64.00

BIITM

Estd. 1999

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Prepared By:

Dr. B.K. Bal

MODULE 1

Cross Cultural Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completion of this chapter, you will be able to

- *Know the meaning of cross cultural communication*
- *Know the cultural diversities*
- *Explain the cultural differences in international business*
- *Know communicating across diversity*
- *Know the tips for developing cross cultural communication skills*
- *Handle written communication in international situation*
- *Handle oral communication in international situation*
- *Explain bias free communication*

Introduction

The present business operations and organisations have been expanded to global level and function beyond national boundaries. The rapid expansion of multinational corporation and wide spread use of information technology revolution testify that the whole world has been reduced to global village. With this different cultures and communities have been unified under a common network and business executives are supposed to communicate effectively with people of different cultural backgrounds. Consequently the study of cross-cultural communication has assumed significance.

Cross cultural communication

Cross cultural communication is communication among people of different cultures. It tries to bridge the understanding among people of different cultures and integrates relatively unrelated areas such as cultural anthropology and established areas of communication with a view to produce some guidelines that help the people to communicate better in intercultural situation.

Cultural Diversities

With globalisation of business operations and employment of staff from different counties, the organisations are rapidly transforming into culturally diversified organisations. These growing cultural diversities have the potential opportunities as well as adverse effects. If the organisations accept the cultural diversities, they can take the advantages of the richness of cultural diversities and can harness the creativity and skills of different people for their competitive advantage. On the other hand, if the organisations try to standardize the culture with imposition of the culture of any other country, they run the risk of losing potential resources like -sacrificing employees' imagination and their inherent traditional skills.

Culture is a set of values, beliefs, eating habits, customs, dressing style and codes that lead the people to define themselves as a distinct group. The culture, being the heritage of countless generations, doing business. In Western culture, time tends to be seen as quantitative, measured in units that reflect the march of progress in logical and sequential manner, with incremental certainty towards the future. In these cultures, time is viewed as money or sometimes more than money and focus is given to getting most efficiency and success of economic endeavours within specified time. This approach is called monochromic-it is an approach that favours linear structure and focus on one event or interaction at a time.

On the other hand in Eastern cultures, time is viewed as unlimited continuity, an unravelling rather than a strict boundary. Birth and death are not absolute ends since the universe continues and different souls assume different forms. People may attend to many things happening at once in this approach to time, e.g. pursuing many conversations in a moment. This approach is called as polychromic approach. In these perspectives the focus is on the collective or group stretching to achieve the goals. Whereas in monochromic settings, an individualist way of life is more easily accommodated as it view that individuals can more easily extract moments in time than from the social network created around them.

There are different perceptions of time among people of different cultures and countries. A U.S. or German executive attaches one meaning of time whereas an executive from Latin America or Japan attaches another. Usually Americans give top priority to reaching decision quickly. The Japanese know that U.S. executives are impatient and they use their impatience to their advantage by making them wait long enough and by using it to agree to anything.

(6) Fate and Personal Responsibility

Fate and personal responsibility is another important variable that affect communication across different cultures. This refers to the degree to which we feel ourselves the masters or controllers of our lives and surrounding circumstances, versus the degree to which we view ourselves as subject to things existing outside our control. Another way to look at this perspective is to ask how much we see ourselves able to change and control the surrounding circumstances and to choose the course of our lives and relationship that affects our lives and futures. Some people of cultures like that of U.S. and Australia having vast land to be conquered, have confidence in their ability to shape and choose the destinies. On the other hand people belonging to much smaller territories like Israel, Palestine, Mexico, Northern Ireland or overpopulated countries like China and India, more emphasis on destiny's role in human life is viewed. In Mexico, there is legacy of poverty, invasion , and territorial mutilation. Therefore Mexicans are more likely to perceive struggles as inevitable or unavoidable or destined to happen.

This variable is important in understanding the cultural conflicts. If people of the above two orientations communicate, miscommunication is likely to happen. The people of first orientation of free will expect action and accountability, failing which they may conclude the other person as lazy, obstructionist, dishonest or irresponsible. The people of fatalistic orientation, expect respect for the natural order of things as what so ever is destined to happen shall happen. Failing to see it, they may conclude that the first type of persons are coercive, aggressive, or with inflated egos.

(7) Face and Face-saving

Another important cultural variable relates to face and face-saving. Face is defined in many different ways in different cross-cultural communication contexts. Some view it as the value or standing a person has in the eyes of others and identify it with pride or self-respect. Others view it as the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in communication. This view attempts to include the ideas of status, power, courtesy, insider and outsider relations, humour, and respect.

If an individual perceive himself or herself as a self-determining individual, then face has to do with preserving his or her image among others. Then he or she will like to exert control in different situation to achieve the goal by taking a competitive stance in negotiations or confronting someone who has done something wrong with him or her. If an individual identifies him or herself as a group member, then he or she will like to avoid direct confrontation or problem-solving with others as it

* Open recognition of differences may embarrass minorities. * Minorities are using their situation to take advantage of the majority. * "Liberal" members of the majority are free of discriminatory attitudes. * Minorities are oversensitive.	* Majority members are not really trying to understand minorities. * The only way to change the situation is by confrontation and force. * All majority members will let you down in a "crunch."

Behaviours That Block Authentic Relations

Behaviours of majority culture	*Behaviours of minority cultures*
* Interruptions * Condescending behaviours * Expressions of too-easy acceptance and friendship * Talking about, rather than to, minorities who are present	* Confrontation too early and too harshly * Rejection of offers of help and friendship * Giving answers majority members want to hear * Isolationism

Assumptions and Behaviours That Promote Authentic Relations

* Treating people as individuals as well as members of culture * Demonstrating interest in learning about other cultures * Listening without interrupting * Taking risks (e.g., being first to confront differences) * Expressing concerns directly and constructively	* Staying with and working through difficult confrontations * Acknowledging sincere attempts (even clumsy ones) * Dealing with others where they are, instead of expecting them to be perfect. * Recognizing that interdependence is needed between members of majority and minority cultures

(2) Learning about a Culture

Each one should try to learn something new from the different cultures. Most of the conflicts among people of different cultures are not because of malice but because of lack of knowledge of other cultures. When the mainstream workers understand each other's cultural background, their understanding gaps will be definitely bridged.

Therefore, business executives should try to learn something about country, history, religion, politics, and customs. They should also read books and articles about the culture and talk with people who have dealt with its members.

Seasoned business travellers suggest the following tips for dealing with persons of other cultures :

- In England, never stick pens or other objects in your front suit pocket because doing so is considered gauche.
- In Arab countries, never give a gift of liquor.
- In Muslim countries, do not be surprised when business executives and employees excuse themselves in the midst of a meeting to conduct prayer (Namaj)
- Allow plenty of time to introduce and interact socially with African persons, otherwise they will distrust and avoid doing business.

• TIPS FOR DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

While dealing with people of another culture, one approach is to learn as much as possible about their language, cultural back-ground, history, social rules and so on. The other is to develop general skills that help to be adept in any culture. The first approach is time-consuming and requires lots of efforts. Even then, one will never be able to understand another culture completely. Even if one could understand the other culture significantly by growing up in that culture, the natives might resent his assumption that he understands the culture completely. The other drawback of immersing in other specific culture is forming the trap of over generalizations and looking at people not individuals with their own unique existences, but as specific ethnic groups like "Africans", "Japanese", "Thai", "Germans", etc.

Therefore the second approach to cultural learnings *i.e.* development of intercultural skills is more useful. One can apply these tips, while interacting with persons of any type of culture :

Take responsibility for communication that aims at bridging the understanding gap.

- Show respect for the other person through gestures and eye contacts.
- Suspend the judgement for the time being.
- Listen carefully the contents of the message.
- Emphasize common grounds.
- Do not be distracted by outward appearance like dress, or mannerism.
- Make verbal and non verbal message consistent.
- Learn about variation in customs and practices so that others can feel comfortable.
- Take the other person as an individual with unique existence than generalising on the basis of ethnic group.
- Be flexible in habits, preferences and attitudes.

Need for Persuasive Communication

Persuasion is needed because of following reasons :

1. Building shared vision. The present day business has to function with collective and collaborative efforts of the different individuals. The top level executives have to build a shared vision of the organization that channelizes the efforts and energies of various persons at work. For this, they have to persuade different employees by telling them the protential benefits of the proposal and winning their commitment for the common objective.

2. Better than Coercion. Persuasion is better than coercion or compulsion which breed resentment and retaliation among different employees as their egos resent. People forcefully resist change when they are forced to change as in case of command and control style of management. But in persuasion change in brought in through indirect and invisible way of which the person is not aware.

3. Basis of Leadership. Persuasion is the basic act of leadership when leaders act as change agent. In the present globalized and liberalized environment, change is inevitable. In fact, change occurs at accelerating pace. Research findings show that employees resist change as they like status quo or fear that change may bring insecurity to their job. To prepare them for the change, executives have to persuade them that the change is in their interest as well as in the interest of the organization.

4. Building Team. Present businesses are run by cross-functional teams of different experts from different countries. These experts have little tolerance for the unquestioned authority. The traditional models of command and control are very obsolete to build team of dedicated and devoted individuals. Persuasian can effectively help to build the team of different experts sharing their ideas for betterment of the organization.

How to Persuade?

Persuasion involves careful and conscious preparation with adequate facts and arguments and the presentation of vivid supporting evidences that appeal not only to intellect but also to emotions. Most business people think persuasion as a straightforward process and one time event. They also think persuasion comprises of :

- A strong statement of one's position.
- Entering into discussion with others and obtaining their ready agreement.

But this is not persuasion in effective way. **Jay Conger** studied closely the effective persuasion and reviewed the characteristics of successful business leaders and change agents. Conger's research indicated that effective persuasion comprises of four distinct and necessary steps :

1. Establish your credibility.
2. Frame your goals in a way that identifies common ground with those you intend to persuade.
3. Reinforce your positions using vivid language and compelling evidence.
4. Connect emotionally with your audience.

Persuasion is an act which comes with conscious practice and experience. These are some of the guiding hints that can be applied in persuasion :

1. Analyse the situation and concerned persons. Before initiating persuasion, first analyse the situation to know what is the real as well as apparent problem. What are the other courses of action and what are their merits and demerits from persuader's and other person's point of view. The interests, needs, motives and psychology of the man to be persuaded should be imagined before hand.

2. Establish Credibility. The person persuading others, must establish credibility as people believe in those who are trust worthy. The higher the credibility, the greater is the impact of the message. To quote **Aristotle**, "*Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others; this is true generally whatever the question is and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided.*"

3. Prepare the receiver to be open-minded. Never start the persuasion with over-whelming dry and rough arguments. Before this, the receiver should be prepared to open his mind. The close-minded and egoistic persons are difficult to convince because their minds are preoccupied with

11. Be flexible, never impose . If the persuader wants the receiver to listen to him, he should first listen to him totally. If there are certain positive points, those must be appreciated with open mind and broad heart. In argumentation, never impose arguments on other person ; give subtle suggestions and indirect hints. *It is quite possible that we try to win argument, but lose relations along with arguments.*

12. Do not be emotional. Sometimes it happens that in argumentation we become emotional, and identify with certain opinion. When we do not find the other person responding we lose temper and patience. That does not solve the problem, rather complicates. Therefore, it is imperative to cool the temper of oneself by being aware of it, as well as to soothe the other person. Discussion should always be in cool and dispassionate manner, rather than in angry and agitated way. Be watchful that arguments are generating more light than heat.

13. Motivate for action. First wait and watch that the attitude of the other person has been changed. Then motivate and encourage him for action. Ask him that the decision you have taken is your own.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER

Persuasive communication is the communication that is directed towards changing or altering another person's beliefs, attitudes and ultimately behaviour. Effective communication is a difficult and time consuming task, but it is also more powerful way than ordering or warning in command and control style of management. Persuasion is needed because :

1. It helps in building shared vision.
2. It is beter than coercion.
3. It is the basis of leadership
4. It helps to build the team.

To persuade others, one can use the following guiding hints :

1. Analyse the situation and concerned persons.
2. Establish credibility.
3. Prepare the receiver to be open minded.
4. Identify the appropriate emotion of the moment.
5. Talk about rewards to those people who think in terms of payoff.
6. Talk about obstacles to be overcome to those who welcome challenge and change.
7. Appeal to self-interest.
8. Use appealing arguments, character and conditions.
9. Organise your ideas for greatest impact and select selling words.
10. Create favourable atmosphere.
11. Be flexible, never impose.
12. Do not be emotional.
13. Motivate for action.

11

FACTORS AFFECTING NEGOTIATION

Given its complexity, several factors affect the process of negotiation. We may broadly group them into six—authority, credibility, information, time, emotional control and communication skills.

Authority

The first key factor affecting any negotiation is authority. Negotiation may start with deliberation but to be effective, it has to end up in a conclusion or settlement. For this, both the parties should have the power or authority to conclude the deal. If one party believes that the other party does not have the requisite authority to make a commitment or at least mediate and carry the process forward, he or she may not be keen to come to the negotiating table. If the parties derive their authority from a higher authority, they should know to what extent they can stretch. Committing beyond the extent of authority they are vested with may result in negating the negotiation. In real-life situations, we do come across instances where due to improper understanding, one party commits certain concessions or facilities which the higher authority does not approve and honour. Lack of authority or ability to stand by the settlements arrived at undermines the effectiveness of negotiation.

Credibility

Trust and mutual confidence are very relevant in any process of negotiation. People who are known to be honest, sincere, steady and reliable have an edge when they enter the process of negotiation. The question in the mind of a group when the other person speaks is can we trust this person's perspectives, opinions and statements? For negotiations to proceed smoothly, the answer to this question should be positive. Credibility comes from the person's knowledge, expertise, track record and relationships. It is essential that both the parties have in their teams those people who are perceived as being credible. The authority or power to enter into a negotiation should be supplemented by the credibility of people sitting across the negotiation table.

Information

Negotiation often proceeds on the basis of facts, figures, past data, future trends and outlook, studies, empirical data and calculations. Information, to repeat a cliché, is power. Adequate and reliable information about the various issues involved is essential for ensuring the success of a negotiation exercise. The party which is better informed has an advantage. Logical and persuasive arguments cannot be put forth in the absence of all relevant information. Before coming to the negotiating table, each party should make conscious efforts to gather as much information as possible on all the issues that will be raised during negotiations. Effective negotiation often involves hard bargaining and well-informed teams enjoy better bargaining power.

It is likely that one of the parties in the negotiation has greater access to information than the other. In the interest of ensuring a smooth flow of negotiation, information that is relevant for deliberations should be shared with the other party. How to share it, when to share it and in what manner it should be shared are matters of judgement and should be decided depending upon the situations.

Time

The time frame within which the negotiation should be completed is another important factor affecting the process of negotiation. One of the parties may have a certain urgency as a result of which they may be in a hurry to conclude the negotiation. It is due to time constraints that negotiations cannot go on endlessly and both the parties should agree on a time frame within which the process has to be completed. At the same time, the very process of negotiation is such that the other party cannot be hurried too much. Both the parties need to have adequate patience. Putting the other party under undue pressure is certainly not desirable. Negotiations having wider impact on all the parties need to necessarily follow a well laid down process, which takes time. However, as the process progresses, the deliberations should gather the required momentum and the deal should be clinched or the settlement concluded towards the peak of the negotiation. Each party should take care not to delay too much resulting in a stalemate.

Emotional control

Human beings are not just rational, they are also emotional. Every person has his or her qualities of the head and heart. It is true that in business situations, people take decisions based on thinking and reasoning and after a careful evaluation of choices before them. Yet, if we scratch the surface, we do find emotions at play. Good negotiators are aware of the play of emotions and are responsive to them. Apart from assessing the emotional state of the people in the other party, the negotiator should himself display the appropriate emotional state. Sometimes, it would be appropriate to come on strong with forceful points. At other times, a whisper and a soft touch would do. The idea is that whatever be your position, try to match the emotional furore of the other party and establish a facilitative ground. While a certain emotional awareness is no doubt relevant, there is nonetheless no room for excessive display of emotions in the process of negotiation.

Communication Skills

As we have already noted, negotiation is an intense process involving exchange of messages. These messages are not necessarily bits and pieces of information. What needs to be shared with others during the process of negotiation would be a complex mix of ideas, attitudes and even emotions. The negotiator needs to state, articulate, explain, reason out, appeal, concede, persuade, persevere and even remain silent depending upon the situation. Good negotiators use silence effectively. They know when to remain silent. Effective negotiation calls for not only saying the right thing at the right time, but also leaving unsaid what need not be said. A good negotiator needs to have a good command over language.

The process of negotiation is not always conducted in a serious manner. There may be instances of inter-cultural group negotiations, where it would be inappropriate to use jokes, humour and light-hearted comments since they are likely to be misunderstood. In other situations where the relationship between the negotiating teams is not too formal, relevant humour and lighter moments may help in building rapport and easing tension. Besides using the right words and tone, effective negotiators supplement their arguments with stories, metaphors and analogies to make their positions come alive. Given the importance of communication skills in the negotiation process, parties concerned choose people who have good interpersonal skills as members of the negotiating teams. Display of arrogance, hurtful comments, sarcastic remarks, emotional outbursts and overfriendly approaches are inimical to the smooth flow of the negotiation process.

STAGES OF NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Negotiation is widely recognized to be a four-step process. These are preparation, opening, bargaining and closing.

Preparation

The first stage in a negotiation process relates to planning and preparation. It is the stage where the parties decide what they want, what are their minimum expectations, how much they will yield and how they will go about the negotiations. Each party will also try to visualize what the other party will be expecting from the negotiation. Preparations for the negotiations would consist of collecting relevant information, obtaining the required authority and outer limits, having intense discussions and collecting details of the previous negotiations on similar issues. As we have noted earlier, a well-informed and a well-prepared party enters the negotiation process with a high level of confidence. In this stage, the parties also look at the time frame, availability of the team members, relative roles and their strategies. While the teams should enter the process with a positive bent of mind, prudence suggests that they should also discuss beforehand what they should do if the negotiations break down and the agreements are not reached.

Opening

The second stage in the negotiation process concerns opening. This is when the parties concerned come to the negotiating table and meet each other. Opening has two steps—rapport building and probing.

Rapport building is the process of getting to know each other. Thus, introductions are made, pleasantries are exchanged, and names and backgrounds are noted. Care should be taken to address the persons by their correct names. Even if someone in the other group is already known, too much of familiarity or intimacy should be avoided. Negotiations should start on a friendly note, but with a professional approach. While meeting people and interacting with them, perceptions do matter. Make sure that negotiations begin on the right note. Be polite and pleasant. Use appropriate words. Be open minded. Show enthusiasm. Listen attentively.

Once the pleasantries are over, the teams enter the stage of probing. Each party tries to know more about the other through open-ended questions. They get to know the needs and expectations of one another. Statements made are more exploratory than assertive. The more they listen and probe, better will be their appreciation of the other party's stand or position. Probing takes place through open-ended questions like, 'How shall we proceed?', 'What do you suggest?', 'What is the time frame we are looking at?' and 'Which issues shall we take up first?'

Bargaining

It is the stage when the negotiating teams really sit down and talk it out. They state their positions and put forth the supporting arguments. In any negotiation, the question uppermost is, 'What's there in it for me?'. Bargaining is nothing but a give and take. You are prepared to concede something provided you get what you want. During the course of hard bargaining, all the relevant negotiation skills we noted earlier are brought into full play. Assertiveness, substantiation, logic, reasoning and persuasion are all put to good use. A good negotiator does not yield easily. He or she uses silence effectively and keeps the other party guessing. When both the parties are tough negotiators, deliberations become more challenging and progress becomes slow. It may become necessary to take a break and get back after a gap. Quite often, there is a total disagreement and when that happens, both the parties should take a longer break and meet at a later date. Complex negotiations take time and the pace cannot be forced.

Closing

Finally, you enter the settlement stage and work towards a 'close'. After completing all the bargaining, the negotiating parties come to the stage of settlement or agreement. The final terms as agreed upon are documented and the agreement gets signed. Even after all the hard bargaining and intense deliberations, quite often there are still some loose ends that have to be tied up. It is only after some deliberation that both the parties agree upon the final draft of the agreement. Negotiations by their very nature involve some compromises and sacrifices. Neither party should expect a settlement or deal that is totally as per their expectations. As they say, you win some and lose some. Good negotiators view the outcome in proper perspective and take the gains and compromises in their stride.

TYPES OF NEGOTIATIONS

There are essentially two types of negotiations—integrative and distributive. Both follow different approaches. Integrative approach is also known as the win–win syndrome. In this, each party appreciates that one should not try to have an upper hand to the detriment of the other. The approach is one in which each group tries to be accommodative and conciliatory. It is based on a problem-solving approach. There is a mutual understanding, and collective efforts are made to ensure that issues are resolved to mutual satisfaction. At the end of the negotiations, both the parties feel satisfied that they have made the best of bargain under the given circumstances. In a distributive process, on the other hand, one party gains at the expense of the other. It is also known as the win–lose syndrome. It is also understood as a zero-sum game. The total sum being limited, the more one gets, the less there is for the other. It is the process of distribution. Styles of negotiation used here are authoritarian or coercive. One party tries to browbeat the other to accept what is offered.

WHY NEGOTIATIONS FAIL

Having understood different types of negotiating styles, processes, strategies, studies and what contributes to the success of negotiations, let us also understand in brief why negotiations fail. Negotiation fails when either party approaches the process of negotiation with totally unreasonable demands or extremely high expectations. If the starting point of both the parties is too divergent, negotiation may not lead to a meeting point. Similarly, negotiation fails if the spirit of cooperation or give-and-take is lacking. If one party wants to make only gains and is unwilling to accept compromises or make sacrifices, negotiation cannot make much headway. An unreasonably rigid approach by one of them may lead to failure of negotiations. The third reason for the failure of negotiation could be the lack of a consistent approach on the part of one of the parties. If the party shifts its stand very often, the process of negotiation cannot progress much. For negotiations to conclude successfully, deliberations should move from one stage to the other in a progressive manner. Another reason why negotiations fail is when one party does not share any information with the other and springs too many surprises confusing them. Springing such surprises very often puts off the other party, making it difficult for them to react. Yet another reason why negotiations fail is when the negotiating teams do not have the requisite authority or are not adequately empowered or when they misunderstand and exceed their authority. In such a case, the final authority that should approve and seal the negotiated terms and commitments declines to do so, thereby negating the entire exercise of negotiation. This happens when there are large financial implications as in wage negotiations and trade agreements. Negotiations may also fail when conditions change dramatically during the course of deliberations, for example, if the basic premise on which negotiations started undergoes a drastic change for reasons such as change of management or ownership, declaration of war, change of government, development of any crisis or emergency situations.

