COMMUNICATION

SKILLS

BURETI TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

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INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Communication
Definition: communication is the giving, receiving, or exchange of information, opinions or ideas by writing, speech or visual means or a combination of the three so that the material communicated is completely understood by everyone concerned.

Communication Terms and Concepts
Communicator (Sender/receiver) - the participants in communication. Typically the roles reverse regularly. The sender is the person or body responsible for sending the message. The sender can be an individual, or a group such as a company, a department, or even a government ministry or a political party. The receiver is the person or body which receives the message. The receiver can be an individual or an organization-a company or some other large group of people. **Information.** This is the material from which the communication will be constructed. It is the actual content put across to the listener, reader or viewer.

Message. Having defined or decided on the information to be conveyed, the sender puts it into the best form in a process called encoding. When information has been encoded, it is known as the message. This simply refers to the form the communication takes i.e. a letter, memo, telephone call or even something as simple as a smile, a shrug of the shoulders or some other gesture.

Encoding. Encoding is the process by which the sender converts the idea into a message by using verbal or non-verbal mediums of communication. These can be words, signs, gestures, symbols or body movements. In order to ensure that the message is well understood, the sender uses words and non-verbal signals that the receiver is familiar with.

Decoding. This is the process of translating words, signs and symbols into meanings. Successful decoding is the correct understanding of the intent of the message as transmitted by the sender. **Medium.** This is the larger group of ways of communicating within which the particular communication can be classed. There are three main media:

Written communication- letters, memos, books and articles, notices and posters.

Oral communication- that is, any method of using the spoken word, such as meetings, telephone calls, interviews, lectures and informal discussions.

Visual communication- a drawing, photograph or other means of putting over a message by pictorial means.

Channels – The channel is the method or methods used to convey a message. The type of message will determine the channel to be used. Channels include face to face conversations, telephone calls or videoconferences, and written communication like emails and memos.

For written communication it might be a notice board, an internal mail service, memo, report, radio or the public postal service.

For oral communication it might be a personal interview, a committee meeting or a public telephone system.

For visual communication it might be a computer printer, a printing press or a fax system. **Noise/ barriers** – This is the name given to any factors which prevent the proper exchange of information apart from those caused by the sender or the receiver. Noise can be physical such as the sounds of traffic, typewriters or telephone bells which interrupt a meeting or it can be some other form of interference e.g. a bad telephone connection, poor handwriting in a letter, a computer failure which causes the loss of documents on a fax line, or even a conflicting message or if the speaker's facial expression conveys a different message from that being given orally. **Environment (**part of context) - that which surrounds and provides a basis for the meaning/interpretation of a message:

Physical (surroundings)
oTemporal (point in time)
oRelational (the existing relationship between communicators - friends, strangers, etc.)

o Cultural (language and behavior community the communicator(s) come from) The context helps determine the tone and style of your communication.

Feedback – This is the receiver's response to the sender's message. The responses can be both verbal and non-verbal. It is an important factor in the communication process because it helps the sender to know whether the message has been understood or not.

The Purposes of Communication

According to Camp & Satterwhite (2002), there are four main purposes of communication:

Communicating to Inform

We communicate to tell someone about something. To inform is to pass on information. In the workplace, you are informing when you explain something to your colleagues, your employees, or your customers.. If you tell an employee how to operate the copy machine, you are informing; if you tell a customer how to fill out a form, you are informing. You also inform when you tell another person what happened. Perhaps you received a phone call from a customer who is angry about his or her service, and you need to describe the call to your supervisor to learn what to do next. This situation is another example of communicating to inform.

Communicating to Persuade

This aims to influence people and bring them round to your way of thinking.

Communication in the business world is mainly persuasive. In other words, you are trying to get another person to do or believe something. In business, you are always selling your ideas, yourself, your products, or your services. Selling and persuading are nearly synonymous in the business world. You may be trying to persuade your supervisor to give you a raise, you may be attempting to persuade a colleague to change a portion of a project on which you are both working, or you may be trying to sell a customer your company's service or product. All of these are examples of persuasion at work.

In order to succeed at persuasion, you must generally give good reasons for the person you are communicating with to do or believe what you intend.

Communicating to Establish Credibility

Establishing credibility is important for people in business. Credibility is achieved via effective communication. Credibility enhances an individual's or company's reputation.

Credible people demonstrate that they have strong emotional character and integrity; they are known to be honest, steady, and reliable. Credibility is akin to reputation. Increasingly, at an organizational level, reputation is becoming more important. Sophisticated customers do not make financial decisions based solely on an organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace. Instead, customers are increasingly sensitive to a company's reputation. In fact, public relations have developed as a functional area to manage the reputations of companies.

Communicating to establish goodwill

This involves maintaining and forming cordial and harmonious relationships with people you are communicating Your ability to establish and build relationships affects every aspect of your life. Whether in your social, academic, or professional life, this ability determines the depth of your relationships with friends, family members, classmates, and coworkers. Good relationships result in goodwill which is the favourable reputation that an individual or a business has with customers. Any communication that helps to develop a better relationship between you and your receiver builds goodwill.

To inquire

This involves obtaining information in various ways,e.g by asking questions or through formulating questionnaires.

Social interaction.

We communicate to establish and maintain relationships with others

Principles/ essentials of effective communication
Clarity
Be clear about the message you want to deliver, as giving a confused message to your audience only ends up with them being confused and your message being ignored.
Avoid unnecessary detail.
Conciseness/ Brevity
Communication should be brief. Do not include too much detail that will bore the receiver. The message should be direct.
Simple.
Avoid the use of big words, jargon and slang. They only confuse the receiver and will lead to communication breakdown.
Consistency
Make sure that your theme remains the same. Avoid bringing in details which are not central to the main message.
Medium
There are several ways you can deliver your message—the trick is to use the right one.
The right medium is one:

with the greatest accuracy

with the largest likelihood of audience comprehension/ understanding

with the lowest financial cost

fast
Relevancy
Communicate only what is appropriate and relevant to the audience.

Completeness
Communicated message must be complete. Completeness refers to providing enough information so that the intent of the message is understood by the receiver. Never make them guess what you mean and never assume that the audience will know what you mean. Give important information such as time, date, places, quantities, dimensions etc.
Correctness
The sender must give correct facts and express them in the correct language.
Courtesy
We must create friendship with all those to whom we communicate. Workmates, customers, clients etc respond positively to those who treat them with respect and kindness. Use words such as please, thank you, sorry, congratulations etc.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)
Information Communication Technologies can be defined as diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, to create, disseminate, store, and manage information.‖ This includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning.

There are 6 components to an ICT system

> Data: raw facts and figures.
>
> Hardware: physical components.
>
> Software: the name given to computer programs.
>
> Information: data that is converted to give it a meaning.
>
> Procedures: a series of actions conducted in a certain order to make sure the system runs smoothly.
>
> People: data is entered by humans, for example a keyboard

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Role of ICT in communication

ICT supports the communication and co-operation of people in their organizations and in the creation and exchange of knowledge.

ICT supports the external relations of the company i.e communication and co-operation with customers, suppliers and partners. This will allow for an agile and adaptive ICT enabled organization with flexible patterns of production. This makes for instance mass-customization or even mass-individualization possible: large-scale delivery of products and services tailored to the wishes of the customer.

Communication technology and virtual reality will support the remote communication between people with a quality near to face-to-face communication. This supports remote communication in the form of virtual workshops, virtual classroom or distant learning.

Information technology supports new forms of electronic documents. Multimedia and virtual reality is useful technologies in support of information exchange and learning processes.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Channels of communication

Definition

A **communication channel** is a means through which a message is sent and received. In other words, it's the method of communication used.

Factors to consider when choosing a communication channel

Time

The amount of time the message will take to reach the recipient is very important, especially if it's something of urgency. This will mean that the message has to be relayed in the shortest time span possible so that an appropriate action can take place.

Cost

Many people prefer using a means that is not only reliable, but pocket friendly as well. This will ensure that they are able to maintain communication at all times without having to strain too much financially.

Confidentiality

Some messages are very sensitive and are meant for the eyes of the recipient only. This means that the sender has to select a means of communication that conforms with confidentiality, so the message is not relayed to third parties.

Complexity

The channel used should ensure that the recipient will be able to read and understand the message clearly. This means that they should factor the complexity of the message in selecting the appropriate channel.

Distance

The distance the message is supposed to travel and the conditions it should arrive in should also be considered. This is why many people prefer using electronic mail compared to postal mail.

Reliability
Confidentiality of the message

Types of communication channels
Face-to-Face

Face-to-face is still the preferred communication channel if clarity of message is of primary importance.

Advantages

Face to face communication allows you to interact with the listener in a back-and-forth discussion.

It also allows you to utilize nonverbal gestures, facial expressions and personal charisma to enhance the message.

Fast feedback.

Disadvantages

A drawback is the potential that a conflict could become more heated or emotional in a face-to-face channel.

Tension or stress is also more likely if you have personal conflict with the other person.

No permanent record. Not admissible in court. Cannot be used as evidence.

.Frequent interruptions.

Telephone

Landlines or mobile telephones are useful communication tools in businesses where distance and travel prevent face-to-face conversation.

Advantages

The telephone still allows immediate interaction between two parties in the communication.

 Mobile phones also expand your ability to communicate with distant workers or offices.

Disadvantages

There is lack of nonverbal or facial expressions. This can inhibit the ability to interpret the context or emotion of a message sender.

The phone is also less personal than a face-to-face meeting.

No permanent record except in where there is the recording of the conversation.

Prone to disturbances such as static which hinder audibility.

E-mail

This is the use of computer hardware and associated software to transmit electronic mail over a network.

E-mail is a vital communication channel in geographically dispersed companies.

E-mail allows for more flexible response times. You can send a message one day and receive a response in a few hours or the next day. It allows for conversation that isn't time-pressured, but can serve for fast turnaround times.

It also allows for the inclusion of files, such as documents or images.

Permanent record.

Prior planning before prior.

Disadvantages

E-mail is less personal than either face-to-face or phone.

Lack of instant clarifications.

Feedback can be slow.

Letters, memos, e-mail, notices, reports e.t.c (Written communication)

Written communication expresses facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing and organized manner. Some of the various forms of written communication that are used internally for business operations include memos, reports, e-mail, letter, bulletins, job descriptions, employee manuals.

5. TV and Radio (Adv & disadv- assignment)

Advantages of written communication (letters, memos, e-mail, notices, reports e.t.c.)

Permanent record: The documents of written communication act as a permanent record. When it is needed, important information can be easily collected from the preserved documents. The documents of **written communication** are easy to preserve. Oral and non-verbal communication cannot be preserved.

Precise and explicit. Written communication presents the information more accurately and clearly. Written communication is clear and straight forward.

Used as a reference: If it is needed, written communication can be used for future reference.

Delegation of authority: Written communication can help the authority to delegate the power and authority to the subordinate. It is quite impossible to delegate power without a written document.

Longevity: Written document can be preserved for a long time easily.

Disadvantages of written communication (letters, memos, e-mail, notices, reports e.t.c.)

Expensive: Written communication is comparatively expensive. It costs are huge in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing and delivering letters.

Time consuming: Written communication takes time to communicate with others. It is a time consuming media. It costs the valuable time of both the writer and the reader.

Useless for illiterate person: If the messages receiver is illiterate, understanding written communication is quite impossible.

Difficult to maintain secrecy: It Secrecy is not always possible to maintain through written communication.

Delay in response: It takes much time to get a response from the message receiver; prompt response is not possible in case of written communication like it is possible in oral communication.

Not personal

Stages in the communication process/ The communication cycle/ Basic concepts of transmission and receipt of information/ Communication Cycle

Information-- Sender (Encodes) ---Channel/ medium/ message----------- receiver (Decodes)

Feedback

Information- Here the sender defines the information to be sent, by thinking about the aim of the communication and the content to be conveyed.

Encoding- This is the encoding process of putting the information into the form which is most suitable both to the receiver and to the aim. In most cases, encoding involves putting ideas into words. Sometimes, however, it will be best to encode an idea in a picture, or even in a gesture. Encoding is a process through which the message is symbolized.

Transmission- This is the actual transfer of information, by means of a medium and channel. Receiver- At this point the receiver takes in the message for example by reading a letter, listening to a speech or looking at a TV programme.

Decoding- The receiver interprets the message given in order to obtain his/ her own idea of the information it conveys. Decoding is the process in which the message is translated and meaning is generated out of it.

Feedback- This is the feedback stage. This is the receiver's response to the sender's message. The responses can be both verbal and non-verbal. It is an important factor in the communication process because it helps the sender to know whether the message has been understood or not.

Meaning is the significance that the sender (speaker/ writer/ designer) and the receiver each attach to a message, and shared meaning occurs when the receiver's interpretation of the message is similar to what the speaker thought, felt, and intended.

Communication barriers

This is the name given to any factors which prevent the proper exchange of information apart from those caused by the sender or the receiver. Communication barriers can pop-up at every stage of the communication process (which consists of **sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback** and **context.**

Barriers to effective communication

Language barriers. Language barriers occur when people do not speak the same language, or do not have the same level of ability in a language. However, barriers can also occur when people are speaking the same language. Sometimes barriers occur when we use inappropriate levels of language (too formal or informal) or we use jargon or slang which is not understood by one or more of the people communicating. The receiver is less likely to understand the message if the sender has trouble choosing the precise words needed and arranging those words in a grammatically-correct sentence.

Emotional Interference. An emotional individual may not be able to communicate well. If someone is angry, hostile, resentful, joyful, or fearful, that person may be too preoccupied with emotions to receive the intended message. If you don't like someone, for example, you may have trouble —hearing‖ them.

Physical Distractions. If a receiver of a communication works in an area with bright lights, glare on computer screens, loud noises, excessively hot or cold work spaces, or physical ailments, that receiver will probably experience communication breakdowns on a regular basis. A bad cellular phone line or a noisy venue can destroy communication. If an E-mail message or letter is not formatted properly, or if it contains grammatical and spelling errors, the receiver may not be able to concentrate on the message because the physical appearance of the letter or E-mail is sloppy and unprofessional.

