

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UNIT-2: Business Communication

Meaning of Communication

The English word 'communication' is derived from the Latin word communis, which means common. The term communication refers to the sharing of ideas in common. In other words, it is the transmission and interaction of facts, ideas, opinions, feelings or attitudes. Communication is the essence of management. The basic function of management (planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling) cannot be performed well without effective communication.

In short, Communication is the process of passing ideas, views, facts, information and understanding from one person to another. This process is necessary for making the subordinates understand what the management expects from them. Communication cannot take place without two parties – receiver and the sender. The information which is sent by the sender must be understandable to the receiver.

Definitions of communication:

Communication may be defined as “the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another.”

According to Koontz and O'Donnel, Communication may be understood “as the exchange of information at least between two persons with a view to create an understanding in the mind of the other, whether or not it gives rise to conflict.”

Newman and Summer- “Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.”

‘Communication is the sum of all things a person does when he wants to create an understanding in the mind of another’. – Louis A. Allen

Business Communication:

Business Communication is communication that promotes a product, service, marketing, or organization; relays information within a business; or functions as an official statement from a company. It is important to acquire the skills of effective writing and speaking. It is also common

for prestigious companies to insist upon excellent communication skills as a requirement at the time of recruitment.

Objectives of Communication:

The primary objective of communication in management is to convey information—instructions, policies, procedures, decisions, etc., so the listener will hear, read, understand what is said, agree and accept the message, and react as intended by the manager or sender of communication.

1. Information:

The first and foremost function of communication is to provide information. This function is performed in many ways. Before providing or passing an information, one has to receive, collect or sift information from various sources, both external and internal, and through various media, verbal or non-verbal, body language or paralanguage, sign language or audio-visual aids, books, journals, newspapers, advertisements, brochures etc.

The information thus gathered is of vital importance to individuals and groups. It helps them to make decisions by identifying, analysing and evaluating the data, and considering alternative choices. In other words, policy decisions can be taken only when information is available.

Education, research and development depend on information.

2. Control:

The next very important function of communication is to control ‘member behaviour’ in several ways. Every organization has a hierarchical system and formal guidelines that the employees are supposed to follow.

When, for example, the employees are required to follow their job description or instructions, or to comply with company policies, communication is performing a control function. This very function also gives the employees their code of conduct. It is generally expected of the employees to first communicate their grievances or complaints to their immediate boss. They have, in this way, to follow the formal channel of communication.

3. Motivation:

In the words of Robbins, “communication fosters motivation by clarifying to employees what is to be done, how well they are doing, and what can be done to improve performance if it’s

subpar... The formation of specific goals, feedback on progress toward the goals, and reinforcement of desired behaviour all stimulate motivation and require communication.”

All business is goal-oriented. All possible efforts have to be made to achieve a target within a well thought-out framework of time. For this purpose it is necessary that the team of workers puts in their very best efforts. In other words they have to be motivated.

4. Emotional Expression and Interdependence:

The work group is a primary source for social interaction. The communication that takes place within the group is of vital importance in the sense that it gives them the best opportunity to share their frustrations as well as feelings of satisfaction. Communication, in this way, provides them a release for their feelings, and that is the fulfillment of an important social need.

Communication is a social activity and every organisation is above all a social entity. The members of the group or organisation are human beings who have so much to share, gather, or pass on. Newman and summer point out that the content of communication is not just facts and figures, or objective ideas, but also feelings, attitudes and interpretations. An adequate understanding of this aspect of communication is of immense help to the management.

Essentials of Communication

In all types of communication, the communicator must keep in view the following essential points:

1. Clarity of Thought: For good communication the idea to be transmitted must be absolutely clear in the mind of the communicator. The process of communication to be complete must spring out from a ‘clear’ head. The academic level of the workers, their power of grasping things, etc., should also be taken into account, otherwise the communication is likely to go waste. It is especially essential for a country like India, where the multiplicity of languages roughens the flow of communication. It should always be remembered that employee communication should never be in abstract terms.

