Kampala International University
Uganda

BACHELOR OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

MODULE 4

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

UCC 1201

By

Wambui Thalya Caroline, MBA,BBA

INTRODUCTION

The Business School/CODL's aim is to become a market leader in the cost-effective provision of quality business management education leading to awards of certificates, diplomas and degrees internationally recognized and professionally acceptable. Throughout its history the business school/CODL has run a series of programmes primarily focused on business and management, which has been consistently, reviewed every three to five years to meet the contemporary needs of the market. The latest review was carried out in 2011 when the current curriculum was launched for six programmes: Business Administration, Bachelor of Commerce, ……………………………………..

Businesses in the 21st century are experiencing profound challenges, which include the need to seek new market opportunities, develop new products that meet the changing demands of customers globally. The rapid growth of businesses and increasing transformations in the global economy has led not only to an increasing demand for specialists in the various management fields, but also to the need of a caliber of managers who are able to constantly adjust and innovate in the increasingly complex and volatile international business environment. It is upon this background that a modular system of teaching has been adopted to cope-up with the competitive environment of service delivery highly emphasizing on the concept of value for money.

The module enables a student to appreciate the concepts and examines the functions and roles of business in an organization. It presents a general overview and analysis of the main principles as a foundation for the more crystallized detailed description of policies, processes and practices, for purposes of setting ground for grooming the students in preparation for the challenging and dynamic field at the end of the course. For instance, accounting options seeks to provide answers to the need of management to maintain high and professional levels of competence in tracking, managing the inflows and outflows of resources in this volatile environment. It answers to the scientific managerial need for ensuring effective, efficient and productive use of resources and the ethical need for accountability and transparency.

The module explores various functional areas with accounting and finance, marketing and human resource management and examines in detail both conceptual and methodological tools that managers use to inform their decision making. Emphasis is placed on engaging with real life examples and applying course materials to specific familiar phenomena such as case studies. The main aims are to help students to understand the dynamics of today's business environment in the digital age.

Unit 1
Introduction

1.1 Communication

Communication is simply defined as the act of exchanging information. It is the haring of information between two or more individuals or groups, to establish a common understanding. It can be used to inform of command, assess, instruct, influence and persuade.

Communication skills are vital in all aspects of life including business. Effective communication between individuals , especially in an organization is important in achieving the organizational objectives and results to managing people effectively. In the words of Stephen Covey, author of ‘ the seven Habits of highly effective people’. “Communication is the most important skill in life. We spend most of our working hours communicating.” Covey defines communication as “mutual understanding”

When applying for a job, your skill, knowledge and qualification are important but equally important are your communication skills, both written and oral. This is why many employees include essay – type question in the application process in order to evaluating the communication skills because it will reflect on their company, the way you (the employee) communicate. Without the ability to communicate, talented, intelligent and knowledgeable people will always be doubted basing on their poor communication skills. This means even the company you work for will be doubted as well for employing a poor communicator.

By successfully getting your message across, you convey your thoughts and ideas effectively. When not successful, the thoughts and ideas that you convey do not necessarily reflect your own, causing a communication breakdowns and creating roadblocks that stand in the way of your goals – both personally and professionally.

In a recent survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, communication skills were cited as the single most important decisive factor in choosing manger. The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh’s Katz Business school, points out of that communication skills, including written and oral presentations, as well as an ability to work with others (in groups or teams), are the main factor contributing to job success.

Inspite of the increasing importance placed on communication skills, many individual continue to struggle with it, unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively – whether in verbal or written format. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to compete effectively in the workplace, and stands in the way of career progress.

Getting your message across is paramount to progressing in business. To do this, you must understand what your message is, what audience you are sending it to, and how it will be perceived. You must also weigh – in the circumstances surrounding your communications, such as situational and cultural context.

1.2 Importance of Communication Skill

The importance of communication skills for managers in highlighted with the following:

- Managers must be able to give **direction** to people who work for them to achieve organizational goals.

- Managers must be able to **motivate** people and get them excited about their jobs.

- Managers must be able to **convince** customers / clients that they should do business with the organization.

- Managers must be able to **absorb** the ideas of others. They do this by interacting with people, staff, clients, and supervisors; they must be able to understand and accept other people's view points.

- Managers must be able to **persuade** other people (staff, clients, supervisors) to enable them accept the manager's ideas, views and opinions.

1.3 International Communication

With more and more companies globalizing, employees in various international locations now have day – to – day communications with each other, international communicating, , also known as across cultural communication is inevitable. Given different cultural contexts, this brings new communication challenges to the workplace.
Even when employees speak the same language (for instance, correspondences between English – speakers in the U. S and English – speakers in the UK), there are some cultural differences that should be considered in an effort to optimize communication between the two parties.

In such cases, effective communication strategy begins with the understanding that the sender of the message and the receiver of the message are from different cultures and backgrounds. This introduces a certain amount of uncertainly, making communications even more complex.

Without getting into cultures and sub – cultures, it is perhaps most important to realize that a basic understanding of cultural diversity is the key to effective cross – cultural communications, without intently studying the individual cultures and languages, we must all learn how to better communicate with individuals and groups whose first language, or language of choice, does not match our own.

Learning the basics about culture and at least something about the language of communication in the host country are necessary. This is necessary even for the basic level of understanding required to engage in appropriate greetings and physical contract, which can be a tricky area inter- culturally. For instance, kissing a business associate is considered an appropriate business practice in the U. S, but in Paris, one peck on each cheek is an acceptable greeting. The handshake that is widely accepted in the U. S. is not recognized in all other cultures.

While many companies now offer training in the different cultures where the company conducts business, it is important that employees being thrust into communicating cross – culturally.

1.4 Importance of effective communication within organizations

Effective communication has always been important in business and due to the dynamic changes in the business world it is becoming even more important. It is now a declaration that effective communication is both an asset and a core competence to the organizations that possess them in today's world, workers are faced with the following changes that highlight the importance of effective communication:

- **Increased used of technology** – The rapid increase and development of technology in different areas of business and its application means that effective communication will give an edge to those who use the "newest" and the latest technology the earliest. The knowledge and technical know – how of adopting new technology is only possible through effective communication.
- **Increased global competition –** Competition is stiffer than ever and a breach in effective communication can cost the company its market share, its image and in serious cases its existence. For organizations to contend in the global economy, they need up – to do- date information which is only possible through effective communication.
- **Restructured management and /or product line** – There are rapid changes in the processes of production and the specification of products themselves in an alarming rate, effective communication helps the organization keep at par with the dynamics of change: transformational, operation, etc.
- **Increased quality emphasis and customer focus** – Effective communication helps fast responsiveness to customer needs, demands, complaints, etc. it is also facilitates the basis for quality improvement by highlighting the importance of quality production and the routines to attain the hallmark of quality as an organizational culture.
- **Increased focus on ethical and legal concerns** – with the rise in corporate social responsibility and law suits against organizations, effective communication can help defuse tricky situations and prevent legal actions against the organization, by fulfilling legal and even ethical obligations.
- **The Need for Innovation** – Effective communication facilitates innovation in the organization which can act as a competitive advantage. Creative and original ideas can be encouraged, developed, and harnessed through effective communication, which can ultimately leads to the development of new product s, concepts, processes and even inventions.
- **Increased efficiency** – effective communication is the basis to training, equipping and expanding the skills of organization and its staff in order to

increase over all performance and enable the effective and efficient use of scarce resources.

1.5 The influence of technology on communication

The changes mentioned above have all had an impact on communication, but none has as much impact as the influence of technology on business communication. Technology has ushered in the electronic mail, voice mail, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, computer networks, fax machines and the internet, to mention a few; all these technology have expanded the methods of communication. Technology has facilitated increased vertical and horizontal communication within the organization to encourage group problem solving, consensus building, global projects and the overall synchronization of the organization.

A few decades ago, the standard equipments used to conduct business included typewriters, telephones, photocopy machines and calculators, now companies equipped with computerized information processing systems, which include personal computers, computer networks and electronic mail systems. Working out of the office is also facilitated by laptops, palm tops, mobile phones, fax machines and digital page to mention a few.

On the global scale, technology has changed the business landscape, making the world a global economy and the only means of success is to be competitive in the global market and not just in the local market.

Technology has also brought the drive to emphasis on quality, both in the aspect of total quality management (TQM) and continuous improvement, this has led to the new found importance of employees being more effective and getting it right the first time, working in cross functional teams, being customer focused and even employing people from beyond national boarders. All this new developments are helped up by the strong backbone of effective communication.

Overall communication in business through the impact of technology has increased productivity, in the aspect of time, convenience, quality and the environment. [See Electronic Communication for more details]

1.6 The communication process

Communication is a process that involves the transmission of meaningful information from on party to another through the use of shared symbols. Communication is considered successful when the meaning is understood. The communication process model illustrates communication between two people, but can also apply to more complex communication situations. The communication process using the communication model consists of two main phases: the transmission phase (from sender) where the information is shared between two or more individual and the feedback phase (from receiver) where a common understanding is reached.

Communication barriers can pop – up at every stage of the communication process (which consists of sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback and context- see the diagrams of the models) and have the potential to crate misunderstanding and confusion. A message is successful only when both the sender and the receiver perceive it in the same way.

1.7 Principles of Communication

Clarity

It refers to clarity of thought and expression.

Clarity of Thought
The communication cycle begins with the generation of an idea in the mind of the transmitter. A great deal of clarity is needed at this stage, for if the beginning fuddled it is likely to mar the entire communication process. The communication must be clear about three points.

1. What is the objective of communication?
2. What is to be communicated?
3. Which medium will prove to be the most suitable for this purpose?

Clarity of Expression
The receiver learns about the idea in the transmitter's mind through the coded message. If encoding is faulty the message may be misinterpreted. So it is important to be careful while encoding the message. Since most of the messages are transmitted with the help of words, the transmitter should be careful about the meanings and organizations of words. The following points about the choice of words deserve attention:

- **Use simple words** Remember that simple and short words are more effective than pompous and heavy words. It is better to use "tell" or "inform" for "Acquaint"

- **Use concrete expression** Concrete expressions create visual images that are easy to register. So instead of vague, generalized statements give definite facts unless you can derive a particular advantage from being general and other such words. These may be described as opinion or contextual words, for many and a few are a matter of opinion or context. Then students absent in a class of thirty are many. Ten members absent in a group of five hundred are a 'few'

- **Prefer active constructions for they are easier to understand** If you deliberately want to create an impersonal style, you may be justified in using passive constructions. But in ordinary circumstances it is better to use active construction.
- **Avoid excessive use of the infinite** The use of infinitive (to-verb-to give, to learn) tends to make the style impersonal and formal.

- **Avoid Jargon** 'Jargon' refers top the special language of a trade, profession, or field of study. It may refer to words as well as the style of writing. In the medical field, jargon will be mostly confined to the choice of words. Legal jargon is primarily stylistic jargon creates difficulties of understanding, and it makes the style formal and staff, so better avoid jargon. In the business field, jargon consists in the use of words like 'instant', ultimo' proximo', 'as per', 'we beg to', and oblige', same etc. It is better to give the date instead of sign words like 'instant' and ultimo'. We bet to and oblige can be easily omitted.

- **Avoid Ambiguity** If your message can mean more than thing, it is ambiguous. Ambiguity is very often caused by a careless use of personal pronouns.

- **Use short sentences** Whether your communication is oral or written, use very short sentences. Long sentences tend to be complex and demand greater concentration. And no body has time or patience for long sentences. As a rule if a sentence runs beyond thirty words, it is better to break it up into two sentences.

Completeness

In business communication, completeness of facts is absolutely necessary incomplete communication irritates the reader, for it leaves him baffled. If wrong, actions follow an incomplete message, they may also prove expensive. Let us suppose you are ordering shirts by mail. Your communication must include all the relevant facts size, colour, catalogue number, mode of payment, mode of dispatch, the date by which you need the shirts, etc. In the absence of any of these details, your order may not be filled to your satisfaction. You should organize your message in such a way that the receiver is not in doubt about anything contained in it. In this regard, the following aspects should be taken into consideration.

- **While answering a letter make it sure that you have answered all the questions** If your customer has four queries and you answer only two of them, it will not bring the desired answer. While answering the letter, devote a paragraph each to all his questions and number the paragraphs. This practice will save your answer from getting lost in a jungle of words.

- **Checking for the "five W" questions – who, what, where, when and why and any other essential points like how also helps to make your message complete.** While announcing a meeting, specify when the meeting is to be held, where it is to be held, why it is being held, what is to be discussed in the meeting, who is to attend the meeting and may be how members are expected to reach the venue.

Conciseness

A reader's time is invaluable. Don't make him feel that he is wasting his time in going through your unnecessary lengthy letter. Be as brief a possible. Brevity in expression effectively wins the attention of the readers. However; brevity should be affected at the cost of appropriateness, clarity, correctness, completeness or courtesy. In fact, there is no hard and fast rule for the length of a letter. A letter should be as long as short as is necessary to tell the story effectively. A two page letter may seem short, while a ten-line letter may seem all too long. There are two tests to ascertain whether a letter is too long. Ask yourself these two questions. "Does it say more than need be said ?" Does it take too many words for what it must say?"

The following simple rules will help you to achieve consciousness in your messages;

- **Include only relevant facts** Make sure your message does not get encumbered by unnecessary details.

- **Avoid repetition** Repetition induces monotony or irritation. You might repeat information or a requesting order to stress it. The reader would naturally expect you are saying something additional. But when he discovers that you are repeating something, he feels cheated.

- **Avoid trite and wordy expressions** In other words, know what you want to say beforehand and say it well.

- **Organize your message well** Use simple and short words as well as sentences. Ensure that your message is coherent.

Consideration

In our letter, we must show consideration for the reader. This can be done in the following ways;

- **Adopt the you-attitude** We know that we are primarily interested in ourselves. Naturally, every other person is interested more in himself than in a third party. It follows, therefore, that when we write letters to others, they are effective and the readers respond to out- letters well only when we write from their point of view. It is an accepted truth that one of the most pleasant sounds to the average individual is his own name or self. To make our letter more effective, we must avoid it's and we's and have as many yours as possible. In any case we should not forget the readers point of view in the whole of our letter.

- **Emphasize positive, pleasant facts** On many occasions you may have to refuse, say no, regret, disagree, complain or say sorry. To say sorry. To say this in plain words and a straightforward style is not difficult, but its effect on the readers mind ad the repercussions on the firm are bad and far-reaching. We swallow sugar coated pill without any grumble.

- **Impart integrity to your messages** Showing integrity is perhaps the best way of showing considerations integrity involves the observance of ethical principles-sincererity and fair treatment. These values should not be discarded as redundant to the modern materialistic world they are the staple food to nourish growth. Nothing will impress the receiver of your message than these two simple virtues.

Courtesy

In business we must create friendliness with all those to whom we write. Friendliness is inseparable from courtesy. And courtesy demands a considerate and friendly behavior towards others. The following principles help to promote courtesy.

- **Answer the letters promptly** In business it is general practice to answer a letter the same day it is received. Sometimes you might need a back reference, or may have to refer to different departments for clarification of certain points or may need the consent of higher authorities. In all these cases, you should at least acknowledge the letter received and intimate the probable time you require to send a full reply.

- **Omit irritating expressions** Some words and expressions are negative in connotation and irritate the readers. Particularly, when used with 'you' they become provocative. Expressions like 'you forgot, you failed, your irresponsible approaches are bound to irritate or hurt the reader. So scrupulously avoid them.

- **Apologize sincerely for an omission/thank generously for a favour** If you have overlooked or failed to do something, express your regrets I promptly and sincerely and make up for the omission at the earliest. If omission is on the part of someone else and the regrets it, promptly tell him that you do not mind and a sort of normalcy of situation has been restored. If someone does a favour to you, acknowledge it promptly and thank the person generously for being kind to you.

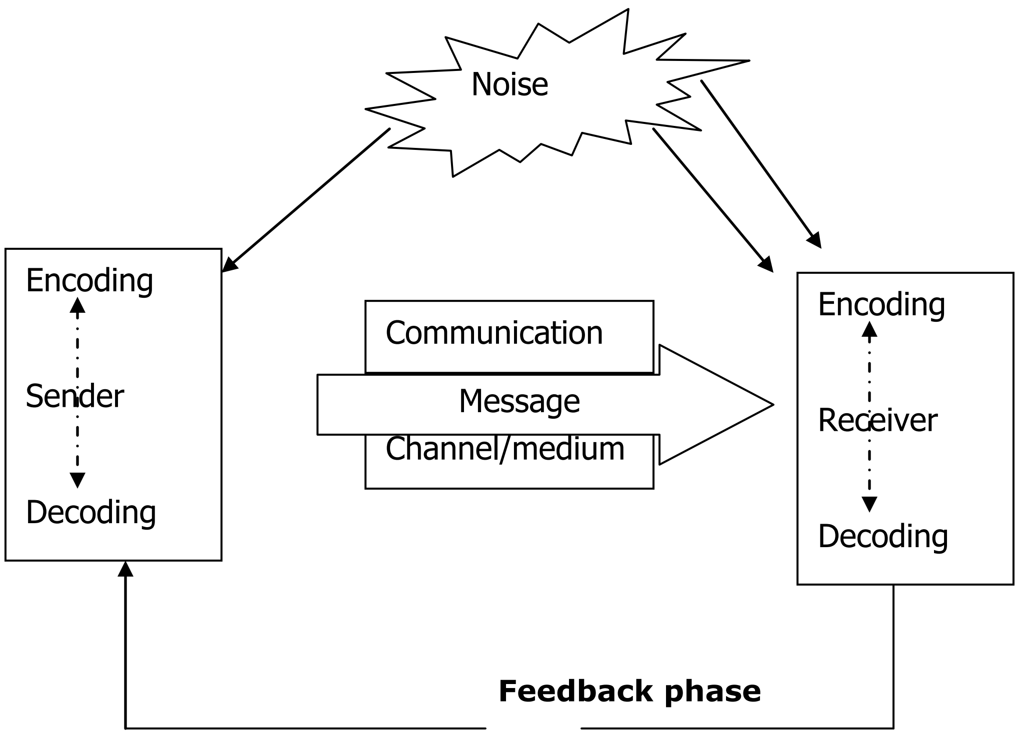
Correctness

- **Give correct facts** Business communication often leads to expensive operations. So you should be sure that you are using correct facts and expressing them in correct language. In fact, you should not transmit any message unless you are absolutely sure of its correctness. If you aren't you should immediately verify it from an encyclopaedia, an office file, a colleague, a dictionary, or even a grammar book. If your message involves any legal matter, you should know the correct legal position before you commit anything.
- **Send your message at the corrective time** All messages must be transmitted and responded to at the most appropriate time. Outdated information is useless in fact since communication is an expensive process; transmitting outdated information involves wastage of time, money and human resources. The principle of correct timing also stipulates that you

communicate your message at a time when it is likely to prove most effective.

