

AEC-001

# ENGLISH COMMUNICATION (THEORY)



**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**SWAMI VIVEKANAND**

**SUBHARTI UNIVERSITY**

Meerut (National Capital Region Delhi)

# ENGLISH COMMUNICATION

## Theory

AEC-001

Self Learning Material



Directorate of Distance Education

SWAMI VIVEKANAND  
**SUBHARTI**  
UNIVERSITY  
UGC Approved Meerut

*Where Education is a Passion...*

MEERUT-250005

UTTAR PRADESH

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**Assessed by:**

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# **Syllabus**

**B.Com 1st Semester 1<sup>st</sup> year**

**Course Name - English Communication**

**Course Code – AEC- 1/AEC-1P Credits: 4**

## **Objective**

The purpose of commencing English communication skills course is to develop in students fundamental communication skills being integral to personal, social and professional interactions. One of the significant associations among human beings is the ability to share thoughts, emotions and ideas through various means of communication: both verbal and non-verbal. The present course hopes to address most of these aspects through an interactive approach of teaching learning process; focusing on various dimensions of communication skills. The course also focuses on enhancing the ability to handle casual and formed situations in terms of personal and intellectual grooming.

## **Syllabus Modules:**

### **Module 01 – Self Introduction**

- Introducing self
- Speaking about achievements
- Voicing future aspects

### **Module 02 – Non verbal Communication**

- Body Language
- Paralanguage skills

### **Module 03 – Manners and Etiquettes**

- Personal grooming
- Dress code
- Telephone etiquettes
- Intellectual grooming

### **Module 04 – Conversation in Real life situations**

- Meeting people,
- Traveling
- Visiting Places
- Shopping



### **Module 05 – Public Speaking skills**

- Extempore
- Role Play
- Group Discussion

### **Module 06 – Practical Assessment**

- Presentations

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Projecting the first impression
2. Use simple forms of polite expressions to establish basic social contact and to perform everyday functions including making requests and offers, conducting simple phone conversations, asking and telling time, giving simple directions, asking about price, ordering a meal, etc.
3. Students learn to use general, social and professional language.
4. Polishing manners to behave appropriately in social and professional circles.
5. Handling difficulty situations with grace style and professionalism.

### **Assessment Scheme:**

<b>AEC-1 (Theory)</b>	<b>– 50 Marks</b>
<b>AEC-1P (Practical)</b>	<b>– 50 Marks</b>

### **Books Recommended:**

1. An introduction to Professional English and Soft Skills by B. K. Das et al., Cambridge University Press
2. Technical Communication: Principles and Practice, Second Edition by Meenakshi Raman and Sangeeta Sharma, Oxford Publications.
3. Effective Technical Communication by M Ashraf Rizvi, The McGraw-Hill companies.
4. Understanding Body Language by Alan Pease.
5. Communicative Grammar of English by Geoffrey Leech and Ian Svartik.
6. Better English Pronunciation by J.D.O'Connor.
7. English Grammar by Wren and Martin.
8. Strengthen Your English, M. Bhaskaran and D. Horsburgh, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1973

# Self Introduction

Notes

**(Structure)**

- 1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Concept of Self
- 1.4 Perception
- 1.5 Theories of Communication
- 1.6 Types of Communication
- 1.7 Self Development and Communication
- 1.8 Concept of Self-Development
- 1.9 Objectives of Self-Development
- 1.10 Interdependence between Self-Development and Communication
- 1.11 Communication Process and Attitude
- 1.12 Summary
- 1.13 Glossary
- 1.14 Review Questions
- 1.15 Further Readings

## 1.1 Learning Objectives

After studying the chapter, students will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of self;
- Explain the concept of perception;
- Understand the theories of communication;
- Explain the types of communication;
- Appreciate the main objectives of self-development;
- Develop an understanding about relationship exists between self-development and communication;
- Know the impact of positive attitude on the communication process.

## Notes

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**1.2 Introduction**

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Self-concept is everything that an individual thinks and feels about himself. It is the mental picture you have of yourself. It can be positive or negative, accurate or inaccurate. The self is something of which we are immediately aware. It is the warm, central, private region of our life and plays a crucial part in our consciousness (a concept broader than self), in our personality (a concept broader than consciousness), and in our organism (a concept broader than personality). Self-concept is very important in understanding personality patterns. The self-concept is composed of relatively permanent self-assessments, such as personality attributes, knowledge of one's skills and abilities, one's occupation and hobbies, and awareness of one's physical attributes. For example, the statement, "I am lazy" is a self-assessment that contributes to the self-concept. In contrast, the statement "I am tired" would not normally be considered part of someone's self-concept, since being tired is a temporary state. Nevertheless, a person's self-concept may change with time, possibly going through turbulent periods of identity crisis and reassessment.

Communication deals with sharing of information. This is a key function of business organization. Communication can be interpreted as a two way process that aims at transmitting ideas, emotions, feelings and information with a common ground of understanding.

It is nearly impossible to limit the concept of communication in words, still it can be explained or expressed on the basis of some theories or models.

The success of organization depends to a large extent on the system of communication. Communication system is based on the size of organization or institution. When it is small, informal channel of communication prevails. However, in a large organization, where number of persons employed is large, communication system is formal. We are accustomed to use of communication by post, telephone, telegram or by messenger(s). The communication system may be written, oral, mechanical etc.

Self-development has very close relationship with communication process. Self-development and communication are inter-dependent. Self-development makes communication more effective and dynamic.

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**1.3 Concept of Self**

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The self-concept is the accumulation of knowledge about the self, such as beliefs regarding personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles. Beginning in infancy, children acquire and organize information about themselves as a way to enable them to understand the relation between the self and their social world. This developmental process is a direct consequence of children's emerging cognitive skills and their social relationships with both family and peers. During early childhood, children's self-concepts are less differentiated and are centered on concrete characteristics, such as

## Notes

physical attributes, possessions, and skills. During middle childhood, the self-concept becomes more integrated and differentiated as the child engages in social comparison and more clearly perceives the self as consisting of internal, psychological characteristics. Throughout later childhood and adolescence, the self-concept becomes more abstract, complex, and hierarchically organized into cognitive mental representations or self-schemas, which direct the processing of self-relevant information.

According to Jersild: The self, as it finally evolves, is made up of all that goes into a person's experience of his individual existence. It is a person's inner world. It is a composite of a person's thoughts and feelings, strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his view of what he is, what he has been, and what he might become and his attitude pertaining to his worth.

Self-concept is the cognitive aspect of self (related to one's self-image) and generally refers to "the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence" (Purkey, 1988).

### Components of Self-Concept

The concept of self has three major components.

1. The perceptual
2. The conceptual
3. The attitudinal

The Perceptual Component: is the image the person has of the appearance of his body and of the impression he makes on others. It includes the image he has of his body parts like muscles, etc. It is often called his "Physical self-concept".

The Conceptual Component: is the person's conception of his distinctive characteristics, his abilities, disabilities his background and origins. It is often called the "psychological self-concept" and is composed of such life-adjustment qualities as honesty, self-confidence, independence, courage and their opposites.

The Attitudinal Component: is the feeling of the person about himself, his attitude about present status and future prospects, and his attitudes of self-esteem, self-approach, pride and shame. It also includes one's beliefs, convictions, values, ideals, aspirations etc.

### Kinds of Self-Concept

James was the first to suggest that a person has many 'selves'. The real self for example is what a person really believes he is, his 'ideal self' is the person he aspires to be; social self is what he believes others think of him and how they perceive him.

The four categories of self-concepts are:

1. The basic self-concept
2. The transitory self-concept



## 3. The social self-concept

## 4. The ideal self-concept.

## Notes

The basic self-concept: It corresponds to the real self; it means the person's concept of what he really is. It includes his perception of his appearance, his recognition of his abilities, beliefs, aspirations etc. The basic self-concept tends to be realistic. The person sees himself as he really is, not he would like to be. More often, the person tends to find flaws in himself, which makes him unhappy and dissatisfied.

The transitory self-concept: In addition to a basic self-concept, a person has a transitory self-concept. It is referred to as "self he hopes he now is" and the "self he fears he now is". Transitory self-concept may be favourable or unfavourable, depending largely on the situation in which the person really is. It is generally influenced by the passing mood or emotional state or any recent experience.

People differ in the frequency with which their behaviour is guided and influenced by transitory self-concept. A person who is well and happy, who is accepted by others, and who achieves what he has set out to do may have transitory self-concept that is more favourable than his basic self-concept.

The social self-concept: It is based on the way the individual believes others perceive him, depending upon their speech and actions. It is called "mirror image". Since social self-concepts develop from social interactions, the concept will be favourable or unfavourable depends on how the social group treats the individual.

In early childhood, before a child is capable of assessing himself, he thinks of himself as he believes others think of him. His social self-concept is thus dominant and only after the child is mature enough to understand, the speech and actions of others does he develop a basic self-concept.

If a child is accepted, approved, respected and lived for what he is, he will be helped to acquire an attitude of self-acceptance and respect for him. But if the significant people in his life, at first his parents and later his teachers, peers and other person who wield an influence, blame him or reject him, the growing child's attitude towards himself is likely to become unfavourable. As he is judged by others, he will tend to judge himself.

The ideal self-concept: It is made up of perceptions of what a person aspires to be and what he believes he ought to be. It may be related to physical self-image; the psychological image or both. It may be realistic if it's within the reach of the person and may be unrealistic that can never be achieved in real life. The ideal self represents the set of traits, competencies and values an individual would like to possess (Rogers, 1959). By possess, we mean that the individual desires to believe that he/she actually has a particular trait, competency, or value, or wants others to believe that the individual has the trait, competency, or value.

The establishment of the ideal self is determined through a mix of external, or other-directed standards, and internal, or inner-directed standards, depending on one's

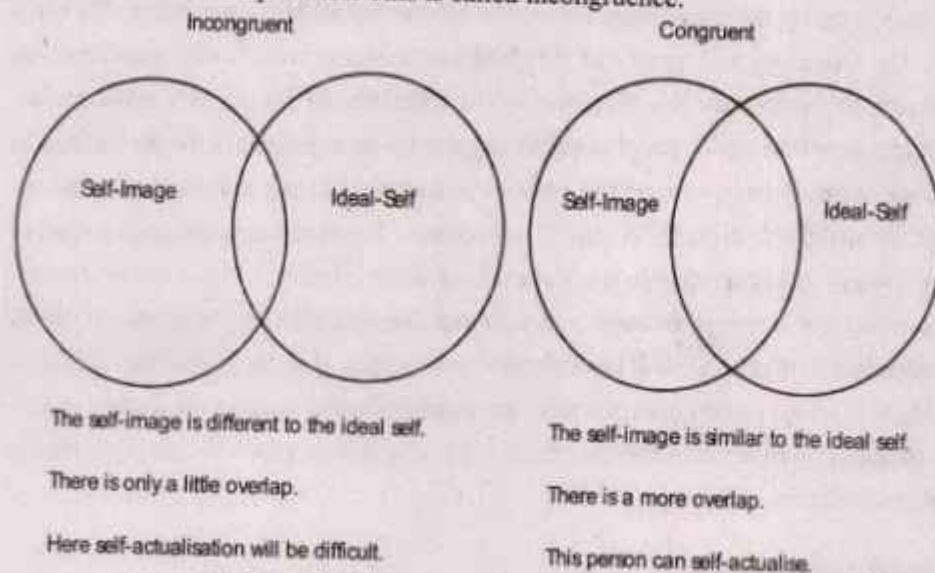
orientation to the world (Reisman, 1961). The ideal self of the other-directed individual is developed largely through the established norms and role expectations of reference group members. For the inner-directed individual, the ideal self is determined largely through the development of a set of internalised goals and standards, and the individual becomes his or her own audience.

If the basic self-concept dominates, the ideal self-concept is likely to be realistic because basic self-concept is based on the more realistic appraisal of one's capabilities.

If it is unrealistic, the ideal self-concept will primarily depend on whether the transitory self-concept are favourable or unfavourable.

### Ideal Self (what you'd like to be)

If there is a mismatch between how you see yourself (e.g. your self image) and what you'd like to be (e.g. your ideal self) then this is likely to affect how much you value yourself. Therefore, there is an intimate relationship between self-image, ego-ideal and self-esteem. A person's ideal self may not be consistent with what actually happens in life and experiences of the person. Hence, a difference may exist between a person's ideal self and actual experience. This is called incongruence.



**Figure 1.1: Congruence and Incongruence**

Where a person's ideal self and actual experience are consistent or very similar, a state of congruence exists. Rarely, if ever does a total state of congruence exist; all people experience certain amount of incongruence. The development of congruence is dependent on unconditional positive regard. Roger believed that for a person to achieve self-actualisation, they must be in a state of congruence.

### Development of Self-concept

Most models and descriptions of the self involve elements of self-perceptions; however, most are unclear as to what aspects of the self the individual holds perceptions of. One

## Notes

of the earliest theorists writing on the nature of the self was William James (1890). He saw the self as consisting of whatever the individual views as belonging to himself or herself, which includes a material, a social, and a spiritual self. The perceptions of the material self are those of one's own body, family, and possessions.

The development of self-awareness does not occur in all-or-none fashion, which would enable us to assume that up to this point, the child does not possess it but beyond this point, he does.

The process of self discovery is actively going on at least as long as the child is developing or discovering new potentialities and in a healthy person, the discovery of self, continues as long as he lives.

### **Hierarchy of Self-Concepts**

The organization of the different self-concept acquired from a wide variety of experience is hierarchical. Each new self-concept is interrelated with those that have already been formed and exerts others that are formed later.