2. Attach Importance to Actions Rather than Words: In all communications, actions are more significant than words. A departmental head who professes ‘we’ feeling in words but always uses ‘I’ when it comes to taking the credit, cannot succeed in establishing proper communication

spirit and is bound to be mistrusted and misunderstood. Such examples can be multiplied in thousands and hence the golden rule that actions take priority in all communications need always be remembered in practice.

3. Participation: Communicator and the recipient should participate in the communication. It is common complaint of the workers that “proper and patient head is not given to their voice”. Listening plays a very fundamental part in oral communication because it is listening only which leads to sharing, participation and understanding in oral communication. But this listening is not merely passive hearing. It is smart which is to be perfected with practice based on sound knowledge of principles of human nature.

4. Transmission: In this connection the communicator must plan carefully what to communicate and how to communicate. How can the executive communicate with the workers when they themselves do not know or cannot understand all facts about the new wage incentive plan or bonus system or the union contract? Further delegation of authority without responsibility breaks down the spirit of communication.

5. Keep the System Always Alive: The system of communication should be kept open and alive all the year round. It is only by honest attempts that good communication relations can be developed.

6. Cordial Men-Boss Relations: Hand and glove kinship between the superior and the subordinates is also an essential precondition for the success of any system of communication. Effective communication requires a quality of relationship between people immediately connected with each other. It requires sound industrial relation policies and practices an all-round atmosphere of friendly cooperation and a feeling of trust and confidence throughout the organisation right from the top management, down to the humblest worker.

7Cs of Effective Communication

The 7 C’s of effective communication would help you to attain your goal. These are certain principles of communication.

They are called 7 C’s because each of these principles begins with the alphabet “C”.

- Clarity
- Correctness

- Conciseness
- Courtesy
- Concreteness
- Consideration
- Completeness

1. Clarity

- Clarity is the soul of a message. It means the accurate transfer of ideas from the sender's side to the receiver. Every message should be conveyed in a clear manner. Clarity comes through clear thinking. A good message shows the idea directly and clearly.
- A writer should not start the message unless he knows how (use of language) and what (central idea) he wants to say. A message written in the simple and ordinary language is always natural and appreciable.

2. Correctness

- Language experts say that writing is art but difficult. There is no shortcut to being a good writer. It is learned through consistent practice and constant struggle. The message being communicated must be correct. Correctness refers to correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Though mistakes are never intentional yet they spoil the image.

3. Conciseness

- The beauty of diction lies in its conciseness. Conciseness means brief and complete. Be as brief as possible. But it must not be so brief as to be discourteous.
- Conciseness is a pre-requisite to effective messages. A concise message saves time and expense for both sender and receiver.

4. Courtesy

- Courtesy is the most important quality of the messenger. "Everyone gains where courtesy reigns" is an old but wise saying. Courtesy means politeness. It is an attitude that shows respect for others. It helps in building goodwill.
- It is not enough to use polite expressions like "thank you", "kindly", "we appreciate", "please" etc but the whole letter must have a courteous tone.

5. Concreteness

- Communicating concretely means being specific, meaningful and clear. Vague and general

messages result in no response. It helps the receiver to understand the exact idea. Concrete use of available facts and figures adds to the authenticity of the message.

6.Consideration

– Use positive and optimistic • Consideration is to put you in the place of the receiver.

It means preparing every message with the message receiver in mind. This mode of consideration is called “you attitude”.

- When you are truly considerate, you try to show sincere regard for his interests and benefits.

7.Completeness

• A message should be complete to bring the desired result. A complete message contains all the facts required by the receiver. The receiver’s reaction to an incomplete message is often unfavorable. An incomplete message shows negligence and carelessness of the writer.

