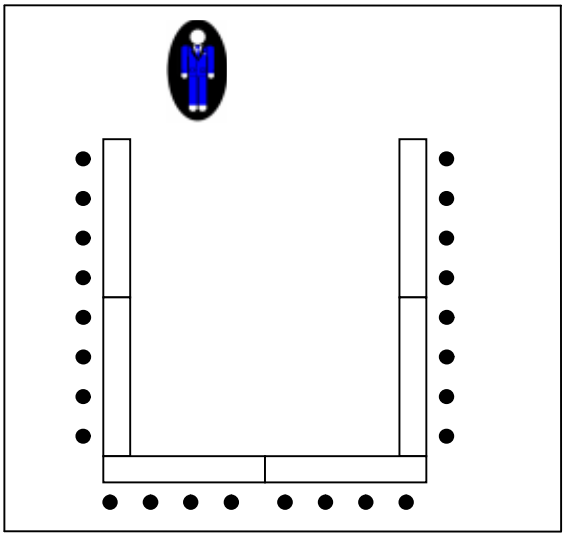


Figure – 6 U-Formation
Boardroom

This seating arrangement is ideal for group discussion, particularly between 10-15 participants. It facilitates good interaction among the participants and is often used for decision-making purposes. Seating around an oblong table everyone can see everyone and can easily share images and texts which are spread across the table.

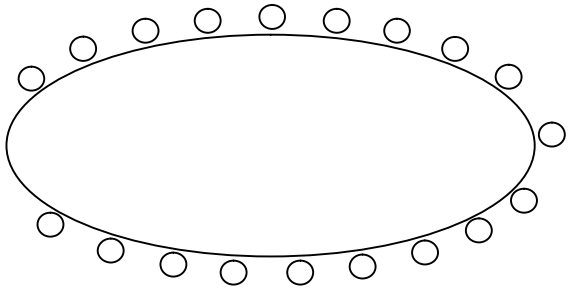


Figure – 7. Boardroom

V-formation

This arrangement is a modification of conventional classroom seating. To seat the same number of people in a V-formation as would be seated in classroom style requires a wider room. However, staggering the tables and setting them at an angle improves audience viewing of the presenter, of visual aids, and of other persons in the group. In addition, the V-formation (like the modified T) is visually more interesting than conventional arrangements.

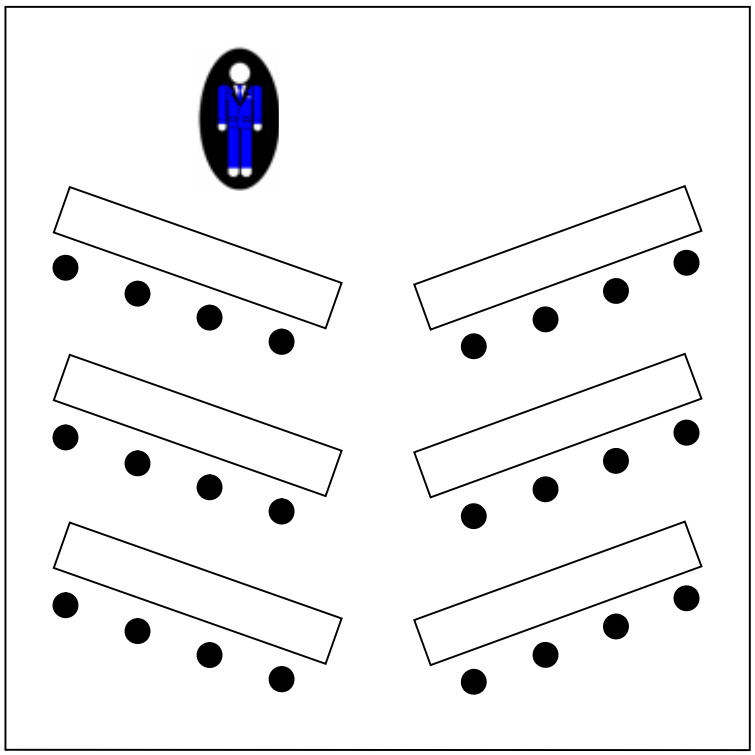


Figure – 8 V-Formation

Environment factors

Environment is literally defined as the conditions that affect the growth or development of living things. In a presentation setting, environmental conditions affect the mood that develops among an audience. In a pleasing environment, people are inclined to be more receptive, listen more attentively, think more

clearly, and respond in a more positive manner. Environmental factors also affect a presenter's performance.

When the presenter has the option to choose the setting for a presentation, environmental factors should be carefully considered. The preferred facility features controls that are placed inside the meeting room are easily accessible to the presenter, so that adjustments can be made if necessary.

Lighting

Lighting affects the mood in a meeting room. Dim lighting or dark rooms produce a dreary, somber mood. Lighting that approximates natural daylight (on a sunny day) creates a livelier, happy mood. For that reason, a presentation should not be held in a room without window. Letting in natural light can improve the audience mood (provided the view outside *is* not detracting). Incandescent lighting is more pleasing than fluorescent lighting. Bright lighting that glares becomes annoying and should be dimmed,

Temperature

When choosing a facility, it is important to check if meeting rooms arc individually climate-controlled. In partitioned meeting spaces, often temperature is controlled from a single thermostat and the presenter may not be able to adjust it.

The temperature should be cool (68 to70 degrees), but not cold or chilly. An audience will remain more alert in a cooler room. People become uncomfortable in a room that is too cold or too hot. For presentations to larger groups, prior to the presentation the thermostat should be set lower than normal.

As people gather, natural body heat raises the temperature and a meeting room can become stuffy. If the presenter starts to feel warm from moving around, before adjusting the climate control, people seated in the audience should be asked if the temperature is comfortable for them.

Air quality

To prevent a room from becoming stuffy, the meeting room should be well ventilated. When considering prospective sites for a presentation, a presenter should be alert to unpleasant odors. Older facilities, for instance may smell musty. Meeting rooms in hotels that host convention business sometimes smell of food or cigarette smoke, odors that are potentially offensive. Presenters themselves should refrain from wearing heavily scented colognes or perfumes.

Sound

In a presentation setting, the only sound that should be prominent is that of the speaker's voice (or members of the audience when they voice feedback). Unfortunately, extraneous sounds can fill a meeting room and disrupt a presentation. Within the room itself, noise 'pollution' may come from a fan on projector equipment that whirrs continuously or from fans in a heating or cooling system. Electronic feedback from a sound system is distracting, as are music or announcements that may be piped into the room over a public address system. At events where meals are served, a speaker should avoid presenting before or during the meal service. Serving personnel, the clinking of glassware and the clatter of dishes are disruptive.

Lesson 23

Visual Aids

Why Visual Aids?

Audiences expect you to use visual aids in your oral presentations. Visual aids can improve the quality and impact of your oral presentation by:

- creating the attention of your listeners,
- illustrating points that are difficult to explain in words alone,
- enhancing understanding of the topic,
- centering the attention of the listeners,
- adding variety,
- helping your speech have lasting impact,
- emphasizing your information & ideas, and
- helping your listeners remember your talk.

With the right tools and ideas, you can be a high-impact presenter ready for an increasingly competitive world. Modern technology is providing exciting improvements to the most traditional types of presentation media offering new ways for you to excel at meetings, conferences, conventions, and training sessions.

Yet many of the traditional presentation techniques may still be the best ones. As a presenter with meeting objectives, you may choose to project full-color images that incorporate text, animation, and video. Or possibly your objective may best be met through the advantages of professionally imaged flip charts placed right next to your conference room table.

As contrasting as these two styles are, one is not necessarily better than the other. In order to make educated and informed presentation decisions the following rules will guide you to determine which medium will serve you best, based on your personality, style, the environment, your budget, your material, the audience, and your goals.

To find the right media for your presentation you need to first determine:

- The size of your audience.
- Whether or not there will be audience participation.
- The room size, arrangement, lighting, acoustics, climate and safety of your presentation environment.
- The presentation budget.
- Equipment and supply limitations.
- Time constraints.

Today's speakers can select from a variety of visual aids to enhance oral presentations. Among the most popular types of visual aids are: computer based presentation, video, 35-millimeter slides, overhead transparencies, flip charts, whiteboards, and handouts.

1. Computer based Presentation

The availability of affordable software and new technology has made computer based presentations the visual aid of choice in most business situations. What used to take weeks of preparation and an outside production house can now be created by you at your desktop. Computer-based presentations can be real-time or prepared in advance. Real-time presenting is useful when the audience needs to see immediate results or the software in action--like financial brainstorming sessions or software training. Prepared presentations can be simple text slides or--with the integration of text, graphics, animation, video, and sound--sophisticated multimedia productions.

In the past, these sophisticated presentations could only be viewed directly from the monitor or projected in a room equipped with a data/video projector and technical support. With the development of portable data/video projectors these presentations can now be transported and projected almost anywhere.

Computer-based presentations bring a level of professionalism that challenges you to be as dynamic as the presentation. With this in mind, it is very important to balance animation, video, transitions and special effects with what you're trying to communicate. Your goal should be a smooth natural delivery of information where the electronics and special effects are not apparent to your audience. Because multimedia software programs provide so many options, it is very easy to overdo them. Beware of creating more interest in the software than the material you're presenting.

Benefits

- Dynamic, full-color multimedia presentations are available to the average presenter
- Data can be presented in real time
- Supply costs are non-existent
- Last minute changes are possible
- Special effects add interest
- Production costs are low
- Transmission to remote locations is possible

Limitations:

- Projection equipment is expensive
- Computer and graphic skills are required
- Presentation depends more upon equipment than the presenter
- A darkened room is required

Helpful Hints:

- Before your presentation check equipment for proper location and function.
- Use only a high-intensity overhead projector
- Use a remote control device to advance your visuals
- If you do not have a remote, have an assistant advance the visuals
- Back up your computer media and take an extra copy with you
- Unless you take your own computer, use the view or runtime version on your computer software program so you do not have to load your software to the computer
- Use a laser pointer to focus the audience's attention
- If possible, vary the presentation with another activity so that you can turn the lights on.

2. Video

When you need to show real-life motion in your presentation, video is the most effective medium. Video clips are used with computer graphics to create multimedia presentations. These presentations incorporate text, graphics, animation, and motion video.

Portable video projectors have made video practical for everyday meetings as well as group presentations. These cost-effective, plug-and-play projectors allow you to project high-quality video images from VCRs, cameras, laser disc players, and CD players.

You can also use video as a delivery system for larger audiences through the use of desktop conferencing, distance learning, video conferencing, and closed-circuit television systems.

Technological developments have made recording, capturing, sending, viewing, editing, and printing video images easier, more practical, and cost effective.

Viewing videos is a passive activity and can allow your audience to lose concentration and focus. If possible, use short video segments (five to ten minutes) during your presentation.

Benefits

- Presentations are professional.
- Full-color motion with sound is possible.
- Duplicating presentation is simple.
- Presentations may be more entertaining.
- Presentation does not require presenter.
- Small cassettes are easy to store.
- Presenting to large remote audience is possible.

Limitations:

- Professional production is required.
- Production is expensive and time consuming.
- Little presenter involvement--can be impersonal.
- Discourages audience participation.

Helpful Hints

- Before your presentation, become familiar with and test all equipment.
- Make sure the room can be properly darkened.
- Be sure that you have enough monitors in place for adequate viewing.
- Keep video presentations short (ten minutes is considered the limit for attention and concentration).
- To increase participation, ask your audience to look for a specific idea or activity in the video before viewing it. Then refer to it by asking questions after viewing.

3. 35mm Slides

The content of 35mm slides provides a crisp, colorful, easy to read format for presenting information. 35mm slides are the most universally accepted way to show full-color, three-dimensional still pictures. They are also used extensively to show graphics or pictures. Slides can be used with large or small audiences and, because the projectors are small and portable, they can be taken almost anywhere. Remote operation allows you to move around the room and still control the duration and sequence of each slide.

One of the main advantages of slide projection is that slides can be easily duplicated and sent to multiple locations with assurance that everyone receives an identical message. If it is also important that the verbal element be consistent, include a pre-recorded tape that has been synchronized with your slides.

Because slide presentations require a darkened room and little or no audience participation, presenters who wish to sell, instruct, or teach should limit slide use. Consider incorporating other presentation formats that encourage audience participation instead. Watching slides in a darkened room for an extended period of time causes drowsiness. Even well narrated slide presentations should be limited to ten or fifteen-minute segments. Encourage audience involvement with the use of a rear projection system in a lit room.

Benefits

- Images are the highest quality.
- Presentations can be easily duplicated.
- Projectors are reliable, portable and easy to use.
- Remote control enables the presenter to move around the room.

Limitations:

- Darkened room is required (or uses rear projection system in lit room).
- Discourages audience participation.
- Presenter is more impersonal.
- More preparation time is necessary.
- Note-taking is difficult.
- Previewing and editing is difficult.

Helpful Hints:

- Arrange and place your slides in the slide tray and check to see that they are in the proper order and right side-up before arriving at the presentation.
- Once the slides are positioned in the slide tray, use a marker to draw a line around the top of the entire ring of slides. If your tray spills, you'll quickly distinguish top from bottom on each slide.
- Be sure the lights are properly adjusted.
- Try to keep enough light so that you can maintain some eye contact with the audience.
- Use a laser pointer to focus the audience on a specific point.
- Number the slides in case they do spill.
- Make sure the slides are in focus before you start.
- If you want to discuss a topic without any visuals, use a black slide.
- Face the audience at all times.
- If possible, vary the presentation with another activity so that you can turn the lights on.

Lesson 24

Visual Aids

4. Overhead Transparencies

Overhead projection is the most versatile and popular presentation medium used by businesses today. Because of its effectiveness and wide acceptance, its popularity is continuing to grow. The projectors are brighter, quieter, and more portable, and high-quality transparencies can now be printed in full color directly from your computer.

Overhead projection gives you control over every aspect of your presentation. By allowing you to face your audience in a fully lighted room, you are able to maintain the eye contact necessary for effective two-way communication. (Never face the "projected" image on the screen. Many presenters face the screen and end up talking to the screen). Facing the audience, you can detect audience confusion and easily clarify by highlighting, underlining, or circling important points with a project-able marker. If you need to explain further place a sheet of un-imaged film or write-on film on the stage of the overhead and use it as an "electric blackboard." By using a technique called revelation, information on your visual can be revealed point-by-point, preventing the audience from reading ahead or jumping to conclusions. If you want undivided attention, simply turn the projector off and all eyes are on you.

Overhead projection provides an informal, but structured atmosphere where an audience expects to learn and is naturally invited to participate. It supports the presenter, enhances the communication process, and shortens meetings.

Benefits

- Presenter has complete control over the presentation.
- Presenter faces the audience in a fully lit room.
- Visuals can easily be rearranged or omitted to fit the needs of the presenter or audience.
- Material can be highlighted or revealed point-by-point.
- Material can be created or added during a presentation using a projectable marker.
- Transparencies are easy and inexpensive to produce.
- An overhead projector is comfortable and simple to use.

Limitations:

- Can be used for groups of up to 100 people.
- Presenter must rely on equipment.
- Older projectors tend to be dim and noisy.
- Presenter is forced to remain near the projector in order to change transparencies.
- Audiences that don't understand the benefits of overhead projection may perceive it as outdated.

Helpful Hints:

- Test to see if the visual is in focus and if the projector is the right distance from the screen before you begin.
- Place the overhead to your RIGHT if you are right handed and to your LEFT of you are left handed-This will make it easier for you to face your audience and write if you need to. In either case, you want to stand in the center of the speaking area.
- Place your overhead projector on a table low enough so it does not block you or the screen. Have a small table next to the overhead so you can stack your overheads before and after you use them.
- To create a smooth transition and keep the audience from staring at a glaring white screen, turn the projector off before placing the next transparency.
- Be sure you have a spare lamp. Nothing is more unsettling than to have your overhead projector bulb goes out during your presentation. Bring spare bulbs and a glove to change the bulb. The old bulb will be HOT! Make sure you know how to change the bulb.

- Don't look at or point to the screen, look at the transparency or maintain eye contact with your audience.
- Use a pencil, pointer, or color highlighting system when pointing to a transparency on the stage of the projector.
- To reveal one line at a time, put a sheet of paper under your transparency and slide it toward you as you discuss each item.
- If you want the attention focused on you and a point you're emphasizing, turn the overhead projector off and move inward the group.
- Make sure what's projected is short and simple.
- Tape the power chord to the floor-to protects you or someone else from tripping.
- Mount transparencies in a frame for easy handling.
- Write your name on mounting frames and number them.

5. Flipcharts

While everyone seems to be interested in creating high-tech computer generated presentations, the flip chart still continues to be the most effective presentation media of all. One should not assume that investing a lot of money in high tech visual aids & equipment will "make" your presentation. The best visuals have been and still are the simplest. Whether hand-written or professionally imaged, the flip chart remains one of the most popular means of presenting meeting room information. An easel is comfortable, reliable, non-threatening (to you and your audience), and usually readily available.

Flipcharts are ideal for recording audience input, reinforcing important points, or gathering information obtained during brainstorming sessions. It is an ideal presentation medium for executive offices, small conference rooms, onsite locations, and courtrooms--any location where projection equipment is unavailable or doesn't suit the environment.

Benefits:

- Clip charts do not need electricity - You don't need to worry if the bulb will burn out or worry about additional presentation equipment.
- Flip charts are economical - They do not require you to use any special films or printers to produce them.
- Flipcharts can be used in fully-lit rooms, allowing the presenter to be the focus of the presentation
- Handwritten flipcharts are ideal for brainstorming sessions and encourage participation when used to record audience input
- The easel is reliable, predictable, comfortable and readily available
- Flipcharts can be used in a variety of environments that aren't suitable for projection equipment--outdoors, small rooms and on-site locations
- Flip charts allow spontaneity - Any last minute changes can be easily made.

Limitations:

- Can be used for group of up to 35 people only.
- Presenter must have high energy.
- Handwritten flipcharts require good penmanship and still may be difficult to read.
- Handwritten flipcharts lack professionalism and credibility.
- Preparation of handwritten flipcharts is labor intensive and therefore costly to produce.

Helpful Hints:

- Make sure the flip charts you use will fit the flip chart stand you will be using. Some have different spaced holes at the top.
- When preparing your charts, it is best to first design your charts on paper first before drawing them on the actual flip chart pad.
- Lightly write your text in pencil first before using the actual flip chart markers. This will allow you to make any adjustments with text spacing and any figures you will be drawing. Do NOT use

all block letters (UPPER CASE). Using upper and lower case letters makes it easier to read. Use the 7 x 7 rule. Have no more than 7 words on each line and no more than 7 lines to a sheet. Using a 6 x 6 rule is even better.

- Use flip chart markers and not regular magic markers. Flip chart markers will not "bleed" through the paper.
- Avoid using the colors yellow, pink, or orange. These are extremely difficult for the audience to see. Avoid using too many colors.
- You can write "lightly in pencil" any notes next to key points you need. The audience won't be able to see them. You may also write what is on the next sheet. Knowing this will allow you to properly introduce your next sheet.

6. Whiteboard

The chalkboard is probably the oldest, most familiar visual aid. It has evolved over the years from the standard black or green hard chalk variety to whiteboard that requires the use of liquid markers. Information can now be written quietly, in brighter colors, and erased completely with considerably less effort. Whiteboards are inexpensive, easy to use, and best suited for small groups where brainstorming sessions or spontaneous illustrations are necessary.

Using a whiteboard as your primary visual aid is considered inadequate for most business situations. Handwriting is time consuming and sometimes illegible. Also, because you have to turn your back to write, you run the risk of losing control of your audience.

Benefit

- Whiteboards are ideal for recording spontaneous information.

Limitations:

- Can be used for groups of up to 30 people only.
- Handwritten material may be difficult to read.
- Audience attention may be lost while presenter turns his/her back to write.
- A whiteboard used as a primary presentation medium conveys lack of preparation.
- Whiteboards are difficult to transport and may not fit all meeting rooms.

Helpful Hints:

- Write large enough so that everyone can see.
- Use when brainstorming or group planning is needed.
- Plan an activity for the group to prevent boredom.

7. Handouts

Handouts are written supplements that you can pass out to your audience to provide additional details or a summary of your presentation. They can also be supporting data worksheets, outlines, or even questionnaires that will give you the feedback you need to do a better job the next time.

Handouts should only be used as a supplement to--not a substitute for--presentation visuals. Handouts that are not to be used during a presentation should be passed out after the meeting. If not, they may distract the audience when they should be concentrating on your message. If the handout is a summary, let the audience know in advance to avoid preoccupation with note taking. Also be careful of passing out too much information. It will most likely confuse or end up in the wastebasket.

Handouts are a reflection of your presentation and should be well designed. Many presentation software programs provide a format for handouts.

Benefits

- Handouts eliminate the need for note taking.

- Provide an accurate record of the information being presented.
- The dissemination of additional information is possible.
- Information is available for absent or late presentation attendee.
- Handouts can be used with all types of presentation media.

Limitations:

- Because people can look ahead, the presenter may lose control.
- Handouts passed out in advance tend to cause attendees to prejudge the presenter. and/or the presentation.
- The noise from page turning is distracting.
- Poorly designed handouts reflect negatively on your presentation.

Helpful Hints:

- Prepare sufficient handouts for the group plus extras.
- Determine the best time to distribute the handouts and place them in a convenient location or pass them out.
- Distribute material before the presentation if you want the audience to follow along as you speak.
- Distribute material during the presentation if you have a reason for not wanting the audience to see it until you are ready to talk about it.
- Distribute material after the presentation if you want people to listen to you rather than read the material.
- If people are going to receive a handout that summarizes your presentation, let them know in advance so they won't need to take extensive notes.

Summary

The following are some general guidelines to consider when choosing and creating visual aids:

Visuals should add to the presentation, not distract from it.

Make sure that your speech has enough substance to equal your visuals so that the audience focuses on your messages. If your audience only remembers your visual aids, then your speech has not been effective.

Visual aids can only add to a good speech, they cannot rescue a poorly developed speech.

Do not put all your time and effort into your visuals at the risk of ignoring developing and practicing your speech.

Your visual aids must be clearly visible and understandable by the entire audience.

A great visual aid is useless if the audience can't see it. Make sure that every member of the audience can see, read, and understand each visual. Always use at least 18-point type for all text.

Use simple fonts

Lettering styles (fonts) that are overly ornamental may look cool, but are very difficult to read. For example, compare the following sentences:

The second sentence is much easier to read, and your audience can comprehend it instantly. The extra time it takes to read and understand the first sentence is time that your audience is not listening to you.

Avoid distributing objects to the audience while you are speaking.

A common temptation is to have the audience pass around items while you are speaking, or to distribute handouts at the beginning of your speech. Unfortunately this distracts the audience and significantly reduces the effectiveness of your speech.

Distribute handouts at the end of your speech, and don't use visuals that the audience can't see from their seats. Use overhead transparencies for photographs or small objects.

Practice with you visuals well ahead of time so that you can smoothly integrate them into your performance.

Nothing can ruin your credibility faster than fumbling around with your visual aids. Always practice with your visuals so you can use them with confidence.

Be prepared for disaster!

Overhead projector bulbs burn out unexpectedly, posters sometimes fall down, and videotapes sometimes jam in the machine. Always prepare an alternate plan for your presentation so that you do not have to depend on your visual aids to carry your speech.

Speak to your audience, not your visual aids.

Keep your eye contact on the audience, and avoid the temptation to constantly look at or read from your visuals.

Keep video and audio presentations short and to the point.

Do not make the audience wait for the important part -- start with the tape cued up to the right spot and make sure the tape is of the highest quality possible.

Try to have only one piece of information on a poster or overhead transparency.

Do not overload your visuals with too much information because they become messy and difficult to understand.

Statistical information is easier for your audience to understand when presented visually through charts and graphs.

Statistics will have a much greater impact if your audience can see the relationship between the numbers, instead of having to imagine how numbers relate.

Lesson 25

Group Communication

Definition of a Group Meeting
A meeting is a gathering of two or more people where purposive discourse occurs. Of course these purposes will vary.

A communication between two people is primarily an interchange – dyadic communication. A group is larger: at least 3 people and perhaps as many as 15 or more. Additionally, a group often meets face to face with a common purpose in mind. Such a group may also be informal (un-planned, free-flowing discourse) or formal (clear, planned purpose).