Channel Barriers. If the sender chooses an inappropriate channel of communication, communication may cease. Detailed instructions presented over the telephone, for example, may be frustrating for both communicators.

Long Communication Chain. The longer the communication chain, the greater the chance for error. If a message is passed through too many receivers, the message often becomes distorted. If a person starts a

message at one end of a communication chain of ten people, for example, the message that eventually returns is usually liberally altered.

Lack of Interest. If a message reaches a reader who is not interested in the message, the reader may read the message hurriedly or listen to the message carelessly. Miscommunication may result in both cases.

Lack of Feedback or inadequate feedback. Since communication is a two-way process, the sender must search for a means of getting a response from the receiver. Delayed feedback can interfere with good communication.

Strategies for overcoming barriers to effective communication

It is very important to overcome barriers to effective communication. This involves diagnosing and analyzing situations, designing proper messages, selecting appropriate channels, assisting receivers of messages in correct decoding and interpretation of the messages and providing for an efficient and effective feedback system.

Use of Simple Language: Use of simple and clear words should be emphasized. Use of ambiguous words and jargons should be avoided.

Reduction and elimination of noise levels: Noise is the main communication barrier which must be overcome on priority basis. It is essential to identify the source of noise and then eliminate that source.

Active Listening: Listen attentively and carefully. There is a difference between —listening‖ and —hearing‖. Active listening means hearing with proper understanding of the message that is heard. By asking questions the speaker can ensure whether his/her message is understood or not by the receiver in the same terms as intended by the speaker.

Emotional State: During communication one should not show their emotions as the receiver might misinterpret the message being delivered. For example, if the conveyer of the message is in a bad mood then the receiver might think that the information being delivered is not good.

Proper Media Selection: The communicators should properly select the medium of communication. Simple messages should be conveyed orally, like: face to face interaction or meetings. Use of written means of communication should be encouraged for delivering complex messages. For significant messages reminders can be given by using written means of communication such as : Memos, Notices etc

Ethical issues in communication

Ethics is defined as moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity.

Characteristics of ethical communication

Conveying the point without offending the audience:

While communicating to the audience, conveying the desired message to them in a polite and significant manner is of primary importance. There are different ways to explain the things to them in a much smoother manner.

Maintain a relationship with the audience:

Maintaining the same wavelength/ level with the audience is very important for a communicator to ensure the audience feels at home. Experienced communicators immediately build a relationship based on trust with the audience as soon as they start speaking.

Avoid withholding crucial information:

In the modern era, information is vital for all decisions. Hence, it is vital for any organization to be cautious when communicating with the public. The communicated information should be absolute and all vital information must be conveyed appropriately. Purposely withholding crucial information might result in the receivers conceiving a bad image about the organization or the communicator.

Accuracy of information is necessary:

Any information that is to be passed on must be true and accurate. Communicating without checking the truth of the information can be highly dangerous for the organization. Identification of the source and testing the information is necessary before communicating it.

Courteous

CLASSIFICATION OF COMMUNICATION

Types of communication

 Formal communication: When communication occurs by following the prescribed rules and procedures of the organization, it is called formal communication. Formal communication is governed by the established chain of command.

Uses of formal communication

— Issuing instruction. The management uses it to pass forth instructions to staff on various subjects.

— Inform. Information concerning different issues is conveyed in an organization via formal channels. This can be vertically or horizontally.

— Coordination. Formal communication tends to be used for coordinating routine transactions within groups and organizations.

—Persuade.

 Motivate.

 Informal communication: When communication does not follow any prescribed rule or procedure, it is called informal communication. The basis of informal communication is spontaneous relationship among the participants. Informal communication is sometimes more powerful and more effective that formal communication.

Uses of informal communication

—Supplements formal communication.

— Informal communication is useful in supporting the social functions of groups. This is because organizations are less explicit in regulating social relationships than they are in regulating formal communication.

—Giving or getting help

Giving or getting help refers to joint problem solving for one person's benefit. This type of interaction commonly consists of a question-answer exchange. Often these questions are shouted from a distance and results are in short, simple answers.

 Gets work done. The maintenance of personal networks and social relationships through informal communication is understood to be a key factor in how people get work done.

 Internal communication: Internal communication refers to the flow of information to the internal participants of an organization. It happens only within the organization. The main purpose of this communication is to ensure smooth functioning of organizational activities.

Internal communication may be of two types: Vertical communication and horizontal communication.

 Vertical communication: When information flows between superiors and subordinate of an organization, it is known as vertical communication. Vertical communication can be of three types: Downward communication, upward communication and diagonal communication.

 Downward Communication: Downward communication occurs when information flows form superiors to subordinates.

 Upward Communication: Upward communication occurs when information flows form subordinates to superiors. Purpose: Through upward communication, subordinates convey their responses, reactions and performance feedback to their superiors.

Diagonal or cross communication: Diagonal communication occurs when information flows between persons at different levels who have no direct reporting relationships. Purpose: Diagonal communication is used to speed information flow, to improve understanding and to coordinate efforts for the achievement of organizational goals.

Horizontal communication: Where information flows among persons holding the same position or rank in the organization.

Uses of internal communications

Improving the effectiveness of the organization. The more information people have, the more quickly they get it and the better connections the better the work done.

Informs. Information from the management gets to the subordinates and vice versa. Message communicated could be about policy decisions or requests.

Problem solving. This is by providing a channel for everyone's ideas and opinions. Solutions can be found if communication is encouraged and is effective.

It creates a climate of openness within the organization. If everyone feels he/ she has access to whatever information he/ she needs or wants, and can talk to anyone in the organization about anything, it encourages good relations among people and promotes trust.

Through downward communication, superiors send organizational goals, policies, job assignments, orders, instructions etc to their subordinates.

External communication: Where an organization communicates with external or outside parties. External parties include customers, suppliers, investors, bankers, insurance companies, government agencies, local communities etc. the main purpose of external communication is to exchange information with the outside parties. External communication employs the use of letters, PR, advertising, emails, presentations etc.

Uses of external communication (Assignment)

Interpersonal communication: **Interpersonal communication** is an exchange of information between two or more people. Successful interpersonal communication is when the message senders and the message receivers understand the message.

Uses of interpersonal communication

Give and collect information.
Influence the attitudes and behaviour of others.
Form contacts and maintain relationships.
Make sense of the world and our experiences in it.
Express personal needs and understand the needs of others.
Give and receive emotional support.
Make decisions and solve problems.

Intra-personal communication

Intrapersonal communication is an individual's internal use of language or thought. It can be useful to .envision intrapersonal communication as occurring in the mind of the individual. The individual communicates in his/ her mind through the process of thinking and feeling.

Intrapersonal communication enables an individual to shape self-concept and develop one's convictions. It helps one to think, plan, analyze and interpret ideas and messages. It also provides the opportunity to think of new ideas and be creative about new decisions, approaches and solutions to organizational problems.

Uses of intrapersonal communication

Enables one to effectively communicate with others.

In order to successfully communicate with others you must first learn to communicate with yourself. Intrapersonal communication is the most basic level of communication. You must understand who you are and what you think of yourself.

Increases focus, concentration and performance. If you believe you cannot do something, your brain will tell your body exactly that and it will shut down. When you stay encouraged and positive, your body will also respond in a positive way.

Enables one think things through.

Enables one interpret messages and events.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION Different Forms of Communication

Oral Communication

Oral communication includes sounds, words, language and speaking. Language is said to have originated from sounds and gestures. There are many languages spoken in the world. The basis of language formation is: gender, class, profession, geographical area, age group and other social elements. Speaking is an effective way of communicating and is again classified into two types viz. interpersonal communication and public speaking.

Good Oral communication is an inseparable part of business communication. In a business, you come across people from various ages, cultures and races. Fluent oral communication is essential, when with dealing people in business meetings. Also, in business communication self-confidence plays a vital role which when clubbed with fluent communication skills can lead to success.

Public speaking is another verbal communication in which you have to address a group of people. Preparing for an effective speech before you start is important. In public speaking, the speech must be prepared according to the type of audience you are going to face. The content of your speech should be authentic and you must have enough information on the topic you have chosen for public speaking. All the main points in your speech must be highlighted and these points should be delivered in the correct order. There are many public speaking techniques and these techniques must be practiced for an effective speech.

Advantages of Oral Communication

Verbal Communication has the following advantages:

1. Saving of Time

Under this form of communication the messages are communicated immediately without consuming any time. Oral communication is the best option during an urgent condition and when immediate action is necessary.

2. Saving of Money

It saves money as it needs no help of any particular media.

3. More Effective

As there is direct touch/ contact of the sender and receiver message transmission proves to be more effective. The sender of message can also exercise his personal influence over the receiver of message.

4. Knowledge of Reaction of Message

An important advantage of oral communication is that under this method of communication, the sender of message can judge the reaction of the message on its receiver. He comes to know whether the receiver of the message will follow it or not.

Disadvantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication has the following disadvantages:

1. Lack of Proof of Message

The greatest disadvantage of oral communication is that there is no proof of the message communicated.

2. Not Suitable for Future Reference
Since there is nothing in writing supporting the messages communicated orally, it is not suitable for future reference. If there is any dispute on any point of the message, it cannot be helped in any way.
3. Not Suitable in Case of Distance
If the receiver and the sender of the message are far from each other, this method of communication
is not suitable because it will increase the cost of communication.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is the way in which we express our feelings, emotions, attitudes, opinions and views through our body movements. Body language is a non-verbal way of communication. Body posture and physical contact convey a lot of information. Body posture matters a lot when you are communicating verbally to someone. Folded arms and crossed legs are some of the signals conveyed by a body posture. Physical contact, like, shaking hands, pushing, patting and touching expresses the feeling of intimacy. Facial expressions, gestures and eye contact are all different ways of communication. Reading facial expressions can help you know a person better.
Creative and aesthetic non-verbal communication includes singing, music, dancing and sculpturing.
Symbols and sign language are also included in non-verbal communication.
When we communicate, non-verbal cues can be as important, or in some cases even more important, than what we say. Non-verbal communication can have a great impact on the listener and the outcome of the communication.
Non-verbal communications include facial expressions, the tone and pitch of the voice, gestures displayed through body language (kinesics) and the physical distance between the communicators (proxemics). These non-verbal signals can give clues and additional information and meaning over and above spoken (verbal) communication.
Non-verbal Messages Allow People To:
Reinforce or modify what is said in words. For example, people may nod their heads vigorously when saying "Yes" to emphasise that they agree with the other person, but a shrug of the shoulders and a sad expression when saying "I'm fine thanks,‖ may imply that things are not really fine at all!
Convey information about their emotional state.
Define or reinforce the relationship between people.
Provide feedback to the other person.
Regulate the flow of communication, for example by signalling to others that they have finished speaking or wish to say something.
Non-verbal communication include:
Body Movements (Kinesics)
Posture
Eye Contact (occulesics)
Para-language
Closeness or Personal Space (Proxemics)
Facial Expressions

Body Language or Body Movements (Kinesics)
Body movements include gestures, posture, head and hand movements or whole body movements. Body movements can be used to reinforce or emphasise what a person is saying and also offer information about the emotions and attitudes of a person. However, it is also possible for body movements to conflict with what is said. A skilled observer may be able to detect such discrepancies in behaviour and use them as a clue to what someone is really feeling.

Research work has identified the different categories of body movement/ gestures that are detailed below with each category describing the purpose they commonly serve:

Emblems: these gestures have direct verbal translations, like nodding the head for _yes', shaking the head for _no' or waving the hand for _hello'. They may be used in place of words.

Illustrators: Gestures which accompany words to illustrate a verbal message are known as illustrators. For example, the common circular hand movement which accompanies the phrase 'over and over again', or nodding the head in a particular direction when saying 'over there'.

Affect Displays: These are facial expressions or gestures which show the emotions we feel. These are often unintentional and can conflict with what is being said. Such expressions give strong clues as to the true emotional state of a person.

Regulators: Gestures used to give feedback when conversing are called regulators, for example head nods, short sounds such as 'uh-huh', 'mm-mm', and expressions of interest or boredom. Regulators allow the other person to adapt his or her speech to reflect the level of interest or agreement. Without receiving feedback, many people find it difficult to maintain a conversation.

Adaptors: these are unconscious movements of the body that originate from the nervous state of our mind. E.g. in an interview, when the candidate is nervous or uncomfortable with the questions asked, he/ she may unconsciously crack knuckles, shake legs or tap the foot

Posture

Posture can reflect people's emotions, attitudes and intentions. Research has identified a wide range of postural signals and their meanings, such as:

Open and Closed Posture: Two forms of posture have been identified, _open' and _closed', which may reflect an individual's degree of confidence, status or receptivity to another person. Someone seated in a closed position might have his/her arms folded, legs crossed or be positioned at a slight angle from the person with whom they are interacting. In an open posture you might expect to see someone directly facing you with hands apart on the arms of the chair. An open posture can be used to communicate openness or interest in someone and a readiness to listen, whereas the closed posture might imply discomfort or disinterest.

Eye Contact (occulesics)

This is the science of the movement/ grammar of our eyes. Eye contact serves three main purposes:

To give and receive feedback: Looking at someone lets them know that the receiver is concentrating on the content of their speech. Not maintaining eye contact can indicate disinterest. Communication may not be a smooth process if a listener averts their eyes too frequently.

To let a partner know when it is their 'turn' to speak: This is related to the above point. Eye contact is more likely to be continuous when someone is listening, rather than speaking. When a person has finished what they have to say, they will look directly at the other person and this gives a signal that the arena is open. If someone does not want to be interrupted, eye contact may be avoided.

To communicate something about a relationship between people: When you dislike someone, you tend to avoid eye contact and pupil size is often reduced. On the other hand, the maintenance of positive eye contact signals interest or attraction in a partner.

Eye grammar (what eyes communicate)

Staring eyes. Too much eye contact which show superiority or lack of respect, a threatening attitude or a wish to insult.

Too little eye contact. It indicates dishonesty, impoliteness, insincerity, and also shyness.

Withdrawal of eye contact. This is considered a sign of submission.