Modes/Types of Communication

Communication is the process of sharing information between individuals using a set of common rules, behaviour, symbols, and signs. Thus, the following are some important modes of communication:

1. Interpretive Communication

Also referred to as the “*one-way communication*”, in this mode, the information conveyed by the sender is interpreted by the receiver in its original form. The target has to understand the message in both written and spoken form keeping various aspects in mind. For example, in a class, the learners may not understand every word said by the teacher but are expected to understand the main crux of the topic. Some of the main highlights of Interpretive Communication are:

- Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.
- This mode of communication involves interpreting the author or producer’s intent.
- There is no alternative to the active negotiation of meaning with the writer, the speaker, or the producer.

2. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information through verbal and nonverbal messages. It is an unmediated mode of communication that occurs when we interact and attempt to mutually influence each other, simultaneously, in order to manage relationships. Although interpersonal communication can encompass oral, written, and non-verbal forms of communication, the term is usually applied to spoken communication that takes place between two or more individuals on a personal or face-to-face level. Examples of Interpersonal Communication include:

- **Personal Interview**
- Telephonic Conversations
- Interactive Sessions
- Debates
- E-mails
- Text Messages

3. Presentational Communication

Presentational Communication is another type of one-way communication, which facilitates interpretation by members of another group where no direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning between members of the two groups exists. With this mode of communication, a person is speaking to an audience that can be rehearsed, pre-prepared, or scripted. Some of the main highlights of Presentational Communication have been given a rundown below.

- To ensure the intended audience is successful in its interpretation, the “presenter” needs knowledge of the audience’s language and culture.
- No direct opportunity for engaging with a larger audience exists in this form of communication.

4. Linguistical or Alphabetic Communication

As one of the popular modes of communication, Linguistical or Alphabetic Communication mainly refers to written or spoken communication where the sender conveys their message through writing on a paper or through speaking.

Examples: Text messages, audio messages, emails, speech, notes and lists, etc.

5. Gestural Communication

Gestural Communication has its quintessential emphasis on body language and physical movements to communicate messages. Sign Language is the best example of the gestural mode of communication as those who can't talk or hear are able to communicate best through their gestures and have their own set of unique languages to converse in. While this mode of communication is mainly combined with spatial, aural or linguistic ones, it can also be used individually given that both the sender and receiver have common points of reference and meanings to have an understandable communication.

6. Aural Communication

As the name suggests, oral communication uses audio mode to convey messages whether it is through sounds or spoken audio. The speaker's voice and pronunciation need to be clear and precise with no background noise.

Example: Radio, audio messages, music, recordings, songs, audiobook.

7. Visual Communication

Visual Communication can be simply termed non-verbal communication as it comprises visual messages from the sender to the receiver. It is one of the oldest modes of communication when the ancient people didn't know a language to communicate with, it is through pictures, drawings and symbols that they were able to talk and converse with each other.

Examples: Pictures, Videos, Charts, Graphs, Symbols

8. Spatial Communication

Spatial Communication elaborates upon the use of physical space in the text as well as its overall structure to convey certain meanings and messages. The physical layout of any written text is deliberately designed to make it look a certain way and adhere to a particular theme. Websites also use this unique mode of communication in choosing a certain font, style, design and layout to make any website user-friendly and more interactive.

9. Multimodal Communication

Multimodal Communication can be simply referred to as communication through varied modes such as verbal, written, gestures, etc. There are different modes under multimodal communication and it is popularly used in higher education to accentuate the learning experience for students.

10. Various Cultural and Intercultural Modes of Communication

Several cultural modes of communication are specific to each area and culture. It can be symbolic usage of actions, body language, etc. The culture of a person is not just what they eat or wear but also how they communicate.

Verbal Communication

Verbal communication refers to the utilization of words to express ourselves in front of other people. Thus it is an inclusion of both spoken and written communication. Although most people prefer verbal communication to describe only spoken communication. The verbal part of communication refers to the words that we choose, and how they are heard and interpreted.