- **Send your message in the correct style** This may also be described as the principle as the principle of adaptability. You must adapt your message to the needs of the receiver. You must consider his educational background, the width of his vocabulary, specialized knowledge of the subject, his psychological make up etc. If he is a layman, all jargon must be excluded and facts should be explained in a simple language. If he is an expert in a subject, you may perhaps go into the subtleties of the issue. While adapting your message to the needs of your receiver, you must so change it that your preserve it's factual as well as emotional content

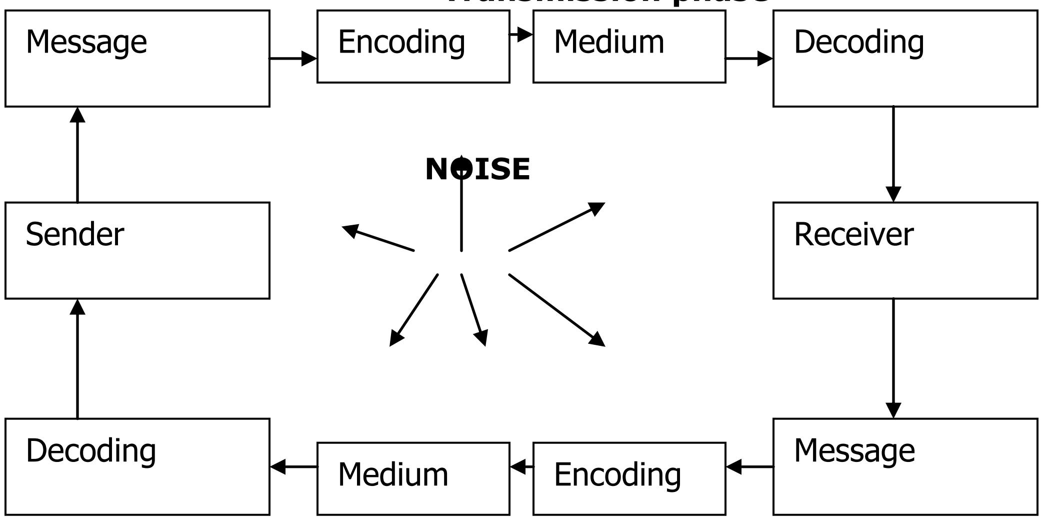
Communication process model



or

The model below is also acceptable

Transmission phase



Communication begins with a sender who has a message (or information) for the receiver. The sender encodes the message and selects a communication channel (or medium) that will successfully deliver the message to the receiver.

The sender – This is the person who initiates the communication. The sender's nonverbal cues will influence the message in the perception of the receiver. To establish yourself as an effective communicator, you must first establish credibility. Physical appearance, position, knowledge, etc can all contribute to the development of credibility. More specifically, in the business arena, this involves displaying knowledge of the subject, the audience and the context in which the message is delivered. Failure to understand who you are communicating to will result in delivering message that are misunderstood.

The message – This is the information being transmitted by the sender to the receiver, which can be spoken, written , drawn, etc. as a sender, consider the message itself. Written, oral and nonverbal communication are affected by the sender's tone, method of message organization, validity of the argument, what is communicated and what is left out as well as your individual style of communicating. Message also have intellectual and emotional components, with intellect allowing the ability to reason and emotion allowing presentation of motivational appeals, ultimately changing minds and actions.

The receiver- This is the individual or audience the message is intended for. As the communicator, there is no doubt you have in mind the actions or reactions you hope your message will prompt from the audience. Keep in mind, your audience also enters into the communication process with ideas and feelings that will undoubtedly influence their understanding of your message and their response to it. To be a successful communicator, you should consider these before delivering your message and acting appropriately.

The feedback – This is the response of the receiver in reaction to the message from the sender; it can be verbal or nonverbal. Your audience will provide you with feedback, verbal and nonverbal reactions to your communicated message, it is important to pay close attention to these feedbacks as they are crucial to ensuring the audience understands your message.

The context – Context is the situation in which the message is delivered. This may include the surrounding environment or broader culture (i.e corporate culture, international cultures, a wedding, boardroom, et cetera.)

Encoding – This is the process of selecting the appropriate symbols such as written words, numbers, and digital symbols such as written words, numbers, digital symbols, sounds or body language that can be rightly decoded by the receiver. This means that the sender must consider the decoding skills of the receiver when encoding for the communication to be successful.

The communication channel- The channel is the means by which the message is delivered and it will determine the quantity and quality of information that is conveyed to the receiver. Communication channels include face – to face conversations, group meetings, memos, policy manuals, e- mails, voice mail, video tapes, computer printouts, p hone calls, TV, etc. The time availability, message complexity, size and proximity of the audience and skills of the sender will determine the more suitable channel to us.

Decoding – This is the translation of the symbolic, verbal, written or visual symbols into an undistorted and clear message. For communication to be successful and effective, the receiver must be able to decode the message and understand its true meaning. Misinterpretations occur when the receiver is unable to decode the message due to lack of necessary skills, culture, jargon, etc.

Noise – Another hindrance to effective communication is noise; noise can be anything that interferes with the sending and receiving of the message. Sources of noise includes the senders accent, slow internet connection, poor vision to read, limited time pressure which leads to poor listening, etc. The larger and complex an organization the more likelihood of noise need to identify communication barriers and how they can be over come in an organization.

Due to the possibility of miscommunication, it is important that effective communication should always include opportunities for feedbacks from the receiver. The feedback enables the sender clarity the message if it has been misunderstood. Communication channels that provide for feedbacks are called two – way communications and channels that do not are one – way communications.

Communication Channels
When dealing with barriers to communication, one of the most influential determinants of effective communication is the communication channel or medium, it determines the richness of the information being communicated. Richness is the amount of information a channel or medium can carry and how effective it will be in facilitation a common understanding between the sender and the receiver. Channels with high information richness are able to carry a lot of information and ensure a common understanding between the two parties even when the information is complex. The figure below helps to clarify the explanation:

High information Richness channel ←——————→ low information richness channel

- Physical presence - interactive channels - personal static impersonal static (Face to face) (telephone , electronic channel medium fliers)
- Best for non routine media) (Memos, letter, bulletin, general
- Ambiguous, difficult report tailored to reports)Message receiver
- Best for routine clear Simple messages.

1.8 Barrier to Effective Communication
To be an effective communicator and to get your point across without misunderstanding and confusion, your goal should be to lessen the frequency of the barriers at each stage of this communication process with clear, concise, accurate, well – planned communications.

Barriers to effective communication can include physical distractions, emotional distractions, cultural and language differences on a general note. Mores specially, the accurate transmission of information can be disrupted by communication barriers such as the following amongst others:

- **Perception** – No two individuals can perceive the same message in exactly the same way; people normally perceive things in a manner consistent to their beliefs, experiences, culture and general upbringing. People also tend to perceive selectively; by selecting out of the message what they want to hear and ignoring what they don't want to hear (examples in being bias or stereotyping).

- **Semantics** – Words have different meanings to different people from various parts of the world and cultures. Semantics is the meaning of word sand can be the cause of miscommunication or hindrance to effective communication (for example "that car is hot", can mean the car is beautiful to some and it can mean the car is overheating to others).

- **Conflicting verbal and non** –verbal communication- People pick up signals and messages on what is being said not only by words but also from non – verbal communication, such as facial expression, bodily posture, speaking volume, e. t. c. Conflicting verbal and non – verbal communication creates confusion due to the fact that the receiver will not be sure on which of the two message should be taken seriously.

- **Defensiveness** – Information that clashes with a person's credibility and integrity can lead to defensive reactions, this is due to the fact that the person will not want to contribute anymore because of the fear of farther dampening his/her image. In some cases most of the communication will be spent of trying to vindicate self and not on the issue at hand.
- **Distortion** – In the process of relaying a message from person to person in the organization the message is filtered, summarized, added on to and in the process distorted by the time it gets to the intended recipient.
- **Rumors and the grapevine** – These are fast moving messages that move through informal groups in the organization. They tend to be mostly false and are the result of communication gaps between the management and staff of the organization, they lead to communication being distorted and mistrusted.
- **Narrow view point**- Some people have a tendency to focus on their area of specialization in the organization and undermine other (from different department , branches, sections, etc) this has a negative impact on resource allocation and hinders effective communication.
- **Status** – Positions in the organization can also be a barrier to effective communication, the difference in rank translates to communication breakdown due to the fact that subordinates are intimidated by the image and position that a superior holds and in some cases where communication of bad news is required they will prefer not to relay the bad news to the boss. Some bosses also have a habit of forgetting subordinates and isolating themselves instead.
- **Structural Restrictions** – The organizational chart can hinder the communication process due to formally sanctioned routes, procedures and protocols. This means messages have to travel through the ranks and the sender has to go through long bureaucratic processes, which most employees don't have the patience or the time for.
- **Diversity issues** – When people from different backgrounds, cultures, countries and groups work together, there is a high level of diversity which means even simple non verbal behaviors can have conflicting meanings, not to mention the verbal aspects . All this impede effective communication when not managed properly.
- **Jargons** – The use of technical terminologies when communicating with someone who is unfamiliar field or profession is definitely a barrier to effective communication.
- **Lack of trust, ambiguity, information overload, information under load, emotions etc**

In today's fast changing world, cross – cultural communication is a fact of business life. One way to learn how to deal with cross – cultural communication barriers to learn from other people experiences. Managers must communicate with others to enable them perform their various roles and tasks. Managers spend most of their time communicating in meetings, on p hone, e- mail or face to face; it is estimated that more than 85% of the manger's time is spent engaging in communication; this highlights the importance of effective communication. When communication is ineffective the organization's performance suffers, competitive advantage can be lost and in some cases poor communication can be dangerous enough to lead to the tragic and unnecessarily loss of human life.

Examples: Poor communication has led to plane crashes (1970's plane colliding); shooting down wrong target (missionary killed in plane in Peru by CIA); and total collapse of mighty organizations (ENRON]

1.9 Overcoming / Managing Barriers to Effective Communication

There will always be communication barriers due to human errors, technology failure, etc, but is has to be managed and if possible completely eradicated. To deliver you r message effectively, you must commit to breaking down the barriers that exist at each of the stages of the communication process (refer to communication model)

If your message is too lengthy, disorganized, or contains errors you can expect the message to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. The use of poor verbal and body language can also confuse the message. It is best to be mindful of the demands on other people's time, especially in today's ultra – busy society.

The difference between effective and ineffective communication can be traced to how well the communicating parties deal with these other elements.:.

- **Use of feedback** – The feedback helps the sender check whether the message has been accurately received by the receiver by deducing from his/her response.

- **Simplified language** – The use of simple understandable language that can be understood by the receiver will facilitate effective communications; this excludes the use of foreign, flashy accents, sophisticated words or jargons.

- **Active listening** – The receiver should pay close attention to the message in its fullness without interrupting or giving premature judgment. The some applies to the sender when feed back is sent.

- **Restraining Emotions** – Both parties should recognize when emotions are running high and try to tame and control it in order to avoid its effect from hindering the communication.

- **Matching verbal and non** – verbal communication – It is obvious that actions speak louder than words therefore it is important that both actions and words convey the same message in order to make the communication more effective.

- **Build Trust** – An atmosphere of trust must be cultivated in the organization to over overpower rumors and the grapevine. This will make every communication trust worthy and effective.

- **Avoid triggering defensiveness** – Criticizing, arguing and even giving advice can trigger some listener's defensiveness because they want to protect their self image. The best thing is not to react immediately and action should be delayed for a convenient time depending on the person.

- **Clarify ideas before communicating** – The planning of the message and choice of the right communication channel will make communication effective and reduce confusion.

Review Questions

1. It is possible to do business in Africa wit out bribing to win. Discuss? Tenders or to make things move 'faster.' What effect will this have of the society?
2. Discuss the barriers to effective communication in the organization of your choice and how to overcome those barriers With an illustration explain the communication process model

Unit 2
Planning for Communication

2.1 Human Relations Skills

It is important now, more than ever that people develop human relations skills (also known as interpersonal skills); this is due to the fact that the average human speaks out 18,000 words a day to individuals or groups, these words can build or destroy human relations. In business, these words can make or break the business. Interpersonal skills involve the ability to comprehend and deal with people in a productive manner and constructive manner than generates goodwill and helps to maintain it.

In order to display and practice good interpersonal skills as a business person one must:

- Use the you – Attitude: Putting readers or listeners first and being considerate to them and their needs.

- Demonstrating a positive attitude: by creating a good working relation with colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and clients. Also showing interest in the job through cooperation and emotional constraints.

- Be a good listener: Listening shows an interest in people and their views or opinion and is a quality of a good communicator.

- Maintaining confidentiality: Keeping confidential information confidential and avoiding spreading rumors even if it is the truth.

- Be considerate : Simply treat other people the way you want to be treated, with courtesy, honesty and patience.

2.2 The Basic Writing Principles of Communication

In order to help easy and effeictive communication the basic writing principles (also know as the C's of Business communiciton) are applied to correspondence. In some text books it is known as the 7'Cs in other the 6C's.

7C'S	6C's
Complete, correct	Consistent, clear
Courteous, Concrete	Correct, Concise
Concise, Clear	Courteous, complete
Consider	

The C's can apply to communication situations when speaking or writing, both in the case of external and internal communications. They make the communication logical and easy to understand. The C's include:

- **Complete** – A complete communication must contain all the important information needed by the receiver for taking action; the details should be enough so that the receiver will not need to ask for more information. A message will be incomplete if essential information is not included. A good way to test the completeness of a message is to ask whether the 5W's and 1 H has been attended to : who, what, where, when , why and how. Complete messages tend to yield desired results.

- **Courteous** – A courteous communication is polite, tactful, friendly and reader centred(you – attitude). The careful use of words must be observed to avoid words that may create unfavourable reaction. In short, putting oneself in the readers place. The organization is judged by the friendliness and consideration of its communication.
- **Concise** – A concise communication uses as few words as possible to communicate the message in a clear, courteous manner. It is saying what you have to say in the fewest words possible, using only essential words and facts. Unnecessary words cluster the message and hamper the communication.
- **Clear** – A clear communication is one that is easily understood and avoids any possible misunderstanding. It only contains short words and sentences. The communicators meaning should be clear and direct, with logical, consistent and unifield flow. Avoid being vague and unspecific.
- **Correct** – A correct communication is accurate in every aspect. Minor errors in dates, amount of money or time may create a loss of time, money, good will or all three , verification of fact s and attention to accuracy is a must. Typographic errors and sources of information should be verified, and grammer, spelling and punctuation should be correct.
- **Concrete*** – A concrete communication is a message that is specific, definite and vivid rather than being vague and general. It is ;using specific facts, figure, names and references to validate the communication.
- **Consideration*** This is the preparation of a message with the recipient in mind and trying to be considerate to his or her educational level, culture, emotions, time, religion, sex , etc.
- **Consistent –** A consistent communication should have reliable facts, treatment, and sequence. It is related to correctness and features agreement with verifiable source. Inconsistency includes June 31 (When there is only 30 day in June or addressing a Mr. as a miss in parts of the communication, saying something one way at one time and another way the next time.

2.3 Ethic of business communication

In business some things are legal but not ethical and these elements have an effect on business communication.

- Treating others with honesty and fairness – Ethics in business communication is displayed honesty and fairness in the treatment of people, in short words treating others the way you would like to be treated. [e.g.; Don’t lie to clients to make quick money]
- Stating facts instead of opinion – Ethics requires that information communicated should be true, this is possible by using objective language

and verifiable facts and information. [e.g. don't use "I feel", "I think", "they say", etc]

- Ethical communication – Withholding information that can cause communication to be misinterpreted is a violation of ethical business communication. [e.g ..not telling a client the negative effect of the product]
- Maintaining confidentiality – Confidential informational is private or secrets and should only be released to people with a proven need to k now. Right – to privacy law is active in most nations this implies that records and communications of private nature must not be revealed. (e.g.; Medical records, attorney, client fillies, banking and financial record, etc.
- Code of Ethics – Some organizations develop their code of ethics and make it public for both internal and external public in order to ensure the public of their stance. The code of ethics states how the organization conducts its business, how it treats, customer and even competitors.