#### ***The primary or first self-concept***

It is shaped up by the social experiences the person has in his home during his early years. The frequency and quality of the child's relationship with family members will determine how important role they play in the formation of his primary self-concept. The primary or first self-concept is shaped by the social experiences the person has in the home during the early years. The primary self-concept in hierarchy is thus a "mirror image" or social self-concept. As his social contacts increase, the child acquires other mirror images of himself and in the hierarchy of the self-concept, these are secondary. The primary self-concept frequently determines the selection of situations in which the secondary self-concept will be formed. For example, if in the home, the child has developed a primary self-concept whose dominant elements support his feeling of self importance, he will select playmates those who treat him in much the way his family members treat him.

#### ***Secondary self-concept***

Just about the time the child becomes mature enough to evaluate himself in relation to others, i.e., at the age of 5 to 6 years, in one way, he would express his ability to imagine how he would like to be and this is the beginning of ideal self-concept. The ideal self-concept is influenced by the concept formed earlier. A highly unrealistic ideal self-concept will increase a person's dissatisfaction with his mirror images and basic self-concept. Thus, if a person is to be happy and well adjusted, all the self-concepts in the hierarchy must be integrated. The integration would depend upon on the degree of continuity in the social cultural environments the home and the people and group outside the home that gives rise to the concept.



## **Pattern of Development**

## *Self Introduction*

The pattern of development from one person to another is fairly predictable. It can be understood as:

### ***Physical and psychological self-concept***

Physical self-concept is usually acquired before psychological self-concepts.

The child has an image of his physical characteristics before he is aware of his abilities, disabilities, needs and aspirations etc. Emotions also play a very important role in the development of psychological self-concept.

Gradually, the images of both psychological and physical concepts fuse. This happens usually during late childhood; the feelings and attitudes accompanying the self-images will be also fused. Physical changes also develop in later childhood and early adulthood, physical self-concept remains fairly stable.

At puberty, the individual attention is focused on his rapidly changing appearances. The person approaching old age likewise changes his physical self-concept.

The psychological self-concept includes the person's attitudes towards his abilities and disabilities, his special attitudes, his roles in life, his responsibilities and his hopes and aspirations. This self-concept develops later than the physical self-concept.

Social contacts with siblings provide the basis for the individual's first assessment of his abilities. Later, he compares himself with the children outside the home and at adolescent with co-workers in the business or workplace.

### ***Social self-concept***

Early social self-concept or mirror images develop in the home, because the child's relationship with the mother is the first significant relationship in life. Later, the young child develops social relationship with other family members; their treatment towards him contributes to his developing self-concept.

The stability or lack of it at home i.e. stepmother, separated parents etc lead to the development of damaging self-concept. Later, the attitude of outsiders, as the child interprets them, exerts a great influence on his self-concept. Similarly, the cultural stereotypes, ethnic identity, religious affiliations, social class discriminations are likely to have a greater influence in adolescents and adulthood however than in childhood.

### ***Basic self-concept***

To develop a basic self-concept that is free from the influence of mirror images, the person must do three things:

1. He must become psychologically independent.
2. He must make use of his abilities to think and make decisions for himself.
3. He must have broad social contacts with all kinds of people so that he can see himself as an individual distant from the group with which he has been closely identified.

## **Notes**



## Notes

The research study given at the end of the chapter helps you to understand the factors affecting the development of the basic self-concept. Development of a basic self-concept is a long and arduous task. In a real sense, it is never completed, because the concept must be changed and revised as a person's estimates of the abilities change. However, it is observed that there is always resistance to change when the individual has to accept his less favourable self-concept and he realizes that he is not all that perfect a child as his parents, grand parents and his other relatives have led him believe he was.

***Ideal self-concept***

It begins around the age of 3 years and reaches its peak between 4 and 5 years. The more dissatisfied a person is with himself and the more unsatisfactory the mirror images he has developed in his relationship with others, the stronger his motivation to develop ideal self-concepts.

If the ideal self-concept is unrealistic, it leads to dissatisfaction. The development of ideal self-concept follows a fairly predictable pattern. The young child has as his ideal, member of the family who, by comparison means something superior to him. Every individual has certain ideals either from the movies, or any eminent personality etc.

**Dominance and Stability of self-concept**

In the hierarchy of self-concepts, the various self-concepts are not separate or distinct, but are so fused and interrelated that each influences others and in turn is influenced by others.

Whereas, it can be safely predicated that the due dominant self-concepts in the hierarchy will be those that give the person the maximum satisfaction.

Only when the self-concept is relatively stable, a person can develop a true sense of identity. Since the self-concept is composed of a person's thoughts and feelings and since these are dynamic, thus changes in self-concept are inevitable.

The four common kinds of variations in the stability of the self-concept are:

1. The self-concept may fluctuate either momentarily or over long periods.
2. May occur within the different self-image areas such as ideal and basic.
3. Variation may be found in different interpersonal situation.
4. Variation occurs within the different self-structures. The ideal self-concept may vary but the real or basic self-concept may remain stable.

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**1.4 Perception**

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Perception is the process by which people select, organise, interpret and respond to information from the world around them. It may be described as a person's view of reality. One of the deepest problems in cognitive science is that of understanding how people make sense of the vast amount of raw data constantly bombarding them from

## Notes

the environment". How do perceptions occur and formulate conceptions? The lowest perception occurs, of course with the reception of raw sensory information through the various sense organs, described as sensations. Out of the many sensations it receives, the mind seeks to find an orderly process by which to make sense of the world. Perceptions, however, may be influenced by beliefs, goals, and the external context. This implies that there is a top-down process along with the bottom-up process of the senses. In order for raw data to be shaped into a coherent whole, it must go through a process of filtering and Organization, yielding a structured representation that can be used by the mind for any number of purposes. Representations, then, are the conclusions drawn from sensations.

## Features

- **Sensory experience:** Perception is our sensory experience of the world around us and involves both the recognition of environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli.
- **Subjective:** Perception is a subjective process, because different people may look at the same event from different angles and interpret the same in multifarious ways. The world is not the same for different people. Often, people tend to behave on the basis of what they perceive reality to be and not necessarily as what reality is. (A quick look at the following figure reveals that the first line is shorter than the second line. If you actually measure them they are equal in length!).
- **Filter:** Perception is a way of forming impressions about oneself, other people and daily life experiences. It serves like a filter through which information passes before it has an effect on people. The quality or accuracy of a person's perceptions, therefore, has a major impact on his or her responses to a given situation.
- **Unique interpretation:** Perception is a unique interpretation of the situation, not an exact recording of it. It is, in fact, a very complex cognitive process that yields a unique picture of the world, a picture that may be quite different from reality.
- **Seeing things differently:** Seeing things differently is an inevitable outcome of perception. Because of individual differences in what people perceive and how they organise and interpret it, perceptions vary among people and differ from objective reality. Our experiences, expectations and interests influence what we see, and what we see may actually differ from the truth. As rightly pointed out by Plato, we see reality only as shadows reflected on the rough wall of a cave (that is reality being filtered through an imperfect perceptual process).
- **Basis of human behaviour:** There can be no behaviour without perception and perception lies at the base of every individual behaviour.

**Notes**

Though there are no set formulas to develop the perceptual abilities, some guidelines can definitely help promote the skills of the perceiver.

**Avoid perceptual distortion:** Some managers have a tendency to form opinions about employees without reading them properly. If the opinions are biased they lead to perceptual distortion. Further, managers can be misled by people who deliberately mistrack other employees. When such a possibility of perceptual distortion exists, managers should be careful in evaluating their perceptual judgements.

**Make accurate self-perception:** People are not without some limitations. Therefore, one very important thing a person should do is that he should understand himself. The more accurately he understands himself, the more accurate his perceptual skills would be. But some people are unaware of the skills they possess. These skills remain unexploited, hidden and unproductive as long as the people are unaware of these skills. This happens due to inaccurate self-perception. Maslow contends that self-actualising individuals have more accurate perceptions about themselves than those who are not self-actualising. Positive attitude towards ourselves and 'self-fulfilling prophecy' are likely to further self-improvement and understanding of the self and proper introspection.

**Put yourself in another person's place:** To understand other people properly, we must live in their shoes. But people seldom follow this because it is very difficult to be empathetic. By changing the frame of reference and assuming others' position, managers can improve their interpersonal skills.

**Create a good impression about yourself:** In social settings, how one appears is very important. We must show ourselves in a positive light creating and presenting an honest image of ourselves in order to improve social status and earn respect. It is an essential requirement for socialisation.

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## **1.5 Theories of Communication**

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Communication has existed since the beginning of human beings, but it was not until the 20th century that people began to study the process. As communication technologies developed, so did the serious study of communication. When the World War I ended, the interest in studying communication intensified. The social science study was fully recognized as a legitimate discipline after the World War II.

Before becoming simply communication studies, the discipline was formed from three other major studies: psychology, sociology and anthropology. Psychology is the study of human behavior; Sociology is the study of society and social process and Anthropology is the study of communication as a factor which develops, maintain and change culture. Communication studies focus on communication as a central to the human experience, which involves understanding how people behave in creating, exchanging, and interpreting messages.



Communication theory has one universal law posited by S.F. Scudder (1980). The Universal Communication Law states that, "All living entities, beings and creature communicates". All of the living communicates through movements, sounds, reactions, physical changes, gestures, languages, breath etc. Communication is means of survival. Examples – the cry of a child (communication that he is hungry, hurt, cold etc.), the cry of an animal (communicating that it is injured, hungry or angry etc.). Every living communicates in its quest for survival.

Communication theories can be best understood, if we are able to know about the atmosphere, limitation and assumptions, under which a message is sent. In other words, a communication which establishes certain values under certain assumptions and limitations for the whole society at large can be termed as communication theories.

### Classification of Theories of Communication

Theories of communication are divided into two categories:

1. Theories propounded to create socio-cultural back ground environments.
2. Theories based on the ideas of different scholars.

**1. Propounded to Create Socio-cultural Background Environment:** This includes communications which aim at creating and saving ideal value for universal community within certain limits. These theories are as:

(a) **Communist Theory of Communication:** This theory is based on principles of communism. After success of revolutionary process in 1917, in the erstwhile USSR, this theory was put to use. This theory is based on the under mentioned principles of communism:

- (i) The voice of labourers will be heard prominently, who were raising the voice against injustice and crimes against them.
- (ii) Voice will be raised against the exploitation of man by man.
- (iii) Role of public will be supreme in the construction of a strong nation.
- (iv) Interest of the nation will remain supreme.

The effect of this theory was widely felt. Lenin's principles were followed not only in Soviet land, but in China and other countries as well. This was sufficiently strong theory. However, this theory could not achieve popularity because of narrow and impractical ideas of communism. Division of Soviet Union was one of the reasons due to which this theory could not become popular universally.

(b) **Chinese Theory of Communication:** Communism prevails in China too, but its philosophy is quite different. Therefore, its communication policy is also different, and is known as Chinese Communication policy. In this policy, instead of revolution, peace is the main theme of the whole communication policy. The ideas hidden in this theory are respect,

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dedication and faithfulness towards the nation. Communication policy of China is based on India's principles of 'Panchsheel'.

- (c) **Christian Theory of Communication:** In this communication theory, emphasis is placed on free thinking, personal freedom and dedication toward almighty God. This theory is based on human sensitivity and service quality in a man. The theory serves as the foundation of communication system in the European countries. The theory is popular among masses because it does not believe in obstacles. Moreover, any new thing conducive to human welfare is communicated to the people. England ruled over many countries and so this theory traveled to those countries too, wherever England had its rule. India too had adopted this theory. But due to peculiar socio-cultural background in India, this theory could not flourish.
- (d) **Islamic Theory of Communication:** This theory is divided into two parts. As one being pure theory of Islam, which has deep insight to human rationale, scientific and love. And the other part being interpretation of some religious leaders and preachers is rigid and narrow minded. This theory is practiced mostly in the Muslim Countries.
- (e) **Conservative Theory of Communication:** The name "Conservative" is attached to this theory because one way of communication is resorted to on the pretext of religion and caste and restrictions are imposed on public. People cannot breathe freely as was the case in Afghanistan quite recently under Laden sponsored government. Restriction is imposed on people's movements, their education and their way of living. When this theory fails, Liberal Theory sets in better informed countries like Nepal and Thailand.
- (f) **Liberal Theory of Communication:** This is considered to be the best theory. Under this theory, full freedom is given to communicate messages and ideas against government and society. There exists no check, control or regulation on messages being communicated.
- (g) **Vedic Theory of Communication:** This theory is in practice since Vedic era and this is why it is known to be the oldest theory. This communication system is based on the Guru-Shishya Disciple form of education system. There was verbal communication system in our country in early times. The theory considers Indian culture and traditions as the base of traditional values. These traditional values were crushed mercilessly under British rule in India.