Types of Verbal communication

Words, sounds, and languages are only part of verbal communication. To communicate effectively with your audience, you must first understand who they are. Remember to use the Pyramid Principle and begin with your core argument before moving on to supporting assertions. Based on your audience, you may divide verbal communication into four categories.

Here are the Types of Verbal Communication:

Intrapersonal Communication:

This is your own route for vocal conversation. You converse with yourself and express your ideas. You will get greater confidence and clarity in your thinking if you communicate with yourself. It will assist you in making decisions, forming sentences, finding appropriate words, and finding effective methods to communicate with others. This will aid you in obtaining your coworkers' trust.

Interpersonal Communication:

This is also known as one-on-one verbal communication. This form of communication takes place between two people. It allows you to see if you're communicating your ideas clearly. The other person's reactions, comments, and verbal and nonverbal indicators will assist you figure out if you're being understood or not. Make sure you're paying attention to the individual on the other side of the table. You don't have to talk to someone to communicate. It's also about being aware of what is happening on in your immediate environment. Listen first, then think, and then answer. Take some time to consider what you'll say and make sure you won't offend anyone.

Small group Communication:

In small-group communication, the number of persons grows. You progress from speaking with only one person to a group of several people. Team meetings, board meetings, and sales meetings are all examples of small gatherings. The group is small enough that everyone can converse with one another. Prepare a subject for your small group sessions so you don't get off course. Keep the discussion on track and give everyone ample time to speak.

Public Communication:

This style is also known as 'public speaking.' An individual speaks to a huge group of individuals at the same time. Public communication includes speeches, political campaigns, and presentations, to name a few examples. Because the number of persons in the audience is bigger in this sort of communication, make sure to use easy-to-understand terms and phrases and organise your thoughts before speaking to them. You'll feel more confidence as a public speaker if you're well-prepared.

Advantages of Verbal communication

Verbal communication is said to be something which is represented through words or any other communicating medium. It is generally of two types- verbal and written communication.

Verbal communication includes activities like telling, singing or question, and answering. There are also many advantages of verbal communication however they limitations too.

Here the Advantages of Verbal Communication:

1. Saves a lot of time.
2. Saves money too.
3. Get feedback quickly.
4. Most convenient method.
5. Clarity of method.
6. Ease of preparation.

Disadvantages of Verbal Communication

The most usual disadvantage to verbal communication is the regional differences between the sender and receiver. These barriers may arise because they are speaking a somewhat different language and their dialect is different.

The audience size is also a barrier to oral communication because the speaker can only address a few people at a time.

- Regional differences are the greatest barrier.
- Language difference and dialect is also a reason for the communication barrier.
- Large audience size is also an issue of communication barriers.
- Receivers may quickly forget what was said to them.
- All people cannot listen at the same pace.

Non-Verbal Communication

Communication of information by use of body language such as gestures by hand, facial expressions, eye contact, etc. is called non-verbal communication. Non-verbal Communication gives us insights into the feelings of a person or a group and whether or not they are approachable. Techniques of Non-verbal Communication is a significant skill to leverage in one's career.

Types of non-verbal communication.

1. Facial Expression

Facial expressions are responsible for a huge proportion of nonverbal communication. Consider how much information can be conveyed with a smile or a frown. While nonverbal communication and behavior can vary dramatically between cultures, the facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, and fear are similar throughout the world.

2. Gestures

Deliberate movements and signals are an important way to communicate meaning without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, and using fingers to indicate number amounts. Other gestures are arbitrary and related to culture.

3. Paralinguistics

Paralinguistics refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. This includes factors such as tone of voice, loudness, inflection, and pitch. Consider the powerful effect that tone of voice can have on the meaning of a sentence. When said in a strong tone of voice, listeners might interpret approval and enthusiasm. The same words said in a hesitant tone of voice might convey disapproval and a lack of interest.