2.4 A summary of Business communication courtesy, ethics and legal responsibilities

The following guidelines should be followed to observe courtesy, ethical and legal responsibilities and to be sensitive to language bias and cultural diversity. It builds on the development of effective communication and its planning. The follow are to be observed.

- Not being honest in your communication
- Not making introductions e.g introducing self, associates, etc
- Not acknowledging invitation and thoughtful actions
- Not observing policies e.g no smoking
- Not using gender – neutral languages
- Misleading or misrepresenting others in your communication (claiming position one is not or power).
- Not including all vital information that is relevant to the situation.
- Not respecting people by not manipulating them in your communication.
- Damaging another person's name and reputation by making false accusation.
- Not understanding the laws pertaining to communication for which you are responsible e.g copyright, censorships, etc.

Review Questions

1. 1. Discuss the principles of communication in the organization
2. In business some things are legal but not ethical and the elements have an effect on business communication. Discuss

Unit 3
Types and forms of communication in organizations

3.1 Introduction

Communication in organizations can be complex and dynamic in nature. Organizational communications is the exchange of information and transmission of meaning among several individuals and communication in organizations can be distinguished into many categories, such as formal and informal communication; external and internal communication.

Internal communication is the transmission of information between and among employees of the organization or business. Internal communication is used to accomplish company goals and objectives. Internal communication may be carried out between people in the same department, other departments, and at other company locations. The employee can communication can individually or in groups. Internal communication may include face – to face conversations, phone call, e-mails, and brainstorming in meetings to mention a few. The tone of internal communication is normally friendly and informal in most organizations.

External communication is the transfer of information from and to the people outside the company. The goal of most external communication is to persuade the recipient to respond favourable to the organization. This communication can include sales letters to get potential customer or job listening to attract qualified people. External communication has a more polite and formal tone than internal communication.

Formal communication are officially recognized and endorsed messages and information that is transmitted within the organization or externally, they include orders from superior to subordinates, statement to the general public, various written and unwritten reports, letters and other communication that is required.

In the daily running of the organization. They include both internal and external communications.

Informal communication consists of informal exchanges between employees or customers without a planned agenda. It is the form of communications that is not officially sanctioned and recognized by the organization, it is sometimes referred to as grapevine at times. It normally occurs when there are gaps in or barriers to formal communication and employees do not receive information they desire. Informal communication takes place by the water coolers , in the hall ways, company cafeterias, in employee's offices, in the parking lots, at restaurants, trade shows, etc. topics like job opportunities, promotions, downsizing, competitors' products, unethical behaviours of managers, etc are normally discussed.

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Informal communication has both its advantages and disadvantages. The negative effect is that gossips and rumors can be harmful to employee morale and motivation and ultimately the company performance. Exaggerate state of affairs such as downsizing can lead to high employee turnover and loss of key employees.
On the other hand informal communication has been known to facilitate creative ideas and organizations like sun – Micro system have officially endorsed it by scheduling occasional Friday afternoon parties other organizations organize Christmas parties so that informal exchange of ideas can flow between employed, both technical and business oriented . Product ideas have been developed over a bottle of beer.

One effective way to manage rumors and misinformation (informal communication) is the application of management by wondering around (MBWA). This is dropping by unannounced at a work site and engaging employees in spontaneous conversions, this helps to build trust and open communication channels in the organization. Sam Walton, the founder of Wal- Mart is renowned for this practice.

3.2 Other forms of communication skills

Other forms of communications that take place in organizations are influenced by the organizational structure such as the one illustrated below:

Vertical communications is the upward and downward flow of communication in the organization, it is made up of the downward and upward communication and usually take place along formal report line, between superiors and subordinates and may involve several levels of the organization.

Downward communication is a part of vertical communication; it is the process whereby information or message is sent from a high position in the organization to an individual or group lower in the hierarchy (or organization chart). Downward communication constantly occurs between managers and subordinates, when manager provide direction, feedback, orders, assignment, policies and other critical information to help subordinates perform at expected levels. Examples include employee performance evaluation, job description, orientation or new employees, praise and recognition, company business strategy, goals and procedures.

Upward communication this is the second part of vertical communication. It is when a message or information is sent from a position lower in the hierarchy to a receiver higher in the hierarchy. It helps managers know how individuals, teams and units of the company are performing, and enable him/her adjust according to responses. Upward communication facilitates feedback to managers about employees' feeling on the organization policies. Barriers that hinder upward communication includes the tendency of punishing the bearers of bad news, and the perception that taking problems over the head of immediate boss to his or her superior is considered disloyalty.

In order to overcome this situation companies like Hewlet – Packard (HP) have an open – door policy which encourages any employee to bring the problems directly to the manager and the problem is delta with within a specified period by the manager. Toyota also uses employee suggestion system to improve the product and process of quality. Effective use of upward communication enables employee air their suggestions, grievances, information about ethics, accounting information, information about defect rate of products, etc.

Horizontal communication is also called lateral communication, it occurs between individuals at a similar level in the organization. It is most likely to take place between team members, between different teams and between employees in different unit, such as between a safety specialist and a quality control specialist discussed possible changes in the production process.

Horizontal communication is becoming more and more important in organizations because it facilitates collaborations between employees with different skills and competences. Horizontal communication facilitates the sharing of information between knowledge workers. Due to recent trends of downsizing and re-engineering organizations to be flatter and the advent of interactive electronic communication technologies, horizontal communication makes it possible to develop learning communities, and vital teams of employees working from different geographical locations. (Examples of horizontal communication include peer assessment, cross – functional product development teams, self management work teams, suggestion committee meetings, and diversity task forces).

3.3 Nature of communication in an organization

Organization can improve the quality of communications by providing a diverse mix of high information richness channels that create opportunity for information flow vertically and horizontally. It is vital that management and staff are trained to use the types of communication channels appropriately. The upgrading of employee communication skills is also important due to the rapid changes in communication technologies and the global business culture. Below are types of communication that take place in an organization.

Face – to – face communication provides opportunities for sending rich information content; it offers a high level of interactivity between the sender and receiver. Not only is verbal communication used but also the interpretation of each other’s non verbal signals such as facial expressions and body language. Most job interviews are done face to face in order to assess the most suitable candidate accurately. One of the most important types of face – to – face communication is the meeting. Meetings are held to inform and train participants, solve problems, monitor and coordinate activities, delegate tasks and create social bond between organization members. The applications of multimedia technologies that transmit video, voice and text over satellite network have made face – to –f ace meetings with globally dispersed people possible. The importance of meetings highlights the use of the face – to –f ace channel.

Electronic communication is communication that is transmitted over phone lines and satellite networks. Electronic communication through the advancement of technology makes interactive communication possible between senders and receivers who separated by physical distance and busy schedules. Electronic communication channels vary in richness of the information that is transmitted and can include text , voice, graphic or video transmission. Electronic communications has been facilitated by the advancement of technology and adds to the impact of technology on communication in business. Electronic communication includes: voice mail, cellular p hones, pagers, facsimile machines (fax), scanners, computerized information system, personal computers, electronic mail, printers, modems, the internet and the world wide web, to mention a few. There are three most important forms of electronic communication used in business and they are :

- **Voice mail-** Lets a sender transmit a detail audio message that is electronically recorded and can be played back when convenient or forwarded if needed. Voice mails also allow a sender to set up a menu of responses to commonly asked questions which saves on time and money. For example MTN Uganda uses voice mail to give information on loading airtime and checking balances. Sometimes voice mail become annoying when callers feel they are being screened and avoided by the business due to being place don voicemail for too long.
- **E – Mail** – Which is electronic mail allows employees to communicate via written messages through personal computer terminals linked to a network. E- Mail is a very fast way to distribute information that is important about the business to a large number of employees at once. E – Mail is often used to exchange information, socializing and to post general notices that might be vital to individuals. E –m ail has been used as a channel for upward communication in some organization, for example, Bill Gates, Chairman of Microsoft corporation (and former CEO) made his address known to all Microsoft employees and personally replies their e – mail is that it can be a source of information overload, and at times excessive e – mails and monitor their activities.
- **The Internet -** In a computer network with multimedia communication capabilities, this means it can combine voice, graphics, and video to be sent to a receiver. Several organizations have websites on the internet where customers can get information on products and services and can place orders or ask questions. The use of the internet has made it possible for companies to serve international customers; universities like KIU advertise their programmes on their website to attract foreign students and electronic commerce has created a whole new business arena of opportunities, such as Amazon.com, BN. Com, eBay. Com, Oneshare. Com, etc where one can actually transact business online (on the internet) in the comfort of his/her house or office. The negative aspect of the internet is that it tends to generate information over load, computer viruses, fraudsters, Hackers and employees indulging on websites such as pornographic pages and personal internet based e – mail accounts which ultimately lead to waste of company time and money.

Written communication includes memos, policy manuals, employee handbooks, company newsletters, bulletin boards, letters and others. The advantage of written communication has over face – to face is that they can be revised, stored, made available when needed and identical copies can be made for handouts. Written communication can be personalized for a small audience or written in a general style to accommodate a large audience. The negative aspects of written communication is that there are no provisions for feedback and the sender will not be able to know if the message was received, read and understood. Written communications are used for the following reasons:

- Conveying complex information – it can be written with the aid of graphs, illustrations and other visual data t hat aids understanding.
- Reaching your intended reader – It could be easier to reach your reader by written correspondence due to no information on phone number.
- Providing proof of the communication – for legal or reference purposes.
- Ensuring confidentiality of information – some information cannot be relayed on phone and sometimes by e – mail, so a correspondence with 'confidential' or 'personal' may be more effective.
- Providing convenience for the reader – He/she can read it at his /her time and any location.
- Accelerate the response to the communication – It would be effective to reply written correspondence with reference to the previous one to ensure clarity and completeness.
- Planning your message – It allows you time to revise and organize your thoughts before expressing them.
- Saving time and money – Written communication may be less expensive and time consuming than personal visits and phone calls.
- Stressing the importance of communication – People may attach more importance and effort to letter written than phone calls. It can also display thoughtfulness.
- Aiding in distributing the same information to several people – it is faster to photocopy written correspondence and sent it to many individual than making calls or visits each at a time.
- Translating international communication – It allows reader to translate correspondence properly and accurately in the case of foreign language correspondences that phone calls or face to face.

Nonverbal communication skills are essential for sending and decoding message with emotional content; friendliness, apologies, respect, acceptance, rejection are only communicated effectively by nonverbal communication complimented by verbal communication. When the verbal and nonverbal communication disagree, the receiver is likely to pay attention to the nonverbal alone. Nonverbal communication include.

- Body movement and gestures – Posture can indicate attentiveness s or lack of interest. Gesture can also add or detract from verbal messages; hand gestures can help emphasis points, but fidgeting signals that the speaker is nervous and lack confidence. Also different cultures place different meanings on gestures, like thumbs up is OK in USA, good in Britain and provocation in Brazil.

- Eye contact – Indicate attentiveness or lack of interest on the part of the sender or receiver in a face – to face conversations on the other hand prolonged eye contact may be interpreted as aggressiveness or inappropriate intimacy. Some cultures find making eye contact with elders or superiors to be rude, while a lack of eye contact in other cultures can indicate dishonesty. It is wise to make eye contact sparingly in business conversations. (e.g culture: China and Japan no eye contactwith superior)
- Touch – Indicates like, acceptance and friendship and is a very powerful signal. A firm handshake indicates enthusiasm and confidence while a weak one states other wise. The use of touch in business has to be very cautious, unwanted touching in the USA can lead to complaint of sexual harassment. Some cultures encourage touch, like the French and kissing on the cheek when greet friends and business associates.
- Facial expression – Reveals the emotional state of an individual such as fear, hate and confusion. A smile and firm hand shake is a good way to establish positive connection with a new acquaintance.

- Physical Distance – Individuals regulate the physical distance between themselves and others while communicating. There is a tendency to stand close to friends, intimate partners and family, but further back with business and casual social acquaintances. Being too close or too far away from an individual can cause discomfort and a high possibility of miscommunication. Different cultures have different acceptable standards, for example people in Venezuela tend to stand closer to business associates unlike in the U. S. A and backing away is considered rude in Venezuela when communicating.
- Tone of voice – such as pitch, loudness, speed and clarity of speech can indicate emotions such as attentiveness, friendliness,, anger, or fear. In business communicating confidence is vital to build credibility, therefore it is wise to practice speaking clearly, emphasizing key words, and the use various speed to keep audiences interest and attentive. Talking in monotone will convey lack of interest and boredom, reducing the audiences' Interest in listening to the verbal communication

Nonverbal cues are very powerful, making it crucial that you pay attention to your actions, as well as the nonverbal cues of those around you. If, during your meeting, participants begin to doodle or chat amongst themselves, they are no longer paying attention to you: your message has become boring or your delivery is no longer engaging. You also need to be mindful of cultural differences when using or interpreting nonverbal cues.

While eye contact, facial expressions, posture, gesture, clothing and space are obvious nonverbal communication cues, others strongly influence interpretation of messages, including how the message is delivered. This means paying close attention to your tone of voice, even your voice's overall loudness and its pitch.

Be mindful of your own nonverbal cues, as wll as the nonverbal cues of those around you. Keep your messages short and concise. This means preparing in advance whenever possible. And for the spontaneous meeting, it means thinking before you speak.

Review Questions

1. 1. Discuss realistically, is MBWA practiced by African managers, give examples. Do the Africa culture /mindset hinder its application? Will you practice it in the future?
2. Discuss. Is it ethical to read employee mails, and monitor their internet activities? Is it ethical or legal to use company computer during work hours to go to Web sites of personal interest
3. Workmate n your department always looks and acts hostile towards you, there are allegations that this individual is even spreading rumors about you. Discuss

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Unit 4
Written communication

4.1 Introductions

A business person can not afford the time and expense of personal visits to each and everyone he transacts business with in different parts of the world, so he has to rely on written correspondence or phone calls. Written correspondence helps him to keep in touch with clients and business associates and to preserve on paper, his conservation with them as a reference. The business letter acts as the paper representation of the business person and his organisation, its appearance and presentation is vital to the image the client and business associates form of both the business person and the organisation he or she represents. Business letters facilitate two main things:

- **To conduct business.** Over 85% of business is conducted partly or wholly by mail (post and email), due to this, business letters are extremely important. It is the basic means by which goods and services are exchanged freely.
- **To build goodwill.** When most businesses are sold, the buyer may pay more for it than the worth of the physical asset; he also pays for the good reputation of the business which is the good will. The reputation is built over several years and has to be maintained as it is built on. Goodwill is not tangible, but is very important, building and maintaining goodwill is one of the major tasks of a business letter.

4.2 Goodwill

Good will is the favourable attitude, friendly feeling that people have towards another person or towards an organisation or business. Goodwill is an intangible commodity that ultimately will result in increase business for you and your organisation. When people feel an organisation is interested in them, appreciates them, respects them and considers their welfare as important, then that organisation has their goodwill. Personal touch of sincere goodwill messages and letters help to establish good human relations both internally and externally.

Internal goodwill letters are written to employees and other associates as it encourages cooperation and makes the organisation flow smoother. It can be written by any individual in the organisation. External goodwill letters are written to clients to show interest in them and their well being. It can also be written to vendors and business associates in other companies. Goodwill letters help to prevent perceived indifferences that customers feel about organisations; it is normally an unexpected gesture from the organisation to the client, staff, etc. Examples of goodwill letters that announce invite or welcome, letters that express get well wishes or sympathy and letters that maintain or reactive business relationships.
Why do people write letters? What types do they write? **Discuss**

4.3 Types of Business Letters

Employees, management and other members of the business organisation write various types of letters, these letters may be to ask for information, advice or favours, to send information, to collect money, to apologise, to sell, to apply for a job etc. There are endless types of written letters, while some letters are easier to write than others, you can not say one is more important than the others. The following are the most frequently written types of business letters;

- **Letters of inquiry**. These are letters simply requesting information, literature, favours, appointments, reservations, etc; secretaries and personal assistants normally write such letters for their employers.
- **Order letters**. These are letters written to order products and services. Many large companies use a form called a purchase order, but small businesses order by means of order letters.
- **Request response letters**. These are letters written to reply to the letters of inquiries received, by the organisation. Letters answering requests create opportunities for the business to make friends and build goodwill. They are therefore considered to be one of the more important communications in business.
- **Claim and adjustment letters**. These are letters written to make corrections to errors or adjustments to initial agreements. Claim letters are somewhat complaint letters written by an inconvenienced or offended writer in protest. Adjustment letters are written in response to claim letters and contain detailed information on why the claims will not be adjusted or an apology for the inconvenience caused.
- **Credit and collection letters.** A large percentage of business transactions are handled on credit basis. Credit letters are written to request for credit facilities from an organisation and if the requesting organisation has a bad credit risk the request will be denied. Collection letters are written due to the fact that some organisations (and people) given credit privileges violate it, the letter acts as a reminder in more serious cases, as a threat.
- **Sales letters**. All business people write sales letters because it automatically becomes a show case for the business person and his/her business. Sales letter are specifically written for the purpose of selling products and services. Other sales letters come under the heading of promotion letters; these letters initiate friendship and create good relationships between the company and its customers and potential customers.
- **Employment letters.** They deal with the personnel of the organisation, they are written by both the employers and employees. Employment letters include letters of inquiring about position, letters of application, letter thanking an employer for an interview, letters of resignation, letters of employment etc.
- **Social business letters.** These types of letters are written to maintain friendly relationships with customers and business acquaintances. These include letters of congratulations, of sympathy, invitations, of friendship and appreciation. They always show thoughtfulness on the part of the writer.