Informal Group
Casual or informal group meetings are common. Here you casually chat over tea, meet after work, or get together for purely social reasons. You and your friends meet to socialize, to interact – often spontaneously, without plan. Your business day is filled with such informal group meetings. Ironically, out of the need for frequent casual meetings may develop the need for more formal and directed meetings.

Formal Group
Often called task-oriented groups, formal groups often search for answers to problems, look for a course of action, make recommendations to a higher authority. This means that you and others may meet to change a policy, make decisions on how a specific problem should be solved, and decide on the beginning steps to implement a solution.

Formation of Groups
Groups go through four formative stages in becoming a group.

Forming: Here the group tries to get started. It is the orientation phase for group members.

Storming: Members begin to stake out their positions; they begin to have conflicts and arguments.

Norming: Progress begins here. Members work to solve conflicts and recognize acceptable kinds of conduct.

Performing: Here the group begins to achieve its goals.

Once you are part of a group seeking to solve a problem, one other thing occurs: The group begins to follow certain phases in solving the problem.

Orientation: Here discussion is free flowing; people orally wander about, each trying to focus on asking questions. Here too, questions are numerous: Members try to inform, ask further questions. Here members' convictions are tentative and somewhat ambiguous.

Conflict: After the preliminary sparring is over, members begin to offer opinions, evidence in support of their positions. At this phase initial conflicts occur. There may even be resistance to the agreed upon task.

Emergence: Open exchanges continue; members begin to search for ways of truly solving the problem. Compromises occur, and there is a decrease in conflict and sincere movement toward decreasing differences in opinion.

Solutions: A positive attitude exists at this phase. Options have been discussed, and criteria for measuring those options have been viewed. Now is the time to complete the task and agree upon a solution.

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Purpose of Group Meetings

Meetings have two core purposes: to present information and to help solve problems. Obviously both purposes occur in all meetings. Three kinds of meetings help achieve these objectives.

- Informational meetings
- Suggested solution meetings
- Problem-solving meetings

Informational meetings: In these meetings the members learn, ask questions, and seek to understand. No problems are solved; no recommendations for change occurs. Participants come to the meeting with one pivotal purpose: to be informed, to understand the information.

Suggested solution meetings: Visualize this situation. A manager desires to receive input from her staff on an issue; he desires to review preliminary recommendations before solving the issue. The complete scenario may run something like this:

1. A supervisor senses a problem and desires a meeting to review options on addressing the problem. The goal: purely exploratory.
2. A memo or e-mail message is sent to all staffers asking for possible opposition on removing the problem.
3. Suggestions are tabulated and distributed to all respondents.
4. A meeting is called to discuss all possible options.

The manager and the review committee review all recommendations. Comments on the options occur at the meeting. Often no decision is made. The meeting is exploratory and informational. Then a final recommendation is prepared either for higher approval or group consensus.

Problem-solving meetings: Problem, solution, benefit, action. These four steps trace the most common process in solving problems typical of the business world. Often (1) the major problem is presented early in the meeting, (2) participants suggest solutions, discussing and evaluating them, and (3) participants arrive at a decision for further action.

Group Decision-Making

Standard agenda

Involves a careful, systematic approach to a problem. Groups make their decisions make use of a six-step guide called the standard agenda.

Problem identification: What is the problem? What is wrong with the current situation?
Problem analysis: View the current situation as a balance between restraining forces and helping forces. What are the forces in play in your group's situation?
Criteria selection: What are the goals of the final decision?
Solution generation: Generate as many solutions as possible. Avoid groupthink by listing many solutions.
Solution evaluation & selection: Measure each solution against the criteria from step three.
Final decision - There are many ways that a group can make a final decision, decide on a solution, or come to agreement. Some of the most popular ways of making the decision include:

- **Consensus**: The group members all agree on the final decision through discussion and debate.
- **Compromise**: Through discussion and readjustment of the final plan, group members come to agreement by giving up some of their demands.
- **Majority Vote**: The decision is based on the opinion of the majority of its members.
- **Decision by Leader**: The group gives the final decision to its leader.
- **Arbitration**: An external body or person makes a decision for the group

Solution implementation: Enact the chosen solution.

Alternate option

Brainstorming - Another option for decision-making is brainstorming. When brainstorming, group members are encouraged to generate as many ideas about a particular topic as they can. For instance, group members may use brainstorming to generate as many solutions as they can in step four of the standard agenda. Group members should be encouraged to say anything that comes to mind when brainstorming. Every idea is written down and judgments about ideas are saved until later, when the group returns to all of the ideas and selects those that are most useful.

Tips for Structured Brainstorming

"The best way to get good ideas is to have lots of ideas."

Brainstorming is a blending of group problem solving and discussion. It operates on the premise that the more ideas that are generated, the greater the possibility of finding a workable solution to a given problem. There are three phases to brainstorming: (1) generation of ideas, (2) analysis, and (3) action planning.

Brainstorming is useful for:

- Generating many ideas is a short time
- Encouraging creative, spontaneous thinking
- Helping people temporarily suspend judgment
- Expanding or piggy-backing on ideas

Final decision - There are many ways that a group can make a final decision, decide on a solution, or come to agreement. Some of the most popular ways of making the decision include:

- **Consensus**: The group members all agree on the final decision through discussion and debate.
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Styles of Group Leadership

Authoritarian

• Activity plans are made by the leader, with some uncertainty on the part of members about what the next step may be.
• All policy decisions are made by the leader.
• Unless productivity is high, member frustration may increase, resulting from high standards set by the leader.
• Members discontent may develop when leaders seek dominance for its own sake.
• Considerable status difference exists between leader and members.
• Aggressive status-seeking activities develop among members who have need of status.
• Members listen carefully to leader's instructions; they may pay little attention to what others say, unless productivity is at stake.
• There is a fundamental belief on the part of the leader that constant direction is necessary for goal achievement.
• Limited responsibility is placed on all members; members are chosen for specific tasks.
• Status comes from praise from the leader, which is usually personal & subjective.

Democratic

• Policy decisions are made by the group, encouraged and assisted by the leader.
• Activity plans made by the group, technical advice being provided by the leader when needed.

• Members satisfactions are gained in making own decisions.
• Members grow in self-confidence & self-acceptance.
• Leader and members function as peers.
• Emphasis on status decreases, and emphasis on respect for others increases.
• Listening improves, with the result of greater acceptance of the ideas of others.
• Little stress is placed on discipline, unless imposed by the group. The leader's relation to the members is friendly, helping, and tolerant.
• There is a fundamental belief on the part of the leader that the members can attain their own ends by using their own resources.
• Responsibilities are placed on all members.
• Status in the group is earned by the contribution made to the achievement of the group's goals; praise from the leader is objective and factually based.

Laissez-faire
• Members of the group are given help in activity plans by the leader only when it is requested.
• The group has complete freedom to make policy decisions without any help or guidance from the leader.
• Members do not know what is expected pf them and develop disunity and dissatisfaction.
• Members have little sense of accomplishment.
• Few contacts exist between leader and members. Little friendship for the leader develops.
• Status-mindedness develops, resulting in competitive hostility.
• Members focus primarily on their own concerns. Listening to others' comments is infrequent.
• There is no concern for goal achievement.
• There is no concern for discipline. Members develop self-assertiveness without regard for others.
• Lack of development of feelings of unity, self-confidence or friendliness.

Planning the Meeting

As with formulating an informative or persuasive speech, take some time to:

- Define the purpose;
- Decide who to participate;
- Arrange for meeting date, time, & place;
- Create an agenda;
- Announce the meeting;
- Check on physical arrangements;

Procedures during the Meeting

- Begin with an opening statement
- Engage participants in discussion
- *Understand the roles of the participants*

Small group success depends on three types of functions being performed:

- Group task roles,
- Group building & maintenance roles, and
- Individual (Personal) roles.

-

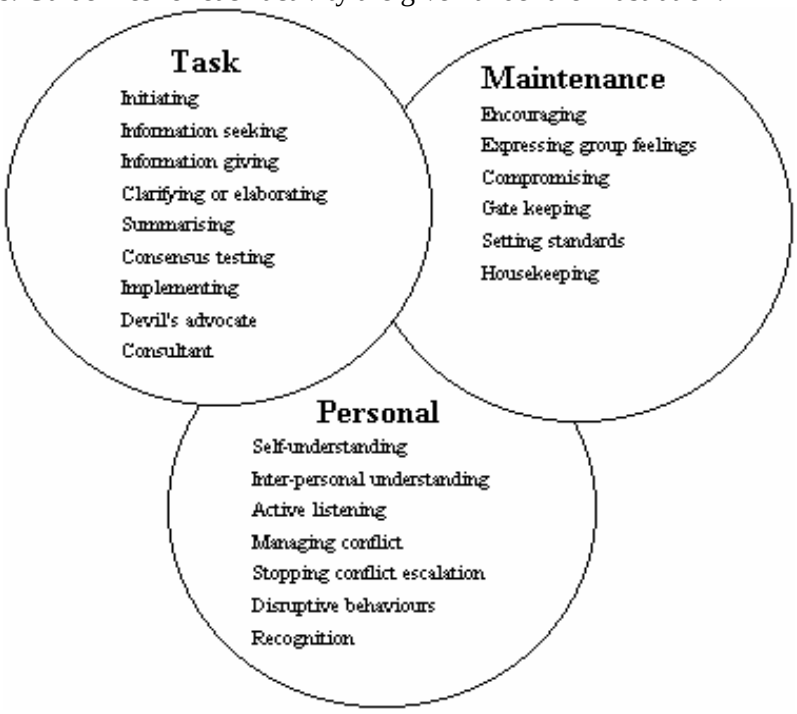
Group task roles help to keep the group focused and directed towards achieving its goals.

Group building & maintenance roles help group members to stay involved, and ensure that everyone is able to contribute to their maximum potential.

Individual roles address the personal needs of group members to ensure that the group functions in the best possible way - these activities include the ways in which conflicts and disruptive behaviors are handled.

These functions are complementary, which means they must all be performed if a group is to work well. Responsible for seeing that these functions are performed rests, on the whole, with the group leader, but each group member also has a responsibility to support the leader, to improve their personal group-work skills, and to help the group achieve the best results possible.

The illustration below lists activities of all the three types of functions performed in the group work. Group leaders and members need to be familiar with all these activities, and to apply them whenever appropriate during group meetings. Guidelines for each activity are given under the illustration.



Listed below are guidelines for carrying out these activities.

Group task roles

Initiating - This is any action taken to get the group members started on working together towards their purpose. The initiating action may be:
- to suggest a procedure for advancing the group's task to the next step such as to flowchart a process, brainstorm a problem, or to evaluate data gathering and measurement options, or
- to re-cap progress to date and to call for suggestions on the best task to undertake next.

Information, or opinion, seeking - This is the act of asking for facts, relevant information, suggestions or ideas about a group concern. This can be done through normal group interaction or if fresh ideas are required, a full brainstorming session or other ideas generation technique can be used.
Information, or opinion, giving - This is offering information up to the group in the form of facts, beliefs, opinions or ideas.
This is a leadership function that most people tackle with enthusiasm, but take care not to overdo it or you will stifle contributions from other members of the group. They will take the attitude that you value your own opinion more than theirs and will be reluctant to offer up their contributions.

This action is best taken when group discussion is a little stuck and needs some fresh points of view to react to.

Clarifying or elaborating - Interpreting ideas, clearing up confusions, identifying alternatives, and raising related issues, are all ways of clarifying and elaborating on things the group is discussing.
Summarizing - This is the act of pulling together related ideas, restating suggestions after they have been fully discussed, or offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject.
Consensus seeking - This is the act of testing whether the group is nearing a conclusion or decision. It is aimed at assessing the extent to which the group is in agreement.
Implementing - This involves putting the decisions of the group into action and requires:
-assigning responsibility
- delegating authority
- accepting personal commitments
Devil's advocate - This is an essential act of leadership and is performed when there is a suspicion that the group has reached agreement or consensus on an issue too quickly and easily. It is a way of

elaborating on an issue to make sure that the best assessment of its implications is made. **Consultants -** Design or research groups have some special leadership needs because they often include artists, researchers or other 'specialists', who are often unwilling to submit themselves, their art, or their ideas to the 'limitations' of group process.

To get the benefit of their work some special concessions can be made by placing them in a consultant role to the group in which they offer up their ideas but do not participate as full group members.

Group Building & Maintenance Roles

Encouraging

Encouragement simply means being responsive to others, giving them an opportunity for recognition, and consciously helping them to feel that they are welcome and valuable members of the group.

Expressing group feelings

This refers to picking up or sensing the mood of the group at appropriate times and disclosing your feelings or reactions to the other group members.

Compromising

Compromise is often regarded as an undesirable thing, which prevents the best ideas from being adopted, and even demeans the person who offers the compromise. The reason for this bad reputation is that people often seek a compromise at the wrong time. They often refuse to modify their stand on many minor issues but back down on important ones because they are intimidated by their far-reaching impact.

Gate keeping

This is the function of keeping communication channels open within the group at all times. This means two things,

- restraining those who tend to talk at all times and at length, and
- drawing out those who tend to stay quiet and withdrawn, who find it difficult to enter a discussion or who are easily talked over by others.

Setting standards

This is the function of imposing and insisting on standards for the actions of the group. This function is essential for keeping the group focused on its task and it is a function, which is often difficult to perform without risking short-term resentment and hostility.

Housekeeping

This function is about making sure that everyone is kept aware of the group's decisions, progress, and 'to do' list. It is easily fulfilled by keeping minutes, distributing them, and discussing them.
Individual Roles

Self understanding

Your capacity to see your own behavior, actions, and reactions in the group in an objective way, will make a big difference to how well you communicate with other group members, and how well you are able to identify and manage potentially destructive conflict.

Better self-understanding leads to better communication by reducing the contradictions between your words and your body language.

Inter-personal understanding

This is the ability to understand the other person's point of view and leads not only to much greater tolerance (which in turn reduces unproductive, or emotionally based, conflict), but also encourages many more ideas to be submitted to the group. This is because group members will feel better understood and less likely to have their ideas ignored or ridiculed.

Active listening

Our natural disposition in a competitive world is to constantly seek attention, to fight to have our ideas heard, to attempt constantly to command the consideration of others or to put our side of the argument. But communication is a two-way thing and if a discussion is to be productive, each person's position must be understood clearly along the way.

Unfortunately, since most of our efforts in discussion go into being heard, rather than listening to the others' points of view, progress is often slow. This natural tendency needs to be countered by active

listening.

Managing conflict

Conflict is the double-edged sword of group functioning.

The absence of conflict means that the group is not reaching its full potential to identify problems and explore possible solutions. It may mean that the group is not sufficiently motivated, or challenged, to generate the 'creative tension' that forges the best solutions.

An excess of conflict, on the other hand, can be destructive to the group and undermine its ability to carry out any action at all.

This means that conflict must be managed. The leader must pursue an agenda which is challenging enough to draw out each person's differing views, but which prevents argumentation from blocking progress and decision making.

Stopping conflict escalation

The problem with our traditional view of conflict is that we see it as a situation, which is only resolved by having a winner and a loser. In this view, conflict is resolved only when one person prevails over the other, so it is a situation, which is ripe for escalation. Escalation means that the heat in the argument rises, the number of points in dispute increase, personal abuse increasingly creeps into the discussion, and in the extreme, escalation leads to violence.

For group-work to be effective, this traditional view of conflict must be undermined and replaced with one, which sees conflict as an essential factor in finding the best solution to a problem.

Disruptive behaviors

There are many types of disruptive behavior which group members can engage in and which need to be dealt with to stop them from hindering the group's progress.

The problem, however, is that the person concerned is often unaware that their behavior is disruptive. In fact the group leader is just as likely to be the culprit as another group member. Taking this into account, anyone in the group may initiate action to stop it:

Recognition

People work best when they feel that they belong, that their participation is worthwhile, and that their contributions are valuable.

What is often overlooked is the need to constantly reinforce this feeling in group members by giving recognition when and where it is due. By recognizing and acknowledging all actions which help the group to function well and achieve its aims, you will be consolidating and improving the capabilities of the group.

Participant roles in a group meeting

Organizer – Some persons do not like clutter – even in meetings. Some are natural organizers. They dislike disorganizations. Meetings often move without direction, from either the inability of the leader to give direction or because members wander off the path. When you are an organizer, you give procedural suggestions; you steer back to main, central issues.

"I feel we're wandering from the topic. I suggest we return to the main subject, which in my estimation is, what criteria should we consider for any foreign expansion?

Clarifier – A clarifier attempts to make clear unclear expressions.

"It's useful that we begin with a consistent definition of the term *strategic*; let's see if we can set a common understanding of the timeframe."

Questioner- Many questions need clarification. You wish to fill your knowledge gap for yourself and others. Be careful: Know the difference between a vital or an inconsequential question. But when in doubt ask your question: others may have had the same question but were afraid to ask.

Factual contributor – Any time you add substantive (factual, accepted opinions) information to a discussion, you are making a worthwhile contribution. Watch your tone. Presenting factual information in an arrogant or overbearing manner will create negative reactions. Be positive.

"You make an interesting point; I like it. May I add some data from a study appearing in the fall issue of the *Journal of Business Communication*?"

Energizer- Gloom is a part of meeting; so is frustration. An energizer keeps the discussion moving by stimulating members to reach their goal.
"Hang in there, we're almost there. If we can make it another half hour, I'm sure we'll reach some kind of consensus."
Idea creator- The creator risks ideas that may be new, different, even unusual. If you are an idea creator, you are willing to test an idea in the open forum of the meeting.
"Wait a second, there may be third option…"
Critical tester- Every meeting needs a person willing to challenge, tactfully, the validity and reasonableness of contributions.
"Are the facts – and the language clear?"
"Are the sources of information recent; can one see the source and verify the evidence given?"
Conciliator- Deadlocks are not uncommon in meetings. Both sides refuse to budge; violent disagreements do occur. You as a conciliator attempt to find a middle ground, seek to find a compromise.
Helper of others- A final role you can play to invite other participants to join in.
"I'd like to hear what Sohail has to say on the topic." (Invitation to participate)

Lesson 26

Elements of Effective Written Communication

Because written communication plays such a significant role in our economy and in the daily routines of the vast majority of organizations, an understanding of the essentials of written communication is critical. You must know *what* you want to say and *how* to say it. In addition, you must design your messages to portray exact meaning as well as create a favorable impression. Well-worded messages not only bring you and your reader closer together, but also make you appear more friendly, helpful, and interested.

In order to choose the right words and sentences for your letters, you need to be familiar with the elements of effective written communication.

The elements are:
1. Courtesy
2. Correctness
3. Conciseness
4. Clarity
5. Concreteness
6. Completeness

1. Courtesy

Review of actual business correspondence reveals that special attention should be devoted to assuring the courtesy of business communication. Effective writers visualize the reader before starting to write. You will want to consider your reader's desires, problems, circumstances, emotions, and probable reaction to your request. This step will enable you to develop your communication from the reader's point of view.

You-Attitude

Writing with a you-attitude shows sincere concern for the reader. Emphasizing the reader's (you) viewpoint rather than the writer's (I) viewpoint demonstrates sincerity. Merely replacing a few I's, we's, our's and my's with you's and your's throughout a letter, however, will not guarantee the presence of the you-attitude. To establish a you-attitude, you must create a positive state of mind through your suggestions and decisions.

A you-attitude is more than simple courtesy or politeness. It hinges on demonstrating a clear understanding of the reader's problem or question. If a reader feels that you are genuinely concerned about his/her problem or question, the overall impact of the message will be greatly enhanced.

Incorporating a you-attitude into your message will help give them *reader benefit,* which shows the reader how he/she will benefit by complying with your request or announcement. Readers are more likely to comply if the benefits appear to be worth their time, effort, or cost. Even though the benefits of compliance may not be readily apparent to the reader, your message can be made much more effective by including reader-benefit material.

Understanding some basic truths about human nature helps us humanize our business messages. These truths are:

- ***People are self-centered***
- ***People are defensive***

- ***People are not perfect***
- ***People expect courtesy***
- ***People do the best they can***

People are self-centered

Being self-centered does not mean egoistic and conceited. It means that people want to know what good they will get out of doing business with us. When a business executive receives mail, s/he asks two questions: what's this and why me. Effective writers tell their readers how they will benefit from doing whatever they are asked to do.
Readers are more likely to comply with your request if the benefit appears to be theirs.

> The first of the following two sentences got very little response when it was used in a collection letter; however, when the sentence was revised to include reader-benefit material, the letter was much more successful.

Change**:**	**Please send your cheque for the amount you owe.**
To:	**By sending your cheque for Rs. 5,000, you will be able to maintain your good credit reputation.**

Merely inserting the second-person pronoun *you* into a sentence does not necessarily assure a you-attitude or reader benefit. The first version of the text example lacks reader benefit, although it does contain the word *you*. The revised version, by mentioning "shopping convenience," contains reader benefit.

Change:	You will be glad to know that we are now open until 9:00 PM seven days a week.
To:	For your shopping convenience, we are now open until 9:00 PM seven days a week.

People are defensive

Put another way, it's human nature to be suspicious of promises and to resist (at least initially) even the most well-meaning criticism. Constructive criticism can be seen as a personal attack. Since it's normal for people to take what we say at face value, we need to be careful with the things we say and we say them.

People are not perfect

Error is a part of life, but no one likes having mistakes pointed out. Effective writers focus on solving the problem not pointing out mistakes.

Example
You go to a store, shop and return leaving an unsigned cheque behind. You receive a call. "You forgot to sign the cheque. Would you please come and sign it today before we close the store." How would you like it? The message amounts to saying, it was your mistake. You did not sign it.

This situation could be better handled by

Incorporating You-Attitude
”We noticed that your signatures were missing. Could you please come in sometimes today to sign?”

People expect courtesy
This is very obvious, isn’t it? Think about the kind of service you want, when we go into a store. We want the sales person to pay attention to us, to make us feel that our business is important. When we call or e-mail someone, we want that person to reply promptly. It’s human nature to expect courtesy, so effective people are courteous to others.

People do the best they can
Effective writers assume their readers are acting honestly, fairly, and intelligently. You have to trust people – even if you are cheated sometimes. You have to forgive the ugly things that people say or do because one day you are going to need to be forgiven too.

Guidelines for Courteous Writing

1. Exclude irritating expressions
Many words and phrases that are used effectively in oral and interpersonal communication are perceived as inappropriate in written communication.

For example: “We find it difficult to understand.”
“Your lack of communication …”
“As we have explained to you many times..”
“Why can’t you understand our position?”
Such words and phrases anger, irritate, or belittle the reader.

We react negatively to words and phrases which imply that we are lying or are dishonest. Yet, that is the implication you are likely to receive from phrases such as ”You claim that ……..,” “ You state that ……,” “According to your letter…..” Writer can also belittle readers and make them feel stupid by stating: “as we have explained to you many times….” Why can’t you understand our position?” Readers are likely to find following opening sentences irritating: “I regret you are having problems with the S-20 lawn-mower you recently purchased from us.” (After all, you are probably more interested in learning how the writer is going to help you with your lawn-mower dilemma than in the fact that he/she acknowledges your problem).

As a writer, you need to be aware of these trouble spots and should avoid using words or phrases that might evoke a negative reaction.

2. Include meaningful apologies
Business correspondence often calls for sincere apologies or a willingness to grant the action that was requested.

When you receive a discourteous letter that incorrectly accuses you, the wisest approach is to reply in a courteous manner. By using this approach, you may win a life-time customer. Another effective way to enhance goodwill is to apologize for a mistake or error even before the customer discovers it. For less serious mistakes or errors, a printed form may be suitable; but when the mistakes or errors are serious, a personalized letter is the only appropriate communication medium.

3. Include courteous wording

Omitting discourteous wording does not necessarily guarantee courteous messages. Although some messages are void of discourteous word, they can be overly harsh or blunt. Notice how the blunt, harsh wording of the material in the example below can be revised to be more pleasant.

Blunt, harsh wording:
"You did not read my recent letter."

Courteous writing:
"Please refer to my June 10 letter."

Similarly notice a difference between the begrudging tone in the first paragraph and the courteous tone in the second paragraph of the following illustration.

Change:	To change the closing date of your charge account will create a great deal of extra paperwork for us. However as you requested, we will comply with your desire to have the closing date of your account changed from the 15th of each month to the 1st of the month.
To:	The closing date for your account has been changed from the 15th to the first of each month, as you asked, I can fully appreciate the reason for your wanting to have this change made.