Para-language (paralinguistics)

Para-language relates to all aspects of the voice which are not strictly part of the verbal message, including the tone and pitch of the voice, the speed and volume at which a message is delivered, and pauses and hesitations between words.

These signals can serve to indicate feelings about what is being said. Emphasising particular words can imply whether or not feedback is required.

A voice that has tremors will not make feel very positive about the speaker.

A high speed of talking in interviews or negotiations or presentations will not instill confidence in the interviewers or audience.

Closeness and Personal Space (Proxemics) The study of
personal space is termed proxemics.

Every culture has different levels of physical closeness appropriate to different types of relationship, and individuals learn these distances from the society in which they grew up. When someone violates an appropriate distance, people may feel uncomfortable or defensive. Their actions may well be open to misinterpretation.

In Western society, four distances have been defined according to the relationship between the people involved. The Four Main space zones/ distances

Intimate Distance (touching to 45cm)
Personal Distance (45cm to 1.2m)
Social Distance (1.2m to 3m)
Public Distance (3m)

These four distances are associated with the four main types of relationship - intimate, personal, social and public. Each of the distances are divided into two, giving a close phase and a far phase, thus making eight divisions in all. It is worth noting that these distances are considered the norm in **Western Society**:

Intimate Distance: Ranges from close contact (touching) to the 'far' phase of 15-45cm. In British society, it tends to be seen as an inappropriate distance for public behaviour and, as mentioned above, entering the intimate space of another person with whom you do not have a close relationship can be extremely disturbing.

Personal Distance: The 'far' phase of personal distance is considered to be the most appropriate for people holding a conversation. At this distance it is easy to see the other person's expressions and eye movements, as well as their overall body language. Handshaking can occur within the bounds of personal distance.

Social Distance: This is the normal distance for impersonal business, for example working together in the same room or during social gatherings. Seating is also important; communication is far more likely to be considered as a formal relationship if the interaction is carried out across a desk. In addition, if the seating arrangements are such that one person appears to look down on another, an effect of domination may be created. At a social distance, speech needs to be louder and eye contact remains essential to communication, otherwise feedback will be reduced and the interaction may end.

Public Distance: Teachers and public speakers address groups at a public distance. At such distances exaggerated non-verbal communication is necessary for communication to be effective. Since subtle facial expressions are lost at this distance so clear hand gestures are often used as a substitute. Larger head movements are also typical of an experienced public speaker who is aware of changes in the way body language is perceived at longer distances.

Advantages of non-verbal communication

Complementary: Non-verbal cues complement an oral message by adding to its meaning. You can pat someone you offended at the back as you say sorry to him or her.

Easy presentation: Information can be easily presented in non-verbal communication through using visual, audio-visual and silent means of non-verbal communication.

Substituting: Non-verbal message may substitute for the oral message especially if the oral message is blocked by noise, interruption, long distance etc. for example: gestures-finger to lips to indicate need for quite, facial expressions- a nod instead of a yes.

Accenting: Often used to accent a verbal message. Verbal tone indicates the actual meaning of the specific words.

Repeat: Used to repeat the verbal message (e.g. pointing a direction while stating directions.)

Help to illiterate people: This type of communication uses gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, proximity, touching etc. and without using any spoken or written word. So, it is very much helpful for illiterate people.

Help to handicapped people: Non-verbal cues of communication greatly help in handicapped people especially to deaf people. Deaf people exchange message through the movements of hands, fingers, eye ball etc.

Attractive presentation: Non-verbal communication is based on visual, picture, graph, sign etc. that can be seen very much attractive.

Quick expression of message: Non-verbal cues of communication like signs and symbols can also communicate some messages very quickly than written or oral messages.

Disadvantages of non-verbal communication

Vague and imprecise: Non-verbal communication is quite vague and imprecise. This is because this communication there is no use of words or language which expresses clear meaning to the receiver. No dictionary can accurately classify them. Their meaning vary according to culture and context.

Continuous: It is possible to stop talking in **oral communication**, but it is generally not possible to stop nonverbal cues. Also, spoken language has a structure that makes it easier to tell when a subject has changed, for instance or to analyze its grammar. Nonverbal does not lend itself to this kind of analysis.

Multi-channel: while watching someone's eyes, you may miss something significant in a hand gesture. Everything is happening at once and therefore it may be confusing to try to keep up with everything. Most of us simply do not do so, at least not consciously.

Culture-bound: Different cultures have different meanings and interpretations of different non-verbal messages.

Long conversations are not possible: In non-verbal communication, long conversation and necessary explanations are not possible. No party can discuss the particular issues of the messages.

Difficult to understand: Difficult to understand and requires a lot of repetitions in **non-verbal communication**. Since it uses gestures, facial expressions eye contact, touch etc. for communicating with others which may not be understandable for the simple and foolish people.

Not everybody prefers: Everybody not prefers to communicate through non-verbal communication with others. Sometimes it cannot create an impression upon people or listeners. It is less influential and cannot be used everywhere. It is cannot be used as a public tool for communication.

Lack of formality: Non-verbal communication does not follow any rules, formality or structure like verbal. In most instances, people unconsciously and habitually engage in non-verbal communication by moving the various parts of their bodies.

Costly: In some cases non-verbal communication involves huge cost. For example, neon sign, power point presentation, cinema etc are very much costly compared to others form of communication.

Distortion of information: Since it uses gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, touch, sign, sound, paralanguage etc. for communicating with others, there is a great possibility in distortion of information in non-verbal communication.

Written Communication

Written communication is writing the words which you want to communicate. Good written communication is essential for business purposes. E-mails, reports, articles and memos are some of the ways of using written communication in business. Written communication can be used for formal business communication and also for informal communication purposes. Mobile SMS is an example of informal written communication.

Advantages of Written Communication

The written communication can be edited and amended many times before it is communicated. This is one of the main advantages of using writing as the major means of communication in business activity.

No need of Personal Contact

Economical

If the receiver and sender of the message are far apart, it is economical to communicate the message in writing because communicating by post is cheap and quite economical.

Written Proof

Written communication provides a proof for future reference. If there is any dispute the message may be referred to.

Disadvantages of Written Communication

Written communication has the following disadvantages:

1. Delay

There is delay because the message is writing is communicated after a certain process is completed. It is prepared, edited, proofread etc before the written communication is delivered. Consequently, the message is delayed.

2. Lack of Secrecy

There is no secrecy in written communication. Secrecy cannot be maintained because these messages can be accessed by anyone.

3. Costly

Written communication involves heavily expenditure. If the receiver and sender of message are near to each other, it is fairly costly to communicate in writing.

Visual communication

Visual communication is visual display of information, like, photography, signs, symbols and designs. Television and video clips are the electronic form of visual communication.

Advantages of visual communication

Conveys information in a fast manner

Visual communication is very fast as far as conveying a message is concerned. A graph for example, showing company's expenditure in a financial year, can be understood just at a glance, compared to paragraphs of text or a speech to convey the same information. Through visual communication complex facts and figures can be easily absorbed/ understood.

Better understanding and retention

A picture is retained in our memory longer than words or quotes. Research shows that people remember visuals the best, followed by speech, accompanied by reading.

Impactful

A graphic of any kind can elicit a stronger reaction from the reader. Compare saying "Nature is a wonderful thing" to an audience, to an image of young, cuddly animals. The image will move people emotionally and be more effective.

Effective

It is a much more efficient way of communicating - not just in time required for relaying information, the effort is much less too. For example, if I had to describe the usage of a pen to a group of people, it would be much easier for me to do so with a pen at my aid, and the point would get across better when those present actually see the pen being written with.

Removes ambiguities
Ambiguities are more common with only oral communication, especially now with globalization, as people from diverse backgrounds and linguistic abilities are working together. A visual, on the other hand, makes everything very clear. For example, if I say "The Kremlin is a colorful, domed structure", some would imagine it to be like a grand cathedral, whereas a few others would think of it shaped liked an igloo. But with a picture, everyone would instantly know how it actually looks.

Captivates and retains audience attention
When visuals are used instead of a simple speech, it makes a person more involved and connected, as visuals are able to pull down most barriers of communication, and open up people.
It enables comparisons to be made and recognized easily.

Disadvantages of visual communication
Costly: The visual methods of communication are more costly than those of other methods. To draw maps, charts, diagram is costly. That is why only large companies or organization can use this technique. High quality images, pictures and graphics, require additional resources to produce. Besides, using lower quality visuals has been proven to reduce credibility.

Complex presentation: Sometimes visual presentation of information becomes complex. Thus the receivers cannot understand the meaning of the presentation.

Incomplete method: This technique is considered as an incomplete method. Visual presentation is not sufficient to communicate effectively and clearly but also it can be successfully used with oral communication. Also only a small amount of information can be conveyed via a graphic. A very detailed visual will look cluttered, overwhelm the reader, and reduce its impact.

Time consuming: Making a graph or pie chart requires more time and effort, as it involves selecting, compiling, and presenting a large amount of information in a visually-pleasing manner. Whereas **oral communication** takes no time to exchange information.

Distracting. Visuals can be distracting, shifting the focus away from the presentation itself. For example, using a fancy, illegible font can actually distract members of the audience from what is being said. A visual can also close up the viewer, if it is too disturbing or controversial.

Problem for general readers: General people are not prefers to communicate through visual communication with others. Sometimes it cannot create an impression upon people or listeners. It is less influential and cannot be used everywhere.

Audio-visual communication

This is the use of both a sound and a visual component for communication. It involves the use of slide-tape presentations, films, television programs, church services and live theater productions.

Disadvantages

Technical Problems

Regardless of your equipment, there are many things that could go wrong that may disrupt your presentation. A bulb might burn out on your projector or it might be blurry or hard to focus. When using a PowerPoint presentation, font and colors may show up differently on screen or the music and sound might not play. CDs can skip. DVDs may be scratched or not compatible with your player.

Distractions

Visual aids are more of a distraction if used throughout the entire presentation versus during key points. Special effects and light from the projector can draw attention away from the speaker. Too much information can also be distracting, because the audience will be trying to read and/or take notes while the speaker has moved on to the next subject. There also may be too many slides for the audience to interpret or the audio and visual may not match up. An entertaining video can take the focus off the speaker and the presentation, while a dry video and low lighting can put students to sleep.

Expensive

Professionally created audiovisuals are expensive. Slides, videos, and films cost money unless borrowed from a library. The equipment used e.g. video cameras, computer hardware and software can be very costly.

Time

Audiovisual presentations can take a considerable amount of time to prepare. It takes time to produce your own video or slides. Films may be difficult to obtain, or it can take time to get permission to use them. Posters and transparencies may require extensive preparation. Creating a PowerPoint presentation can also be time consuming.

Space

If you choose to use an audiovisual aid, the size of the room should be taken into consideration. It is critical that all students are able to see or hear your presentation. If the room is too large for everyone to see the visual aid, or if part of your audience is forced to view the presentation at odd angles, some students will struggle to keep up with your lesson.

Convenience

Certain audiovisual aids such as VCRs for older video recordings, can be bulky and difficult to transport.

OFFICIAL ETIQUETTE, PROTOCOL AND DIPLOMACY Etiquette

Definition

Etiquette is defined as the code of ethical behaviour regarding professional practice or action among the members of a profession in their dealings with each other. It includes conventional requirements as to social behavior and conduct as established in any class or community or for any occasion.

Communication Etiquette therefore involves courteous and well-thought out interaction between individuals or groups that includes informed speech, attentive and active listening and a sincere grasp or understanding of what is being communicated.

In the business world, good manners are essential for getting ahead. Proper etiquette can help people land jobs, get promotions and establish excellent relationships with others. The most successful businessmen and women know how to turn on the charm and exhibit their best business etiquette to get the job done professionally and effectively (Houston Chronicle (2015).

Need/ importance for Etiquette
Etiquette makes you a cultured individual
Etiquette teaches you the way to talk, walk and most importantly behave in the society.
Etiquette is essential for a lasting first impression. The way you interact with your superiors, parents, fellow workers, friends speak a lot about your personality and up- bringing.
Etiquette enables the individuals to earn respect and appreciation in the society. No one would feel like talking to a person who does not know how to speak or behave in the society. Etiquette inculcates a feeling of trust and loyalty in the individuals. One becomes more responsible and mature. Etiquette helps individuals to value relationships.

Communication etiquette
Acknowledge communications: When someone communicates with you, respond in a way that indicates you got the message and will act appropriately. In some cases, the response will simple be a thank you.
Provide follow up on previous communications: When you have had a communications, there is an expectation of something being done. You take the action as communicated. The remaining thing to be done is to communicate what has been done.
Be respectful in all communications: There is never a time when you should be disrespectful of those you communicate with – even if you are responding to communications that were disrespectful to you.
Communicate new information to those who need the information: Whenever you obtain information that is generally not known by others, provide people with this information. The key is to think of who needs to know the information and what parts of the information would be useful to these people.
Communicate through the appropriate media: Tough sensitive issues should be communicated in person. Information that is primarily factual can be communicated electronically. Communications that require discussion does not work well electronically.
Communicate through channels: You should rarely communicate directly to those above your functional leader or client unless approved by the person above you. The only time when skipping of your boss might be appropriate is when there is an ethical or similar issue where your boss is uninvolved.
Use the correct titles: You need to learn how to address different people. Some will have titles. Some will prefer to be addressed formally (Mr., Ms).
Telephone Etiquette- It is essential to learn how one should interact with the other person over the phone. Telephone etiquette refers to the way an individual should speak on the phone. Never put the other person on long holds. Make sure you greet the other person. Take care of your pitch and tone.
Politeness. Remember to always say please and thank you when you interact with others, in person or over written correspondence. Being polite makes you pleasant to work with and shows respect.

Protocol
Protocol is a system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations. Most of the communication encounters in business are formal. Communication protocol therefore means standard procedures that are adhered to in communication activities in an organization.
A company needs an overall communication protocol to establish a minimum standard of dialogue and interaction which is directly proportional to the scenario at hand. To put it more simply, the more important the issue, the higher the level of effective communication required. With an effective

communication protocol in place, what your clients will see is excellence in service and they will be aware of the stage in which some process or activity they are interested in has reached.