The standard elements of a business letter include

1 – Heading

- Date
- Inside address
- Salutation
- Body
- Complimentary close
- Signature block

1.Heading – the heading of the letter shows its source; the organisations name, address and phone number. Most organisations have printed letter head that contain the heading.

2. Dateline – Insert the date; the letter was written 13 lines from the top or 1 blank line beneath the bottom of the letterhead.

3. Inside address – The inside address identifies the recipient of the letter and is separated from the date by one blank line. The amount of space separating the inside address from the date may be adjusted to suit the length of the letter.

4. Salutation - The way you address the recipient is governed by your relationship with the person. If you have not met or if the relationship is a formal one, use his or her title and surname.

5. Body – The body of your letter will usually occupy the greatest amount of space. It should be simple spaced with a blank line separating it from the preceding and following parts of the letter. You should also separate each paragraph of the letter by a blank line.

6. Complimentary – the complimentary close is a single word or phase, separated from the body by a blank line your choice provides a way to create just the desired tone "very truly yours" seem outdated "sincerely" and cordially are widely accepted closings.

7. Signature block – place the signature block four lines below the complimentary close include your name and title.

Additional Elements

In some letters you may have to include additional that is not part of the standard elements. There are special ways of promoting this information. That allows you to convey specific managers without cluttering up the body of the letter.

Addressee Notation – This line should be printed above the leading, separated by two blank lines. It is used to indicate any special handling the better should receive common notifications include "URGENT" "CONFIDENTIAL" and "PERSONAL", the entire addressee notification should be in capital letters to emphasize its impatience.

Attention line – Attention line is a means of directing your letter to a specific department or position title when you do not know name of the person for whom your message is intended.

ATTENTION" CREDIT DEPARTMENT
: FOOD SERVICES
: Ms James

Subject line – The subject line provide a clear indication of the topic of a letter which is especially important when you are to an office that receives a high volume of mail. The subject line will increase the chances that your message will get the right sort of attention and that it will be easy to file and locate.

There are two possible positions for the subject line; it may be positioned just below the salutation, separated by a blank line. Alternatively, it can be above the salutation, in the position that an addressee notation might go in another type of correspondence.

Reference initials – When the person who processes the letter is someone other than its signer, that persons initials are usually included below the signature block. If the writers name is included in the signature block, only the preparer's initials need appear as a reference. If the letter is written on behalf of a company and does not bear the signature of an individual sender, then the initials of both the writer (in capitals) and the preparer (in lowercase letters) should be included. Either of the following forms is acceptable.

Enclosure line – An enclosure line indicates that materials a company the letter itself. This serves as a useful check to make sure that anything that was supposed to be included in the mailing is indeed, enclosed. It also provides a permanent record about any enclosed material

The enclosure notation appears at the bottom of the letter, a line or two below the signature block and reference initials, if any. The notation may simply state "Enclosures" if the specific contents are described in the body of the letter, or it may specify either the number of enclosure ("enclosures; 2") or their actual contents ("Enclosure: Rate schedule").

Copy line – A copy notation less the addressee know who else will be receiving the letter. The notation should be set flush with the left marginal, below any reference initials and enclosure notation. The following forms are commonly used to indicate a copy notation:

cc: Rebeca Haynes
pc: Rebecca Haynes
c: Rebecca Haynes
copy to Rebecca Haynes

Mailing line – if the letter is sent by means other than first-class mail (e.g., certified mail, special delivery, fax), it may be desirable to indicate this fact. The notation may be placed in either of two locations: at the top of the letter, just above the inside address; or below the signature block and any other notations described in this section.

Postscript – A postscript (ps) id traditionally an afterthought that occurs to the sender after the body is written but before the letter is sent. When taken in this sense, postscripts should be avoided: if a message is important enough to dignify with a letter, you should compose it thoughtfully.

A second use for postscripts is to emphasize or separate an idea from the body of the letter. You might, for example, append personal congratulations for an accomplishment or thanks for a favour to the body of a businesslike message. Because of their "by the way" nature, postscripts are more appropriate when the sender and addressee have a familiar relationship than in a letter to a stranger.

Second – Page Header – if a letter is longer than one page, a heading at the left margin top of the second and following sheets will help make your correspondence easy to identify. Subsequent pages should contain the name of the addressee, the page number, and the date. Each of these elements may be on a separate line:

Mr. Eldon Press
July 22, 2012
Page 2

They may be combined on a single line set flush with the margin
Mr Eldon Press, July 22, 2012, page 1

Or they may be separated by tabs and centred on the page.
Mr. Eldon Press 2, July, 2012

Letter Formats – Most businesses letters follow one of two formats: the block format .and the modified – block format. The main differences between these styles are the placement of elements and the way they are indented. Either format is acceptable for a business letter, although some organisations may have a standard style that should be followed in any correspondence written on company letterhead.

In the block format, each element and paragraph is set flush with the left margin. In the modified – block format, the date, complimentary close, and the signature clock appear just to the right of the center of the page. In this format the first line of each paragraph in the body may also be indented five spaces, although this feature is not required.

Envelopes – The envelope that contains your letter will be the first thing the receiver sees, so it should look just as professional as the correspondence contained inside. In addition, a clearly addressed envelope minimizes the chances that your message will be lost on its way to the addressee.

The address on the envelope should match the content and style of the inside address on the letter it contains. Since the postal service routes mail by reading from the bottom of the address upwards, your letter should start with the most specific information and add increasingly more general information on each succeeding line:

- Name of the addressee
- Department or group
- Name of the organization
- Name of the building or mail-stop number
- Street address and suite number or post office box number
- City, state, or province, and zip code or postal code
- Country (if the letter is being mailed overseas).

Envelope format - Of stationery folded in thirds. If your correspondence is too bulky to fit easily in such an envelope, don't try to cram it in. Instead, mail it in a larger envelope. The address on a large piece of correspondence will look most professional if you print out and attach a mailing label. If you use an envelope without the organizations return address printed on it, use a printer for your return address.

While the recipient isn't likely to notice that a letter is properly folded, a poorly folded one can create an unwelcome impression. For standard 8 ½ by 11 stationery, fold the sheet (or sheets) in thirds. Begin by folding the bottom third upward and creasing it neatly. Then fold the top third downward, leaving a quarter inch or so of space between the top of the page and the first crease. Finally, insert the letter with the open end at the top and the lose flap facing out. When enclosing sheets in a large envelope, place the letter the rear of the envelope so that it is immediately visible when opened.

4.6 Business Report

Various reports are carried out in thousands of modern businesses in order operate efficiently in almost all positions ranging from management to public relations or accounts, report will be required, this is due to the fact that report are used to monitor and control operations and the facilitated effective decision making.

A report by definition is an impartial objective planned presentation of fact to one or more individuals within or external to the organisation for the purpose of conducting business. Normally, report carries more complex information than those in letters and memorandums.

Many Businesses are so large and complex that their operations is scattered throughout the city, nation and event international boundaries. In order for the business owner, manager or the head of department to get information on the business activities, he gets it through writer report which is called business report. Report very due to the nature of information they carry.
A report is presentation of fact, information and ideas. These Presentation can be made periodically (daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly) or they can occur just once in the organisation as special request. These are many types of report serving different purposes, some are analytical report, some are report of an experiment, and others give the results of a survey investigation, while some tell the progress being made in the business or in a certain area of the business.

Report may be sent from employees to management from the organisations to the stockholder, they can go to customers, supervisors and even to the staff. Memorandums may be used for report written for internal use in the organisation, but longer report that go to top management and external people tends to be more formal in nature and is accompanied by a letter of transmission. The letter of transmission gives details on the purpose, scope of the report and acknowledgement of the sources of information that help in its compilation. Business report can be classified according to the following;

- Frequency – periodical or special
- Origin – authorised or voluntary (accountability)
- Function – to inform or to analyse
- Subject – usually in keeping with the department of origin (financial report, performance report).

- Formality – formal or informal in nature
- Type or appearance – letter from or memo form.

It should be noted that the above classification does not place report in to mutually exclusive categories, some report fall into several classes eg monthly authorised analytical reports in the form of a memo form the finance department. The purposes of reports canal so vary extensively, but can fall more commonly into one of the following:

- To assist management in running the organisation
- Report become permanent record and source of reference
- Report can provide information to interested parties such as articles in the newspapers journals
- Report help to identity, and recommend solutions to problems or issues in the organisation.

Types of reports

- **Informative Reports:** Report that give facts and other information on some aspects of the organisation, such as sales report, performance report, bids submitted etc. These reports can be periodic or progressive in occurrence.
- **Analytical reports.** Reports that examine situations, problems, occurrences, draws conclusions and makes recommendation along with the provision of data or information. These types of report can include justification reports, feasibility reports, and proposals.

Common Faults in Reports

Some of the faults commonly found in badly written reports are as follows:

- Title of report not well conceived:
- Not clearly indicating what the report is all about.
- Purpose of report not clear.
- Target readership not clear: It is not clear to whom the report is addressed or for whom the report is meant.
- Report not adequately addressing needs of intended reader
- Major issues forming the subject matter of the report not all covered.
- Report strays to not-so-relevant issues.
- Issues treated in a shallow way; not enough depth of coverage.
- Not enough information given to support issues raised.
- Sources of authentic information not disclosed.
- Report structure not adequately guiding the reader.
- Materials placed in inappropriate section of report
- Style and structure not adapted to type of report or readership.
- Language used inappropriate for the particular readership: Too complex, offensive, etc.
- Grammar and construction poor, with such problems as verbosity, circumlocution, unnecessarily flowery language, etc.
- Report unnecessarily long or detailed.
- Issues not flowing logically.
- Format not attractive to reader.

- Report not dated.
- Unrelated subject matter complied in the same report.
- Report inadequately edited, and therefore having many errors.
- Report inappropriately package, in terms of type of paper used, type of cover type of binding, and so on.
- Delayed completion of report writing such that it does not adequately bring about the desired effect.

Some of the common causes of the above faults are:

- Report written too much in a hurry.
- Report written without adequate reference information.
- Report written by someone inadequately knowledgeable on the subject.
- Report written without adequate research or preparation.
- Time used for writing not suitable enough.
- Inadequate knowledge and skill in report writing.
- Carefree attitude.

Preparation for Report Writing

- Try to get concise terms of reference so that the purpose of the report is clear to you, and so that only the information required is sought. This will also clarify the necessary contents of the report, and guard against irrelevance, unnecessary detail, or failure to adequately cover issues, which need to be covered.
- Identify clearly the readership to be targeted – so that you can tune the report to their needs.
- What are the specific needs of the readership?
- How do you want the reader to react to the report?
- What is likely to be reader's difficulties in understanding the report? (E.g.- language, lack of familiarity with subject…)
- What are likely to be his attitudes towards the report? (Skepticism,Ready acceptance…).
- What will the reader do with the information in the report?

Information Collection

It is almost always necessary to collect information of one type or another for the preparation of a report. The process of obtaining the required information normally covers:

- Identifying what information is required, and deciding on how much information needs to be collected, based on the expected value of the information: Is it essential, merely desirable, or unimportant?
- Identify the best source of each type of information.
- Deciding on the best method of collecting information. Is it through reading literature, interviewing people, administering questionnaires, or carrying out some special analysis?
- Obtaining authority for collection of the information, when necessary.
- Actual collection of the information.
- Verification of the information where necessary.
- Analyzing and processing the information to the level and formal required for the report.

At all stages of information handling the confidentiality, which the information deserves ought to be kept.

Another useful tip on information collection and processing is that it is useful to save all working data up to the final stage of the report writing exercise. You never know when you will require the data.

Structure of a report

A report should have a beginning, middle and end. If the report is lengthy or complex it will also need a summary of conclusions and recommendations**.** There may also be appendices containing detailed data and statistics.

Beginning

The introduction should explain: why the report has been written, its aims, its terms of reference, and why it should be read. It should then state the sources of information upon which the report was based. Finally, if the report is divided into various sections, the arrangement and labeling of these sections should be explained.

Middle

The middle of the report should contain the facts you have assembled and your analysis of those facts. The analysis should lead logically to the conclusion and recommendation included in the final section.

N.B: One of the most common weaknesses in report is for the facts not to lead on naturally to the conclusion; the other is for the conclusion not to be supported by the facts.

Summaries the facts and your observations. If you have identified alternative course of action. Set out the pros and cons of each one, but make it quite clear which one you favour. Don’t leave your readers in suspense.

End

The final section of the report should set out your conclusions and recommendations, stating how each of them will help to achieve the stated aims of the report or overcome any weaknesses revealed by the analytical studies.

Summary

In a long or complex report it is very helpful to provide a summary of conclusions and recommendations. It concentrates the reader’s mind and can be used as agenda in presenting and discussing the report. It is useful to cross-reference the items to the relevant paragraphs or sections of the report.

Writing the Report

The **introduction** should contain:

- The name and title of the recipient
- In some case an appended distribution list may be added, divided into sections. I.e. for action – for information.
- The date of the report
- A classification, e.g., secret, confidential, private (this is not always applicable).
- An indication of the broad extent of the report, its composition and significance.
- Some terms of reference (for the purpose of the report and the extent to which the report satisfies the terms of reference).
- Any background information which will help the reader to understand the report
- A summary of results, conclusions or recommendations.
- The arrangement or the main sections.
- A definition of any technical terms used

There should be a definite break between the introduction and the start of the report. The introduction should be as interesting as possible, highlighting points of particular significance or benefit. Care must be taken, however, not to dramatize or distort the facts

In the **body of the report**, it is advisable to concentrate on the unity of one section at a time. The following list of steps may be useful in the writing of the report.

- State facts and indicate source.
- Analyze facts
- State conclusions or recommendations.
- Describe the procedure of investigation or study.
- Refer to or summarize matter fully presented in an Appendix

At this stage it is as well to forge ahead from point to point and maintain a flowing style, point of grammar and revision can come latter when the draft is completed.

The **conclusion** and introduction are closely interdependent and a good conclusion should do at least some if not all the following:

- Summaries the discussion in the main sections
- Summaries findings and inferences.
- Make recommendations based on the findings
- State clearly any action to be taken and say by whom it should be taken.
- Emphasize any significant points in the subject matter
- Refer briefly to the wider consideration outside the terms of reference of the report, which may have some bearing

Points raised in the introduction will need to be expanded in the conclusion if they were only briefly mentioned in the introduction.

The conclusion should have a section heading of its own to divide it from the main body of the report.

In some cases, it is often useful to place the conclusion directly after the introduction.

This is especially useful when a section of your readers do not want to read or are incapable of understanding the technical parts of the report but nevertheless require the conclusion or recommendations quickly.

A table of contents at the beginning of the report will help people to read the main headings without going right through the report. A table of contents may be compiled as follows:-

- Copy the numbered sections and subsection headings
- Indicate the relationship between heading and sub-headings by indentations.
- Add separate lists of tables and illustrations if necessary
- If the report is to be re-typed later, leave space for page numbers to be filled in by the typist.

A synopsis of the whole report is often helpful to encourage people to read. It should precede the introduction if it is included.

The separate division must be put in some logical order and number to allow for easy referencing in any discussion in the report.

The material in each section should be put in the best sequence to facilitate understanding of the report.

Conclusions or recommendations should be in agreement with the facts. These conclusions may be grouped at the end of the report to form a natural conclusion or they may be distributed among the sections to which they belong. It is often useful to state conclusions and recommendations section by section and restate them at the end of the report to add emphasis to them.

The use of **footnotes** is often advisable, as it allows extra information to be provided without interrupting the natural flow of the narrative or argument. Footnotes should be as brief as possible and should appear on the same page as the text to which they refer. There should be some system of identifying more than one footnote. This is often done by numbering them.

Appendices perform a similar function to the footnote by removing distracting details. An appendix, however, normally provides for more information and in fact, can be quite an elaborate piece of work in itself. Different people may be reading the report and some will want more information than others. Appendices should be such that they cater for the needs of the various types of readers.

Numbering or lettering of sections is often of great help. A system frequently employed is the numbering of all paragraphs from beginning to end independent of any division in the report. This method makes cross-referencing more accurate than referring to the chapter, page, or section.

Another common system is to number chapters, sections and subsections, in the following manner:
1.0 For Chapter Heading
1.1 For the heading of the first section of Chapter1.
1.1.1 For the heading of the first sub- section of the first section of chapter 1.
(i) or (a) etc for paragraphs which require numbering within a sub-section.

Illustrations can be extremely useful and can often convey very simply what would take a great deal of description. Illustrations should be referred to at least once in the text and should be accompanied by an identifying caption of title. If there is more than one illustration, they should be numbered for reference. The illustration should be possible to read the text and observe the illustration without turning a page. This of course, is not always possible, especially if the illustration is referred to more than once. In this case, it should be places close to the first reference.

Editing a Report

When the rough draft has been completed, it should, if possible, first be put aside for a short time. It should then be examined as a whole to judge the overall impression. The heading, references and appendices should be checked.

Consider the title, Table of Contents, Introduction and Conclusion in relation to one another. Are the parts in agreement with and in proportion to one another? Has emphasis been placed on the correct points? Do the Heading and the Table of Contents agree?

Weigh every statement in the text critically and in detail, make sure the grammar, spelling and punctuation is correct. Make sure you only use words and terms (unless they are specifically explained) that the people reading your report can understand. Aim for simplicity.