4. Respond in a timely manner

Although one person's priority may be another person's timewaster, prompt attention to customer questions and needs is imperative. When we do not receive an answer to a letter within a reasonable time, we believe that our concerns are not important to the person to whom we wrote. Delaying a response can be severely damaging to the write-reader relationship.

When the action requested by a customer cannot be competed in a reasonable time, he/she should be notified of the delay, sending a short note like the following will distinguish you as a courteous person.

We will examine your camera to determine the shutter–response problem and have it back to you within three weeks. If repairs are needed, I will call you on Friday Dec. 11, for approval to make the repairs.

Or, when the person to whom a business letter is addressed is out of town for an extended period, the following is a suitable response.

Mr. X is out of the office until next Friday, I am sure he will be able to provide you with all of the information you requested when he returns.

Many companies have found that prompt answer to question result in satisfied customers and help generate additional business. Courteous writing is more than words and sincerity. It is a total effort to demonstrate sincerity through positive writing and prompt attention to customer questions and inquiries.

5. Positive wording

In written communication, the use of positive wording is essential for building goodwill. The elimination of words that have negative connotations will provide a pleasing and comfortable link with the reader. Examples of positive and negative wording are:

Negative wording:	You do not qualify for the free gift because you did not respond within ten days.
Positive wording:	You probably did not notice that your order was mailed after our special gift order had expired.
Negative wording:	We are very sorry that we cannot send you our Communication Skills booklet by December 5.
Positive wording:	The publication department has assured me that you will have the Communication Skills booklet by January 20.

Positive writing also requires a conscious effort to exclude words that readers normally consider to be negative. You cannot use such words as ”sorry” or unfortunately” without conveying to the reader that the situation is going to end with somewhat less than desired results.

5. Bias-free language

Most of us think of ourselves as being sensitive, unbiased, ethical, and fair. But being fair and objective isn't enough; to establish a good relationship with your audience, you must also appear to be fair. Bias-free language avoids unethical, embarrassing blunders in language related to gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability.

a. Gender bias

Avoid sexist language by using the same label for every one (don't call a woman "chairperson" & then call a man "chairman"). Reword sentences to use *they* or to use no pronoun at all. The preferred title for women in business is *Ms.*, unless the individual asks to be addressed as *Miss* or *Mrs.* or has some other title, such as *Dr.*

Change: Please share this report with your supervisor. He will find it interesting.
To: Please share this report with your supervisor, who will find it interesting.

You can also eliminate sexist language by using plurals as the following example illustrates.

Change: The attitude of an employee is important if he expects to be promoted.
To: The attitudes of employees are important if they expect to be promoted.

Good communicators make every effort to change biased language such as:

Replacing

Businessman	**with**	**Businessperson**
Chairman	**with**	**Chairperson**
Man-made	**with**	**Artificial**
Spokesman	**with**	**Spokesperson**
Mankind	**with**	**Humankind**

b. Racial and ethnic bias

The central principle is to avoid language suggesting that members of a racial or an ethnic group have stereotypical characteristics. The best solution is to avoid identifying people by race or ethnic origin unless such a label is relevant.

Examples:

"His black assistant speaks more clearly than he does" (Racial-bias**)**
"His assistant speaks more clearly than he does". (Reader-friendly**)**
"Mr. X is an unusually tall Asian" (Racial-bias**)**
"Mr. X is tall" (Reader-friendly**)**

c. Age bias

As with gender, race, and ethnic background, mention the age of a person only when it is relevant. When referring to older people, avoid age avoid adjectives like frail, old etc.

Example:

"Mr. X, aged 55, has just joined our Technical Department" (Age-bias**)**
"Mr. X has just joined our Technical Department". (Reader-friendly**)**

d. Disability bias

No painless label exists for people with a physical, mental, sensory, or emotional impairment. Avoid mentioning a disability unless it is pertinent. However if you must refer to someone's disability, avoid terms as "handicapped", "crippled", or "retarded". Put the person first and the disability second.

Example:

"Crippled workers face many barriers on the job". (Disability-bias)
"Workers with physical disabilities face many barriers on the job" (Reader-friendly).

Lesson 27

Elements of Effective Written Communication

2. Correctness

At the core of correctness is proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
However, a message may be perfect grammatically and mechanically but still insult or lose a customer. The term correctness, as applied to business messages also means the following three characteristics:

- Use the right level of language
- Check accuracy of words, information, and data.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation.
- Check spelling.

Use the right level of language

Writing at a level appropriate for your reader is crucial. The words you use and the way you use to form sentences affect comprehension and also convey an unwritten message. If you write in a stiff, formal way, you will give the impression of being formal, whether or not you intend to be. On the other hand, if you write as casually as you speak in conversation with your friends, you may create an impression of informality. Formal English, like formal dress and formal manners, is appropriate for formal reports, research papers, and address delivered on serious occasions.

Informal English is the language of business correspondence written for a general readership. The conventions of informal English are less rigid than those of formal English. Sentences may be long or short, and they tend to sound more conversational than formal English. For example,

Formal
"**Please inform me of the manner in which you intend to liquidate this balance".**

Informal
"Pl. let me know when you plan to pay the outstanding balance of your account".

The vocabulary of informal writing is less difficult. Compare the following lists, noting the differences between the formal and informal usage.

Formal	Informal
ascertain	**find out**
endeavor	**try**
procure	**get**
utilize	**use**

Check accuracy of words, information and data

Effective business communication requires the use of accurate words, information, and data. The goodwill that perhaps required years to develop can be destroyed with even a minor error. One error in a letter, a figure, or a digit can make a big difference. To ensure the accuracy of your facts, you should recheck before signing a document.

Use correct grammar and punctuation
Many people in business organizations incorrectly apply principles of grammar and punctuation. The proper use of these two language fundamentals is crucial. Even if the content of the document is

appropriate and contains the essential qualities of written communication, the presence of incorrect grammar and punctuation will have a negative impact on the message.

Check spelling

Administrative assistants provide a valuable service to supervisors, managers, and executives by ensuring the correct spelling of words. While the first draft of a written message is the responsibility of the typist, the final product is the responsibility of the person signing the document. Don't depend upon the spell-check, if you have the slightest doubt of a spelling, consult a dictionary.

3. Conciseness

Effective writing is concise - each word, sentence, and paragraph counts. Conciseness should not be interpreted to mean brevity, which will result in an incomplete message. To illustrate, a 150-word letter that could be written in 100 words without a loss in meaning is not concise. A two-page letter cannot be shortened without a loss in meaning is concise.

Concise communication does the following:

a. Eliminate wordy expressions

Using unneeded words increases the length of sentences and forces readers to carry excess words in their minds. In the following two paragraphs, the writer was not careful in selecting words. Notice the conciseness of the revised paragraph.

Change**:**	We would like to ask you to return the form enclosed herein at your earliest possible convenience. In accordance with your request, we have a consensus of opinion that the washing machine that you purchased when you were in our store is at this time still under warranty.
To:	The warranty on your machine is still in effect. As soon as you return the enclosed form, we will send our repair technician to your home.

Here are some of the wordy and concise writing.

Wordy	Concise
In accordance with your request	**as you requested**
Consensus of opinion	**we agree**
Held a meeting	**met**
At this time	**now**
A long period of time	**a long time**

b. Include only relevant material

The effective, concise message should omit not only unnecessary wordy expressions but also irrelevant statements. To be sure you include only relevant facts, observe the following suggestions:

i. stick to the purpose of the message.
ii. Delete irrelevant words and rambling sentence.

iii. Omit information obvious to the receiver; do not repeat at length what that person has already told you. If you feel it is important to remind the audience of known information, subordinate the familiar information.

iv. Avoid long introductions, unnecessary explanations, excessive adjectives and propositions, pompous words.

v. Get to the important point tactfully and concisely.

Example**:**

Wordy**: We hereby wish to let you know that our company is pleased with the confidence you have reposed in us.**
Concise**: We appreciate your confidence**

c. Avoid unnecessary repetition

Sometimes repetition is necessary for emphasis. But when the same thing is said two or three times without reason, the message becomes wordy and boring. Here are three ways to eliminate unnecessary repetition:

i. Use a shorter name after you have mentioned the long one once. Instead of "Business Communication Center", use "Communication Center"

ii. Use initials rather than repeat long name. Instead of using Virtual University again and again, use VU.

iii. Cut out needless repetition of phrases and sentences.

Wordy: Continue to utilize the old form until such time as the new form is available.
Concise: Start using the new form on Feb. 1

4. Clarity

Getting the meaning from your head into the head of your reader – *accurately* – is the purpose of *clarity*. Of course, you know this is not simple. We all carry our own unique ideas, experiences, and interpretations with words.

Clarity can be achieved by:
i. Choosing precise, concrete & familiar words
ii. Constructing effective sentences & paragraphs

1. Choosing precise, concrete and familiar words

Clarity is achieved in part through a balance between precise language and familiar language. When you use precise or concrete language you select exactly the right words to convey your meaning. When you use familiar language, you select a word that is familiar to the audience, and appropriate for the situation. Familiar words, as between two good friends, for example, are often conversational, and occasionally may be part of a speech or written communication.

When you have a choice between a long word and a short one, use the short, familiar word your reader or listener will quickly understand.
Examples: Note that the long words and their short replacements are in italics.
Long word
1. *During the preceding year*, the company was able to *accelerate* the productive operations.
2. The president *acceded* to the proposition to nullify the *contractual relationship*
Short word
1. *Last year* the company was able to *speed up* operations
2. The president *agreed* to break the *contract*.

Concrete words

The dividing line between abstract and concrete words is hard to define. Abstract words are vague.

Abstract	Concrete
sizeable loss	4% loss
near future	on Friday

Choose familiar words

The foremost suggestion for word selection is to use familiar words. These are the everyday words – the words with sharp and clear meanings in the mind.

Notice how the following statement with unfamiliar words is expressed clearly in the revision using familiar words.

Unfamiliar: After our perusal of pertinent data the conclusion is that a lucrative market exists for the subject property.
Familiar: The data we studied show that your property is profitable and in high demand.

When you have a choice between a long word and a short word, use the short, familiar word that your reader will quickly understand.

Unfamiliar word	Familiar word
ascertain	find out, learn
peruse	study, learn
subsequent	after
remuneration	pay

2. Constructing effective sentences & paragraphs

At the core of the clarity is the sentence. Important characteristics to consider are length, unity, coherence, and emphasis.

Length

Generally, short sentences are preferred. The suggested average sentence length should be about 17 to 20 words. Because variety in sentence length adds interest to writing, adopt a range of from 3 to 30 or more words. But when a sentence exceeds 40 words, try to rewrite it into more than one sentence. Also, if all sentences are short (under 10 words), the result is overly simple.

This memorandum is being distributed with the blueprints that show the final version of the new offices at our new Lahore headquarter and are to be used later for discussion at the next board meeting, which is to be held on Sept, 14. (Long sentence)

This memo is being distributed with the blueprints. The blueprints show the final version of the Lahore. Headquarter offices. Later they will be used at the Sept. 14 board meeting. (Improved sentence)

Unity

In a sentence – whether simple, compound, or complex – unity means that you have one main idea, and any other ideas in the sentence must be closely related to it.

Example: “We have safe deposit lockers, and we have the maximum employees in Pakistan.”

Coherence

To help improve the clarity of your writing, your sentences and paragraphs need to be coherent. Coherence is achieved by making sure the relationships between parts of sentences and paragraphs are clear to the reader and by placing the modifiers in the correct location in each sentence.

Example

The car is in the garage that he wrecked. (means that he wrecked the garage that housed a car) The car he wrecked is in the garage. (means that he wrecked a car and it is in the garage).

Emphasis

The technique of emphasis is used when you want certain words, phrases, clauses, or sentences to stand out. Some of the emphasis techniques that you can employ are position, repetition, quantity, and mechanics.

Emphasis stands out in two positions: the beginning and the ending. The beginning is generally the preferred location, unless you are presenting negative information. When using the repetition technique, you simply repeat the words you want to emphasize. In addition, you can emphasize an idea by increasing the number of words devoted to its discussion. Emphasis can also be achieved by presenting a key idea in a short paragraph and then using the paragraphs that follow to present additional information. Finally, several mechanical means of emphasizing ideas are available, including underlining, putting information in all capitals, and using a different color ink.

Writers must decide what needs emphasis, and then choose sentence structure. In the example below, the first of the two sentences illustrates how overuse of the repetition technique can have a negative impact.

Example

Change:	Candidates should be motivated and have interest in public speaking, and have prerequisites and others.
To:	Candidates should have prerequisites and be motivated for public speaking.

Lesson 28

Elements of Effective Written Communication

5. Concreteness

Communicating concretely means being specific, definite, and vivid rather than vague and general. Concrete writing makes specific references to persons, places, objects, & actions while abstract mans making general references to these items.

To make your writing concrete you should:
a. Include as much specific information as possible.
b. Use active rather than passive verbs.
c. Use vivid, image-building words.

Include as much specific information as possible

Unfortunately, what is concrete to us may not be concrete to our readers. An effective way to overcome this dilemma is to provide as much specific information as possible rather than general information. For example, knowing how "fast" "fast" is in the following sentence is impossible without presenting additional information.

Change:	She is a fast typist.
To:	She types @ of 80 words/min.

Another example of a general statement and a more concrete revised version follows.

Change:	He got a good score in his MBA Program.
To:	His GPA in 2000 was 3.9 on a four point scale.

General words are often interpreted differently by the reader from what you intended. The following is a partial list of particularly troublesome words.

large	**good**
small	around
old	convenient
young	little
majority	large

It's permissible – even desirable - to use general expressions, only when:

i. It's not possible to be specific: "You may not have the precise figures & facts.

ii. You wish to be diplomatic (considerate): "You have missed three invitations to my office" – is harsh, rude; you may be tactful by saying, "I have sent you several reminders to see me in my office."

iii. Exact figures are unimportant, as in "more than half the committee was present".

Use active rather than passive verbs

Active verbs help make your sentences more:
1. Specific: "The Dean decided" is more explicit than "A decision has been made".
2. Personal: "You will note" is both personal and specific. "It will be noted" is impersonal.

3. Concise: The passive requires more words and thus slows both writing and reading. Compare “Figure shows” with “It’s shown by figures”
4. Emphatic: Passive words dull action. Compare “The students held a contest” with “A contest was held by the students”.

You may prefer the passive voice, instead of the active, only in such situations:
1. When you want to avoid personal, blunt accusations or comments. “The October cheque was not included” is more tactful than “You failed to include the October cheque”. “Attendance at the meeting is required” is less harsh than “ You must attend”.
2. When you want to stress the object of the action. In “Your saving account is insured up to 1,00,000”, you have intentionally stressed “your account” not the firm that does the insuring. Also “You are invited” is better than “We invite you.”
3. When the doer isn’t important in the sentence. In “Three announcements were made before the meeting started” the emphasis is on the announcements not on who gave them or who made the announcement.

Use vivid, image-building words Among the devices you can use to make your messages forceful, vivid, and specific are sensory appeals, comparisons, concrete nouns, and well-chosen adjectives and adverbs.

Examples:

Change:	This report is weak.
To:	The following flaws weaken the quality of this report: - the numerous grammatical errors - the inaccurate information that is presented, and - the absence of feasible recommendations.”
Change:	This is a long letter.
To	This letter is three times as long as you said it would be.

6. Completeness

Incomplete messages quickly increase the organization’s cost. Any time a message is prepared that requires the preparation of another message, the cost of communicating doubles. Incomplete messages are costly in other ways as well because they can result in:

1. Loss of goodwill.
2. Loss of valued customers.
3. Loss of sales.
4. Waste of time trying to make sense out of an incomplete message.
5. Cost of returning merchandise because of an incomplete order.

The best way to determine if you have provided enough information is to subject your writing to questions like Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? – 5Ws & H. If you have provided clear answers to these questions, your response is likely to be complete. If you cannot answer these questions, you probably should consider adding additional information.

As you strive for completeness, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Provide all necessary information.
- Answer all questions asked.
- Give something extra, when desirable.

Provide all necessary information

When you initiate a message, check to make sure you have provided all the information the reader needs for thorough, accurate understanding. One way to help make your message complete is to answer the five W questions – *who, what, when, where, why* – and any other essentials such as *how.*

Examples:
While placing an order (request), make clear:
what – you want
when – you need it
where- to send it
how – payment will be made
suppose you are reserving a banquette hall or rooms, specify:
accommodation required (what for)
location - (where)
sponsoring agency - (who)
date & time - (when)
event – (why)
details – (how to pay ..)

Answer all questions asked

Whenever you reply to an inquiry, try to answer all questions – stated and implied. A colleague or prospective customer's reaction to an incomplete reply is likely to be unfavorable. The customer may think the respondent is careless or purposely trying to conceal information. In general, "Omissions cast suspicions." Whether you are answering an inquiry about your product or recommending a former employee for a new job. If you have no information on a particular question, say so clearly. If you have unfavorable information in answer to certain questions, handle your reply with both tact and honesty.

Give something extra; when desirable

sometimes you must do more than answer the customers' specific questions. For example, suppose you receive the following inquiry from an out-of-the-town visitor:

I will be visiting your country next week. Since we have not met for a long time, I would like to know where we could meet.

If you answer only this one question - "when could we meet" - your letter would be incomplete. Realizing that your reader is a newcomer, you should include in your reply a welcome plus such needed details as direction for reaching the meeting place, day, date, and time of meeting.

Lesson 29

Preparing for Effective Business Writing

Effective business writers prepare for writing. In fact, much of their writing success can be attributed to the quality of their preparation. Occasionally, preparing to write may be as time consuming as the actual writing.

Preparing to write is a multifaceted activity that includes the planning and organizing stages, which are followed by the drafting or dictating stage. Most inexperienced writers also find it necessary to edit their first draft – and in some case several drafts – before they are satisfied with their message.

Several steps are found within each of the stages. The following outline identifies these steps.

1. Planning Stage

- Determine your purpose
- Consider your reader
- Choose your idea
- Determine the appropriate content

2. Organizing Stage

- Outline the topics you plan to include
- Determine the order of the topics

3. Drafting Stage

- Develop appropriate beginning paragraph
- Compose the body
- Develop appropriate ending paragraph

4. Editing Stage

5. Proofreading stage

1. Planning Stage

The more time you devote to planning your message, the more effective it will be because planning will help you determine what material to include given the nature of the situation and the reader. During the planning stage you determine your purpose, consider your reader, and determine the appropriate content for your message.

Determine your purpose

The first step you undertake in planning a written message is to determine your purpose. Is the message to be sent to the reader as a response to a message you received from him/her? Does the message have to be persuasive? Is the nature of the situation positive or negative? your message mainly informational, such as announcing your firm's new location? The purpose of your message determines the content as well as the order in which you present the material.

Consider your reader

Effective writing is readily understood by your reader. Unless you are familiar with your reader and have considered his/her background, you may have difficulty focusing on his/her needs. The approach & content you use in writing for one reader may not be appropriate for another reader.

The purpose of your message will determine how much you need to know about your reader. The amount of necessary background knowledge will vary from situation to situation. For example, when you are composing a reply to an invitation to speak at a convention, you will need to know less about your reader than when you are composing a sales letter designed to promote the computer supplies distributed by your company. In the first example, you will want to write in a concise, courteous, and straight-forward manner. In the second case, you will want to know the type of computer supplies the reader buys, in what quantity, for what popular brands of equipment, and so forth. Knowing this information will enable you to "pitch" your message to the reader.

To give full consideration to your reader, you will want to have several answers to the following questions.

1. How much technical background does your reader have?
2. Are you preparing material for one reader or for multiple readers?
3. Is your reader from within the organization or outside the organization?
4. What is your reader's occupation & income level?
5. What is your reader's age?
6. What important habits of your reader should be considered?
7. What is the educational level of your reader?
8. What is your reader's geographical location?
9. Is your message likely to be read as part of your reader's routine?
10. What do you expect your reader to do with the information contained in your message?

Choose your ideas

With your purpose and receiver in mind, the next step is to choose the ideas for your message. If you are answering a letter, underline the main points to discuss and jot your ideas in the margin. If you are writing an unsolicited or a complex message, begin by listing ideas as they come to you – brainstorming – and then choosing the best ideas for your receiver.

Determine the appropriate content

Determining the content for a letter in which you are responding to a request is easier than when you are initiating the communication relationship. When responding to a request, you simply answer the questions asked in the originating letter, adding any additional information that you feel would be helpful to your reader. But when the letter you are preparing is the first of a series, you have no prior correspondence to guide your decision about what material to include.

To determine appropriate content, you might find answering the following questions helpful.

1. What information is relevant for this situation, given the purpose of the message and the reader's needs?
2. What information should be included to make the message complete?
3. If I were the recipient of this message, what information would I find helpful?
4. What material needs to be included to make the message conform with the content customarily found in the type of message I am preparing.

Once you have determined the broad topics to be included in the message, the planning stage is completed. The next stage, organizing the material, now begins.

Lesson 30

Preparing for Effective Business Writing

2. Organizing Stage

Outline the topics

Once the broad areas to be included in your message have been identified, your next step is to outline the. This step involves identifying the various subtopics to be discussed within each of the broad topics.

Assume you are composing a letter to send to a client whose credit account has had a past due balance for four months. One of the broad topics you decide to discus is the need for the client to pay the amount of the past-due balance. The following partial outline summarizes the information that could be included in the discussion of this broad area.

A. Need to have account paid in full by Dec…

1. The customer can protect his/her credit reputation by paying now.

2. Receipt of payment now will help you avoid having to borrow short-term money, which will benefit the customer in the long run because you will not have to increase your prices.

3. The customer can avoid paying additional finance or interest charges on his/her account.

Careful outlining is helpful for several reasons: One, it improves the clarity of your message; Second, it saves writing time later (changes in outline are easy than in writing material); and Third, it enables to emphasize properly the various topics in the message (placing the most important at the beginning is more emphatic than in the middle).

Several methods can be used in developing topics:

1. Direct method

2. Indirect method

The direct method involves presenting a general statement first, followed by specific supporting statements. This method is generally preferred when presenting positive or good-news information because the reader is immediately given the information of greater interest. The supporting information, which is of lesser interest, can be presented next.

An example of the direct method is shown in the outline below:

A. Mention that replacement copier is on its way
B. Discuss the examination of the copier revealed two defects

1. Weak transistor

2. Short circuit in one of the components

C. Mention that quality control tests do not find all defects
D. Discuss warranty on new copier
E. Express “satisfaction guaranteed” in courteous closing

Example of Direct-Method Letter

Dear Mr. ..

A copier was sent to you this morning to replace the copier you sent to us for repair.

An examination of your copier revealed a weak transistor and a short circuit in one of the electronic components. Because your copier was still under warranty, we prefer to replace the copier with a new one.

Our electronic equipment is subjected to right quality control tests during several stages of its manufacture. These tests find nearly 99% of the defective components - which is the best performance record in the industry. The reliability of our products is accepted by many of our customers.

The 120-day warranty on your replacement copier will take effect upon its receipt. Please complete and return the warranty card enclosed with the copier.

You are sure to have good performance by your copier. Remember, your satisfaction is guaranteed.

The indirect method, which is more appropriate for negative-news messages, presents the specific information first, followed by the conclusion.

A. Use a neutral opening that compliments the reader for having good credit references.
B. Discuss the reasons that the credit account cannot be approved for Rs. 1, 00,000. 1. Company requires minimum monthly income of Rs. 50,000 for this credit limit. 2. Is advantageous to applicant by helping him avoid assuming a potentially greater financial burden than can be effectively handled on this income level.
C. Mention that the credit account can be opened for Rs. 75,000 but not for the Rs. 1,00,000 that was requested.
D. Suggest that the reader, if he desires, can have account reviewed after one year to determine if credit limit can be increased.

Example of Indirect-Method Letter:

Dear Mr. …

Each of the individuals you listed as credit references on your charge account application spoke favorably about your bill-paying habits. You can be proud of this record.

A minimum monthly income of Rs. 50,000 is required to open an account for the Rs. 100,000 max. that you requested. Your present monthly income is Rs. 30,000. We find this limit actually benefits many of our customers because it helps them avoid assuming a greater financial burden than they might be able to handle on income of less than 50,000.

Your income level qualifies you for a charge account with a credit limit of Rs. 75,000. If you would like for us to open an account with this credit limit, please sign & return the enclosed card, which we need as authorization to open an account for you.