DOS AND DON'TS

Dos	*Don'ts*
Be well prepared and set clear objectives	Avoid sarcasm and hurtful comments
Be flexible in your approach. Remember that it is a give and take	Do not indulge in loose talk and casual approach
Listen actively and attentively	Do not raise trivial or insignificant issues
Maintain discipline and decorum. Give respect and take respect	Do not get emotional or egoistic
Show patience, tact and perseverance	Do not get into avoidable arguments
Be open minded and pragmatic	Do not interrupt others and jump to conclusions
Ask questions and seek clarifications	Do not insult or slight people
Be enthusiastic, reasonable and convincing	Do not yell or raise your voice
Be soft yet firm	Do not lie or be inconsistent
Supplement your words with appropriate body language	Do not react or comment in a hurry

KEY THOUGHTS

1. Negotiation is the process through which messages are exchanged, benefits and sacrifices are clarified, conflicts are resolved, deals are struck and commitments are obtained.
2. Quite often the process of negotiation is complicated and long drawn, and every skill is put to test.
3. Negotiation is a goal-oriented process involving face-to-face interactions.
4. Negotiation often entails hard bargaining and successful resolution of conflicting interests in a spirit of accommodation and a give-and-take approach.
5. The nature of negotiation in the world of business is extremely wide.
6. Negotiations, to be effective, call for due homework, facts and figures at hand and a flexible approach.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Importance of Presentation Skills

We may not all be professional public speakers but we may have to make a presentation at some point of time or the other. Whether one is a student, a professional engineer, an academician, or a business executive, one may have to make oral presentations in front of one's colleagues or professional peers. A professional student may be required to make presentations in the form of progress reports, student seminars, research presentations, and so on. Professionals in different fields, including scientists and engineers, have also to make oral reports, present seminars, deliver project presentations, or present a proposal orally. Similarly, business executives may have to introduce a new product that their company has launched, to present a new sales plan that they want others to know about, or they may just have a brilliant idea that they would like to share with their colleagues.

Thus, of the many skills that contribute to professional success, none is more important than the ability to communicate orally in front of a group of people. Business people rank oral presentation skills among the most important factors responsible for their success. Oral presentation is a tool of professional and business interaction. Infact, in some organisations, institutions, or universities, recruitment is made on the basis of a selection process, which involves oral presentation in the form of seminar presentation, short lectures, business presentations or some other form of oral presentation.

A good presentation can do wonders for a person; it may help in getting a lucrative job offer from the company he/she always wanted to join, he/she may get a big business deal or the promotion he/she had been waiting for. The list is long. On the other hand, a poor presentation of ideas not only reduces the professional image of the person presenting it, but may result in major business or personal loss.

Therefore, the ability to deliver an effective presentation is essential for all of us. We should know how to present our ideas in a persuasive way, how to make our audience interested in our presentation, how to use appropriate visuals during our presentation, and how to reflect confidence while speaking. A person making a presentation should have the ability to begin his presentation in an effective way, develop his/her ideas logically and conclude his/her presentation with something memorable. He/she needs to understand the basic elements of an effective presentation—the 4 Ps, that is, Plan, Prepare, Practice, and Perform.

PLANNING THE PRESENTATION

An oral presentation is the formal, structured, and systematic presentation of a message to an audience and it involves conveying a lot of information in a limited time. It should, therefore, be planned well in advance so that the material is delivered effectively. Planning the presentation is, thus, the most important element. It helps the presenter

- know the audience;
- stimulate the interest of the audience;
- be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the audience;
- strike up interaction with his/her immediate audience in as many ways as possible;
- know his/her purpose;
- analyse the occasion;
- fit the material to the time at his/her disposal; and
- select and narrow a topic for his/her presentation.

Planning a presentation involves defining the purpose, analysing the audience, analysing the occasion, and choosing a suitable title.

Planning an oral presentation, thus, involves purpose identification, audience analysis, analysing the occasion, and the process of selecting and narrowing the topic of presentation. The following suggestions will help in planning well:

1. Define the Purpose

Planning a presentation should start by defining its purpose. What is the purpose of this presentation? This is the most important question that needs to be answered in order to make a presentation focused, with clear objectives. A general purpose as well as a specific purpose should be identified. General purposes include:

- To inform—to share information
- To persuade—to change behaviour, attitude, belief, values, and so on
- To demonstrate—to help listeners know how to do something

Identifying the specific purpose of a presentation involves identifying an observable measurable action that the audience should be able to take, and using one idea that matches audience needs, knowledge, expectations, and interests. It should focus on audience behaviour and restate the speech topic.

Study the following examples:

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will be able to describe three advantages of using HP PrecisionScan LT software.

(Informative presentation)

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will believe that the HP PrecisionScan LT is the best scanning software.

(Persuasive presentation)

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will be able to use HP PrecisionScan LT software.

(Demonstrative presentation)

2. Analyse the Audience

The desired results cannot be achieved from a presentation unless the person making the presentation knows his/her audience well. Audience analysis is an integral part of the process of oral presentation. It includes identifying audience characteristics, analysing audience needs and expectations, and identifying factors for getting and maintaining audience attention.

Lenny Laskowski, an international professional speaker and an expert on presentation skills, has used the word A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E as an acronym, and has defined some general audience analysis categories that all surveys should include. The 'acronym' is reproduced below:

***A**_udience—Who are the members? How many will be at the event?*
***U**_nderstanding—What is their knowledge about the topic I will be addressing?*
***D**_emographics—What is their age, sex, educational background, and so forth?*
***I**_nterest—Why will they be at this event? Who asked them to be there?*
***E**_nvironment—Where will I stand when I speak? Will everyone be able to see me?*
***N**_eeds—What are the listener's needs? What are my needs as a speaker? What are the needs of the person who wants me to speak?*
***C**_ustomised—How can I custom fit my message to this audience?*
***E**_xpectations—What do the listeners expect to learn from me?*

Identify Audience Characteristics In order to know the audience, the presenter needs to identify their basic characteristics. He/she should try to gather as much background information about his/her listeners as he/she can—their age, gender, social, economic and educational background, religion, political affiliations, profession, attitudes (likes and dislikes), beliefs (true and false), and values (good and bad). If these audience characteristics are identified, he/she will be much better equipped to plan and prepare his/her presentation effectively.

Analyse Audience Needs and Expectations Those who will attend and listen to the presentation have their needs and expectations. They will be there for a reason. If the presenter wants them to listen to him/her, he/she has to understand and respond to their needs and expectations. For this he/she should ask the following questions:

- Why will they listen to me?
- Who asked them to be there?
- Is their attendance compulsory?
- What are their interests?
- What ideas or experience do I have that the audience may like to hear?
- What are their needs?
- What do they expect?
- How do my objectives meet audience needs?

Answers to these questions will help him/her make appropriate modification in his/her presentation to suit his/her audience. The presentation must be audience oriented, dealing with the topic from their perspective. The presenter may not change his/her ideas and facts for his/her audience but he/she may change the way he/she conveys them. He/she may tell them what he/she wants to tell but in a way that appeals to them.

Recognise Factors for Getting and Maintaining Audience Attention Once the characteristics, needs, and expectations of the audience have been identified, factors that meet the needs of the listeners should be determined. Listeners will be more interested in the presentation if it meets their requirements. As a result, they will listen more attentively, understand what is said, and remember the key points of the presentation. The presenter needs to consider the following specific questions in this context:

- How can I relate my presentation to the needs and expectations of my audience?
- What should I do to ensure that my audience remembers my main points?
- What style will appeal to my audience?
- What are the changes that I should make?
- Have I incorporated ways of encouraging my listeners to give feedback and share information that will make my presentation more effective?
- Have I planned strategies for dealing with listeners' communication apprehensions?
- How will I handle hostile listeners or those who are disruptive?

Moreover, more informed decisions can be made about how to best adapt to the varying moods of listeners and how to tap their curiosity, interest, and motivation. Perhaps the best rule to remember in identifying factors for getting and keeping audience attention is to remain flexible. A blend of methods and alternatives to accommodate listeners' perceptions may be the best approach to audience analysis.

3. Analyse the Occasion

The occasion on which the presentation is to be made should be analysed in order to understand the nature of the event or communicative situation. Several aspects of the event like its background, the people involved, the organisations or associations linked to the event, and so on need to be considered. Here are some relevant questions.

- Is my presentation part of a larger event like a national/international seminar with a central theme, or just an internal conference where I am supposed to present my views on a particular topic?
- Am I familiar with the procedures of the event?
- Who are the sponsors?
- Who are the other speakers?
- What is the venue?
- What is the duration of my presentation?

Infact, thinking through the answers to some of these questions ahead of time may ensure that the presentation is effective.

4. Choose a Suitable Title

Generally, a title has to be chosen for the presentation. The title gives the audience the first glimpse of the presentation and they forms their first impressions. Therefore, it is essential that the title is appropriate and conveys the essence of the message. A vague, misleading, and fussy title may confuse the audience.

The process of choosing a title may begin by first identifying a topic. The choice of the topic depends on the occasion, the audience, the type, and purpose of the presentation. A list of topics may be compiled, including potential topics like social, economic, political, technological and environmental problems (for example, poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, corruption, crime, inflation, AIDS epidemic, and so on.); ideas regarding society, education, business and economy, government, technological systems, and so forth, and reactions to debatable issues (for example, universal civil code, Article 370, politics and religion, and abortion). When all the possible topics have been noted, the choices can be evaluated and an appropriate topic may be chosen.

After a suitable topic has been selected for the presentation, it should be narrowed down as per the focus of the presentation in order to phrase a clear, complete, specific, and focused title. In this process, the nature of the general and specific purposes of the presentation as well as audience expectations and rhetorical sensitivity may be considered. For example, if the selected topic is 'pollution', it may be narrowed to any of the following:

- Vehicular pollution hazards in New Delhi (local focus)
- Pollution of the Ganges (national focus)
- CFC's and ozone depletion (international focus)

PREPARING THE PRESENTATION

Once the presentation has been planned, it is time to begin preparing for it. Preparing well is the key to success. Making an oral presentation—whether a seminar presentation, an oral report, a project presentation, or a business presentation—is easier when it is prepared it in a systematic manner. Being prepared helps the presenter

- deal with speech anxiety effectively;
- develop the required confidence;
- seek precise and relevant examples and illustrations; and
- check for accuracy, redundancies, and cliches.

Preparing for a presentation involves developing the central idea and main points, gathering relevant supporting material, and planning visual aids.

Develop the Central Idea

The central idea of the presentation is its core idea or thesis statement. It should be a complete declarative sentence that captures the essence of the message. The following are the characteristics of a central idea:

- It restates the presentation topic.
- It is a simple audience-centered idea.
- It is a one-sentence summary of the presentation
- It focuses on the content of the speech.
- It uses specific language.

Preparing for a presentation involves developing the central idea and the main points, gathering supporting material, and planning visual aids.

Develop the Main Ideas

Develop the main ideas for the presentation. The presenter may make a logical division of the central idea, establish reasons for the idea being true, or support the central idea with a series of steps. Choosing one of these techniques will largely depend on the topic of the presentation as well as its objectives. Study the following examples:

- Logical division of the central idea
  Example: Central idea: Unemployment in India
  Logical divisions: A. Types B. Causes C. Solutions
- Establishing reasons for the central idea being true
  Example: Central idea: Education in India needs to be restructured
  Establishing reasons: A. Reason 1 B. Reason 2 C. Reason 3
- Supporting the central idea with a series of steps
  Example: Central idea: Indo-Pak Relations can be improved
  Series of steps: A. Strategy 1 B. Strategy 2 C. Strategy 3

Gather Supporting Material

One of the most difficult aspects of preparing a presentation is gathering relevant supporting information. Information that will be used in the presentation should be carefully selected. This will depend on the scope and length of the presentation.

While gathering supporting information a systematic approach should be adopted. First, the presenter should gather all his/her thoughts on the subject and then recall related information from his/her personal knowledge and experience. Thereafter, several research resources such as the Internet, library resources, personal interviews, and discussion with experts, colleagues, and special interest groups should be consulted. A list of material to be included in your presentation should be made. The supporting material gathered may include facts, examples, definitions, quotations, and so on.

An outline of the collected material is developed, and reworked until it is in good order. After that, the first draft is written and revised as required. It is important to check for accuracy, redundancies, and cliches. The style of the presentation should be informal, preferably using everyday language and avoiding technical terms and statistics.

Plan Visual Aids

Using appropriate visual aids will increase the effectiveness of presentations. Good visuals may serve the following purposes.

- ***They Serve as Speech Notes:*** Visual aids may be used as notes to emphasise and clarify the main points of the presentation. Each visual aid may contain a main idea. Effective titles may be used to convey the main message of the visual aid.
- ***They Give Confidence:*** Using good visuals might increase the presenter's self-confidence because they refresh his/her memory, establish his/her credibility, and show that he/she has planned, is well-prepared, and is professional.
- ***They Help Focus on the Theme of the Presentation:*** Visuals help the presenter to focus on the theme of the presentation and concentrate on the objectives of his/her presentation. He/she may use effective visuals to highlight the central idea of his/her presentation.
- ***They Increase Audience Interest:*** Interesting and relevant visual aids make the audience more interested in what is being said. They may force even a hostile and demotivated audience to pay attention.
- ***They Give Clarity and Precision:*** Visuals make the presentation easy to understand and remember.

Any of the following types of visual aids may be used.

A. *Three-Dimensional Visual Aids*

(a) Objects
(b) Models
(c) People

B. *Two-Dimensional Visual Aids*

(a) Drawings
(b) Photographs
(c) Slides
(d) Maps
(e) Graphs
- Bar graphs
- Pie graphs
- Line graphs
- Picture graphs

(f) Charts
(g) Overhead transparencies
(h) Computer generated presentations
(i) Chalkboard

The following suggestions will help in planning and using visual aids effectively:

- Relevant visual aids must be chosen. The visual aids should match the message. Using a visual that does not match with what is being said is distracting and may confuse the audience.
- The presenter must be familiar with his/her visual aids and rehearse his/her presentation with using the visual aids.
- Computer software programs such as PowerPoint and Corel Presentations may be used to enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. However, special care must be taken while designing electronic presentations or multimedia presentations because making the presentation overly dependent on electronic visuals may create certain handicaps.
- Handouts may be distributed, that is, charts, presentation abstracts, summaries, brochures, pamphlets, outlines, and so on, in order to complement the presentation.
- While using overhead transparencies, eye contact should be maintained with the audience.
- Visual aids must be introduced before actually showing them.

ORGANISING YOUR PRESENTATION

After the central idea as well as the main ideas have been developed, relevant supporting material has been gathered, and appropriate visual aids have been planned, the message has to be organised and structured. Good organisation is essential for effective presentation. The key to good organisation is the repetition of the main ideas of your message. Just remember the three Ts:

Your presentation should be organised into three distinct parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

Tell the audience what you are going to tell.
Tell it.
Tell them what you have told.

Divide the presentation into three distinct parts: the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction

The opening of the presentation should convince the audience to listen to it. It has five functions:

- Get the audience's attention
- Introduce the subject
- Give the audience a reason to listen
- Establish the credibility
- Preview the main ideas

Get Audience Attention The speaker needs to get the attention of his/her audience and hold it until the end of his/her talk. Listeners form their first impression of the presentation quickly, and first impressions matter. Therefore, the opening should capture their attention. Audience attention may be captured in several ways. These techniques include using any one of the following:

- ***Startling Statement/Statistics*** Say something surprising or unexpected, or give statistics that surprises the audience.
- ***Anecdote*** Tell a short entertaining account of an event, a short story.
- ***Questions*** Ask some interesting questions. The question should be rhetorical with an obvious answer.
- ***Quotations*** Start the presentation with a relevant quotation that throws light on the central idea of the presentation.
- ***Humour*** Start the presentation with a humorous reference.

Introduce the Subject A statement of the central idea should be included in the introduction. In simple and direct language the audience has to know what the presentation is about.

Give the Audience a Reason to Listen Audience attention should be drawn to the topic of the presentation by showing them how the topic affects them directly. Giving relevant statistics can motivate the audience.

Establish the Credibility The speaker's credibility should be established early in a speech. He/she should be able to convince the audience that he/she is worth listening to. The speaker should be well prepared, appear confident, and strike a rapport with the audience by narrating personal experiences relevant to the topic.

Preview the Main Ideas The audience should be told what they are going to listen to. The preview to the presentation should be given towards the end of the introduction. The preview should include a statement of the central idea and mention the main points of the presentation.

Remember the acronym
KISS
(KEEP IT SIMPLE AND SHORT)
Your audience will understand a simple message easily.

SHORT
Your audience may concentrate better if your message is short.

Body

The body contains the main content of the presentation. Most people fail to make an effective presentation simply because they try to convey so much information and include so many ideas. The speaker may be tempted to include so many points in his/her presentation but it is advisable to focus on a few main ideas, two to four. Each main point should be supported by appropriate details but not excessive data. This will spoil the presentation because it may confuse the audience. In short, the *mantra* is to use a few main points with relevant supporting details. The speaker should concentrate on each main point and use appropriate transitions to indicate a change of point as the audience may not be able to differentiate between the main points and minor points. He/she should ensure that his/her information is accurate, complete, and relevant.

As the body of the presentation is structured, the speaker should choose the sequence he/she will follow from among any of the following organisational patterns:

- Sequential
- General to specific
- Specific to general
- More important to less important
- Less important to more important
- Categorical
- Problem and solution
- Contrast and comparison

In developing the sequence of a presentation, transitions between sections, illustrations that will be used, and points of emphasis should also be decided.

Conclusion

The conclusion of your presentation should accomplish the following four specific objectives:

(i) Summarise the presentation
(ii) Reemphasise the central idea
(iii) Focus on a goal
(iv) Motivate the audience to respond
(v) Provide closure

Summarise Your Presentation The conclusion gives the speaker the last chance to present his/her key ideas. The main ideas should be repeated.

Reemphasise the Central Idea The central idea of the presentation should be restated in a memorable way.

Focus on a Goal The speaker should focus on the specific objective of the presentation and concentrate on what he/she wants his audience to do, think, change, remember, and so on.

Motivate the Audience to Respond The audience should be motivated to give feedback. They may be encouraged to ask questions.

Provide Closure Verbal techniques may be used to let the audience know that the speech has ended. Appropriate words and phrases such as "in conclusion", "lastly", "finally", and "as my last point" may be used. The speaker may thank the audience for their patient listening. Nonverbal cues may also be used to signal closure.

Handling Stage Fright

Everyone who has faced an audience and has made a speech or presentation must have experienced stage fright. Perhaps one of the most difficult things that need to be handled during a presentation is one's first encounter with stage fright. Whenever we are faced with a frightening situation we find difficult to handle, our body responds. This response is in terms of extra energy to deal with the situation. As a result, the heartbeat quickens, breathing becomes more rapid, the mouth becomes dry, blushing occurs, palms sweat, and several other physiological changes occur. We become nervous or anxious and suffer from stage fright. Infact, even very good speakers experience some degree of stage fright when they have to give a presentation before an audience. So, some degree of stage fright is quite normal. However, it is important to learn to handle stage fright and use the extra energy positively to improve presentation delivery.

Do you know that

- *You feel more nervous than you appear.*
- *The more you think that you are nervous, the more nervous you will feel.*
- *Your audience cannot easily detect your stage fright.*
- *Even the most experienced presenters get nervous before an important presentation.*
- *Even great speakers like Kennedy and Churchill were extremely fearful of speaking in public.*

The following strategies can be used to control and reduce stage fright:

- **Concentrate on the Three Ps: Planning, Preparation and Practice** As discussed earlier, presentations should be well planned, thoroughly prepared, and rehearsed repeatedly. Knowing the purpose, audience, and occasion helps to reduce speech anxiety. Effective preparation familiarises the speaker with his/her message and thus reduces stage fear. Knowing the introduction, body and conclusion well in advance gives the speaker the confidence to control his/her speech anxiety. Finally, practice makes one perfect, if the presentation is well rehearsed. There is nothing to fear and there may be little or no stage fright at the time of presentation because the speaker is familiar with the situation.

- **Set Realistic Goals** Set objectives that are realisc. If the goals are unrealistic and beyond one's capabilities, it will unnecessarily create nervusness. In fact, the normal stress of the speaking situation is heightened by unrealistic ambitons. The speaker should be practical and identify his/her shortcomings. If he/she is not a very efective oral communicator, he/she should set humble goals. Moreover, he/she may set himself upto feel nervous by putting undue emphasis on a presentation.
- **Avoid Negative Thoughts** Entertaining negative thughts may sometimes create more anxiety. Avoid thoughts such as "I am going to fail", "I can't speak", "My topic is boring", "I didn't prepare well", "I am not ready", "My audience don't ike me", "I'm not fluent", and so on. Instead, positive self-talk such as, "I really know thispresentation and believe in what I'm saying", "The topic is very interesting", "I am well planned and confident", and so on. The speaker should feel confident about his/her planning and preparation, have faith in himself/herself, tell himself/herself that everything is fine and tlat his/her listeners are positively disposed towards him/her.
- **Begin the Presentation with a Pause** Beginning presentations is accompanied by feelings of excitement and nervousness. This can be controlled by taking a few moments to make oneself comfortable. The speaker should not be in a hurry tostart rather he should approach his/her audience calmly with a smile, adjusting his/her delivery notes, establish eye contact with the audience, and then begin his/her presentation.
- **Speak Slowly** Inexperienced speakers often try to control their nervousness and stage fright by speaking too fast. This should be avoided as speaking too quickly exposes one's nervousness. The audience will recognise this and they will moreover find it difficult to understand the talk. Therefore, it is important to speak slowly and take appropriate pauses.
- **Learn and Practise Stress Reduction Techniques** Learn effective stress reduction techniques, such as deep breathing, isometrics, progressive relaxation, mental relaxation, and so on. They are useful in reducing stage fright. Usually stage fear is expressed by discomfort, which may range from mild embarrassment to outright panic. The key in dealing with stage fear is to maximise one's performance by coping with the obstacles that prevent positive performance.

CHECKLIST FOR MAKING AN ORAL PRESENTATION

Start With Confidence A startling statement/quotation/anecdote/question/joke are good options for starting a presentation. The speaker must make sure that the technique used to start the presentation helps emphasise or support his/her point. It must match his/her message. Examples from personal and professional life can be used to stress points. The speaker must be willing to give of himself/herself by sharing his/her experiences and insights with the audience. It is useful to practise the opening of one's speech and plan exactly how it should be said.

Be Organised Presentations should be organised properly with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction should provide an overview of the main points of the presentation. The speaker should make the purpose of the presentation clear, use transitions and signposts to clarify its organisation, and incorporate credible and interesting supporting material.

Stay Relaxed Advance planning and preparation help in staying relaxed and tension free during the presentation. Focussing on the message rather than the audience also helps in staying calm and confident.

Pay Attention to Body Language Effective gestures, body movements, and walking patterns make an impression on the audience. The speaker should, at all times, maintain eye contact with the audience. These aspects should be borne in mind while rehearsing the presentation.

Use Appropriate Visual Aids Visuals should be chosen with a view to creating maximum effect. They should focus on the main points of the presentation and help in retaining audience attention.

Pay Attention to all Details The speaker should pay attention to even the smallest details, making sure to organise all his/her papers, speaking notes, handouts, and visual aids, before the starting the presentation.

Close in a Memorable Way The presentation should be concluded in a memorable way, with a summary of the keypoints. The audience should leave with a positive impression of the speaker and his/her presentation.

MODULE 2

A SAMPLE LETTER OF COMPLAINT

(Also known as claims letter)

Dear Sir,

We ordered 2000 1kg tins of Nihal Baby Food Powder in our order No. M-4006/ FP dated 4 April 2013. Today when the consignment arrived we checked its contents and found only 1500 tins, out of which 45 were badly damaged. It seems one of the cases was not packed properly or some heavy load had been placed over it in transit.

There is a great demand for milk powder in the town at this time of the year and we expected to clear the whole stock in the next two months. But it appears some of our customers will be to be disappointed. With enormous resources at your command, we hope you can save the situation by sending 500 tins immediately by quick transit service.

As regards the damaged tins, we want your advice. There are two alternatives; either you allow us to sell them at reduced price in which case we shall send you the total amount realized after deducting our usual commission of 7 per cent or permit us to return them to you at your cost for replacement.

We would very much appreciate an early reply.