Read the text out loud or to somebody else and make sure it reads smoothly. Be sure it says what you want it to say and be sure people understand what you are saying, not only in sense but also feeling.

Check the illustrations to ensure clarity. Are the captions pertinent? Check to see if a sketch could not more easily understand other long-winded explanations in the text.

If possible, submit the draft to a person qualified to give constructive criticism.

Remember a report is a written communication and is only successful if the reader understands exactly what the writer is THINKING. If there is any misunderstanding. The fault lies with the writer for not constructing the report in a way in which the reader could understand.

4.7 Components of Business Reports

As with other form of writing in organisation the formats vary basing on the preference of it management and the influence of organisational culture. Most formal report generally contains the following parts;

Introduction: The introduction includes the background statement as to why the report was written, now the data was gathered, what the report does not include the materials and equipments used. These information help the reader better evaluate the findings and conclusions of the report.

Characteristics of a good report

- Title clear and descriptive, presented on a separate cover page.
- Purpose clear. (Try to write down the purpose in one sentence. This is a help to understanding the subject, and leads to the exclusion of unnecessary information. The choice of the title should make the purpose plain.)
- Language appropriate to readership (As plain as possible; Easy to understand and free of unnecessary jargon; Adequately descriptive; Not offensive; Good grammar and sentence construction.)
- Subject matter adequately covered: In breadth and depth.
- Free from unnecessary details
- Addressing specific needs of readership
- Clear on actions required to be taken by reader
- Based on factual information
- Sources of information relating to the main issues in the report indicated.
- Issues logically arranged within the report
- Conclusions and recommendations based on adequate information and analysis
- Free from typing and editing errors.

Summary. The summary is a brief presentation of the findings of the report and it is placed to facilitate busy executives who do not have the time to read the whole report. The summary helps the executives with quick decision making capabilities; the details can be read letter on.

Body. The body of the report contains the detailed presentation of the facts that has been gathered. The facts must be carefully assembled and neatly presented. The reader of the report depends solely on the writer's integrity.

Conclusion and Recommendation. The writer's conclusion tells the executive what the data gathered means and what he thinks should be done based on the findings. The nature of the report and the wishes of the person who requested it can determine where a recommendation is needed or not. Sometimes the recommendations are rejected, adjusted or accepted and implemented.

It is important to note, that most formal reports are written in the third person; the readers of these reports are mainly interested in the third person; the readers of these reports are mainly in the information gathered. The closer the writer sticks to the facts the more objective he will report them, and the more valuable his report will be to those who make the final decisions. Quality typing and set up as with a forms at writing will increase the forcefulness of the communication by helping the reader rapidly absorb the key point. Longer and more formal reports usually consist the following;

- The cover
- Title page
- Letter of transmittal
- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Summary (executive summary)
- Body of the report
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Supplementary materials or appendix

Also included may be bibliography; special supplementary or complimentary materials like folders, photographs, books, maps etc. A report must always be signed and should have the names and titles at those who compiled it either on their respective areas of contribution or at the end of the report.

4.9 Memorandums (Memo)

Memorandums can be used to request information, reinforce agreements, and clarify provision messages or acts as a short report. The memo is the equivalent of the business letter in internal communication and it presents about 50% of all written communication in organisations. Internal communication being all forms of communication that takes place within the organisation. Memos are used to communicate with other employees of the same organisation regardless of where the employee is located (same building or in a branch far away). It can be taken by hand via internal mail systems of an organisation (network, fax) I can be delivered by hand to departments, pigeon holes or placed on a notice board in the organisation.

Because of the interoffice memo form has been developed to save time, the formality of an inside address, salutation and complimentary closings are all omitted. The tone and manner that memos are written depends on the preference of the management of the company. Traditionally, memos tend to be formal and written in third person to avoid confusing facts and opinions. However, the trend is moving a way from the stiff, formal writing styles of old. The tones of memos are memos are more recently influenced by the position of the writer in relation to the reader, but still the tone varies from organisation to organization depending on their culture.

Style and format

Most memos should be short and to the point, although they should never be so brus due as to seem rude.

The body of a memo should resemble a letter in appearance. Single-spaced, with blank lines separating paragraphs. Ideally the memo will be no longer than one page since lengthier one may not get the kind of full reading you want.

Elements
Every memo should contain the same basic elements

1. Heading
2. Date
3. Addresses' name
4. Senders' name
5. Subject

Heading – Every memo should be identified by the heading MEMO or MEMORUNDUM in capital letters centred at the top of the page.

Date – The date should indicate when the memo was sent, not when it was written. If the information in the memo changes before the memo is sent, the content should be adjusted and the date should be changed.

Addressee's name – In a memo, it is usually not necessary to use courtesy title like "Mr" or "Dr" with the addressee name. You should include a courtesy title only if you would use the title when speaking to the addresses in person.

The senders name – use the same format for your name as you do for the addressee's name, usually minus and courtesy title ("Mr", "Mrs"), if the recipient does not know you, or if it would be helpful to add the weight of your position in the organization, include your department and / or your personal title.

The subject of the memo – the "subject" line helps the receiver identify the nature of your manage quickly and makes it easier to file the memo. Try to keep the subject line brief – Instead of saying "results of the survey you requested on customer satisfaction" simply put "results of customer satisfaction survey".

Letters
Whereas memos are used for correspondence, letters are the right format when you are sending printed correspondence to people outside of your organization.

Standard element – the letter below illustrates the standard element in a business letter. Using the proper format is not just a social nicely: each element has a good reason for existing.

Heading Plot 8719 Weldon Drive
Old Kampala, Kampala
Date January 12, 2006

Inside address Claims Department

	Trinton health Insurance Co P. O. Box 27212 Kampala, Uganda
Attention line	Attention: Mr. Newsome
(Salutation)	Dear Mr. Newsome
Subject line	Subject: Policy No. 27.445
Body	Thank you for helping to clarify my question about the delay in paying my claim for physical therapy arising from my recent tennis injury. As you requested in our phone conversation today, I am enclosing the following information. i. A copy of the most recent statement from my physical therapist. ii. A letter from the personnel director at Carlton industries verifying that I was a full-time employee at the time of my injury. It has been four months since I just filed my claim for these services. As you can imagine I am anxious to be reimbursed for the expense as provided in my policy. If you need any further information, please write or phone me immediately.
Complimentary	Sincerely XXXXXXX
Signature blocks	Geoffrey HSU
Enclosure line	Enclosure (2)
Copy line	Copy: Personnel office, Cerlton Industries

4.10 Benefits of memos

The memo is valuable for internal communication due to the following:

- Carries a special formality and gets friendly reception (because both writer and reader belong to the same organisation), this creates a cordial relationship amongst the two people.
- Provides written record of message
- Allows several individuals to receive the same message
- Communications in all direction, upwards to managers, supervisors, executives to subordinates, laterally among people of equal rank, teams and departments required.
- Reduces time and cost required to prepare communication
- Can use a variety of delivery systems including hands, fact and e-mail.

Purposes of memos

The main and most important reason for using memos as interoffice correspondence is to save on time. In business time is money, memos are not as demands as letter and they enable the writer to just four on the content. Memos are use for the identical reasons letters are used externally to the organisations. Memos fulfil the following purpose: Transmit information, instruct, announce, congratulate, express gratitude, inform, direct peoples, request, respond and confirm to recommend and to persuade.

Many organisations have the policy of putting all important communications in writing, this will act as a record, reference and is always field, in this case the memo will act as the transmit all letters (transmittal memo). Memos can be printed on plain paper using a stand format or template or they may be written on pre-printed forms.

A good memo layout makes the message appealing to the reader and allow quick of details. Memos are usually divided into three main parts.

Beginning: Introduction purpose. The opening paragraph of a memo is important because it states the purpose of the memo, identifies the specific problems or project, provides backgrounds information and gives an overview of the information contained in the memo.

The opening of a memo must be reader focused due to the fact that it determines if the message will be reader or ignored. Using the altitude, positive tone will all make the memo readers attention: using convincing, positive tone will all make the memo readable to the reader by referring the reader to a previous communication (Another memo, phone call, e-mail, and fax or voice mail), a meeting or a topic of mutual interest.

Middle: Message/Discussion. The middle section is where the presentation of the message is made, in this section questions are answered, supporting information is provided and valid explanations are given for the purpose of the memo. The following should be achieved in the middle section of the memo.

- The information meets the needs of the receiver.
- The information answers or solves the problems identified
- The information incorporates 7c's

Ending: Conclusion/Recommendation. The ending of the memo should be a separate paragraph that does or more at the following:

- Restates the memo's purpose
- Highlights key information
- Summarise the main points of the message
- Interprets the material presented
- Makes recommendations
- Suggest future action
- Express goodwill thought

The conclusion must correlate directly to the statement of purpose in the opening and should support the fact presented in the middle of the memo.

Letter Formats – Most businesses letters follow one of two formats: the block format .and the modified – block format. The main differences between these styles are the placement of elements and the way they are indented. Either format is acceptable for a business letter, although some organisations may have a standard style that should be followed in any correspondence written on company letterhead.

In the block format, each element and paragraph is set flush with the left margin. In the modified – block format, the date, complimentary close, and the signature clock appear just to the right of the center of the page. In this format the first line of each paragraph in the body may also be indented five spaces, although this feature is not required.

Envelopes – The envelope that contains your letter will be the first thing the receiver sees, so it should look just as professional as the correspondence contained inside.In addition, a clearly addressed envelope minimizes the chances that your message will be lost on its way to the addressee.

The address on the envelope should match the content and style of the inside address on the letter it contains. Since the postal service routes mail by reading from the bottom of the address upwards, your letter should start with the most specific information and add increasingly more general information on each succeeding line:

- Name of the addressee
- Department or group
- Name of the organization
- Name of the building or mail-stop number
- Street address and suite number or post office box number
- City, state, or province, and zip code or postal code
- Country (if the letter is being mailed overseas).

Envelope format - Of stationery folded in thirds. If your correspondence is too bulky to fit easily in such an envelope, don't try to cram it in. Instead, mail it in a larger envelope. The address on a large piece of correspondence will look most professional if you print out and attach a mailing label. If you use an envelope without the organizations return address printed on it, use a printer for your return address.

While the recipient isn't likely to notice that a letter is properly folded, a poorly folded one can create an unwelcome impression. For standard 8 ½ by 11 stationery, fold the sheet (or sheets) in thirds. Begin by folding the bottom third upward and creasing it neatly. Then fold the top third downward, leaving a quarter inch or so of space between the top of the page and the first crease. Finally, insert the letter with the open end at the top and the lose flap facing out. When enclosing sheets in a large envelope, place the letter the rear of the envelope so that it is immediately visible when opened.

4.11 E-MAIL

Since the first message was sent via the Internet in 1972, e-mail has become a common and indispensable tool. Since you are likely to use this channel more than any other form of written communication, it is important to use it well.

Overall Considerations

Because e-mail is still a relatively new type of business communication, the rules for using it are still developing. You will be wise to pay close attention to your company's policies on e-mail use. When deciding whether and how to use e-mail as a channel for your business communication, keep these points in mind.

Treat every e-mail as a public, permanent document – E-mail only appears to be as casual and transitory as conversation. A misaddressed message can lead to embarrassment ands humiliation. Despite what you might assume, e-mail is not private: it has the potential to be forwarded (purposely or accidentally) without your permission or knowledge. E-mail is written communication, and as such it can survive as a permanent record. Even if you delete a message, it can remain available to employers, other businesses, and courts for years. In fact, e-mail has the same weight as a letter or memo sent on company letterhead.

Don't use company e-mail for personal business – Use your own personnel e-mail account for private correspondence, chanting with friends, and other non business exchanges. E-mails sent from your company address can have the same effect as written messages sent on company letterhead. You wouldn't use official stationery to write to friends or family, especially if there was a chance your message might be forwarded to others who you don't want to see it. One expert advised thinking of e-mails as "giant, moving billboards, exposing our every thought to the cyber world".

Be cautious about using e-mail for delicate topics. Don't use e-mail to avoid personal discussions that would better be handled by phone or in person. E-mail is not an appropriate forum for reprimands, negative appraisals, firings, and resignations. Highly sensitive topics like these are best handled face-to-face. E-mail has the potential to be misunderstood, so avoid using it in a hurry or to convey sarcasm or humor if the receiver is likely to misunderstand. Stop, think, and wait to send an e-mail if you are angry or frustrated. Once a message is sent, it is irretrievable and their impact on your career could be disastrous if your message was not well thought out. Never send information you are not sure is accurate (e.g., cancelled meetings, changed deadline, budget figures).

Don't use e-mail to impose on others. Just because you can send e-mail messages quickly doesn't mean you should. Avoid the temptation to send unnecessary messages to others or forward ones that the recipient won't appreciate. Most business people already are overwhelmed with an e-mail in-box leaded with correspondence. Don't add unnecessarily to this clutter.

Many people see e-mail as a way to flatten hierarchies in business, and it can be a way to reach important people, expedite projects, and reduce time otherwise spent in meetings. However, pat attention to your corporate culture. Despite these advantages, it is often safer to follow the regular chain of command. Sending an e-mail to your CEO suggesting a new procedure for your division without first checking with your immediate supervisor could spell disaster for your career.

The Netiquette home page (http:www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html) offers a complete guide to e-mail etiquette. This site presents the opportunity to read the basics, take a quiz, and receive e-mail update. Net User Guidelines and Netiquette (http:ns1.fau.edu/netiquette/net) also has practical information for users of e-mail, newsgroup, and other internet applications.

Format

The form of your message is just as important as its content. These guidelines will help you create e-mail that accomplishes its goals.

Be mindful about using special formatting. If you and recipient are in the same e-mail system, you have more leeway in formatting your messages. If you are not in the same system, avoid colored backgrounds and different typefaces, as they are often hard to read or may not translate into different systems. The same is true of bold, italics, and other formatting styles; if the recipient is not in the same system as you, these items may be lost or they may turn into meaningless symbols.

Include relevant parts of the original message in your replies. Your recipients may not remember what they wrote to you about or what they wrote to you about or what question they asked you, so it is important to include parts of the original message along with your response. Include only that part of the message that is relevant and that you are responding to. Quoted material is usually marked with <> signs; many programs automatically do this. If the part you must quote is long, put it at the end of your message.

Use separate messages for separate topics. If it is necessary to discuss several topics, consider separate message, each with its own object header. This makes it easier for the recipient to keep track of and respond to each one. If you send and un avoidably long message such as a newsletter, an index at the beginning can help readers scan and find information quickly. If the message is lengthy, perhaps a phone conversation or an in-person chat is warranted.

Be careful when adding attaching. Attachments (e.g., photos, spreadsheets, word processing files) should be used only with a great deal of thought. An attachment may be preferred for a lengthy document, but before you attach consider the receivers. If they use the same e-mail as you, then attachments should download and open easily. However, external recipients may be fearful of viruses and choose not to download attachments.

Recipient may be traveling or checking e-mail from a handheld device that cannot download documents. Downloading graphics takes a lot of time and space. Given these drawbacks, you might ask the recipients if they need to and want to receive the larger documents and verify how they would like to receive it: attachment, fax, or hard copy. When you for use an attachment for necessary and lengthy reports, let the recipient know where to look for the essentials either by highlighting or stating in the body of your message: "See figure on page 4 and summary on page 8".

Elements

Like a traditional memo, every business e-mail should have four parts address, subject line, salutation, close.

Address

Most programmes have the capacity to designated "cc" and "bcc" addresses. CC is variously regarded as "carbon copy," computer copy" or courtesy copy". In any case "cc" tells the recipient of the message who will be receiving copies. The designation "bcc" signifies a blind copy: The person to whom the message is addressed won't know you have sent this copy. Use "cc" when others need and expect copies and when you want the recipient to know that you are sending them.

In reply to a customer's complaint, you might want that customer to see that you are sending your responses regarding safety to all technicians who were part of the problem. Consider a blind copy if you want the person who receives it to read your message, but when knowing that others are seeing it might antagonize the primary addressee. For example, if the technicians would be upset with your announcing the problem to the boss, you might send a bcc copy of the above message to your boss with your notation. "This is how I resolved the complaint I mentioned last week".

Additionally, when you are sending a message to multiple recipients, consider using the blind cc capacity so that others don't need to scroll through the whole list of recipient names.

Subject line

The subject line should be clear and concise. For example, "Don't forget about the survey" is not as useful as "survey deadline tomorrow!" Never leave the subject line blank. Be cautious about forwarding messages unnecessarily , but if you do decide it is necessary to forward something, update the subject line so that others don't need to read "RE : RE: RE", or FW: FW: FW" Clean up the message as well; no one wants to open a message and see scores of addresses and >symbols.

It helps the new reader if you clean up the format, but it is never acceptable to change someone's message when you forward to a third party. Unless a particular type for leave are forwarded to HR), ask the senders permission to forward a message.

Salutation

Without a salutation an e-mail can sound harsh. As one expert pointed out, "Blunt is not businesslike". Dear Mr. Nakayama" or dear Mr. Gina" starts on a coordinal note. Bulk or broadcast messages or those to groups can begin with "Good morning", or "Dear Computer Policy Committee Members".

Close

Wrap up your message with a brief, appropriate close such as "regards," Cordially", Or "thank you". There is no consensus about the advisability of including a complete signature block listing your name, company, phone, fax, website, and address at the end of the message, but most professionals recommended including it. This information allows others to reach you easily, regardless of where they are picking up your message. Cute quotations and graphics in your signature are not advisable for business, unless it is your company slogan or a tag line indicating the work you do.

