LESSON 01

COMMUNICATION

Outline:

Why we Study Business Communication? What is Communication?

Importance

Advantages of Communication in your Career Communication & Global Market

Communication at Workplace

Why we Study Business Communication?

You may say that communication is important; you spend a lot of time doing it and you’re pretty good at communicating. After all, you talk to people, write notes, read books, and get along with other people which make you informed already. Why should you study communication?”

The apparent simplicity of communication is deceptive. Just because we all communicate every day does not make us good communicators. Just because some aspects of effective communication are based on common sense; it does not mean common sense alone is enough. Skilled communicators draw on an extensive and complex body of knowledge, including semantics (the study of word choice according to their meaning), linguistics (the study of language), rhetoric (the study of writing and speaking effectively), psychology, sociology, graphic design, and even computer science. You will explore and apply the scholarship and research from all of these fields in your study of communication.

“Why then,” you may well ask finally, “study business communication specifically? Communication is communication: I’ve taken plenty of English courses and communicated in every one of my other courses.”

Good communication does, in fact, cross disciplines; correct grammar and audible speaking, for
example, are as necessary in a geography class as they are in a business communication class.
There are, however, at least five ways in which what you will learn that how this course differs
from what you have learned, or will learn, in your other classes. First, the subject matter is
different: here you will get a chance to practice communicating with concepts and techniques
from areas such as accounting, finance, and marketing. Secondly the forms are also different: you
will, for example, practice writing memos, letters and business reports - not just term papers,
exams and essays. Thirdly, in this class you will have a chance to practice your oral presentation
skills, which - according to various studies - you will probably be using extensively in the
business world. Fourthly, you may learn a slightly different style; in general, business
communication is more objective, systematic, and concise than creative or personal
communication. Finally, perhaps the most important difference is that, you will learn to persuade
people to accomplish your desired results.

What is Communication?

I have been discussing how important communication will be for your success in business. What you might be asked, what does the term communication mean? It is certainly hard to define because it has come to mean practically anything.

Definition of Communication

The word communication means the act or process of giving or exchanging of information,
signals or messages as by talk, gestures or writing. Technically speaking, in the act of

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communication, we make opinions, feelings, information, etc. known or understood by others through speech, writing or bodily movement.

Why do we Communicate?

The purpose of any given communication may be:

a) To initiate some action;

b) To impart information, ideas, attitudes, beliefs or feelings;

c) To establish, acknowledge or maintain links or relations with other people.

Initiating Action

Initiating action may be achieved by two basic categories of communication.

a) Expressing Needs and Requirements.

This can range from a baby’s cry - or even the bleep of an alarm clock - to an adult’s more
precious expression of needs and wants. In a business organization, it would include briefings,
instructions and procedure manuals. This will only be effective where the other person is willing
to satisfy the needs.

b) Persuading and Motivating Others

It means to carry out the desired course of action, in other words, giving them a reason (other than one’s own want or need) to perform that action. Persuasion of this kind is likely to be a major element in marketing and sales: a sales reply cannot simply ask a customer to buy the product because she, the sale rep, needs success. She must show that there are benefits to the consumer, which will make the purchase worthwhile.

Imparting Information

Imparting information, ideas, attitudes, beliefs and feelings may have any number of specific
purposes.

Creating awareness

Creating understanding
Persuading others
Influencing others

Information gathering is a constant activity of human beings. We receive a great deal of data and information in our daily lives, only some of which we seek or consciously absorb. Think about these: news bulletins, books, bank statements, business information, gossip, thing people tell you, things you ask them. This list is endless.

Remember that other people may be seeking information in the messages you ‘send’ (and in the
tone of your voice and other indications of what is ‘between the lines’). This information may or
may not be something you wish to communicate: you need to be aware of it before your
listener/reader.

Establishing Relations

Establishing, acknowledging and maintaining relations with other people are vital functions of communication.

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Importance

Communicating effectively in speaking and writing is useful in all areas of business, such as management, technical, clerical, and social positions as we have just seen.

The ability to communicate well has always given advantages to those who possess it.
Communication has a rich history. The ancient world, both the East and the West, depended on
oral communication. In ancient Greece and Rome, it was necessary to communicate when dealing
with matters in assemblies and the courts. During the Medieval and Renaissance Periods, the oral
tradition progressed. As writing became more important as a permanent record of
communication, authors and books on written communication principles appeared.

So, we can say that some of today’s principles of writing are a mixture of ancient oral and written
traditions.

Advantages of Communication in your Career

Your success in your career is based on your ability to do well both in written and oral communication.