Yours sincerely,

R.L. Bagchi

Purchase Manager

A SAMPLE LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT

Dear Mr. Bagchi,

Thank you for your letter No........ of 9th April, 2013 . We are very sorry to learn that you have been put to embarrassment and inconvenience owing to our mistake.

Your suggestion for quick shipment of 500 tins is fair and we have despatched them today by quick transit service, as desired by you. We hope they will reach in time for you to keep the dates with your clients. We also agree to bear the transportation cost of damaged tins. Please send them back soon.

We thank you for drawing our attention to this mistake because we have again carefully examined the working of our packing and despatch department and introduced further checks to prevent the recurrence of such mistakes. Rest assured that you will not be put to any such inconvenience in future.

Yours sincerely,

Anjum Azad (Mr.)

Sales Manager

SAMPLE CLAIMS LETTER 2

Dear Sir,

On 6 February 2003 we bought a voltage stabilizer, voltrex for Rs. 3228.56 from your authorised dealer Mr. Shyam Kumar Co., Laxmi Sagar, Bhubaneswar. It bears No. LT 400397A and the guarantee card is numbered VL 4448632.

After we had used it for about a month for regulating current to our computer IBM 1130 it began to produce a loud noise. I sent it to Shyam Kumar Co. They said it was a minor defect and returned it to us after repairs. After about three weeks the same trouble started again. We called an engineer and got our equipment checked. He says that the computer is all right and has advised us against using the stabilizer as it may damage the equipment.

Now we feel reluctant to approach the dealer. They might once again dismiss the trouble as a minor one and return it after repairs. The fact that the stabilizer has developed trouble twice within about seven weeks indicates that there is some manufacturing defect in it.

I, therefore, request you to arrange to replace it immediately by issuing necessary instructions to the dealer. I may add that some other organizations which own your stabilizer have been getting trouble-free service for several years. In fact, their recommendation has prompted us to buy your product.

Yours sincerely,

T. R. Das

Research and Development Officer

A SAMPLE SALES LETTER

Dear Sir:

Attention

A lady called on us· the other day and told us the secret of her happy married life. This is what she had to say:

After two years of her marriage she had a baby and began to feel tired, overworked, and sick. Her husband observed this and apart from consulting a doctor and getting her a tonic, he bought her a National Pressure Cooker. Within weeks her health improved and her cheerful disposition lit up the home like warm sunshine. Hers is a happy family now.

Our cooker adds fun cooking and beauty to the kitchen. It saves both money and time.

In just 30 minutes you can prepare a full meal for your family, thus cutting your fuel bill by 25 percent.

Interest
&
Desire

Years of research have gone into making it. It is made of a metal which has been carefully tested to withstand the maximum pressure that can be generated. The lid, though firm when in use, opens easily and the handle is very convenient to hold. it has a double safety device.

We also guarantee it for three years against manufacturing defects and offer free repair service during this period at all our authorized retail shops.

At present National Cookers are available in the following four sizes:

Model A404	4 litres
Model A406	6 litres
Model A408	8 litres
Model A410 10 litres	

Choose the one that suits you best and mail the enclosed postage-free postcard after filling in the details. In about a week the postman will call on you and deliver it at your door

Yours sincerely
P.N. Banerjee
Sales Officer

Action

ACTIVITY 3

The sentences in each paragraph of sales letter below have been jumbled up. Put the sentences of each paragraph 111 the right order and rewrite the letter.

Para: 1

(a) And now we have. produced a dining table and a set of chairs to go with it that make eating a pleasure.

(b) We have been thinking for years how to design furniture that will enable you to eat your meals in a relaxed manner.

Para: 2

(c) The chairs will receive you with open arms and impart a feeling of comfort, and the table will provide enough space for all members of your family.

(d) And then you have a choice from seven sophisticated colours.

(e) Their sleek look will fit in with the modern decor of your house.

(f) With our Happy Home table and chairs in the house it is a delight to feel hungry.

Para: 3

(g) At present we offer sets to suit families of four, six, eight and twelve.

(h) Their detailed description and coloured pictures are given in the enclosed folder.

Para: 4

(i) An order form and a post-free envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

(j) Our showroom remains open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays.

(k) You are most welcome to drop in and personally select what you need.

(l) Or, if you choose to order by post, we shall send the set of your choice by truck.

SKP Ship Management

Remi Bizort, VD Road, Andheri(W), Mumbai-400053

Interoffice Memorandum

Sample Memo

Date: 10th April,2013

To: Ashish Kumar, Training Manager

From: Jerry Massey, Managing Director

Subject: Special Workshop on Ship Management and Modern Technology

Please refer to your memo dated 3rd April, containing the proposal to organize a special workshop on "Ship management and modern technology" for the Junior executives of our company. I am pleased to inform you that the executive board has approved your proposal. You may send us the final list of resource persons to be invited in the workshop. You may consider including the names of a few senior executives working in the ship management industry. This may help us in making the workshop more focused and need-based.

I would like to express my appreciation for the effort that you have put into designing the structure of the workshop. Keep up the good work and keep these ideas coming.

Jerry Massey

SAMPLE CIRCULAR

Ashok Textile and Cloth Mill Ltd.
Vadodara, Gujrat

No. B/8/38 Date: 22 April, 2013

It has come to the notice of directors that the policy of selling company products to employees at 50% discount is misused. Some of the employees bring their friends and relatives to factory premises and they purchase goods in the name of the employee concerned. There are also complaints of sale of goods to retailers. This affects our relationship with our stockists and dealers in an adverse way.

For the time being, the policy of sale of goods to employees at amazingly lower rate of 50% discount will not be discontinued. However, this policy w.e.f. May 1, 2013 will be subject to a monthly limit of Rs.2,000. To implement this policy every employee will be issued a Purchase Card which will record the amount of purchases. The purchases falling below Rs.2,000 can be carried forward to the next month, not beyond that.

Shiv Anand
Managing Director.

SPECIMEN OF OFFICE NOTICE

All officials, whose salary is taxable, are informed that they shall fill the Income Tax forms by 15^{th} of February. They are further required to furnish the proof of their savings or donations entitled for tax rebate or deductions before March 25, 2013.

This order may be treated as most urgent, failing which concerned officials' salary statement will not be issued and his pay of March, 2013 will be withheld.

Sudesh Sharma
Managing Director

Copy to: Notice Board, All Departments.

SAMPLE E-MAIL MESSAGES

1

To	GinaPorter@GlobalComms.co.uk
From	shirley@shirleytaylor.com (Shirley Taylor)
Date	22.10.04 9.55
Subject	Lunch 28 October

Informal greeting

Hello Gina

Contractions are OK

This is just a reminder that I'm looking forward to meeting you for lunch next Friday 28th. I am glad you've arranged for Jenny Chew to join us too. Can I suggest 12.30 at Hemingways on Orchard Road? I hear this new restaurant is fabulous. My treat of course. Please confirm.

Informal, chatty style where appropriate

Shirley

No formal closing

To	MandyWilson@Pioneer.co.sg
From	shirley@shirleytaylor.com (Shirley Taylor)
Date	14.8.04 14:30
Subject	Customer Services Training

This style is slightly less informal

Dear Mandy

We are considering sending some of our staff on a training course on Customer Services. Do you have a suitable course available within the next few months? If so please let me have the dates and times plus costs.

Short sentences, no padding!

If there isn't a regular Pioneer course scheduled, can you tailor-make a course specially for our staff? We could hold it in our conference room.

Short paragraphs

Perhaps we can arrange to meet to discuss this - are you free next Friday 20 August at 11 am? I could come over to you, or you could come over to my office. Just let me know.

Write in a casual style as if you are speaking

Shirley Taylor
Manager
ST Training and Consultancy
Tel: +65 64726076 Fax: +65 63392710
Mobile: +65 96355907

EXAMPLE OF FORMAL REPORT

Company's name

AURORA HOLDINGS

Report Title (be specific)

REPORT ON COMPLAINTS ABOUT POOR SERVICE AND FOOD PROVIDED IN THE STAFF RESTAURANT

Who asked for the report ?
What was requested?
When was it requested?

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To investigate complaints about poor service and food provided in the staff restaurant and to make recommendations, as requested by Mr. Michael Lee, Administration Director, on 14 April 2013.

List the steps take to gather the information(past tense).

PROCEDURE

1. An interview was held with Mrs. Alice Newton, Restaurant Manager, on 15 April 2013.

2. Interviews were held with a cross-section of staff(48) who used the restaurant between 15 and 20 April.

Present the information obtained through each step mentioned in "Procedure"

FINDINGS

1. INTERVIEW WITH RESTAURANT MANAGER

1.1 STAFFING

Mrs. Newton has 3 full-time assistants. The youngest, Miss Lily Ng, attends day-release classes at South point College on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. She works 1400 – 1700 on those days.

1.2 EQUIPMENT

A schedule of current equipment and their year of purchase is attached. No problems were reported. However, Mrs. Newton said that additional equipment would be useful.

1 microwave oven
1 slow cooker
1 rice cooker

Use numbered points and sub-headings for clarity.

2. INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF

20 staff from the 1200-1300 lunch sitting were interviewed, and 28 from the 1300-1400 sitting.

2.1 CHOICE

The food available is shown on the attached schedule. 60% of the staff interviewed said they would prefer some cold meals to be provided. They said they may make alternative lunch arrangements if the variety did not improve.

2.2 QUEUEING

70% of staff took lunch from 1200 to 1300 hours as opposed to 30% from 1300 to 1400. This resulted in large queues forming at the first lunch sitting.

What are the logical implications from the 'Findings'?

CONCLUSIONS

1. There are insufficient number of assistants to cope with the preparation of food in the morning and with the popular first lunch sitting.
2. The present equipment is insufficient.
3. The selection of meals is not wide enough to cater to staff requirements.
4. The ratio of staff to each sitting is not balanced.

What action do you suggest should be taken, based on Findings and Conclusions?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A new assistant should be recruited to work 0900-1400 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
2. Mrs Newton should be asked to look into prices and availability of the new equipment required.
3. Mrs. Newton should be asked to devise some new dishes which also include cold choices.
4. The number of staff attending each sitting should be reviewed so that a more even balance can be achieved.

Leave a space for the writer to sign.

Name and title of writer

TAN LAY HONG(Miss)
Business Administration Officer

Date

24 April 2013

Components of a formal proposal :

Part	Description
1. Title of the proposal	-
2. Statement of Need	A statement of why the proposal is necessary.
3. Project Profile	How the proposal will be implemented and evaluated, with deadlines for different stages.
4. Budget	Financial description of the project and explanation of costs.
5. Credibility (Ability to Deliver)	History and structure of the proposing organization; its primary activities, audiences and services.
6. Conclusion	Summary of the main points of the proposal. The next step.

A solicited proposal in letter format

JWS Remodeling Solutions
1701 Lake Street, Traverse City, Michigan 49685
(231) 946-8845. Fax : (213) 946-8846. E-mail: jws@worldnet.att.net

April 13

40

Mr. Daniel Yurgren
Data Dimensions
15 Honeysuckle Lane
Travers City, Michigan 49686

Dear Mr. Yurgren:

Subject : Proposal for Home Office Construction

Acknowledges scope of project

JWS Remodeling Solutions would be happy to convert your existing living room area into a home office according to the specifications discussed during our March 14 meeting. We can schedule the project for the week beginning May 11, 2013 (two weeks from today). The project will take roughly three weeks to complete.

41

INTRODUCTION :

Our construction approach is unique. We provide a full staff of licensed trades people and schedule our projects so that when one trade finishes, the next trade is ready to begin. To expedite this project, as you requested, we have agreed to overlap several trades whose work can be done concurrently.

Uses introduction to grab the reader's attention with expedited completion date - a key selling point

PROJECT PROFILE :

JWS Remodeling Solutions will provide the following work :

- Partition and finish walls to create two separate storage closets at north end of living room with access through two 3'0" six panel door units. Replace all disturbed sheetrock.
- Provide all rough and finished electrical fittings, using recessed lighting in the ceiling and appropriate single pole switches and duplex outlets.
- Paint or finish all surfaces/ trim to match specs used throughout house.
- The work does not include custom office cabinetry, carpeting, or phone or cable wiring. We would be happy to bid on these projects in the future.

Uses body to explain how company will expedite scheduled outline approach, and provide work place and on the next page list qualifications and state costs.

Specifies exactly what contractor will and won't do

BUDGET :

The total cost for this project is $6,800, broken down as follows :

Materials and supplies	$ 3,300
Labor	$ 2,700
Overhead	$ 800
Total	$ 6,800

Justifies cost by providing detail

An initial payment of $3,800 is due upon acceptance of this proposal. The remaining $3,000 is due upon completion of the work.

42

CREDIBILITY :

JSW Remodeling Solutions has been in business in the Michigan area for over 17 years. We have a strong reputation for being a quality builder. We take great pride in our work and we treat all projects with the same high-level attention, regardless of their size or scope. Out trades people are all licensed, insured professionals with years of experience in their respective crafts. Enclosed is a copy of our company brochure discussing our qualifications in greater detail, along with a current client list. Please contact any of the names on this list for references.

Increases desire by highlight ing qualifica tions

CONCLUSION :

If you would like to have JWS Remodeling solutions complete this work, please sign this letter and return it to us with your deposit in the enclosed envelope. We currently anticipate no construction delays, since the materials needed for your job are in stock and our staff of qualified workers is available during the period mentioned. If you have any questions regarding the terms of this proposal, please call me.

Uses brief closing to emphasize fast turnaround and immediate call for action.

Sincerely ,

Jardan W. Spurrier
President

Enclosures

Accepted by :

Makes letter a binding contract, if signed.

______________________ ______________________
Daniel Yourgren Date

Sample Agenda

Company name and Committee name	AURORA HOLDINGS pic SOCIAL CLUB
Notice states place, day, Date and time of meeting	A meeting of the Sports and Social Club will be held in the Conference Suite A on Friday 14 May 200- at 1800
Use the heading AGENDA	AGENDA
These three items of ordinary Business are included on every Agenda (some committees will also include 'Correspondence')	1. Apologies for absence 2. Minutes of last meeting 3. Matters arising
Special business is listed Separately (any official Reports come first)	4. Chairman's Report 5. Football Results and Matches (Frank Jones) 6. New Keep-Fit Classes (Carol Chen) 7. Purchase of Tennis Equipment (Aileen Forster) 8. Annual Dinner and Dance
Finish all agendas with these final two items of ordinary business	9. Any other business 10. Date of next meeting
	M.M. Mohanty **Secretary**
Don't forget reference and date	CE/ST 7 May 200-

Minutes

Main heading includes meeting, place, day, date and time

List those present in alphabetical order with Chairman first

This separate ACTION column is a popular way of displaying minutes

The minutes must be corrected if necessary before they can be signed

---

AURORA HOLDINGS pic

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB
HELD IN CONFERENCE SUITE A ON FRIDAY 14 MAY 200- AT 1800

PRESENT	Mr. Chris Evans (Chairman)	Mr Frank Jones
	Miss Carol Chen	Miss Maxine Street
	Miss Aileen Forster	Mrs Wendy Williams

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

   No apologies were received.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

   The Chairman asked members to correct an error in item 3.1 where The figure £ 1,200 should read £ 12,0000. After this correction the Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

   There were no matters arising.

46

Break down items if appropriate into separate headings

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman pointed out that membership had fallen by 20% over the last 6 months. It was felt that this was due largely to lack of publicity during the present year, and also because new employees were not sure how to join. Variosu decisions were reached :

4.1 CIRCULAR TO STAFF

A letter would be sent to al employees who were not members of the Club outlining its aims and activities. A tear-off slip would be included for interested employees to indicate their areas of interest. CE

Insert initials or full names in the ACTION column

4.2 SOCIAL EVENING

A social evening with refreshments would be organised specifically for non-members. Carol Chen agreed to make arrangements. CE

47

Include the page number at the top left

5. FOOTBALL RESULTS AND MATCHES

5.1 Frank jones reported on the results of the 3 football Matches during April.

Team A v Victory Enterprises	12 April	Won 4-3
Team B v Pentagon Supplies	19 April	Lost 3-2
Team A v Ward Hi-Tech	26 April	Won 5-2

5.2 Future matches were schedule to be :

Team A v Team B	18 May	1500	Home
Team A v Connolly Industries	25 May	1500	Away

6. NEW KEEP FIT CLASSES

Carol Chen proposed that Keep Fit classes should be held. Sharon Warner from the Fun N Fitness Gym had agreed to conduct such classes on the Company's premises every Wednesday evening 1800-1900.

A discussion was held on a suitable room for the classes, and it was agreed that the Training Office would be suitable. Carol would circulate a notice to all staff announcing the first Keep class on Wednesday 22 May. CC

Leave a space for Chairman to sign and date at the next meeting

7. PURCHASE OF TENNIS EQUIPMENT

Aileen Forster reported that the in-house tennis tournament would start on Monday 4 July. New nets and balls were needed and the tennis courts needed repairing. It was agreed that Aileen should make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible. AF

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in Conference Suite A on Thursday 24 June 2007 at 1800.

.... (Chairman)

.... (Date)

CE / ST
16 May 2007

People also meet for social reasons:

- They need to belong.
- They need to achieve and make an impact.
- They need to communicate, build and share a common reality.

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Planning a Meeting

In planning a meeting, remember that for the task needs to be met, the social needs must be met and for the social needs to be met, the task needs must be met. Is it possible to satisfy both? Yes! Just plan for both the meeting content and the meeting process. The meeting content will address task needs while the meeting process attends to social needs. Paying attention to the process ensures that tasks get done.

Be Specific

Most people agree that a productive meeting will follow an agenda. The most productive meetings, however, are the ones in which, even before considering the items on the agenda, attendees are clear about the overarching objective of the meeting. A clear objective provides clear direction for the meeting. For even greater clarity, the objective can be stated in terms of desired results or outcomes. An

Build Shared Clarity

Understand the power of clarity and take responsibility for it in your meetings. To do that, consider first what you can do if you are in charge of the meeting. The following steps will help.

- Consider why you want people to meet. Ask yourself what you will accomplish face-to-face (or via conference call) that you would not accomplish otherwise. This should help you understand the objective of the meeting (but remember that you aren't the only one in need of clarity). Is it for information sharing, relationship building, decision-making, problem solving or design?
- After you know the objective of the meeting, think about the outcomes for the meeting and record at least two: (a) What is your perfect outcome? (b) What is your minimum acceptable outcome?
- Validate the objective and outcomes to the best of your ability. Can you reasonably expect this group to produce your outcome in the time allotted? What can be achieved? What preparation is required? Include others in this validation process if it will help you achieve clarity.
- Start the meeting by clearly stating the objective and outcomes. Make sure all the attendees understand the objective and are willing to work towards it.

When it's not 'your' meeting, it is a little trickier to be personally responsible for a clear objective and outcome of the meeting, but you can still do it. If you are a subordinate, guest or a participant in a different capacity, consider some of the following approaches: Ask for the objective and outcomes of the meeting when you are first invited. Let your host know that you take the invitation seriously, that you view meetings as important work and that you wish to be prepared to help produce the desired result.

- If you show up for a meeting without knowing the objective and outcomes in advance, ask what these are as the meeting gets underway. Doing this in a supportive manner early in the meeting shows that you are there to contribute actively. It will also help the meeting leader because clarity of purpose, shared by all the participants, is the most powerful way to ensure the meeting is successful.
- Make every meeting 'your' meeting by valuing your time and the contribution you can make.

outcome is a clear description of what you will deliver by the end of the meeting. For instance:

Objective: Finalize budget recommendation

Outcome: Finalize departmental fiscal year budget for corporate budget review

Create an Agenda

An agenda is an outline of things to be discussed at the meeting, along with a time frame for each item. To create your agenda, first look to the meeting objective, since your agenda is a path to achieving it. Then look to the participants since they will also have ideas about what is important. Two important tips about the agenda are:

- Prioritize agenda items in terms of importance to most participants.
- Assign realistic amounts of time to each agenda item.

Prepare in Advance

Take the time to prepare for the meeting. This may take only a few minutes to collect your thoughts and jot them down or it may take hours for a formal presentation. Advance preparation allows the meeting to move forward smoothly, eliminating wasted time and the impression that the meeting was unproductive.

Meeting Process

Who will Participate?

On a small project team or task force, it will be easy to determine who should participate in meetings. However, in other situations, it is not always a clear choice. These questions provide a useful filter for choosing participants:

- Whose inputs do we need?
- Who is needed to make a decision?
- Whose consent do we need to move forward?

Answers to these questions will help determine who needs to attend the meeting or even whether the meeting needs to be held or not. Many meetings are held whether or not key participants are available. These meetings have then to be held again when all participants are present. Save time by choosing participants appropriately and scheduling meetings to accommodate key participants' calendars.

What should be the Discussion-management Process?

Planning for dis-cussion management or facilitation is a critical skill for leaders wishing to conduct great meetings. This is of overwhelming importance for participants' satisfaction. Start with clarity about who is to run the meeting and whether the leader will also act as the facilitator. The default choice—that the group leader or manager runs the meeting and calls on others to talk—is not necessarily the best choice for all meetings. A more participative format allows for the manager or leader to set the meeting objective and then take a seat with the members while another team member actually facilitates the discussion. This format encourages all members to participate.

Plan, Discuss and Assign Roles

At least the following four important roles are played in any well-conducted meeting:

- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Leader
- Participant

Some add a fifth role, the timekeeper.

Different individuals can play each of these roles or one person can play all of them. But they all have to be accounted for if the meeting is to flow well and produce results. Planning for these roles can be an ongoing process. Determining role assignments in the beginning engages everybody in the process and validates the expectations and contributions.

Pre- and Post-meeting Communication

The best way to create commitment to and participation in meetings is to be clear about why you are meeting. Involve as many potential attendees as possible in planning either the content or the process of the meeting. Before the meeting, be sure to consider the following:

- advance agenda
- participants
- time and place
- preparation of materials
- list of audio/visual equipment available to presenters
- requests for any special needs

Capturing and reporting key outcomes of the meeting are critical for follow-up activities. Be sure to capture these essential and basic items in your meeting notes:

- decisions
- action items
- open issues

Once the meeting is concluded, arrange for the recorder's notes to be posted or distributed to all participants. Post-meeting communication provides form and closure both to participants' contributions and their social needs.

How to Lead Effective Meetings

The leader of the meeting has one basic goal—to accomplish the objectives of the meeting. The following sequential guidelines will be a useful tool if you are presiding over a meeting.

Starting Time

Start the meeting on time. Nothing says more about the management than starting a meeting at the scheduled time. It has been commonly observed that starting a meeting at the time specified in the agenda immediately serves as an excellent attention-getting device and sends a right signal about the level of significance of the concerned meeting and the seriousness of the agenda.

Opening Remarks

Once you have the participants' attention, open the meeting with appropriate remarks and also make some introductory remarks about the objectives of the meeting to set the ball rolling.

- Establish the right tone—usually serious and positive.
- Be sure to identify any participants unknown to the group so that every member knows each other well.
- Discuss the agenda of the meeting in general, pointing out some background to the situation and the specific objectives of the meeting.
- Identify, if any, time constraints not already expressed in the agenda—for example, when the meeting must end, etc.

Getting Down to Business

Once you are done with the opening remarks, move to the first item on the agenda. Be extremely careful in not allowing the opening remarks to serve as a springboard to others in the meeting to go off the track.

Participation

It is imperative to have a balanced participation in the meeting from all the members. A common observation has been that some participants talk too much while others talk too little. Effective meeting leadership must ensure that a few members of the group do not dominate the discussion at the expense of their less-assertive colleagues. A practical approach would be to put some direct questions to the quiet ones, specifically soliciting their comments, remarks or advice instead of trying to prevent the more talkative participants from speaking.