If you wish, we will review your account after one year to determine if the maximum limit can be increased to 100,000. All you need to do is request the review.

Our charge account can enhance the convenience of your shopping in our store.

Determine the appropriate order of the topics

Once you have prepared your outline, the next step involves reviewing the topics to make sure they are discussed in an appropriate order.

When you are determining the order of the topics, you should review your outline, keeping the following questions in mind.

1. Are the ideas of equal importance presented in a parallel manner?

2. Is the sequence of the topics appropriate for the development method I am using (direct, indirect)?

3. Is the sequence of the topics likely to add clarity to my message?

4. Are related topics properly sequenced?

5. Are the topics presented in the sequence recommended for the type of the message I am preparing?

To illustrate how changing the order of topics in an outline can improve message clarity, note the difference in the two outlines below.

Topical method of outlining

1. Health Insurance

   a. Individual insurance

   b. Group insurance

   c. Federal insurance / industrial insurance

   d. Dependent coverage

2. Life Insurance
   a. Option I
   b. Option II
3. Long-Term Disability
4. Dental Insurance
   a. Employee group insurance
   b. Dependent coverage
5. Retirement

Revised topical outline

1. Types of Employee Benefit Plans & Coverage
   A. Health Insurance
      a. Individual insurance
      b. Group insurance
      c. Federal insurance / industrial insurance
   B. Dental Insurance
      a. Employee group insurance
   C. Life Insurance
      a. Option I
      b. Option II
   D. Long-Term Disability
   E. Retirement
2. Dependent Coverage
   A. Health insurance
   B. Dental insurance

Lesson 31

Preparing for Effective Business Writing

3. Drafting Stage

Once you have completed the planning and organizing stages, you are ready to draft the message. The beginning and ending paragraphs of your messages are critical to their effectiveness. Because they usually occupy positions of emphasis, they are likely to be carefully scrutinized by the reader.

Developing opening paragraphs

The following suggestions help improve the effectiveness of the opening paragraph:

1. Make sure the beginning is appropriate for the reader.

2. Make sure the beginning is appropriate for the situation. Normally, in good-news letters, begin with the good news; in neutral or direct-request letters, begin with the main idea or request; in disappointing-news letters, buffer the beginning with neutral or information which the reader will agree; and in persuasive messages, begin with information that will catch the reader's attention.

3. Avoid the inclusion of negative information or discourteous wording by emphasizing what can be done rather than what cannot be done.

4. Use a you-viewpoint (rather than an I-viewpoint) in the opening.

5. Use a fast-start beginning rather than a slow beginning in which you provide information that is obvious to the reader.

6. Keep the beginning paragraph fairly short.

5. Make sure the beginning paragraph possesses unity and coherence.

In a direct-request letter, the opening sentence can represent the request. In the first of the following two paragraphs the reader will not know why he/she received a letter after reading the opening. In the revised paragraph, notice how much more quickly the reader will learn the purpose of the letter.

Change:	I am a student at XYZ business school and am currently enrolled in MBA program. One of the projects in the class is to make an in-depth financial analysis of some of the leading companies in Pakistan. I have selected your company for this project. (The main idea which was to request an annual report for the related company - is not presented in the beginning paragraph.)
To:	Would you please send me an annual report for use in making a financial analysis of your company? Making a thorough analysis of the financial condition of your company is one of the requirements for the MBA program I am enrolled in at XYZ Business School.

To begin a disappointed-news letter with negative information complicates a negative situation even more, as the first of the following two paragraphs illustrates.

Change:	We are sorry to inform you that we are unable to open a charge account at XYZ store. Unfortunately, you have too many liabilities in relation to your assets to qualify for a charge account. (A beginning like this will surely irritate the reader.)
To:	You will be pleased to learn that the credit references you listed on your credit application commented favorably on your bill-paying record. Several were also impressed with your promptness that has enabled you on numerous occasions to avoid interest charges. (Using a beginning such as this in a disappointing-news letter will help put the reader in a more positive frame of mind before reading the disappointing news.)

We are not always inclined to read unsolicited mail unless something in it attracts our attention. In persuasive messages, attention-getting beginnings are especially desirable. Notice how the first of the following two paragraphs, which does nothing out of ordinary, fails to capture the reader's attention, while the revised paragraph creates a greater amount of initial interest.

Change:	We are soliciting volunteers to donate an hour or two of their time each month to work at the information desk in the National Museum. We hope you will consider volunteering. (A beginning like this in a persuasive message will do little to entice the reader to comply with your request
To:	What could be more exciting than helping direct visitors at the National Museum to the location of the work of their favorite artist? You can share the excitement of our visitors by volunteering to work at the information desk in National Museum an hour or two each month.

Ending paragraph

In the ending you have opportunity to do two things: (i) Concentrate on the action you desire the reader to take; (ii) Show courtesy towards the reader.

Suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the ending paragraph of your messages are:

1. State the desired action clearly & completely.

2. State who is to perform the desired action if the action is to be performed by someone other than the reader.

3. State how the action is to be performed.

4. State when the action is to be performed, if appropriate.

5. Make the action easy to be performed.

6. Include reader-benefit material, if appropriate.

7. Show appreciation to the reader, if appropriate. Remember, until the reader does something for you, thanking him/her is inappropriate.

8. Avoid the inclusion of negative information in the ending.

9. Offer to be of assistance, if appropriate.

Notice how the first of the following two paragraphs fails to specify clearly and completely the action desired by the reader. The revised version removes any doubts the reader may have about the desired action.

Change:	Please let us hear from you.
To:	Just as soon as you sign and return the enclosed authorization card to us, we will be able to make the requested modifications to your insurance plan. (This paragraph is effective because it tells when, who, what, how, and why, as well as contains reader-benefit material.)

In the first of the following two paragraphs, the writer failed to mention in the closing who is to take the desired action. The revised version clearly points out who is to do what.

Change:	Upon receipt of the enclosed form, we will be able to add Mrs. Murad's name to your saving account.
To:	Please have Mrs. Murad sign the line marked with a red "X" on the signature card. As soon as we receive the card, she will be entitled to use this saving account. (This paragraph identifies who, what, where, why, and when, in addition to containing reader-benefit material.)

Notice how the first of the following two paragraphs violates several of the suggestions for writing effective ending paragraphs. The violations are removed in the revised version.

Change:	Let me know when you would like to come for an interview.
To:	Please call at 586…. early next week to let me know a convenient time for you to come for an interview. (This paragraph identifies what, where, when, and why.)

The negative information found in the first of the following two paragraphs has been removed from the second version.

Change:	We regret that we do not have the information you requested.
To:	Best wishes for the successful completion of your project. Your effort to obtain actual material for inclusion in your project is commendable. (The refusal, which was stated earlier in the letter, shouldn't be repeated in the closing paragraph.)

Body composition

Develop the main idea with the scope of your message (its length and detail) in mind.

Discuss main points and supporting evidence within the framework of the scope

Adjust your message to fit the time and space available.

4. Editing Stage

Evaluate for compliance with principles of effective communication. The editing process will be simplified if you evaluate your work, keeping in mind the following questions.

1. Is the information in your message correct?

3. Have you provided enough information to satisfy your reader's needs?
4. Have you covered all your points in the most logical order?
5. Do the most important ideas receive the most space, and are they placed in the most prominent position?
6. Would the message be more convincing if it were arranged in another sequence?
7. Do you repeat yourself?
8. Are details scattered that need to be grouped together?
9. Have you answered all the questions asked by the reader?
10. Have you provided additional info which your reader will appreciate having?

As you proofread you should check for:

1. Accuracy of dates, figures, amounts, numbers, and so forth
2. Misspelled words
3. Typographic errors
4. Omissions and additions of material
5. Proper sequencing of material
6. Correct format

Lesson 32

Parts of Business Letter

- Heading - letterhead
- Date
- Inside address
- Salutation
- Attention line
- Subject
- Body
- Complimentary close
- Signature area
- Reference initials
- Enclosure
- Copies line
- Postscripts

Parts of letter

- Essential parts
- Non-essential parts

Essential parts

- Letterhead
- Date
- Inside address
- Salutation
- Body
- Complimentary close
- Signature

Specimen Business Letter

Letter Head **Company Letterhead**
With address/telephone/fax

Date	August 5, 2001
	Mr. / Ms. First name Last name
	Title or Department
Inside Address	Company Name
	2000 Street, Suite 100
	City, State Zip
Salutation	Dear Mr. / Ms. Last Name:
	I am writing to request information about
	Accommodations in the Seattle area. Our company is
Body	sending six senior managers to Seattle to attend an
	executive training program at the University for two months
	in the fall.
	I understand that there are several different housing options
Body	available for international visitors: university residence halls, home stays,
	hotels, and apartments. Which would you recommend?
	I would appreciate any information you could send
Body	me.
Complementary	Sincerely,
Close	First name last name
Signature	First name Last name
	Position

Non-essential parts

- Addressee notation
- Attention line/ Reference
- Subject line
- Reference initials
- Enclosure
- Copy notation/Carbon copy (CC)
- Mailing notation
- *Post script*

Heading -letterhead

A heading shows where the letter comes from, and if it is letterhead stationary, it is usually at the top center of the letter. If you are not using letterhead stationary, your return address, but not your name, is typed directly above the date about 2 inches from the top.

A heading includes, most if not all of the following information:
- Name of the firm and its full postal address
- Name of department
- Telephone, fax, telex number and E-mail.
-Optional: directors name, logo, trade mark, firm's starting date

Date
The date is typewritten two to six lines below the last line of the letterhead. The date indicates when the letter was written. If your letter is completed over a number of days, use the date it was finished. The date is placed at the left margin or so it ends with the right margin.

Date sequence preferred is:

- December 5, 2005 – month, day, year; or in figures like 12/5/05 (American style). In Europe & Asia – 5/12/05.

Inside address

The inside address is the recipient's address. Always best to write to a specific individual. Write at the left-hand margin. Includes name & address of the individual, group or organization. If the addressee has no professional title like "Dr." "Prof." use courtesy titles i.e. Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms.

Example:

Mr. A. R. Qureshi,

General Manager, XYZ Corporation,

P. O. Box 1234

Lahore.

Salutation and complimentary close

The salutation (or opening greeting) is typed on the 2nd line below the inside address, two lines above the body, & even with the left margin. Salutation is conventionally paired with an appropriate complimentary close (the 'signing off'), to end the letter in a similar tone and formality.

Greeting	*Close*	*Context*
Dear Sir/Madam/Sirs (Name not used)	Yours faithfully,	Formal Situations Recipient not personally known Recipient senior in years, position
Dear Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss Qureshi, Dear Colleague Dear Customer	Yours sincerely,	Friendly (or would-be-friendly, e.g for selling or conciliatory letters). Established relationships. Implied relationships.
Dear Jaffer/ Jamila My dear Jaffer/ Jamila etc.	Yours, Yours sincerely, Kind regards. Best wishes. Affectionately,	Close, informal relationships. More personal.

Main body

The main body of the letter is divided logically into the paragraphs. Paragraphs are conventionally separated by two line spaces for clarity; whether or not the first line of each is indented from the left hand margin.

Complimentary close

The closing begins at the same horizontal point as your date and one line after the last body paragraph. Most popular closes are: Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Very truly yours, yours very truly. When the letter is informal, additional closes are often used, like Warm regards, Best regards & Best wishes. From UK and Asia closing is; faithfully yours.

Leave four lines between the closing and the sender's name for a signature.

Signature area

You can include in the signature area several identifications: name of your company, your signature, your typewritten name, and your business tile.

Sincerely,
Mohammad Nazim

Head, Communication Dept.

Addressee notation

Addressee notation is written to make the readership of the letter restricted. It is written two lines above inside address. It is written in capital letters.

Ways:

CONFIDENTIAL

PERSONAL

PLEASE FORWARD

Attention line/ reference

An attention line is useful in the following contexts:

When the writer doesn't know an individual's name but wants the message to go to a particular title (sales manager) or department (personnel). When the writer knows only the person's surname (Mr. Butt) and therefore does not want to use that name in the salutation. When the writer expects that the addressee travels often and wants the letter to be attended promptly by whoever takes care of the addressee's business. It is written two lines below the inside address.

Example:

For the attention of: Mr. Butt

Subject line

Subject gives a few words indication of the main subject of the letter. It directs the reader's thoughts to the matter in hand. Though Subject line is not an essential part of a letter but it is commonly used in business letters where higher management is your recipient, as they usually don't have time to read complete letters. However, subject line is essential if you writing in simplified format. The subject line also indicates where to file the letter for future reference.

Example:

Subject: Contract No. 12280-051

Subject: Order No. 0012254

The Subject line is usually written one line below the salutation. The subject line can be left aligned, centered or indented as the paragraphs in the body text. Some times the subject line is written above the salutation or at the very top of the page.

Ways to Write subject line:

Giving the heading "Subject":

Subject: Summer 2005 Sales Meeting

Distinguishing it from other parts of the letter:

Some writers omit the word subject and upper case to write the subject line, or in a different way so that it is easily distinguishable, i.e. different font type, italics, etc.

Example:

SUMMER 2005 SALES MEETING

Some writers like under lining the subject line or the last line of the subject line if it is long.

Examples:

- Subject: Summer 2005 Sales Meeting
- Subject: Summer 2005 Sales Meeting
- SUBJECT: SUMMER 2005 SALES MEETING
- SUMMER 2005 SALES MEETING

Reference initials

As it is very common that one person dictates or writes the letter and the other person types it, therefore reference initials are used to show who helped prepare the letter. Reference initials always appear at the left margin and are typed one or two lines below the last line of the signatures. If the writer's name is in the signature block then only the typist's initials appear in the reference initials.

Your initials as the composer of the message along with those of your typist usually appear at the left margin on the same line with the last line of the signature area. The first is writer's initials and the second is the typist's initials.

Example:

- mn/ mqs
- mn: mqs
- MN: MAS

Sometimes the writer and the signer of a letter are different people. At least the file copy of a letter should bear both their initials and as well as the typist's.

Example:

- **mn/ dq/ mqs (signer, writer, typist)**

Enclosure

Putting something other than the letter in the same envelope, such as a cheque, resume, price list, leaflet or any other document for reference is called enclosing something with the letter. Indicate this simply by typing Enclosures one, two or three lines below the complementary close and signature. Enclosure is written left aligned with the margin. One may list the name of each document you are including in the envelope.

Mailing notation

Mailing notation words such as Special Delivery, Certified, or Registered Mail, when applicable, may be typed a double space below the date line and at least a double space before the inside address.

Postscript

To emphasize a point already in your letter or to include a brief personal message unrelated to the letter, a postscript, typed or handwritten may be added ("P.S.," "PS," or "PS:") below everything else typed on the page.

Example:

Enc. (or Encs, for more than one item)
Enclosures 2 (two documents are enclosed)
Enclosed: 1) CV
2) Attested Copy of NIC
3) Attested Final Transcript

Copy notation

When you want persons other than the addressee to receive a copy of your letter, the names of these persons should be typed just below the reference initials or the enclosure notation, whichever is last. Type "cc" before the copy notation names if you are sending them a carbon copy. On occasions you might want to keep the sending of copies or a copy to one or few persons secret from the person who receives the original letter. In that case place the notation "bc," "bcc," or "bpc" for blind copy, blind carbon copy and blind photo copy. Place this on the copies and not on the original in the same place where copy notation appears.

Example:

cc: Muhammad Aslam

c: Muhammad Aslam

pc: Muhammad Aslam

Copy to Muhammd Aslam

A second after thought would be designated as P.P.S, meaning post postscript.

Additional rules

Second page Heading:

If the letter is long and an additional page is required, a second page heading is used.

The name of the receiving person or organization, page number, and date are included in the second page heading, however reference number can also be included.

Two lines are left empty after the second page heading and then the body is written.

Second page Heading:

Examples:

Mr. XYZ

May 10, 2005

Page 2

or

Mr. XYZ, May 10, 2005, Page 2

Lesson 33

Direct-Request Letters

Writing routine letters
Whenever you ask for something – information, action, products, adjustments, and references – you are making a request. To be as clear as possible, you as a writer need to imagine all the ways a request might be understood and then carefully choose your words to avoid pitfalls.

Strategy for routine requests
Like all routine messages, routine requests may be thought of as having three parts: an opening, a body, and a close. Using the direct approach, you place your main idea (a clear statement of the request) in the opening. You use the middle to give details and justify your request. Then you close by requesting specific action and concluding cordially.

State your request up front
Begin routine requests by placing your request first – up front is where it stands out and gets the most attention. Of course, getting right to the point should not be interpreted as a license to be abrupt or tactless:

- **Pay attention to tone.** Even though you expect a favorable response, the tone of your initial request is important. Instead of demanding action ("Send me your catalogue no 33A"), soften your request with words like "please" and "I would appreciate."
- **Assume your audience will comply.** An impatient demand for rapid service isn't necessary. Generally make the assumption that your audience will comply with your request once the reason for it is clearly understood.
- **Avoid beginning with personal introductions.** Don't be tempted to begin your request with a personal introduction such as "I am the senior corporate writer in the corporate relations department of XYZ, and I am looking for information that …."
- **Punctuate questions and polite requests differently.** A polite request in question form requires no question mark: "Would you please help us determine whether Mr. Aslam is a suitable applicant for this position." A direct question within your message does require a question mark: "Did Mr. Aslam demonstrate an ability to work smoothly with clients?"
- **Be specific.** State precisely what you want. For example, if you require the latest census figures from a government agency, be sure to say whether you want a page or two of summary figures or a detailed report running several thousand pages.

Explain and justify your request
Explain the middle section of your message to explain your initial request. Make the explanation a smooth and logical outgrowth of your opening remarks.

Whether you're writing a formal letter or a simple e-mail, you can use the middle section of your routine request to list a series of questions.

When using a series of questions, just keep a few basics in mind:

- **Ask the important questions first.** If cost is your main concern, you might begin with a question such as "What is the cost for shipping the merchandize by air versus truck?" Then you may want to ask more specific but related questions about, say, the cost of shipping partial orders.
- **Ask only relevant questions.** So that your request can be handled quickly, ask only questions central to your main request. If your questions require simple yes-or-no answers, you might provide readers with a form or with boxes to check. If you need more elaborate answers, pose open-ended questions. "How fast can you ship the merchandize?" is more likely to elicit the information you want than "Can you ship the merchandize?"
- **Deal with only one topic per question.** If you have an unusual or complex request, list the

request and provide supporting details in a separate, short paragraph. You may even use paragraph headings to make your reader's job easier.

Request specific action in a courteous close

Close your message with three important elements:

1. A specific request,
2. Information about how you can be reached, and
3. An expression of appreciation or goodwill.

Use the closing to request a specific action and to ask readers respond by a specific and appropriate time ("Please send the figures by Sept 10 so that I can return first quarter results to you before the Oct 10 Conference"). Help your reader respond easily by including your phone number, office hours, and other contact information.

Conclude your message by sincerely expressing your goodwill and appreciation. However, don't thank the reader "in advance" for cooperating.

1. Direct-inquiry letters

Two types of direct-inquiry letters discussed here are:

A. Requesting information about products or services
B. Requesting information about people

A. Requesting information about products or services

Organizations that receive letters of inquiry about their products or services find their responses to these letters can be an effective sales technique.

Your goal in preparing direct-inquiry letters is to make responding as easy as possible for the recipient? For the reasons identified above, you need not be particularly concerned about motivating the recipient to respond. Rather, your main concern is to present your inquiry with as much clarity as possible so the recipient will be able to respond completely and accurately without having to prepare additional correspondence.

You are generally advised to begin a direct-inquiry letter with the request rather than with explanatory material. Placing the request after the explanatory material results in a slow-start opening, as the following example illustrates.

Change:	I am thinking of purchasing a new printer for my ABC personal computer. This printer would primarily be used when I am using the computer as a word processor. I use the Electronic Word Processing Software package. Will all of the F-1080 printer functions be operational when using my computer system and word processing system?
To:	Will all of the F-1080 printer functions be operational when using the Electronic Word Processing software on an ABC personal computer system?

Notice how much faster the revised version gets to the main purpose of the letter. The first version lacks conciseness and tells the reader something he/she can easily infer: The printer will be used primarily when the system is being used as a word processor.

The first of the following two paragraphs also has a slow-start beginning. You will notice that the second version is much faster because it avoids telling the reader something he/she can easily infer.

Change:	My wife, son, and I are planning to travel to Ayubia this summer. While in this area we want to do several things, including horse riding, hiking, and bird watching. Could you please send me information about the hiking trails as well as information about the places best suited for the other activities?

To:	Could you please send me information about the following facilities in the vicinity of Ayubia: trails for half-day hiking trips, horse riding and bird watching activities?

Occasionally when you are requesting information about a product or service, you may have several questions to ask. The most important question is usually asked first, and the less important questions follow. If you are asking a number of questions, you may want to consider putting the questions in an enumerated list.

Could you please send me information about a photocopier that has the following features:
1. A heavy-duty photocopier, which could print 10,000 copies/min.
2. An in-built program to sort out and staple each document.
3. Remote control functions.
4. Dual purpose functions of a computer printer and a photocopier.
5. Quick and easy repair and replacement.

After the request is presented in the opening of the letter, explanatory material is then included. This includes the reason for the request or information that the recipient will find useful in preparing the response.

The following paragraph illustrates an effective explanation section of a direct-inquiry letter.

We intend using this facility for conferences which are held almost every two-months. On the average the total number of participants vary between 800---1000.

The last section of the direct-inquiry letter is the closing, which should be action-oriented.

Change:	I will appreciate your sending me the requested information.
To:	A quick response to my request will enable us to decide soon as to which photocopier best meets our needs. If there are any additional features than those mentioned above, which you think might be helpful, please feet free to suggest.

The suggested plan for a direct-inquiry letter includes the following elements:

1. An opening that contains the primary request and secondary requests;
2. An explanation that includes the reasons for the requests or provides additional helpful background information;
3. A closing that suggests the action you wish the recipient to take; and that expresses appreciation for assistance.

B. Requesting information about a person

Inquiries about people involve two considerations: First is the need to respect the rights – legal and moral. Second is the need to structure the questions around the job involved. Therefore:

1.Respect human rights, both legal and moral.
2.Ask only for info related to the job.
3.Stress fact, write for business use and when authorized and treat confidentially.
4.Structure the questions around the job.

When these requirements are considered, plan and organize the inquiry by:
Beginning directly, with a general question seeking information, or a specific question that sets up the entire message.
Explaining the situation.
Covering the additional questions systematically. Make certain they cover the work involved and protect the subject's rights.

Ending with adapted goodwill talk.
Now applying these instructions to Mr. Aslam's application for the position of Office Manager, assume that analysis of the application and the job tells you that you should ask four questions:
1.Is Mr. Aslam capable of handling the responsibilities involved?
2.Does he know the work?
3.How hard a worker he is?
4.Is he morally responsible?

Now how would you arrange the questions and the necessary explanation in a message? Here is a specimen.

Mr. Aslam has applied to us for employment and has given your name as a reference. He indicated that he worked under your supervision during the period 2001-2004.
(*An opening that fails to contain the request for information.*)

We would be most appreciative if you would give us your evaluation of Mr. Aslam. We are especially interested in his ability to handle responsibility, knowledge of office procedures, work habits, and morals.

(*A section that contains a delayed request for imprecisely identified information.*)

Thanking you in advance for your courtesy. I remain.
(*A closing that lacks action orientation.*)

The above example illustrates an ineffective letter that requests information about a person. The message shows a not-so good effort. The opening is indirect. The explanation in the opening is important, but does it deserve the emphasis that the beginning position gives it? Although the question part gives the appearance of conciseness, it is actually scant. It includes no explanation. It does not even mention for what kind of position Mr. Aslam is being considered. The items of info wanted do not stand out. In fact, they are not even worded as questions but are run together in a single declaration sentence. Though courteous, the closing words are old style (thanking in advance).

Lesson 34

Direct-Request Letters

B. Requesting information about a person

Following example illustrates an effective revision of the previous letter:

Will you help me evaluate Mr. Aslam for the position of Office Manager? In authorizing this inquiry, Mr. Aslam indicated that he worked for you from 2001-2004. Your candid answers to the following questions will help me determine whether Mr. Aslam is the right person for this job. (*An opening that contains background information and the primary request*)

1. What is your evaluation of Mr. Aslam's leadership ability, including interpersonal skills? Our office has a staff of 20.
2. How well can Mr. Aslam manage a rapidly expanding office system? Ours is a growing company. The person who manages our office not only will need to have good computer skills but also need to know how to adapt them to changing conditions.
3. What is your evaluation of Mr. Aslam's stamina and drive? The position he seeks often involves working in a fast-paced environment under time pressures.
4. What is your evaluation of Mr. Aslam's moral reliability? Our office manager is responsible for much of our company equipment as well as some company funds.