2. **Theories based on the Ideas of Different Scholars:** The ideas of different scholars on communication process have been put forward in the form of communication theories, some of which are explained below:

- (a) **Aristotle's Theory of Communication:** This theory was propounded by Aristotle. According to Aristotle if persuasive techniques are used, the thinking process of the receiver can be changed. Under this theory there are three components of communication-sender, message and receiver. But of these three, sender is the most important. He can change the thinking of the receiver. In other words, communication is one sided if persuasive techniques are employed by the sender.
- (b) **Lasswell's Theory of Communication:** This theory was presented by Lasswell and is considered as one sided theory. Alike Aristotle, sender is important in this theory too. Lasswell laid emphasis on the channel of communication. According to this theory, the sender will bring a change in the thinking process of the receiver by using appropriate channel of communication. Thus, according to Lasswell, channel of communication is more important as compared to sender of the message.
- (c) **Shammon and Weaver's Theory of Communication:** According to Shammon and Weaver, after receiving the message it must be encoded and then transmitted so that receiver is in a position to understand the message, and can transmit his feedback well in time. The idea behind encoding the message was to avoid the effect of noise. Thus, the message is transmitted in full and pure form.
- (d) **Schramm Theory of Communication:** Schramm presented a wide and reformed form of the theory as was given by Shammon and Weaver. Schramm prescribed three models of his theory.
- (i) **Model 1:** First model was more or less same as was presented by Shammon and Weaver. The difference with that theory was that message does not contain the element of noise and the message too is not wrong and is not distorted.
  - (ii) **Model 2:** In this model Schramm suggested that sender should select a channel to transmit the message in a way that receiver understands the message. Thus, he laid emphasis on receiver in this model too.
  - (iii) **Model 3:** In this model, Schramm considered the reaction of receiver, as an important aspect. Thus according to him, the components of communication are:
    - 1. Sender
    - 2. Encoding process
    - 3. Decoding process
    - 4. Destination
    - 5. Response

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- (e) **Katz-Lazarsfeld Theory of Communication:** The theory was mainly propounded for mass communication and therefore one can call it mass communication theory also. In this theory, after encoding the message, sender transmits the message by some appropriate channel to an opinion leader. This leader relays it to the public. The theory has three components- message, sender and the group leader.
- (f) **Berlo's Theory of Communication:** This theory lays stress on perception. This theory says that sender encodes the message (employing his skills and knowledge) and transmits the same using some suitable channel. How the receiver receives the message, it depends upon his knowledge and perception of receiver.
- (g) **Modern Theory of Communication:** Communication process is being presented in the form of a circle in modern theory of communication. According to this communication cycle, message is dispatched to the receiver. The receiver expresses his response after receiving the message which is in real sense is the feed back.

The different stages of this process are:

- (i) **Input:** It means those ideas and information which the sender wants to dispatch.
- (ii) **Message:** The actual message which is transmitted.
- (iii) **Channel:** This means medium i.e. letter, report, telephone, fax, conference, e-mail etc.
- (iv) **Output:** That message which receiver gets.
- (v) **Feed back:** Receiver's response after receiving the messages which may be positive or negative.
- (vi) **Communication loss:** The message which was to be sent or already sent and received by the receiver may be wrong in some way or the other. This is called communication loss. The obstacles in communication process cause communication loss. These obstacles create problems in understanding the message.

## 1.6 Types of Communication

Communication may be classified on the following basis in any business concern:

- A. On the basis of organizational relations
- B. On the basis of direction
- C. On the basis of expression
- D. On the basis of scope

## (A) On the Basis of Organizational Relations

Communication can be classified on the basis of organizational relationships as following two types:

1. Formal Communication
2. Informal Communication

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- 1. Formal Communication:** Formal communication is associated with the formal organizational structure. Formal channels of communication are planned and established by the organization. This communication is between two positions and not between two persons. Officio-legal relations between officers and subordinates give birth to formal communication. It is deliberate attempt to regulate the smooth, accurate and timely flow of information. Usually formal communication is in written form. These are communicated through orders, instructions, annual reports, bulletins, policy manuals and hand books of the organization. Formal communication may be upward, downward and horizontal.

**Advantages:** Formal communication has under mentioned advantages:

- (i) Helps to maintain the authority of line executives and he has full command on his subordinates.
- (ii) In this type of communication managers have full control on the direction, nature and speed of communication.
- (iii) Unity of message is maintained in this system of communication.
- (iv) Formal communication follows a prescribed path and achieves its goal definitely.
- (v) It is an orderly systematic and timely flow of information.
- (vi) It helps to maintain the discipline in the organization.

**Disadvantages:** The following are the disadvantages of formal communication:

- (i) The information passes through many hands causing distortion of communication.
- (ii) Formal communication takes much time to communicate due to formal procedures.
- (iii) It is mechanistic. It has adverse effect on personal contact and relationships.
- (iv) It creates rep-tapism in the organization.
- (v) Formal communication affects the speed and accuracy of information flow.
- (vi) It also affects the performance of the task and satisfaction of the group members.
- (vii) It increases the work-load of the line managers because all communication is transmitted through them.



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2. **Informal Communication:** Informal communication is quite reverse in nature of formal communication. When there is informal relationship between sender and receiver, then the communication happening in between them is called informal communication. Informal communication flows through unofficial and structure less channels. It is also known as "grapevine" as it flows in any direction.

The creation of informal communication takes place on many factors like personal and social relations, sentiments, religions, areas, languages, castes, reference Books, etc. These relations are not tied to any norm, law or policy. Herbert Simon writes, "The informal communication system is built around the social relationship of the members of the organization". Formal and informal communication networks exist in all organizations together.

**Advantages:** The following advantages of informal communication are as follows:

- (i) It is fast and flexible tool of communication than the formal channel.
- (ii) Informal communication is dynamic and reacts quickly to the change in the circumstances.
- (iii) It may provide feedback to managers on possible effects of decision taken by the management.
- (iv) It helps in fostering mutual cooperation between senders and receiver. It helps developing social relations of the organization.
- (v) Informal communication builds teamwork, harmony and loyalty among the employees in an organization.
- (vi) Informal communication is supplement or fills gaps in formal communication.
- (vii) It is effective tool of transmitting organizational values, ideals, customs, traditions and history.

**Disadvantages:** Following are the main disadvantages of informal communication:

- (i) It very often carries half-truth, rumours and distorted information, which creates confusion among the employees.
- (ii) It is difficult to make anybody particularly responsible for false communication.
- (iii) It creates misunderstanding.
- (iv) It may promote gossips and chitchats.
- (v) It leads to leakage of secret information.

### (B) On the Basis of Direction

Communication on the basis of their direction may be classified into four parts:

1. Downward Communication
2. Upward Communication

## 3. Horizontal Communication

## 4. Diagonal Communication

- 1. Downward Communication:** The direction of such types of communication is from high level authority to low level authority. Downward communication flows from the top of the organization authority to downwards, passing through various levels to the bottom of the organization along with the scalar chain. This communication conveys orders, instructions, rules, policies, programmes, procedures, objectives, directives etc. from the chief executive of the company to the bottom of the organization. The line in the organizational chart is followed while transmitting the directives. It specifies the extent of subordinate's authority and their responsibilities. This communication can be verbal, symbolic or unwritten form. This communication is of great importance for those working at lower level because these are concerned with performance of work entrusted upon them.

**Advantages:** The following are the advantages narrated below:

- (i) It helps in explaining the company rules, policies, plans and programmes etc. to the members of organization.
- (ii) It increases the feeling of acceptance on the part of workers.
- (iii) It is also important that communication be transmitted to workers in the language that they can easily understand.
- (iv) It is important, however that there is not communication breakdown at any level or from any source.
- (v) It is used as a means to exercise control over subordinates by intimating them their performance on the job.
- (vi) It brings satisfaction to people and helps motivate them.

**Disadvantages:** The following are the various disadvantages of downward communication:

- (i) It is time consuming process because the information has to pass through different level of the organization.
- (ii) The original information may reach the lowest level in distorted and changed shape and may lose the very objective of communication.
- (iii) It promotes bureaucracy or authoritative atmosphere. In which inexperienced superiors are tempted to misuse their authority on subordinates.

- 2. Upward Communication:** It is just the reverse of the downward communication. When flow of information from bottom to top or to say when messages are sent by subordinates to higher authorities, then this system of communication is known as upward communication. It includes information about progress of work, problems related to work, suggestions, ideas, opinions, grievances, complaints, appeals etc. The growing organization must encourage upward communication to have a general feeling of the employees to prevent their grievances of isolation and unheard

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problems. Thus, upward communication serves as a feedback to the superiors and to the management. The effectiveness of this type of communication largely depends upon the attitude of the top management.

**Advantages:** These are some of the advantages of upward communication:

- (i) Feedback is received such as complaints, problems, suggestions and work progress in upward communication that helps the management in the effective implements of policies and decisions.
  - (ii) It encourages new ideas and suggestions.
  - (iii) It promotes harmony and mutual feeling of co-operation among subordinates and managers.
  - (iv) It allows subordinates to express their grievances, complaints, opinions, etc.
  - (v) A healthy upward communication stimulates and motivates the employees.
- Disadvantages:** The following disadvantages of upward communication are given below:

- (i) Top management may be unwilling to listen to the subordinate staff in authority.
- (ii) It is very complex process and quite lengthy one, so some problem may arise due to delay of information.
- (iii) It creates bitterness in relations between the managers and the employees.
- (iv) Some employees hesitate to put their problems before the managers, with the fear that they may loose the confidence of their managers.

3. **Lateral or Horizontal Communication:** When communication takes place amongst employees, officers and departmental heads of equal level, it is known as horizontal or lateral communication. It may be written or oral. The main object of lateral or horizontal communication is to co-ordinate the efforts of different departments or persons. Horizontal communication develops the feeling of mutual understanding. For example, communication between sales manager and production manager; or between one supervisor (marketing) and the other supervisor (production) in the organization is known as horizontal communication.

**Advantages:** Some of the important advantages of horizontal communication are given below:

- (i) It helps in coordinating business activities to achieve the business objectives.
- (ii) It creates informal and congenial work environment.
- (iii) It removes duplication of work and thus minimizes the wastages of time, money, labour and other resources.
- (iv) It helps to share information between the different units or departments.



**Disadvantages:** The following are some of the disadvantages of horizontal communication:

- (i) Communication at the same level depends upon the desire of the members involved in the horizontal communication. They may have different approaches.
- (ii) Rivalries among work units may cause individuals to hide information which may be harmful for the organization.

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**4. Diagonal Communication:** This is also known as line & staff communication. Diagonal communication cuts across departmental lines in between people who are neither in the same department nor on the same level of organizational structure. It takes place when member cannot communicate effectively through other channels. For example, when sales representatives send their reports direct to the controller of finance, without submitting them to the marketing department, it is called as diagonal communication.

The basic purpose of such communication is faster flow of information enhancement of organizational efficiency by cutting across department lines and minimization of red tapism.

### (C) On the Basis of Expression

On the basis of mode of expression, communication may be classified into following four parts:

1. Oral or Verbal Communication
2. Written Communication
3. Non-Verbal Communication
4. Audio-Video Communication

**1. Oral or Verbal Communication:** In this process of communication, conveying message through spoken words. It may take place by face to face to contacts and may be in the form of direct talk and conversation or the public address. It also includes telephonic calls or talking on the intercom system. Oral communication includes personal talks, interviews, speeches, group discussion, announcement, committee meetings, radio and T.V. programme.

Verbal communication is the powerful and effective means of communication. Theo Haimann writes, "The human voice can import the message with the meaning and shading which even long pages of written simply cannot convey".

#### **Advantages:**

- (i) It is direct, simple, times saving and least expensive form of communication.
- (ii) This mode of communication is more effective and powerful than other mode.

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- (iii) Immediate feedback and spontaneous thinking.
- (iv) Oral communication helps in improving the motivation of people and generating a feeling of participation.
- (v) Oral communication is the only way out during the period of emergency.
- (vi) Any misunderstanding or doubts can be removed immediately.
- (vii) It develops a sense of belonging because of personalized contacts.
- (viii) It creates good environment in an organization.

**Disadvantages:**

- (i) There is a written proof of messages or formal records of transaction.
- (ii) It is not appropriate in case of long messages as it is not possible to remember lengthy messages by the receiver.
- (iii) There is every possibility that spoken words are not clearly heard or understood or may be taken in some other sense.
- (iv) Different perception of sender and receiver of the message may cause misunderstanding and confusion.
- (v) The spirit of authority cannot be transmitted effectively in oral transactions.
- (vi) If the oral message is conveyed on along the hierarchical chain of command then some distortions can occur during the process.
- (vii) It does not have legal validity, so it may create legal problems.

**2. Written Communication:** When exchange of information and opinions through written words, known as written communication. Most of the communications in an organization are in written form. It includes instructions, letters, memos, formal report, rules and regulations, policy manuals, information bulletins etc. Therefore, in the process of this form of communication, simple words are used for conveying the message. If there is a need, charts, graphs, diagrams etc. are used for conveying the message. By written form of communication, it is possible to communicate with several persons simultaneously, the distantly placed parties communicated by this methods.

**Advantages:**

- (i) It provides a permanency of records for future reference so that suitable action can be taken against the subordinates who fail to follow the communication.
- (ii) Written communication reduces disputes, jurisdictional frictions and back passing etc.
- (iii) Written communication gives time to the recipient to think, analyze and then decide the course of action.
- (iv) It helps in determining the responsibility.

- (v) It reduces the possibility of conflicts and misunderstanding.
- (vi) It appears formal and authoritative for action.
- (vii) It can save money and time, when many persons must be contacted at the same time.
- (viii) It is clear, complete and authentic.

**Disadvantages:**

- (i) It is a costly and time consuming system.
- (ii) The written communication can not remain confidential because it passes through many hands.
- (iii) It is not flexible; it results in red-tapism.
- (iv) There is no feed back opportunity to be sure that the receiver has understood the message.
- (v) The chances of misunderstanding are much more because interpretation of meaning may vary.
- (vi) It leads to excessive formality and lack personal touch.