Agenda

Use your agenda to keep the discussion on track. If the discussion starts to drift from the item being considered, remind the members of the specific agenda items and try and steer them back to the main issue. If an item in the agenda is taking more time than initially planned, do not try to prematurely stop the discussion, because the participants may feel suffocated. If there is a substantial need for an item to be discussed in detail further, think about holding another meeting addressed to that item.

Closing

Close the meeting at the appropriate time once you have covered the items on the agenda. Meetings sometimes continue aimlessly after the items have been covered, and it is embarrassing to have someone inquire, 'Is the meeting over?' Before you close the meeting, signal the participants by asking for any final comments or questions. Offer a summary of what has been accomplished at the meeting. Tell the participants that the minutes will be sent to them shortly. Finally, be sure to thank the group members for their time and consideration.

Strategic Issues Related to Effective Meetings

To Meet or not to Meet

Meeting when it is not necessary is a waste of time. Many weekly meetings can be eliminated if a decision is taken to meet only when it is absolutely necessary. Some tips for deciding if a meeting is worth your time are given below:

Has a goal been set for the meeting? Is there a purpose for meeting, or a goal to achieve? Every meeting should have an objective and if the one you have been asked to attend does not, consider recommending that a memo or e-mail be sent instead.

Has an agenda been created ahead of time? An agenda is the basis for an effective meeting. Creating and distributing the meeting agenda ahead of the meeting gives participants an opportunity to prepare for it. Having an agenda for a meeting also focusses the discussion and helps the group stay on track.

Will the appropriate people be attending? If the appropriate people are not present, important decisions get put on hold. It will also take time to update key individuals on what took place in the meeting they missed. It is better to put the meeting on hold until all the required people are in the room.

Can the information be covered in an e-mail or memo? The purpose of most meetings is sharing information and updating others. If possible, make an effort to substitute these types of meetings with an e-mail or memo. Simply send an e-mail to all the people who would have attended the meeting. This will save everyone time; they will still be up-to-date on what is happening and will be grateful for having one less meeting to attend that week.

Non-verbals in Meetings

Have you ever been to a meeting in which even though the leader said he/she wanted high participation, the leader stood at the head of the table and 'talked at' the participants seated silently down both sides? Chances are you have. It is unfortunate, but true—leaders who do not plan for real participation will not get it, no matter what they say they want. Standing at the end of a long table sends a strong non-verbal message: Do not talk, listen. It is a good setup if you want to discourage participation. Actions speak louder than words. Applying this maxim to management meetings requires that you take careful stock of your meeting room and where people will sit. How much does it matter? In his book *Silent Messages*, Albert Mehrabian reports the percentage of a message communicated through our different communication channels in this way:

- Words we say: 7%
- Tone of voice: 38%
- Body language: 55%

Think of the last time you were with someone who stood with his arms crossed, tapping his foot and looking annoyed, who then huffed, 'I'm fine.' Which clues did you believe—the words or the body language and tone of voice? Physical, non-verbal messages often send a much louder message than spoken words.

Control or Collaboration?

There are ways to deliberately convey non-verbal messages. When you are the leader and you need to maintain control of a meeting:

- Conduct the meeting yourself to signal, 'I am in charge.'
- Stand while others are sitting to signal, 'I have the floor.'
- Sit at the head of the table to signal, 'I am in charge.'

If you want a highly participative, collaborative meeting:

- Ask a team member or facilitator to conduct the meeting to signal, 'Let's share leadership.'
- Sit while others are sitting to signal, 'I'm with you.'
- Sit on one side of the table instead of at the head, to signal, 'I'm with you.'

What if You Expect Confrontation?

The most confrontational position you can assume is to stand or sit directly across from another. You can increase or decrease feelings of confrontation by purposely

MODULE 3

How are communication Skills Related to Soft Skills ?

Hard skills are necessary to do a job competently and efficiently. They are acquired through professional education and on the job experience.

Soft skills are skills necessary to interact effectively with people inside as well as outside a business organization.

Importance of Soft Skills :

Business organizations used to have a strongly hierarchical structure. This model discouraged initiative, involvement and leadership qualities. Today, therefore, the emphasis is on team effort rather than one-man leadership. To encourage good team-playing, certain skills related to psychological and emotional aspects of individuals need to be developed. These skills determine a person's ability to fit into a business organization or a project team, and to practise flexibility in collaborating with others in meeting the changing needs of an organization.

Thus 'soft skills' refer to a cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language and attitudes of friendliness. They include competencies in leadership, in working in a team, in articulateness, assertiveness, basic etiquette, and in 'lateral thinking'.

Soft skills and communication skills are closely related. Soft skills help the development of communication skills; communication skills can also develop desirable attitudes which form a part of soft skills. The two sets of skills are interdependent, and they need to be developed together.

The important soft skills that every executive needs to master are :

1. *Communication skills* (ability to listen activity and present clearly and confident ability to exhibit proper body language)

2. *Interpersonal skills* (for human relations team-building social networking).

3. *Emotional intelligence* (ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and relationships)

4. *Time & stress management* (analysis of the use of time and setting of priorities)

5. *Creative thinking*(reduction of stress through positive attitude and mind-composing techniques) (looking at problems from an unconventional point of view and generating innovative ideas.

6. *Conflict Resolution Skills* (ability to negotiate towards a win-win- solution)

It is obvious from the above that communication skills form the central core of soft skills and serve as the expression point of the other soft skills.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Business etiquette refers to conventional rules of social behavior or professional conductor; they are unwritten rules which act as norms to be observed by all professionals who work as a team in a particular company or department.

Each business house has its business protocols which an employee learns by working in that environment and by observing others. There are, however, general rules of business etiquette based on the fundamental principles of organizational behavior.

The more important business etiquette rules related to:

1. Introductions
2. Telephone calls
3. Business Dining
4. Interaction with foreign clients
5. Inter organization Business Etiquette

1. **Introducing yourself:** As a norm of business etiquette and the first step towards cordial business transactions, people greet each other by starting their full name and position at the very outset. Do not use any honorific words such as Sri, Smt., Mr. Mrs, etc before your name. However, if it is a degree earned by you, such as Ph. D., you may use Dr. before your name.

A handshake is done immediately after introduction. As a visitor, you can first offer you hand. As a winning form of non-verbal communication, handshakes must be accompanied by eye contact and a gentle smile.

2. **Introducing other persons:** Normally, the senior-most person among the visitors of the host team introduces the other persons at a business meeting. First, visitors are introduced to the host; a junior is introduced to a senior, using the polite form "May I introduce......"

3. **Telephone calls:** In telephonic conversation, the way we receive, respond, speak or hang up is often as important as the message we communicate.
   Before initiating a call, jot down the purpose of the call and the exact message you want to convey.
   - Keep a writing pad and pen ready at hand.
   - Begin first with what is important for your receiver. Talk about your interests later.
   - Keep the duration of the conversation as short as possible.

   - Beginning a call: Greet the receptionist with a "Good Morning", tell her you name and the name of your organization, and then mention whom you want to speak to.
   - If the telephone line suddenly gets disconnected, the person who originally initiated the call should redial immediately and say, "Sorry, the call got disconnected".
   - If the receiver has to suspend your call for attending to something else, it is the duty of the receiver to resume the call and offer some pleasant explanation.
   - Make your business calls polite by using polite expressions such as "please" and "Thank you".
   - Always use the interrogative form for making a request – "Could I ..." "May I....."
   - Always answer a call by the third ring.

4. **Business Dining:** Business meals are taken with colleagues or clients or consultants. It is common practice to negotiate business at lunch or dinner. Such business occasions are, in fact, business activities; hence you must act with a sense of responsibility.

(a) **As a host:** Invite the guest personally or over telephone. However confirm the date, time and place in writing. If the vanue is new for the guest, help him/her by giving directions. Apprise the invitee of your guest list.

Receive the guest(s) personally outside the dining hall.

(b) **As a Guest:** You should stick to your own dietary preferences. If you are a tea- totaller, politely decline the offer to drink –Say "Thanks, I would like to have some fresh lime soda (or whatever be your choice)".

Eating with the hand in India is just fine. But if you are using knife and fork, then hold the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right hand. When not in use, put both knife and fork together in either the 'four O' Clock' or 'six O' Clock' position on your plate.

Get the waiter's attention by establishing eye contact and turning a little towards him or by saying "Excuse me...."

5. **With Foreign Clients:** Respect the foreign client's religious beliefs and cultural needs.
   - Nothing pleases foreigners more than speaking to them in their own language. Try to learn and use some words of greeting in the visitor's language.
   - Prepare documents in English as well as the foreign visitor's language.

6. Company to Company Etiquette:

Each manager is his/her company's image-builder. (S)he should always try to conduct himself/herself as a representative of the company.

- Show your loyalty by speaking well of your company, by defending your colleague's action, and by never criticizing your company before your colleagues from other companies.
- Keep confidential materials in as few hands as possible.
- Handle the poorest of customers well.
- Respect hierarchies. Good manners breed good understanding and mutual respect necessary for good business relations.

GROUP DISCUSSION

I) What is Group Discussion?

'Group Discussion' is a non-formal, friendly discussion in which all the members comprising the group (usually between 8 and 12) are expected to participate, It is used as a means to assess one's over-all personality. It proceeds by means of a natural, friendly, spontaneous and purposive conversation between the candidates for a job on an interesting but often controversial topic of current importance. The topic is given at the appointed hour, and no time is given for planning- hence the conversation that follows has to be spontaneous, not-pre-planned. Within a time- limit of 20-30 minutes, the abilities of the members of the group arc measured in an unobtrusive manner by the examiner who does not actively participate in the discussion.

Unlike a formal debate where one is supposed to speak only for or against the motion, one by one, and within a definite time-limit allotted by the President, a group discussion follows an informal approach. The participants are free to speak in favour of or against the topic, to be neutral, or to explain the merits or demerits.

II) Parameters of evaluation

The selector evaluates the candidates' performance in a group discussion session on the following parameters:

1) Power of expression
2) Knowledge of the topic
3) Social adaptability
4) Flexibility
5) Liveliness
6) Confidence and courage of conviction
7) Extent of participation
8) Ability to exert influence on the group

III) How to prepare:

1) First and foremost, you must try to create ~111 extensive knowledge base by reading newspapers and magazines and listening to talks on the radio and television.
2) Secondly, ·adopt an analytical way of thinking. Note down points in favour of and against an issue, and then come to a decision regarding your stand.

3) Finally, develop the art of discussion. This involves accurate expression of your ideas using appropriate language, and your display of sensitivity to the other members of the group.

IV) While – discussion' Tips:

1. Make an attempt at initiating the discussion. Even if you could not be the first speaker, try to get an opportunity as early as possible. It is absolutely essential that you talk and express your views. Further, you must talk as much as possible, effectively and sensibly, to impress others.
2. Make original points and back them with substantial reasons.
3. If some other member has already made the point you wanted to make, do not worry. Even then, you can either support or oppose the point by sound reasoning, or add some additional information that might have been left out.
4. Listen to the other participants patiently and attentively, and make a mental note of the points they make. If their points are good, readily accept them and advance your reasons, If you find their arguments unacceptable, offer your arguments to refute them.
5. As soon as you find your argument has been refuted by someone else, you must try to justify your point of view of bringing in fresh ideas or arguments.
6. Show flexibility ill your views. Don't hesitate to accept criticism. If someone points to flaws in your argument, do not feel offended or insulted. Instead, change your original opinion willingly, if proved wrong.
7. Pre considerate to the feelings of the others ill the group. A friendly discussion requires co-operation, not confrontation. You need not shout at others. You must use polite language throughout. Your helpful, accommodative and encouraging attitude will surely be appreciated by the evaluator.
8. Pre an active and interested participant. Remain cheerful, smiling, uud alive to whatever is going on in the group.
9. While speaking, address the whole group making eye-contact with each participant in turn.

V) Some Don'ts

1. Don 't try to monopolize the discussion.
2. Don't interrupt a participant in the middle of an argument
3. Don't make fun of any participant even if his arguments are illogical.
4. Don't engage yourself in sub-group conversations.
5. Avoid being frivolous and expressing irrelevant ideas.
6. Don't get emotional and criticize others without valid arguments.

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

1	Power of expression	Is (s)he able to express ideas clearly fluently and logically ?
2	Knowledge of the topic :	Has (s)he displayed a wide range of ideas and analytical thinking ?
3	Social adaptability :	(i) Is (s)he co-operative ? (ii) Does (s)he own mistakes readily ? (iii) Can (s)he accept criticism gracefully (iv) Does (s)he have consideration for the feelings of others ?
4	Flexibility :	Has (s)he shown interest in the topic
5	Liveliness :	(i) Has (s)he shown interest in the topic and the other members of the group ? (ii) Does (s)he have the urge to contribute willingly ? (iii) Does (s)he possess a cheerful temperament ?
6	Confidence and courage :	(i) Does (s)he have faith in his/her ability ? (ii) Can (s)he face bullying courageously ? (iii) Does (s)he have the courage of conviction ?
7	Extent of participation :	How often, how much, and with what effect has (s)he spoken ?
8	Influence on the Group :	What impression has (s)he created on others ? Is (s)he able to motivate others and sell his/her ideas to them ?

From 'Business Communication Today' by Bovée & others

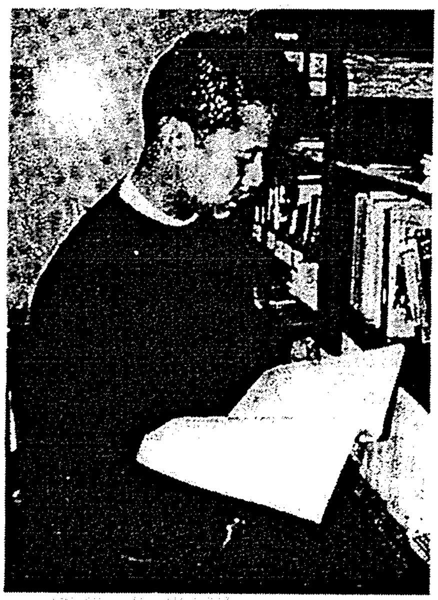
Just as written messages need planning, employment interviews need preparation.

PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

Learning Objective 3

List six tasks you need to complete to prepare for a successful job interview

For a successful interview, preparation is mandatory. As Jodi DeLeon points out, the best way to prepare for a job interview is to think about the job itself and prepare. It's perfectly normal to feel a little anxious before an interview. But good preparation will help you perform well. Be sure to consider any cultural differences when preparing for interviews, and base your approach on what your audience expects. The advice in this chapter is most appropriate for companies and employers in the United States and Canada. Before the interview, learn about the organization, think ahead about questions, bolster your confidence, polish your interview style, plan to look good, and be ready when you arrive.



In his efforts to find work, Mark Calimlim gets help from the Career Center at Syracuse University.

Learn About the Organization

When planning your employment search, you probably already researched the companies you sent your résumé to. But now that you've been invited for an interview, you'll want to fine-tune your research and brush up on the facts you've collected (see Table 18.2). You can review Chapter 10 for ideas on where to look for information.

Today's companies expect serious candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the company's operations, its market, and its strategic and tactical problems.[14] Learning about the organization and the job enables you to show the interviewer just how you will meet the organization's particular needs. With a little research, for instance, you would discover that Microsoft plans on investing heavily in the technical and marketing support of software developers as well as making things simpler for all users and system administrators.[15] Knowing these facts might help you pinpoint aspects

Best of the Web

Planning for a Successful Interview

How can you practice for a job interview? What are some questions that you might be asked, and how should you respond? What questions are you not obligated to answer? Job-interview.net provides mock interviews based on actual job openings. It provides job descriptions, questions and answers for specific careers and jobs, and links to company guides and annual reports. You'll find a step-by-step plan that outlines key job requirements, lists practice interview questions, and helps you put together practice interviews. The site offers tips on the keywords to look for in a job description, which will help you narrow your search and anticipate the questions you might be asked on your first or next job interview.

www.job-interview.net

~~RE~~ 64

TABLE 18.2 Finding Out About the Organization and the Job

Where to Look for Information	
• *Annual report*	Summarizes operations; describes products, lists events, names key personnel
• *In-house magazine or newspaper*	Reveals information about company operations, events, personnel
• *Product brochure or publicity release*	Gives insight into firm's operations and values (obtain from public relations office)
• *Stock research report*	Helps assess stability and growth prospects (obtain online or from stockbroker)
• *Newspaper's business or financial pages*	Contain news items about organizations, current performance figures
• *Periodicals indexes*	Contain descriptive listings of magazine/newspaper articles about firms (obtain from library)
• *Better Business Bureau and Chamber of Commerce*	Distribute information about some local organizations
• *Former and current employees*	Have insight into job and work environment
• *College placement office*	Collects information on organizations that recruit and on job qualifications and salaries
What to Find Out About the Organization	
• *Full Name*	How the firm is officially known (e.g., 3M is Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Company)
• *Location*	Where the organization's headquarters, branch offices, and plants are
• *Age*	How long the organization has been in business
• *Products*	What goods and services the organization produces and sells
• *Industry position*	What the organization's current market share, financial position, and profit picture are
• *Earnings*	What the trends in the firm's stock prices and dividends are (if firm is publicly held)
• *Growth*	How the firm's earnings/holdings have changed in recent years and prospects for expansion
• *Organization*	What subsidiaries, divisions, and departments make up the whole
What to Find Out About the Job	
• *Job title*	What you will be called
• *Job functions*	What the main tasks of the job are
• *Job qualifications*	What knowledge and skills the job requires
• *Career path*	What chances for ready advancement exist
• *Salary range*	What the firm typically offers and what is reasonable in this industry and geographic area
• *Travel opportunities*	How often, long, and far you'll be allowed (or required) to travel
• *Relocation opportunities*	Where you might be allowed (or required) to move and how often

Be prepared to relate your qualifications to the organization's needs.

of your background (such as the ability to simplify processes) that would appeal to Microsoft's recruiters.

Think Ahead About Questions

Planning ahead for the interviewer's questions will help you handle them more confidently and intelligently. (See "Sharpening Your Career Skills: Interview Strategies: Answering the 16 Toughest Questions.") Moreover, you will want to prepare intelligent questions of your own.

65

Planning for the Employer's Questions

Employers usually gear their interview questions to specific organizational needs. You can expect to be asked about your skills, achievements, and goals, as well as about your attitude toward work and school, your relationships with others (work supervisors, colleagues, and fellow students), and occasionally your hobbies and interests. Candidates might be asked to collaborate on a decision or to develop a group presentation. Trained observers evaluate the candidates' performance using predetermined criteria and then advise management on how well each person is likely to handle the challenges normally faced on the job.[16]

Practice answering interview questions.

For a look at the types of questions often asked, see Table 18.3. Jot down a brief answer to each one. Then read over the answers until you feel comfortable with each of them. Although practicing your answers will help you feel prepared and confident, you don't want to memorize responses or sound overrehearsed. You might also give a list of interview questions to a friend or relative and have that person ask you various questions at random. This method helps you learn to articulate answers and to look at the person as you answer.

Planning Questions of Your Own

The questions you ask in an interview are just as important as the answers you provide. By asking intelligent questions, you demonstrate your understanding of the organization, and you can steer the discussion into those areas that allow you to present your qualifications to best advantage. Before the interview, prepare a list of about a dozen questions you need answered in order to evaluate the organization and the job.

You are responsible for deciding whether the work and the organization are compatible with your goals and values.

Don't limit your questions to those you think will impress the interviewer, or you won't get the information you'll need to make a wise decision if and when you're offered the job. Here's a list of some things you might want to find out:

- **Are these my kind of people?** Observe the interviewer, and if you can, arrange to talk with other employees.
- **Can I do this work?** Compare your qualifications with the requirements described by the interviewer.
- **Will I enjoy the work?** Know yourself and what's important to you. Will you find the work challenging? Will it give you feelings of accomplishment, of satisfaction, and of making a real contribution?
- **Is the job what I want?** You may never find a job that fulfills all your wants, but the position you accept should satisfy at least your primary ones. Will it make use of your best capabilities? Does it offer a career path to the long-term goals you've set?
- **Does the job pay what I'm worth?** By comparing jobs and salaries before you're interviewed, you'll know what's reasonable for someone with your skills in your industry.
- **What kind of person would I be working for?** If the interviewer is your prospective boss, watch how others interact with that person, tactfully query other employees, or pose a careful question or two during the interview. If your prospective boss is someone else, ask for that person's name, job title, and responsibilities. Try to learn all you can.
- **What sort of future can I expect with this organization?** How healthy is the organization? Can you look forward to advancement? Does the organization offer insurance, pension, vacation, or other benefits?

pes of questions to ask during interview:
Warm-up
Open-ended
Indirect

Rather than bombarding the interviewer with these questions the minute you walk in the room, use a mix of formats to elicit this information. Start with a warm-up question to help break the ice. You might ask a Microsoft recruiter, "What departments usually hire new graduates?" After that, you might build rapport by asking an open-ended question that draws out the interviewer's opinion ("How do you think Internet sales will affect Microsoft's continued growth?"). Indirect questions can elicit useful

TABLE 18.4 Fifteen Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Questions About the Job	*Questions About the Organization*
What are the job's major responsibilities?	What are the organization's major strengths? Weaknesses?
What qualities do you want in the person who fills this position?	Who are your organization's major competitors, and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
Do you want to know more about my related training?	What makes your organization different from others in the industry?
What is the first problem that needs the attention of the person you hire?	What are your organization's major markets?
Would relocation be required now or in the future?	Does the organization have any plans for new products? Acquisitions?
Why is this job now vacant?	How would you define your organization's managerial philosophy?
What can you tell me about the person I would report to?	What additional training does your organization provide?
	Do employees have an opportunity to continue their education with help from the organization?

Bolster Your Confidence

If you feel shy or self-conscious, remember that recruiters are human too.

By building your confidence, you'll make a better impression. The best way to counteract any apprehension is to remove its source. You may feel shy or self-conscious because you think you have some flaw that will prompt others to reject you. Bear in mind, however, that you're much more conscious of your limitations than other people are.

If some aspect of your appearance or background makes you uneasy, correct it or offset it by exercising positive traits such as warmth, wit, intelligence, or charm. Instead of dwelling on your weaknesses, focus on your strengths so that you can emphasize them to an interviewer. Make a list of your good points and compare them with what you see as your shortcomings.

Remember that you're not alone. All the other candidates for the job are just as nervous as you are. Even the interviewer may be nervous.

Polish Your Interview Style

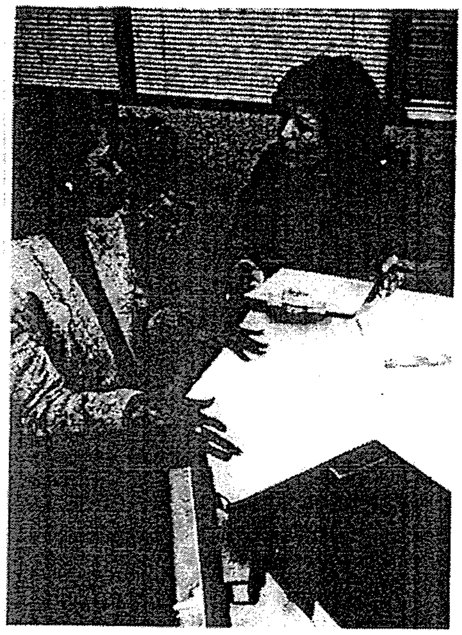
Confidence helps you walk into an interview, but once you're there, you want to give the interviewer an impression of poise, good manners, and good judgment. Some job seekers hire professional coaches and image consultants to create just the right impression. Charging anywhere from $125 to $500 an hour, these professionals spend a majority of their time teaching clients how to assess communication styles, and to do so they use role-playing, videotaping, and audiotaping.[17] You can use these techniques too.