A complete communication protocol consists of the following:

It shows who is included in the communications.

It indicates what will be communicated. It shows how far or deep the communication will go.

It gives guidelines on when to communicate.

It tracks of the communication in order to ensure that it is maintained and effective.

It explains why a certain level or depth of communication required for a given issue.

It shows the channel to use e.g. phone, e-mail, posting on website, face to face presentation e.t.c.

Diplomacy
Definition:

It is the art of dealing with people in a sensitive and effective way. It involves the skill in handling affairs without arousing hostility.

We all need to know what to say and how to say it in any situation. We need to know how to communicate with diplomacy, tact and confidence.

The way in which we communicate can elicit positive or negative emotions. If we communicate aggressively, without respect or sensitivity, or angry emotions we will prevent effective communication from taking place. Communicating with diplomacy and tact is an approach that combines strength and sensitivity and keeps negative emotions at bay.

Why be diplomatic?

In modern day and age, one has to practice diplomacy as it is essential to get one's way in a world that is highly competitive. What you say matters a lot. One has to be careful while conveying issues as they would have an impact on one's surroundings. Building up of personal relationships depends upon your choice of words and how you convey them to the concerned person.

It is essential to be diplomatic as what we convey does influence others actions. Much has to be accomplished in our daily lives, and we need to interact with others in order to achieve it. We may have to convince others and also get our way.

In the arena of international politics, much is conveyed diplomatically. Countries have to foster relations between each other and naturally they have to be very careful in their public dealings. Diplomacy plays an important role in striking deals. Senior leaders of various countries do not convey much in their talks. They have to be careful in what they say. They do not reveal or convey everything. They play with words. In fact, they do a lot of —sweet talk‖.

How to be diplomatic in communication.

Think before you communicate. Even if you are angry or felling offended, think before you say or do anything. Try to keep calm and evaluate the situation objectively and assess the factual information before you without including emotions.

Use decisive language. Speak clearly in simple language so that the person or people you are addressing won't misunderstand your points.

Be non-confrontational. Avoid language that could be heard as confrontational or overly aggressive.

Avoid highly emotional situations. If you are involved in a discussion that's already emotionally charged or argumentative, suggest to the parties involved to take a break and return to it after calm has returned.

Choose a diplomatic posture. Use neutral body language to put your points across. Maintain eye contact. Avoid waving your hand when you talk as this can be viewed as aggressive or distracting. Do not engage in smiling all the time as it indicates lack of serious intent. People will not take you seriously.
 Stand your ground. Be firm in your responses and opinion but allow some degree of flexibility.

Advantages of being diplomatic
 One strikes deals.
 One is able to win over people.
 Keeps enemies at bay.
 Settle disputes amicably.
 Also it makes you more closer to people as you are less likely to offend them

Telephone etiquette

 When talking hold the mouthpiece an inch away from your lips and the earpiece close to the ears.
 Speak politely, confidently and in a positive and friendly tone.
 When you pick the receiver, you should first introduce your company, the department or even you if desirable. Say a pleasant _good morning' or _good afternoon'. It adds a cordial note to the response. Listen carefully without interrupting the caller.
 If part of the message is not clear, politely ask the caller to repeat it.
 Avoid mumbling words together or talking through the nose or teeth.
 Avoid clichés like _yes', _ah', _I see', etc.
 Do not shout into the telephone. Do not speak too low. Try to be as natural as possible. Try to speak as if the person you are speaking to is sitting next to you.
 In long distance calls, it is good to be loud but shouting should be avoided at all costs.
 In telephonic communication. Time is the most vital factor and so do not waste time in idle personal talk. But at the same time do not sound abrupt also.

WRITING SKILLS
Good writing skills are essential for effective communication. Learning to write well takes time and practice.

Punctuation is the system of signs or symbols given to a reader to show how a sentence is constructed and how it should be read.
Sentences are the building blocks used to construct written accounts. They are complete statements. Punctuation shows how the sentence should be read and makes the meaning clear. Every sentence should include, at least, a capital letter at the start, a full stop, exclamation mark or question mark at the end. This basic system indicates that the sentence is complete.

The Comma (,)
The comma is useful in a sentence when the writer wishes to:
 pause before proceeding
 add a phrase that does not contain any new subject
 separate items on a list
 use more than one adjective (a describing word, like beautiful)
For example, in the following sentence the phrase or clause between the commas gives us more information behind the actions of the boy, the subject of the sentence:

The boy, who knew that his mother was about to arrive, ran quickly towards the opening door. Note that if the phrase or clause were to be removed, the sentence would still make sense although there would be a loss of information. Alternatively, two sentences could be used: The boy ran quickly towards the opening door. He knew that his mother was about to arrive.

Commas are also used to separate items in a list.

For example:

The shopping trolley was loaded high with bottles of beer, fruit, vegetables, toilet rolls, cereals and cartons of milk. Note that in a list, the final two items are linked by the word _and' rather than by a comma.

Commas are used to separate adjectives.

For example:

The boy was happy, eager and full of anticipation at the start of his summer holiday.

As commas represent a pause, it is good practice to read your writing out loud and listen to where you make natural pauses as you read it. More often than not, you will indicate where a comma should be placed by a natural pause. Although, the _rules' of where a comma needs to be placed should also be followed.

For example:

However, it has been suggested that some bees prefer tree pollen.

Full Stop (.)

A full stop should always be used to end a sentence. The full stop indicates that a point has been made and that you are about to move on to further explanations or a related point.

Less frequently, a series of three full stops (an ellipsis) can be used to indicate where a section of a quotation has been omitted when it is not relevant to the text, for example:

―The boy was happy… at the start of his summer holiday.‖

A single full stop may also be used to indicate the abbreviation of commonly used words as in the following examples:

 Telephone Number = Tel. No.

 September = Sept.

 Pages = pp.

Exclamation Mark (!)

An exclamation mark indicates strong feeling within a sentence, such as fear, anger or love. It is also used to accentuate feeling within the written spoken word.

For example:

―Help! I love you!‖

In this way, it can also be used to indicate a sharp instruction

 ―Stop! Police!‖ or to indicate humour

 ―Ha! Ha! Ha!‖

The exclamation mark at the end of a sentence means that you do not need a full stop. Exclamation marks are a poor way of emphasising what you think are important points in your written assignments; the importance of the point will emphasise itself without a sequence of !!!

in the text. An exclamation mark should only be used when absolutely essential, or when taken from a direct quote.

The exclamation mark should be used sparingly in formal and semi-formal writing.

Question Mark (?)

The question mark simply indicates that a sentence is asking a question. It always comes at the end of a sentence:

For example:

Are we at the end?
Note that the question mark also serves as a full stop.

Semi-colon (;)
The semi-colon is perhaps the most difficult sign of punctuation to use accurately. If in doubt, avoid using it and convert the added material into a new sentence.
As a general rule, the semi-colon is used in the following ways:
When joining two connected sentences. For example:
We set out at dawn; the weather looked promising.

The semi-colon can also be used to assemble detailed lists. For example:
The conference was attended by delegates from Paris, France; Texas, USA; London, UK; Stockholm, Sweden; Colombo, Sri Lanka; and Mumbai, India.

Colon (:)
The colon within a sentence makes a very pointed pause between two phrases. There are two main uses of the colon:
It is most commonly used when listing. For example:
She placed the following items into the trolley: beer, fruit, vegetables, toilet rolls, cereals and cartons of milk.
Or it can be used within a heading, or descriptive title.

A colon may introduce direct speech

A colon separates hours from minutes E.g. 11:30am
A colon introduces an example or an explanation of something already mentioned E.g. The miser had one wish: to keep all his money.

Apostrophe (')
The apostrophe, sometimes called an inverted comma has two main uses.
The apostrophe indicates possession or ownership.
For example:
The girl's hat was green, (girl is in the singular).
This shows the reader that the hat belongs to the girl.
The girls' hats were green, (girls in this instance are plural, i.e. more than one girl, more than one hat).
This indicates that the hats belong to the girls.
Another use of the apostrophe is to indicate where a letter is omitted:
For example:
We're going to do this course. (We are going to do this course.)
Isn't this a fine example of punctuation? (Is not this a fine example of punctuation?)
The time is now 7 o' clock. (The time is now 7 of the clock)
Note that a common mistake is to confuse **its** with **it's**.
It's indicates to the reader that a letter has been omitted.
For example:
It's a lovely day is an abbreviated way of saying: **It is** a lovely day.
Note that in most formal writing, the practice of using abbreviated words is inappropriate.
See also: Common Mistakes in Writing for more on using apostrophes correctly.

Quotation or Speech Marks ("….")
Quotation or speech marks are used when quoting someone else's speech or writing.
For example:
My grandpa said, "Share your chocolates with your friends."

Hyphen (-)
The hyphen is used to link words together.
For example:
    sub-part
    eighteenth-century people
    week-end
    second-class post
    gender-neutral
    non-verbal
The hyphen is also used when a word is split between two lines. The hyphen should be placed between syllables at the end of the upper line and indicates to the reader that the word will be completed on the next line.
Computer applications such as Word Processors can be set to automatically hyphenate words for you, although it is more common to use extra spacing to avoid hyphenation.

Brackets ( )
Brackets always come in pairs ( ) and are used to make an aside, or a point which is not part of the main flow of a sentence. If you remove the words between the brackets, the sentence should still make sense.
For example:
—The strategy (or strategies) chosen to meet the objectives may need to change as the intervention continues.‖
Brackets are also used in text citations. E.g. According to Jane (2014) climate change is to blame for the disrupted rainfall patterns in Kenya,

Slash (/)
Many people use the slash instead of **or, and** etc. There is, however, a modern convention in gender-neutral writing to use ‗she/ he'.
Courtesy in writing
Communicating in a business environment involves communicating with individuals. In both written and oral communication, it is possible to be courteous while being direct and business-oriented. The writer should be aware of the reader‗s feelings. Most people respond more readily to a positive interaction, according to a study conducted by the University of North Carolina that found 52 percent of those interviewed said they —lost work time worrying about incidents of rudeness.‖
Strategies used:
    Proper titled
Everyone appreciates having the correct titles attached to their name. If a person is a doctor or if a woman is married, they expect to have the correct salutation in a business letter. E.g. Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr, Hon e.t.c.
    Proper greetings
The standard and most widely accepted way that a greeting is used to open a letter is —Dear,‖ followed by the proper salutation, and the person‗s last name. If you write a letter without using this standard opening, it may immediately alienate your reader. Also, the greeting of —To Whom it May Concern,‖ often comes off as cold or distant.
    Proper tone

You should always try to use the appropriate tone or attitude in your business correspondence. The better you know someone, the more informal the tone can be. However, in most business settings, the tone should remain somewhat formal. This formal tone relays the fact that your message is courteous, but should also be taken seriously. The proper tone should make the reader comfortable, while maintaining a certain level of respect.

Clarity

Courteous writing should be respectful, clear, and concise. Clarity is important because it does not waste valuable time. Confusing messages will often be perceived as wasteful by the reader. Clarity of thought and purpose is another essential element of a courteous letter.

Use Nondiscriminatory Language

Nondiscriminatory language is language that treats all people equally. It does not use any discriminatory words, remarks, or ideas. It is very important that the business writer communicate in a way that expresses equality and respect for all individuals. Discriminatory language can come between your message and your reader. Make sure your writing is free of sexist language and free of bias based on such factors as race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability. Use neutral job titles. E.g. use the word Chairman but not Chairperson

Stress the Benefits For the Reader

Write from the reader's perspective. Instead of simply writing from the perspective of what the reader can do for you, write in a way that shows what you can do for the reader. A reader will often read a document wondering "What's in it for me?" It is your job to tailor your document accordingly.

Stressing reader benefits will help you to avoid sounding self-centered and uninterested.

Use positive words and avoid negative words.

What is a paragraph?

A paragraph is a collection of related sentences dealing with a single topic. Learning to write good paragraphs will help you as a writer stay on track during your drafting and revision stages. Good paragraphing also greatly assists your readers in following a piece of writing. You can have fantastic ideas, but if those ideas aren't presented in an organized fashion, you will lose your readers (and fail to achieve your goals in writing).

The Basic Rule: Keep one idea to one paragraph

The basic rule of thumb with paragraphing is to keep one idea to one paragraph. If you begin to transition into a new idea, it belongs in a new paragraph. There are some simple ways to tell if you are on the same topic or a new one. You can have one idea and several bits of supporting evidence within a single paragraph. You can also have several points in a single paragraph as long as they relate to the overall topic of the paragraph. If the single points start to get long, then perhaps elaborating on each of them and placing them in their own paragraphs is the route to go.

Elements of a paragraph

To be as effective as possible, a paragraph should contain each of the following: **Unity, Coherence, A Topic Sentence,** and **Adequate Development.** As you will see, all of these traits overlap. Using and adapting the following elements to your writings will help you construct effective paragraphs.

Unity

The entire paragraph should concern itself with a single focus. If it begins with one focus or major point of discussion, it should not end with another or wander within different ideas.

Coherence

Coherence is the trait that makes the paragraph easily understandable to a reader.

A topic sentence

A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with. Although not all paragraphs have clear-cut topic sentences, and despite the fact that topic sentences can occur anywhere in the paragraph (as the first sentence, the last sentence, or somewhere in the middle), an easy way to make sure your reader understands the topic of the paragraph is to put your topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph. (This is a good general rule for less experienced writers, although it is not the only way to do it). Regardless of whether you include an explicit topic sentence or not, you should be able to easily summarize what the paragraph is about.

Adequate development

The topic (which is introduced by the topic sentence) should be discussed fully and adequately. Again, this varies from paragraph to paragraph, depending on the author's purpose, but writers should be wary of paragraphs that only have two or three sentences. It's a pretty good bet that the paragraph is not fully developed if it is that short.

Some methods to make sure your paragraph is well-developed:

Use examples and illustrations

Cite data (facts, statistics, evidence, details, and others)

Examine testimony (what other people say such as quotes and paraphrases)

Use an anecdote or story

Define terms in the paragraph

Compare and contrast

Evaluate causes and reasons

Examine effects and consequences

Analyze the topic

Describe the topic

Offer a chronology of an event (time segments)

How do I know when to start a new paragraph? You should start
a new paragraph when:

When you begin a new idea or point. New ideas should always start in new paragraphs. If you have an extended idea that spans multiple paragraphs, each new point within that idea should have its own paragraph.