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- 3. Non-Verbal Communication:** This is a mode of communication under which one person conveys his ideas or thoughts to the other person through signs, postures and gestures. In such a situation words are not necessary for communication because ideas can be conveyed through body language. The movement of the ears, eyes, hands and body has been used to relay certain message. It is more appealing than any form of verbal communication. Action speaks louder than words. Non-verbal communication is very useful in understanding or conveying feelings, emotions and attitudes. It includes facial expressions, movement of lips, nodding of head, tone of voice, clothes, postures, body movements etc. In non-verbal communication to express happiness smiling, anger, frustrations, shyness, fear, intimacy and to express unhappiness faces are made.

**Advantages:**

- (i) Non-verbal or gestural communication is a supplement to oral communication.
  - (ii) It immediately conveys the feelings, emotions, attitudes, reactions and responses.
  - (iii) It helps to motivate the subordinates in an organization.
  - (iv) Non-verbal communication makes communication much faster and easier.
  - (v) Non-verbal or gestural communication saves a lot of money for the organization. It doesn't require any expenses.
- 4. Audio-Video Communication:** The growth of information technology in the field of communication is intricately linked to the growth of business and industry. As



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business grows, new and advance techniques and technology of communication are developed and with that there developed further growth of business. Importance of audio-visual (video) means of communication is increasing very fast in the present times. Today, films, video cassettes, tape recorders, movie cameras, projectors, L.C.D., T.V. and computers are being used at a large scale in various industrial activities like meeting, conference, symposium, training programmes, surveys and advertisements.

### (D) On the Basis of Scope

On the basis of scope, the communication process may be classified into following two parts:

1. Internal Communication
2. External Communication

1. **Internal Communication:** Internal communication means that communication which takes place within the organization, among different departments, between superiors and his subordinates. It includes upward, downward and horizontal communication between top officials and their subordinates. Information, rules, orders, directions, work reports, organizational charts, suggestions from subordinates, complaints, requests, grievances etc. are included in this type of communication. Internal communication plays an important role in the operation of the business.
2. **External Communication:** There are so many groups in the external environment of the business like- consumers, suppliers, government, society, investors, professional bodies, public etc. Communication between all these groups is called external communication. As the external environment has become more dynamic turbulent, business organizations are required to make a regular exchange of information with outside groups and individuals.

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### 1.7 Self Development and Communication

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Self-development has a very close relationship with communication ability and skill. Awareness for knowledge and excellence is essential for perfect communication. Listening to something attentively, studying seriously, creative writing and using effective language all helps in self-development. Thus, self-development and communication processes go hand in hand.

The dialogues between people living in a society are possible through communication only. Self-development and communication are inter-dependent. The self confidence of sender and receiver influences their style, nature and level of communication. On the other hand effective communication affects the need of self- development.

## 1.8 Concept of Self-Development

Self-development differs from person to person. It is a subjective and relative concept. The word "self" here means total personality which includes total personal qualities of a person like, physical, intellectual, materialistic, spiritual and behavioral qualities. Self-development thus implies that these qualities should develop in a person in a balanced way. Thus, it can be concluded that "self-development is the process of development of the physical, intellectual, materialistic and spiritual qualities in a person".

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## 1.9 Objectives of Self-Development

The main objective self-development is to make the personal and social life. So happy and successful that he lives a joyful life. The main objectives of self-development are as follows:

1. **Personality Development:** One of the important objectives of self-development is the development of the favourable and balanced personality. According to social psychologists personality is cluster of different attributes or qualities which reflect a person's nature and behavior.
2. **Development of Positive Attitude:** Attitude may be positive or negative towards certain persons, objects or situations. Self-development saves a person from negative feeling and develops his positive traits. A person having positive attitude is usually cheerful and optimistic in life.
3. **Development of Self-respect:** Self-development develops self-respect. What we think and feel about ourselves, are a subject of self respect. Self-development creates the qualities such as courteousness and politeness in a person.
4. **Development of Knowledge:** Self-development develops in a person the tendency to learn, understand and analyze things, thus making him more enterprising courageous and dynamic.
5. **Development of Self-confidence:** Self-development brings self-confidence in a person. It also develops good leadership qualities and he becomes in a position to bear risks of life.
6. **Development of Thoughts:** Self-development is helpful in the development of intellectual power. A thinking mind is able to take rational decisions.
7. **Development of Organization Efficiency:** Self-development helps in the development of total personality which enhances his organizational efficiency also. This brings progress in his business.
8. **Development of Cultural Harmony:** A person with wide vision and liberal attitude has a respect for other cultures and religious beliefs. This tendency brings cultural harmony of a nation.

9. **Overall Development:** Self-development develops physical, intellectual, materialistic, religious and behavioral traits of a person. All these things help in overall development.

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### 1.10 Interdependence between Self-Development and Communication

Self-development and communication process are inter-dependent. While on one side, self-development brings the elements of effectiveness and dynamism in communication, an effective communication, on the other hand helps in self-development to grow fast.

**Improvement in Communication by Self-development:** The present processes of communication as well as means of communication are helpful in the development of self-development. Self-development helps the communication in becoming effective by improving process of communication. The relationship between self-development and communication is described here below:

1. **Improvement in Communication Skills:** Self-development brings improvement in communication skills like, speaking, listening, writing, and gesture skills. A person, with need for self-development, becomes more educated and able to perform well his duties. An educated person can read and write as well. His style of writing is more creative and appealing.
2. **Improvement in Analytical Power:** Analytical power gets a boost with self-development. A self-development man is able to find solutions of problems even in tiring circumstances. He is able to communicate with competence even in difficult situations. He can analyze audience well. Therefore he can contribute effectively in the communication process.
3. **Improvement in Critical Skills:** Self-development nurtures critical skills of a person. Self-developed person can easily plan, revise and edit any communication. He can express his reactions by analyzing the message correctly.
4. **Widens the Vision:** Self-development widens the vision of a person. Such a person can easily analyze his audiences.
5. **Enhances Other Skills:** Apart from the qualities mentioned above, self-development brings other abilities too in a person like completeness, conciseness, clarity consideration etc.

#### Improvement in Self-development by Communication:

An effective communication is an important tool of self-development. The main channels of communication like non-verbal and verbal help in the growth of self-development. Many elements like effective writing, eloquence of speech, body language, attentive



listening, help in self-development. Self-development gets big look by effective business communication in the following ways.

1. **Non-verbal Communication & Self-development:** Non-verbal channels of communication increase self-development. Such channels are body language, gestures, postures etc. The intellectual power of a person increases if he understands body language and gesture. These channels are not only interesting, but directional too. So these are helpful in enhancing self-development.
2. **Oral Communication and Self-development:** Different channels of oral communication like speech, group discussion & public speaking are also helpful in raising the self-development. If a speaker speaks with facts and figures supported with appropriate logics, then his speech becomes very effective for audiences.
3. **Written Communication and Self-development:** Written communication plays an important role in the self-development. We resort to writing, when an idea flashes in our mind. Writing helps in raising the creative and imaginative qualities in a person. All these elements are helpful in self-development.
4. **Listening and Self-development:** Listening is an important component of effective communication. A successful businessman listens attentively to every talk of his clients. For self-development it is necessary to listen to useful suggestions.

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### 1.11 Communication Process and Attitude

Attitude is the best of one's mind toward an object or subject. It involves liking or disliking people, work and objects. Attitude is developed through learning, although the family, society and nation exert great influence in the attitude formation of people. Attitude is the combination of popular belief and interest.

According to Morgan & Icing, "An attitude is a tendency to response either positively or negatively to certain persons, object or situations. Attitude has a feeling component, a cognitive component and an action component".

Attitude helps in making forecasts concerning people's behavior. Once an attitude is developed in relations to a particular thing or object then it becomes the permanent mental attitude towards that thing or object.

For building a positive attitude towards things, a person should have the desire to become a successful person, to have the knowledge of ways and become a successful person, and have the determination and necessary discipline to follow those ways and means. Personal positive attitude is developed through persuasion. Persuasion means building of attitude and change in it, its reestablishment, or its reconstruction through communication. This whole process is not an automatic one. How seriously a receiver is taking the message, depends on the success of failure of communication.

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Real or unreal change of outlook consists of three elements – change bringing agent or sender, message and receiver. Communication is very important in bringing change. Who says what and to whom with what effect, all these questions, helps us in understanding the change of attitude in a person.

A company advertising its suitcase or its cigarette usually shows a specific person in its advertisement. Such advertisements are based on the assumptions that channel of communication plays an important role in the change of attitude.

Another important aspect regarding attitude is reliability of communication. If the people have faith in the person, communicating with them, change of attitude becomes fast. This fact was revealed in the studies conducted by Horland and Weiss. They asked people's opinions on four such problems on which there were divergent views. People were also informed about the views of a respected writer of a newspaper and another writer of a book on those problems. It was found that people agreed with those views which were expressed by the respected writer belonging to a newspaper, because they were influenced by him more.

Sender's prestige, reliability and attractiveness on one hand enhance his effectiveness in changing attitude and on the other it also shows as to what sender intends to say.

### 1.12 Summary

Self-concept is inherently phenomenological, that is, it refers to the person's own view of him- or herself. Most of the success and failures that people experience in many areas of life are closely related to the way they view themselves and their relationships with others. It is also becoming clear that self-concept has at least three major qualities: (1) it is learnt, (2) it is organized, and (3) it is dynamic.

Practically speaking, we often fail to see reality in this world. We interpret what we see and call it reality. Perceptions, thus, influence behavioural responses greatly.

Perception is nothing but a person's view of reality. To get a clear picture of what he visualises, a person first selects what he wants to see organises the obtained information and interprets the same in his own unique way. In this process he may move closer to reality or go off the track completely due to certain perceptual errors.

To emerge victorious in interpersonal relations, one has to improve one's own perceptual skill through empathy, proper understanding of the situation etc.

Communication is the very essential nerve for the entire society. Without which nothing could be expected. Communication has been defined by various numbers of authors in their own meaningful way, known as the communication theory. Theories are classified on the socio-cultural backgrounds like-Communist theory of communication, Christian theory of communication, Islamic theory of communication, Vedic theory of

communication etc. and theories based on the ideas of different scholars, like-Aristotle's theory of communication, Lasswell's theory of communication, Shammon and Weaver's theory of communication, Modern theory of communication etc.

Communication is also classified like on the basis of organizational structure (formal and informal communication), on the basis of direction (downward, upward, horizontal and diagonal communication), on the basis of expression (oral, written, audio-video and non-verbal communication) and on the basis of scope (internal and external communication). Each of the particular types of communication has its own advantages and disadvantages, depending on the situation and the variables used.

In the last, communication has a strong bond with the self-development of an individual. Self-development lays the foundation of overall personality development, increase in the knowledge & confidence, betterment of an organizational efficiency, increases the intellectual horizon of an individual and formation of a positive attitude towards objects, events, persons and society as a whole.

## Notes

### 1.13 Glossary

- **Self:** your consciousness of your own identity
- **Self Image:** The conception that one has of oneself, including an assessment of qualities and personal worth
- **Perception:** individuals own view of the world
- **Selective perception:** single out the aspects of situation, person or object that are consistent with one's beliefs, attitudes and values
- **Perceptual set:** expectation of a particular interpretation based on past experiences

### 1.14 Review Questions

1. 'The various self-concepts develop in accordance with a predictable pattern'- Discuss.
2. Explain the concept of self and its various forms.
3. What do you mean by perception? Discuss the nature and importance of perception.
4. Can two people see the same thing and interpret it differently? Why?
5. What do you mean by perceptual selectivity? How does it work?
6. Explain the perceptual organisation principle.
7. Briefly explain the various theories of communication.
8. Explain in brief the various types of communication along with its merits and demerits.



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9. What is informal communication? Distinguish between formal and informal communication.
10. What do you mean by self-development? Explain its objectives.
11. What relationship exists between self-development and communication? Is self-development possible through communication?
12. What is attitude? What relationship exists between attitude and communication?

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### 1.15 Further Readings

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# **Non-Verbal Communication**

Notes

**(Structure)**

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
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## **2.1 Learning Objectives**

After studying the chapter, students will be able to:

- To know the nature of non-verbal communication;
- To understand the effective use of body language;
- To learn the logic of sign language;
- To recognise different clues given by facial expressions, gestures, postures, body movements and eye contact;
- To understand relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication.

## **2.2 Introduction**

Communication need not to be verbal all the time. It can also be non-verbal. In other words, man does not communicate through words only or only through writing, speaking and listening. Most of the time, communication is non-verbal, i.e. through a gesture, a

smile, a frown, or through eye contact, body position. Compared to verbal communication, it is more subtle and instructive. On scientific analysis, it has been proved that verbal communication accounts only for 7 per cent whereas non-verbal communication accounts for over 50 per cent and hence non-verbal communication needs serious consideration. Non-verbal communication is ancient and universal.

### 2.3 Meaning of Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is communication without using words or speech. *Non-verbal communication is thus the wordless message received through the medium of gestures, signs, body movements, facial expressions, tone of voice, colour, time, space, style of writing, etc.* Non-verbal communication is also called silent language or the language of signs and gestures. We can define non-verbal communication in the following ways:

1. Non-verbal communication is communication through any means other than words.
2. It is the transmission of message by some medium other than speech or writing.
3. It refers to all external stimuli other than the spoken or written words and that includes body motion, characteristics of voice, appearance, and space distancing.
4. It is the communication that uses non-linguistic means to convey the message.
5. It refers to the transfer of meaning by body-language, space, time and paralanguage.