Style

"Keep it short" is the most important stylistic guideline in crafting a useful e-mail message. Whenever possible, limit e-mail to two or three paragraphs – one screenful of text. Use bullets to make information more readable and accessible. Don't ramble: keep your message clear and as brief as possible. Tell the reader the details and end with the action requested or required.

Although e-mail seems like an informal medium, correct grammar and spelling in business correspondence is important. For better or worse, your messages create an image for you and your company in the readers mind. With friends outside of work, short cuts ("wanna", "sota"), emoticons and chat acronyms LOL (line, but in business they can create problems, especially with strangers. Most e-mail systems have a spelling/grammar checking function, which you should use. However, be sure too supplement these tools to make sure you have chosen the right word (e.g., "its, "versus "it's). For important or longer messages, consider witting the message first in your message with a double space between paragraphs. Don't type in all capital letters since this creates the effect of shouting. Profanity, off-color remarks, and gossip never belong in company e-mail.

Managing the volume of e-mail

Managing the volume of e-mail is a feat. In the year 2005, the average corporate user received over fifty messages per day and spent 2 hours managing it. Experts predict that the volume of e-mail will continue to grow. Here are some suggestions for managing e-mail.

Develop shortcuts

You and a core group of co-workers can agree on some e-mail shortcuts such as using the subject line only for short messages and responses with the notation "EOM" (end of message). This eliminates the need for the receiver to open the message. In response to a notice of meeting, you could respond with a subject line "will attend EOM". You might also create a folder that automatically deletes messages after a month. Use it to temporarily store messages you don't think you'll need, but want to keep for a bit.

Send e-mail on a "need to know" basis

Does everyone need to see your report? Or your reply to the supervisor? Be careful about "reply to all" when you only want to reply to sender. Bombarding receivers with what they regard as junk e-mail may cause them to disregard important messages when you send them.

Avoid the unnecessary replies

Endless unnecessary replies clog systems: "Thanks," "OK", "Got it", "Great," "Appreciate it", "Any time". Let the other person have that last word. Indicate in your message in your message that no response is necessary; FYI (For your information) in the subject line signals the recipient that this is informational only and no response is requested.

Use filters

If your e-mail software has the capability, use filters to identify mail by sender and /or subject line and automatically put it in a folder for your easier access. (See your e-mail program's documentation for details). Filters can also identify junk e-mail (span) and isolate it in a folder labelled as such.

Discourage unwanted messages

Let others know if they are sending you unwanted e-mail. Ask to be removed from the joke list or simply say, "Thanks for thinking of me, but it won't be necessary for you to send me your subcommittee meeting minutes each week. I'd appreciate a summary of your work each quarter".

4.12 Writing for Employment

At some point in our lives, all of us have to send a job application letter and a CV or CV. The CV remains an essential element of the employment process.

CVs

A CV is a marketing document – an advertisement in which you sell yourself to potential employers. A CV' summaries your background and qualifications for employment. CVs serve as a screening device, helping prospective employers decide which candidates' applications are worth further considerations.

A CV' won't get you hired, but it can put on you the short list of candidates to be considered or cause you to be dropped from the running. As you read in competitive hiring situations, screening candidates is a process of eliminating as much as selection. The people doing the hiring have more applications than they can handle, so they naturally look for ways of narrowing down the candidates to a manageable number. A good CV can also be useful for representing yourself to potential employers who might hire you for a job that hasn't been announced or even been created yet.

Besides that you are. Are you organized and thorough? How well can you present your ideas? Is your work accurate? After you have left the interview, your CV will remain behind as a reminder of the way you tackle a job and of the kind of employee that you are likely to be.

The most effective CVs are tailored to the interest and needs of a particular position and employer. This may not be practical, however, if you are applying to several firms at the same time. /at the very least, your CV should reflect the requirements of a field. For example, a medical technician should stress laboratory ski8lls when applying for a job in a lab; but when a job opening is in a clinic, the same technician should emphasize experience that involves working with people. A CV that encourages job offers focuses on the employer's needs and how you can help the employer.

Appearance

Like every important business document, your CV should be impeccable. Any mistakes or sloppiness here could cost you the job by raising doubts in an employer's mind because the design of CV's can be complicated, many candidates hire professional services to create them. Remember of the CV is to get an interview. It must be well organized so that vital information is readily accessible.

Whether you create the CV' yourself or have it professionally done, the final products should reflect the professional image you want to create. It should meet these criteria.

- Be neat and error-free. No whiteout or hand corrections.
- Contain plenty of white space to avoid crowding
- Be printed on heavy weight paper, either white or a light neutral color
- Be reproduced clearly on a high quality printer or copy machine

CVs use the word "I" sparingly and avoid abbreviations. Begin sentences with positive verbs (creates, developed, analyzed). The word "fired" and "unemployed" do not belong on your CV. Be certain that information in your CV does not conflict.

Although you want to make yourself stand out from the crowd, be cautious about using unusual kinds of paper or fonts. A novel approach may capture the fancy of a prospective boss, but it may be a turn-off. The more you know about the field and the organization itself, the better your decisions will be about the best approach.

Your CV should almost never exceed two pages in length, and one is usually better. Employers are often unimpressed with longer CVs, which are hard to read and can seem padded, especially when they come from people with comparatively little job experience. A long CV may even may even prompt your disqualification early in the selection process. One magazine editor admitted that when 150 applicants for a job as his assistant overwhelmed him, he laid out all the CVs on a table to sort. When he got tired of lifting the first pages to see what was on the second page, he threw out all the CVs that were longer than one sheet. Later, when his boss asked him how he was progressing, he was able to say, "Very well! I've already eliminated half of them"

Elements while CVs can be organized in more than one way, they will almost always contain the same basic information. CVs are not autobiographies. The purpose is to get an interview, not tell your life history. Personal information like age, height, weight, religion, race, marital status, and children does not belong in a CV.

Name and contact information

This usually includes your name, address, phone numbers, e-mail address, and website. Make sure that the information allows an interested employer to reach you easily. If you are currently employed, this can be difficult and delicate. Career specialists recommend that you proceed "carefully and cautiously" and set up boundaries to keep your job search out of your current employment. You may not want to list your current business phone or business e-mail. A personal e-mail address and home or cell phone is preferable to a current employer's.

Be certain to check these frequently and respond speedily. Be certain your e-mail address is not offensive or does not create an impression you wouldn't want, "Devil girl" or "Lazy boy" do not convey the impression of a serious job candidate. You might set up a separate e-mail account expressly for seeking employment. If you will not be at your school or other current address long, you will want to list both a permanent home address and a school address. Indicate how long (i.e until May 31st") an address will be valid.

Job or career objective

Most employers agree that a statement of professional objectives should be included in a CV. An effective statement consists of two parts: the first should announce your general goal and mention some important demonstrated skills – talents that will qualify you for the job. The second part should detail one or more specific areas in which you want to work. For example:

> A position in public relations using proven skills in writing, researching, and motivating. Special interests in radio and television programming.
>
> Entry-level position in design and development of microprocessor circuitry. Eventual\ advancement to position as project leader technical manager.

Education

Employers are usually interested in learning about your academic training, especially education and training since high school, degrees earned, major and minor fields of study, and dates attendance and/or graduation. If you attended college, it is unnecessary to include high school. Begin with your most recent education and work backward. If the information will be helpful and if space permits, you may consider listing notable courses you have taken. If your grade point average is impressive, include it. Finally, note any honors you have earned. If you received awards for other accomplishments, consider listing all your achievements in a separate section entitled "Awards and Honors".

Experience

Every employer wants to know what kinds of work you have performed. By using the general title "Work Experience" instead of the more limited "Employment History" you can highlight a summer internship, delete a dishwashing job, group minor or similar jobs together, ad volunteer wok or club activities that taught you marketable skills.

While you should list your former job titles, employers are really most interested in the kinds of duties you performed. They search this category for the answers to two questions: What can you do? What are your attributes as an employee? You can provide answers to these questions by a companying your job title, name of employer, and city with a list of duties you performed.

There is no need to use complete sentences – phrases will do. Be sure to use very concrete language, including technical terminology, to describe the work you performed. Place this section either before or following the section on education, depending on which will be most important to an employer. For an extensive list of words that might help you accurately describe the skills

Special interests and Aptitudes

Most employers want to know about special abilities that will make you a more employee. These include community service activities (cite offices you have held), languages you can write or speak, special equipment you can operate, relevant hobbies and so on. They key here is to include only information that the employer will find useful and that casts you in a favourable light.

Membership

If you belong to any organizations in your field, list them under "Memberships". Be sure to include any offices or committee appointments you have held. Membership in service and civic groups is usually less important, so include it only if you have held a major office.

Certifications

Many professions and skilled traders offer people the opportunity to become officially certified by taking a competitive examination or by completing an advanced course of study. If you are certified o licensed in any occupational field, create a category in which to display that fact, even if it has only one entry. For finance, if you are Microsoft certified systems Engineer, list your MCSE certification. If your Notary Public or CPR certification could benefit an employer, include it.

References

This section always should be the last one in a CV. For space and privacy considerations, you may simply include the phrase "References available upon request" and supply the names only when and if you are asked as employers rarely investigate references until you are under serious consideration.

If, however, your references are impressive enough to merit listing, follow these basic guidelines. Choose only the three or four people who combine the best elements of familiarity with your work and credible position. Recommendations form high status people carry more weight, but reference from a celebrity who barely knows you is not a good as one from an unknown who has worked closely with you. In any case, do get permission before hand from the people you list as references.

4.13 Types of CVS

There are two common approaches to organizing a CV: Chronological and functional. There is also a hybrid approach which combines both of the above. Each has its own advantages, and the one you choose will probably depend on the specific job description you are applying for and your past accomplishments.

1. Chronological Approach. The chronological approach emphasizes your education and work experience and is most effective when such experience clearly relates to the job you are seeking. Within the categories "Education", "Work Experience", and "Related Experience" (if you have such a section) list entries in reverse order, beginning with your most recent experience. Under each position, describe your responsibilities and accomplishments, emphasizing ways in which they prepared you for the job you are now seeking, if you are a recent graduate, listing your education first makes sense.
.

2. Functional Approach. The functional approach features the skills you bring to the job (organizer, researcher, manager, etc) and as figure A2 – 6 illustrates, it provides examples of the most significant experiences that demonstrate these abilities. This approach is especially appropriate in the following instances.

- When you are first entering the job market or rendering it after an absence.
- When you have a held a variety of apparently unrelated jobs.
- When you are changing careers or specialties.
- When your work history has been interrupted.
- When your past job titles don't clearly show how are qualified for the position you are seeking.

When you write a functional CV, follow the "Skills" category immediately with a chronological "Work history" and a scaled-down "Education" section that lists only institutions, degrees, and dates. Either of the latter two categories may come first, depending on whether you gained most of your skills and experience in school or on the job.

Whatever format you choose, experts agree that strong CV posses the same qualities;

- They focus on the employer's needs. If you understand what qualities (perseverance, innovation, ability to learn quickly) and skills (e.g, mastery of software, selling) an employer needs, you can focus your CV on showing how you will fit the job.
- They are concise. Along winded CV sends the wrong message in a business environment where time is money and clarity is essential. Use simple, brief statements to describe yourself, and avoid verbose language.
- They are honest. Outright lies are obvious grounds for disqualification, of course. But getting caught exaggerating your qualifications will raise serious doubts your honesty in other areas. As one expert out it, "Be aggressive, be bold, but be honest.

Reference List

A list of references can be prepared and taken to the interview. This list can include three to seven persons who you have asked to use as references, know your work and character, and are relatives. Since you are giving out these names, be certain you have contacted each to let them know where you might be using their names. This also gives you a chance to let them know about the type of position and expected calls they may receive. You might remind a college professor of the term project you completed or remind a past employer of an accomplishment you'd like mentioned. You can also be sure you have current contact information and their preferred contact information (home or work, cell phone or e-mail). After each persons listing, include the persons relationship to you (past or present employer, colleague, supervisor, manager). Use the same paper and print that you used for your CV.

4.14 Electronic CVS

Electronic CV are an increasingly widespread alternative to the paper-and ink variety. Since may employers look for – and sometimes even require - applicants to submit information electronically, it is important to know how this part of the hiring system operates.

Types of Electronic CVs
The most common types of electronic CVs are e-mail attachments, scanable format, and Web-based documents.

E-mail CVs
Submitting an e-mail CV involves attaching a computer file of the CV to an e-mail massage and sending it to one or more prospective employers. /the CV is typically created in a word processing format, but in other cases it might consist of a web page (HTML) file, or in some cases even an audio or video format. The most important consideration when crafting a CV you plan to submit as an e-mail attachment is to be sure the recipient will be able to open and read it after down loading. On occasion, you may be asked to submit a CV within an e-mail message. In that case, use the plain text format described in table A2-1.

Online CVs and job Banks
If you have your own website, you can post your CV there: but there is another alternative. Web-based job banks are services where job seekers can post information about themselves for potential employees to review. (For a list of internet job banks, see the "on the web" box on page 204
Scannable CVs
A scannable CV is a paper CV' that is formatted so that prospective employers can enter its contents into a database. The use scannable CVs has grown from the fact that human resource personnel are unable to review all of the materials they receive from job applicants, so they use OCR (optical character recognition) software to enter the content of CVs into their database. Once the content is digitized, employers can sort it according to a variety of criteria including applicants' employment experience and skills.

Employers program their software to search scanned CVs for keywords, so be sure to identify and include terms commonly used in the field where you are seeking work. For example, industrial engineers might include "Kaizen" and "time studies" while a pharmacist might list "compounding". Include any industry related jargon and acronyms that the scanning software may be programmed to recognize.

A CV has the best chance of being scanned accurately if you follow these guidelines:

- Create and save the documents in ASCII plain text formatting. (For more information on ASCII format,
- Be sure only your name is on the top line. An address on the same line will confuse the software.
- Send only a high-quality laser printed copy, not a photocopy. The scanning device is better able to get all of your information from a high-quality printer.
- Use only simple fonts in standards sizes and white paper. The scanner is unable to recognize large fonts, patterned paper, script , graphics, boxes, and vertical or horizontal lines.
- Do not fold or staple the CV
- Be certain your name is on each page

Strategies for electronic CVs

CV preparation and delivery are changing, but a basic principle holds: adapt to your audience. Customize the content and method of transmission of your CV for individual companies, positions and when possible, the people who will read it.

Compared to paper CVs, electronic ones have both advantages and draw backs. When you send a paper CV, the recipient sees exactly what you created, although receiving and forwarding it to others may take time. With electronic CVs, there is a greater risk that your reader may not be able to view the document for technical reasons or may not want to open the file because of the additional time it takes and the potential for a virus. Furthermore, some companies automatically delete unsolicited e-mails with attachments, so know before you attach.

When you do submit a CV electronically, follow these guidelines.

- Don't bombard employers with CVs for positions that don't exist or for which you are not qualified.
- Be sure to include a cover letter that tells the employer what position you are applying for.
- Although plain text files and e-mail limit your formatting, you can still use bullets to make your cover letter more readable by using plus signs (+) or asterisks (*).

Formatting electronic CV material

To make sure potential employers can read your electronic CV, you need to understand the most commonly used file formats for these documents. There are three popular file formats used for electronic CVs plain text, rich text, and hypertext. Each of these file formats is coded in ACSII (American Standard Code for information Interchange), although the terms "ASCII" and "plain text" are often used interchangeably. As table A2-1 outlines, each has advantages and disadvantages and readily recognizable features.

4.15 Job Application Letters

Whenever you send your CV to a prospective employer, accompany it with a job application letter (also called a cover letter) that is personalized for the particular job you are applying for and the organization to which you are applying . A cover letter according to one expert is "an introduction, a sales pitch and a proposal for further action all in one". You want your cover letter to result in an interview so use it to demonstrate your fit for the job. Who interest, enthusiasm, qualifications, and professionalism.

Cover letters should be sent to a specific individual. If you do know the appropriate person, call the company ands ask for the individual's name, being certain that you get the spelling and title correct.

- The first lines should let the readers know what position you are applying for, how you know of the position, and any connection you have to the company. If you are responding to an advertisement, mention the job title, number, and publication. You might be writing at the suggestion of a mutual acquaintance or as a result of your research.
- An introduction (or reintroduction) of yourself if the reader doesn't know (or remember) who you are
- A brief description of one or two of your most impressive accomplishments that are relevant to the job at hand. Remember; don't just say you can help the organization. Offer some objective evidence that backs up your claim. Show knowledge of the company trough personal experience or positive news articles.
- A statement regarding the next step you hope to take – usually a request for an interview. Detail any information about limits on your availability, but keep these to an absolute minimum.
- A final, cordial expression of appreciation to the reader for considering you.

Review Questions

1. Discuss the difference between a memo and a letter?
2. Explain the important rules for compiling a report
3. Discuss the common fault in reports

Unit 5
Verbal communication in business

5.1 Public speaking

Studies have shown that people are more scared of public speaking than of dying, studies have also shown that one of the most admired qualities in others is the ability to speak in front of a group with confidence and eloquence. Public speaking is simply addressing a group with the intention of influencing their opinion, inform, ordering, teaching, etc. Any communication made in front of an audience is public speaking. It is important to understand that nonverbal communication plays a significant role in public speaking, such as dress code, nervousness, body movement, eye contact, etc. there are several types of public speaking.