Staging mock interviews with a friend is a good way to hone your style.

You can develop an adept style by staging mock interviews with a friend. After each practice session, try to identify opportunities for improvement. Have your friend critique your performance, using the list of interview faults shown in Figure 18.3. You can tape-record or videotape these mock interviews and then evaluate them yourself. The taping process can be intimidating, but it helps you work out any problems before you begin actual job interviews.

Nonverbal behavior has a significant effect on the interviewer's opinion of you.

As you stage your mock interviews, pay particular attention to your nonverbal behavior. In the United States, you are more likely to have a successful interview if you



When Patricia Washington interviews potential employees, she looks for people who communicate well. Part of good communication is being prepared with résumés and work samples; another part is knowing how to look. Applicants show more than their job skills—they also demonstrate their ability to communicate and their concern for a professional appearance.

Good grooming makes any style of clothing look better. Make sure your clothes are clean and unwrinkled, your shoes unscuffed and well shined, your hair neatly styled and combed, your fingernails clean, and your breath fresh. If possible, check your appearance in a mirror before entering the room for the interview. Finally, remember that one of the best ways to look good is to smile at appropriate moments.

Be Ready When You Arrive

Plan to take a small notebook, a pen, a list of the questions you want to ask, two copies of your résumé (protected in a folder), an outline of what you have learned about the organization, and any past correspondence about the position. You may also want to take a small calendar, a transcript of your college grades, a list of references, and a portfolio containing samples of your work, performance reviews, and certificates of achievement. In an era when many people exaggerate their qualifications, visible proof of your abilities carries a lot of weight.[21]

Be sure you know when and where the interview will be held. The worst way to start any interview is to be late. Check the route you will take, even if it means phoning the interviewer's secretary to ask. Find out how much time it takes to get there; then plan to arrive early. Allow a little extra time in case you run into a problem on the way.

Once you arrive, relax. You may have to wait a little while, so bring along something to read (the less frivolous or controversial, the better). If company literature is available, read it while you wait. In any case, be polite to the interviewer's assistant. If the opportunity presents itself, ask a few questions about the organization or express enthusiasm for the job. Refrain from smoking before the interview (nonsmokers can smell smoke on the clothing of interviewees), and avoid chewing gum in the waiting room. Anything you do or say while you wait may well get back to the interviewer, so make sure your best qualities show from the moment you enter the premises. That way you'll be ready for the interview itself once it actually begins.

Be prepared for the interview by
- Taking proof of your accomplishments
- Arriving on time
- Waiting graciously

INTERVIEWING FOR SUCCESS

How you handle a particular interview depends on where you stand in the interview process. If you're being interviewed for the first time, your main objective is to differentiate yourself from the many other candidates who are also being screened. Without resorting to gimmicks, call attention to one key aspect of your background so that the recruiter can say, "Oh yes, I remember Jones—the one who sold used Toyotas in Detroit." Just be sure the trait you accentuate is relevant to the job in question. In addition, you'll want to be prepared in case an employer expects you to demonstrate a particular skill (perhaps problem solving) during the screening interview.

Present a memorable "headline" during an interview at the screening stage.

If you progress to the initial selection interview, broaden your sales pitch. Instead of telegraphing the "headline," give the interviewer the whole story. Touch briefly on all your strengths, but explain three or four of your best qualifications in depth. At the same time, probe for information that will help you evaluate the position objectively. As important as it is to get an offer, it's also important to learn whether the job is right for you.

Cover all your strengths during an interview at the selection stage.

If you're asked back for a final visit, your chances of being offered a position are quite good. At this point, you'll talk to a person who has the authority to make an offer and negotiate terms. This individual may have already concluded that your background is right for the job and may be more concerned with sizing up your personality. Both you and the employer need to find out whether there is a good psychological fit. Be honest about your motivations and values. If the interview goes well, your objective should be to clinch the deal on the best possible terms.

Emphasize your personality during final interview.

TABLE 18.5 Interview Questions That May and May Not Be Asked

You may ask this . . .	*But not this*
What is your name?	What was your maiden name?
Are you over 18?	When were you born?
Did you graduate from high school?	When did you graduate from high school?
[No questions about race are allowed.]	What is your race?
Can you perform [specific tasks]?	Do you have physical or mental disabilities?
	Do you have a drug or alcohol problem?
	Are you taking any prescription drugs?
Would you be able to meet the job's requirement to frequently work weekends?	Would working on weekends conflict with your religion?
Do you have the legal right to work in the United States?	What country are you a citizen of?
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	Have you ever been arrested?
This job requires that you speak Spanish. Do you?	What language did you speak in your home when you were growing up?

- Your height, weight, gender, pregnancy, or any health conditions or disabilities that are not reasonably related to job performance
- Arrests or criminal convictions that are not related to job performance

Although federal law does not specifically prohibit questions that touch on these areas, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) considers such questions with "extreme disfavor." Table 18.5 compares specific questions that may and may not be asked during an employment interview.

Think about how you might respond if you are asked to answer unlawful interview questions.

How to Respond If your interviewer asks these personal questions, how you respond depends on how badly you want the job, how you feel about revealing the information asked for, what you think the interviewer will do with the information, and whether you want to work for a company that asks such questions. If you don't want the job, you can tell the interviewer that you think a particular question is unethical or simply refuse to answer—responses that will leave an unfavorable impression.[24] If you do want the job, you might (1) ask how the question is related to your qualifications, (2) explain that the information is personal, (3) respond to what you think is the interviewer's real concern, or (4) answer both the question and the concern. If you answer an unethical or unlawful question, you run the risk that your answer may hurt your chances, so think carefully before answering.[25]

Where to File a Complaint When a business can show that the safety of its employees or customers is at stake, it may be allowed to ask questions that would seem discriminatory in another context. Despite this exception, if you believe an interviewer's questions are unreasonable, unrelated to the job, or an attempt to discriminate, you may complain to the EEOC or to the state agency that regulates fair employment practices. To report discrimination on the basis of age or physical disability, contact the employer's equal opportunity officer or the U.S. Department of Labor. If you file a

CHECKLIST: SUCCEEDING WITH JOB INTERVIEWS

A. Preparation

1. Determine the requirements and general salary range of the job.
2. Research the organization's products, structure, financial standing, and prospects for growth.
3. Determine the interviewer's name, title, and status in the firm.
4. Prepare (but don't over-rehearse) answers for the questions you are likely to be asked.
5. Develop relevant questions to ask.
6. Dress in a businesslike manner, regardless of the mode of dress preferred within the organization.
7. Take a briefcase or portfolio—with pen, paper, list of questions, two résumés, work samples.
8. Double-check the location and time of the interview, mapping out the route beforehand.
9. Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early; allow 10 to 15 minutes for possible problems en route.

B. Initial stages of the interview

1. Greet the interviewer by name, with a smile and direct eye contact.
2. Offer a firm (not crushing) handshake if the interviewer extends a hand.
3. Take a seat only after the interviewer invites you to be seated or has taken his or her own seat.
4. Listen for cues about what the questions are trying to reveal about you and your qualifications.
5. Assume a calm and poised attitude (avoiding gum chewing, smoking, and other signs of nerves).

C. Body of the interview

1. Display a genuine (not artificial) smile, when appropriate.
2. Convey interest and enthusiasm.
3. Listen attentively so that you can give intelligent responses (taking few notes).
4. Relate your knowledge and skills to the position and stress your positive qualities.
5. Keep responses brief, clear, and to the point.
6. Avoid exaggeration, and convey honesty and sincerity.
7. Avoid slighting references to former employers.
8. Avoid alcoholic drinks if you are interviewed over lunch or dinner.

D. Salary discussions

1. Let the interviewer initiate the discussion of salary, but put it off until late in the interview if possible.
2. If asked, state that you would like to receive the standard salary for the position.

E. Closing stages of the interview

1. Watch for signs that the interview is about to end.
2. Tactfully ask when you will be advised of the decision on your application.
3. If you're offered the job, either accept or ask for time to consider the offer.
4. With a warm smile and a handshake, thank the interviewer for meeting with you.

---

your performance in the future.[28] In addition to improving your performance durin interviews, interview notes will help you keep track of any follow-up messages you need to send. Whenever you need to review important tips, consult this chapte "Checklist: Succeeding with Job Interviews."

FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Learning Objective 5

Name six common employment messages that follow an interview, and state briefly when you would use each one

Six types of follow-up messages:

- Thank-you message
- Inquiry
- Request for a time extension
- Letter of acceptance
- Letter declining a job offer
- Letter of resignation

Touching base with the prospective employer after the interview, either by phone or writing, shows that you really want the job and are determined to get it. As Microso DeLeon points out, following up brings your name to the interviewer's attention on again and reminds him or her that you're waiting for the decision.

The two most common forms of follow-up are the thank-you message and th inquiry. These messages are often handled by letter, but an e-mail or a phone call can b just as effective, particularly if the employer seems to favor a casual, personal sty Other types of follow-up messages are sent only in certain cases—letters requesting time extension, letters of acceptance, letters declining a job offer, and letters of resign tion. These four types of employment messages are best handled in writing to doc ment any official actions relating to your employment.

Thank-You Message

Express your thanks within two days after the interview, even if you feel you have litt chance for the job. Acknowledge the interviewer's time and courtesy, and be sure restate the specific job you're applying for. Convey your continued interest, then as politely for a decision.

Example

- I am a B.Tech. in Chemical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi. For the last six years I have been working as a sales and application engineer at the Filtration Division of TAPCOM Limited, Singapore. I have experience in selling filtration and fluid purification products and equipment, covering applications such as hydraulic fluids and process fluids. I enjoy travelling and visiting new places. I am resourceful, self disciplined, and energetic.

2. **What are your career objectives?/ What type of position are you looking for? /What do want to do?/ What are your short-term and long-term career goals?**

All these questions are similar as the interviewers would like to know whether working in their company falls within the candidate's objectives. A positive answer to this question would include a focused statement expressing the candidate's career goals in relation to the targeted position and conveying the candidate's motivation and interest in the job.

Example

- I want to obtain a challenging position in a large software consulting organisation, where I should be able to use my specialised qualification, understanding and experience in business process modelling and organisational change management to suit customer needs.

3. **Tell us something about your interests and activities.**

This is a direct question. The interviewers want to know if the candidate's interests and activities match the key components of the job. The candidate should mention his/her activities, projecting himself/herself as a dynamic and energetic person who accepts challenges.

Example

- I am an extrovert and love to interact with all kinds of people. I am a member of the Institution of Engineers, New Delhi and the International Society of Mechanical Engineers, Mumbai. I am also the Secretary of the Delhi chapter of the Society for Promotion of Science. I enjoy playing badminton and lawn tennis in my free time. I also like classical music and ghazals.

4. **Why should we hire you?/ What makes you fit for this position?**

The interviewers want to know the candidate's interpretation of the job and his/her assessment of his/her suitability for the position. The candidate should be able to establish how well his/her qualification, knowledge, and skills match the needs of their organisation and job requirements.

Example

- As you are looking for someone with experience in automobile sales, with a technical background, my specialised qualification and extensive experience in automobile sales in an expanding company makes me the best candidate for the job. My twelve years as sales manager in Topsel Toyota, Kolkata have provided me with sufficient experience in motivating and leading a dynamic sales team, planning and implementing sales promotion activities, and setting and achieving targets. With the qualifications and skills you are seeking, I am sure I would be able to get desired results for your company.

5. **Why do you want to join our company?/ What makes you interested in our organisation?/ Why are you interested in our company?**

in the Inter-University Debate Competition in March 2003, and second position in the IIT Elocution Competition, 2004. As a member of National Cadet Corps, I won the best IITB cadet award in 2002.

9. Where do you see yourself in five years?

Interviewers would like to know if the candidate's ambitions and career goals are realistic. The candidate should answer this question in the light of his/her self-analysis, explicitly express his/her intention to stay with the organisation for a long period.

Example

- I would be working as a senior executive in your company.

10. Why are you interested in this job?/ What interests you most about this position?

Interviewers would like to assess the candidate's interest and motivation to join the position and see if his/her interest areas match the job. This question should be answered in the light of the job analysis, highlighting his/her interest in the job as well as his/her suitability for it.

Example

- As a high calibre IT professional, I have been looking for an opening like this one, which provides a fast moving, dynamic work environment, and accelerated and challenging growth opportunities. I am sure in this position I will have opportunities to utilise my exposure and experience in software and functional and system level testing policies and procedures.

11. Can you tell us about your responsibilities at your present job?/ What are you doing right now?/ What are your duties at your present position?

This is a straight question asking the candidate to list his responsibilities at his/her present job. Be specific and tell what you do and how you do it.

Example

- As a product specialist at Pfizer Limited, I develop market strategies and programmes to address key issues; analyse the market competition; and conduct market research to identify opportunities, threats, and key issues. Moreover, I develop marketing plans for new products, plan line extensions, and execute the launch.

12. What are your strengths?

Interviewers would like to know if the candidate's strengths match the needs of the job. This question should be answered in the light of the candidate's self-analysis highlighting his/her strong points as well as his/her suitability for the job.

Example

- I have strong communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to get along with others. I have been able to achieve company targets and live up to commitments with a sense of urgency. Last year my company wanted me to convince the government authorities in the industry department to approve starting a new manufacturing unit in Gurgaon and I was successful in getting the project approved.

13. Tell us about a problem you have faced and the strategy you used to handle it?

Interviewers want to know how the candidate handles a problem. In order to illustrate one's problem solving skills, brief description of a problem situation and the strategy to solve it should be outlined.

Example

- Although I would prefer a full-time position, I can also consider a part-time position.

19. Will you accept a lower position for the time being?

Unless one is very desperate to join somewhere, this question should be answered with a polite refusal.

Example

- Although I want to be part of your company, I am afraid I would not be able to accept a lower position.

20. When can you join us?/ When can you begin?/ How long will you take to join us?

Interviewers would like to check the candidate's willingness to work. The candidate should give a very positive response to this query.

Example

- As soon as I am released from my present job.

Practice

After analysing expected questions and planning how to answer them, the candidate is ready to face the interview. He/she should then practise the probable answers in order to develop the required confidence as well as to experience the actual interview. The main purpose of the practice is to help one learn how to answer questions with confidence in a natural and spontaneous way. The candidate should mimic the real interview and try to be his/her natural self while practising. Practice should be continued until one is sure of confidently answering all the questions. The following are some suggestions for practising.

Mock interviews, audio-video interview practice, and rehearsing open questions will provide the required confidence.

Mock Interviews Mock interviews should be conducted with the help of friends, classmates, colleagues, or relatives. Two or three people may form a mock interview panel that poses the questions. The candidate can ask them for their feedback regarding the answers and comments on his/her self-confidence, accuracy, communicative effectiveness, assertiveness, and other personality traits. Although they may not give him/her very perfect comments, their views will help in making appropriate changes in the answers or in the ways of answering them.

Audio/video Practice The candidate may record his/her answers to expected interview questions on an audio/video recorder and listen to them after sometime. He/she can judge the quality of answers in the light of prefixed parameters. He/she may also ask others to listen to the answers and suggest improvements. This will help the candidate in assessing his/her preparation and make appropriate modifications in his/her answers.

Rehearse Open Questions The candidate should rehearse answers to open questions such as "Tell us something about yourself." before a group of friends, classmates, colleagues, or roommates. They should be invited to comment on his/her answers, gestures, body movements, and mannerisms, and point out weaknesses. Analysing their reactions, comments, and suggestions will help the candidate to improve the quality of his/her answers and his/her body language.

Speak Clearly The interviewee should speak clearly and effectively. He/she should use effective speaking techniques, be articulate and speak distinctly, focusing attention on his/her message. Care should be taken to regulate voice quality, accent, and intonation.

Speak Confidently The interviewee should not be shaky and confused while he/she speaks and should instead speak confidently and with a smile.

Speak Slowly with Appropriate Pauses Interviewees should not speak in a hurry. Inexperienced speakers may often try to control their nervousness by speaking too fast. This should be avoided as speaking too quickly exposes one's nervousness and the interviewers will not be able to follow what is being said properly. Effort should be made to speak slowly and take appropriate pauses.

GOOD MANNERS AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

A major part of projecting oneself as a well-behaved dynamic professional is one's conduct during the interview. It is important that one takes care of one's mannerisms and behaviour patterns during the interview. The conduct of most candidates is not positive during an interview. Some interviewers might use a friendly tone and try to create an informal atmosphere to make the interviewee comfortable but the candidate should always remember that a job interview is a formal situation and he/she cannot behave the way he/she behaves when he/she is with friends. The interviewee must behave formally and try to impress the interviewers with good manners and a positive behaviour pattern.

Be Polite Being polite, pleasant, and courteous is the key to a successful job interview. The candidate should never be rude and impolite, but should instead be courteous and use polite expressions and phrases. If he/she is dogmatic and unfriendly during interview, interviewers might find it difficult to continue the interview. By being cheerful he/she should put interviewers at ease. The candidate should also avoid making remarks that might show that he/she is a snob and should try honestly to understand the point of view of the interviewers.

Be Flexible The candidate should express flexibility during the interview and not be rigid on anything. An ideal employee is always flexible. One is likely to work in a team environment and should be a team player who can go along with people. Obstinate people are not successful team players because rigidity goes against team spirit. So, it is important to be flexible in approach, attitude, and style.

Be Tactful It is important to be very tactful during a job interview. It is better to think before speaking than to suffer afterwards. Words and phrases should be chosen carefully, and controversial issues that may lead to unnecessary arguments should be avoided.

Do not Argue The interviewee should never argue with the interviewers. He/she may disagree with the interviewers but should not press the point too hard. Expressing disagreements and reservations in a negative way that might offend the interviewers should be avoided, instead, he/she should express respect for the views expressed by them.

Be Interested The candidate should express interest in the process of interviewing because interviewers will prefer a more interested but less qualified candidate to a less interested and more qualified one. The interviewee should be interested in what the interviewer is asking and his/her behaviour and attitude should reflect this interest. The interviewee should maintain eye contact with each interviewer and respond to their questions in a lively manner. Some candidates remain lifeless during an interview. This shows a lack of interest and may lead to rejection.

11. Be flexible, never impose . If the persuader wants the receiver to listen to him, he should first listen to him totally. If there are certain positive points, those must be appreciated with open mind and broad heart. In argumentation, never impose arguments on other person ; give subtle suggestions and indirect hints. *It is quite possible that we try to win argument, but lose relations along with arguments.*

12. Do not be emotional. Sometimes it happens that in argumentation we become emotional, and identify with certain opinion. When we do not find the other person responding we lose temper and patience. That does not solve the problem, rather complicates. Therefore, it is imperative to cool the temper of oneself by being aware of it, as well as to soothe the other person. Discussion should always be in cool and dispassionate manner, rather than in angry and agitated way. Be watchful that arguments are generating more light than heat.

13. Motivate for action. First wait and watch that the attitude of the other person has been changed. Then motivate and encourage him for action. Ask him that the decision you have taken is your own.

REVIEW OF CHAPTER

Persuasive communication is the communication that is directed towards changing or altering another person's beliefs, attitudes and ultimately behaviour. Effective communication is a difficult and time consuming task, but it is also more powerful way than ordering or warning in command and control style of management. Persuasion is needed because :

1. It helps in building shared vision.
2. It is beter than coercion.
3. It is the basis of leadership
4. It helps to build the team.

To persuade others, one can use the following guiding hints :

1. Analyse the situation and concerned persons.
2. Establish credibility.
3. Prepare the receiver to be open minded.
4. Identify the appropriate emotion of the moment.
5. Talk about rewards to those people who think in terms of payoff.
6. Talk about obstacles to be overcome to those who welcome challenge and change.
7. Appeal to self-interest.
8. Use appealing arguments, character and conditions.
9. Organise your ideas for greatest impact and select selling words.
10. Create favourable atmosphere.
11. Be flexible, never impose.
12. Do not be emotional.
13. Motivate for action.

FACTORS AFFECTING NEGOTIATION

Given its complexity, several factors affect the process of negotiation. We may broadly group them into six—authority, credibility, information, time, emotional control and communication skills.

Authority

The first key factor affecting any negotiation is authority. Negotiation may start with deliberation but to be effective, it has to end up in a conclusion or settlement. For this, both the parties should have the power or authority to conclude the deal. If one party believes that the other party does not have the requisite authority to make a commitment or at least mediate and carry the process forward, he or she may not be keen to come to the negotiating table. If the parties derive their authority from a higher authority, they should know to what extent they can stretch. Committing beyond the extent of authority they are vested with may result in negating the negotiation. In real-life situations, we do come across instances where due to improper understanding, one party commits certain concessions or facilities which the higher authority does not approve and honour. Lack of authority or ability to stand by the settlements arrived at undermines the effectiveness of negotiation.

Credibility

Trust and mutual confidence are very relevant in any process of negotiation. People who are known to be honest, sincere, steady and reliable have an edge when they enter the process of negotiation. The question in the mind of a group when the other person speaks is can we trust this person's perspectives, opinions and statements? For negotiations to proceed smoothly, the answer to this question should be positive. Credibility comes from the person's knowledge, expertise, track record and relationships. It is essential that both the parties have in their teams those people who are perceived as being credible. The authority or power to enter into a negotiation should be supplemented by the credibility of people sitting across the negotiation table.

Information

Negotiation often proceeds on the basis of facts, figures, past data, future trends and outlook, studies, empirical data and calculations. Information, to repeat a cliché, is power. Adequate and reliable information about the various issues involved is essential for ensuring the success of a negotiation exercise. The party which is better informed has an advantage. Logical and persuasive arguments cannot be put forth in the absence of all relevant information. Before coming to the negotiating table, each party should make conscious efforts to gather as much information as possible on all the issues that will be raised during negotiations. Effective negotiation often involves hard bargaining and well-informed teams enjoy better bargaining power.

It is likely that one of the parties in the negotiation has greater access to information than the other. In the interest of ensuring a smooth flow of negotiation, information that is relevant for deliberations should be shared with the other party. How to share it, when to share it and in what manner it should be shared are matters of judgement and should be decided depending upon the situations.

Time

The time frame within which the negotiation should be completed is another important factor affecting the process of negotiation. One of the parties may have a certain urgency as a result of which they may be in a hurry to conclude the negotiation. It is due to time constraints that negotiations cannot go on endlessly and both the parties should agree on a time frame within which the process has to be completed. At the same time, the very process of negotiation is such that the other party cannot be hurried too much. Both the parties need to have adequate patience. Putting the other party under undue pressure is certainly not desirable. Negotiations having wider impact on all the parties need to necessarily follow a well laid down process, which takes time. However, as the process progresses, the deliberations should gather the required momentum and the deal should be clinched or the settlement concluded towards the peak of the negotiation. Each party should take care not to delay too much resulting in a stalemate.

Emotional control

Human beings are not just rational, they are also emotional. Every person has his or her qualities of the head and heart. It is true that in business situations, people take decisions based on thinking and reasoning and after a careful evaluation of choices before them. Yet, if we scratch the surface, we do find emotions at play. Good negotiators are aware of the play of emotions and are responsive to them. Apart from assessing the emotional state of the people in the other party, the negotiator should himself display the appropriate emotional state. Sometimes, it would be appropriate to come on strong with forceful points. At other times, a whisper and a soft touch would do. The idea is that whatever be your position, try to match the emotional furore of the other party and establish a facilitative ground. While a certain emotional awareness is no doubt relevant, there is nonetheless no room for excessive display of emotions in the process of negotiation.