Imagine the following situations which demonstrate non-verbal form of communication:

1. The darkness and the silence in picture hall communicate that the picture is going to start.
2. During conversation, when you raise your eye brows on a statement, convey your disbelief in the statement.
3. Receiving applause by large audience at the end of inaugural address delivered by you shows your good performance.
4. Patting by your boss shows confidence in you and you are being appreciated.

All the situations mentioned above convey a significant effect to communicate through means other than words. Thus, words are not the only means we use to communicate. We also use silence, signs, symbols, body movements, etc.

### 2.4 Characteristics of Non-verbal Communication in Organization

1. Non-verbal communication indicates the attitude and feeling in addition to what is being expressed through words.
2. Non-verbal communication relies on observation and interpretation.
3. Non-verbal message may compliment or contradict.
4. All body movements with exception of instrument movements are meaningful.

5. Dress or language used will reveal the communicator states or education.
6. Body movement and facial expressions often occurs spontaneously and can support or contradict the verbal message.
7. It has been found that non-verbal communication forms the larger part of the overall communication activity.

#### *Extent of non-verbal communication*

Management Impact	Types of Communication
55 percent	Facial expression, body posture, gestures
7 percent	Words
38 percent	Tone of voice and inflection

Non-verbal communication speaks much louder than words.

*"A Cry of Agony is more Powerful than a Tale of Woe".*

## 2.5 Nature of Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication<sup>2</sup> means all communication without words. It is broad and imprecise. And because it is broad, non-verbal communication is quite vague. For instance, a frown on someone's forehead is sometimes interpreted to mean worry. But could it be that the person has a headache? Or is the person in deep thought? No doubt, there could be numerous meanings ascribed to the facial expression.

Cross-cultural aspects give many meanings to non-verbal communication. Culture teaches us about body positions, movements, and various factors that affect human relationships like intimacy, space, time, and such. Thus, the meanings we give to non-verbal symbols will vary depending on how our culture has conditioned us.

As a listener, you need to go beyond the obvious to determine what non-word symbols mean. As we have said about word symbols, you need to see what people intend with their non-verbal symbols as well. Perhaps one good way to grasp the intent of this suggestion is to look at the intended meanings you have for the non-verbal symbols you use. Realize that non-verbal symbols can have many meanings.

## 2.6 Types of Non-verbal Communication

There are many ways to classify non-verbal communication. According to Lesikar & Flatley,<sup>3</sup> four of the more common types are body language, space, time and paralanguage. However, over the years, researchers have studied the impact of many other modes of non-verbal communication such as language of colour and symbols. Lesikar's approach is better as it includes all modes of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication can be classified into the following categories:



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Our bodies send non-word messages through arms, fingers, expressions, posture, and so on. For example, happiness, surprise, fear, anger and sadness usually are accompanied by definite facial expressions and eye patterns. In particular, the face and eyes are the most important. The face and eyes, gestures, posture, and physical appearance reflect the inner workings of emotions in our bodies. Moreover, speaking and gestures appear to be linked. In general, the louder someone speaks, the more emphatic the gestures used, and vice-versa. One should always remember that appearance is an important part of the body messages that are sent and received in oral communication.

**Importance of Body Language**

Regarding the importance of body language, Psychologist **Paul Ekman** says, *"we talk with our vocal cords, but we communicate with our facial expressions, tone of voice and our entire body."* Understanding body language has immense practical use. In this regard, education psychologist **Marilyn Maple** says, *"When you can consciously 'read' what other are saying unconsciously, you can deal with issues at work and at home before they turn into full blown problems".* On careful observation, in a meeting, we can look around and see who has the highest status. In every species and society, those who are in control, try to appear large, strong and fearless. Body language includes:

1. **Facial Expressions** : A popular saying puts it succinctly: "the face is the index of the heart". Whatever we feel deep within ourselves is at once reflected in our face, making facial expression such an integral part of communication. We convey so much without speaking a word. For example, consider facial expressions which are generally associated with happiness surprise, fear, anger, sadness, bewilderment, astonishment and contentment. Let us also consider a smile, different kinds of smile, frown, corners of lips and the position of the eye brows, the cheeks, whether drawn up back or dropping, the jaw, nose/nostrils and the chin. We can easily mark all the motion signals sent through these parts of the face by others and observe our own expressions by looking at ourselves in a mirror. We will realize that every facial muscle is an instrument of communication with a significant role to play.

The face and eyes are the most expressive means of body communication. Dale Leather has found that 10 basic categories of meanings can be communicated via facial expressions.

Facial Expression	
• Happiness	• Disgust
• Surprise	• Contempt
• Fear	• Interest
• Anger	• Bewilderment
• Sadness	• Determination



**Ekman and Friesen** identified eight facial styles exhibited by most people. A summary of the eight styles is:

- (i) **The Withholder:** Inhibited; little facial movements are found in this style.
- (ii) **The Revealer:** Uninhibited; great deal of facial movement is exhibited in this style.
- (iii) **The Unwitting Expresser:** Limited numbers of expressions are thought to be masked.
- (iv) **The Blank Expresser:** Blank face is shown instead of emotions.
- (v) **The Substitute Expresser:** Emotion is shown but it is different way than the expresser thinks.
- (vi) **The Frozen-Affect Expresser:** Permanent display of a given emotion, e.g., one always looks sad because that is the permanent feature of a facial configuration.
- (vii) **The Ever/Ready Expresser:** Initial emotion is displayed and has nothing to do with the stimulus.
- (viii) **The Flooded-Affect:** Express or overriding state (e.g., anger) colours all other emotions.

2. **Eye Contact:** The eyes play an important role in face-to-face communication. Eye contact is one of the most powerful forms of non-verbal communication. When we look at somebody's face, we focus primarily on his eyes and try to understand what he means. The eyes, along with the eyebrows, eyelids and size of pupils convey our innermost feelings. Authority relationships as well as intimate relationships are frequently initiated and maintained with eye contact which also builds emotional relationships between the listener and speaker.

- (i) Eyebrows and eyelids raised and combined with dilated pupils tell us that the person is excited, surprised or frightened.
- (ii) Eyebrows with upper and lower eyelids closed and combined with constricted pupils tell us that the person is angry or in pain.
- (iii) Looking at somebody for a long time shows the intensity of our interest in him. If the eye contact is brief, or we take our eyes off the person very soon, it indicates nervousness or an embarrassment on our part. Prolonged eye contact can signal admiration.
- (iv) Direct eye contact of more than 10 seconds can create discomfort and anxiety.
- (v) Generally people's eyes approach what they like and avoid what they do not like. Eye contact between a speaker and audience increases the audience's assessment of the speaker as a credible source.
- (vi) People generally maintain more eye gaze and mutual eye gaze with those whose approval they want, those to whom they bring good news, and those

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whom they like. They also do so with people towards whom they feel positive and whom they know and trust.

- (vii) Averted eyes show anger, hurt feelings, and a hesitancy to reveal the inner self. They also reveal negativism and the need to increase psychological distance as in an elevator, waiting room, or other small space.

Eye behaviour communicates in many ways. It shows emotions and establishes conversational regulators. It also monitors feedback and serves as a reminder. The eyes not only supply information, they receive it as well. Major aspects of communication are covered through eyes. Of course, eye contact and eye movements convey their meaning in combination with other facial expressions.

3. **Gestures:** In addition to facial expressions and eye contact, another important element of body language is the use of gestures. Gestures are the physical movements of arms, legs, hands, torso and head, which help one to express thoughts and/to emphasize one's speech. They play a very important role in conveying meaning without using words.

**Ekman and Friesen** have identified five types of body gestures:

- (i) **Emblems:** A large number of body movements have come to be identified as a substitute for verbal translations. They often replace verbal messages and take the shape of emblems. The list is long and comprehensive including about seventy emblems, namely:
- (a) Patting the stomach—"I'm full of food".
  - (b) Nodding the head up and down—"Yes" or "I agree".
  - (c) Patting the adjacent seat—"Sit beside me."
  - (d) Shaking fist—"I'm angry."
  - (e) Yawning—"I'm bored" or "I'm angry."
  - (f) Cupping hand behind ear—"I can't hear you."
  - (g) Clapping hands—"I approve."
  - (h) Placing first finger on lips—"Be silent."
  - (i) Circling the first finger parallel with the side of the head—"that person's crazy" or "that person's stupid."
  - (j) Forming the first and second finger in the shape of a "V"—"Peace" or "Victory."
  - (k) Shrugging shoulders and raising palms of hand upward—"I don't know."
  - (l) Scratching the head—frustration.
  - (m) Tapping finger against skull—"I'm thinking."
  - (n) Tapping finger on own chest—"Me."

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- (o) Standing on the side of the road and, pointing a thumb in the direction of traffic—"I'd like a ride" (hitch hiking).
- (p) Waving—"Hello," "Good bye," "Come here," "Here I am."
- (ii) **Illustrators:** They are directly tied to verbal language. These gestures illustrate the words, which a speaker is saying. When a speaker says, "My third and final point is..." and holds up three fingers, this gesture is an illustrator.
- (iii) **Regulators:** Regulators control oral communication by alerting the sender to the need to hurry up, slow down, or repeat something. Examples are: frequent glances at the watch or drumming finger on the table when someone is talking with another person. When someone is delivering a long speech and the other person wants to restrict him, he/she may show his watch to regulate or moderate him.
- (iv) **Displays:** These indicate emotional states, such as anger or embarrassment, occurring usually in our facial expressions. The display differs from the three previous types, in that; people have for less control over them. Many have felt their faces turning red, because they were angry or embarrassed. However, there is little, which they can do to control this display.
- (v) **Adaptors:** They are the gestures over which people have little control over often people are not conscious of performing such gestures. Stifling a yawn or clasping the hands to the face in fear, are adaptor gestures. They are automatic and are usually not planned.

It is important to note that gestures are not used individually but in relation to another person, and acquire meaning at particular times. Speech and gestures go together, and, therefore, have to be properly coordinated. In the absence of speech-gesture co-ordination, we experience confusion and discomfort.

Although gestures are spontaneous, we can learn to monitor and use positive gestures and minimize the negative ones.

**Positive Gestures:** Positive gestures are body signals which make us look relaxed, confident and polite.

- (i) Positive listening gestures include:
  - (a) Leaning a little towards the speaker.
  - (b) Tilting the head.
  - (c) Eye contact with the speaker.
  - (d) Gently nodding the head in agreement.
- (ii) Good speaking gestures include keeping palms open and avoiding clutching or folding them across the chest.
- (iii) Walking with the head upright, hands swinging freely by the sides.

*Negative Gestures:* Negative gestures include body movements which give a negative impression about us. These are:

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- (i) Signs of nervousness:
  - (a) Hands in the pocket
  - (b) Covering the mouth with the hand while speaking
  - (c) Scratching
  - (d) Biting nails
  - (e) Glancing sideways
  - (f) Drumming fingers
  - (g) Tapping feet
  - (h) Wringing hands
  - (i) Crossed arms or legs
  - (j) Setting the hair with hands
  - (k) Sitting on the edge of the chair
  - (l) Speaking too fast, or too slow
  - (m) Straightening the tie
  - (n) Clearing the throat too often
  - (o) Blinking the eyes a lot
  - (p) Clicking the pen
  - (q) Playing with the paper weight
  - (r) Adjusting the glasses up the nose
- (ii) Gestures showing aggressiveness:
  - (a) Staring
  - (b) Pointing at someone
  - (c) Showing a fist
  - (d) Folding both arms
  - (e) Bending over someone
- (iii) Gestures showing rudeness:
  - (a) Shake hands too hard
  - (b) Give a very limp handshake
  - (c) Stand too close
  - (d) Whisper at a social gathering
  - (e) Work while someone talks to you
  - (f) Yawn
  - (g) Smirk



- (h) Puff
- (i) Start gathering or folding papers before a meeting is over
- (iv) Gestures showing lack of good sense:
  - (a) Banging the table
  - (b) Chewing pens
  - (c) Waving hands around you while talking
  - (d) Wiping hands across the face
  - (e) Touching nose time and again
  - (f) Attending meetings with the cell phone on
  - (g) Staring pointedly at someone

4. **Head, body shape and posture:** In any face-to-face communication, meeting or interview, the way we hold our head is very important. Everybody is aware of the age-old saying, "Hold your head high". Which is nothing but a sign of honour and self-respect, confidence, integrity and interest in the person/persons before us. A head bent low, depending upon the situation, would show modesty, politeness or a sense of quietness. On the other extreme, a head drawn too far backwards or stiffly held straight up, indicates pride or haughtiness. Head jerks indicate insolence, rejection or agreement, depending upon the context and personality of the person concerned. Nodding the head sideways or back and forth, conveys the intended meaning more eloquently than words.

- (i) **Body shape:** Behavioural scientists have studied the shapes of our bodies and have broadly put them in the following types:
  - (a) *Ectomorph*: thin, youthful and tall;
  - (b) *Mesomorph*: strong, athletic, muscular, and bony;
  - (c) *Endomorph*: fat, round and soft.

We cannot do much about the shape of our body, but we can put it to effective use. Both our body shape and posture affect what we think about ourselves, how we relate to others and how others relate to us or respond to our moves. Generally, we act spontaneously in situations like when we meet a friend or participate in a meeting. But we do become self-conscious while appearing for an interview or making a presentation. On such an occasion, we try to make the best possible impression.