To contrast information or ideas. Separate paragraphs can serve to contrast sides in a debate, different points in an argument, or any other difference.

When your readers need a pause. Breaks between paragraphs function as a short "break" for your readers—adding these in will help your writing more readable. You would create a break if the paragraph becomes too long or the material is complex.

When you are ending your introduction or starting your conclusion. Your introductory and concluding material should always be in a new paragraph. Many introductions and conclusions have multiple paragraphs depending on their content, length, and the writer's purpose.

.Essay writing

An essay is a short piece of writing that generally shows the author's view on a particular subject. There are many different kinds of essays, including narrative, descriptive, argumentative and persuasive.

Types of essays
Narrative Essays

The first important thing to remember about a narrative essay is that it tells a story. The author may write about

an experience or event from his or her past

a recent or an ongoing experience or event

something that happened to somebody else, such as a parent or a grandparent

The second important thing about a narrative essay is that the story should have a point. In the final paragraph, the author should come to an important conclusion about the experience that has just been described.

Descriptive Essays
The purpose of a descriptive essay is to describe a person, place, or thing in such vivid detail that the reader can easily form a precise mental picture of what is being written about. The author may accomplish this by using imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses.

Informative/Explanatory Essays
An **Informative/Explanatory** essay teaches or informs your reader about a subject. This type of essay can explain how something works, how to perform a task, the steps in a procedure, or why something is the way it is. Ultimately, the reader should have a better understanding of the subject after reading your paper.

Argumentative essay
The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

The following steps, however, can be used to write any kind of essay.

Establish Your Topic
Your may be assigned a topic or be asked to choose from among a few topics. The assignment may contain certain key words that will suggest the content and structure of your essay. For example, you may be asked to:

- Analyze
- Argue
- Compare and contrast
- Describe
- Discuss
- Summarize

If you do not understand what you are being asked to do, check with your teacher.

You may be asked to find a topic on your own. Most people find this difficult. Give yourself plenty of time to think about what you'd like to do. Trying to answer questions you have about a particular subject may lead you to a good paper idea.

- What subject(s) are you interested in?
- What interests you most about a particular subject?
- Is there anything you wonder about or are puzzled about with regard to that subject?

Be sure your topic is narrow enough so that you can write about it in detail in the number of pages that you are allowed. For example, say you are asked to write a 1-page essay about someone in your family. Since you only have a limited number of pages, you may want to focus on one particular characteristic of that person, or one particular incident from that person's life, rather than trying to write about that person's entire life. Having a narrow focus will help you write a more interesting paper.

One method for narrowing down your topic is called **brainstorming.** Brainstorming is a useful way to let ideas you didn't know you had come to the surface.

- Sit down with a pencil and paper, or at your computer, and write whatever comes

into your head about your topic, no matter how confused or disorganized.
- Keep writing for a short but specific amount of time, say 3–5 minutes. Don't stop
to change what you've written or to correct spelling or grammar errors.
- After a few minutes, read through what you have written. You will probably
throw out most of it, but some of what you've written may give you an idea you can develop.
- Do some more brainstorming and see what else you can come up with.

Organize Your Ideas

Develop an outline to organize your ideas. An outline shows your main ideas and the order in which you are going to write about them. Click here to see some sample outlines.
- Write down all the main ideas.
- List the subordinate ideas below the main ideas.
- Avoid any repetition of ideas.

Write a First Draft

Every essay or paper is made up of three parts:
- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion

The introduction is the first paragraph of the paper. It often begins with a general statement about the topic and ends with a more specific statement of the main idea of your paper. The purpose of the introduction is to

- let the reader know what the topic is
- inform the reader about your point of view
- arouse the reader's curiosity so that he or she will want to read about your topic

The body of the paper follows the introduction. It consists of a number of paragraphs in which you develop your ideas in detail.

- Limit each paragraph to one main idea. (Don't try to talk about more than one idea per paragraph.)
- Prove your points continually by using specific examples and quotations.
- Use transition words to ensure a smooth flow of ideas from paragraph to paragraph.

The conclusion is the last paragraph of the paper. Its purpose is to
- summarize your main points, leaving out specific examples
- restate the main idea of the paper

IV.
Revise the First Draft

Try to set aside your draft for a day or two before revising. This makes it easier to view your work objectively and see any gaps or problems.
Revising involves rethinking your ideas, refining your arguments, reorganizing paragraphs, and rewording sentences. You may need to develop your ideas in more detail, give more evidence to support your claims, or delete material that is unnecessary. For more advice on revising and a sample revision, click here.
Read your paper out loud. This sometimes makes it easier to identify writing that is awkward or unclear.
Have somebody else read the paper and tell you if there's anything that's unclear or confusing.

Proofread the Final Draft
Look for careless errors such as misspelled words and incorrect punctuation and capitalization.
Errors are harder to spot on a computer screen than on paper. If you type your paper on a computer, print out a copy to proofread. Remember, spell checkers and grammar checkers don't always catch errors, so it is best not to rely on them too much.

Functional writing
Functional writing is writing that is meant to fulfill real life purposes, such as: making a request or giving advice, inviting someone for a visit or to a function, applying for something e.t.c. Functional writing includes the writing of business letters, memorandum, notices, agenda, minutes, advertisements, e-mail, facsimile and press releases.

Business letters/ E-mail Functions of a business letter
- To provide a convenient and inexpensive means to communicate without personal contact.
- To seek or give information
- To provide evidence of transactions entered into.
- To provide a record for future reference

Types of business letters
Letters of inquiry
Letters answering a request
Claim and adjustment letters

Credit letters
Collection letters
Sales letters
Employment letters
Social letters
Memorandum

Parts of a business letter

Letterhead

It is also known as heading or address. It appears at the top of the page. It contains the name of the company, address, logo, telephone number etc.

Date

It enables quick reference in future and helps in prompt action and filing. It consists of the day, month and year.

Reference

It is written below the dateline close to the left margin. It serves to identify either the department or the section from which the letter is being sent or the particular file in which the
correspondence is to be found. The purpose of the reference is to enable replies to be linked with the previous correspondence and also to send replies to these letters to the proper official or department.

Inside address

It contains the name and address of the firm or the individual to whom the letter is written. It helps the outward clerk to write the same address on the cover. It should be written below the reference line.

Salutation

This is the greeting part which commences the letter and precedes the message erg Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Mr. Kariuki etc.

Body of the letter

Reference or subject

It is a brief one-line mention of the major theme of the letter right in the beginning. It is written below the salutation.

Opening paragraph

Main paragraph

It contains the subject matter of the letter. It should be clear, simple and correct.

Closing paragraph

Complementary close

It is a polite way of ending a letter e.g. Yours Faithfully, Yours sincerely etc.

Signature

It is the assent of the writer to the subject matter of the letter and is a practical necessity. It contains the writer's name, status, department etc. it is just below the complementary close.

Enclosures

Carbon copies

Letters sent outside the organization may be brought to the attention of senior official for their information. This is done by sending a carbon copy of the original to the official concerned. It is indicated by typing on the originals the abbreviation _c.c' and the name of the person to whom the letter is sent at the foot of the page on the left hand side.

Memorandum A memo is:

• a short document used for communicating inside an organisation It contains To, From, Date, Subject Headings and Message sections

Elements of a memo

Memos should have the following sections and content:

Main heading. The heading ‚memo' or ‚memorandum' makes clear the purpose of the document and ensures that it stands out.

'To' section. Contains the name of the receiver.

‚From' section. Contains the name of the sender.

'Date' section.

A Subject Heading. It should be brief and exact. It makes clear immediately what the memo is about.

First paragraph. This provides a background, context or reason for the information or instructions contained in the second paragraph. It should be kept short.

Second paragraph. This is the actual message, information, instructions or reminder and should follow logically from the first paragraph.

Initials of the sender. In some organizations the writer will add his/ her initials at the foot of the memo.

C.   Press release

A **press release**, **news release**, **media release**, **press statement** or **video release** is a written or recorded communication directed at members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something newsworthy. Typically, they are mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to assignment editors and journalists at newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations or television networks.

Steps follow in coming up with a good press release

1.   Grab attention with a good headline.

The beginning of a press release -- just as with a magazine article, book or promotional pamphlet
   is the most important. A strong headline will pull in journalists seeking good stories. Your headline should be as engaging as it is accurate.

2.   Get right to the point in the first paragraph.

Because reporters are busy people, you must assume that they will only read the first sentence and then scan the rest. Get the message of your press release out quickly. Every important point should be addressed in the first few sentences. The subsequent paragraphs should be for supporting information.

3.   Include hard numbers.

Include in the press release hard numbers that support the significance of your product or announcement. If you're claiming a trend, you need proof to back it up. Quantify your argument and it will become much more compelling.

4.   Make it grammatically flawless.

Proofread your press release -- and let a few other people proofread it as well -- before sending it out. Even a single mistake can dissuade a reporter from taking you seriously.

5.   Include quotes whenever possible.

Including a good quote from someone in the company or close to the product/event can give a human element to the press release, as well as being a source of information in its own right.

6.   Include your contact information.

A common oversight that can render a press release ineffectual is a lack of contact information for reporters to follow up with. Whether you or someone else at the company is the point of contact, don't forget to include an email address and phone number on the release (preferably at the top of the page).

7.   One page is best -- and two is the maximum.

As with most good writing, shorter is usually better. Limit yourself to one page, though two pages are acceptable. This will also force you to condense your most important information into a more readable document -- something journalists are always looking for.

8.   Provide access to more information.

You must limit your press release to one page (or two, if you must), but that doesn't mean you can't show people how to learn more. Providing relevant links to your company's website, where prospective writers can learn more about your mission and what you've already accomplished is a crucial element to the release. Don't make journalists/ writers search on their own for more information -- guide them as quickly as possible to your website, and keep their interest piqued.

Advertisement

It is a paid, non-personal communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or influence an audience.

Uses of adverts

To promote products and services
To promote vacant posts
To announce special events and functions
To publicize changes in the organization

A good advertisement should

Attract the reader's attention (Attention)
Get the reader's interest by mentioning something that will appeal to them (Interest)
Arouse the reader's desire to buy, to attend a function, to find out more or to contact the writer (Desire)
Lead the audience into an action (Action).

Tips for writing effective advertisements
Know your advertising objective

Start with the end in mind. What do you want the reader to do? Do you want them to call you? Do you want the reader to send an application in? Do you want them to buy something? Once you know your objective that everything in your ad should be designed to accomplish that objective.

A lot of people think that what they want is exposure to as many people as possible. If you have lots of money to spend then that could be a good idea. But, if you are concerned about your budget and you want to minimize your cost per sale then I suggest you are better off with an ad that is geared toward creating a response.

Get Their Attention

Potential clients get flooded with marketing messages every day. If you want to stand out from the crowd you will need to craft a headline that will grab their attention.
You need to get their attention but it also needs to be relevant to your product or service and be truthful.

Use Plain English

Eliminate big words with lots of syllables and technical jargon because too many people will not be able understand you.

Write About The Benefits

Features describe and benefits sell. Don't make the mistake of writing only about the features of your product. Write also about the benefits.

Notice writing

A notice is a very short piece of writing which is usually formal in style. It is widely used by individuals and organizations to announce events and celebrations, births and deaths, occasions like inaugurations or sales, to issue public instructions, to make appeals and to extend invitations. Most notices are meant to be pinned up or pasted on special boards meant for this specific purpose only. There must be one or more such notice board in the school and other organization. Whereas notices issued by the Government departments and other big organization also appear in various newspapers.

Purpose/ uses of a notice

To announce social events
To report on matters of interest to the staff
To inform staff of new procedures
To advertise posts for internal appointments
To remind staff of company procedures

How to Write a Notice?

Writing an effective notice is a kind of art that can be acquired with practice with keeping some basic points in mind while writing them out. Your notice should give complete information and must be written in a clear and thought through style and easily understandable language.

Content that a good effective notice must include in it are:

Name of the Organization, Institution or Office issuing it.
Date of issuing of a particular notice.
The heading _Notice to make it very clear.
A suitable description/ eye-catching caption or heading to hold the immediate attention of the reader.
Purpose for which it has been written like calling a meeting, drawing attention, making an appeal or informing general public about some issue of concern etc.
Details of schedule i.e. date, time, venue, programme, duration etc. in case the notice is about an event to be organized in the near future.

SUMMARY

Def 1: A **summary** is a condensed version of a larger reading.

Def 2: A **summary** is a shortened version of a text that highlights its key points.

The primary purpose of a summary is to give an accurate and objective representation of what the work says.
To summarize, you must read a passage closely, finding the main ideas and supporting ideas.
Then you must briefly write down those ideas in a few sentences or a paragraph.
A summary is not a rewrite of the original piece and should not be long. To write a summary, use your own words to express briefly the main idea and relevant details of the piece you have read. Your purpose in writing the summary is to give the basic ideas of the original reading.
What was it about and what did the author want to communicate?

A summary:

Is an essential condensation in your own words.
Answers the question —what is the author really saying?‖

Is the result of careful —listening‖ to the author.
Remains faithful to the author's emphasis and interpretation.
Does not disagree with or critique the author's opinions.

Importance of summarizing

The process of summarizing enables you to understand the original text better.

It enables anybody who does not want to read the entire text have to know what it is all about.

The knowledge you gain by summarizing makes it possible for you to analyze and critique the original text.

General rules/ considerations in summary writing

You should not include your own ideas or interpretations. Do not put in your opinion the issue or topic discussed in the original piece

Do not rewrite the original piece.

Keep your summary short.

Use your own words.

Refer to the central and main ideas of the original piece.

Read with who, what, when, where, why and how questions in mind

Steps in summary writing

Skim (read quickly) the text. Don't take any notes this time -- just take in the minimum about the basic plot of the book or article. You'll be able to concentrate on the smaller things later.