4. Body Language and Posture

Posture and movement can also convey a great deal on information. Research on body language has grown significantly since the 1970's, but popular media have focused on the over-interpretation of defensive postures, arm-crossing, and leg-crossing, especially after the publication of Julius Fast's book *Body Language*. While these nonverbal behaviors can indicate feelings and attitudes, research suggests that body language is far more subtle and less definitive than previously believed.

5. Proxemics

People often refer to their need for “personal space,” which is also an important type of nonverbal communication. The amount of distance we need and the amount of space we perceive as belonging to us is influenced by a number of factors including social norms, situational factors, personality characteristics, and level of familiarity. For example, the amount of personal space needed when having a casual conversation with another person usually varies between 18 inches to four feet. On the other hand, the personal distance needed when speaking to a crowd of people is around 10 to 12 feet.

Differences between Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Verbal communication uses oral or written words whereas non-verbal communication will not use any kind of written words. Verbal communication is of only two types but, non-verbal is of many types like audio, visual and silent, etc. Non-verbal is difficult to understand whereas verbal is very easy to understand. In verbal communication, there is less chance for confusion and misunderstanding than nonverbal as it is conveyed through wordless cues. The degree of formality is very less in non-verbal communication and verbal is more formal.

Verbal communication	Non-verbal communication
Exchange of information by words	Exchange of information by wordless clues
Has less chance of confusion	Has high chance of confusion
It is easy to understand	It is difficult to understand
It is highly structured and formal	It lacks structure and highly informal
The presence of two persons is not necessary	The presence of two persons are necessary

Barriers to Communication

A person at times wants to communicate one thing; but actually he communicates something else which he never intended. This type of event in communication behaviour is known as “The Arc of Distortion”.

Distortion could be due to some defect in any of the mechanisms of communication. These obstructions to communication are also known as “barriers”.

The following are a few barriers to communication:

1. Lack of a proper style, of feedback.
2. Content irrelevant to the needs of the clientele.
3. Failure to maintain a two-way flow of communication.
4. Unsuitable climate.
5. Lack of provision for horizontal flow of ideas.
6. Non-availability of technical consultants.
7. Semantic difficulties.
8. Lack of leadership.
9. Lack of motivation.
10. Lack of support from the heads of institution.

Any barrier to communication could be overcome or distortion reduced through a well organised system of feedback. The feedback is of critical importance in testing the success of any attempt at communication for only by some such device is it possible to observe its effect. If the communicator is to face with the communicant it is possible for him to judge the success of the communication by the latter’s reaction.

Other Barriers to Communication:

1. Lack of Planning:

Good communication seldom happens by chance. Too often people start talking and writing without first thinking, planning and stating the purpose of message. Furthermore the personality and attributes of the person who is receiving the message also matters cause no matter how nicely the message has been delivered the receiver should be that intelligent to read it correctly.

2. Ambiguity:

Clearly, language and linguistic ability may act as a barrier to communication. If the message sent is not clear and is ambiguous then it may act as a barrier.

3. False Assumptions:

Often overlooked, yet very important, are the un-communicated assumptions that underlie messages. Whenever message is sent it should be checked that there are no assumptions, if something is required from receivers end then it should be mentioned in the message for example A customer may send a note stating that he will visit a vendor's plant. Then he may assume that the vendor will meet her at the airport. Such assumptions create confusion.

4. Distortions:

Another barrier to effective communication is distortion, which can be accidental or deliberate. Sender must have sent the message but the receiver was too busy to register it. Thus on sender's end message has been sent but actually receiver has not taken a note of it.

5. Implied Meaning:

Sometimes the message may not be clear and straight forward thus does not give true idea of the message.

6. Passing Judgements:

Sometimes the message gives a judgement against, the receiver which acts as a barrier to communication.

7. Lack of Trust:

If the sender and receiver do not trust each other than the communication may lose its true meaning.