- (ii) **Posture:** A person's general posture, even without specific gestures, communicates meaning. The body position of an individual conveys a variety of messages. For example, superiors usually take a more relaxed posture than their subordinates. Posture is also a way to demonstrate interest in another person. Several writers have concluded that when you lean forward to the person towards whom you are speaking with, you demonstrate interest in him/

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her. Sitting back, on the other hand, may communicate a lack of interest. It is difficult to assess exactly the meaning or significance of postures. Warren Lamb says that a person's posture and gesture can tell much about how effectively the person will perform in an organization. Such expressions or gestures can denote cheerfulness, affection, pleasantness, joy, fear, anger, nervousness, caution, worry, and defensiveness. They also attempt to hide emotions. Knapp summarizes various clues to deception. A few clues regarding deception are:

5. **Appearance:** Appearance, in the context of body language would include clothing, hair, jewellery, cosmetics etc. All these may seem unrelated to body language, but upon a closer look, we find that they are very meaningfully related to our facial expression and communication styles.

A famous writer has said that a man is recognized by his "dress and address"; "Dress does not need any explanation." By address, he means the way a person speaks to another. Every occasion has its own particular type of dress which may be formal or informal.

It is normally a part of an organization's work rules to have a formal suit for the working hours. Certain organizations have a uniform for all levels of workers. If one changes from the formal dress to an informal or casual one, he is easily noticed, and his dress speaks volumes about his attitude towards life, work, colleagues and his own feelings. It is not just the dress or clothes that are important for any occasion but also the choice of shoes, hair style and perfume that convey 'meaning' in a Non-verbal form.

### *Effective use of Body Language*

If body language is so important, the question is, how to make effective use of it. Given below are some useful tips in this regard:

1. **Mind the body-talk:** In our day-to-day communication, we should carefully notice details about the way we speak and move.
  - (i) When standing, we should keep our shoulder erect, body open and weight evenly balanced on both feet. We should guard against giving the appearance of a ramrod straight posture. Such a still posture shows rigidity in thought.
  - (ii) We should carefully identify the little things that people do when they are tense. Some people play with a lock of hair or fiddle with the pen in their hand. Such behaviour, according to psychologists, undermines the strength of what they might want to say.
  - (iii) In order to look confident and in charge, we should sit squarely in a chair, feet on the floor and shoulders straight. Austin says, "Rest your forearms on the

- table. This posture conveys the message "I will not move". If we slouch or jiggle our feet, we give the impression of being indifferent and uninterested.
- (iv) *Be careful with the handshake:* In the business world, handshakes are very important. They convey crucial messages about power, status and concern for the person we meet. A handshake that really conveys confidence is firm and dry, with strong but without an excessive pressure. Bending the wrist or gripping only the fingers would again give wrong and misleading signals.
  - (v) You must acquire the ability to sustain direct eye contact if you want to be taken seriously.
  - (vi) The dominant person always has the right to look and keep looking. The subordinate is supposed to look away. If you maintain eye contact so intently that your boss feels uncomfortable, he will sense that you are challenging his authority, even though that is not what you intended.
  - (vii) Communicate at the level of the person before you. The way we hold our body can show the person before us where we stand vis-a-vis him/her. If we fold our arms across our chest and cross our legs while we talk, we are closing off communication. If we tap our foot/feet, it shows that we are impatient.
  - (viii) With young children we should kneel or bend down so that we are able to look into their eyes. With older people we should lean against a wall or counter, put our weight on our one foot and keep our arms at our side, so as to appear open to their needs. With people in higher position, a straight posture shows respect.
  - (ix) We must be ourselves, **Maple** says, *"Non-verbal messages come from deep inside you, from your sense of self-esteem. To improve your body language, you have to start from inside and work out. If you are comfortable with yourself, it shows. People who know, who they are, have a relaxed way of talking and moving. They always come across confident and sure of their position. So, avoiding all tension, we must relax and be ourselves, not try to be, or show what we are not."*
  - (x) Graceful movements and confident posture improve the atmosphere at the workplace. With only a little care, we can look pleasant, send out right signals, enthuse workers and make others interested in us.

### Advantages of Body Language

Body language is the most easily visible aspect of communication. It, therefore, helps the receiver of the message in decoding the message. Body language complements verbal communication. Especially in face-to-face communication, no message can be completely sent across without the accompaniment of facial expressions and gestures. It helps in establishing rapport. Body language adds intensity to the process of communication.



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In the absence of any gestures, change of posture and proper eye contact, face-to-face communication will look bland or insipid. Because people are sensitive to and easily influenced by body language, it goes a long way to improve the overall atmosphere and looks of the organization. An ingenious executive can make very effective use of it.

### Limitations of Body Language

Since it is Non-verbal communication, relying on facial expressions and gestures cannot be wholly relied upon. Words, written or spoken can be taken seriously, but body language cannot always be taken seriously. People belonging to different cultural backgrounds send out different body signals. They are, therefore, liable to be misinterpreted. One has, therefore, to be extra careful in its use and understanding. Facial expressions, gestures and postures also tend to become ineffective if the listener is inattentive. It, therefore, requires extra care in getting the right message. Use of body language is not very effective in a large gathering. It yields best results in face-to-face situations, where there are just two or a small number of participants in the communication situation.

### Space Language

The space around its contents and us, convey a definite meaning. Of course, it requires some effort on our part to arrange them meaningfully, and on the part of others to understand or interpret their meaning. In other words, it tells us as to how people communicate with space. How close or far they stand in relation to another person, where they sit in a room, or how they arrange the office furniture, all of which has a real impact on communication. One of the major writers on this type of communication is anthropologist Edward T. Hall. He has identified three major types of space: feature-fixed space, semi-fixed feature space, and personal space.

1. **Feature-fixed space:** Feature-fixed space refers to buildings and other fairly permanent structures, such as walls. The manner in which buildings are laid out and the sequence of rooms and offices, have a considerable influence on communication. The person will probably communicate more with those individuals whose offices are closer to his own, rather than with those which are farther away from him. Evidence reveals that bigger the fixed place, higher will be the status of the individual in an organization.
2. **Semi-fixed feature space:** The placement and arrangement of moveable objects, such as desk and chairs, is referred to as semi-fixed feature space. Currently, a great deal of emphasis is placed on how business offices are arranged. In addition, the quality of furniture has considerable influence on the status of the individuals and this is clearly communicated non-verbally. Frequently, the superior person will come from behind the desk and will face the subordinate, for easier communication.



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3. **Personal space:** Our interaction with the people around us has for a well-defined or well-understood spatial dimension. Conversely, we can say that the spatial dimension or distance between us and other people tells us something important about our relations and the nature of our communication with them. This branch of Proxemics has come to be regarded as "personal space language." Edward T. Hall has done useful and interesting work in this area. Placing ourselves in the centre we can present the space around us in the form of the following concentric circles:

- (i) Intimate zone—physical contact/touch to 18 inches.
- (ii) Personal zone—18 inches to 4 feet.
- (iii) Social zone—4 to 12 feet.
- (iv) Public zone—12 feet to as far as we can see and hear.

(a) *Intimate distance/zone:* This ranges from actual physical contact to about 18 inches from another person. Communication and interaction within this distance are intimate activities. Mostly, our family members, close friends and select people enter this area. Those selected people are indeed 'special' people, whatever the reasons for their special status and have special significance in our communication with them. In the language used within this small, intimate and perhaps private circle, not many words are used in organizations; confidential information is often communicated within the intimate distance. When two friends meet each other after a long gap, they hug each other. Eye contact, handshake, pat on the back or shoulders is quite noticeable. The major form of intimate contact in business organization is of the handshake. Most people respond positively to men who give a firm handshake.

(b) *Personal distance/zone:* This ranges from 18 inches to four feet. Interaction in this zone includes causes and friendly conversation including conversation with close friends, colleagues, associates and visitors. Here we rise above the closed circle of intimacy around us. Although communication in this circle is also mostly personal in nature, it is relaxed and casual most of the time. It permits spontaneous unprogrammed talking or discussion. However, certain important decisions may be taken in this circle.

(c) *Social distance/zone:* It ranges from four feet to about twelve feet and has aptly been called social space. We use this space mostly for formal purposes, and the relationships within this circle are more official. We do most of our business within this area. While feelings, emotions, shared likes and dislike may come up in the intimate and 'personal' space, more

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reason and planning are used in the 'social space. This is therefore, of paramount importance in business and much of the communication in organizations is done in this social zone.

- (d) *Public distance/zone*: It ranges from 12 feet to the limits of visibility and hearing. Communication at a public distance is considered in public speaking. A good deal of communication within and outside an organization takes place at this range. We can well imagine the nature of communication/speaking which in this space becomes even more formal. The attachment of the 'intimate' and 'personal' space is substituted by the detachment of perception, objectivity of approach and formality of communication speaking. We have to raise our voice so as to be heard by others whose group is almost always larger in this space. That is why it has been called 'public' space.

### Space Use

Proxemics is also concerned with the use of space by groups of people. The space assigned to them determines their respective place and interaction patterns. For example, people who begin conversation and those seated at the front are usually considered leaders of the group. If the same people are seated in a row, their communication pattern will be of a different nature. People seated around/oval table will most likely communicate in the form of a conference. Everyone is aware of some of the ways space is used to communicate in business organizations. Experts have identified three basic principles about the use of space vis-a-vis status within the organization:

1. For people who enjoy a higher status in the organization, more and better quality space is allotted. In many organizations, the president has the most attractive office, while the vice-president, department heads, and lower level employees have smaller offices. The number of windows in the office and the way the office is furnished are also commensurate with rank of position. This is clearly evident that better the quality place, higher will be the position or seniority of the individual.
2. The higher people in the organization are protected within their territory which is often closed. Many times the more status a person has in the organization, the more difficult it is to see him/her. Outer offices and secretaries are usually used to protect the high-status person. Even gates are manned with specially deployed security staff.
3. For senior people in the organization, it is easier to invade the territory of lower status personnel. The superiors usually can enter the subordinate's office at will. The supervisor also has the ability to phone the subordinate at almost anytime. This is the privilege that he/she enjoys. However, the subordinate usually does not have the same access to the supervisor.

## Surroundings

Our surroundings or physical environment speak its own Non-verbal language which is a sprawling vast area. It is, therefore, worthwhile to cover only two important aspects of our physical context, namely colour and layout or design. Through our sensory perception we get meaning from our surroundings, in the same way as we get via our choice of colour and design, both of which, help us to send out definite signals to others.

## Layout and Design

Like 'colour language', there is also a 'layout and design language' as part of our non verbal communication. The space arrangement of an office, carpeting or its absence, the furniture and its design, all convey a meaning. Everybody is impressed by a 'tastefully' furnished office, or the impressive layout of a lobby/dining hall/conference room/reception desk. It is for this very reason that so much attention is being paid to the architecture and furnishing of offices/hotels/houses of executives in modern times. All this is aimed at conveying the mood/personality/outlook/vision of the organization. Behind all this is the vision of the successful communicator.

## Time Language

Time is a third type of Non-verbal communication. Just as there are body language and space language, there is also a time language, i.e., how we give meaning to time communicates to others. In terms of Non-verbal communication, you should recognize that time orientations are not always the same—especially in the cross-culture arena—but they do communicate. For Americans, Canadians, and many other from English-speaking countries, time values are monochronic. Monochronic people tend to view time as linear and always moving ahead. They expect events to happen at scheduled times. Polychronic people—such as those from Asian, Arabic, and Spanish speaking countries have a more indefinite view of time. Unlike the monochronic person who expects a meeting to start precisely at 9.00 a.m., the polychronic person sees a 9.00 a.m. meeting as an objective to be accomplished if possible. Nevertheless, time orientations become parts of the messages we send to and receive from one another.

## Paralanguage

Paralanguage meaning 'like language' is a fourth type of Non-verbal communication. Of all the types, it is the closest to communication with word symbols. It has to do with the sound of a speaker's voice; the 'how' of it—those hints and signals in the way words are delivered. Paralanguage creates meanings because of speed, pitch, volume, and connection of words. The symbols become a part of the meaning that is filtered from a spoken message. Degrees of consistency between what and how someone says something convey meaning. Expectancies about background, appearance, and personality are part of paralanguage.

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The first signal we receive or use is that of our voice. Everybody knows how important voice is. It tells us so much about the speaker's sex, background, education, training and temperament. There are all kinds of voices—clear, musical, raucous, cultivated, pleasant, and unpleasant and so on. Unless damaged by some injury to the vocal cords or some neurological problem, the human voice normally does a satisfactory job. In other words, it conveys the meaning of the message. In certain jobs, it is absolutely necessary for the applicant or employee to have a clear and pleasant voice. For example, jobs involving the use of telephone, announcing, tape-recording, etc., again require clear and articulate tone/voice.