• Think of the focus while you're reading. Get down the most basic of questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? This bare bones thinking can help you to effectively and quickly write a pertinent summary.

Read the text thoroughly. In order to write an accurate summary, you must understand what you're reading. Try reading with the author's purpose in mind.

• Take notes and highlight as you read. Take note of the subheadings, even if there aren't any. Dividing it into sections in your mind will help you organize your summary.

• Consider why you have been assigned the text. Write down the author's main point and the main points of each section. Look for the writer's thesis and underline it. This is the main idea of the work.

Outline the article. This serves as the skeleton of your summary. Write down the main points of each section, but do not go into minor detail. synopsis

• It'll benefit you to write it in your own words now; that will save you time translating later. If you can't get around copying from the original, put quotation marks around it. Only do this with incredibly important sentences that cannot be reworded.

Start writing the summary with a clear identification of the work. This automatically lets your readers know your intentions and that you're covering the work of another author. Clearly identify (in the present tense) the background information needed for your summary i.e. the type of work, title, author, and main point.

Summarize the piece as a whole. Omit nothing important and strive for overall coherence through appropriate transitions. Write using "summarizing language." Your reader needs to be reminded that this is not your own work. Use phrases like the article claims, the author suggests, etc.

Present the material in a neutral fashion. Your opinions, ideas, and interpretations should be left in your brain -- don't put them into your summary. Be conscious of choosing your words. Only include what was in the original work.

Be concise. This is a summary -- it should be much shorter than the original piece. If you're working on an article, give yourself a target length of 1/4 the original article.

Conclude with a final statement. The final statement should reflect the significance of the book or article from the author's standpoint. Be careful not to include in the conclusion any of your own assumptions or opinions.

Check for accuracy. Check whether the summary is making the same points as the article itself. Make sure you have not omitted anything important

Revise your work. Make sure that the wording is appropriate and there is use of transitions to make it as easy to read as possible. Look out for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Your credibility will seriously be questioned if your summary contains these mistakes.

REPORT WRITING SKILLS
Definition:

A report refers to information that has been carefully gathered and logically presented.

A report is a document which investigates a specific subject according to a prescribed/ given format and for a clearly defined readership/ audience who normally are those in superior positions within a company or organization.

Features of a good report

Factual. A good report should be based on facts and not imagination. The facts should be accurate.

Clarity. A good report is absolutely clear. Clarity depends on proper arrangement of facts. The report writer must proceed systematically. He should make his/ her purpose clear, define his/ her sources, state the findings and finally make the necessary recommendations. The report should be divided into short paragraphs giving them headings, and insert other suitable signposts to achieve greater clarity.

Objective. It should be impartial. It should not have personal opinion, bias or prejudice.

Orderly / structured in a predetermined fashion. Its contents should be clearly and logically arranged.

Detailed. All relevant information should be included in the report.

Precise. In a good report the writer is very clear about the exact purpose of writing it. Precision gives a kind of unity and coherence to the report.

Brevity. A good report should be brief. But brevity should not be achieved at the cost of clarity or completeness.

Grammatical accuracy.

Types of reports

Oral Report

Oral Report- is a presentation of factual information to an audience by word of mouth.

Written report

Written reports are a written document describing the findings of some individual or group and are often used to display the result of an experiment, investigation, or inquiry.

Management reports

These are reports used by business managers to monitor the success of their businesses and operations. These reports may include financial, labor and traffic reports.

Operations procedure

This is a prescribed procedure to be followed routinely. It is a particular course of action intended to achieve a result.

Formal reports

They are official in nature. They contain information resulting from investigations. They are about major issues of importance. They are mostly used by a committee or a working party. The findings are directed at the appointing authority.

Informal reports
They are not official in nature. They are produced by junior clerks and personnel.

Routine reports
These are reports submitted on a fixed time span e.g. daily basis, weekly basis, monthly basis or even annually. They may cover petty expenses on daily basis or attendance of workers on daily basis. They may also cover various divisions or units of production on a daily basis.

Statutory reports
These are those reports which have a legal status and they are required by law e.g. auditor general's, financial reports or chairman's report to the annual general meeting of the company's stakeholders.
Financial reports
These are reports prepared by the manager of the finance department or the controller of finance. They provide valuable information on the financial structure, the effectiveness of the use of capital, the need and ways of reorganizing capital resources etc.

Role/ uses of reports in an organization
Reports facilitate decision making and planning
Reports provide reliable data which can be used in the planning and decision making process. It acts as a source of reliable information for long term planning and decision making.
Reports facilitate framing of personnel policies
Certain reports relating to employees are useful while preparing personnel policies such as promotion policy, training policy and welfare facilities to employees.
Reports used give information to shareholders
Some company reports are prepared yearly for the benefit of shareholders. Annual reports for example, are prepared and sent to all shareholders before the AGM because they give information about the progress of the company.

Reports are a used for internal communication
Reports acts as an effective means of communication within the organization. They provide feedback to employees and are prepared for the information and guidance of others connected with the matter / problem.

Reports disclose unknown information
Reports provide information, which may not be known previously. The committee members collect data, draw conclusions and provide information which may be new to all concerned parties.
Report gives Information to employees
Reports are available to managers and departments for internal use. They are widely used by the departments for guidance. Report provide a feedback to employees and are useful for their self-improvement.
Report gives reliable permanent information
The information provided by a report is a permanent addition to the information available to the office. We have census reports (prepared since last 100 years) which are used even today for reference purpose.
Reports give complete & updated information
A report provides complete, factual and an up-to-date information about a particular matter or subject.

Steps to take in preparation for report writing
All reports need to be clear, concise and well structured. With careful planning, the writing of a report will be made much easier. The following are the steps to take in report writing.
Step One: Understanding the purpose of the report
You must understand the purpose of your report as described in your report instructions. Consider who the report is for and why it is being written. Understand the terms of reference, scope and purpose of the report.

Step Two: Gathering and selecting information
Once you are clear about the purpose of your report, you need to begin to collect data relevant to the report. Data may come from a variety of sources, and may be collected using data collection tools like questionnaires, interviews schedules or by surveying.

Step Three: Organising your material
Once you have gathered information you need to decide what will be included and in what sequence it should be presented. Begin by grouping together points that are related. These may form topics/ sections or chapters. Choose an order for your material that is logical and easy to follow.

Step Four: Analyze your material
Before you begin to write your first draft of the report, take time to consider and make notes on the points you will make using the facts and evidence you have gathered. Ask yourself what conclusions can be drawn from the material? What are the limitations or flaws in the evidence? Do certain pieces of evidence conflict with one another? Relate the information you have gathered to the problem or issue described in the report brief.

Step five: Write the draft
Use short words and sentences. Avoid use of jargon. Avoid ambiguity.
Step six: Revise and proof read the draft (Refer to notes on paragraph development)

General report format guidelines
When you write a report, you will want to make it easy to read and understand. Here are some guidelines to apply to any report you write.
  Use lists: Whenever you can, help your reader by using lists. Give your lists visual emphasis by bullets.
  Use headings and subheadings: Use headings and subheadings to guide your reader through the organization of the report and list them in the table of contents. Each section should have a clear topic statement to let the reader know what will be included in the section.
  Use clear typefaces, such as Times New Roman or Arial: Avoid using more than one typeface in a document. Bold section headings for emphasis.
  Use white space to enhance your information: Dense blocks of text are difficult to read and will make it more difficult for your readers to find the information they need. For further information on this topic, see the OWL resource on document design, HATS.

The structure of a report

Preliminaries

Title Page/ cover page
Executive Summary
Terms of Reference
Table of contents
Acknowledgements
Body
Introduction
Methods
Findings
Discussion
Conclusion
Recommendations
III.Appendices

Glossary of Technical Terms

Title Page

It explicitly describes the purpose of the report. It may include could be your name, the date and for whom the report is written.

Executive Summary

It gives an overview of subject matter, methods of analysis, findings, and recommendations in brief detail.

Terms of Reference

This section gives precise indication of the area covered by the report. Under this heading you could include a brief explanation of who will read the report (audience) why it was written (purpose) and how it was written (methods).

Table of contents

It lists the different chapters and/or headings together with the page numbers. Your contents page should be presented in such a way that the reader can quickly scan the list of headings and locate a particular part of the report. You may want to number chapter headings and subheadings in addition to providing page references. Whatever numbering system you use, be sure that it is clear and consistent throughout.

Introduction

The introduction sets the scene for the main body of the report. It explains the aims and objectives of the report in detail. It identifies any problems or limitations in the scope of the report gives and a description of research methods, the parameters of the research and any necessary background history.

Methods

Information under this heading may include: a list of equipment used; explanations of procedures followed; relevant information on materials used including sources of materials and details of any necessary preparation; reference to any problems encountered and subsequent changes in procedure.

Findings

This section should include a summary of the results of the investigation or experiment together with any necessary diagrams, graphs or tables of gathered data that support your results. Present your results in a logical order without comment. Discussion of your results should take place in the main body (**Discussion**) of the report.

Discussion

This is where you discuss the findings. The facts and evidence you have gathered should be analysed and discussed with specific reference to the problem or issue. If your discussion section is lengthy you might divide it into section headings. Your points should be grouped and arranged in an order that is logical and easy to follow. Use headings and subheadings to create a clear structure for your material. Use bullet points to present a series of points in an easy-to-follow list. As with the whole report, all sources used should be acknowledged and correctly referenced.

Conclusion

It describes that section of the report which interprets the facts and observations presented in the findings. No new material should be introduced in the conclusion.

Recommendations

This section is used to put forward a future course of action concerning the topic under investigation.

Appendices

This is where you include all the supporting information you have used or is contained in the body of the report. This might include tables, graphs, questionnaires, surveys or transcripts.

Bibliography

It lists all published sources referred to in your report. It is listed alphabetically. There are different styles of using references and bibliographies. Refer to the study guide Referencing and Bibliographies and check your departmental handbook for guidelines. Texts which you consulted but did not refer to directly could be grouped under a separate heading such as 'Background Reading' and listed in alphabetical order using the same format as in your bibliography.

Acknowledgments

Where appropriate you may wish to acknowledge the assistance of particular organisations or individuals who provided information, advice or help.

Glossary of Technical Terms

This is a brief, clear description of each term used. You can also include in this section explanations of the acronyms (short forms), abbreviations or standard units used in your report.

Audience analysis

Research shows that communicators who understand their audience are more successful in achieving their communication goals. Understanding your audience can help you answer questions like:

How much do they already know about my topic?
What do they think about my topic?
What are their goals?

To optimize your communication, you will need to know not only who your audience is, but also what they need from your communication task.

To understand your identified audience, start by gathering demographic and psychographic information. Keep careful notes you can refer to as necessary.

a.   Demographics

These are statistical data relating to the population and particular groups within it. E.g age, education, level, gender, income level, geographic region, cultural, and ethnic background.

b.   Psychographics

This is the study and classification of people according to their interests, activities, and opinions.
E.g attitudes, beliefs, values, loyalties, knowledge level, and lifestyle.

Data collection

Data collection refers to the gathering of information to serve or prove some facts. Data collection is aimed at proving or refuting some facts.

Purpose of data collection

To obtain information
To keep on record
To make decisions about important issues
To pass on information to others

Sources of data

There are two major sources of data. These are primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary sources

This is information gathered directly from respondents. They provide first-hand information or original data. e.g.interviews, diaries, letters, journals, original hand-written manuscripts, newspaper and magazine clippings, government documents, etc.This is through questionnaires, interviews, focused group discussions, observation and experimental studies. It involves creating new data.

Secondary sources

This is data gathered and recorded by someone else prior to and for a purpose other that the current project. This is data that is being reused usually in a different context e.g. textbooks, review articles, biographies, historical films, music and art, articles about people and events from the past

Data collection instruments/ tools
Questionnaires, interview schedules e.t.c

Data analysis

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. The methods or statistics used for data analysis are influenced by the stated objectives, research questions or hypothesis, and the research design used.

Reading skills

Improving your reading skills will reduce unnecessary reading time and enable you to read in a more focused and selective manner. You will also be able to increase your levels of understanding and concentration.

Reading for study

You already use a range of reading styles in everyday situations. The normal reading style that you might use for reading a novel is to read in detail, focusing on every word in sequence from start to finish. If it is a magazine you are reading, you might flick through the pages to see which articles are of interest. When you look in a telephone directory for a particular name, you purposefully ignore all other entries and focus your attention on spotting the name you want. These everyday reading skills can be applied to your studies.

To improve your reading skills you need to:

* **have clear reading goals;**

* **choose the right texts;**

* **use the right reading style;**

* **use note taking techniques.**

Reading goals

Clear reading goals can significantly increase your reading efficiency.
Use your reading goals to help you identify the information that is relevant to your current task.

Choosing a text

Assess the text to see if it contains information that is relevant to your reading goals.

Reading style Scanning

Scanning is where you pass your eyes speedily over a section of text in order to find particular words or phrases that are relevant to your current task. You can scan:

the introduction or preface of a text;

the first or last paragraphs of chapters;

the concluding or summarizing chapter of a text

Skimming is the process of speedy reading for general meaning. Concentrate on identifying the central or main points. Use this technique to:

pre-view a selection of text prior to detailed reading;

refresh your understanding of a selection of text following detailed reading.

Detailed reading and note taking

Once you have selected useful information, you can begin to read in detail. Note taking techniques provide a useful aid to reading. Use:

underlining and highlighting to pick out what seem to you the most central or important words and phrases. Do this in your own copy of texts or on photocopies - never on borrowed texts;

keywords to record the main headings as you read. Use one or two keywords for each main point. Keywords can be used when you don't want to mark the text;

questions to encourage you to take an active approach to your reading. Record your questions as you read. They can also be used as prompts for follow up work;

summaries to check you have understood what you have read. Pause after a section of text and put what you have read in your own words. Skim over the text to check the accuracy of your summary, filling in any significant gaps.

CONDUCTING MEETINGS AND MINUTE WRITING **Definitions**

• A meeting is a gathering of two or more people that has been convened for the purpose of achieving a common goal through verbal interaction, such as sharing information or reaching agreement. Meetings may occur face to face or virtually, as mediated by communications technology, such as a telephone conference call, a skyped conference call or a videoconference.