This ability to communicate effectively is a valuable asset for you.

If your career requires mainly mental rather than manual labor, your progress will depend
on how effectively you communicate your ideas to others who need or should receive
them.

Strong communication skills are required in every job description listed by companies’
advertising positions. Communication is a primary responsibility in many careers, such as
customer relations, labor relations, marketing personnel, public relations, sales, and
teaching.

Communication is also required in government and non-profit organizations. Communication skills play a major role at every level.

Even if your work is mainly with figures, as in the accounting profession, the ability to communicate to those who read your financial reports is necessary.

A Quality for Promotion

As an executive you must have the ability to communicate if you want promotion. Those who
cannot communicate effectively in either oral or written communication, remain in the same
positions.

Many surveys have borne out the idea that effective communication is essential for success and promotion in every field.

Communication & Global Market

The way you communicate both within and outside your own country effects everything you do.
Moreover, your ability to speak and write effectively will also make a difference to your
organization. These qualities will help you to be successful in dealing with international business
people.

Always remember that “To the customer, you are the company”. You’re dealing with customers, clients and the public reflect the company you represent. Important communications can make a difference to your company because each message communicates the essential quality and culture of your company and can either build goodwill or destroy it.

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Messages written to international customers and other business contacts are sensitive to the readers. Your goodwill as well as your organization’s is at stake. So be very careful while communicating with international people.

The ability to communicate effectively with others is repeatedly named as a top quality of a successful business person. You as a business person may be very intelligent; but if you can’t get your message across to the other, you will be thought of as less intelligent than you are because ideas are common, but the ability to clearly communicate ideas to others is rare.

If you are a better communicator, customers and business associates form better impression of
you and your organization. This impression is based solely upon your ability to communicate
both oral and written messages. Effective business message builds or retains goodwill which is a
priceless commodity. Because the exchange of written communication is vital to a businessman
for promoting goodwill, the art of producing effective correspondence will help ensure your
success in business.

So, your ability to communicate is, in fact, your trademark. The memos, letters and reports you write, demonstrate your ability, or lack of ability to communicate. Presenting yourself through your communication will project a favorable image as well as promote successful business both internally and externally.

Besides, as a businessman you are required to run the working of your organization smoothly
because you are to clearly transfer your objectives, policies, method of working etc. to the people
working with you at different levels, so this ability to communicate is very crucial for basic
managerial functions.

As a businessman you will regularly plan design and control affairs to maximize your production
and minimize your cost. Your ability to communicate effectively is going to help you from the
brainstorming step to implementing the objectives that you chalk out for the promotion of your
business.

Another factor that is important to achieve the desired objectives is decision making. Here again
ability to communicate both orally and in writing helps you make the most of yourself and your
organization.

Above all, your ability to communicate helps you in understanding human relationships. Being an effective communicator, you can interact effectively and positively with others. This situation results in an open climate of communication within organization as well as outside it. So, communication is of paramount importance to be successful in the business.

Developing the Right Attitude

“To the customer, you are the company.” Your attitude when dealing with customers, clients, and
the public reflect on the company you represent. Your attitude will reflect your country and your
culture.

Each message communicates the essential quality and culture of your company and can either build goodwill or destroy it.

Doing an honest job enthusiastically and competently helps both the doer and the receiver. Answering even routine inquiries should and can be an interesting challenge.

Preparing Adequately

Most of the people can learn to communicate effectively for business if they are willing to devote whatever effort is necessary to prepare them adequately. In addition to the proper goodwillbuilding attitude, the following qualities are desirable:

Careful, sound judgment when choosing ideas and facts for each message. Patience and understanding, even with unjustly insulting persons.
Integrity, backed up by a valid code of ethics.

Reasonable facility with the English language.

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Applied knowledge of the communication process and principles and of successful methods for sending and receiving messages.

Knowledge of the cultural conventions of your audience.

Cultural Diversity at Work

Today’s workplace is increasingly diverse in age, gender and national origin. Diversity has brought problems to organizations, but it has also brought strengths. The Changing demographics have contributed to change in management styles, making effective communication central to success in carrying out the organization’s business.

Advance in Technology

The internet, e-mail, voice mail, faxes, pagers, and other wireless devices have revolutionized the
way people communicate. Such technological advances are new and better tools to the workplace
but also increase the speed, frequency, and reach of communication. People from opposite ends
of the world can work together effectively, 24 hours a day. Moreover, advancement in
technology makes it possible for more and more people to work away from the office-in cars,
airports, hotels and at home. So it is easier to understand why communication is so important.

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