(*A section that identifies the desired information.*)

Other than the common duties performed by an Office Manager, we are particularly looking for a person who could travel within the country and liaise with our other branch offices and prepare a variety of reports for our senior executives and shareholders.

(*A section that contains a discussion of the duties to be performed by the jobholder.*)

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. We plan to fill this position by October 1, 2005; therefore we will appreciate if you please send us your reply within the next two weeks.

(*An action-oriented closing that mentions the confidential handling of information.*)

This example gives evidence of good analysis of the job and the applicant. The message begins with an opening question that also includes helpful explanation. Then the message presents the specific questions. Worded separately and in a question form, each stands out and is easy to answer. Worded in with each question is explanation that will help the reader understand the work for which Mr. Aslam is being considered. The close is courteous.

Note, throughout the message, the concern for the rights of the people involved. The inquiry is authorized, is for business purposes only, and will be treated confidentially.

The suggested plan for a letter in which information about a job applicant is requested includes the following elements:

1. An opening that mentions the name of the person who has given the reader's name as a reference;
2. A list of questions that you would like to have answered.
3. A brief discussion of the common duties of the job for which the applicant has applied.
4. A courteous, action-oriented closing.

2. Indirect-inquiry letters

The indirect-inquiry letter is used to request general information rather than answers to specific questions.

If you have one or more specific questions, you will want to use the direct-inquiry letter. But if you simply desire general information, an indirect-inquiry letter will suffice.

Except for the request, the other sections of both types of letters are quite similar.

The opening of an indirect-inquiry letter can be less specific than the opening of a direct-inquiry letter. You are cautioned to avoid preparing such a general opening for an indirect-inquiry letter that the recipient will have difficulty responding.

The first paragraph illustrates the opening that is too general to be of much help to the recipient. The revised version is more specific – and therefore will be more helpful to the individual who has to prepare the response.

Change:	Do you have packets available for individuals visiting Ayubia? If so, please send me one.
To:	Would you please send me information about points of interest and scheduled events for families visiting Ayubia?

The explanatory sections of direct- and indirect-inquiry letters may not vary much from one another. The following paragraph illustrates an appropriate section for an indirect-inquiry letter. You will notice that the writer decided to include several pertinent details.

My wife and two sons (ages 14 and 12) plan to accompany me to Ayubia for a meeting that I am attending Sept 10-14. While I am attending the daytime meeting, they want to do as much sightseeing as possible. Because they will not have access to a car, they will have to depend on public transportation to get around.

3. Claim letters

The manner in which an organization deals with the claims it receives will affect its reputation.

When you have a legitimate complaint about a product or service, you should make it known to the manufacturer or supplier.

Claims against service connected with purchases are far more common than against the products themselves. The following list summarizes the bases for claims about service:

1. Merchandize not received.
2. Part of the merchandize not received.
3. Wrong merchandize received.
4. Damaged merchandize received.
5. Merchandize received too late.
6. Merchandize sent to wrong address.
7. Error made in prices of merchandize.
8. Statement received for bill already made.
9. Employee incompetence or rudeness.

Qualities of effective claim letters

Before you begin the process of preparing a claim letter, you will want to be familiar with the following qualities of effective claim letter:

1.An effective claim letter does not threaten.
2.An effective claim letter presents all the facts pertinent to the situation.
3.The writer of an effective claim letter does not take his/her anger out on the recipient.
4.An effective claim letter, by containing you-attitude material, will help the recipient realize the advantage of making an adjustment.

5. An effective claim letter makes a definite request, such as one of the following:
a. Replacement of the product or service.
b. Partial or full refund on the purchase price of the product or service.
c. Replacement shipment, which contains the merchandize that was ordered.
d. Repair of the defective product.
e. Cancellation of an order or a portion of the order.
f. Correction of an error in billing, such as overcharging for merchandize, tax, and shipping.

Structure of effective claim letters
The opening paragraph in a claim letter should mention the nature of the claim.

The X-photocopier we purchased from you on Aug. 22 is being returned with a request that it be replaced with a new one.

Explanatory material be presented as precisely and directly in an impersonal and courteous manner.

On several occasions during the last month it was inoperable at critical occasions. Because we bought it primarily to make copies on very short notice, our international visitors were severely inconvenienced when they could not provide copies of their presentations to the participants. On such occasions we had to get the outside service or
do without it.

The inclusion of you-attitude material is suggested:

The concern your company has for its customers convinces me that you will want us to own a X-photocopier worthy of its excellent reputation.

Effective action-oriented closing.

I will appreciate your replacing the X-photocopier soon so we can provide a fast and efficient photocopying service to our conference participants.

4. Order letters
Normally, order blanks or purchase orders are used when ordering merchandise by mail. However, when neither order blanks nor purchase orders are available, you can prepare an order letter.

When placing an order, you need not excite your reader; just state your needs clearly and directly. Most orders refer to a product that the reader knows about, so these messages are usually processed without objection.

Order letters are comprised of three distinct content components:
1. Pertinent information about the items being ordered;
2. Directions for shipping the merchandize, including desired receipt date (if appropriate) and the desired shipping location (if different from your address); and the
3. Method of payment.

The order letter below presents an effective writing:

Please send by urgent delivery (TCS/FedEx etc.) the following items:

Quantity	Cat. No.	Description	Size	Price	Unit Total
1	697-44	Trouser L	890	890.00	
2 pairs	713-88	Gloves	L	90	180.00
					1,070.00

Please charge these items to my Visa Card (account number 111-333-6666) that has an expiry date of December 30, 2005.

Because the above items are to be given as a gift, your delivery by Sept. 20 will be appreciated.

Lesson 35

Direct-Request Letters

5. Letters of invitation

Letters of invitation include speaking invitations as well as informal and formal social invitations.

Speaking invitation

When writing a letter inviting someone to make a presentation, the inclusion of vital information about the event will help prevent inconvenience or misunderstanding.

Important details to include in the letter of invitation are:

1. Name of the group before which the presentation will be made;
2. A few characteristics about the group to help the speaker tailor his/her remarks to the audience;
1. The desired length of the presentation;
4. The topic of the presentation;
3. The date, time, and the location;
4. Any transportation and/or lodging arrangements;
7. Amount of honorarium, if one is being given.

An effective example of speaking-invitation letter is as follows:

As Secretary General of the All- Pak Students Conference, I cordially invite you to speak on conflict management at one of the morning sessions on Jan. 15, 2006. The Conference will be held at the X-hotel in Lahore. (*An opening that contains the invitation and that presents important details about the event*)

I had the honor of listening to your speech on the above subject delivered at the Punjab University last year, which was well received by the students. I believe it would be appropriate if the students are reminded once again of the importance of conflict management that is the root cause of many ills in our society. (*A section that contains you-attitude material)*

The participants of the above Conference will comprise of graduate and postgraduate students coming from all over Pakistan, faculty members from all academic institutions, a few high government. officials and invitees from private corporations. (*A section that contains a discussion of the characteristics of the audience*)

If you are able to make a presentation at our Conference, please select whichever of the following sessions times best suits your availability on the morning of January 15; 9:30-10:15, 10:30-11:15, or 11:30-12:15. (*A section that invites the reader to select the time of the presentation*)

As a token of our appreciation for your participation, we will give you an honorarium of Rs. 5,000. We would also like you to be our guest at the lunch, which begins at 12:30 on the 15th.
(*A discussion of the reimbursement to be offered*)

Because the Organizing Committee wants to finalize the program soon, could you please let me know your decision by October 25? (*An action-oriented closing*)

Social-invitation letters

Most social invitation letters are considered informal. When more formality is needed, a formal invitation, either printed or handwritten should be considered.

Printed formal invitation is illustrated below:

Mr. M. Nazim
requests the pleasure of your company
at a dinner
in the honor of
Dr. A.U. Rehman
on Friday, the twenty-first of December
at seven o'clock
in the Blue Room
SB-Hotel, Lahore

R.S.V.P.
5867… Black Tie

Effective social-invitation letter is illustrated below:

Please join us at a luncheon on Dec. 21 to celebrate Mr. Rehman's tenth year as the Rector of the University. This important event, which begins at 12:30, will be held at the Blue Restaurant on Hali Road in Lahore.
(*A fast-start that presents the invitation and that contains important information about the event to which the reader is being invited*)

In addition to the University's staff, a few of the senior academicians are also being invited. If you wish, you will have an opportunity to join others in making a public tribute to recognize Mr. Rehman's significant accomplishments during his attachment with the University. (*A section that presents a discussion of the important information*)

Please let me know by Dec. 10 if you will be able to attend the celebration and if you wish to deliver a tribute. (*An action-oriented closing*)

6. Reservation letters

Provide all information, like: type of room needed (single, double, suite); number of persons to occupy the room; arrival and departure date and time, and a request for confirmation.

For putting this information, follow the plan like:
1.A fast-start opening which identifies the type of room desired and the days needed;
2.A section which mentions arrival and departure times;
3.A courteous, action-oriented closing, which mentions your desire for a confirmation.

The example below illustrates an effective reservation letter. Notice that all of the important elements are included.

I will appreciate if you please reserve two double beds for the nights of Sept 20 and Sept 21. The reservations are for my wife and two sons (age 6 and 4)

We will be arriving in Islamabad by PK-346 on Sept 20 and departing early on the 22nd.
Please send me the confirmation of our reservation within a week so that we could finalize our visit.

7. Letters requesting favors

When a favor is requested, the writer has a special reason for expressing his/her ideas tactfully and courteously as well as persuasively.

The individual requesting for a favor should first ask two questions
1.Have I sufficient reason for making this request?
2.Am I asking a favor of a person reasonably expected to be willing to grant the favor?

The letter should have a positive tone, be courteous, and show appreciation for the recipient's granting of the favor. The recipient should not be thanked in advance.

Change:	The students in the data processing class I teach at the Virtual University are always interested in seeing state-of-the-art computer installations. The article in last week's Business News about your installation was very interesting to my class. Would you be able to provide my students with a tour of your new computer installation?
To:	Would you be able to give a tour of your new computer installation to a group of 15 eager-to-learn students in my data processing class at the Virtual University? We became aware of your state-of-the-art installation through the article in last week's Business News.

Once the nature of the favor has been stated, additional information about the favor should be provided. The information will help the recipient become more aware of your desire to have the favor granted. This material should be followed by an explanation of why the favor is important to you and others. The following paragraph illustrates an effective request.

All of the students in this class are seniors in the data processing program at VU. Nearly half of them have work experience in data processing. These students would be especially appreciative of having an opportunity to see a state-of-the-art installation. Seeing such an installation will contribute significantly to their understanding of the vital nature of the data processing function in an insurance company.

The closing of a letter requesting a favor should be action-oriented and express appreciation for the possibility that the recipient may be able to grant the favor, While the first of the following two paragraphs expresses appreciation, it is not action oriented.

Change:	Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.
To:	I will call you next week to learn of your decision about the possibility of a tour. My students would be greatly appreciative of an opportunity like this to enrich their educational backgrounds.

The letter below is not likely to motivate its recipient to grant favor.

A friend of mine recently told me about the excellent presentation you made to a class of his several years ago. Would you be willing to make a similar presentation in my class?
(*An opening that presents the request but that is quite deficient in the information that is provided*)

Having speakers come into high school classes is an excellent way to bridge the gap between the real and educational world. We often find that speakers are able to share their rich experiences, one cannot find in the books. (*A section that presents additional information*)

Please let me know at your convenience if you might be available to speak to my accounting class.
(*A section that lacks action-oriented material*)

An effective version of an effective favor-request letter is as follows:

Are you available within the next two months to make a presentation on the topic of accounting careers before my accounting class? Because the class meets from 1:00 to 1:50, a presentation lasting thirty minutes with a twenty-minute question-answer period would be ideal. (*A fast-start opening that presents vital information about the request*)

Mr. Kausar recently told me about the excellent presentation you made on accounting careers before one of his classes several months ago. He indicated that several of his students chose an accounting career after having heard your presentation. Several of my students are consideration an accounting career --- and your presentation would be helpful as they make their decisions. (*A section that provides additional information about the request*)

Your helping enrich the educational experiences of my students would be greatly appreciated. I will call you on Dec. 10 for your decision. (*A courteous action-oriented closing)*

Lesson 36

Good-News Letters

Types of good-news letters:

Many situations in the business world require the preparation of good-news letters. When well written, these letters help organizations improve their relationships with their customers and clients.

The types of good-news letters are:

1. Letters replying to inquiries, extending credits,
2. Letters granting adjustments
3. Letters acknowledging orders
4. Letters granting favors
5. Letters of congratulation
6. Letters accepting invitations

What characteristics do good-news letters possess?

Good-news letters can be identified by the following characteristics:

1. Begin with the good news or main idea
2. Use a fast-start opening
3. Provide explanatory details or information of primary and secondary importance.
4. Incorporate a you-viewpoint
5. Incorporate an appropriate closing

Examples of a fast-start opening:

I am pleased to inform you that after deliberating the matter carefully, our human resource committee has recommended you for appointment as a staff accountant.

Congratulations. You have been selected to join our firm as a staff accountant beginning Sept.10.

Example of providing explanatory details or information of primary and secondary importance:

Your educational background and internship have impressed us, and we believe you would be a valuable addition to our Company. As discussed during your interview, your salary will be Rs. 20,000, plus benefits. In this regard, you will meet our HR manager, Mr. Moin, at 9:00 AM on Monday Sept 10. He will assist you with all the necessary paperwork. He will also arrange various orientations to help you know about us and the Company.

Letters that provide information about products or services

Letter responding to an inquiry about a product or service should have a fast-start opening

Change:	Thank you for your recent letter in which you inquired about our new desktop computer.
To:	Yes, the memory of the H-D 3000 in our new desk-top computer line can be expanded to 512K by inserting two H-D 3987 boards. A service contract that u also inquired about is available for an annual charge of Rs. 1000.

Inclusion of answers to questions and/or presentation of details or information of secondary importance.

Change:	The installation of the memory boards is an easy process. Any of our trained service technicians can install these boards in a few minutes.
To:	The factory-trained service technicians who work for the H-D computer dealer in your area, B-world Co., are able to install these memory boards in approx. 30 minutes. The cost of each board is Rs. 3000. We estimate that the memory of the H-D computer can be upgraded to 512 K for less than Rs.4000.

The inclusion of sales-promotion, or reader-benefit material:

During the six months that the H-D 3000 has been on the market, it has received excellent reviews in several computer magazines. After you read the four reviews that I am enclosing with this letter, I think you will agree that the well-designed keyboard, the high resolution of the screen, and the upgradeable nature of its memory make the H-D 3000 a superior product. Add to these features our exclusive three-year warranty and you can easily understand why the H-D 3000 is receiving such positive reviews.

The closing appropriate for a letter responding to an inquiry about a product or service be friendly and courteous.

Change:	Thank you for your interest in the H-D 3000.
To:	We appreciate having the opportunity to answer your questions. Should you have any other questions, please write me. Or if you would like to see a demonstration of the H-D 3000, please visit our dealer in your area, the B-world Company.

Letters responding to an inquiry about a person

Two situations necessitate the preparation of such letters responding to an inquiry about a person. These situations occur when you are asked to provide information about

1. A person whom you serve as a reference (such as former or current employee) and
2. A job applicant's work performance (also for a person's credit worthiness).

Notice the difference between the slow-start of the first of the following two paragraphs and the fast-start of the revised opening.

Change:	Your letter in which you inquired about the suitability of Mr. Aslam for an Office Manager position arrived recently. Mr. Aslam worked here from 2001-2004. His last position was Office Supervisor.
To:	Mr. Aslam, about whom you recently inquired, was highly regarded when he worked for us from 2001-2004. I am glad to recommend him to you as an Officer Manager, a position he is well suited for.

The following paragraph illustrates an effective response to an inquiry about a person's work performance.

The following are answers to your questions:
1.Yes, Mr. Aslam is a self-starter. Rarely did I have to give him instructions for carrying out his job duties.
2.Yes, Mr. Aslam's work is meticulously done. I recall only one instance in which he had to redo the work because of the manner in which the first report was prepared.
3.Yes, Mr. Aslam is a dedicated worker. On several occasions, he cheerfully worked after hours and on weekends when I asked him to.
4.Yes, Mr. Aslam works well with others. He is pleasant to be around, has empathy for others, and is very helpful.
Other information you may find helpful in evaluating Mr. Aslam's suitability for employment includes the following:
1.Of all the supervisors I have had, Mr. Aslam is the most eager to learn and to develop professionally.

2.The level of Mr. Aslam's management skills, his understanding of business operations, and his personality will enable him to handle in a very competent way the position he has applied for.

3.Mr. Aslam is able to defuse effectively, both in person and on the phone, many situations that have the potential of becoming problematic.

Your response will be helpful to the reader if you can provide evaluative statements about the person's performance. Specific information in your response will be more helpful to the reader than general information.
If you have negative information to present, you should make sure that it is pertinent to the situation. Unless these negative aspects are likely to affect the person's ability to perform his/her job well, you may want to consider omitting this information.

The ending should include a statement summarizing your overall opinion.

"Mr. Aslam, whom I found to be an excellent supervisor, is being referred to you with my top recommendation. If he is given the opportunity to work for you, I am sure you will readily concur with my evaluation of his work performance.

Letters responding to indirect inquiries

A number of the characteristics found in letters responding to direct inquiries are also found in letters responding to indirect inquiries. These characteristics are a fast-start opening, the presentation of material of primary importance first, followed by the presentation of material of secondary importance, and a friendly, courteous closing.

Also, when you are preparing a letter in response to an indirect inquiry, the inclusion of reader-benefit material is more appropriate. To illustrate, the following reader-benefit material is appropriate for inclusion in a letter responding to an inquiry about things to see and do in Ayubia.

You will find Sept. to be a perfect month to visit Ayubia. The mild days and comparatively cold nights will add to your family's sightseeing pleasure.

Among the attractions found especially interesting by families who have children the ages of yours are the chair lifts, the play-land, and the zoo. For the more culturally minded families, the museum and the roadside restaurants are especially interesting. The deep-forest trails are another interesting attraction. The locations of these attractions, which are easily accessible by the bus or taxi, are identified on the enclosed map.
We are sure you will be eager to return for another visit once you spend a few days in Ayubia.

The suggested plan for a letter responding to an indirect inquiry contains the following elements:

1. A fast-start opening that mentions your compliance with the initial inquiry / request – but that avoids presenting obvious information
2. A section that includes additional information that might be helpful to the reader, including sales-promotion, or reader-benefit material
3. A friendly, courteous closing that expresses your willingness to provide future assistance.

Letters granting adjustments

Because the situation stems from an unhappy experience, you have two special needs.

1. Need to overcome negative impressions
2. Need to regain lost confidence

One is the need to overcome the negative impressions the experience leading to the adjustment has formed in the reader's mind. The other is the need to regain any confidence in your company, or its services the reader may have lost from the experience.

The example below illustrates an ineffective letter:

Subject: Your broken chandelier

We have received your July 1 claim reporting that our shipment of the crystal glass chandelier reached you with 20 broken units. We regret the inconvenience caused to you and can understand your unhappiness. (*A slow-start opening that presents obvious information*)
Following our standard practice, we investigated the situation thoroughly. Apparently the fault is the result of an inexperienced temporary employee's negligence. We have taken corrective measures to assure that future shipments will be placed more carefully.
(*A delayed presentation of the good news*)

I am pleased to report that we are sending replacements today. They should reach you before Dec. 12.

Again, we regret all the trouble caused to you. (*A redundant apology that ends on a negative note*)

An improved version of the same letter is presented below:

Subject: Your July 1 report on invoice 1234

Twenty carefully packed pieces of Chandelier should reach you before Dec. 12. Our driver left our warehouse today with instructions to special deliver them to you on Friday.
(*An opening that presents the good news first*)

Because your satisfaction with our service and products is important to us, we have thoroughly checked our shipping procedures. It appears that the shipment to you was packed by a temporary employee who was filling in for a hospitalized packer. Even though we now have our experienced packer back at work, we have instituted a control procedure designed to assure safe arrival of all future shipments.
(*A section that explains the cause of the problem; a negative discussion handled in a positive way)*

As you know, our Crystal Chandeliers have become one of the hottest products, their unique designs remain a collection item of prized customers like you.
(*A courteous closing*)

Keeping in mind the two special needs, we come up with this specific plan for the message granting an adjustment:

1. Begin directly – with the good news
2. Incidentally identify the correspondence that you are answering
3. Avoid negatives that recall the problem
4. Regain lost confidence through explanation or corrective action
5. End with a friendly, positive comment

Letters that grant favors

Writing a letter to grant a favor should be one of the easiest letters to write.

Suggested plan for a letter that grants a favor:

1. A cordial, courteous opening that mentions the granting of favor
2. A discussion of restriction or limitations that pertain to the granting of the favor
3. A discussion, if appropriate, of any action the reader is to take in accepting the favor
4. A cordial, courteous closing that is action oriented when appropriate

The opening paragraph of a letter that grants a favor should be cheerful and cordial. The following illustrates an effective beginning for such a letter:

Yes, I look forward to showing your students our beautiful new facility. A tour of our building will enable them to see the latest interior office design.

When a favor is granted with a limitation or a restriction, that information should be included in the letter. For example consider the following as an appropriate discussion of a limitation.

So that we can complete the tour before the employees leave at 4:30, it should begin no later than 3:00. Should you prefer to begin the tour earlier in the afternoon that will be possible as my schedule is open all afternoon on Sept 10.

The granting of a favor with a limitation or a restriction often necessitates some action on the part of the reader. The following paragraph effectively outlines the requested action.

Will you please call me at 586…. when you decide on the time and would like the tour to begin. We can finalize any other details at that time.

The closing of the letter that grants a favor should be cordial and courteous, as well as action oriented, if appropriate.

I look forward to hearing from you - and also to showing your students our new facility.

Letters of congratulation

An excellent – although often overlooked – way to recognize the achievement or accomplishment of an acquaintance is to send a letter of congratulations.

Some of the occasions or events for which congratulatory letters are prepared are: job promotion, an election to an office, an achievement in a special interest, and the receipt of an award, a retirement, and so forth.

One of the indispensable qualities of letters of congratulation is sincerity. Trite stilted phrases indicate a lack of sincerity and destroy the goodwill that congratulatory letters should create.

The suggested plan for a congratulatory letter includes the following elements:
1. An opening that congratulates the reader for his/her accomplishment or achievement
2. A section that expresses your understanding of the importance of the accomplishment or achievement
3. A courteous closing that extends best wishes for continued success

An example of a well-written congratulatory letter is shown below:

Congratulations on your being recognized as the Business Leader of the Year. You are certainly a deserving recipient of this award.

(*An opening that congratulates the reader on the accomplishment*)

The countless hours you have spent trying to improve the business climate of XYZ Company finally "paid off" when it was recently recognized as one of the country's most desirable business organization. You can be proud of the fact that you gave your time and effort for the good of the organization - and not for any personal gain.

(*A section that presents a discussion of your impression of the importance of the reader's accomplishment*)

You have my best wishes for the continued success and happiness that you certainly deserve.

(*A courteous closing that extends best wishes*)

Letters accepting invitations

A letter in which a special-business invitation or an invitation to an event is accepted should convey appreciation and enthusiasm and should be sent as soon as possible after receiving the invitation.

In acceptance of an invitation to an event, the acceptance should be conveyed in the opening. Also incorporated into the acceptance are the important details about the event: date, time, and place. These details are wisely included:

a. to verify the accuracy of these details in case an error has been made, and
b. to provide a record in case the invitation becomes misplaced.