The message, however, may not be effectively conveyed if we do not take care of the following points in the use of our voice:

1. **Pitch variation:** Most of us introduce wide variations in our pitch while speaking. It is necessary to catch the listener's attention and to keep him interested in us. Those who speak in monotones (single tone, without variation) fail to keep the listener's attention. That is why the word 'monotonous' has come to be used as a synonym for 'boring.' Many speakers are not aware of this weakness on their part. Once they become aware of it, the problem can be solved. A high pitch may indicate nervousness, anxiety, tension, fear, surprise, dynamism, anger, joy, cheerfulness, or impatience. A low pitch may show affection, sadness, boredom, pleasantness, intimacy or empathy. Most of us, when excited, speak in a high-pitched voice and express anger or anxiety in this manner. A situation like this sparks off a heated discussion in which we hear voices at different pitch levels. Quite often we hear, "Raising your voice is not going to convince me." Or "You can't convince me by your shouting." It is equally important to keep up a pitch at which the listener gets our point across comfortably.
2. **Speaking speed:** Fluency in a language is not the same thing as the speed of speaking. We do, however, speak at different speeds on different occasions and while conveying different parts of the same message. As a general rule, we should present the easy parts of a message at a brisk pace, because it is likely to be understood easily and soon. On the other hand, the difficult, complicated and highly technical part of information should be conveyed at a slower pace. Easy information, if conveyed slowly, becomes irritating. Hard or complicated information presented rapidly will be difficult to understand. Similarly, an increase in rate could indicate impatience, urgency or anxiety from the person sending the message while decrease in rate can indicate thoughtfulness or a reflective attitude. When we are relaxed, we speak at a comfortable speed.
3. **Pause:** The pace or speed of speaking is also accompanied by a pause. We cannot, and should not, go on speaking without pausing voluntarily or involuntarily. But the pauses have to be at the right moments. Incorrect use of pauses can create



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problems. A pause can be highly effective in emphasizing the upcoming subject and in gaining the listener's attention. But it must also be noted that frequent, arbitrary pauses spoil the speech and distract the listener's attention. It is, therefore, very important for a speaker to carefully monitor his pauses.

4. **Non-fluencies:** Speech is not always a continuous string of meaningful words. There are, as we have named above, pauses scattered at intervals which may be inserted with sounds or utterances like 'ah', 'oh', 'uh', 'um', 'you know', 'ok', etc. They are also sometimes inserted with laughing, yawning or chuckling. Sometimes, they may be effective in that they invite the listener's attention by giving a Non-verbal edge to the verbal communication. They are called 'non-fluencies'. It is rather interesting to see that they are carefully and sparingly used, to add to the fluency of the speaker, give him time to breathe or relax, make him more alert and get the message conveyed overtly or covertly. But too frequent, an insertion of these non-fluencies could also irritate the listener.
5. **Volume variation:** Volume is another voice quality that frequently conveys meanings, especially in conjunction with rate. We must speak loud enough for our audience to hear us, but also remember not to be too loud. The loudness of our voice should be adjusted according to the size of our audience. As somebody has very well said, "The contrast provides the emphasis; Volume variation puts life into our speaking." If a supervisor says softly, "I would like to talk with you in my office," you might feel somewhat at ease, but if, he said loudly, "I would like to talk with you in my office!" you would feel disturbed and uncomfortable. Softness and loudness in volume alters meaning specifically. Voice volume tends to vary with emotional and personality characteristics. Loudness of voice seems to occur in conjunction with anger, cheerfulness, joy, strength, fearlessness, activity, and high status, softness in volume appears with affection, boredom, sadness, intimacy, empathy, fear, passivity, weakness, and low status.
6. **Pronunciation:** People pronounce words differently. Their variations in pronunciation convey different meanings to different people.

### Advantages of Paralanguage

The major function of paralanguage is to express emotions. Several researchers have demonstrated that it is possible to communicate various emotions solely with paralanguage. In a foundation study, an actor who read even a small text made sure that the meaning communicated has solely the result of vocal cues rather than a strong vocabulary base.

1. Paralanguage is closely allied to language and no oral message is complete without it. Paralanguage is a sufficiently dependable indicator of the speaker's place in the organization. On the basis of his voice quality, one can easily guess his position in the hierarchy.

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2. Paralanguage tells us quite clearly about the speaker's educational background.
3. Paralanguage speaks volumes about the speaker's national and regional background.
4. This information is of immense use to the receiver and organization, in dealing with him.
5. Paralanguage gives us useful clues regarding the speaker's mental state. His voice quality, intonation and speaking speed make it easy for the receiver of the message to deal with him in the best possible manner.
6. Paralanguage has important educational value in that a careful listener can learn from an effective speaker.

**Limitations of Paralanguage**

1. Paralanguage is 'like' language, but not language. It is a Non-verbal part of communication and therefore, cannot be fully relied upon.
2. What is said and how it is said must be blended. Since this does not happen often. It requires extra care to get to the exact content of the message.
3. The voice quality and pitch of the speaker may unnecessarily prejudice the receiver of the message who has to be very open-minded and patient.
4. Paralanguage may sometimes misguide or mislead, as there may be a difference in the speech and the intention behind the spoken words.
5. As speakers belong to different speech communities, it is difficult to achieve uniformity in oral communication.

**Sign Language**

Communication is a process involving the use of mutually understood signs/symbols between the sender and receiver of a message or piece of information. From time immemorial, man has been using signs and symbols mutually understood between at least two persons, and more usually among people belonging to a group, tribe, or trade. These signs, symbols, signals and indicators have generally been of two types—visual and audio or sound signals. Smell, touch and taste also communicate because sensory perception and impressions are a necessary part of human existence. But the most powerful or effective of them is the visual element. That is why we have a **Chinese proverb**, "a picture is worth a thousand words". The reason is that we imbibe more than 50 per cent of our information through the gateway of our eyes.

Besides, two other Non-verbal types exist, but they are minor. One is colour, i.e. what meaning you draw from colours like red, blue, black, etc., because it is proven that colours produce meanings in our minds. Another is the physical context—office, carpeting, decorations, and such. One should consider them as part of the message one sends and receives.

Colour and sign language are also important modes of Non-verbal communication. The signs, pictures, colours, etc., are visual methods to describe Non-verbal communication in the language of colour and sign as under:

### **Colour as Non-verbal Communication**

Colour is a very important and powerful means of communication because of its visual impact. Colour is so much a part of our daily life. Like flowers, it is possible to "say it with colours". Colours too make their own statements. Different colours communicate different feelings and psychological effects. For example:

1. White—serene, sober, peaceful, purity
2. Red—passion, danger
3. Green—growth, brightness
4. Blue—competence
5. Grey—strength
6. Pink—youth

As colours had psychological effect; motivation and state of mind of employees are influenced by the colour at the place of work. Lively, pleasant and cooling colours at the work-place can help to create good influence on workers. Black and other dark colours are gloomy; very bright and gaudy colours may be disturbing and overexciting; well matched and softly blending colours are pleasant and soothing. Of course, moods and feelings associated with colours vary from culture to culture; nevertheless, colours symbolize feelings and moods in almost all cultures. Colour is used mainly for conveying identification. For example, red cylinders are used only for cooking gas. Hence, colour is a very important and powerful means of communication.

### **Sign Language as Non-verbal Communication**

Sometimes, words fail to convey the exact meaning of message while a picture leaves a long lasting impression. As a Chinese proverb says, "*A picture is worth a thousand words*". People, today, not only communicate through words alone, but also make use of signs and symbols in communication, hence. These signs and symbols, as used in communication are mutually understandable by the receiver and the sender of the message and include pictures, drawings, sounds, etc. The sign language uses video and audio signals in communication.

### **Meaning and Features of Sign Language**

Sign language includes all forms of codification (visual signs, signals, etc.) which replace words, numbers and punctuation signs. We are familiar with the fact that deaf and dumb people communicate with each other using sign language.

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## Notes

The most common features of sign language are as under:

1. Sign language is an art of communication with the use of pictures, drawings, sounds, etc.
2. Sign language is an expression of one's feelings through the use of symbols.
3. Sign language requires just common sense and not any formal education for being understood.
4. Sign language tends to be a very popular and effective means of communication.

### Aspects of Sign Language

Sign language represents a form of Non-verbal communication. It has the following two aspects:

1. **Visual signs:** Visual signs or symbols speak a universal language understood by people all over the world and are easy to grasp and remember. Visual signs include the use of posters, drawings, cartoons, maps, diagrams, photographs, caricatures, status, etc. These signs are mostly used when the sender has to send message to a large group of persons. Visual signs hold lot of importance in our daily life. Modern organizations use visual signs because of the following benefits:
  - (i) Visual signs like pictures and posters convey the message very easily and economically.
  - (ii) Colourful photographs and paintings make communication interesting and motivating.
  - (iii) Pictures, posters, etc. reflect the mental makeup and cultural background of the communicator.
  - (iv) Posters and paintings are useful for informing and educating illiterate people.
  - (v) Posters are also used as an effective means of advertising or publicity.

Visual signs suffer from some limitations like:

- (i) Only simple and elementary ideas can be communicated through sign language.
  - (ii) Sign language cannot be a substitute for but only a supplement to verbal communication.
  - (iii) People may misunderstand sign language.
  - (iv) On the spot correction is not possible in sign language.
2. **Visual Aids**

- (i) **Posters:** A poster is a visual aid that helps a communicator to get across an idea to the audience. It catches the attention of the audience and passes on them a simple message at a glance. A poster has to be bold in design and its components may be picture or illustration, words, colour and space.



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- (ii) **Pictorial representation:** Pictorial symbols, often with very little verbal message, are used for mass communication. A large variety, from simple drawing to sophisticated coloured pictures and exact photographic reproductions are used on posters and in advertisements. Communicating this way is especially suitable in regions with a large number of illiterate and semi-literate people. Further, pictures are universally understood, and more easily remembered. They make an immediate impact because they are more easy to perceive than a written message.
- (iii) **Graphs:** Getting a precise idea or drawing a comparison or conclusion from numeral or statistical data needs presentation of data through graphs. Different types of graphs are used for different purposes. These are area graphs, bar graphs, pie graphs, line graphs and picot graphs.
- (iv) **Charts:** A chart contains a series of ideas, while a poster is generally used in the awareness stage. A chart is used in the latest stages especially in the testing stage either alone or in the combination with other visual aids. Bar graphs are one of the most common and adaptable types of graphic presentation. Pie charts are effective when it is desired to show relative sizes of parts in a whole. Line graphs are useful when it is desired to portray a trend or series of figures covering a large number of time periods.
- (v) **Flip charts:** A flip chart is like an album of drawings, pictures and charts. It is a visual aid and assists a communicator. Flip chart requires two pieces of card board, sheets of paper, colour pencil or ink and brush, cuttings of pictures or stencils over which ink can be sprayed.
- (vi) **Maps:** Maps are used for geographical information of all kinds such as climatic conditions, distribution of population, crops, vegetation; transport routes etc. key and scale are needed for all maps. The importance of maps is that it helps in conveying the space relationships between places.
- (vii) **Signs:** A sign is a mark used as a representation of something, for example, skull and cross bones for "danger" '+' for addition, '-' for subtraction, etc. It is mostly visual and has a fixed meaning.
- (viii) **Signals:** A signal is a previously agreed movement which helps to warn, direct or to command, for example, coming across a red light or a red flag is a signal to stop.
- (ix) **Bulletin board:** It is a board with a background of coloured cloth. It can be covered with glass. The material for display may be news-sheets, announcements, booklets, bulletins, circular letters, newspaper cuttings, pictures, cartoons, charts, maps, graphs, etc.
- (x) **Audio signs:** Audio (or signs) or signals have been used to send messages since the early days of civilization. Audio signs are also universal in nature

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as they are understood by the people easily. Audio signs include the use of drum beating, alarms, hooters, buzzers, whistles, bells, sirens, etc. These signs are also used when the sender has to convey a message to a large group of persons. Audio signs hold lot of importance in our daily life and are commonly used to make important announcements to general public. The use of audio signals is associated with the following benefits:

- (a) Sound signals convey the message very quickly. For example, the hooting of a siren in a factory immediately makes the workers active.
- (b) Sound signals are very useful for managing time.
- (c) The working of an organization can be streamlined with the help of buzzers and such other sound signals.

### 3. Audio Aids

- (i) **Radio:** Radio is a very useful element of mass communication. Radio is a powerful medium and occupies an important place in advertising. In India, the All India Radio stations give the meters and frequency in kilocycles on FM, medium and short waves. Radio is a mobile as well as instantaneous form of communication.
- (ii) **Audio cassette:** Audio cassettes have emerged as a popular and useful communication medium. The main advantage of audio cassettes is that the communicator can easily have control on the sound and can stop it any time. Moreover, it can be used again and again for revision or recall.
- (iii) **Record player:** Records are discs of lac and plastic. These discs are embossed and engraved and can be used for giving instruction to a group or for group meetings, entertainment, etc. Record player, on the other hand, is an electrical instrument, which reproduced the sound recorded on records.
- (iv) **Magnetic tape:** Magnetic tape is a storage device, such as disk tapes and chip. It is a tape or ribbon coated with a magnetic material on which the data and information may be stored in the form of magnetically polarized spots. Magnetic tape is used for batch processing and is generally used in computers. Magnetic tapes are normally available in the cartridge or tape cassette form.
- (v) **Public address system:** Public address system includes microphones, amplifiers and loudspeakers. The microphone converts sound waves into alternating electric currents, which are fed into the amplifier. The amplifier amplifies these currents and passes them to the loudspeakers, which further converts them into sound waves. These sound waves can be heard as loud voice of the speaker.

## Why is Sign Language used?

The various benefits of sign language are as follows:

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1. **Large audience:** Visual signs help the communicator to cover a large group of persons as compared to any other mode of communication.
2. **Interesting:** Visual signs make communication interesting and motivating for the receiver of the message and thus, enable him understand the message quickly.
3. **Useful for illiterate persons:** Visual signs tend to be very useful for the illiterate persons. They do not require any formal training or learning to understand messages in the sign language.
4. **Economical transmission of message:** Visual signs, like pictures, posters, photographs, etc., economies on verbal communication. They help the sender to send the communication easily to a large number of people.
5. **Speedy transmission of message:** Audio messages can be transmitted to a large number of people in different regions at a faster speed than any other mode of communication.
6. **Publicity:** Posters are an effective means of publicity as they attract the attention of people watching them.
7. **Creating alertness:** Sound signals are very quick in conveying the intended message. For example, the ringing of a bell or the hooting of a siren makes the workers alert, both in reporting for duty, winding up the day's work, or to take safety measures.