Briefing: Briefings are concise and factual communication to the audience, it is informative, directing, advocating, or persuading. Every good briefing follows the ABC principle; Accuracy, Brevity, Clarity. Accuracy and clarity characterizes all good public speaking and brevity distinguishes Briefings from any other form of public speaking. Briefings are most commonly used in military organizations.

Lecturing: This is commonly used in educational institutions and churches / Mosques / Temples. The communication is directed towards instructing, teaching and informing. Lectures can also be divided into two sub categories:.

- **Formal Lectures** are by nature one sided with n on verbal contribution from the audience e.g during a sermon.
- Informal Lectures are normally presented to small audiences and allowing verbal interaction between the instructor and the audience.
- **Entertaining Speech** is focused at giving enjoyment to the audience; the speaker often relies on the use of humor and vivid language as primary means of entertaining the listeners and delivering the key points. Example of this type of talk includes the Master of Ceremony's remarks in an introduction (Traditional Marriage) This type of the most effective when delivering any message, but is the most difficult to make because it requires skills and talent which a majority might not possess.
  Hint:

5.2 Guidelines for preparing for public speaking

A good guideline for preparing for public speaking is asking oneself the 5W and 1H: who? What? How? When? Why?

- **Who** are you speaking to ? What are t heir interests, presuppositions and values? What do they share in common with others; how are they unique?

- **What** do you wish to communicate? One way of answering this question is to ask yourself about the 'success criteria'. How do you know if and when you have successfully communicated what you have in mind?

- **How** can you best convey your message? Language is important here, as are the nonverbal cues discussed earlier. Choose your words and your nonverbal cues with your audience in mind. Plan a beginning, middle and end. If time and place allow, consider and prepare audio – visual aids.

- **When?** Timing is important here. Develop a sense of timing, so that your contributions are seen and heard as relevant to the issue or matter at hand. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent. 'It's better to be silent than sing a bad tune'

- **Where?** What is the physical context of the communication in mind? You may have time to visit the room, for example, and rearrange the furniture. Check for availability and visibility if you are using audio or visual aids.

- **Why?** In order to convert hearers into listeners, you need to know why they should listen to you – and tell them if necessary. What disposes them to listen? That implies that you know yourself why yourself why you are seeking to communicate – the value or worth or interest of what you are going to say.

Note: Be concise, Be brief. Use short words and sentences. Where appropriate, support these with short, easy – to – understand examples, which help demonstrate your message.

5.3 Presentation skills

Most professionals, including those in business, occasionally make presentations to students, employees, clients,

- **Preparing for a presentation** The importance of preparation can not be emphasized enough when it comes to making a presentation. Preparation will differentiate if the topic will be worthwhile for the audience in the aspect of their time and attention and ultimately influencing their decision or not. Preparation includes analyzing the audience in order to know how to deliver your message in a way that they will understand and enjoy. It also includes developing the speech or information to be delivered to the audience in a way that will suit the specific audience (this includes clarity, content, humor, etc).

  Creating visual aids: In order to facilitate effective communication and eliminate boredom and confusion the use of visual aid is always a benefit to presentations. They do not replay to presentation, but the act as a tool for facilitating understanding. Visual aids can include samples of products, power point projection, slip, handouts, videos, demonstrations, etc.

- **Displaying a professional Image :** It is important that know that when you are going to deliver your message on the podium and when delivering the message, people are forming their opinion about you and way you are going go talk a bout. This means being dressed professionally; well groomed; being realistic; use good mannerism; display confidence; make proper introductions; showing respect / professional courtesy to audience, etc.

- **Delivering presentation:** Don't read the presentation, summarize it; radiate a positive energy; maintain eye contact with audience' speak slowly and occasionally pause to allow audience absorb the information, but also make the most of the time you have; use accurate grammar; be audible, never turn your back on the audience; engage the audience; repeat important pints; avoid clichés and sounds such as 'uhhs', anticipate noise in the audience and try to take charge by pausing to let them know they are disturbing, stay with your time limits, live time for question from the audience.
- **Managing Stage Fright:** Symptoms of stage fright can include cold hands, sweaty palms, shaky knees or hands, quivering voice, a pounding heart to mention a few. Stage fright is a natural emotion; all speaker experienced and inexperienced have stage frights, but experienced speaker convert this energy into a positive one. Most people list stage fright above the fear of dying of snakes. Experienced speaker live with stage fright by learning how to manage it, the anxiety can be managed by the following suggestions:
  - Preparing adequately
  - Master the information to be delivered
  - Prepare a very strong opening due to the fact that fright starts then
  - Try to talk with members of the audience befog the presentation to ease the tension.
  - Relax and loosen up by bending and relaxing your waist, hands and arm.
  - Before getting the podium take three deep breaths to help relax your nerves
  - When speaking focus only on your topic and your audience, nothing else.
  - Develop a positive attitude towards public speaking by practicing and making the most of less formal speaking opportunities like the one in this course.

5.4 Meetings

Face to face communication among people in an organization is unavoidable and essential to the business meetings and is important in business communications because meeting tend to achieve more results than phone calls, letters, or electronic mail. Meetings are one of the most important ways of exchanging ideas and information in business. Meeting can involve superiors, and employees, several levels of the organization, employee and customers, etc. meetings can be called depending on the urgency, the topic, the number of participant, and their ability to make it on time. While meetings are wonderful tools for generating ideas, expanding on the thoughts and managing group activity, this face – to – face contact with team members and colleagues can easily fail without adequate preparation and leadership. There are several types of meetings in today's business world. Meetings are held for the following reasons, in most case:

- to share information with others in the organization
- to discuss new ideas and proposals and vote on it
- to involve employee in daily business and interest them
- to do collective problem solving and brainstorming
- to give feed backs on activities
- to help coordinate activities

Formal Meetings: Formal meetings are preplanned, structured and usually conducted by an elected official. Formal meetings follow strict procedures which means a set of rules for conducting the meeting has to be observed. Example of these types of meetings includes annual or quarterly corporate meetings of directors, executives or shareholders; conventions for professional organization.

Informal Meetings: Informal meetings include staff meetings, management meetings, and project team meeting, all these meetings are held when needed and they tend to follow a discussion format, with an individual serving as a facilitator or coordinator and another person serving as a note taker.

Electronic Meetings: Electronic meetings are becoming more and more a part of business. It is the combined use of audio, video and /or computer equipments, including an electronic writing pad with several people in various locations communicating through these devices. These meetings involve the use of technology such as faxes, e- mails, digital cameras, and computers. Electronic meetings can be held by videoconferencing or by audio – conferencing (Teleconferencing). [See teleconferencing for more details]

5.5 The Importance of preparation for meetings

To ensure everyone involved has the opportunity to provide their input, start your meeting off on the right foot by designating a meeting time that allow all your meeting off on the right by designating a meeting time that allows all participants the time needed to adequately prepare. Once a meeting time and place has been designated, make yourself available for questions that may arise as participants prepare for the meeting. If you are the meeting leader, make a meeting agenda, complete with detailed notes.

In these notes, outline the goal and proposed structure of the meeting, and share this with the participants. This will allow all involved to prepare and to come to the meeting ready to work together to meet the goal(s) at hand. The success of the meeting is hinged on the skills displayed by the meeting leader.

To ensure the meeting is successful, the leader should:

Generate an agenda to all involved in the meeting.
Start the discussion and encourage active participation
Work to keep the meeting at a comfortable pace – not moving too fast or too slow
Summarize the discussion and the recommendations at the end of each logical section.
Circulate minutes to all participants While these tips will help ensure your meeting is productive and well – received, there are other important areas that need to be touched on to make sure your meeting and negotiation skills are fine – tuned and ready to take to the boardroom.

Managing a Meeting
Choosing the right participants is vital to the success of any meeting. Make sure all participants can contribute and choose good decision – makes and problem-solvers. Try to keep the number of participants to a maximum of 12, preferably fewer. Make sure the people with the necessary information for the items listed in the meeting agenda are the ones that are invited.

If you are the leader, work diligently to ensure everyone's thoughts and ideas are heard by guiding the meeting so that there is a free flow of debate with no individual dominating and no extensive discussions between two people. As time dwindles for each item on the distributed agenda, you may find it useful to stop the discussion, then quickly summarize the debate on that agenda item and move on the next item on the agenda.

When an agenda item is resolved or action is agreed upon, make it clear who in the meeting will be responsible for this. In an effort to bypass confusion and misunderstanding, summarize the action to be take and include this in the meeting's minutes.

Agenda: An agenda is the plan for a meeting; it acts as a guidance tool that keeps the participants of the meeting on the issues at hand in order to attain the desired objective. It helps participant to understand what is expected of them. An agenda identifies the objectives of the meeting, prepares participants for the meeting and defines the times allotted to each of the topics, and the order of discussion.

Setting an Agenda
An agenda is a list of topics to be covered in a meeting. A meeting without an agenda is like a ship at sea without a destination or compass. No one aboard knows where it is or where it's headed smart organisations appreciate the importance of establishing agenda. At computer chip giant Intel, company policy requires meeting planners to circulate agenda several days in advance so participants can react to and modify them.

A complete agenda contains several kinds of information. A list of the attendees (and whoever else needs to see the agenda). The meeting's time and location, necessary background information and a brief explanation of each item.

If you post an agenda on the web, it is possible to attach annotation, even entire documents to supplement items. (For an example, see: http.//etc.comment.edulgrammar/corresp/agenda.pdf)

AGENDA

Date: December 19, 2006
To: Pat Mbibiiika, Fred Topapa, Kevin Rwamukye, & Monica Musigi
From: Ted Opondo
Subject: Planning meeting for new Arua office.
Time/place: Tuesday, April 2, from 9:30 to 11:00am. In the third floor conference room.
Background: We are still on target for an August 10 Opening date for the Arua office.
Scheduled – vital if we are to be ready for all season
We will discuss the following items:

1. *Office Equipment*
   Please come with a list of business machines and other equipment you think will be needed for the office. At the meeting, we will refine this list to standardise our purchases as much as possible. Lets try to start out with compatible equipment.
2. *Office Decoration*
   Ellen Mugisha of the Lira programme group will present a preliminary design for our reaching. She will come up with a final plan based on our suggestions.
3. *Promotion*
   Kevin wants to prepare a series of press releases for distribution to Louisville media a month or so before the office opens. Please come with suggestions of items that should be mentioned in these releases.

Time, length and location

To avoid problems, all three of these details need to be presented on agenda without the starting time, you can expect to hear such comments as "I thought you said 10 not 9" or we always started at 3 before "unless you announce the length, expect some members to leave early, pleading, "I have another meeting" or "I didn't realise we would run this long – I have got a doctor's appointment" failure to not the location results in members' stumbling in late after waiting in the "usual place" wondering why no one showed up.

Participants

The overall size of the group is important. When attendance grows beyond seven members, the likelihood of some members falling silent increases. If the agenda in discussions. If the meeting is primarily informational, a larger group may be acceptable.

Be sure to identify on the agenda the people who will be attending. By listing who will attend, you alert all members about whom to expect in the meeting. If you have received the agenda can tell you. It is frustrating and a waste of time to call a meeting and then discover that the person with key information isn't there.

Minutes: A record of the proceedings in a meeting is called minutes. A note taker (secretary) is important in the meeting it is his/her job to take down the minutes. Minutes record the decisions of the meeting and the actions agreed. They provide a record of the meeting and , importantly, they provide a review document for use at the next meeting so that progress can be measured – this makes them a useful disciplining technique as individuals' performance and non performance of a greed actions is given high visibility.

The style of the minutes issued depends on the circumstances – in situations of critical importance and where the record is important , you may need to take detailed minutes. Where this is not the case, then minutes can be simple lists of decisions make and of actions to be taken (with the responsible person identified). Generally, they should be as short as possible as long as all key information is shown – this makes them quick and easy to prepare and digest.

It is always impressive if the leader of a meeting issues minutes within 24 hours of the end of the meeting- it's even better if they are issued on the same day.

5.6 Participating in teams, groups and meeting

In business, management is increasingly depending on group thinking and team work to plan and help with problem-solving decisions. Many business groups, teams and committees are organised in order to harness the talents, ideas and skills of employees. For every leader in a group there are usually more working members, this means most of the time you as an individual might be a group or team member and not always the leader. Know and practicing the following will help you be a valuable and effective team or group member:

- Respect the opinion of all members of the group
- Use only your share of talking time
- Help to harmonise differences in opinion
- Help to keep the discussion on the subject.

Attitudes to avoid in groups or teams

A group or team member, it is vital to understand group and team dynamics. This will help to understand the attitudes and practices that hinder group effectiveness and performance. The attitudes and practices of the following types of people hinder the success of meetings, group and teamwork:-

Selfish-interest Pleader. Everything he/she says and does is intended to help him/her get his or her way, despite the good ideas of others. These individuals tend to be assertive.
The blocker. This individual is always opposing new ideas and believes in tradition and the old way of doing this. Does not like innovation or thinking out of the box.
The aggressor. This individual is never aware of other people's feeling and in some cases does not care about their feelings. He or she tries to build his/her ego

by deflating other peoples. Tend to feel superior and tired to manipulate others in the group.
The sympathy seeker. These individuals seek other people's sympathy and never want to accept responsibility or fail to carry through on his/her responsibility. Such persons would like the group to compliment his or her weaknesses.
The disinterested bystander. These individuals can make a display of lack of interest or involvement and in some cases through cheeky tactics he/she may try to disrupt the group. In some cases might just give the group a frozen smile and agree with everything in order to mentally escape to boring proceedings.

As a group or team member try not to be one of these characters and try to observe them in the group in order to manage them especially if you are the leader.

5.7 Teleconferencing

Teleconferencing allows people in different locations and time zones to meet electronically. Teleconferencing is sometimes referred to as electronic meeting, the cost is determined by the time spent on using the equipment and of course the initial cost of purchasing the equipment. Many large companies can afford teleconferencing facilities, but small companies normally rent the teleconferencing services.

Audio teleconferencing (Audio conferencing)

Audio teleconferencing initially called conference call is the cheapest, simplest and most commonly used form of teleconferencing. All that is needed is a telephone or speaker phone and the conference feature which is used to connect all the parties. Audio conferencing normally used to exchange information, give directives, resolve minor conflicts, conduct collaborative problem solving, and present simple proposals. it remains less effective in comparison to face-to-face meetings.

Videoconferencing

Though it has been in existence since the 1970s, videoconferencing became more prominent in business in the 1990s, due to the need to cut on travel costs. It uses all media (audio, graphic and video). In most organisations a specific rooms is specially equipped cameras, monitors, multiple microphones, and special transmission lines for transmitting audio and video information. Less financially capable organisations have to rent rooms and equipments off location to utilise videoconferencing. a key advantage of videoconferencing is that it enables face-to-face communication (encouraging the use of non verbal communication as well). Videoconferencing is normally used for product presentations, new product announcements, personnel training and brainstorming sessions. Videoconferencing works better with a small group due to the fact that it is easy for others to get distracted if the group is large.

Dealing with the public

Although most organisations have specific employees to deal and receive the public, all employees at one point or the other have to deal with individuals from the public, such as clients and associates. Good customer skills are important not only for the sales people but for everyone in the organisation. It is therefore vital that basic procedures for meeting the public are understood. The following are the basics:-

- Give prompt attention to all visitors
- Greet visitors pleasantly
- Be courteous to all visitors even difficult ones
- Apologize for delay of any sort
- Find out the purpose of the visit even if its not your personal client
- Be discreet and tactful when exchanging information.

5.8 Employment Interviews

The job interview may be the most critical factor in determining whether a candidate is employed or not. No matter how impressive your background, your CV, and application letter, the inability to 'sell' yourself might still lead to unemployment. In an interview you have the opportunity to sell yourself every time you speak through response to questions, your descriptions of experiences and activities, your explanation of procedures and methods all contribute to the interview impression.

Preparation for the interview

Though most people are not conscious of it at the time, the preparation for the job interview began a long time ago; when you chose the type of work you want to do, the acquired education and training needed for the chosen career and finally targeting potential employers. That led to the compilation of a CV, list of reference, an application letter and ultimately the interview. To prepare for a job interview you need to consider the following:

- **Remember the goal of the interview.** To sell yourself and to find out if the job fits your qualification and career plans.
- **Research the prospective employer.** Find out about the company, its products and services, history and key individuals in management. This will help you decide whether it is the place for you and give you an advantage before the interview.
- **Prepare questions to ask the interviewer (s).** Ask question about the company's services and products, its performance, opportunities for advancement, HR policies, etc all the questions should reflect your research on the company. This will create a good impression. Avoid questions that focus too much on salaries, pay raise, leaves, lunch hours and holidays.
- **Know your strength and weaknesses.** Magnify your strength and try to manage your weaknesses. This means you should emphasis your qualifications, experiences, skills and characteristics that will make you the right candidate for the job. Make sure you know your qualification and all the details you have to the interviewer(s) orally or else it might indicate you are lying. Never lie!
- **Anticipate questions.** Be prepared to answer questions on your qualifications, education, past work experiences, hobbies, why you chose the profession, the organisation etc.
- **Become knowledgeable about the industry trends and current events.** Displaying knowledge of the industry and current events in your interview and their effects on the organisation, the position and yourself once employed will make the interviews impressed and interested in you abilities.