The suggested plan for a letter of acceptance for a social-business invitation includes the following elements:

1. An opening in which the invitation is cordially and enthusiastically accepted
2. A review of the important details about the event
3. A courteous closing that expresses appreciation for the invitation

The example below illustrates a well-written letter in which a Social-business invitation is accepted:

I enthusiastically accept your invitation to the retirement dinner of Mr. Munir. This event will be a fine tribute to Mr. Munir whose accomplishments as Executive Director of the XYZ Company are extensive.
(*An opening that mentions the enthusiastic acceptance of the invitation*)

Because the retirement dinner is to be a surprise to Mr. Munir, we will say nothing to him about it before the evening. (*A section that reviews the important details of the event*)

I appreciate your inviting us to this important event. We look forward to seeing you at the P-Continental at 6 p.m. on Dec. 20. (*A closing that expresses appreciation and that reviews other important details*)

The example below illustrates a well-written letter that expresses appreciation for the invitation.

I sincerely thank you for inviting me to Mr. Munir's retirement dinner. I was especially pleased to be able to join others in paying tribute to a hard-working, dedicated employee of the XYZ Company.
(*An opening that expresses cordial thanks for the event*)

I was quite impressed with Mr. Munir's impromptu after-dinner remarks. The graciousness with which he delivered those remarks was impressive. As always, he gave others all the credit for his success.
(*A section that contains a discussion of the event's highlights*)

I appreciate your giving the opportunity to help honor Mr. Munir.
(*A cordial closing*)

Letters acknowledging orders

The reasons for acknowledging an order are to inform the customer that his / her order has been received and that it has been shipped (or will be shipped), to express appreciation to the customer for his / her order, and to build goodwill.

A letter that acknowledges an order should begin with a fast-start opening which provides the best news first. The reader will be more interested in learning about the status of his / her order than receiving a "thank you." Although including a note of thanks in the opening is appropriate, information about the status of the order should be presented first. The following example illustrates the difference between the slow-start and fast-start openings.

Change:	Thank you for your recent order for three pairs of shirts.
To:	The three pairs of shirts you recently ordered from us were sent to you this morning by UPS, and they should arrive in two days. Your order and the cheque for Rs. 3,000 are appreciated.

The inclusion of resale and/or sales-promotion material is also appropriated in letters that acknowledge orders.
The following paragraph illustrates the use of sales-promotion material.

You will be interested to learn that all of our summer stock goes on sale next week. Prices on this stock will be reduced between 30 and 50%, enabling you to purchase at greatly reduced prices. A summer-sale catalog, along with an order blank, is enclosed with your shipment. Orders, most of which are filled within 24 hours of their receipt, can be charged as we honor all major credit cards.

The closing of an order-acknowledgement letter should be forward-looking. The first of the following two closing paragraphs is weak, while the revised version is much more effective.

Change: We appreciate your business.
To: We appreciate having you as a new customer. You can always count on fast, courteous service when ordering from the Fancy Store.

Lesson 37

Disappointing-News Letters

A variety of situations arise in the business world that require the preparation of letters in which disappointing-news is conveyed. Your goal in writing these letters is to state the refusal in an inoffensive way to avoid alienating your reader.

Developing strategies for disappointing-news letters

When delivering disappointing-news, you have five goals:
1. To convey the disappointing-news,
2. To ensure its acceptance,
3. To maintain reader's goodwill,
4. To maintain organization's good image, and
5. To reduce/eliminate need for future correspondence

Accompanying so many goals in a single message is not easy. But you can make your bad-news messages effective by:
1. Adopting an audience-centered tone
2. Organize your message to meet your reader's needs and expectations by using direct or indirect approach.

Creating an audience-centered tone

It's not what you say but how you say it. Your tone contributes to your message's effectiveness by helping your readers:
- Accept that your disappointing-news represents a firm decision.
- Understand that, under the circumstances, your decision was fair and reasonable.
- Remain well disposed toward your business.
- Preserve their pride.

When establishing tone, strive for **firmness, fairness, goodwill and respect**

Disappointing-news involves emotions. You must acknowledge these emotions – empathic response. But you can't let those emotions interfere with your message.

Adopt audience-centered tone by paying attention to three things:

1. **Using the "you"-attitude**

Using the "you" attitude is crucial to every message you write, but it's especially important in disappointing-news messages. For example, point out how your decision might actually further your audience's goals. Convey concern by looking for the best in your audience. And assume that your audience is interested in being fair, even when they are at fault.

2. Choose Positive words

You can ease disappointment by using positive words rather than negative, counterproductive ones.

Avoid a negative tone	**Use a positive tone**
I can't understand what you mean	Pl. clarify your request
The damage won't be fixed for a week.	The item will be repaired next week
The breakage was not our fault.	The merchandize was broken during shipping.

The enclosed statement is wrong. Please recheck the enclosed statement.

3. **Use respectful language**

When you use language that conveys respect and avoids an accusing tone, you protect your audience's pride. For instance, when refusing a claim, try using third-person, impersonal, passive language to explain your audience's mistakes in an inoffensive way. This approach downplays the doer of the action because the doer is not satisfied

Say, "The appliance won't work after being immersed in water" instead of "You shouldn't have immersed the appliance in water".

When the audience is at fault, the "you" attitude is better observed by avoiding the word "you".

Organizing your message

Using the direct approach

The key to choose the best approach for disappointing-news messages is to analyze audience members first. Try to put yourself in their shoes. What is their likely reaction to the news? How important is the message? How well do you know them? Some people like to know the disappointing-news right away. Similarly, some situations are more appropriate for directness than others. If you know that your audience is likely to prefer the disappointing-news first, or if the situation is minor and the news will cause your audience little pain or disappointment, use the direct approach.

Use the direct approach when your negative answer or information will have little personal impact. The direct approach is also appropriate when you want to present an image of firmness and strength.

Harshness in the direct approach

The example below states the disappointing-news right away. This blunt treatment puts the reader in a bad frame of mind. The result is that the reader is less likely to accept the explanation that follows.

Sub: Your request for donation

We regret to inform you that we cannot grant your request for a donation to the association's scholarship fund.

So many requests for contributions are made of us that we have found it necessary to budget a definite amount each year for this purpose. Our budgeted funds this year have been exhausted, so we simply cannot consider additional requests. However, we will be able to consider yr request next year.

We deeply regret our inability to help you now and trust that you understand our position.

Using the indirect approach

Beginning a disappointing–news message with a blunt "no" could well prevent people who prefer an explanation first from reading or listening to your reasons. Presenting the reasons first increases your chances of gaining audience acceptance by gradually preparing readers for the negative news to come. The indirect approach follows a four-part sequence:

1. Open with a buffer
2. Continue with a logical, neutral explanation of the reasons for the disappointing-news
3. Follow with a clear but diplomatic statement of the disappointing-news (emphasizing any good news and de-emphasizing the bad), and
4. Close with a positive, forward-looking statement that is helpful and friendly.

Tact and courtesy in an indirect refusal
The example below skillfully handles the negative message. Its opening words are on subject and neutral. They set up the explanation that follows. The clear and logical explanation ties in with the opening. Using no negative words, the explanation leads smoothly to the refusal.

Sub: Your scholarship fund request

Your efforts to build the scholarship fund for the Association's needy children are most commendable. We wish you good success in your efforts to further this worthy cause.

We are always willing to assist worthy causes whenever we can. That is why every January we budget for the year the maximum amount we are able to contribute to such causes. Then we distribute that amount among the various deserving groups. Since our budgeted contributions for this year have already been made, we are placing your organization on our list for consideration next year.

We wish you the best of luck in your efforts to help educate the deserving children of the Association's members.

Begin with a Buffer
The first step in using the indirect approach is to make a neutral, no controversial statement that is closely related to the point of the message; this statement is called a buffer.

A good buffer expresses your appreciation for being thought of, assures the reader of your attention to the request, compliments the reader, or indicates your understanding of the reader's needs.

Use a buffer that is:
-Neutral
-Relevant
-Not misleading
-Assertive
-Succinct

Here are some things to avoid when writing a buffer:

Avoid saying no. An audience encountering the blunt refusal right at the beginning usually reacts negatively to the rest of the message, no matter how reasonable and well phrased it is.

Avoid using a know-it-all tone. When you use phrases such as "you should be aware that, "readers expect your lecture to lead to a negative response, so they resist the rest of your message.
Avoid wordy and irrelevant phrases and sentences. Sentences such as " We have received your letter," "This letter is in reply to your request," and "We are writing in response to your request" are irrelevant. Make better use of the space by referring directly to the subject of the letter.
Avoid apologizing. Unless warranted by extreme circumstances, an apology only weakens the explanation of your unfavorable news that follows.
Avoid writing a buffer that is too long. Be brief. Identify something that both you and your audience are interested in and agree on before proceeding in a businesslike way.

Types of Buffer

Buffer	Strategy	Example
-Agreement	Find a point on which you and the reader share similar views.	We both know how hard it is to make a profit in this industry.
-Appreciation	Express sincere thanks for something.	Your cheque for Rs. 5.000 arrived receiving yesterday. Thank you.
-Cooperation	Convey your willingness to help in any way you realistically can.	Employee services is here to smooth the way for all of you who work to

		achieve company's goals.
-Fairness	Assure the reader that you have closely examined and carefully considered the problem, or appropriate action thatdetect any pattern of use that might has already been taken.	For the past week, we have carefully monitored those using the photocopy machine to see whether we can mention an explain its frequent breakdowns.
-Praise	Find an attribute or an achievement to compliment.	Your resume shows an admirable breadth of experience which should serve you well as you progress in your career.
-Understanding	Demonstrate that you understand the reader's goals and needs.	So that you can more easily find the printer with the features you need, we are enclosing a brochure that describes all the XYZ printers currently available.
-Good news	Start with the part of your message that is favorable.	A replacement knob for your range is on its way, shipped Sept. 2005

Lesson 38

Disappointing-News Letters

Follow with reasons

Well-written reasons are:

1.**Detailed:** provide enough detail to make the reason for the refusal logically acceptable.
2.**Tactful:** implies that the applicant is better off avoiding a program in which he or she would probably fail, given the background of potential co-workers.
3.**Individualized:** explains the company's policy as logical rather than rigid.
4.**Unapologetic:** offers no apology for the decision.
5.**Positive:** avoids negative personal expressions like "You do not meet our requirements".

Suppose you refuse the application of a management trainee. A tactfully worded letter might give these reasons for the decision not to hire.

> Because these management trainee positions are quite challenging, our human relations department has researched the qualifications needed to succeed in them. The findings show that the two most important qualifications are a bachelor's degree in business administration and two year's supervisory experience.

The paragraph does a good job of stating the reasons for the refusal:
- It provides enough detail to make the reason for the refusal logically acceptable.
- It implies that the applicant is better off avoiding a program in which he or she would probably fail, given the background of potential co-workers.
- It explains the company's policy as logical rather than rigid.
- It offers no apology for the decision.
- It avoids negative personal expressions ("You do not meet our requirements").

State the refusal

Three techniques are useful for saying no as clearly and as kindly as possible:

Firstly, **de-emphasize the disappointing-news:**

-Minimize the space or time devoted to the disappointing-news.

- Subordinate disappointing-news in a complex or compound sentence ("My department is already short of manpower, so I will need all my staff for at least the next two months"). This construction pushes the disappointing-news into the middle of the sentence, the point of least emphasis.

-Embed disappointing-news in the middle of a paragraph or use parenthetical expressions ("Our profits, which are down, are only part of the picture").

Second, **use a conditional (if or when) statement** to imply that the audience could have received, or might someday receive, a favorable answer: ("When you have more managerial experience, you are welcome to reapply"). Such a statement could motivate applicants to improve their qualifications.

Third, **tell the audience what you did, can do, or will do, rather than what you did not do, cannot do, or will not do**: Say, "We sell exclusively through retailers, and the one nearest you that carries our merchandise is …." rather than "We are unable to serve you, so please call your nearest dealer." By implying the disappointing-news, you may not need to actually state it **(**"The five positions currently open have been filled with people whose qualifications match those uncovered in our research."). By focusing on the positive and implying the disappointing-news, you soften the blow.

Instead of this	**Use this**
- We must deny you application.	The position has been filled.
- We must reject your proposal.	We have accepted the proposal from AA Builders.
-We can't afford to continue the program	The program will conclude on May 1
-We must turn down your extension request.	Please send your payment by Sept. 14.

Close with a goodwill
After giving your audience the disappointing-news, your job is to end your message on an upbeat note. Follow these guidelines:

- Keep it positive – Don't refer to, or apologize for the disappointing-news, and refrain from expressing any doubt that your reasons will be accepted (avoid statements such as: "Again, may I say that I regret that we must refuse". "I sincerely hope that you understand why we must make this decision". "I trust our decision in satisfactory").
- Limit future correspondence – Encourage additional communication only if you are willing to discuss your decision further (avoid wording such as: "If you have further questions, please write").
- Be optimistic about the future – Don't anticipate problems (avoid statements such as: "Should you have further problems, please let us know").
- Be sincere – Steer clear of clichés that are insincere in view of the disappointing-news (avoid saying: "If we can be of any help, please contact us").
- Be confident – Don't show any doubt about keeping the person as a customer (avoid phrases such as: "We hope you will continue to do business with us").

Refusing request for information
When people ask you for information and you can't honor the request, you may answer with either the direct approach or the indirect approach. Say that you've asked a company to participate in your research project concerning sales promotion. However, that company has a policy against disseminating any information about projected sales figures. The following letter conveys the negative message without sounding offensive:

We at XYZ Co. appreciate and benefit from the research of companies such as yours. Your study sounds interesting. (*Buffer is supportive and appreciative*)

Our board requires strict confidentiality of all sales information until quarterly reports are mailed to stockholders. We release press reports at the same time the quarterly reports go out, and we'll be sure to include you in all our future mailings.

(*Body fully explains reason for decision without falling back on a blanket reference to company policy*)

Although we cannot release projected figures, we are more than willing to share information that is part of the public record. I have enclosed several of our past earnings reports for your inspection. We look forward to seeing the results of your study. Please let us know if there is any additional way we can help.
(*Close is friendly, positive, and helpful*)

Lesson 39

Disappointing-News Letters

Refusing request for a favor

When you must say no to a requested favor, your use of the direct or indirect approach depends on your relationship with the reader. For example, the principal of a local college asks your company to host graduation on your corporate grounds, but your sales meetings will be taking place at the same time. If you do not know the principal, you will use the indirect approach. If you are friends you'll probably use the direct approach. See the example below:

Because we appreciate XY College and the many opportunities you have provided to deserving students over the years, we at Infotech have supported the college in many ways. Thank you for considering our grounds for your graduate ceremony.

(*Buffers disappointing-news by demonstrating respect and recapping request*)

Our company-wide sales meetings will be held during the month of December. We will host over 200 sales representatives and their families, and activities will take place at corporate campus. Therefore, we will be unable to devote an adequate support staff for your graduation. (*States reason for the disappointing-news explicitly and in* detail).

Have you called Mr. Sohail at the Community Club? I can't think of a prettier site for graduation. I know Sohail personally. I can fill you in on the details if you would like to talk to me first. (*Suggests an alternative showing that the writer cares about the college and has given the matter some thought*).

Even though our annual meeting will most likely prevent us from hosting graduation, we remain firm in our commitment to your institution & to yr students. We will continue to
be a corporate partner to XY college and will support your efforts as you move forward.

(*Close by renewing the corporation's future support*).

Refusing a refund

An out-of-town customer bought an expensive dress and mailed it back three weeks later, asking for a refund. The customer explained that the dress was not a good fit and that she really did not like it anymore. But perspiration stains on the dress proved that she had worn it. This letter skillfully presents the refusal.

We understand your concern about the exclusive Nina Boutique's dress you returned on February 15. As always, we are willing to do so as much as we reasonably can to make things right. (*Sets up explanation*)

What we can do in each instance is determined by the facts of the case. With returned clothing, we generally give refunds. Of course, to meet our obligations to our customers for quality merchandize, all returned clothing must be unquestionably new. As you know, our customers expect, only the best from us, and we insist that they get it. Thus, because the perspiration stains on your dress would prevent its resale, we must consider the sale final. We are returning the dress to you. With it you will find a special alteration voucher

that assures you of getting the best possible fit free of charge.

(G*ood restraint – no accusations, no anger*)

So, whenever it is convenient, please come by and let us alter this beautiful Nina Boutique's creation to your requirements. We look forward to serving you.

(*Friendly goodwill close*)

Refusing a claim

Almost every customer who makes a claim is emotionally involved; therefore, the indirect method is usually the best approach for a refusal.

When refusing a claim, avoid language that might have a negative impact on the reader. Instead, demonstrate that you understand and have considered the complaint. The, even if the claim is unreasonable, rationally explain why you are refusing request. Remember, don't apologize and don't rely on company policy. End the letter on a respectful and action-oriented note.

An effective letter refusing a claim is mentioned below:

Thank you for your letter about the battery release switch on your XY digital camera. We believe, as you do, that electronic equipment should be built to last. That's why we stand behind our products with a 90-day warranty. (*Buffers the disappointing-news by emphasizing a point that reader and writer both agree on*)

Even though your XY camera is a year old and therefore out of warranty, we can still help. Please pack your camera carefully and send it to our store in Lahore. Include your complete name, address, phone number and a brief description of the malfunction, along with a cheque for Rs. 500. After examining the unit, we will give you a written estimate of the needed parts and labor. Then just let us know whether you want us to make the repairs – either by phone or by filling out the prepaid card we'll send you with the estimate. (*States disappointing-news indirectly, tactfully leaving the repair decision to the customer*)

If you choose to repair the unit, the Rs. 500 will be applied toward your bill, the balance of which is payable by cheque or credit card. If you decide not to repair the unit, the Rs. 500 will pay for the technician's time examining the unit. XY also has service center available in your area. If you would prefer to take the unit to one of them, please see the enclosed list.

(*Helps soothe the reader with a positive alternative action*)

Thanks again for inquiring about our service. I have enclosed a catalogue of our latest cameras and accessories. In Dec. XY is offering a "Special Sale" at which time you can buy a newer model. Come and visit us soon.

(*Closes by blending sales promotion with an acknowledgement of customer's interests*)

Declining an invitation

From time to time, invitations must be declined. The reasons necessitating regrets are varied, ranging from a potential conflict of interest to a lack of time. Regardless of the reason for the refusal, the letter of decline must be tactful and courteous.

The letter declining an invitation below is much more likely to produce a better relationship between the writer and the reader.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at the upcoming convention of the Management Association. I've always found it pleasant to visit Lahore in Spring.

Our firm recently began offering public seminars in various cities throughout the country. I am scheduled to offer a 3-day seminar in Karachi during the same 3-days of your convention. Otherwise, I would be happy to speak at your convention.

One of my colleagues who also has expertise in management sciences is available during the time you asked me to speak. His presentation skills are excellent, and I am certain that he could contribute significantly to the success of your convention.

If you are interested in contacting my colleague about the possibility of his speaking at your convention, please send me a note or call me at ……

Best wishes for a successful convention.

Rejecting job applications

It's difficult to tactfully tell job applicants that you won't be offering them employment. But don't let the difficulty stop you from communication the disappointing-news.

Follow 3-guidelines:

- Open with the direct approach. If you buffer, you appear manipulative, because you otherwise phone.

- Clearly state why the applicant was not selected. Make your rejection less personal by stating that you hired someone more experienced, whose qualifications match the position requirements more closely.

- Close by suggesting alternatives. Mention other openings within the company. Application will be considered for future openings.

We have filled the tax accountant position. Selecting just one candidate from 30 qualified applicants was quite difficult. We hired a candidate with more than 10 years' experience in the field.
(*Opens with the direct approach by not postponing the disappointing-news that the applicant expects*)

Your resume and credentials show you to be a deserving candidate. Your academic record and previous accounting experience certainly indicate your willingness to work hard. Those of us who had the opportunity to talk with you believe that your ability to communicate will certainly help you achieve an excellent position in a recognized accounting firm. (*Follows the disappointing-news with further encouragement, offering specific praise to help the candidate with her self-confidence intact*)

In the mean time, we would like to keep your info on file for six months, in case another position opens up in the near future. (*Closes positively by asking to keep information on file*)

Do's & Don'ts to follow in preparing disappointing-news messages

Suggestions of a Do-Nature

Suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of disappointing-news messages are presented below. Each suggestion is followed by one or more sentences that illustrate its use.

1. **Use a neutral or buffered opening that produces agreement rather than disagreement**.

When you purchase a Green Products lawn mower, you have every right to expect that it will be of the quality commonly associated with the Green Products.

The items you recently ordered from us have been selling very well.

2. **Discuss the facts and analyze the situation in sufficient detail, which will help convince the reader of your honesty and sincerity**.

We consider a number of factors when reviewing applications for credit. Included are such factors as length of time at one residence, length of time of current employment, income, assets, bill-paying record,

3. **Consider using an implicit refusal rather than an explicit refusal**.

The warranty that came with your Mix-Rice electric mixer is in effect for the first year of ownership, beginning with the date of purchase. Our records show your mixer was purchased more than two years ago.

4. **Capitalize on what you can do for the reader rather than what you cannot do**.

We are offering you a 2% discount on all cash purchases for the next six months.

During the second year of ownership of your XY Computer, our warranty covers the cost of labor when making repairs if you purchase the parts from us. We are currently offering a 5% discount on the list price of all XY parts.

5. **Use sales-promotion material whenever appropriate**.

You will be glad to know that we just received authorization to distribute the Pak sportswear line. To help introduce this new line to our customers, we are offering a 3% introductory discount on all Pak merchandize ordered on or before Dec. I.

6. **Offer suggestions to prevent a recurrence of the problem situation**.

To keep your Green-Products lawn mower operating at peak performance in the future, we suggest that you use only Green-Products oil-gas mixture.

7. **Make a counteroffer or counter-proposal, if appropriate**.

We believe it will be in your immediate best interest for us to set your credit limit at Rs. 75, 000 rather than the 1,00,000 you requested.

8. **Make reader action easy, if appropriate**.

If you would like us to substitute “Fancy Shirtings” in the same quantity and size for the out-of-stock “Brand-Shirtings” that you ordered, please call me on 586…… The Brand-shirtings can be shipped as soon as we hear from you.

Suggestions of a Don’t-Nature

1. **Avoid the use of negative words or phrases**.

We regret that we cannot exchange your recently purchased S-radio for SR-radio, as you requested.

2. **Avoid the use of an accusatory tone**.

Your new power cutter malfunctioned because you failed to assemble it properly.

3. **Avoid placing the statement of refusal in a position of emphasis**.

For the reasons outlined in the above paragraph, we are sure you will understand why we cannot honor your request for a full refund on the formal dress you recently purchased from us.

4. **Avoid using company policy as the reason for justifying the refusal**.

Our company has a policy that prohibits the use of our facilities for anything other than official company business.

5. **Avoid making suppositions that are not likely to occur**.

Now that you have heard our side of the story, we are certain that you will agree with our decision.

6. **Avoid apologizing for the action you are taking**.

We are sorry that we cannot grant your request.

7. **Avoid a slow-start opening**.

We have received your letter of Jan.

8. **Avoid a meaningless closing**.

Thanks for getting in touch with us.

9. **Avoid suggesting that problems may arise again in the future**.

Should you feel, after we repair and return your VCR, that it is not giving you the quality of service that you have the right to expect, please contact.

10. **Avoid phony or insincere empathy**.

We know just how upset you were when the heating coil in your coffee maker burned out in the middle of your dinner party.

Lesson 40

Writing Persuasive Message

1. **Planning Persuasive Messages**
   a. Analyze your purpose
   b. Analyze your audience
      i. gauging audience needs
      ii. considering cultural differences
   c. Establish your credibility
   d. Strive for high ethical standards
2. **Developing Persuasive Messages**
   a. Get your reader's attention
   Begin the message with an attention-getting statement that is:
      - personalized
      - you-oriented
      - straightforward
      - relevant

   b. Build your reader's interest
      - elaborate on the main theme
      - relate benefits specifically to the attention-getter

   c. Increase your reader's desire
      - make audience members want to change by explaining how the change will benefit them
      - back up your claims with relevant evidence

   d. Motivate your reader to take action
      - suggest a specific step the audience can take
      - stress the positive results of the action
      - make the desired action clear and easy

   e. Balance emotional and logical appeals
      - use emotional appeals to help the audience accept your message
      - use logical appeals when presenting facts and evidence for complex ideas or recommendations
      - avoid faulty logic

   f. Reinforce your position
      - use semantics to build credibility and enhance the emotional content of your message
      - use a variety of critical thinking and effective writing tools to strengthen your case

   g. Deal with resistance
      - anticipate and answer possible objections
      - try "what if?" scenarios
      - let others help you find solutions to problems that you uncover
      - present pros and cons of all options
      - avoid common mistakes

Planning Persuasive Message

Unlike routine positive messages, persuasive messages aim to influence audiences who are inclined to resist. Therefore, persuasive messages are generally longer, are usually more detailed, and often depend heavily on strategic planning.