• Formal or informal deliberative assembly of individuals called to debate certain issues and problems, and to take decisions.

Formal meetings are held at definite times, at a definite place, and usually for a definite duration to follow an agreed upon agenda. The opposite is true for informal meetings.

Minutes

They are notes recounting the transactions occurring at a meeting or official proceeding. Minutes describe the events of the meeting, starting with a list of attendees, a statement of the issues considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions for the issues.

Role of Meetings

Meetings are an important organizational tool as they can be used to:

Develop ideas	To give training
Solve problems	To plan and prepare for action
Make decisions	To resolve differences and misunderstandings
To understand a situation, exchange ideas and experiences	To generate enthusiasm and seek cooperation
To inform, explain, present ideas	To review past performance and evaluate it
To give and get feedback on new ideas	To create a feeling of continuity and solidarity in a body's working.

Types of meeting

Types of meetings will naturally vary between different organisations. Below are some type of meetings that take place in an organization:

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

A formal meeting, held annually, where, those responsible for running the company (the directors) meet with those who own it (the shareholders). The AGM for a company must be held annually.

Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

This is a general meeting which is called to deal with urgent matters which require resolution between AGMs.

Board meetings

Committee meetings

These are meetings involving a group of people who have been drawn from the larger group for the purposes of managing specific issues.

Management meetings

Management meetings can take many forms depending on the structure of the organisation. These meetings involve managerial decision making at various levels. For example, some meetings will involve the senior management team, while others will involve middle management or will cover both groups.

Departmental meetings

These are periodic meetings attended by all departmental staff to discuss and address departmental issues (e.g. reviewing performance, setting objectives, reporting on the outcome of actions taken and discussing any other matters in connection with departmental operations).

Steering group meetings

A steering group may be formed to take a high-level overview of a project. The group is usually composed of senior executives, project leaders and possibly external advisors to the organisation.

Team briefings

These are meetings held by the team leader to discuss issues with members of the team (e.g.
progress reviews, allocation of tasks, setting objectives, performance and motivational issues).

One-off informal meetings

These are meetings that take place anywhere at any time. They may be informal discussions between one or two employees or a small group.

Role/duties of the chairperson

To prepare the agenda. This is a list of items to be discussed.

To declare the meeting formally open at the appropriate time.

To introduce each item for discussion together with the member who is to talk about it where necessary.

To ensure that the meeting works through each agenda at a reasonable pace.

To make sure that no one is allowed to dominate the discussion by seeking the views of everyone in the meeting.

To intervene if the discussion becomes heated or if personal animosity or abuse seems likely.

To supervise voting procedures, count votes and announce the results.

To ensure that a minutes of the previous meeting are produced by the secretary and circulated to each member for agreement at the next meeting.

Roles/ duties of the secretary

To send out notices of the meeting in good time to all the members.

Together with the chair person, they draw agenda and to send copies of it to the members in good time before the meeting.

To circulate among members any documents that might be necessary to enable them to contribute fully to the discussion of the matters listed on the agenda.

To make arrangements for the accommodation of members who have to travel a long distance to attend the meetings.

Planning a meeting

Planning improves participation by ensuring that discussion is on a single topic and that the members are well prepared for the meeting. This is the responsibility of the Chairperson, Secretary and Executive, depending on the type of organization.

Planning should include the following:

Notification: Everyone should been notified of the date, time and venue of the meeting.

Preparing the agenda: The agenda is a list of the most important issues for the members to discuss. It is drawn from the Matters Arising from the previous meeting and from the discussions of the Executive or Secretariat.

Conducting a meeting

The chair calls the meeting to order at the scheduled start time even if someone is running late.

Respect the schedules of your meeting participants and end the meeting on time as well. If you can't cover all of the points within the allotted time, move it to the agenda of the very next meeting.

Ask a secretary or other meeting participant to take minutes at every business meeting so that everyone will recall what was discussed and decisions made.

Pass out a written meeting agenda to each participant to clarify the direction of the meeting. Pass out the previous meeting's minutes as well.

Introduce any guests in attendance at your business meeting before you get started.

Summarize the purpose of the meeting and what you want to accomplish at the very beginning. Then start with the first item in your agenda.

Follow your agenda closely and do not allow meeting participants to veer off of the order of issues to discuss.

Prohibit meeting participants from insulting, talking over, talking loudly, belittling or raising his voice to other members at the meeting. This causes productivity to suffer. If someone is being repeatedly violating these basic rules of conduct at your meeting, ask him to leave.

Transition to each new item on your agenda with finality and do not backtrack. Moderate the meeting if necessary by giving each member the go-ahead to speak his mind on the issue. Ask each person to limit her point to two minutes or less.

End your meeting on a positive note that inspires action. Summarize what each member must do from this point forward to accomplish the goals and issues discussed.

Advantages of Meetings:
It Saves time:
This is because one can meet a large number of people at a time.

Improve decision:
Improved decision can be taken through meeting. This is because every matter is discussed considering the pros and cons of an issue. A Proverb says, ―Two heads are better than one.‖

Information Sharing
A key advantage of meetings, from those held within the office among staff to meetings between a company and its clients, is that they provide an opportunity to share information. This could be as simple as sharing updates on financials or recognizing new employees to more complex issues, such as contract negotiations, new client presentations or addressing problems with an account. An actual meeting pinpoints a time and place to have in-depth discussions without other distractions or work getting in the way.

Social and emotional support:

Members get personal support from each other when they meet and exchange ideas.

Feeling of being consulted:
Members get the feeling that they have been consulted and this is useful in getting their intelligent and willing cooperation.

Idea development:
Ideas are systematically thought about, analyzed and improved in the meeting

Various interest groups represented:
In a meeting many interest groups can be represented and minorities can also be given due attention.

Disadvantages:
Expensive:
Meetings are expensive to arrange – they require a venue, paperwork, prior communication, and travelling by the attendees.

Open to disruption:
Formalities: There are many formalities to hold on a meeting. Agenda, minutes, regulations are needed for a valid meeting.

Challenges faced in conducting of meetings

Not finishing on time

Meetings often run overtime and consequently many agenda items don't get adequate coverage or don't even get covered at all.

Difficulty in making decisions

Some meetings seem to drag on as group members struggle to reach consensus and make decisions. The responsibility for coming to decisions rests squarely with the chair or leader.

Dominant Participants

Dominant participants often suppress collaborative problem solving and creativity among participants. The chairperson needs to see all that members are given equal opportunities to contribute.

Silent Participants

Some people are quiet in meetings for different reasons. Some people are reticent/ reserved by nature. Others are fearful that their opinions will be ridiculed and dismissed. Some are not comfortable speaking in the presence of strangers.

Rehashing Decisions

Issues that were discussed and decided on in previous meetings sometimes re-emerge to be rehashed. This can be very discouraging to the group or committee. Some reasons for this include:

People were not aware that a conclusive decision was actually made regarding a specific issue.

People recall that a decision was made, but the record of it is not available.

Dominant participants pushed through a decision in a previous meeting and silent participants begin to speak up afterwards.

Key persons don't attend

When key members and/or staff don't attend meetings, decisions may be made that are later questioned and not implemented as hoped. As a chairperson, you can help ensure that key players attend meetings and provide input when needed.

Challenges in minute writing

It is difficult to know exactly what has been agreed upon when members are not sticking to the point and lots of different suggestions are being at once.

The discussion moving from one agenda to another before it has been exhaustively discussed.

Everyone talking at once, such that you can't follow the discussion

Where there is a long and confusing discussion and you don't know which bits are important to write down.

Where the secretary wants to contribute at the same time write the minutes.

Being nervous about getting minutes writing right.

Twelve Qualities of an Effective Meeting

- Well-prepared
- People understand and carry out their roles
- Efficient and effective meeting process
- Safe, stimulating environment
- Participants able to contribute freely/ Everyone participates
- Full potential of the group is utilized
- Time is used well
- Minimal amount of wheel-spinning
- Clear agreement reached
- Consensus fully supported
- An energized team leaves the room to implement the decisions made

- Clear understanding of who will do what, by when, to follow through on meeting agreements

The characteristics of a good agenda:-
The names of expected attendees.
The exact place date.
The start time for starting the meeting.
Rough indication of the meeting next time.
The time expected to be end.
Objective of the meeting.
Issues discussed and resolved.
Action will taken.

Types of minutes
How you write your minutes should be determined by how they will be used.
Minutes can be informal or formal depending on their **purpose** and **audience**.

Action minutes
These are written by internal groups, such as teams or project groups, which meet on a regular basis and the minutes they produce minutes that emphasize action points without worrying about keeping a detailed account of how or why decisions were made. The purpose of these minutes is to provide a record of decisions that require action. Brief notes with lists of action points might be all that is required. As the audience is internal, the style might be informal with action points listed in a table, and discussion and decisions noted as bullet points.
Often, the minute-taker will be a member of the team or group, and is free to participate in the discussion.

Discursive minutes
Here, discussions and decisions are recorded in paragraphs of full text with full sentences. Usually, decisions are recorded as having been taken by the committee, or by the members. It is rare to name individuals.
The minute-taker in this case is usually a formally appointed secretary. The secretary has a range of tasks which includes assisting in setting the agenda; calling for, collating and distributing papers; following up on action points; and providing briefings to the Chair. The secretary is not expected to contribute to the discussions, leaving him/ her free to accurately and objectively describe what took place at the meeting without bias or distraction.

Verbatim minutes
These minutes offer a word-for-word account. The minute-taker is expected to record what was said by all parties. All statements are directly attributed to a named individual. Verbatim minutes are used to capture what passed at disciplinary panels. As with discursive minutes, the minute-taker is not expected to contribute as this may compromise his/her role as an independent and objective observer.

Tense
Minutes should be written in the **past tense**. As they are a record of a discussion that has taken place, they always refer to an event in the past:
- It was noted that
- The Chair reported
- The Committee agreed that it would
- Members noted that the papers could be viewed

Minute writing Structuring minutes
As with any piece of writing, it is important to structure your minutes to make them coherent and ensure that they flow. Structuring your minutes will not be difficult: as minutes are a conventional type of document, there is a standard structure with certain items that are expected regardless of the type of minutes you are writing.
The structure of minutes is provided by the agenda which provides an outline of what will be discussed and in what order. Regardless of when an item was actually addressed in the meeting, the minutes should record the discussion and decisions under the appropriate item on the agenda. The standard items of all minutes are:

•**Title**: the name of the meeting/ committee/ board, date, location and time;
• **List of those in attendance**: Members present, absent with apology, absent without apology and any guest/s in attendance.

Preliminaries

This is the introductory part of the meeting. The chairperson calls the meeting to order (time when the meeting starts id indicated). A prayer may be said. The chairperson mentions the apologies and welcomes the members.

Minutes of the previous meeting: These will be read at the meeting where members will either agree that they were a true record of the previous meeting, or they will note corrections to be made to the minutes. Here one member proposes and another seconds that they are a true record.

Matters arising: confirmation that action points from the previous meeting have been completed.
Business of the day: Agenda
Any other business: this covers discussion of items that were not listed on the agenda;
Adjournment: there being no other business the meeting was adjourned.
Date of next meeting: With time and location if appropriate.
Signing spaces: For the chairperson to sign and indicate the date.

INTERVIEWS

Definition: An interview is a conversation between two or more people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer in order to obtain information from the interviewee. It suggests a meeting between two or more people for the purpose of getting a view of each other. It is a formal oral communication in which individuals interact for the purpose of knowing each other.

Purposes of interviews in an organization
Selection of personnel/ Employment purposes
Job or employment interviews are used to select suitable persons on the basis of their qualifications
and experience.
Evaluation of workers

Determining reasons for exit
Organizations conduct exit interviews to determine a person's reasons for leaving a company.
To seek information and ideas
Interviews are used as a tool to seek information and ideas that concern a particular issue of importance to the organization. They are helpful in writing reports.
Interviews in media organizations are done by presenters who are seeking a person's ideas or views on issues of importance to the public.
Security agencies conduct interviews known as interrogations. This is for the purpose of getting information that is required concerning a case.
Types of interview
Job interviews
The interviewer who is a prospective employer wants to learn about the interviewee who is the jobseeker and vice versa.
Information interview
Interview seeks information that will contribute towards a decision or basic understanding.
Information flows mainly in one direction.
Persuasive interviews

One person (the persuader) tells another about a new idea/ product/ service or explains why the other should act on the recommendations. Usually the persuader asks about the other persons needs and shows how the product or concept is able to meet those needs. The persuader must be skilled enough to be convincing.

Exit interviews

The interviewer usually a superior/ boss try to understand why the influence is leaving the organization or transferring to another department or division.

The departing employee can often provide some understanding (insight) into whether the business is being handled effectively or whether things could be improved. The interviewer tends to ask the questions while the interviewee answers.

Evaluation interviews

Interviews are often involved in the periodic evaluation that some companies make of their workers. They may be inducted to gather information on matters e.g. worker attitudes, working conditions, managerial effectiveness, and worker plans.

Counseling interview

Here, a supervisor talks with an employee about their personal problems that are interfering with work performance. The interviewer is concerned about the welfare of both the employee and the organization. The goal is to establish the facts, convey the company's concern and steer the person towards a source of help.

Conflict-resolution interview

The goal is to bring two parties close together, cause adjustments in perception and attitudes and create a more productive climate.

Disciplinary interviews

A supervisor tries to correct the behaviour of an employee who is flouting the organization rules and regulations. The interviewer (supervisor) must not only get the employee to see the reason for the rules and agree to comply but must also review the facts and explore the person's attitude.

Interviewer's preparation for an interview

As an interviewer you should make the following preparations:

Have a clear picture of the company profile and the nature of the job for which the interview is being held.

Know the type of personality, character or temperament required for the job.

Send interview invitation letters well in advance so as to enable the interviewee prepare adequately. Also mention the documents the interviewee should carry.

Make proper seating arrangement for the interviewee in the waiting room.

Find a quiet interview room free of interruptions.

Give each member of the interview panel a copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae. This will help in preventing confusion and time wastage.