Communication Skills

As we have already noted, negotiation is an intense process involving exchange of messages. These messages are not necessarily bits and pieces of information. What needs to be shared with others during the process of negotiation would be a complex mix of ideas, attitudes and even emotions. The negotiator needs to state, articulate, explain, reason out, appeal, concede, persuade, persevere and even remain silent depending upon the situation. Good negotiators use silence effectively. They know when to remain silent. Effective negotiation calls for not only saying the right thing at the right time, but also leaving unsaid what need not be said. A good negotiator needs to have a good command over language.

The process of negotiation is not always conducted in a serious manner. There may be instances of inter-cultural group negotiations, where it would be inappropriate to use jokes, humour and light-hearted comments since they are likely to be misunderstood. In other situations where the relationship between the negotiating teams is not too formal, relevant humour and lighter moments may help in building rapport and easing tension. Besides using the right words and tone, effective negotiators supplement their arguments with stories, metaphors and analogies to make their positions come alive. Given the importance of communication skills in the negotiation process, parties concerned choose people who have good interpersonal skills as members of the negotiating teams. Display of arrogance, hurtful comments, sarcastic remarks, emotional outbursts and overfriendly approaches are inimical to the smooth flow of the negotiation process.

STAGES OF NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Negotiation is widely recognized to be a four-step process. These are preparation, opening, bargaining and closing.

Preparation

The first stage in a negotiation process relates to planning and preparation. It is the stage where the parties decide what they want, what are their minimum expectations, how much they will yield and how they will go about the negotiations. Each party will also try to visualize what the other party will be expecting from the negotiation. Preparations for the negotiations would consist of collecting relevant information, obtaining the required authority and outer limits, having intense discussions and collecting details of the previous negotiations on similar issues. As we have noted earlier, a well-informed and a well-prepared party enters the negotiation process with a high level of confidence. In this stage, the parties also look at the time frame, availability of the team members, relative roles and their strategies. While the teams should enter the process with a positive bent of mind, prudence suggests that they should also discuss beforehand what they should do if the negotiations break down and the agreements are not reached.

Opening

The second stage in the negotiation process concerns opening. This is when the parties concerned come to the negotiating table and meet each other. Opening has two steps—rapport building and probing.

Rapport building is the process of getting to know each other. Thus, introductions are made, pleasantries are exchanged, and names and backgrounds are noted. Care should be taken to address the persons by their correct names. Even if someone in the other group is already known, too much of familiarity or intimacy should be avoided. Negotiations should start on a friendly note, but with a professional approach. While meeting people and interacting with them, perceptions do matter. Make sure that negotiations begin on the right note. Be polite and pleasant. Use appropriate words. Be open minded. Show enthusiasm. Listen attentively.

Once the pleasantries are over, the teams enter the stage of probing. Each party tries to know more about the other through open-ended questions. They get to know the needs and expectations of one another. Statements made are more exploratory than assertive. The more they listen and probe, better will be their appreciation of the other party's stand or position. Probing takes place through open-ended questions like, 'How shall we proceed?', 'What do you suggest?', 'What is the time frame we are looking at?' and 'Which issues shall we take up first?'

Bargaining

It is the stage when the negotiating teams really sit down and talk it out. They state their positions and put forth the supporting arguments. In any negotiation, the question uppermost is, 'What's there in it for me?'. Bargaining is nothing but a give and take. You are prepared to concede something provided you get what you want. During the course of hard bargaining, all the relevant negotiation skills we noted earlier are brought into full play. Assertiveness, substantiation, logic, reasoning and persuasion are all put to good use. A good negotiator does not yield easily. He or she uses silence effectively and keeps the other party guessing. When both the parties are tough negotiators, deliberations become more challenging and progress becomes slow. It may become necessary to take a break and get back after a gap. Quite often, there is a total disagreement and when that happens, both the parties should take a longer break and meet at a later date. Complex negotiations take time and the pace cannot be forced.

Closing

Finally, you enter the settlement stage and work towards a 'close'. After completing all the bargaining, the negotiating parties come to the stage of settlement or agreement. The final terms as agreed upon are documented and the agreement gets signed. Even after all the hard bargaining and intense deliberations, quite often there are still some loose ends that have to be tied up. It is only after some deliberation that both the parties agree upon the final draft of the agreement. Negotiations by their very nature involve some compromises and sacrifices. Neither party should expect a settlement or deal that is totally as per their expectations. As they say, you win some and lose some. Good negotiators view the outcome in proper perspective and take the gains and compromises in their stride.

TYPES OF NEGOTIATIONS

There are essentially two types of negotiations—integrative and distributive. Both follow different approaches. Integrative approach is also known as the win–win syndrome. In this, each party appreciates that one should not try to have an upper hand to the detriment of the other. The approach is one in which each group tries to be accommodative and conciliatory. It is based on a problem-solving approach. There is a mutual understanding, and collective efforts are made to ensure that issues are resolved to mutual satisfaction. At the end of the negotiations, both the parties feel satisfied that they have made the best of bargain under the given circumstances. In a distributive process, on the other hand, one party gains at the expense of the other. It is also known as the win–lose syndrome. It is also understood as a zero-sum game. The total sum being limited, the more one gets, the less there is for the other. It is the process of distribution. Styles of negotiation used here are authoritarian or coercive. One party tries to browbeat the other to accept what is offered.

WHY NEGOTIATIONS FAIL

Having understood different types of negotiating styles, processes, strategies, studies and what contributes to the success of negotiations, let us also understand in brief why negotiations fail. Negotiation fails when either party approaches the process of negotiation with totally unreasonable demands or extremely high expectations. If the starting point of both the parties is too divergent, negotiation may not lead to a meeting point. Similarly, negotiation fails if the spirit of cooperation or give-and-take is lacking. If one party wants to make only gains and is unwilling to accept compromises or make sacrifices, negotiation cannot make much headway. An unreasonably rigid approach by one of them may lead to failure of negotiations. The third reason for the failure of negotiation could be the lack of a consistent approach on the part of one of the parties. If the party shifts its stand very often, the process of negotiation cannot progress much. For negotiations to conclude successfully, deliberations should move from one stage to the other in a progressive manner. Another reason why negotiations fail is when one party does not share any information with the other and springs too many surprises confusing them. Springing such surprises very often puts off the other party, making it difficult for them to react. Yet another reason why negotiations fail is when the negotiating teams do not have the requisite authority or are not adequately empowered or when they misunderstand and exceed their authority. In such a case, the final authority that should approve and seal the negotiated terms and commitments declines to do so, thereby negating the entire exercise of negotiation. This happens when there are large financial implications as in wage negotiations and trade agreements. Negotiations may also fail when conditions change dramatically during the course of deliberations, for example, if the basic premise on which negotiations started undergoes a drastic change for reasons such as change of management or ownership, declaration of war, change of government, development of any crisis or emergency situations.

DOS AND DON'TS

Dos	*Don'ts*
Be well prepared and set clear objectives	Avoid sarcasm and hurtful comments
Be flexible in your approach. Remember that it is a give and take	Do not indulge in loose talk and casual approach
Listen actively and attentively	Do not raise trivial or insignificant issues
Maintain discipline and decorum. Give respect and take respect	Do not get emotional or egoistic
Show patience, tact and perseverance	Do not get into avoidable arguments
Be open minded and pragmatic	Do not interrupt others and jump to conclusions
Ask questions and seek clarifications	Do not insult or slight people
Be enthusiastic, reasonable and convincing	Do not yell or raise your voice
Be soft yet firm	Do not lie or be inconsistent
Supplement your words with appropriate body language	Do not react or comment in a hurry

KEY THOUGHTS

1. Negotiation is the process through which messages are exchanged, benefits and sacrifices are clarified, conflicts are resolved, deals are struck and commitments are obtained.
2. Quite often the process of negotiation is complicated and long drawn and every skill is put to test.
3. Negotiation is a goal-oriented process involving face-to-face interactions.
4. Negotiation often entails hard bargaining and successful resolution of conflicting interests in a spirit of accommodation and a give-and-take approach.
5. The nature of negotiation in the world of business is extremely wide.
6. Negotiations, to be effective, call for due homework, facts and figures at hand and a flexible approach.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Importance of Presentation Skills

We may not all be professional public speakers but we may have to make a presentation at some point of time or the other. Whether one is a student, a professional engineer, an academician, or a business executive, one may have to make oral presentations in front of one's colleagues or professional peers. A professional student may be required to make presentations in the form of progress reports, student seminars, research presentations, and so on. Professionals in different fields, including scientists and engineers, have also to make oral reports, present seminars, deliver project presentations, or present a proposal orally. Similarly, business executives may have to introduce a new product that their company has launched, to present a new sales plan that they want others to know about, or they may just have a brilliant idea that they would like to share with their colleagues.

Thus, of the many skills that contribute to professional success, none is more important than the ability to communicate orally in front of a group of people. Business people rank oral presentation skills among the most important factors responsible for their success. Oral presentation is a tool of professional and business interaction. Infact, in some organisations, institutions, or universities, recruitment is made on the basis of a selection process, which involves oral presentation in the form of seminar presentation, short lectures, business presentations or some other form of oral presentation.

A good presentation can do wonders for a person; it may help in getting a lucrative job offer from the company he/she always wanted to join, he/she may get a big business deal or the promotion he/she had been waiting for. The list is long. On the other hand, a poor presentation of ideas not only reduces the professional image of the person presenting it, but may result in major business or personal loss.

Therefore, the ability to deliver an effective presentation is essential for all of us. We should know how to present our ideas in a persuasive way, how to make our audience interested in our presentation, how to use appropriate visuals during our presentation, and how to reflect confidence while speaking. A person making a presentation should have the ability to begin his presentation in an effective way, develop his/her ideas logically and conclude his/her presentation with something memorable. He/she needs to understand the basic elements of an effective presentation—the 4 Ps, that is, Plan, Prepare, Practice, and Perform.

PLANNING THE PRESENTATION

An oral presentation is the formal, structured, and systematic presentation of a message to an audience and it involves conveying a lot of information in a limited time. It should, therefore, be planned well in advance so that the material is delivered effectively. Planning the presentation is, thus, the most important element. It helps the presenter

Planning a presentation involves defining the purpose, analysing the audience, analysing the occasion, and choosing a suitable title.

- know the audience;
- stimulate the interest of the audience;
- be sensitive to the needs and expectations of the audience;
- strike up interaction with his/her immediate audience in as many ways as possible;
- know his/her purpose;
- analyse the occasion;
- fit the material to the time at his/her disposal; and
- select and narrow a topic for his/her presentation.

Planning an oral presentation, thus, involves purpose identification, audience analysis, analysing the occasion, and the process of selecting and narrowing the topic of presentation. The following suggestions will help in planning well:

1. Define the Purpose

Planning a presentation should start by defining its purpose. What is the purpose of this presentation? This is the most important question that needs to be answered in order to make a presentation focused, with clear objectives. A general purpose as well as a specific purpose should be identified. General purposes include:

- To inform—to share information
- To persuade—to change behaviour, attitude, belief, values, and so on
- To demonstrate—to help listeners know how to do something

Identifying the specific purpose of a presentation involves identifying an observable measurable action that the audience should be able to take, and using one idea that matches audience needs, knowledge, expectations, and interests. It should focus on audience behaviour and restate the speech topic.

Study the following examples:

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will be able to describe three advantages of using HP PrecisionScan LT software.

(Informative presentation)

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will believe that the HP PrecisionScan LT is the best scanning software.

(Persuasive presentation)

- At the end of my presentation, the audience will be able to use HP PrecisionScan LT software.

(Demonstrative presentation)

2. Analyse the Audience

The desired results cannot be achieved from a presentation unless the person making the presentation knows his/her audience well. Audience analysis is an integral part of the process of oral presentation. It includes identifying audience characteristics, analysing audience needs and expectations, and identifying factors for getting and maintaining audience attention.

Lenny Laskowski, an international professional speaker and an expert on presentation skills, has used the word A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E as an acronym, and has defined some general audience analysis categories that all surveys should include. The 'acronym' is reproduced below:

***A_udience**—Who are the members? How many will be at the event?*
***U_nderstanding**—What is their knowledge about the topic I will be addressing?*
***D_emographics**—What is their age, sex, educational background, and so forth?*
***I_nterest**—Why will they be at this event? Who asked them to be there?*
***E_nvironment**—Where will I stand when I speak? Will everyone be able to see me?*
***N_eeds**—What are the listener's needs? What are my needs as a speaker? What are the needs of the person who wants me to speak?*
***C_ustomised**—How can I custom fit my message to this audience?*
***E_xpectations**—What do the listeners expect to learn from me?*

Identify Audience Characteristics In order to know the audience, the presenter needs to identify their basic characteristics. He/she should try to gather as much background information about his/her listeners as he/she can—their age, gender, social, economic and educational background, religion, political affiliations, profession, attitudes (likes and dislikes), beliefs (true and false), and values (good and bad). If these audience characteristics are identified, he/she will be much better equipped to plan and prepare his/her presentation effectively.

Analyse Audience Needs and Expectations Those who will attend and listen to the presentation have their needs and expectations. They will be there for a reason. If the presenter wants them to listen to him/her, he/she has to understand and respond to their needs and expectations. For this he/she should ask the following questions:

- Why will they listen to me?
- Who asked them to be there?
- Is their attendance compulsory?
- What are their interests?
- What ideas or experience do I have that the audience may like to hear?
- What are their needs?
- What do they expect?
- How do my objectives meet audience needs?

Answers to these questions will help him/her make appropriate modification in his/her presentation to suit his/her audience. The presentation must be audience oriented, dealing with the topic from their perspective. The presenter may not change his/her ideas and facts for his/her audience but he/she may change the way he/she conveys them. He/she may tell them what he/she wants to tell but in a way that appeals to them.

Recognise Factors for Getting and Maintaining Audience Attention Once the characteristics, needs, and expectations of the audience have been identified, factors that meet the needs of the listeners should be determined. Listeners will be more interested in the presentation if it meets their requirements. As a result, they will listen more attentively, understand what is said, and remember the key points of the presentation. The presenter needs to consider the following specific questions in this context:

- How can I relate my presentation to the needs and expectations of my audience?
- What should I do to ensure that my audience remembers my main points?
- What style will appeal to my audience?
- What are the changes that I should make?
- Have I incorporated ways of encouraging my listeners to give feedback and share information that will make my presentation more effective?
- Have I planned strategies for dealing with listeners' communication apprehensions?
- How will I handle hostile listeners or those who are disruptive?

Moreover, more informed decisions can be made about how to best adapt to the varying moods of listeners and how to tap their curiosity, interest, and motivation. Perhaps the best rule to remember in identifying factors for getting and keeping audience attention is to remain flexible. A blend of methods and alternatives to accommodate listeners' perceptions may be the best approach to audience analysis.

3. Analyse the Occasion

The occasion on which the presentation is to be made should be analysed in order to understand the nature of the event or communicative situation. Several aspects of the event like its background, the people involved, the organisations or associations linked to the event, and so on need to be considered. Here are some relevant questions.

- Is my presentation part of a larger event like a national/international seminar with a central theme, or just an internal conference where I am supposed to present my views on a particular topic?
- Am I familiar with the procedures of the event?
- Who are the sponsors?
- Who are the other speakers?
- What is the venue?
- What is the duration of my presentation?

Infact, thinking through the answers to some of these questions ahead of time may ensure that the presentation is effective.

4. Choose a Suitable Title

Generally, a title has to be chosen for the presentation. The title gives the audience the first glimpse of the presentation and they forms their first impressions. Therefore, it is essential that the title is appropriate and conveys the essence of the message. A vague, misleading, and fussy title may confuse the audience.

The process of choosing a title may begin by first identifying a topic. The choice of the topic depends on the occasion, the audience, the type, and purpose of the presentation. A list of topics may be compiled, including potential topics like social, economic, political, technological and environmental problems (for example, poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, corruption, crime, inflation, AIDS epidemic, and so on.); ideas regarding society, education, business and economy, government, technological systems, and so forth, and reactions to debatable issues (for example, universal civil code, Article 370, politics and religion, and abortion). When all the possible topics have been noted, the choices can be evaluated and an appropriate topic may be chosen.

After a suitable topic has been selected for the presentation, it should be narrowed down as per the focus of the presentation in order to phrase a clear, complete, specific, and focused title. In this process, the nature of the general and specific purposes of the presentation as well as audience expectations and rhetorical sensitivity may be considered. For example, if the selected topic is 'pollution', it may be narrowed to any of the following:

- Vehicular pollution hazards in New Delhi (local focus)
- Pollution of the Ganges (national focus)
- CFC's and ozone depletion (international focus)

PREPARING THE PRESENTATION

Once the presentation has been planned, it is time to begin preparing for it. Preparing well is the key to success. Making an oral presentation—whether a seminar presentation, an oral report, a project presentation, or a business presentation—is easier when it is prepared it in a systematic manner. Being prepared helps the presenter

- deal with speech anxiety effectively;
- develop the required confidence;
- seek precise and relevant examples and illustrations; and
- check for accuracy, redundancies, and cliches.

Preparing for a presentation involves developing the central idea and main points, gathering relevant supporting material, and planning visual aids.

Develop the Central Idea

The central idea of the presentation is its core idea or thesis statement. It should be a complete declarative sentence that captures the essence of the message. The following are the characteristics of a central idea:

- It restates the presentation topic.
- It is a simple audience-centered idea.
- It is a one-sentence summary of the presentation
- It focuses on the content of the speech.
- It uses specific language.

Preparing for a presentation involves developing the central idea and the main points, gathering supporting material, and planning visual aids.

Develop the Main Ideas

Develop the main ideas for the presentation. The presenter may make a logical division of the central idea, establish reasons for the idea being true, or support the central idea with a series of steps. Choosing one of these techniques will largely depend on the topic of the presentation as well as its objectives. Study the following examples:

- Logical division of the central idea
  Example: Central idea: Unemployment in India
  Logical divisions: A. Types B. Causes C. Solutions
- Establishing reasons for the central idea being true
  Example: Central idea: Education in India needs to be restructured
  Establishing reasons: A. Reason 1 B. Reason 2 C. Reason 3
- Supporting the central idea with a series of steps
  Example: Central idea: Indo-Pak Relations can be improved
  Series of steps: A. Strategy 1 B. Strategy 2 C. Strategy 3

Gather Supporting Material

One of the most difficult aspects of preparing a presentation is gathering relevant supporting information. Information that will be used in the presentation should be carefully selected. This will depend on the scope and length of the presentation.

While gathering supporting information a systematic approach should be adopted. First, the presenter should gather all his/her thoughts on the subject and then recall related information from his/her personal knowledge and experience. Thereafter, several research resources such as the Internet, library resources, personal interviews, and discussion with experts, colleagues, and special interest groups should be consulted. A list of material to be included in your presentation should be made. The supporting material gathered may include facts, examples, definitions, quotations, and so on.

An outline of the collected material is developed, and reworked until it is in good order. After that, the first draft is written and revised as required. It is important to check for accuracy, redundancies, and cliches. The style of the presentation should be informal, preferably using everyday language and avoiding technical terms and statistics.

Plan Visual Aids

Using appropriate visual aids will increase the effectiveness of presentations. Good visuals may serve the following purposes.

- ***They Serve as Speech Notes:*** Visual aids may be used as notes to emphasise and clarify the main points of the presentation. Each visual aid may contain a main idea. Effective titles may be used to convey the main message of the visual aid.
- ***They Give Confidence:*** Using good visuals might increase the presenter's self-confidence because they refresh his/her memory, establish his/her credibility, and show that he/she has planned, is well-prepared, and is professional.
- ***They Help Focus on the Theme of the Presentation:*** Visuals help the presenter to focus on the theme of the presentation and concentrate on the objectives of his/her presentation. He/she may use effective visuals to highlight the central idea of his/her presentation.
- ***They Increase Audience Interest:*** Interesting and relevant visual aids make the audience more interested in what is being said. They may force even a hostile and demotivated audience to pay attention.
- ***They Give Clarity and Precision:*** Visuals make the presentation easy to understand and remember.

Any of the following types of visual aids may be used.

A. *Three-Dimensional Visual Aids*

(a) Objects
(b) Models
(c) People

B. *Two-Dimensional Visual Aids*

(a) Drawings
(b) Photographs
(c) Slides
(d) Maps
(e) Graphs
- Bar graphs
- Pie graphs
- Line graphs
- Picture graphs

(f) Charts
(g) Overhead transparencies
(h) Computer generated presentations
(i) Chalkboard

The following suggestions will help in planning and using visual aids effectively:

- Relevant visual aids must be chosen. The visual aids should match the message. Using a visual that does not match with what is being said is distracting and may confuse the audience.
- The presenter must be familiar with his/her visual aids and rehearse his/her presentation with using the visual aids.
- Computer software programs such as PowerPoint and Corel Presentations may be used to enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. However, special care must be taken while designing electronic presentations or multimedia presentations because making the presentation overly dependent on electronic visuals may create certain handicaps.
- Handouts may be distributed, that is, charts, presentation abstracts, summaries, brochures, pamphlets, outlines, and so on, in order to complement the presentation.
- While using overhead transparencies, eye contact should be maintained with the audience.
- Visual aids must be introduced before actually showing them.

ORGANISING YOUR PRESENTATION

After the central idea as well as the main ideas have been developed, relevant supporting material has been gathered, and appropriate visual aids have been planned, the message has to be organised and structured. Good organisation is essential for effective presentation. The key to good organisation is the repetition of the main ideas of your message. Just remember the three Ts:

Your presentation should be organised into three distinct parts: introduction, body, and conclusion.

Tell the audience what you are going to tell.
Tell it.
Tell them what you have told.

Divide the presentation into three distinct parts: the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Introduction

The opening of the presentation should convince the audience to listen to it. It has five functions:

- Get the audience's attention
- Introduce the subject
- Give the audience a reason to listen
- Establish the credibility
- Preview the main ideas

Get Audience Attention The speaker needs to get the attention of his/her audience and hold it until the end of his/her talk. Listeners form their first impression of the presentation quickly, and first impressions matter. Therefore, the opening should capture their attention. Audience attention may be captured in several ways. These techniques include using any one of the following:

- ***Startling Statement/Statistics*** Say something surprising or unexpected, or give statistics that surprises the audience.
- ***Anecdote*** Tell a short entertaining account of an event, a short story.
- ***Questions*** Ask some interesting questions. The question should be rhetorical with an obvious answer.
- ***Quotations*** Start the presentation with a relevant quotation that throws light on the central idea of the presentation.
- ***Humour*** Start the presentation with a humorous reference.

Introduce the Subject A statement of the central idea should be included in the introduction. In simple and direct language the audience has to know what the presentation is about.

Give the Audience a Reason to Listen Audience attention should be drawn to the topic of the presentation by showing them how the topic affects them directly. Giving relevant statistics can motivate the audience.

Establish the Credibility The speaker's credibility should be established early in a speech. He/she should be able to convince the audience that he/she is worth listening to. The speaker should be well prepared, appear confident, and strike a rapport with the audience by narrating personal experiences relevant to the topic.

Preview the Main Ideas The audience should be told what they are going to listen to. The preview to the presentation should be given towards the end of the introduction. The preview should include a statement of the central idea and mention the main points of the presentation.

Remember the acronym
KISS
(KEEP IT SIMPLE AND SHORT)
Your audience will understand a simple message easily.

SHORT
Your audience may concentrate better if your message is short.