Persuasive messages require that you pay particular attention to several planning tasks. E.g. because your purpose is to persuade, making sure of your purpose is perhaps the most important planning task. When

analyzing your audience for a persuasive message, you may want to delve more deeply than you would for other messages. Your credibility
takes on extra importance in a persuasive message. So whenever you are trying to persuade someone, you must make sure your ethics are above reproach.

Analyze your purpose

Writing an external persuasive message is one of the most difficult tasks you could undertake. For one thing, your purpose is to persuade people to do something different or to try something new. But people are busy, so they are reluctant to act, especially if it takes time and offers no guarantee of any reward in return. Given the complexity and sensitivity of persuasive messages, you must be absolutely sure that your purpose is clear, necessary, and appropriate for written media.

Analyze your audience

Process of audience analysis is much more involved for persuasive messages. To write an effective persuasive argument, you need to search for common ground, points of agreement on which to build. That means you must shape your argument so that others believe your proposal will satisfy their concerns and bring them rewards.

Gauging audience needs. Consider these important questions: Who is my audience? What are their needs? What do I want to do? How might they resist? Are there alternative positions I need to examine? What does the decision maker consider the most important issue? How might the organization's culture influence my strategy?

To assess individual needs, you can refer to specific information such as demographics (the age, gender, occupation, income etc.) and psychographics (personality, attitude, lifestyle, and other psychological characteristics of an individual). Both types of information are influenced by culture. When analyzing your audience take into account their cultural expectations and practices so that you don't undermine your persuasive message by using an inappropriate appeal by organizing your message in a way that seems unfamiliar or uncomfortable to your audience.

Considering cultural differences. Your understanding and respect for cultural differences will help you satisfy the needs of your audience and will help your audience respect you. That's because persuasion is different in different cultures. In France, using an aggressive, hard sell techniques is no way to win respect. In Germany, people tend to focus on technical details, verify any figures you use for support, and make sure they are exact. In Sweden, people focus on theoretical questions and strategic implications. In the US people are concerned with more practical matters.

As with individuals, an organization's culture or subculture heavily influences the effectiveness of messages.

Establish your credibility

To persuade a skeptical or hostile audience, you must convince people that you know what you are talking about and that you are not trying to mislead them. Your credibility is your capability of being believed because you are reliable and worthy of confidence.

Some of the ways to gain credibility are:
Support your message with facts. Testimonials, documents, guarantees, statistics, and research results all provide seemingly objective evidence for what you have to say, which adds to your credibility. The more specific and relevant your proof, the better.
Name your sources. Telling your audience where your information comes from and who agrees with you always improves your credibility, especially if your sources are already respected by your audience.

Be an expert. *Your knowledge of your message's subject area (or even of some other area) helps you give your audience the quality information necessary to make a decision.*

Establish common ground. Those beliefs, attitudes, and background experiences that you have in common with members of your audience will help them identify with you.

Be enthusiastic. Your excitement about your subject can infect your audience.
Be objective. Your ability to understand and acknowledge all sides of an issue helps you present fair and logical argument in your persuasive message.
Be sincere. Your concern, genuineness, good faith, and truthfulness help you focus on your audience's needs.
Be trustworthy. Your honesty and dependability help you earn your audience's respect.

Have good intentions. *Your willingness to keep your audience's best interests at heart helps you create persuasive messages that are ethical.*

Your credibility will also be enhanced if you maintain high ethical standards.

Strive for high ethical standards

Persuasion is wrongly associated with coaxing, urging, and sometimes even tricking people into accepting an idea, buying a product, or taking an unwanted or unneeded action. However, the best businesspeople make persuasion positive. They influence audience members by providing information and aiding understanding, which allows audiences the freedom to choose. Ethical businesspeople inform audiences of the benefits of an idea, an organization, a product, a donation, or an action so that these audiences can recognize just how well the idea, organization, product, donation, or action will satisfy a need they truly have.

To maintain the highest standards of business ethics, make every attempt to persuade without manipulating. Choose words that won't be misinterpreted, and be sure you don't distort the truth.

Developing Persuasive Messages

Your success as a businessperson is closely tied to your ability to convince others to accept or act on your recommendations. Minimally, you want them to pay close attention to your ideas and value your contributions.

Some formal strategies you can use to strengthen your persuasive skills.

Strategies for Persuasive Messages

Effective persuasion involves four distinct and essential strategies:
1.Framing your arguments
2.Balancing emotional and logical appeals
3.Reinforcing your position
4.Dealing with resistance

1. Framing your arguments

To effectively persuade your audience, you need to frame your argument in the most effective way. Most persuasive messages follow an organizational plan that goes beyond the indirect approach used for negative messages. The opening does more than serve as a buffer; it grabs your audience's attention. The explanation section does more than present reasons, and it is expanded to two sections. The first incites audience's interest, and the second changes your audience's attitude. Finally, your close does more than end on a positive note with a statement of what action is needed; it emphasizes reader benefits and motivates readers to take specific action.

Organizing persuasive messages plan involves four phases:

a. Attention

Begin the message with an attention-getting statement that is:

- personalized
- you-oriented
- straightforward
- relevant

Make your audience want to hear about your problem or idea. Write a brief engaging opening sentence, with no extravagant claims or irrelevant points. And be sure to find some common ground on which to build your case.

b. Interest

In the interest section

- continue the opening theme in great detail
- relate benefits specifically to the attention-getter

Explain the relevance of your message to your audience. Continuing the theme you started with, point a more detailed picture with words. Get your audience thinking.

c. Desire

In the interest section

- provide evidence to prove your claim
- draw attention to any enclosures

Make audience members want to change by explaining how the change will benefit them. Reduce resistance by thinking up and answering in advance any questions the audience might have. If your idea is complex, explain how you would implement it. Back up your claims in order to increase audience willingness to take the action that you suggest in the next section. Just remember to make sure that all evidence in directly relevant to your point.

d. Action

End by

- suggesting a specific step the audience can take
- restating how the audience will benefit by acting as you wish
- making action clear and easy

Suggest the action you want readers to take. Make it more than a statement such as “Please institute this program soon” or “send me a refund”. This is the opportunity to remind readers of the benefits of taking action. The secret of a successful action phase is making the action easy.

2. Balancing emotional and logical appeals

How do you actually convince an audience that your position is the right one, that your plan will work or that your company will do the most with reader’s donation? One way is to appeal to the audience’s minds and hearts. Together, these two elements have a good chance of persuading your audience to act.

Finding the right balance between the two types of appeals depends on four factors:
i. The actions you wish to motivate
ii. Your reader’s expectations,
iii. The degree of resistance you must overcome,
iv. How far you feel empowered to go in selling your point of view

When you are persuading someone to accept a complex idea, take a serious step, or make a large and important decision, lean toward logic and make your emotional appeal subtle. However, when you are persuading someone to purchase a product, join a cause, or make a donation, you will rely a bit more heavily on emotion.

Emotional Appeals: An emotional appeal calls on human feelings, basing the argument on audience needs or sympathies; however, such an appeal must be subtle. For example, you can make use of the emotion surrounding certain words. The word *freedom* evokes strong feelings, as do words such as

success, prestige, credit record, savings, free, value, and *comfort*. Such words put your audience in a certain frame of mind and help them accept your message. However, emotional appeals aren't necessarily effective by themselves. Emotion works with logic in a unique way. People need to find rational support for an attitude they're already embraced emotionally.

Logical Appeals: A logical appeal calls on human reason. In any argument you might use to persuade an audience, you make a claim and then support your claim with reasons or evidence. When appealing to your audience's logic, you might use three types of reasoning:

- **Analogy** With analogy, you reason from specific evidence to specific evidence. For instance, to persuade employees to attend a planning session, you might use a town meeting analogy, comparing your company to a small community and your employees to valued members of that community.
- **Induction** With induction, you reason from specific evidence to general conclusion. To convince potential customers that your product is best, you might report the results of test marketing in which individuals preferred your product over others. After all, if some individuals prefer it, so will others.
- **Deduction** With deduction, you might reason from a generalization to a specific conclusion. To persuade your boss to hire additional employees, you might point to industry-wide projections and explain that industry activity (and thus your company's business) will be increasing rapidly over the next three months, so you'll need more employees to handle increased business.

Lesson 41

Writing Persuasive Message

No matter what reasoning method you use, any argument or statement can easily appear to be true when it's actually false. Whenever you appeal to your audience's reason do everything you can to strengthen your argument by finding common ground (basing your major argument on points that your audience already accepts) and by stating your points clearly. Finally, keep your arguments relevant, well grounded, and systematic. To avoid faulty logic, practice the following guidelines:

- **Avoid hasty generalizations:** Make sure you have plenty of evidence before drawing conclusions.
- **Avoid begging the question:** Make sure you can support your claim without simply restating it in different words.
- **Avoid attacking your opponent.** Be careful to address the real question. Attack the argument your opponent is making, not your opponent's character.
- **Avoid oversimplifying a complex issue.** Make sure you present all the factors rather than relying on an "either/on" statement that makes it look as if only two choices are possible.
- **Avoid assuming a false cause.** Use cause-and-effect reasoning correctly; do not assume that one event caused another just because it happened first.
- **Avoid faulty analogies.** Be sure that the two objects or situations being compared are similar enough for the analogy to hold. Even if A resembles B in one respect, it may not hold true in other important respects.
- **Avoid illogical support.** Make sure the connection between your claims and your support is truly logical and not based on a leap of faith, a missing premise, or irrelevant evidence.

3. Reinforcing your position

Once you have framed your arguments and chosen your appeal, you can concentrate on strengthening your message with some important persuasive tools. Effective persuaders know that the facts alone may not be enough to persuade your audience. So they supplement numerical data with examples, stories, metaphors, and analogies to make their position come alive. They use language to paint a vivid picture of the persuader's point of view.

Semantics. Say that you are trying to build your credibility. How do you let your audience know that you are enthusiastic and trustworthy? Simply making an outright claim that you have these traits is sure to raise suspicion. However, you can use semantics (the meaning of words and others symbols) to do much of the job for you. The words you choose to state your message say much more than their dictionary definition.

Instead of this	**Say this**
1. I think we should attempt to get approval on this before it's too late.	Let's get immediate approval on this.
2. This plan could work if we really push it.	With our support, this plan will work.
3. I have been thinking lately that may be someone could …	After careful thought over the past two months, I have decided that …

Another way semantics can affect persuasive messages is in the variety of meanings that people attribute to certain words. Abstract words are subject to interpretation because they refer to things that people cannot experience with their senses. So you can use abstractions to enhance the emotional content of a

persuasive message. For example, you may have better luck collecting an overdue bill by mentioning honesty and fair play than by repeating the sum owed and the date it was due.

Other Tools

Using semantics skillfully is not your only persuasive tools. Here are some additional techniques you can use to strengthen your persuasive messages:

- **Be moderate.** Asking your audience to make major changes in attitudes or beliefs will most likely evoke a negative response. However, asking audience members to take one step toward that change may be a more reasonable goal.
- **Focus on your goal.** Your message will be clearest if you shift your focus away from changing minds and emphasize the action you want your audience to take.
- **Use simple language.** In most persuasive situations, your audience will be cautious, watching for fantastic claims, insupportable descriptions, and emotional manipulation. So speak plainly and simply.
- **Anticipate opposition.** Think of every possible objection in advance. In your message, you might raise and answer some of these counterarguments.
- **Provide sufficient support.** It is up to you to prove that the change you seek is necessary.
- **Be specific.** Back up your claims with evidence, and when necessary cite actual facts and figures. Let your audience know that you have done your homework.
- **Create a win-win situation.** Make it possible for both you and your audience to gain something. Audience members will find it easier to deal with change if they stand to benefit.
- **Time your message appropriately.** The time to sell roofs is right after the tornado. Timing is crucial in persuasive messages.
- **Speak metaphorically.** Metaphors create powerful pictures. One metaphor can convey a lifetime of experience or a head full of logic
- **Use anecdotes and stories to make your points.** Anecdotes tie it all together – the logic and the emotions. Don't tell your audience what kinds of problems they can have if their system clashes. Tell them what happened to Mr. X when his hard drive crashed in the middle of his annual sales presentation.

All these tools will help your persuasive message be accepted, but none of them will actually overcome your audience's resistance. Whether based on emotion or logic, your argument must be strong enough to persuade people to act.

4. Dealing with resistance

The best way to deal with audience resistance is to eliminate it. If you expect a hostile audience, one biased against your plan from the beginning, present al sides – cover all options, explaining the pros and cons of each. You will gain additional credibility if you present these options before presenting the decision.

To uncover audience objections, try some "what if?" scenarios. Poke holes in your own theories and ideas before your audience does. Then find solutions to the problems you have uncovered. Recognize that people support what they help create and ask your audience for their thoughts on the subject before you put your arguments together. Let your audience recommend some solutions. With enough thought and effort, you may even be able to turn problems into opportunities; for example, you may show how your proposal will be more economical in the long run, even though it may cost more now. Just be sure to be thorough, open and objective about all the facts and alternatives.

When putting together persuasive arguments, avoid common mistakes such as:

Using an up-front hard sell. Setting out a strong position at the start of a persuasive message gives potential opponents something to grab onto – and fight against.
Resisting compromise. Persuasion is a process of give and take. As one expert points out, a persuader rarely changes another person's behavior or viewpoint without altering his or her own in the process.
Relying solely on great arguments. In persuading people arguments matter, but they are only one part of the equation. Your ability to create a mutually beneficial framework for your position, to connect with your audience on the right emotional level, and to communicate through vivid language are all just as important; they bring your argument to life.
Assuming persuasion is a one-shot effort. Persuasion is a process, not a one-time event. More often than not, persuasion involves listening to people, testing a position, developing a new position that reflects new input, more testing, more compromise, and so on.

Lesson 42

Writing Persuasive Message

The Sales Letters

The suggested plan for a sales letter includes the following elements:

1. ***An opening that attracts the reader's attention.***
2. ***A section that captures the reader's interest in the product or service you are selling;***
3. ***A section designed to establish desire and conviction on the part of the reader;***
4. ***A courteous, action-oriented closing.***

The letter below shows how the writer incorporates the suggested plan.

You are one of the several hundred carefully selected customers who have been approved for a special credit opportunity. **(An effective opening that creates interest)**

Only a small percentage of Pakistanis are financially responsible enough to meet the stringent selection criteria for a credit card – and you are one of the few with exceptional credit worthiness. **(A section that uses an effective interest-building approach)**

Your credit authorization certificate is enclosed. Simply take the certificate to your local authorized Electronic dealer, and you can take your new Electronics dealer, and you can take your new Electronics equipment home with you the same day. A charge account agreement form is also enclosed. **(A section that stimulates action)**

As an Electronics charge customer, you will not only be able to charge your purchases, but also will get advance notices of our sales. During two sales each year, our charge account customers are able to take advantage of our sale prices the day before the sale is announced to the public.

(A section that outlines the advantages of being a charge customer, which also helps create interest)

Your Electronics charge account, which has a credit limit of Rs. 100, 000, will arrive at your home just a few days after you sign and return the enclosed agreement form. Because this offer expires on December 31, act today to open your account. You will be glad you did.

(A closing that outlines the action to be taken)

Another persuasive letter selling a product:

Did you know that one out of four residents in your area becomes a victim of theft? How would you feel if you returned to your home and discovered that your hard-earned stereo, computer, or microwave had been stolen? Remember, locked doors won't stop a determined thief. **(Starts with a provocative question - raises reader's awareness)**

My home was burglarized too. That's why I have developed a simple to install security system which works like an auto alarm and can be installed on the main gate without the help of any other person. The small activator hooks to your key chain. Just press the "lock" key. A "beep" tells you your home is secure, and a blinking red light warns the intruder to stay away. **(Explains how the product works – information that creates interest)**

If a thief tries to breach in, a loud alarm sounds. Your possessions will be safe. And, even more important, you can activate the system from your bedside, so you are safe while you sleep.

(Uses both a logical appeal, protecting possessions, and an emotional appeal, personal safety)

You would expect this peace of mind to cost a fortune – something most people don't have. But we are offering Security Alarm System for only Rs. 5000. Here's what you will receive by return mail.

- ***The patented alarm unit***
- ***Two battery-operated programmable remote units***
- ***A one-year warranty on all parts***
- ***Complete and east-to-follow installation instructions.***

Order additional alarm boxes to install on your window or bathroom door for only Rs. 3000. Act now. Fill out the response card and mail it along with your choice of payment method in the enclosed envelope. Don't give thieves and criminals a chance. Protect yourself and your belongings. Send in your card today

(Urges quick action)

Collection Letters

Collection letters are also considered persuasive because the inclusion of motivationally oriented material is designed to get the reader to comply with your request. Because the reader may not be readily able nor willing to comply with your request, you have to take extra measures to assure compliance.

Use of one or more appeals in writing effective letters is discussed below:

Appeal to fair play

The fair-play appeal essentially says to the customer: "We have been fair with you by providing the quality of product and services that you have the right to receive, and now you need to be fair with us by paying your account in full."

The following example illustrates the use of fair-play appeal in a collection letter.

The special instructions in your order indicated that the glassware was needed by Dec. 10, so we sent the order to you by air express – at your expense.

We believe that we have been fair with you, and we are certain that you intend to be equally fair with us. Will you, therefore, please send us your cheque for the amount due?

Appeal to good credit reputation

The appeal to a good credit reputation is most effective for the first letter in a collection series. An effective appeal to a customer to maintain a good credit reputation is illustrated below.

- ***We remember very well the favorable comments made by several of yours credit references when you applied for credit. Because of this good credit reputation, we do not want you to lose it. Is the past-due status of your account an oversight?***
- ***So that we will be able to recommend you some day as a credit customer, please protect your credit reputation by sending us your cheque for Rs. 20,000.***

Appeal to pride

Another appeal commonly used in collection letters is to pride, which involves asking the reader to act in ways that he/she can be proud of – in this vase, paying the past-due account.

During the six years that you have had a charge account with us, we have been very proud of the way in which you have met your financial obligations. We are sure that you, too, take a great pride in keeping your account balance paid up.

We are confident that you will want to pay the balance of your past-due account very soon, which will enable you to continue to take pride in your good credit reputation.

Appeal to fear legal action

When all other appeals have failed to entice the customer to pay, the company may include a statement of intended action in the final collection letter.

We believe that we have given you ample time to pay your account or at least to explain to us why you have chosen not to pay. Now we are forced to take more drastic action.

Unless we have your full payment by Dec. 10, we will turn your account over to our collection department.

To avoid the inconvenience of a poor credit reputation, will you please pay your account in full by Dec. 10? Doing so will enable you to protect your credit reputation.

Memoranda and Short Reports

What is a Memo?

A memorandum, also called as a memo, is a message written to use within the organization. Traditionally letters are used for external communication; ordinarily the memo is intended solely for communicating with others within the organization.

General Format

The format is fairly standard. If printed memo forms are not available, the following headings can be typed on a sheet of paper:
To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

Basic Purpose

Memos are prepared for:

- **Requesting information**

- **Giving instructions**
- **Serving as covers for all messages, and**
- **Making announcements**

Advantages of a Memo

Memo:

- ***Solves problems (by transmitting information)***
  - By informing reader about solutions e.g.,
    - Policy Changes
    - Price Increases
  - By persuading reader to take actions e.g.,
    - Attend a Meeting
    - Change Current Production Procedure
- ***Provides a written record***
- ***Can reach many persons simultaneously***

A Memo requesting information

The following suggestions will be helpful in writing a memo requesting information:

1. State the key idea, the request.
2. Present the details.
3. Remind the reader of the request and provide additional specific information.

To: ***Faculty, Business Education Department***
From: ***M. Ahmad, Chairman, Business Education Department.***
Date: ***Sept. 10, 2005***
Subject: ***Film Catalog for Faculty Use***
In order to reduce the time it takes to screen and select appropriate files, we are putting together a catalogue of those films which have been used effectively in Business Education classes
Please submit to this office the following information, using a separate sheet of paper for each film:

1. ***Film title and appropriate length***
2. ***One paragraph description of the main points made in the film***
3. ***One paragraph description of how the film relates to the courses in which it was used.***

Please provide this information by January 1. Shortly thereafter you will receive your copy of the completed catalogue. Through the cooperation of all faculty members in this project, all of us will benefit."

A Memo giving instructions

A sample memo is presented below:

To: *Faculty, Virtual University*
From: *Rafiq Ahmad, Assistant Circulation Manager, College Library*
Date: *March 15*
Subject: *New Procedure for reserving books*

A new procedure for putting books on reserve will begin at the start of the summer session. Remember to follow these guidelines:

1. Submit a list of books on the attached form to the Reserve Department at least four weeks before the start of the session in which the books will be assigned.
2.Do not include more than 10 books on a form.
3. Include the following in each entry on a list:

- **Call number**
- **Book title**
- **Author's name**
- **Course number and name**
- **Faculty's name and office Tel. No.**

By following these procedures you will be contributing to library efficiency.

A transmittal Memo

A transmittal memo is used to introduce the reader to a longer, accompanying message. Besides the introduction it describes the main points of the message.

The main body of a memo written on a research done:

To: *M. Arshad, Personnel Director*

From: *Abdul Ghafoor, Logistical Support Coordinator*

Date: *August 1, 20--*

Subject: *Research report on Turnover among workers*

I have done some research on the high rate of turnover among the workers.

My report is divided into four parts, and each part is preceded by a brief abstract of its contents.

Part I clarifies the problem and its effects on operation;

Part II presents a compilation of the supervisor's perceptions of the problem;

Par III presents a compilation of the workers' perceptions of the problem;

Part IV presents conclusions bases on the findings of the survey.

An announcement Memo

Memos may be used to announce such matters as personnel transfers, meetings, or policy changes.

To:	***All Management and supervisory Personnel***
From:	***Ch. Rasool, Manager of Industrial relations***
Date:	***June 10, 20--***
Subject:	***Paid holidays for Full-time employees***

ABC Co. will observe the dates listed below as official holidays during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005. These holidays will apply to all regular employees. Part-time employees and probationary workers are not considered regular and, therefore, are not entitled to receive holiday pay.

- Independence day, August 14

- Defense day, Sept. 6

……..

……..,

Please see that all personnel under your jurisdiction are made aware of this official holiday schedule.

Memorandum Reports

- ***Progress reports***
- ***Periodic reports***
- ***Justification reports***
- ***Letter reports***

Progress reports

The content of a progress report is determined by the familiarity of the report reader with the project.

The suggested plan for a progress report includes the following elements:

- ***Introduction***
- ***Summary of progress already reported***
- ***Detailed summary of progress since last reporting***
- ***Nature of exceptional progress***
- ***Summary of work yet to be completed***

Progress report

To: ***Ghulam Murtaza, Vice-President***

From; ***A. Dastagir, Assistant Vice-President***

Date: ***July 17, 2005***

Subject: ***Status report on the development of a Training Program***

The following outlines the status of the development of the training program I have been working on for several months.

Introduction

The purpose of this research project is to determine the need for a training program in XY Corporation. The project, which is being undertaken by Sohail and me, is to be completed by Jan. 1, 2006.

Summary of progress already completed

The progress that has been reported up to this point includes the following:

1.Determination of objectives of the project.

2.Definition of parameters of the project.

3.Development of an appropriate research instrument (questionnaires and interviews)

Detailed summary of progress

Since the last progress report was prepared, the following have been completed:

1.Obtained approval of the questionnaire and interview record.

2.Pilot tested the questionnaire and interview record.

3.Determined method for selecting the respondents.

4.Selected the respondents.

Nature of exceptional Progress

The project is six days behind schedule because of a strike at Prime Printing, the company we have contracted with to print the questionnaires. The strike ended Oct. 15, and we expect printed questionnaires this week.

Summary of work yet to be completed

The following work remains to be done: distribution of questionnaires, completion of interviews, analysis of data, and preparation of the final report.