Decide in advance which member of the panel will initiate the interview.

How to conduct the interview

Welcoming the candidate

Welcome the candidate in exactly the same way you would welcome a friend who visits you at your office or home. Give the candidate a warm smile and talk to him/ her in a friendly tone of voice.

Contents of the interview

Start talking to the candidate by asking relevant question on things such as qualifications, experience, skills, attitude, character, drive, aspirations, previous employment, willingness to travel etc.

Parting

Thank the candidate for having come for the interview. It is desirable to give him/ her a specific date in which the results would be communicated.

Interviewee's preparation for the interview

Know yourself

Know about the company

Know the profile of the company (probably from its website). Find out as much as possible about its activities, growth, future prospects etc.

Prepare for the questions

Anticipate the questions that you will probably be asked and prepare answers to them.

Prepare the questions that you would like to ask

If the interviewer does not offer you full information about the company and the job, you may ask questions to gain this information.

Arriving for the interview

Dress appropriately

You should be dressed for the occasion. Your clothes as well as general appearance should be neat. Finger nails should be clean, shoes polished and hairstyle appropriate. Lotions, cream and perfumes should be used sparingly. The accessories should complement your suit or dress.

Take with you your certificates

Take your certificates and other papers that might be of use during the interview.

Arrive for the interview on time.

This is of utmost importance. Try to arrive at the interview venue ten to fifteen minutes before the scheduled time. This will give you enough time to relax and prepare for the interview.

How to conduct yourself during the interview

Do not be nervous or agitated when entering the interview room. See carefully where you are going and do not trip over the carpet or the doormat.

Greet the interviewer (s) politely.

Do not sit down until you have been asked to. Then sit in a natural composed manner.

When the interviewer starts conversation, pay attention to what he/ she says. Do not interrupt. Only respond at the appropriate time.

Give relevant answers to questions asked. Neither give too long or too short answers.

Do not try to make an exhibition of your knowledge. Don't boast of your capabilities.

If there is something you do not know, admit it straight away. Do not lie.

Remain calm and friendly throughout the interview. Do not lose temper.

Be positive in your attitude. Express your enthusiasm for the job and the company.

Don't keep shifting in your seat. Do not bite or chew your fingernails, or smoothen your hair or keep adjusting the knot of your necktie. These are signs of nervousness.

When you are asked questions about your previous job, be frank but avoid criticism of your former employer or colleagues. Mention only the positive, pleasant, and constructive aspects of your earlier employment.

When the interview is over, don't forget to thank the interviewer. You may even tactfully ask when the results will be made known to you.

If the job is offered, you may accept it immediately or ask for time to think over it, depending upon your circumstances.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND CUSTOMER CARE

Definition of public relations: It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics.

Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour.

Role of PR

Internal communications
Communicating with employees. E.g. via in-house letters or suggestion boxes.

Corporate PR
Communicating on behalf of the whole organization. E.g. via press releases, conferences, ethical statements, visual identity and images.

Media relations
Communicating with journalists, specialists and editors from local, national, and trade media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and web-based communication. This is via press releases, photo calls, video news releases, off-the-record briefings and press events.

Business to business communication
Communication with other organizations e.g. suppliers and retailers. This could be through exhibitions, trade events and newsletters.

Public affairs
Communicating with opinion formers like politicians and monitoring the political environment.
This is via presentations, briefings, private meetings and public speeches.

Community relations/ corporate social responsibility
Communicating with local community, elected representatives, head teachers etc. this is via exhibitions, presentations, letters, meetings, sport activities and other sponsorships.

Investor relations
Communicating with financial organizations and individuals. This is via newsletters, briefings and events.

Strategic communication
Identification and analysis of a situation, problem and solutions to further the organization's goals. This is via researching, planning and executing a campaign to improve ethical reputation of the organization.

Crisis management
Communicating clear messages in a fast changing situation or emergency. E.g. a PR officer dealing with media after major rail crash on behalf of the police, hospital or local authority.

Events management and exhibitions
Organizing complex events and exhibitions. E.g. annual conference, press launches and trade shows.

Issues management

Copywriting
Writing for different audiences to high standards of literacy. This is writing press releases, newsletters, web pages and annual reports.

Publications management
Overseeing print/ media processes, often using new technology e.g. leaflets, internal magazines and websites.

Qualities and Skill Sets of a PRO

Professional approach	Creativity
Networking skills	Storytelling traits
Interpersonal skills	Curiosity
Written and oral communication skills	Knowledge of current affairs
Analytical skills	Result oriented
Emotional intelligence	Self-disciplined
Innovating and troubleshooting skills	Tech-savvy
Organization and management skills	Competitive
Leadership qualities	Constructive thinker

Customer care

This is the work of looking after **customers** and ensuring their satisfaction with one's business and its goods or services. Modern consumers are aware of their right to a high standard of customer care.

A **customer** (sometimes known as a **client**, **buyer**, or **purchaser**) is the recipient of a good, service, product, or idea, obtained from a seller, vendor, or supplier for a monetary or other valuable consideration.

Types of customers

Loyal Customers- These types of customers are less in numbers but promote more sales and profit as compared to other customers as these are the ones which are completely satisfied. These customers revisit the organization over times hence it is crucial to interact and keep in touch with them on a regular basis and invest much time and effort with them. Loyal customers want individual attention and that demands polite and respectful responses from supplier.

Discount Customers- Discount customers are also frequent visitors but they are only a part of business when offered with discounts on regular products and brands or they buy only low cost products. More is the discount the more they tend towards buying. These customers are mostly related to small industries or the industries that focus on low or marginal investments on products. Focus on these types of customers is also important as they also promote distinguished part of profit into business.

Impulsive Customers- These customers are difficult to convince as they want to do the business in urge or caprice. They don't have any specific item into their product list but urge to buy what they find good and productive at that point of time. Handling these customers is a challenge as they are not particularly looking for a product and want the supplier to display all the useful products they have in their tally in front of them so that they can buy what they like from that display. If impulsive customers are treated accordingly then there is high probability that these customers could be a responsible for high percentage of selling.

Need Based Customers- These customers are product specific and only tend to buy items only to which they are habitual or have a specific need for them. These are frequent customers but do not become a part of buying most of the times so it is difficult to satisfy them. These customers should be handled positively by showing them ways and reasons to switch to other similar products and brands and initiating them to buy these. These customers could possibly be lost if not tackled efficiently with positive interaction.

Wandering Customers- These are the least profitable customers as sometimes they themselves are not sure what to buy. These customers are normally new in industry and most of

the times visit suppliers only for confirming their needs on products. They investigate features of most prominent products in the market but do not buy any of those or show least interest in buying. To grab such customers they should be properly informed about the various positive features of the products so that they develop a sense of interest.

Importance of customer care

Satisfied Shareholders

Good customer care leads to satisfaction of consumers and shareholders. Satisfactory response from consumers means increased sales, which ultimately leads to increased satisfaction of shareholders. They tend to invest more in your organization, which can dramatically improve the return on investment of your business.

Increased Business Growth

Quality service can boost your business growth. Quality services can help you expand your client base but great customer service is the key to retain your clients.

Successful Business Strategies

Encouraging consumers for feedback and comments is an integral part of quality customer service. Following consumers' feedback for analyzing the strengths and weaknesses is probably the best way to understand the expectations of consumers and adopt successful business strategies.

Reduced Risk of Business Failures

Understanding the expectations and mindset of consumers can considerably reduce the risk of business failures and losses.

Consumer Satisfaction

If your customers are happy, your investors and business partners will be happy as well, and this ultimately leads to higher profits. With a strong client base you can win the trust of investors and make the most of every viable business opportunity.

Reduced Employee Turnover
With increased sales and higher profits due to effective customer service, you can offer employees good salary packages and additional bonuses, thus reducing employee turnover.

Stronger customer loyalty
Reduced marketing costs

Customer care skills

Listening skills
Listen intently. This shows that you care and want to offer the right solution.

Communication skills
Communicate effectively. Know when to listen, when to speak and how to speak.

Be calm and have patience
Try to manage your emotions and stay calm. This will help deal with disgruntled and confused customers. When you stay calm your customer will feel respected.

Honesty
Being honest and transparent with your customers proves that you truly care about their happiness and satisfaction even when the message you are sharing is not positive.

Body language
Maintaining a good body language is important when talking to a client. Smiling frequently and expressing happiness and laughter in your conversation helps to improve the customer's experience.

Empathy
It is important not only to understand what a customer says, but how a customer feels. An important skill is being able to recognize and understand a person's emotional state. If you struggle to convey empathy, think about being in the customer's position. How would you feel if you were in her position? How would you like to be treated by an employee? These questions will help you to identify with and better assist your customers.

Taking responsibility

A big part of working in customer service is being able to say, —I'm sorry,‖ whether it's for a late shipment or the poor quality of a product. You have to be able to sincerely apologize to a customer on behalf of your company, even when the problem was not your fault.

Human relation skills

Get to know other workers/ colleagues.

Interact with your coworkers. Join employee recreational and social activities. Listen to the things your coworkers share about their personal lives and interests.

Don't try to change everything.

Know and understand the organization before you think about changing something. Listen to others. Talk to coworkers about your ideas and get some feedback before you suggest changes.

Be honest.

One of the most important things you own is a good reputation. Honesty with your coworkers will build up your reputation. It's one of the best ways to gain and keep respect.

Avoid gossip.

Don't listen to other people gossiping about coworkers. Most importantly, never gossip about others. When you gossip, people wonder what you say about them and often avoid you.

Be positive and supportive.

Listen to the ideas of other people. When someone makes a mistake, don't criticize. It's irritating to have someone else point out a mistake. When you realize you've made a mistake, admit it and try to do better next time.

Show appreciation.

Be sure you thank a coworker who does something to make your job easier. Let coworkers know you appreciate their contributions to the team. People like to be recognized and praised.

Return favors.

A coworker might help you out by exchanging a day off with you. Return that favor. A sure way to make people dislike you is to only take and never give.

Live in the present.

Avoid talking about the way things used to be. People don't want to hear about how great your old job was or how great former coworkers were.

Ask for help and advice when you need it.

People like to feel needed. Your coworkers can be a great resource. When you aren't sure what to do, they can give you advice and assistance.

Avoid battles.

Let coworkers in conflict work out their own differences. Don't take sides in their arguments. This is a sure way to develop problems with coworkers. When you take sides, other people usually resent your interference. Often both sides become unhappy with you.

Interpersonal skills

Verbal communication

Effective verbal communication begins with clarity. This often requires nothing more than slowing down and speaking more thoughtfully. Many people feel rushed to respond to questions and conversations immediately, but it is better to pause for a moment in consideration, especially if the question merits it.

Non-verbal communication

Your body language is constantly speaking. Everything you do or don't do says something about you and how you are feeling. Your facial expressions (especially eye contact), your posture, your voice, your gestures with your extremities and even the way you position yourself physically in a room or amongst colleagues is constantly revealing your true attitude, for better or for worse.

Listening skills

This is the ability to hear attentively and process information correctly. Effective listening enables one to interpret a message and respond appropriately.

Manners

Good manners tend to make many other interpersonal skills come naturally. With business becoming increasingly more global, even for small businesses, manners are more important than ever. A basic understanding of etiquette translates to other cultures and their expectations.

Negotiation

This term means having the ability to discuss and reach an agreement in a professional manner.

Problem solving

This is a very important skill for business people to have as constant problems are a common result within organizations. The key aspects of successful problem solving are being able to identify exactly what the problem is, dissecting the problem so that it is fully understood, examining all options pertaining to solutions, setting up a system of strategies and objectives to solve the problem, and finally putting this plan into effect and monitoring its progress.

Responsibility and accountability

Responsibility and accountability are two reliable indicators of maturity. Saying you are going to do something and then actually doing it is a sign of responsibility. This builds trust between yourself and those they rely on you and it encourages others to seek your counsel and assistance.

LISTENING SKILLS

You probably spend more time using your listening skills than any other kind of skill. Like other skills, listening takes practice.

What does it mean to really listen?

Real listening is an active process that has three basic steps.

Hearing. Hearing just means listening enough to catch what the speaker is saying. For example, say you were listening to a report on zebras, and the speaker mentioned that no two are alike. If you can repeat the fact, then you have heard what has been said.

Understanding. The next part of listening happens when you take what you have heard and understand it in your own way. Let's go back to that report on zebras. When you hear that no two are alike, think about what that might mean. You might think, "Maybe this means that the pattern of stripes is different for each zebra."

Judging. After you are sure you understand what the speaker has said, think about whether it makes sense. Do you believe what you have heard? You might think, "How could the stripes to be different for every zebra? But then again, the fingerprints are different for every person. I think this seems believable."

Tips for being a good listener

Give your full attention on the person who is speaking. Don't look out the window or at what else is going on in the room.

Make sure your mind is focused, too. It can be easy to let your mind wander if you think you know what the person is going to say next, but you might be wrong! If you feel your mind wandering, change the position of your body and try to concentrate on the speaker's words.

Let the speaker finish before you begin to talk. Speakers appreciate having the chance to say everything they would like to say without being interrupted. When you interrupt, it looks like you aren't listening, even if you really are.

Let yourself finish listening before you begin to speak! You can't really listen if you are busy thinking about what you want say next.

Listen for main ideas. The main ideas are the most important points the speaker wants to get across. They may be mentioned at the start or end of a talk, and repeated a number of times. Pay special attention to statements that begin with phrases such as "My point is..." or "The thing to remember is..."

Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the speaker has said, just ask. It is a good idea to repeat in your own words what the speaker said so that you can be sure your understanding is correct. For example, you might say, "When you said that no two zebras are alike, did you mean that the stripes are different on each one?"

Give feedback. Sit up straight and look directly at the speaker. Now and then, nod to show that you understand. At appropriate points you may also smile, frown, laugh, or be silent. These are all ways to let the speaker know that you are really listening. Remember, you listen with your face as well as your ears!

Thinking fast

Remember: time is on your side! Thoughts move about four times as fast as speech. With practice, while you are listening you will also be able to think about what you are hearing, really understand it, and give feedback to the speaker.

All the best in your studies