Body

The body contains the main content of the presentation. Most people fail to make an effective presentation simply because they try to convey so much information and include so many ideas. The speaker may be tempted to include so many points in his/her presentation but it is advisable to focus on a few main ideas, two to four. Each main point should be supported by appropriate details but not excessive data. This will spoil the presentation because it may confuse the audience. In short, the *mantra* is to use a few main points with relevant supporting details. The speaker should concentrate on each main point and use appropriate transitions to indicate a change of point as the audience may not be able to differentiate between the main points and minor points. He/she should ensure that his/her information is accurate, complete, and relevant.

As the body of the presentation is structured, the speaker should choose the sequence he/she will follow from among any of the following organisational patterns:

- Sequential
- General to specific
- Specific to general
- More important to less important
- Less important to more important
- Categorical
- Problem and solution
- Contrast and comparison

In developing the sequence of a presentation, transitions between sections, illustrations that will be used, and points of emphasis should also be decided.

Conclusion

The conclusion of your presentation should accomplish the following four specific objectives:

(i) Summarise the presentation
(ii) Reemphasise the central idea
(iii) Focus on a goal
(iv) Motivate the audience to respond
(v) Provide closure

Summarise Your Presentation The conclusion gives the speaker the last chance to present his/her key ideas. The main ideas should be repeated.

Reemphasise the Central Idea The central idea of the presentation should be restated in a memorable way.

Focus on a Goal The speaker should focus on the specific objective of the presentation and concentrate on what he/she wants his audience to do, think, change, remember, and so on.

Motivate the Audience to Respond The audience should be motivated to give feedback. They may be encouraged to ask questions.

Provide Closure Verbal techniques may be used to let the audience know that the speech has ended. Appropriate words and phrases such as "in conclusion", "lastly", "finally", and "as my last point" may be used. The speaker may thank the audience for their patient listening. Nonverbal cues may also be used to signal closure.

Handling Stage Fright

Everyone who has faced an audience and has made a speech or presentation must have experienced stage fright. Perhaps one of the most difficult things that need to be handled during a presentation is one's first encounter with stage fright. Whenever we are faced with a frightening situation we find difficult to handle, our body responds. This response is in terms of extra energy to deal with the situation. As a result, the heartbeat quickens, breathing becomes more rapid, the mouth becomes dry, blushing occurs, palms sweat, and several other physiological changes occur. We become nervous or anxious and suffer from stage fright. Infact, even very good speakers experience some degree of stage fright when they have to give a presentation before an audience. So, some degree of stage fright is quite normal. However, it is important to learn to handle stage fright and use the extra energy positively to improve presentation delivery.

Do you know that

- *You feel more nervous than you appear.*
- *The more you think that you are nervous, the more nervous you will feel.*
- *Your audience cannot easily detect your stage fright.*
- *Even the most experienced presenters get nervous before an important presentation.*
- *Even great speakers like Kennedy and Churchill were extremely fearful of speaking in public.*

The following strategies can be used to control and reduce stage fright:

- **Concentrate on the Three Ps: Planning, Preparation and Practice** As discussed earlier, presentations should be well planned, thoroughly prepared, and rehearsed repeatedly. Knowing the purpose, audience, and occasion helps to reduce speech anxiety. Effective preparation familiarises the speaker with his/her message and thus reduces stage fear. Knowing the introduction, body and conclusion well in advance gives the speaker the confidence to control his/her speech anxiety. Finally, practice makes one perfect, if the presentation is well rehearsed. There is nothing to fear and there may be little or no stage fright at the time of presentation because the speaker is familiar with the situation.

- **Set Realistic Goals** Set objectives that are realisic. If the goals are unrealistic and beyond one's capabilities, it will unnecessarily create nervusness. In fact, the normal stress of the speaking situation is heightened by unrealistic ambitons. The speaker should be practical and identify his/her shortcomings. If he/she is not a very efective oral communicator, he/she should set humble goals. Moreover, he/she may set himself upto feel nervous by putting undue emphasis on a presentation.
- **Avoid Negative Thoughts** Entertaining negative thughts may sometimes create more anxiety. Avoid thoughts such as "I am going to fail", "I can' speak", "My topic is boring", "I didn't prepare well", "I am not ready", "My audience don't ike me", "I'm not fluent", and so on. Instead, positive self-talk such as, "I really know thispresentation and believe in what I'm saying", "The topic is very interesting", "I am well planned and confident", and so on. The speaker should feel confident about his/her planning and preparation, have faith in himself/herself, tell himself/herself that everything is fine and tlat his/her listeners are positively disposed towards him/her.
- **Begin the Presentation with a Pause** Beginning presentations is accompanied by feelings of excitement and nervousness. This can be controlled by taking a few moments to make oneself comfortable. The speaker should not be in a hurry tostart rather he should approach his/her audience calmly with a smile, adjusting his/her delivery notes, establish eye contact with the audience, and then begin his/her presentation.
- **Speak Slowly** Inexperienced speakers often try to control their nervousness and stage fright by speaking too fast. This should be avoided as speaking too quickly exposes one's nervousness. The audience will recognise this and they will moreover find it difficult to understand the talk. Therefore, it is important to speak slowly and take appropriate pauses.
- **Learn and Practise Stress Reduction Techniques** Learn effective stress reduction techniques, such as deep breathing, isometrics, progressive relaxation, mental relaxation, and so on. They are useful in reducing stage fright. Usually stage fear is expressed by discomfort, which may range from mild embarrassment to outright panic. The key in dealing with stage fear is to maximise one's performance by coping with the obstacles that prevent positive performance.

CHECKLIST FOR MAKING AN ORAL PRESENTATION

Start With Confidence A startling statement/quotation/anecdote/question/joke are good options for starting a presentation. The speaker must make sure that the technique used to start the presentation helps emphasise or support his/her point. It must match his/her message. Examples from personal and professional life can be used to stress points. The speaker must be willing to give of himself/herself by sharing his/her experiences and insights with the audience. It is useful to practise the opening of one's speech and plan exactly how it should be said.

Be Organised Presentations should be organised properly with an introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction should provide an overview of the main points of the presentation. The speaker should make the purpose of the presentation clear, use transitions and signposts to clarify its organisation, and incorporate credible and interesting supporting material.

Stay Relaxed Advance planning and preparation help in staying relaxed and tension free during the presentation. Focussing on the message rather than the audience also helps in staying calm and confident.

Pay Attention to Body Language Effective gestures, body movements, and walking patterns make an impression on the audience. The speaker should, at all times, maintain eye contact with the audience. These aspects should be borne in mind while rehearsing the presentation.

Use Appropriate Visual Aids Visuals should be chosen with a view to creating maximum effect. They should focus on the main points of the presentation and help in retaining audience attention.

Pay Attention to all Details The speaker should pay attention to even the smallest details, making sure to organise all his/her papers, speaking notes, handouts, and visual aids, before the starting the presentation.

Close in a Memorable Way The presentation should be concluded in a memorable way, with a summary of the keypoints. The audience should leave with a positive impression of the speaker and his/her presentation.

MODULE 2

A SAMPLE LETTER OF COMPLAINT

(Also known as claims letter)

Dear Sir,

We ordered 2000 1kg tins of Nihal Baby Food Powder in our order No. M-4006/ FP dated 4 April 2013. Today when the consignment arrived we checked its contents and found only 1500 tins, out of which 45 were badly damaged. It seems one of the cases was not packed properly or some heavy load had been placed over it in transit.

There is a great demand for milk powder in the town at this time of the year and we expected to clear the whole stock in the next two months. But it appears some of our customers will be to be disappointed. With enormous resources at your command, we hope you can save the situation by sending 500 tins immediately by quick transit service.

As regards the damaged tins, we want your advice. There are two alternatives; either you allow us to sell them at reduced price in which case we shall send you the total amount realized after deducting our usual commission of 7 per cent or permit us to return them to you at your cost for replacement.

We would very much appreciate an early reply.

Yours sincerely,

R.L. Bagchi

Purchase Manager

A SAMPLE LETTER OF ADJUSTMENT

Dear Mr. Bagchi,

Thank you for your letter No........ of 9th April, 2013 . We are very sorry to learn that you have been put to embarrassment and inconvenience owing to our mistake.

Your suggestion for quick shipment of 500 tins is fair and we have despatched them today by quick transit service, as desired by you. We hope they will reach in time for you to keep the dates with your clients. We also agree to bear the transportation cost of damaged tins. Please send them back soon.

We thank you for drawing our attention to this mistake because we have again carefully examined the working of our packing and despatch department and introduced further checks to prevent the recurrence of such mistakes. Rest assured that you will not be put to any such inconvenience in future.

Yours sincerely,

Anjum Azad (Mr.)

Sales Manager

SAMPLE CLAIMS LETTER 2

Dear Sir,

On 6 February 2003 we bought a voltage stabilizer, voltrex for Rs. 3228.56 from your authorised dealer Mr. Shyam Kumar Co., Laxmi Sagar, Bhubaneswar. It bears No. LT 400397A and the guarantee card is numbered VL 4448632.

After we had used it for about a month for regulating current to our computer IBM 1130 it began to produce a loud noise. I sent it to Shyam Kumar Co. They said it was a minor defect and returned it to us after repairs. After about three weeks the same trouble started again. We called an engineer and got our equipment checked. He says that the computer is all right and has advised us against using the stabilizer as it may damage the equipment.

Now we feel reluctant to approach the dealer. They might once again dismiss the trouble as a minor one and return it after repairs. The fact that the stabilizer has developed trouble twice within about seven weeks indicates that there is some manufacturing defect in it.

I, therefore, request you to arrange to replace it immediately by issuing necessary instructions to the dealer. I may add that some other organizations which own your stabilizer have been getting trouble-free service for several years. In fact, their recommendation has prompted us to buy your product.

Yours sincerely,

T. R. Das

Research and Development Officer

A SAMPLE SALES LETTER

Dear Sir:

A lady called on us· the other day and told us the secret of her happy married life. This is what she had to say: ← Attention

After two years of her marriage she had a baby and began to feel tired, overworked, and sick. Her husband observed this and apart from consulting a doctor and getting her a tonic, he bought her a National Pressure Cooker. Within weeks her health improved and her cheerful disposition lit up the home like warm sunshine. Hers is a happy family now.

Our cooker adds fun cooking and beauty to the kitchen. It saves both money and time.

In just 30 minutes you can prepare a full meal for your family, thus cutting your fuel bill by 25 percent.

Interest & Desire

Years of research have gone into making it. It is made of a metal which has been carefully tested to withstand the maximum pressure that can be generated. The lid, though firm when in use, opens easily and the handle is very convenient to hold. it has a double safety device.

We also guarantee it for three years against manufacturing defects and offer free repair service during this period at all our authorized retail shops.

At present National Cookers are available in the following four sizes:

Model A404	4 litres
Model A406	6 litres
Model A408	8 litres
Model A410 10 litres	

Choose the one that suits you best and mail the enclosed postage-free postcard after filling in the details. In about a week the postman will call on you and deliver it at your door

Yours sincerely
P.N. Banerjee
Sales Officer

Action

ACTIVITY 3

The sentences in each paragraph of sales letter below have been jumbled up. Put the sentences of each paragraph 111 the right order and rewrite the letter.

Para: 1

(a) And now we have. produced a dining table and a set of chairs to go with it that make eating a pleasure.

(b) We have been thinking for years how to design furniture that will enable you to eat your meals in a relaxed manner.

Para: 2

(c) The chairs will receive you with open arms and impart a feeling of comfort, and the table will provide enough space for all members of your family.

(d) And then you have a choice from seven sophisticated colours.

(e) Their sleek look will fit in with the modern decor of your house.

(f) With our Happy Home table and chairs in the house it is a delight to feel hungry.

Para: 3

(g) At present we offer sets to suit families of four, six, eight and twelve.

(h) Their detailed description and coloured pictures are given in the enclosed folder.

Para: 4

(i) An order form and a post-free envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

(j) Our showroom remains open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays.

(k) You are most welcome to drop in and personally select what you need.

(l) Or, if you choose to order by post, we shall send the set of your choice by truck.

SKP Ship Management

Remi Bizort, VD Road, Andheri(W), Mumbai-400053

Sample Memo

Interoffice Memorandum

Date: 10th April,2013

To: Ashish Kumar, Training Manager

From: Jerry Massey, Managing Director

Subject: Special Workshop on Ship Management and Modern Technology

Please refer to your memo dated 3rd April, containing the proposal to organize a special workshop on "Ship management and modern technology" for the Junior executives of our company. I am pleased to inform you that the executive board has approved your proposal. You may send us the final list of resource persons to be invited in the workshop. You may consider including the names of a few senior executives working in the ship management industry. This may help us in making the workshop more focused and need-based.

I would like to express my appreciation for the effort that you have put into designing the structure of the workshop. Keep up the good work and keep these ideas coming.

Jerry Massey

SAMPLE CIRCULAR

Ashok Textile and Cloth Mill Ltd.
Vadodara, Gujrat

No. B/8/38 Date: 22 April, 2013

It has come to the notice of directors that the policy of selling company products to employees at 50% discount is misused. Some of the employees bring their friends and relatives to factory premises and they purchase goods in the name of the employee concerned. There are also complaints of sale of goods to retailers. This affects our relationship with our stockists and dealers in an adverse way.

For the time being, the policy of sale of goods to employees at amazingly lower rate of 50% discount will not be discontinued. However, this policy w.e.f. May 1, 2013 will be subject to a monthly limit of Rs.2,000. To implement this policy every employee will be issued a Purchase Card which will record the amount of purchases. The purchases falling below Rs.2,000 can be carried forward to the next month, not beyond that.

Shiv Anand
Managing Director.

SPECIMEN OF OFFICE NOTICE

All officials, whose salary is taxable, are informed that they shall fill the Income Tax forms by 15th of February. They are further required to furnish the proof of their savings or donations entitled for tax rebate or deductions before March 25, 2013.

This order may be treated as most urgent, failing which concerned officials' salary statement will not be issued and his pay of March, 2013 will be withheld.

Sudesh Sharma
Managing Director

Copy to: Notice Board, All Departments.

SAMPLE E-MAIL MESSAGES

1

To GinaPorter@GlobalComms.co.uk
From shirley@shirleytaylor.com (Shirley Taylor)
Date 22.10.04 9.55
Subject Lunch 28 October

Hello Gina

Informal greeting

Contractions are OK

This is just a reminder that I'm looking forward to meeting you for lunch next Friday 28th. I am glad you've arranged for Jenny Chew to join us too. Can I suggest 12.30 at Hemingways on Orchard Road? I hear this new restaurant is fabulous. My treat of course. Please confirm.

Informal, chatty style where appropriate

Shirley

No formal closing

35

To	MandyWilson@Pioneer.co.sg
From	shirley@shirleytaylor.com (Shirley Taylor)
Date	14.8.04 14:30
Subject	Customer Services Training

This style is slightly less informal

Dear Mandy

We are considering sending some of our staff on a training course on Customer Services. Do you have a suitable course available within the next few months? If so please let me have the dates and times plus costs.

Short sentences, no padding!

If there isn't a regular Pioneer course scheduled, can you tailor-make a course specially for our staff? We could hold it in our conference room.

Short paragraphs

Perhaps we can arrange to meet to discuss this - are you free next Friday 20 August at 11 am? I could come over to you, or you could come over to my office. Just let me know.

Write in a casual style as if you are speaking

Shirley Taylor
Manager
ST Training and Consultancy
Tel: +65 64726076 Fax: +65 63392710
Mobile: +65 96355907

EXAMPLE OF FORMAL REPORT

Company's name →

AURORA HOLDINGS

Report Title (be specific) →

REPORT ON COMPLAINTS ABOUT POOR SERVICE AND FOOD PROVIDED IN THE STAFF RESTAURANT

Who asked for the report ?
What was requested?
When was it requested? →

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To investigate complaints about poor service and food provided in the staff restaurant and to make recommendations, as requested by Mr. Michael Lee, Administration Director, on 14 April 2013.

List the steps take to gather the information(past tense). →

PROCEDURE

1. An interview was held with Mrs. Alice Newton, Restaurant Manager, on 15 April 2013.

2. Interviews were held with a cross-section of staff(48) who used the restaurant between 15 and 20 April.

Present the information obtained through each step mentioned in "Procedure" →

FINDINGS

1. INTERVIEW WITH RESTAURANT MANAGER

1.1 STAFFING

Mrs. Newton has 3 full-time assistants. The youngest, Miss Lily Ng, attends day-release classes at South point College on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. She works 1400 – 1700 on those days.

1.2 EQUIPMENT

A schedule of current equipment and their year of purchase is attached. No problems were reported. However, Mrs. Newton said that additional equipment would be useful.

1 microwave oven
1 slow cooker
1 rice cooker

Use numbered points and sub-headings for clarity. →

2. INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF

20 staff from the 1200-1300 lunch sitting were interviewed, and 28 from the 1300-1400 sitting.

2.1 CHOICE

The food available is shown on the attached schedule. 60% of the staff interviewed said they would prefer some cold meals to be provided. They said they may make alternative lunch arrangements if the variety did not improve.

2.2 QUEUEING

70% of staff took lunch from 1200 to 1300 hours as opposed to 30% from 1300 to 1400. This resulted in large queues forming at the first lunch sitting.

What are the logical implications from the 'Findings'?

CONCLUSIONS

1. There are insufficient number of assistants to cope with the preparation of food in the morning and with the popular first lunch sitting.
2. The present equipment is insufficient.
3. The selection of meals is not wide enough to cater to staff requirements.
4. The ratio of staff to each sitting is not balanced.

What action do you suggest should be taken, based on Findings and Conclusions?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A new assistant should be recruited to work 0900-1400 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
2. Mrs Newton should be asked to look into prices and availability of the new equipment required.
3. Mrs. Newton should be asked to devise some new dishes which also include cold choices.
4. The number of staff attending each sitting should be reviewed so that a more even balance can be achieved.

Leave a space for the writer to sign.

Name and title of writer

TAN LAY HONG(Miss)
Business Administration Officer

Date

24 April 2013

Components of a formal proposal :

Part	Description
1. Title of the proposal	-
2. Statement of Need	A statement of why the proposal is necessary.
3. Project Profile	How the proposal will be implemented and evaluated, with deadlines for different stages.
4. Budget	Financial description of the project and explanation of costs.
5. Credibility (Ability to Deliver)	History and structure of the proposing organization; its primary activities, audiences and services.
6. Conclusion	Summary of the main points of the proposal. The next step.

A solicited proposal in letter format

JWS Remodeling Solutions
1701 Lake Street, Traverse City, Michigan 49685
(231) 946-8845. Fax : (213) 946-8846. E-mail: jws@worldnet.att.net

April 13

40

Mr. Daniel Yurgren
Data Dimensions
15 Honeysuckle Lane
Travers City, Michigan 49686

Dear Mr. Yurgren:

Subject : Proposal for Home Office Construction

Acknowledges scope of project

JWS Remodeling Solutions would be happy to convert your existing living room area into a home office according to the specifications discussed during our March 14 meeting. We can schedule the project for the week beginning May 11, 2013 (two weeks from today). The project will take roughly three weeks to complete.

INTRODUCTION :

Our construction approach is unique. We provide a full staff of licensed trades people and schedule our projects so that when one trade finishes, the next trade is ready to begin. To expedite this project, as you requested, we have agreed to overlap several trades whose work can be done concurrently.

Uses introduction to grab the reader's attention with expedited completion date - a key selling point

PROJECT PROFILE :

41

JWS Remodeling Solutions will provide the following work :

- Partition and finish walls to create two separate storage closets at north end of living room with access through two 3'0" six panel door units. Replace all disturbed sheetrock.
- Provide all rough and finished electrical fittings, using recessed lighting in the ceiling and appropriate single pole switches and duplex outlets.
- Paint or finish all surfaces/ trim to match specs used throughout house.
- The work does not include custom office cabinetry, carpeting, or phone or cable wiring. We would be happy to bid on these projects in the future.

Uses body to explain how company will expedite scheduled outline approach, and provide work place and on the next page list qualifications and state costs.

Specifies exactly what contractor will and won't do

BUDGET :

The total cost for this project is $6,800, broken down as follows :

Materials and supplies	$ 3,300
Labor	$ 2,700
Overhead	$ 800
Total	$ 6,800

Justifies cost by providing detail

An initial payment of $3,800 is due upon acceptance of this proposal. The remaining $3,000 is due upon completion of the work.

42

CREDIBILITY :

JSW Remodeling Solutions has been in business in the Michigan area for over 17 years. We have a strong reputation for being a quality builder. We take great pride in our work and we treat all projects with the same high-level attention, regardless of their size or scope. Out trades people are all licensed, insured professionals with years of experience in their respective crafts. Enclosed is a copy of our company brochure discussing our qualifications in greater detail, along with a current client list. Please contact any of the names on this list for references.

Increases desire by highlighting qualifications

CONCLUSION :

If you would like to have JWS Remodeling solutions complete this work, please sign this letter and return it to us with your deposit in the enclosed envelope. We currently anticipate no construction delays, since the materials needed for your job are in stock and our staff of qualified workers is available during the period mentioned. If you have any questions regarding the terms of this proposal, please call me.

Uses brief closing to emphasize fast turnaround and immediate call for action.

43

Sincerely ,

Jardan W. Spurrier
President

Enclosures

Accepted by :

Makes letter a binding contract, if signed.

____
Daniel Yourgren

____
Date

Sample Agenda

Company name and Committee name	AURORA HOLDINGS pic SOCIAL CLUB
Notice states place, day, Date and time of meeting	A meeting of the Sports and Social Club will be held in the Conference Suite A on Friday 14 May 200- at 1800
Use the heading AGENDA	AGENDA
These three items of ordinary Business are included on every Agenda (some committees will also include 'Correspondence')	1. Apologies for absence 2. Minutes of last meeting 3. Matters arising
Special business is listed Separately (any official Reports come first)	4. Chairman's Report 5. Football Results and Matches (Frank Jones) 6. New Keep-Fit Classes (Carol Chen) 7. Purchase of Tennis Equipment (Aileen Forster) 8. Annual Dinner and Dance
Finish all agendas with these final two items of ordinary business	9. Any other business 10. Date of next meeting
	M.M. Mohanty **Secretary**
Don't forget reference and date	CE/ST 7 May 200-

Minutes

Main heading includes meeting, place, day, date and time

List those present in alphabetical order with Chairman first

This separate ACTION column is a popular way of displaying minutes

The minutes must be corrected if necessary before they can be signed

AURORA HOLDINGS pic

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB
HELD IN CONFERENCE SUITE A ON FRIDAY 14 MAY 200- AT 1800

PRESENT

Mr. Chris Evans (Chairman)
Miss Carol Chen
Miss Aileen Forster
Mr Frank Jones
Miss Maxine Street
Mrs Wendy Williams

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Chairman asked members to correct an error in item 3.1 where The figure £ 1,200 should read £ 12,0000. After this correction the Minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

Break down items if appropriate into separate headings

Insert initials or full names in the ACTION column

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman pointed out that membership had fallen by 20% over the last 6 months. It was felt that this was due largely to lack of publicity during the present year, and also because new employees were not sure how to join. Variosu decisions were reached :

4.1 CIRCULAR TO STAFF

A letter would be sent to al employees who were not members of the Club outlining its aims and activities. A tear-off slip would be included for interested employees to indicate their areas of interest. CE

4.2 SOCIAL EVENING

A social evening with refreshments would be organised specifically for non-members. Carol Chen agreed to make arrangements. CE

46

5. FOOTBALL RESULTS AND MATCHES

5.1 Frank jones reported on the results of the 3 football Matches during April.

Team A v Victory Enterprises	12 April	Won 4-3
Team B v Pentagon Supplies	19 April	Lost 3-2
Team A v Ward Hi-Tech	26 April	Won 5-2

Include the page number at the top left

2.