- **Confirm your appointment.** Make sure you know the time it begins and when you are expected to arrive.
- **Get direction to the interviewing site**. Make sure you know the location and how to get there on time.
- **Identify items to take to the interview**. Know what to take along for the interview for example original documentations, pen, paper etc.
- **Get a good night's sleep before the day of the interview.** Get enough rest and relaxation before the day of the interview.

The interview

At the interview it is important to remember to:

- Make a positive impressing – arrive early, dress in a businesslike fashion, demonstrate self conference, professionalism etc.
- Greet Interviewer (s) (firm hand shake and smile) and follow their cue to seat, to talk, to present documentation etc.
- Be attentive to Interviewers and speak clearly for them to understand
- Remember the impact of nonverbal communication on the interview
- Be frank, honest and express confidence is yourself and your abilities.
- At the conclusion of the interview, thank the interviewer(s) and let them know you will be waiting to hear from them
- Be positive and optimistic

Is it legal or ethical to lie for your boss, to a client, to their spouse, to the police? Will she/he also be lying to you? What will you do? Discuss

5.9 Listening Skills

Listening skills

Our ears are continuously assaulted by sounds very moment of the day. We hear these sounds, but do not listen to them; in self defence, we block off many sound from our consciousness. But too often we also block of sounds which we should be listening to, most people of acquired the bad habit of not listening even when they are with their best friends, relatives and in their work environment.

The main difference between hearing and listening is that listening involves the deliberate use of the mind to absorb the information. The key difference in the two is purpose, purpose being the reason as to listening or not listening. This purpose may be one of simple friendliness and sociability as in a party conversation; obtaining information as in a lecture or of critical analysis as in when observing a political debate; all this scenarios listening intensity varies.

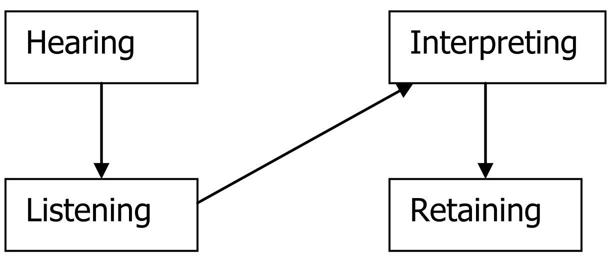
Listening is a fundamental communication skill which allows the receiver to understand both the verbal communication and the nonverbal content of the message. Listening is an active, not passive activity and it requires the listener to be involved in the communication process. An active listener indicates both verbally and nonverbally that he or she is engaged in the conversation. When the speaker is communicating a feeling the listener can restate what the speaker is expressing by asking questions to reconfirm or clarify the message being received.

Also using nonverbal indicators of listening such as eye contact, head nodding, leaning forward, all can act as an encouragement for the speaker to continue. Lack of feedback from the listener can discourage the speaker from sharing opinions or feelings. By listening passively the listen may unintentionally short-circuit the conversation.

The different purposes of listening can imply different kinds of listening (active listening, passive listening or just hearing), but most good listening skills are basic to all kinds. Some basic rules are as follow; though they may sound similar they should all be observed to facilitate effective listening and ultimately good communication.

5.10 The listening model

All humans spend more time listening than talking, reading or writing. Business people spend roughly 70% of the working day communicating, half of that is spent listening, but only 25% of what is heard is retained. The model explains further.



Hearing- the physical ability to perceive sound for example hearing nearby conversations or the humming of a computer without focusing on it or its meaning.
Listing - the act of filtering out distraction to allow understanding of the sounds for example when you ask a question you then listen for a response.

Interpreting – a mental function whereby the sound is analysed to understand the meaning and then related to information and experience familiar to the listener.
Retaining – the act of remembering the interpreted sounds for future use.
Kinds of listening
There are mainly two kinds of listening, active and passive listening. The difference between the two is found in the level of the listener's involvement.

Passive listening. The listener focuses at a minimal level and is able to absorb just enough of the speaker's words to stay involved in the speech or conversation. Passive listening is more appropriate if the listener is listening just for pleasure, in a case where it doesn't matter when the information is retained or not e.g. watching a movie or listening to music can induce passive listening.

Active listening requires the listener to concentrate and focus in order to acquire the information being communicated; this is a requirement at the workplace and in school. Several of the information acquired in business settings requires retaining and this is only possible through active listening.

5.11 Overcoming barriers to listening

Being a good listener can make a difference between being a good manager and a mediocre one. Unfortunately, due to the fact that we were not taught to listen (unlike speaking) as children and the fact that nobody is born with good listening skills means being a good listener has to be a deliberate effort. It requires conscious practice to overcome the following barriers:

- Not concentrating on what is being said
- Becoming distracted by noise
- Talking instead of listening
- Having preconceived thoughts and opinions
- Not being interested in what is being said

In order to encourage effective and good listening skills the following should be observed:

- **Get ready to listen.** Good listing requires a readiness to listen with an understanding as to why you are going to listen and what you should be listening for. This requires that you prepare yourself physically, mentally and emotionally. Practically turning your back on distractions and seating close enough to see and hear what the speaker is saying.
- **Accept your share of responsibility** very often listeners approach a speaker with a "show me" attitude; he or she dares the speaker to interest him/her in the communication. This kind of attitude is discourteous and tough on the speaker. The sooner it is recognised that listening is a shared responsibility in communication the sooner good listeners will be made. The quality of courtesy and listening can affect the talking of the speaker and even in some cases it can control it.
- **Listen with understanding** be certain that you understand the speakers ideas fully and completely, do not jump to conclusions about false or half-true statements. This means your must listen carefully and ask questions if necessary to clarify anything that is vague or ambiguous.
- **Listen with an open mind.** Keep your mind open when listening, forget your biases and prejudices for the moment and be ready to receive new ideas. Do not refuse to listen to new ideas just because it conflicts with those you are familiar with.
- **Listen actively.** Listening actively basically means three things on your part: concentration, relating what you hear to what you already know, and reading between the lines to sense implied meanings.
- **Listening with empathy.** Listening with empathy means putting yourself in the speakers place so as to see through his/her eyes, naturally such listening requires imagination. Empathic listening help dispel any shyness, suspicion or hostility on the speakers part. Listening with empathy helps effective communication and yields great rewards.

Listening is an invaluable skill for managers to use on a daily basis on the job. By actively listening the manager show empathy for and understanding of the speakers even if from a different position to the manager's own position. This is important when managers negotiate with each other or with customers. Employees and other managers are unlikely to bring problems a manager who has poor listening skills, which in turn can undermine a manager's credibility and units his/her effectiveness.

Listening Self- Inventory
How good are you at listening? Find out:

	Yes	No
I listen to several conversations at once	-	-
I only want facts and I interpret	-	-
I at times pretend to pay attention	-	-
I am good at judging non verbal communication	-	-
I usually know what people will say before they say it	-	-
I divert my attentions if I am not interested in the talk	-	-
I normally nod, frown, when listening to a speaker	-	-
I respond immediately when some finishes speaking	-	-
I evaluate what is being said while it is being said	-	-
I formulate responses while the speaker is still talking	-	-
The speaker delivery style normally stops me from listening	-	-
I usually ask people to clarify what they mean, not guessing	-	-
I always try to understand others view points	-	-
I hear what I want to hear not what is being said	-	-
Peoples feel I understand even when I disagree with them	-	-

Scoring:

15-13	=	Good listening skills
12-11	=	Average listening skills
10-0	=	Need to work on your listening skills

Review Questions

1. 1. You are assigned to give a presentation, at the presentation a colleague who wants your job came with the intention to make you fail and look incompetent (he/she knows it and you know it too,) what will you do? Discuss

2. Which of the characters are you when working in a group sometimes, be honest! Discuss.

3. **Discuss.** Be honest, a client comes to complain to you about your firm's services and he becomes abusive; insulting you, your family, your tribe etc. What will you do?

4. **Discuss** What influence will the office location, furniture, stationery, machinery etc have on the perception people have about the organisation?

5. **Discuss.** Your best friend and colleague stole company money and confided in you when being investigated, what will you do?

2.7

THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF COMMITTEES

Managers find that now more of their time is spent in attending various kinds of meetings than in past, for their organisations are now making an increased use of committees to solve the various management problems they have to face.

Interpreted literally, a committee is a person or persons to whom certain powers are committed by a parent body. But now the term committee' is used to cover the activities of any group of people who deliberate about certain matters with a view to action. Thus deliberation or discussion on certain issues leading to decision making is the essence of all committees. We could say that a committee consist of certain people who get together to exchange views on some issues of common interest.

People get together to exchange views in conferences also. But a conference is far more informal than a committee. A committee is more specific; a conference is more general. A conference has wider scope than a committee. In a conference the emphasis is on discussion (though it might later on lead to decisions) but in a committee the emphasis is on taking decisions and solving problems.

Managing director invites his departmental heads to discuss some problems, we just call it a meeting. It should be clear that the dividing line between committees, conferences and meetings is very thin and in practice the distinction is almost blurred. Therefore some of the remarks given below with reference to committees should hold good for conferences and meetings also.

Different Types of Committees

1. **Executive Committee** The executive committee of an organisation is generally elected from its members as its annual general meeting. Its powers are specified by its parent body and it is required to give an account of its activities at regular intervals. The executive committee is empowered to take decisions in day-to-day matters in the light of the broad organisational goals.

2. **Advisory Committees** These committees consist of experts or people representing different groups or interest. Their sole function is to advise and they do not have any say in taking or implementing decisions. Nor do they enjoy any right to vote.

3. **Standing and adhoc committees** Standing committees are permanent committees empowered to take management decisions. Finance committee. Bonus and salary committee, product committee are some of the standing committees. A committee constituted for a specific purpose and dissolved when the purpose has been achieved is called an adhoc or temporary committee. A firm may appoint an adhoc committee on the restructuring of the office or for exploring the possibility of diversification in a particular line. As soon as this committee has completed its study and submitted its report to the board of directors, it will be dissolved.

4. **Formal and informal committees** Various committees cited above are all formal committees. They are formally constituted and their duties and responsibilities are specified. They function in a regular fashion. But sometimes committees are formed

merely for the purpose of collective thinking. They have no fixed agenda, no formal authority. Their recommendations are not a formal decision, they are more in the nature of an advise. Such a committee may just meet over a cup of tea or lunch and informally discuss some problems.

5. **Line and staff committees** The staff committees are a kind of advisory committee that appraise the management on the views of the employees. The line committee has the power to take decisions with regard to the employees who are responsible to it. The line committee is a kind of executive committee.

The Advantages of Forming Committees

1. **They offer expert opinion**
   Since a number of experts are represented on the committees, they can bring to bear on the problems a much greater variety of knowledge and experience than could possibly be possesses by one man. When a committee meets, much useful knowledge and experience is pooled.

2. **They help to generate new ideas**
   When a group of people discuss a problem new ideas may spontaneously occur to them. But for the meeting of the committee, these ideas may never have come to their mind. Such ideas can have considerable repercussions on the future activities of the organisation.

3. **Feedback is available**
   Committees enable managements to find out the response of the employees to proposed policies. This proves extremely useful, for having known the reaction of the employees at an early, formative stage, the managements can avoid action that might provoke resentment among their employees.

4. **Employer-employee relationships are improved**
   Since the employees are associated with the decision making process, they feel exalted and their relationships with the employers are considerably improved and they develop a sense of loyalty towards the organisation.

5. **The employees' interest can be safeguarded**
   Since the employees can put their case to a representative body rather than to an individual, there is a greater possibility that their interests will be safeguarded.

6. **Committees draw out latent talent**
   Committees give a chance to the various employees to make significant contribution to the many facets of the organisation in modern conditions. In this way, the talent of a large number of people which would otherwise have lain dormant is brought into active display.

7. **Committees promote coordination**
   If a committee consisting of department heads meets at regular intervals, it will definitely promote better understanding and coordination among the various departments. Decisions will be taken with a spirit of understanding and cooperation and their implementation will be made easier.

8. **Committees give valuable training to junior executives**

If junior executives are made to serve on committees. It exposes them to a rich treasure of creative ideas and helps them to view things in a wider perspective so that they can later tackle problems with greater confidence and effectiveness.

9. **Committees help to check authoritarian trends**
Committees prevent the concentration of authority in one man and tend to distribute power in many hands. There is a kind of democratisation which proves good in the interest of the organisation.

10. **Committees achieve consolidation of authority**
Sometimes there mat be matters which concern more than one department. It may be impossible for the manager of any one department to take a decision. In such cases, a committee consisting of the heads of the concerned departments may be appointed under the chairmanship of the general manager and this committee may be authorised to take decisions. Thus authority is consolidated in a committee instead of an individual.

11. **Committees transmit information uniformly**
When information is given in a committee consisting of various departmental heads or other representative members, it ensures that there is uniform transmission of information.

Disadvantages Of Committees

In spite of the numerous advantages of the committees pointed out above a number of people are often sceptical of the functioning of committees. It must be such a sceptic who said that a committee comprises a group of the unfit appointed by the unwilling to do the unnecessary. Another critic says that a meeting (of a committee) is a meeting to decide when the next meeting will be held implying that nothing very useful is accomplished in the meetings of the committees. Still another critic says that a committee is a place where the loneliness of thought is replaced by the togetherness of nothingness'. And indeed it is undeniable that committees do suffer from many disadvantages.

1. **Delay**
If committees are appointed to take decisions, it definitely causes delays. When the meeting of a committee is being called, it is necessary to give due notice of the meeting to ensure that attendance of a representative section of members. It means that the decision, which could have been taken immediately by the manager, were he authorised to do so, has been put off for some time. Even otherwise, it is a matter of common experience that taking decisions is not an easy task in committee meetings. There is a tendency to prolong discussion and the decision is put off.

2. **Irrelevant discussion**
All of us who have attended the meetings of various committees must have observed that a great deal of valuable time is wasted in irrelevant discussion. Members often tend to drift into trivialities and irrelevancies and nothing significant is achieved.

3. **Expensive**
Committees prove to be very expensive. The deliberations of the committees take a very long time often spreading over months and years. Sometimes committees

branch out into sub- committees. This involves a considerable loss of time and increase in expenditure.

4. **Undesirable compromises**
Since committees work in groups, their deliberations are often a sort of compromise. The decision finally arrived at may not be that decision which is in the best interest of the organisation but a decision that accommodates the interests of all members.

5. **Minority tyranny**
Committees suffer from what may be termed as minority tyranny. In an effort to seek consensus or unanimity they may have to yield to the wishes of a minority group whose thinking may be opposed to organisational interests.

Why Do Committees Misfire?

Committees are in vogue these days. It has become a common practice to refer everything to a committee. But just as the number of committees in an organisation is going up, so is people's disillusionment with them. An impression is gradually gaining ground that nothing worthwhile is achieved in committee meetings. Members assemble, talk at random, let off some steam, take tea and snacks, and disperse. There does seem to be some truth in this belief. We discuss below some of the factors responsible for the failure of committee meetings.

1. **Poor leadership**
Very often the meeting of a committee misfire because of poor leadership. The chairman fails to effectively control the meeting and give a direction to the discussion. The members get distracted from the main subject and lose themselves in a maze of irrelevancies.

2. **Overbearing leadership**
This is exactly the opposite of poor leadership. Here the chairman behaves in an authoritarian manner and does not allow the members to express themselves freely. Communication is choked and idea-production is shifled. Members start under estimating the worth of their own ideas and try to shape their contributions according to what the chairman wants to hear. Besides the chairman unconsciously cultivates an ear for only those comments that echo his personal preferences and prejudices. This makes the entire functioning of the committee counter productive.

3. **Lack of compliance with formal procedures**
Sometimes, on account of the negligence of the secretary, formal procedures are not fully compiled with. Let us suppose a proper notice badly affected if it has a small membership, it ceases to be representative and adequate variety of opinion is not available. On the other hand, if a committee is crowded with members, there is such a diversity of opinion that it becomes difficult to take any decision.

4. **Undesirable or incompetent membership**
For successful functioning of committees, it is very essential that right type of people are asked to serve on them. If the members do not know their job well, they will simply reduce the committee to an organised pooling of ignorance. If they are volatile and explosive or rigid and unaccommodating, they will wreck the working of the committee and just make it collapse.

How To Make The Committees Work Effectively

Despite obvious drawbacks, committees have come to stay. Whether on account of ours being an age of democratisation or the needs of modern commercial and industrial units being different, it is no longer possible to go back to the past one man organisations and dispense with committees. All that we can do is to take certain precautions to ensure that they work smoothly and successfully.

1. **Proper defining the scope of the committee**
   The term of reference of a committee should be clearly defined. They should be neither too broad nor vague. A senior manager should periodically review the working of each committee to ascertain if the terms of reference need re-defining.

2. **Competent membership**
   The success of a committee depends upon its members, so they should be chosen with care. They should be competent and well informed people with the right kind of temperament. They must not be aggressive or domineering nor meek and submissive. They must be neither too rigid to make any decisions possible nor too yielding to reduce decision making to a farce. They should be people with positive outlook on life, capable of clear thinking and cogent expression.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Write brief notes on each of the following principles of communication:
   a. clarity
   b. completeness
   c. conciseness
   d. consideration
   e. courtesy
   f. correctness

2. State and explain different types of committees
3. What are the advantages of forming a committee?
4. Why do committees misfire?

READING MATERIALS / LIST

Sue C. Camp & Marilyn L. Satterwhite, College Communication
Courtland Bovee & John V. Thill, Effective Communication
Shirley Taylor, Communication for Business
Asha Kaul, Effective Business Communication
L.A. Woolcott & W. R. Unwin, Mastering Business Communication
Internet and any other source