Periodic Reports

To: ***M. Aslam, Executive Vice-President***

From: ***M. Munir, Manager, Credit Department***

Date: ***August 10, 20--***

Subject: ***Expenditure for the Credit Dept. for Sept., 2005***

The expenditures you asked me to calculate for the Credit Dept. for Sept., 2005 follow:

	Beginning Balance	***Ending Balance***	***Expense***
Salaries	***Rs.50,000***	***20,000***	***30,000***
Supplies	***9,000***	***7,000***	***2,000***
Telephone	***500***	***200***	***300***
Printing	***500***	***300***	***200***

Justification Report

Sometime you have to write a memorandum report in order to justify something a change in procedure, an increase in budget, or perhaps reasons for resisting any new policy. For whatever reason – and there are many – it is written, the justification report is a common type of memorandum report.

The justification report follows a direct or deductive plan, which means that the recommendations and conclusions are presented before the facts and findings. This plan is used because the most important section of justification reports typically is the recommendation.

The suggested plan for a justification report includes five elements, as shown in the example:

Interoffice Memo

To: ***M. Sohail, Office Manager***

From: ***M, Arshad, Office Service Supervisor***

Date: ***July 15, 20--***

Subject: Need for automatic Collator

The following information outlines the need for the purchase of an automatic collator:

Statement of purpose and recommendation:

Because of the increasing employee time consumed by manually collating documents, the possibility of purchasing an automatic collator should be investigated.

Outcome of recommendation:

By using an automatic collator, a considerable amount of employee time could be saved. The result would be higher employee productivity and greater efficiency because employees could utilize their time to perform more worthwhile work.

Suggested plan for implementing recommendation

An examination of the automatic collators manufactured by several different companies is recommended. Because of the different features found on the various devices, some collators would be more suitable than others.

Discussion of recommendation &/or advantages & disadvantages:

The use of an automatic collator would result in the following advantages:

a) employees would not have to perform the rather menial task of collating;

b) employee time could be better utilized by performing other tasks;

c) employee morale would improve if employees do not have to collate manually; and

d) greater accuracy of collated documents could be expected.

The only disadvantage seen in purchasing an automatic collator is the purchase cost, which is estimated to be approximately Rs. 10,000.

Conclusion:

Among the conclusions are the following:

An automatic collator can be justified on the basis of the number of sheets that have been collated.

Letter reports

- ***Basic difference is their destination***
- ***Are useful for presenting limited amount of information (1 to 4 pages & use a regular letter format)***

Letter reports

November 12, 2005

Mr. XYZ

General Manager

Hali Rd.

Lahore.

Dear Mr. XYZ

Here is the report you requested on June 15 concerning the nature of the physical improvements made at the branch office.

Physical improvements to General Office Area

The general office area has been completely renovated. New tile has been installed. In the general office area, and the carpet in the managers' and supervisors' offices is new. A new fluorescent lighting system has been installed, which adds greatly to the overall appearance of the office area. Heating and cooling ducts are integrated into the lighting fixtures. New furniture was purchased for some employees and work areas. Because the new furniture is streamlined and the old furniture has traditional styling, the two styles are not coordinated.

Suggestions for additional improvement

As a response to your request for suggestions to improve the branch office facilities, the following recommendations are being made:

1. ***Purchase more of the new streamlined furniture.***

2. ***Renovate the restroom facilities.***

I think we are making substantial progress toward improving the appearance of the facilities here at the branch office. If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely (or faithfully),

Lesson 43

Writing Résumés

What is a Résumé?

A résumé is a one or two page summary of your skills, accomplishments, experiences, and education designed to capture a prospective employer's interest. The purpose of a r*ésumé* is to create interest and secure an interview. ***It is the primary tool of your job search and may take several drafts to prepare effectively.***

Fallacies and facts about Résumé

Fallacy	*Fact*
The purpose of a résumé is to list all your skills & abilities.	***The purpose of a résumé is to kindle employer interest & generate an interview.***
A good résumé will get you the	***All a résumé can do is get you in job you want. the door.***
Your résumé will be read carefully and thoroughly by an interested employer.	***Your résumé probably has less than 45 seconds to make an impression.***
The more good information you present about yourself in your résumé, the better.	***Too much info on a résumé may actually kill the reader's appetite to know more.***
If you want a really good résumé, have it prepared by a résumé service.	***Prepare your own résumé – unless the position is especially high-level or specialized. Even then, you should check carefully before using a service.***

Adapt your résumé to your audience

Because your résumé will have little time to make an impression, be sure to adopt a "you" attitude and think about your résumé from the employer's perspective. Ask yourself:

1. What key qualifications will this employer be looking for?
2. Which of these qualifications are your greatest strengths?
3. What quality would set you apart from other candidates in the eyes of a potential employer?
4. What are three or four of your greatest accomplishments, and what resulted from these accomplishments?

Writing your résumé

To write a successful résumé 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 standards of excellence,
6. are flexible and willing to try new things, and
7. possess strong communication skills.

As you organize and compose your résumé, think about how you can convey those seven qualities.

What do you have to offer?

Get started by jotting down 10 achievements you are proud of, such as taking a prize-winning photo, tutoring a child, or editing your college magazine. Think carefully about what specific skills these achievements demanded. For example, leadership skills, speaking ability, and artistic talent may have helped you coordinate a winning presentation. As you analyze your achievements, you will begin to recognize a pattern of skills. Which of them might be valuable to potential employers?

Next look at your educational preparation, work experience, and extracurricular activities. What do your knowledge and experience qualify you to do? What have you learned from volunteer work or class projects that could benefit you on the job? Have you held any offices, won any awards or scholarships, mastered a second language?

Take stock of your personal characteristics. Are you aggressive, a born leader? Or would you rather follow? Are you outgoing, articulate, great with people? Or do you prefer working alone? Make a list of what you believe are your four or five more important qualities. Ask a relative or friend to rate your traits as well.

What do you want to do?

What you can do is one thing. What you want to do is another. Discover the things that will bring satisfaction and happiness on the job.

1. *How would you like to work*? **Consider how much independence you want on the job, how much variety you like, and whether you prefer to work with machines, ideas, people, figures, or some combination thereof. Do you like physical work, mental work, or a mix? Constant change or a predictable role?**
2. *What specific compensation do you expect*? **What do you hope to earn in your first year? What kind of pay increase do you expect each year? What's your ultimate earnings goal? Would you be comfortable getting paid on commission, or do you prefer a steady paycheck? Are you willing to settle for less money in order to do something you really love?**
3. *Can you establish some personal career goals*? **Consider where you'd like to start, where you'd like to go from there, and the ultimate position you'd like to attain. How soon after joining the company would you like to receive your first promotion? Your next one? What additional training or preparation will you need to achieve them?**
4. *What size company would you prefer*? **Do you like the idea of working for a small, entrepreneurial operation? Or would you prefer a large corporation?**
5. *What type of operation is appealing to you*? **Would you prefer to work a profit-making company or a non-profit organization? Are you attracted to service business or manufacturing operations? Do you want regular, predictable hours, or do you thrive on flexible, varied hours? Would you enjoy a seasonally varied job such as education (which may give you summer off) or retailing (with its selling cycles)?**

6. *What locations would you like* ***? Would you like to work in a city, a suburb, a small town, an industrial area, or an uptown setting? Do you like working indoors or outdoors?***
7. *What facilities do you envision* ***? Is it important to you to work in an attractive place, or will simple, functional quarters suffice? Do you need a quiet office to work effectively, or can you concentrate in a noisy, open setting? Is access to public transportation or freeways important?***
8. *What sort of corporate culture are you comfortable with* ***? Would you be happy in a formal hierarchy with clear reporting relationships? Or do you prefer less structure? Are you looking for a paternalistic firm or one that fosters individualism? Do you like a competitive environment? One that rewards teamwork? What qualities do you want in a boss?***

The well written résumé may include a persuasively arranged summary of:

- ***Name & address***
- ***Career objective or summary of qualifications***
- ***Education and training***
- ***Work experience, skills, and accomplishments***
- ***Activities and achievements***
- ***Personal Data (memberships, honor and awards, hobbies and interests.)***
- ***References***

Each of these is discussed below:

Name & address

This constitutes the heading of the résumé. It includes the applicant's name, address, telephone number(s), e-mail address.

RÉSUMÉ

Mohammad Nazim

1..-J, Model Town, Lahore-54700

(92 42) 58676..

0300-4518…

nazim49@…mail.com

Career objective or summary of qualifications

This section must be prepared with as much clarity of thought and specificity as possible. Remember, your goal is to generate interest immediately. If you decide to state your objective, make it effective by being as specific as possible about what you want.

Objective

Employment in the career services field.

A challenging position of responsibility as a personnel director, personnel specialist, or organization development specialist in private industry anywhere in Pakistan.

Summary of qualifications

Ten years of experience in commission selling with track record of generating new customer leads through creative advertising and community leadership positions.

Education and training

List the latest educational or training level first and work chronologically backward from there. Account for any significant gaps between major educational training events.

Include your degree or diploma, major field, institution, and date of attainment for each level.

Education

1993 to 1995	***Master of Business Administration with emphasis on International Business, University of the Punjab.***
1990 to 1993	***Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting, University of the Punjab.***

Work experience, skills, and accomplishments

Tailor your description to highlight the relationship between your previous responsibilities and your target field. When describing your work experience, list your jobs in chronological orders, with the current or last one first. However the reverse chronological order is preferred. Include any part-time, summer, or intern positions, even if unrelated to your current career objective.

Several formats exist for presenting your work experience information. You may list it (a) by date, (b) by job title, (c) by functional skills attained.

Work experience

Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2005	***Modern Furnitures, Lahore.***
(by date)	***Worked part time during school year as a book-keeper and full time during the summer.***

Performed computerized bookkeeping operation.

Receptionist & Snack ***S & P Restaurant, Lahore. Sept.***

Bar Cashier ***(by job title) 2004 to Oct. 2005. Worked part time as front-desk receptionist & as cashier in the snack bar. Took messages, answered questions, gave directions. Etc.***

Have developed effective ***As production manager***

Management skills ***(Sept. 2004 to Oct. 2005) and***

(by functional skills attained) later as vice-president (Oct 2005 to present) of A. J. Corporation, Lahore. I have had many varied management experiences.

Activities and achievements

Your résumé should also describe any volunteer activities that demonstrate your abilities. List projects that require leadership, organization, teamwork, and cooperation. Emphasize career-related activities such as "member of the Student Marketing Association." List skills you learned in these activities, and explain how these skills are related to the job you are applying for.

Note any awards you have received. Quantify your achievements. If your activities have been extensive, you may want to group them into divisions such as "College Activities," "Community Service," Professional associations," "Seminars and Workshops," and "Speaking Activities."

Personal data

Provide additional information about yourself, if not mentioned earlier

References

When listing the names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of references, obtain their permission prior to submitting the resume. Choose those people who represent the range of various facets of your career and professional talents and experiences.

The chronological résumé

The work-experience section dominates and is placed in the most prominent slot, immediately after the name and address and the objective. You develop this section by listing your jobs sequentially in reverse order, beginning with the most recent position position and working backward toward earlier jobs.

This approach has three key advantages:

1. ***Employees are familiar with it and can easily find information.***
2. It highlights growth and career progression, and
3. It highlights employment continuity and stability

The chronological résumé

RÉSUMÉ

Mohammad Aslam
254-K, Garden Town, Lahore
(92 42) 586....
0300-45.....
maslam@...mail.com

Objective

Accounting management position requiring a knowledge of international finance

Experience

March 2001 to Present	*Financial Analyst, I. A. Imports* ***- Prepare accounting reports for wholesale importer ($10 million annual sales)*** ***- Audit financial transactions with supplies in 12 foreign countries.*** ***- Created a computer model to adjust accounts for fluctuations in currency exchange rates*** ***- Negotiated joint-venture agreements with major supplies in UK.***
Oct. 1998 to March 2001	*Staff Accountant, M. S. Chemicals* ***- Handled budgeting, billing, & credit processing functions for the Lahore Branch.*** ***- Audited travel/entertainment expenses*** ***- Assisted in launching an online computer system to automate all accounting functions***
Education	
1996 to 1998	***Master of Business Administration with emphasis on International Business, University of the Punjab.***
1993 to 1996	***Bachelor of Business (administration, Accounting)*** ***University of the Punjab.***

Lesson 44

Writing Résumés

The functional résumé

A functional resume emphasizes a list of skills and accomplishments, identifying employers and academic experience in subordinate sections.

This approach has three advantages:

1. ***Without having to read through job descriptions, employers can see what you can do for them,***
2. ***You can emphasize earlier job experience, and***
3. ***You can de-emphasize any lack of career progress or lengthy unemployment.***

Objective

To work as director of marketing.

Relevant Skills

- *Training and Development*

  2 years of experience as the training and development manager for A & R Co.
- *Organization Development*

  2 years of experience as an organization development planner for D. B. Consultants
- *Managing*

  Trained part-time employees of B. Services in cash register operation and customer services.

Work Experience

Manager, Training and Development, ***A & R Co., March 1, 2003 to April 15. 2005***

Organization Development Planner, ***D. B. Consultants, Jan. 30, 2001 to Feb. 28, 2003***

Education

Master of Business Administration (3.8 GPA/4.0 scale). V. University, Aug. 2000

These suggestions aid in completing application forms:

2. ***Keep your résumé up to date, and carry a copy of it with you.***
3. ***Read the instructions on the form carefully before beginning to complete it.***
4. ***If the instructions specify printing or handwriting responses, do as required.***
5. ***Complete every blank on the form – even if you have to insert entries like "None," "Not applicable."***
6. ***Complete the form correctly and neatly. Carry a small dictionary with you to spell words correctly.***
7. ***For open-end questions, organize your thoughts carefully and write a draft of the answer on a piece of paper before transferring to the form.***
8. ***Answer questions honestly, but in a manner that will emphasize strengths, not weaknesses.***
9. ***As suggested for the résumé, consider carefully whether to include or omit answers to questions that you may not legally have to answer.***

10. ***If the form includes a question about what salary you expect to receive, write an actual figure or range of figures if you have made such a decision, or write something like this:***

- **The typical salary paid for the position to someone of my ability**
- **To be discussed during interview**
- **Negotiable**
- **Open for discussion.**

11. ***Upon completion, review the entries for completeness and accuracy.***

Interviewing

Getting Ready

1.Review your resume.
2.Try to find out information about the interviewer.
3.Formulate answers to questions you are likely to be asked.
4.Become familiar with nonverbal cues that can enhance your interview performance.

Thinking ahead about questions

Planning ahead for the questions will help handle them more confidently and intelligently:

- Tell us something about yourself.
- What are your greater strengths?
- What are your greater weaknesses?
- Why is your GPA not higher?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?
- If we hire you, what changes would you make?
- What didn't you like about previous jobs you have had?
- Where do you want to be five years from now?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Is money important to you?

Making a good impression during the interview

1.Appropriate dress is important for a good first impression.
2.Be on time.
3.Be confident and courteous.
4.Keep eye contact with the interviewer.
5.Provide thoughtful, direct, & honest answers.
6.Avoid asking questions about salary

What do interviewers evaluate?

1.How mentally alert and responsive is the applicant?
2.Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions?
3.Does the applicant demonstrate a degree of intellectual depth when communicating or is his/her ability shallow and lacking in depth?
4.What is the applicant's capacity for problem solving?
5.How well does the applicant respond to stress and pressure?
6.Can the applicant succeed in the position for which he/she is being interviewed?
7.Can the applicant be trusted?
8.Is the applicant professionally and socially mature?

The most Critical Success Factors employers are looking for:

- Positive attitude toward work
- Proficiency in field of study
- Communication skills (written & oral)
- Interpersonal skills

- Confidence
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Flexibility
- Self-motivation
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Leadership

People with high EQ

Research shows that employees with certain personality traits tend to be more successful at their job. As a result, many employers today seek candidates with a high "emotional intelligence," or EQ (emotional quotient). People with a high EQ generally possess these desirable attributes: self-awareness, good impulse control, persistence, confidence, self-motivation, and empathy, as well as the abilities to persuade, articulate a mission, interpret the mood of a group, and communicate with people in terms they understand.

People with high EQ:

- Think clearly and stay focused on the task at hand while under pressure.
- Admit to their mistakes.
- Meet commitments and keep promises.
- Hold themselves accountable for meeting their goals.
- Seek new ideas from a variety of sources.
- Handle multiple demands and changing priorities.
- Make sacrifices to meet an important organizational goal.
- Cut through red tape and bend outdated rules when necessary.
- Seek fresh perspectives, even if that means trying something totally new.
- Operate from an expectation of success rather than a fear of failure.
- Try to learn how to improve their performance.
- Set challenging goals and take calculated risks to reach them.

Lesson 45

Overview

Having had a good thorough study of Oral and Written Communication techniques, which spread over 44-lectures, the students should finally be in a position to understand the importance of effective communication in their personal and professional life. Starting from the first lecture, which delved on knowing about "self concept" and "self image", and ending on the note of having a "self-assessment" made before drawing your future roadmap (or writing your resume for the job search), the students are advised to start focusing on some of the lessons they could learn from this course. Although these could be numerous, depending on how you look at, a few that could be mentioned in an overview are:

1. Becoming a smart thinker;
2. Being an active listener; and
3. Becoming an effective speaker.

Making a great change in your life would depend on how smartly you employ all the tools and techniques you learnt for good planning and organization in communication. Do not forget we all are born with the ability to think, listen, and speak, but what will make a difference in our lives is how skilled we are to be effective. Therefore, few things you could start doing from today is:

1. Think smartly

Finding your identity, being aware of one's capabilities and limitations, defining one's goals and objectives, sorting out one's priorities, and organizing oneself to produce results require giving a serious thought by asking yourself questions like:
Who you are?
Where am I?
Where do I stand professionally?
What are my strengths?
What are my major problem areas? And so on.

Remember, if you have no concept of your identity, then you have nothing on which to build your plans for the future. A lack of identity often results in a lack of direction. You must know your strengths and weaknesses; otherwise the process of defining your goals and working toward them would be flawed. So, start thinking now. Thinking seriously and smartly.

2. Listen actively

Of the various ways we interact with people, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, nearly 42% of our waking time is spent in listening. A good communicator needs to be a good listener; otherwise barriers occur and affectivity suffers.

It is important, therefore, that of all the levels of listening discussed so far (Active, Passive, Partial, and Preferential listener), one should develop skills to become an Active Listener. Understanding the listening process is of paramount importance which is: Receiving; Filtering; Understanding; Remembering; Evaluating; and Responding. Don't forget that the most crucial phase in the listening cycle is the "remembering". We tend to remember only half after listening, and that too *not what was said, but what we think was said*. Memory for speech is not reproductive, it's reconstructive. Acknowledging these facts, start developing attentive listening skills, i.e.

- Keep an open mind. Listen non-judgmentally. Recognize your own biases. Welcome new viewpoints rather than resisting them.
- Be motivated to listen
- Be alert to nonverbal cues
- Listen with a goal in mind
- React to the message, not to the person.
- Listen for supportive ideas without personal prejudice or bias.

- Don't get angry
- Remember it's impossible to listen and speak at the same time.
- Try to get into the other person's inner frame of reference.
- Listen for speaker's main ideas and concentrate on their meaning. Take advantage of your brainpower.
- Do not jump to conclusions. Listen for facts before forming your opinion.
- Ask questions. Show your interest and attention. Keep them pertinent to the speaker's frame, not yours.
- Listen with the heart as well as with the head.

3. Speak effectively

How to be an effective speaker, a good negotiator, and an impressive communicator? Answer to all these questions lie in the various aspects of a good speech. And a good speech is how skillful the speaker is. Of the various techniques we discussed in our lectures salient components of an effective speech are the:

-Speaker
-Message
-Audience
-Channel
-Feedback
-Setting

The speaker

One of the major components of any speech or presentation is the speaker himself or herself. Many presenters, while using visual aids, forget that they are the presentation and not the visual aids. They tend to put too much effort into the visual aids and forget that those are just aids to the speaker.

There are three factors that contribute to a speaker's affectivity:

a. Speaker's motivation
b. Speaker's credibility
c. Speaker's delivery or the speaker's style

a. **Speaker's motivation**: It can be approached in terms of two considerations:
Whether direct personal reward (monetary compensation) or indirect rewards (feeling good about helping others) are involved.

Whether immediate rewards (cash) or delayed rewards (getting a college degree after four years of college) play a part.

In essence, one or both of these factors may motivate a speaker. Before speaking you should consider what your motivations are.

b. **Speaker's credibility**: A speaker's ideas are accepted as believable only to the degree that the speaker is perceived to be credible. The speaker's credibility depends on his/her trustworthiness, competence, and good will. The speaker who is well organized will usually be considered competent. The speaker who is attractive and dynamic will be seen as more credible than one who is not.

c. **Speaker's delivery**: The delivery, the way the message is presented, should compliment the speech's objective. A well-written speech delivered poorly can quickly lose effectiveness.

The message

The message refers to everything a speaker does or says, both verbally and non-verbally. The verbal component may be analyzed in terms of three basic elements:

a. Content
b. Style
c. Structure

Let's look at each of these elements.

a. **Content** - is what you say about your topic. The content is the MEAT of your speech or presentation. Research your topic thoroughly. Decide on how much to say about each subject.

b. **Style** - The manner in which your present the content of your speech is your style. Styles can vary from very formal to the very informal. The style should be determined by what is appropriate to the speaker, the audience, as well as the occasion and setting.

c. **Structure** - The structure of a message is its organization. There are many organizational variations, but in each case, the structure should include:

i. An Introduction
ii. A Body
iii. A Conclusion

The introduction should include:
- an opening grabber such as a quote or shocking statistic.
- an agenda
- the purpose or main message of your presentation.

The body should include:
- your main points or ideas.
- points which support your main message.

The conclusion should include:
- a summary of your main points.
- a closing grabber.
- time for questions & answers, if appropriate.

When speeches and presentations are poorly organized, the impact of the message is reduced and the audience is less likely to accept the speaker or the speaker's ideas.

The audience
As a speaker you should analyze your listeners and then decide how to present your ideas. This analysis might include considerations related to: age, sex, marital status, race, geographic location, group membership, education, career etc.

A well-prepared speech that is ill suited to the audience can have the same effect as a poorly prepared speech delivered to the correct audience. Both speeches will fail terribly.
Proper audience analysis will assure that you give the right speech to the right audience.

The channel
When we communicate with our audiences, we use many channels of communication. This includes non-verbal, pictorial and aural channels. It is very important that you use as many channels as you can to communicate with your audience. The more channels of communication you can use at the same time, the better. A brief list of examples for the three channels we mostly use are:

A. Nonverbal
1. gestures
2. facial expressions
3. body movement
4. posture

B. Pictorial
1. diagrams
2. charts
3. graphs

4. pictures
5. objects

C. Aural

1. tone of your voice
2. variations in pitch and volume
3. other vocal variety

The feedback

By "feedback" the speaker receives information about how his or her message has been received by the listeners and, in turn, responds to those cues. The feedback process is not complete until the speaker has responded to the listener. This process includes the listener's reactions to the speaker's response and so forth.

The setting

The place in which you deliver your presentation may be one that enhances or interferes with the effectiveness of your presentation. Determine ahead of time what the facilities are like before you speak. This way you can properly plan your delivery or make adjustments, if necessary.

4. Write purposefully

Good writing style is important to good communication. Communication happens only when you write something that somebody else reads and understands. For this, you must use words and concepts that mean the same thing to you and to your reader.

In other words, you must adapt your writing to your reader. Here again, good writing proceeds from clear thinking (or smart thinking?) – thinking that gives importance to the reader, not to you.

To write purposefully, don't start writing briskly with the hope that your thoughts will somehow clarify themselves by the working of the magic of words. It won't happen. There is no such magic. You have to spend a good amount of time practicing: planning and organizing, before you start writing purposefully. Refer back to the exercise of going through the following four steps:

i. Determining your purpose
ii Considering your reader
iii. Choosing your idea
iv Determining your content

Much of your writing success could be attributed to the quality of preparation, which could consume as much as 60% of the total time devoted to the actual writing.

5. Live happily

Communication performs many important functions related to our day-to-day needs. Our success in satisfying our personal needs rests with our skills in interpreting and responding to the communication behavior of other people. In order to gain this skill we must be willing to understand human and interpersonal communication. We must also be willing to understand the underlying causes of human behavior which mostly result from the misconceptions that undermine our communication endeavors only because we think that:

- We need more communication,
- Communication eliminates problems, and
- Meanings are in words.

It is important, therefore, to remind yourself of the gainful application of the communication skills and maximize the awards to you and the people in your life.
To sum up, the study and practice pf communication should be a lifetime process, and it must ensure a happy and a healthy living throughout.

THE END