5.2 Future matches were schedule to be :

Team A v Team B	18 May	1500	Home
Team A v Connolly Industries	25 May	1500	Away

6. NEW KEEP FIT CLASSES

Carol Chen proposed that Keep Fit classes should be held.
Sharon Warner from the Fun N Fitness Gym had agreed to conduct such classes on the Company's premises every Wednesday evening 1800-1900.

A discussion was held on a suitable room for the classes, and it was agreed that the Training Office would be suitable. Carol would circulate a notice to all staff announcing the first Keep class on Wednesday 22 May. CC

7. PURCHASE OF TENNIS EQUIPMENT

Aileen Forster reported that the in-house tennis tournament would start on Monday 4 July. New nets and balls were needed and the tennis courts needed repairing. It was agreed that Aileen should make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible. AF

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in Conference Suite A on Thursday 24 June 2007 at 1800.

Leave a space for Chairman to sign and date at the next meeting

.... (Chairman)

.... (Date)

CE / ST
16 May 2007

People also meet for social reasons:

- They need to belong.
- They need to achieve and make an impact.
- They need to communicate, build and share a common reality.

BUSINESS MEETINGS

Planning a Meeting

In planning a meeting, remember that for the task needs to be met, the social needs must be met and for the social needs to be met, the task needs must be met. Is it possible to satisfy both? Yes! Just plan for both the meeting content and the meeting process. The meeting content will address task needs while the meeting process attends to social needs. Paying attention to the process ensures that tasks get done.

Be Specific

Most people agree that a productive meeting will follow an agenda. The most productive meetings, however, are the ones in which, even before considering the items on the agenda, attendees are clear about the overarching objective of the meeting. A clear objective provides clear direction for the meeting. For even greater clarity, the objective can be stated in terms of desired results or outcomes. An

Build Shared Clarity

Understand the power of clarity and take responsibility for it in your meetings. To do that, consider first what you can do if you are in charge of the meeting. The following steps will help.

- Consider why you want people to meet. Ask yourself what you will accomplish face-to-face (or via conference call) that you would not accomplish otherwise. This should help you understand the objective of the meeting (but remember that you aren't the only one in need of clarity). Is it for information sharing, relationship building, decision-making, problem solving or design?
- After you know the objective of the meeting, think about the outcomes for the meeting and record at least two: (a) What is your perfect outcome? (b) What is your minimum acceptable outcome?
- Validate the objective and outcomes to the best of your ability. Can you reasonably expect this group to produce your outcome in the time allotted? What can be achieved? What preparation is required? Include others in this validation process if it will help you achieve clarity.
- Start the meeting by clearly stating the objective and outcomes. Make sure all the attendees understand the objective and are willing to work towards it.

When it's not 'your' meeting, it is a little trickier to be personally responsible for a clear objective and outcome of the meeting, but you can still do it. If you are a subordinate, guest or a participant in a different capacity, consider some of the following approaches: Ask for the objective and outcomes of the meeting when you are first invited. Let your host know that you take the invitation seriously, that you view meetings as important work and that you wish to be prepared to help produce the desired result.

- If you show up for a meeting without knowing the objective and outcomes in advance, ask what these are as the meeting gets underway. Doing this in a supportive manner early in the meeting shows that you are there to contribute actively. It will also help the meeting leader because clarity of purpose, shared by all the participants, is the most powerful way to ensure the meeting is successful.
- Make every meeting 'your' meeting by valuing your time and the contribution you can make.

outcome is a clear description of what you will deliver by the end of the meeting. For instance:

Objective: Finalize budget recommendation

Outcome: Finalize departmental fiscal year budget for corporate budget review

Create an Agenda

An agenda is an outline of things to be discussed at the meeting, along with a time frame for each item. To create your agenda, first look to the meeting objective, since your agenda is a path to achieving it. Then look to the participants since they will also have ideas about what is important. Two important tips about the agenda are:

- Prioritize agenda items in terms of importance to most participants.
- Assign realistic amounts of time to each agenda item.

Prepare in Advance

Take the time to prepare for the meeting. This may take only a few minutes to collect your thoughts and jot them down or it may take hours for a formal presentation. Advance preparation allows the meeting to move forward smoothly, eliminating wasted time and the impression that the meeting was unproductive.

Meeting Process

Who will Participate?

On a small project team or task force, it will be easy to determine who should participate in meetings. However, in other situations, it is not always a clear choice. These questions provide a useful filter for choosing participants:

- Whose inputs do we need?
- Who is needed to make a decision?
- Whose consent do we need to move forward?

Answers to these questions will help determine who needs to attend the meeting or even whether the meeting needs to be held or not. Many meetings are held whether or not key participants are available. These meetings have then to be held again when all participants are present. Save time by choosing participants appropriately and scheduling meetings to accommodate key participants' calendars.

What should be the Discussion-management Process?

Planning for dis-cussion management or facilitation is a critical skill for leaders wishing to conduct great meetings. This is of overwhelming importance for participants' satisfaction. Start with clarity about who is to run the meeting and whether the leader will also act as the facilitator. The default choice—that the group leader or manager runs the meeting and calls on others to talk—is not necessarily the best choice for all meetings. A more participative format allows for the manager or leader to set the meeting objective and then take a seat with the members while another team member actually facilitates the discussion. This format encourages all members to participate.

Plan, Discuss and Assign Roles

At least the following four important roles are played in any well-conducted meeting:

- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Leader
- Participant

Some add a fifth role, the timekeeper.

Different individuals can play each of these roles or one person can play all of them. But they all have to be accounted for if the meeting is to flow well and produce results. Planning for these roles can be an ongoing process. Determining role assignments in the beginning engages everybody in the process and validates the expectations and contributions.

Pre- and Post-meeting Communication

The best way to create commitment to and participation in meetings is to be clear about why you are meeting. Involve as many potential attendees as possible in planning either the content or the process of the meeting. Before the meeting, be sure to consider the following:

- advance agenda
- participants
- time and place
- preparation of materials
- list of audio/visual equipment available to presenters
- requests for any special needs

Capturing and reporting key outcomes of the meeting are critical for follow-up activities. Be sure to capture these essential and basic items in your meeting notes:

- decisions
- action items
- open issues

Once the meeting is concluded, arrange for the recorder's notes to be posted or distributed to all participants. Post-meeting communication provides form and closure both to participants' contributions and their social needs.

How to Lead Effective Meetings

The leader of the meeting has one basic goal—to accomplish the objectives of the meeting. The following sequential guidelines will be a useful tool if you are presiding over a meeting.

Starting Time

Start the meeting on time. Nothing says more about the management than starting a meeting at the scheduled time. It has been commonly observed that starting a meeting at the time specified in the agenda immediately serves as an excellent attention-getting device and sends a right signal about the level of significance of the concerned meeting and the seriousness of the agenda.

Opening Remarks

Once you have the participants' attention, open the meeting with appropriate remarks and also make some introductory remarks about the objectives of the meeting to set the ball rolling.

- Establish the right tone—usually serious and positive.
- Be sure to identify any participants unknown to the group so that every member knows each other well.
- Discuss the agenda of the meeting in general, pointing out some background to the situation and the specific objectives of the meeting.
- Identify, if any, time constraints not already expressed in the agenda—for example, when the meeting must end, etc.

Getting Down to Business

Once you are done with the opening remarks, move to the first item on the agenda. Be extremely careful in not allowing the opening remarks to serve as a springboard to others in the meeting to go off the track.

Participation

It is imperative to have a balanced participation in the meeting from all the members. A common observation has been that some participants talk too much while others talk too little. Effective meeting leadership must ensure that a few members of the group do not dominate the discussion at the expense of their less-assertive colleagues. A practical approach would be to put some direct questions to the quiet ones, specifically soliciting their comments, remarks or advice instead of trying to prevent the more talkative participants from speaking.

Agenda

Use your agenda to keep the discussion on track. If the discussion starts to drift from the item being considered, remind the members of the specific agenda items and try and steer them back to the main issue. If an item in the agenda is taking more time than initially planned, do not try to prematurely stop the discussion, because the participants may feel suffocated. If there is a substantial need for an item to be discussed in detail further, think about holding another meeting addressed to that item.

Closing

Close the meeting at the appropriate time once you have covered the items on the agenda. Meetings sometimes continue aimlessly after the items have been covered, and it is embarrassing to have someone inquire, 'Is the meeting over?' Before you close the meeting, signal the participants by asking for any final comments or questions. Offer a summary of what has been accomplished at the meeting. Tell the participants that the minutes will be sent to them shortly. Finally, be sure to thank the group members for their time and consideration.

Strategic Issues Related to Effective Meetings

To Meet or not to Meet

Meeting when it is not necessary is a waste of time. Many weekly meetings can be eliminated if a decision is taken to meet only when it is absolutely necessary. Some tips for deciding if a meeting is worth your time are given below:

Has a goal been set for the meeting? Is there a purpose for meeting, or a goal to achieve? Every meeting should have an objective and if the one you have been asked to attend does not, consider recommending that a memo or e-mail be sent instead.

Has an agenda been created ahead of time? An agenda is the basis for an effective meeting. Creating and distributing the meeting agenda ahead of the meeting gives participants an opportunity to prepare for it. Having an agenda for a meeting also focusses the discussion and helps the group stay on track.

Will the appropriate people be attending? If the appropriate people are not present, important decisions get put on hold. It will also take time to update key individuals on what took place in the meeting they missed. It is better to put the meeting on hold until all the required people are in the room.

Can the information be covered in an e-mail or memo? The purpose of most meetings is sharing information and updating others. If possible, make an effort to substitute these types of meetings with an e-mail or memo. Simply send an e-mail to all the people who would have attended the meeting. This will save everyone time; they will still be up-to-date on what is happening and will be grateful for having one less meeting to attend that week.

Non-verbals in Meetings

Have you ever been to a meeting in which even though the leader said he/she wanted high participation, the leader stood at the head of the table and 'talked at' the participants seated silently down both sides? Chances are you have. It is unfortunate, but true—leaders who do not plan for real participation will not get it, no matter what they say they want. Standing at the end of a long table sends a strong non-verbal message: Do not talk, listen. It is a good setup if you want to discourage participation. Actions speak louder than words. Applying this maxim to management meetings requires that you take careful stock of your meeting room and where people will sit. How much does it matter? In his book *Silent Messages*, Albert Mehrabian reports the percentage of a message communicated through our different communication channels in this way:

- Words we say: 7%
- Tone of voice: 38%
- Body language: 55%

Think of the last time you were with someone who stood with his arms crossed, tapping his foot and looking annoyed, who then huffed, 'I'm fine.' Which clues did you believe—the words or the body language and tone of voice? Physical, non-verbal messages often send a much louder message than spoken words.

Control or Collaboration?

There are ways to deliberately convey non-verbal messages. When you are the leader and you need to maintain control of a meeting:

- Conduct the meeting yourself to signal, 'I am in charge.'
- Stand while others are sitting to signal, 'I have the floor.'
- Sit at the head of the table to signal, 'I am in charge.'

If you want a highly participative, collaborative meeting:

- Ask a team member or facilitator to conduct the meeting to signal, 'Let's share leadership.'
- Sit while others are sitting to signal, 'I'm with you.'
- Sit on one side of the table instead of at the head, to signal, 'I'm with you.'

What if You Expect Confrontation?

The most confrontational position you can assume is to stand or sit directly across from another. You can increase or decrease feelings of confrontation by purposely

MODULE 3

How are communication Skills Related to Soft Skills ?

Hard skills are necessary to do a job competently and efficiently. They are acquired through professional education and on the job experience.

Soft skills are skills necessary to interact effectively with people inside as well as outside a business organization.

Importance of Soft Skills :
Business organizations used to have a strongly hierarchical structure. This model discouraged initiative, involvement and leadership qualities. Today, therefore, the emphasis is on team effort rather than one-man leadership. To encourage good team-playing, certain skills related to psychological and emotional aspects of individuals need to be developed. These skills determine a person's ability to fit into a business organization or a project team, and to practise flexibility in collaborating with others in meeting the changing needs of an organization.

Thus 'soft skills' refer to a cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language and attitudes of friendliness. They include competencies in leadership, in working in a team, in articulateness, assertiveness, basic etiquette, and in 'lateral thinking'.

Soft skills and communication skills are closely related. Soft skills help the development of communication skills; communication skills can also develop desirable attitudes which form a part of soft skills. The two sets of skills are interdependent, and they need to be developed together.

The important soft skills that every executive needs to master are :

1. *Communication skills* (ability to listen activity and present clearly and confident ability to exhibit proper body language)

2. *Interpersonal skills* (for human relations team-building social networking).

3. *Emotional intelligence* (ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and relationships)

4. *Time & stress management* (analysis of the use of time and setting of priorities)

5. *Creative thinking*(reduction of stress through positive attitude and mind-composing techniques) (looking at problems from an unconventional point of view and generating innovative ideas.

6. *Conflict Resolution Skills* (ability to negotiate towards a win-win- solution)

It is obvious from the above that communication skills form the central core of soft skills and serve as the expression point of the other soft skills.

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Business etiquette refers to conventional rules of social behavior or professional conductor; they are unwritten rules which act as norms to be observed by all professionals who work as a team in a particular company or department.

Each business house has its business protocols which an employee learns by working in that environment and by observing others. There are, however, general rules of business etiquette based on the fundamental principles of organizational behavior.

The more important business etiquette rules related to:

1. Introductions
2. Telephone calls
3. Business Dining
4. Interaction with foreign clients
5. Inter organization Business Etiquette

1. **Introducing yourself:** As a norm of business etiquette and the first step towards cordial business transactions, people greet each other by starting their full name and position at the very outset. Do not use any honorific words such as Sri, Smt., Mr. Mrs, etc before your name. However, if it is a degree earned by you, such as Ph. D., you may use Dr. before your name.

A handshake is done immediately after introduction. As a visitor, you can first offer you hand. As a winning form of non-verbal communication, handshakes must be accompanied by eye contact and a gentle smile.

2. **Introducing other persons:** Normally, the senior-most person among the visitors of the host team introduces the other persons at a business meeting. First, visitors are introduced to the host; a junior is introduced to a senior, using the polite form "May I introduce……"

3. **Telephone calls:** In telephonic conversation, the way we receive, respond, speak or hang up is often as important as the message we communicate.
   Before initiating a call, jot down the purpose of the call and the exact message you want to convey.
   - Keep a writing pad and pen ready at hand.
   - Begin first with what is important for your receiver. Talk about your interests later.
   - Keep the duration of the conversation as short as possible.

   - Beginning a call: Greet the receptionist with a "Good Morning", tell her you name and the name of your organization, and then mention whom you want to speak to.
   - If the telephone line suddenly gets disconnected, the person who originally initiated the call should redial immediately and say, "Sorry, the call got disconnected".
   - If the receiver has to suspend your call for attending to something else, it is the duty of the receiver to resume the call and offer some pleasant explanation.
   - Make your business calls polite by using polite expressions such as "please" and "Thank you".
   - Always use the interrogative form for making a request – "Could I …" "May I….."
   - Always answer a call by the third ring.

4. **Business Dining:** Business meals are taken with colleagues or clients or consultants. It is common practice to negotiate business at lunch or dinner. Such business occasions are, in fact, business activities; hence you must act with a sense of responsibility.

(a) **As a host:** Invite the guest personally or over telephone. However confirm the date, time and place in writing. If the vanue is new for the guest, help him/her by giving directions. Apprise the invitee of your guest list.

Receive the guest(s) personally outside the dining hall.

(b) **As a Guest:** You should stick to your own dietary preferences. If you are a tea- totaller, politely decline the offer to drink –Say "Thanks, I would like to have some fresh lime soda (or whatever be your choice)".

Eating with the hand in India is just fine. But if you are using knife and fork, then hold the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right hand. When not in use, put both knife and fork together in either the 'four O' Clock' or 'six O' Clock' position on your plate.

Get the waiter's attention by establishing eye contact and turning a little towards him or by saying "Excuse me…."

5. **With Foreign Clients:** Respect the foreign client's religious beliefs and cultural needs.
   - Nothing pleases foreigners more than speaking to them in their own language. Try to learn and use some words of greeting in the visitor's language.
   - Prepare documents in English as well as the foreign visitor's language.

6. Company to Company Etiquette:

Each manager is his/her company's image-builder. (S)he should always try to conduct himself/herself as a representative of the company.

- Show your loyalty by speaking well of your company, by defending your colleague's action, and by never criticizing your company before your colleagues from other companies.
- Keep confidential materials in as few hands as possible.
- Handle the poorest of customers well.
- Respect hierarchies. Good manners breed good understanding and mutual respect necessary for good business relations.

60

GROUP DISCUSSION

I) What is Group Discussion?

'Group Discussion' is a non-formal, friendly discussion in which all the members comprising the group (usually between 8 and 12) are expected to participate, It is used as a means to assess one's over-all personality. It proceeds by means of a natural, friendly, spontaneous and purposive conversation between the candidates for a job on an interesting but often controversial topic of current importance. The topic is given at the appointed hour, and no time is given for planning- hence the conversation that follows has to be spontaneous, not-pre-planned. Within a time- limit of 20-30 minutes, the abilities of the members of the group arc measured in an unobtrusive manner by the examiner who does not actively participate in the discussion.

Unlike a formal debate where one is supposed to speak only for or against the motion, one by one, and within a definite time-limit allotted by the President, a group discussion follows an informal approach. The participants are free to speak in favour of or against the topic, to be neutral, or to explain the merits or demerits.

II) Parameters of evaluation

The selector evaluates the candidates' performance in a group discussion session on the following parameters:

1) Power of expression
2) Knowledge of the topic
3) Social adaptability
4) Flexibility
5) Liveliness
6) Confidence and courage of conviction
7) Extent of participation
8) Ability to exert influence on the group

III) How to prepare:

1) First and foremost, you must try to create ~111 extensive knowledge base by reading newspapers and magazines and listening to talks on the radio and television.
2) Secondly, ·adopt an analytical way of thinking. Note down points in favour of and against an issue, and then come to a decision regarding your stand.

3) Finally, develop the art of discussion. This involves accurate expression of your ideas using appropriate language, and your display of sensitivity to the other members of the group.

IV) While – discussion' Tips:

1. Make an attempt at initiating the discussion. Even if you could not be the first speaker, try to get an opportunity as early as possible. It is absolutely essential that you talk and express your views. Further, you must talk as much as possible, effectively and sensibly, to impress others.
2. Make original points and back them with substantial reasons.
3. If some other member has already made the point you wanted to make, do not worry. Even then, you can either support or oppose the point by sound reasoning, or add some additional information that might have been left out.
4. Listen to the other participants patiently and attentively, and make a mental note of the points they make. If their points are good, readily accept them and advance your reasons, If you find their arguments unacceptable, offer your arguments to refute them.
5. As soon as you find your argument has been refuted by someone else, you must try to justify your point of view of bringing in fresh ideas or arguments.
6. Show flexibility ill your views. Don't hesitate to accept criticism. If someone points to flaws in your argument, do not feel offended or insulted. Instead, change your original opinion willingly, if proved wrong.
7. Pre considerate to the feelings of the others ill the group. A friendly discussion requires co-operation, not confrontation. You need not shout at others. You must use polite language throughout. Your helpful, accommodative and encouraging attitude will surely be appreciated by the evaluator.
8. Pre an active and interested participant. Remain cheerful, smiling, uud alive to whatever is going on in the group.
9. While speaking, address the whole group making eye-contact with each participant in turn.

V) Some Don'ts

1. Don 't try to monopolize the discussion.
2. Don't interrupt a participant in the middle of an argument
3. Don't make fun of any participant even if his arguments are illogical.
4. Don't engage yourself in sub-group conversations.
5. Avoid being frivolous and expressing irrelevant ideas.
6. Don't get emotional and criticize others without valid arguments.

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

1	Power of expression	Is (s)he able to express ideas clearly fluently and logically ?
2	Knowledge of the topic :	Has (s)he displayed a wide range of ideas and analytical thinking ?
3	Social adaptability :	(i) Is (s)he co-operative ? (ii) Does (s)he own mistakes readily ? (iii) Can (s)he accept criticism gracefully (iv) Does (s)he have consideration for the feelings of others ?
4	Flexibility :	Has (s)he shown interest in the topic
5	Liveliness :	(i) Has (s)he shown interest in the topic and the other members of the group ? (ii) Does (s)he have the urge to contribute willingly ? (iii) Does (s)he possess a cheerful temperament ?
6	Confidence and courage :	(i) Does (s)he have faith in his/her ability ? (ii) Can (s)he face bullying courageously ? (iii) Does (s)he have the courage of conviction ?
7	Extent of participation :	How often, how much, and with what effect has (s)he spoken ?
8	Influence on the Group :	What impression has (s)he created on others ? Is (s)he able to motivate others and sell his/her ideas to them ?

From 'Business Communication Today' by Bovée & others

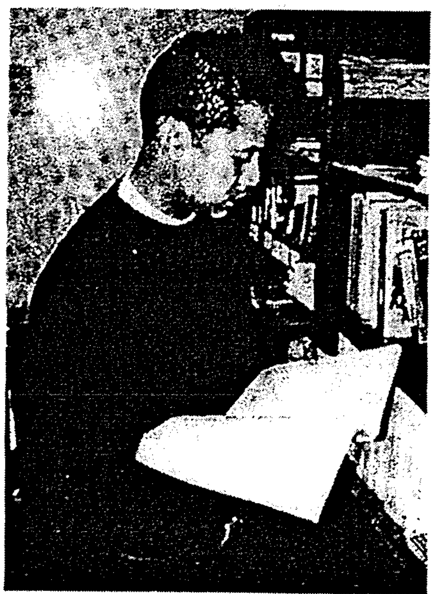
Just as written messages need planning, employment interviews need preparation.

PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

Learning Objective 3

List six tasks you need to complete to prepare for a successful job interview

For a successful interview, preparation is mandatory. As Jodi DeLeon points out, the best way to prepare for a job interview is to think about the job itself and prepare. It's perfectly normal to feel a little anxious before an interview. But good preparation will help you perform well. Be sure to consider any cultural differences when preparing for interviews, and base your approach on what your audience expects. The advice in this chapter is most appropriate for companies and employers in the United States and Canada. Before the interview, learn about the organization, think ahead about questions, bolster your confidence, polish your interview style, plan to look good, and be ready when you arrive.



In his efforts to find work, Mark Calimlim gets help from the Career Center at Syracuse University.

Learn About the Organization

When planning your employment search, you probably already researched the companies you sent your résumé to. But now that you've been invited for an interview, you'll want to fine-tune your research and brush up on the facts you've collected (see Table 18.2). You can review Chapter 10 for ideas on where to look for information.

Today's companies expect serious candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the company's operations, its market, and its strategic and tactical problems.[14] Learning about the organization and the job enables you to show the interviewer just how you will meet the organization's particular needs. With a little research, for instance, you would discover that Microsoft plans on investing heavily in the technical and marketing support of software developers as well as making things simpler for all users and system administrators.[15] Knowing these facts might help you pinpoint aspects

Best of the Web

Planning for a Successful Interview

How can you practice for a job interview? What are some questions that you might be asked, and how should you respond? What questions are you not obligated to answer? Job-interview.net provides mock interviews based on actual job openings. It provides job descriptions, questions and answers for specific careers and jobs, and links to company guides and annual reports. You'll find a step-by-step plan that outlines key job requirements, lists practice interview questions, and helps you put together practice interviews. The site offers tips on the keywords to look for in a job description, which will help you narrow your search and anticipate the questions you might be asked on your first or next job interview.

www.job-interview.net

64