## Limitations of Sign Language

Some of the limitations of sign language are as under:

1. **Difficulty in transmission of complex message:** Sign language helps in communication of simple message only. It is very difficult to communicate complex message through this mode as they may result in confusion.
2. **Communication skills:** Sign language requires a lot of skills on the part of the communicator. The communicator or the sender of the message has to be good in drawing effective and relevant visual and audio signs.
3. **Not a substitute to verbal communication:** Sign language is not a substitute to verbal communication. It can only supplement verbal communication.
4. **Mistake in decoding:** Sign language, at times, may be misunderstood by the receiver of the message and may result in adverse action if any mistake is caused in decoding of the message at his end.
5. **Lack of flexibility:** Sign language lacks flexibility which is available in case of verbal communication. It might be very difficult to amend the message in case of any mistake.

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Although communication<sup>4</sup> is generally through words—written and spoken—yet it is not complete without non-verbal communication. As we all know, our earliest communications successfully took place without words. That is to say, as babies we communicated with everybody only through non-verbal means. A person should be aware of the impact of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal messages may not always be intended or planned; nevertheless, they clearly communicate to people and influence their interpretation. Non-verbal messages may aid or hinder communication. The following are important characteristics of non-verbal communication:

1. The words we use generally convey objective information; non-verbal messages reveal our emotions and attitudes. When we do use words to talk about our emotions, we often talk about what we think we ought to feel, not what we really feel. Meanwhile, we express our true feelings non-verbally.
2. Non-verbal communication is more suitable than words for some communication tasks. It is often quicker and easier to point to an object than to describe it. Because body movements are visual, it is also a silent means of communication and may be used when it is difficult to use speech.
3. Communication is more than verbal. Verbal exchanges accounts for only a fraction of the message people send and receive. Research has shown that between 70-90% of the entire communication spectrum is non-verbal. Consequently, you should be aware of the different forms of non-verbal communication that you are likely to encounter during negotiation conferences.
4. Sometimes non-verbal communication can take place when no one present can describe the nonverbal cues that transmitted the message. Non-verbal communication can also be unique to one individual. Hand gestures, for example, may take their meanings from objects or actions they relate to or from the way they are used in conjunction with speech.
5. Knowledge of non-verbal communication is important for managers who serve as leaders of organizational teams for at least two reasons. Firstly, to function effectively as a team leader, the manager must interact with the other members successfully and secondly, how something is expressed may carry more significance and weight than what is said, i.e. the words themselves.
6. Non-verbal communication makes, or helps to make, a first impression. First impressions are powerful. They often result in frozen evaluations, images that can be very difficult to alter.
7. Non-verbal communication is always present. Neither oral nor written communication exists without non-verbal communication.

Although non-verbal messages are powerful, a listener should not become so intent on interpreting them that he/she fails to listen to the speaker's words.



## 2.8 Relationship between Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication centers on substitution, complementing, conflict, and accenting which are explained as under:

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1. **The substitution relationship:** When we nod our head up and down in approval of an action, we mean "yes" without using the word. Here we have substituted nonverbal sign for verbal sign.
2. **The complementing relationship:** When we say 'no' and at the same time shake our head from side-to-side to reinforce the negative verbalization, we are complementing the verbal message.
3. **The conflict relationship:** When action conflicts with verbal message, we tend to rely more on the nonverbal communication. Since much nonverbal communication is below our level of awareness, nonverbal clues are often harder to fade than verbal ones. The noted psychologist Sigmund Freud once said, *"A person who has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore"*.
4. **The accenting relationship:** Just as highlighted words emphasize written ideas, non-verbal behaviour may accent parts of a verbal message. "Look at me", when we say jabbing someone's shoulder with a pointing finger, we are accenting or modulating our verbal message with a non-verbal sign.

## 2.9 Essentials for Effective use of Non-verbal Communication

Effective communication skills are essential for success not only in the personal life of the communicator but also in professional life. On the basis of research conducted by the researchers, it has been found that non-verbal communication has an upper edge in verbal communication. The following essentials are important to improve the use of non-verbal communication.

### 1. Watch and read the non-verbal clues:

- (i) Interpret non-verbal clues in relation to the situation and culture accurately.
- (ii) Be careful about false non-verbal clues deliberately given to deceive you.
- (iii) Consider the non-verbal message, along with what the speaker's words say, to know the total message.
- (iv) Respond, but do not react to non-verbal signals with self-control.

### 2. Use good body language:

- (i) Develop self-awareness by visualizing yourself as others see you by interpreting your body movements and gestures.
- (ii) Try to develop positive gestures and expressions to present yourself as you wish to be seen by others.

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- (iii) Convey sincerity through your tone of voice and facial expression.
  - (iv) Use symbols and nonverbal cues to reinforce and clarify the meaning of message.
  - (v) Maintain eye contact with your audience.
  - (vi) Smile genuinely to reflect your feelings of delight.
  - (vii) Avoid power posturing signals.
  - (viii) Do not give conflicting non-verbal cues.
  - (ix) Present yourself well to make a lasting good impression.
3. **Touching as channel of communication should be used cautiously:** Generally, touching is the channel of communicating intimacy. One should be careful in using this channel, particularly that which part of the body can be touched by whom and when. It all depends upon the culture of a country and a particular region. For example, in the West, men and women walk freely holding each other hands, but it is not so in India and other Asian countries. Different parts of the body are considered as centres of intimate relationships. For example, the forearm of woman can be touched by a man while communicating without causing offence, but not the upper part of the arm.
4. **Silence to be used sensibly in communication:** If you do not know much about the topic being discussed it is better to keep silent. Likewise, if you agree with what is being said, it is again good to be silent. Indians and Chinese normally follow this pattern but an American would take silence as a sign of withdrawal and non-participation. For people in East, silence is the sign of wisdom but for Westerners, it is an indicator of lack of an understanding.
5. **The purpose of all communication needs to be useful and harmonious:** The non-verbal language used by the speaker should reflect the body language of the other person. Mostly 70 per cent of conversation time is used in listening and that tells us the significance of silence. For proper rapport and harmony, remember the following steps:
- (i) Develop the habit of talking less and listening and observing others more.
  - (ii) Do not dominate the discussion.
  - (iii) Keep your natural pace of conversation.
  - (iv) Recognize the pace of others.
  - (v) Let your pace and other's being nearly the same.
  - (vi) Try to establish a rapport between you and the other person during the first few minutes of your conversation.
  - (vii) Do not introduce any controversial issue before you have been able to create rapport through pacing.
  - (viii) Avoid harsh criticism. Try to see reason for difference of opinion.

- (ix) Be tolerant of differences.
- (x) Focus on similarities of ideas.

6. **Express gratitude:** Express gratitude to your audience when they are being attentive and responsive. The encouragement could increase the level of attentiveness and responsiveness, making it a more enjoyable experience for you and for them.

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## 2.10 Summary

Non-verbal communication is distinct from oral and written communication. It takes place without the use of words. Unlike verbal communication, this type of communication transcends linguistic barriers and carries universal appeal. Non-verbal communication takes place through body language, postures and gestures, attire, appearance, handshake, space, timing, example and behaviour. Since this type of communication takes place through observation, it may be both intended and unintended. Non-verbal communication is ancient and universal.

In this chapter, we have discussed certain characteristics of non-verbal communication in organizations. Further, the nature, types and significance of non-verbal communication is discussed. The substitution, complementing, conflict and accenting are the four types of relationships between verbal and non-verbal communication. Effective communication skills are essential for success not only personally but professionally too. To improve the use of non-verbal communication important essentials are offered too.

Besides, colour and sign language is also discussed in this chapter as colour and sign language are important modes of non-verbal communication. Colour is a very important and powerful means of communication because of its visual impact and it is so much a part of our daily life. Sign language includes all those forms of codification in which words, numbers and punctuation signs are replaced by gestures. The aspects, importance and limitations of sign language are also offered in the present chapter.

## 2.11 Glossary

- **Eye Contact:** The eyes play an important role in face-to-face communication. Eye contact is one of the most powerful forms of non-verbal communication.
- **Volume variation:** Volume is another voice quality that frequently conveys meanings, especially in conjunction with rate. We must speak loud enough for our audience to hear us, but also remember not to be too loud.

## 2.12 Review Questions

1. What is non-verbal communication?
2. Explain the nature and importance of non-verbal communication.
3. Define non-verbal communication. How is it related to verbal communication?



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4. State the meaning and characteristics of non-verbal communication.
5. What is the significance of non-verbal communication?
6. Explain the various essentials for effective use of non-verbal communication.
7. What is meant by sign language? Discuss its aspects.
8. Explain the significance of colour as non-verbal communication.
9. Discuss the advantages and limitations of sign language as a means of communication.
10. Write short notes on the following:
  - (i) Visual aids
  - (ii) Audio aids
  - (iii) Colour as non-verbal communication
  - (iv) Visual signs
  - (v) Audio signs.

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### 2.13 Further Readings

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# **Manners and Etiquettes**

Notes

## **(Structure)**

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 What are Business Etiquettes?
- 3.4 Basic Rules of Business Etiquettes
- 3.5 Scope of Business Etiquettes
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- 3.9 Summary
- 3.10 Glossary
- 3.11 Review Questions
- 3.12 Further Readings

### **3.1 Learning Objectives**

After studying the chapter, students will be able to:

- To understand the concept of business etiquettes;
- To know the general rules of business etiquette;
- To learn how to introduce yourself and others;
- To learn how to interact with foreign clients;
- To know business to business norms of behaviour;
- To know how to handle telephone calls.

### **3.2 Introduction**

In today's highly globalized and competitive environment, executives are expected to know the essential business etiquettes. It means for successful and rewarding business transactions, they must know how to conduct themselves at company meetings, parties

*English Communication* and dinners. They must be aware of their company's culture and etiquettes. The company's culture and etiquettes refer to conventional rules of social behaviour and the rules of business transactions.

## Notes

Effective business communication is not at all possible without understanding business etiquettes. In this chapter, an attempt is made to explain the meaning of business etiquettes, the scope of business etiquettes, rules of business etiquettes and many other aspects of business etiquettes as telephonic etiquettes, business dining, etc.

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### 3.3 What are Business Etiquettes?

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The word etiquette means conventional rules of social behaviour,<sup>1</sup> or professional conduct. These rules are unwritten rules, which act as norms to be observed by all professionals who work as a team in a particular company or department. They help you realize when your behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate. In business, as in life, etiquette is a self-rewarding trait of appropriate conduct. Successful professionals know how to conduct themselves at company meetings, parties, and dinners. They are aware of their company's culture and etiquette. Further, the rules of business etiquette mean more than the rules of just being nice.

This means self-discipline and respect for the conventional norms of conduct. Members belonging to a profession (e.g., medicine, law, chartered accountancy) are required to observe the rules of their professional conduct. Similarly, people working in business organizations are supposed to behave as per accepted norms. They should be aware of the culture and behavioral standards of their organizations. They should know how to conduct themselves in formal and informal gatherings such as company meetings, office parties, and ceremonial dinners and so on. These fundamental rules of business behaviour are known as business etiquette.

If you ignore these norms of group attitude and behaviour, you run the risk of being singled out as 'loners' or 'headstrong' persons. Your behaviour may disrupt the smooth working of the team by causing misunderstanding and tension among fellow workers.

Suppose, you choose to turn up late for meetings habitually, or ignore deadlines, or indulge in character assassination at coffee-breaks, or demand (as a right), not request (as a favour), help in a situation, you are ignoring, knowingly or unknowingly, the rules of good professional conduct, behaviour, and etiquette.

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### 3.4 Basic Rules of Business Etiquettes

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Every workplace evolves its own set of norms of behaviour and attitude. For example, you can survey banks or hospitals during lunch time. In some, you may find that everyone resumes working without even a minute's delay, after lunch time, while in some others,

taking an extra 10 to 15 minutes for lunch may be a general practice. In such cases, the sense of punctuality is governed by no rules written in the work manual. *Manners and Etiquettes*

The golden rules of business etiquette can be easily remembered by the word 'IMPACT' whose letters signify: Integrity (I), Manners (M), Personality (P), Appearance (A), Consideration (C) and Tact (T). The rules are briefly stated below:

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1. **Integrity:** It means you act in an honest, truthful and trustworthy manner. A reputation for integrity is slowly gained but quickly lost. Unquestioned integrity is the first golden rule of good business behaviour.
2. **Manners:** It means the patterns of behaviour. Selfish, boorish or undisciplined behaviour cannot lead to fruitful business relationships. Speaking or acting in a racist or sexist manner, and disloyalty to your company or colleagues are unacceptable business manners.
3. **Personality:** It communicates your own values, attitudes and opinions. Your behaviour will decide whether your qualities are appreciated or not. A balanced approach is necessary. You can be passionate, irreverent and self-confident. But you should not be emotional, disloyal and arrogant. You should not fail to observe the civilities of business life.
4. **Appearance:** Always present yourself to your best advantage. A well-clothed and rightly postured appearance makes good impression on others. Never let your appearance become a liability.
5. **Consideration:** See yourself from the viewpoint of others. By imagining the likely reaction of the person you are to meet, speak or write, you can deal with him more carefully and sensitively. A successful negotiator role plays the likely action of his opposition before meeting him.
6. **Tact:** Think before you speak or act. There is always the temptation to react immediately to some provocation or situation in business dealings. Avoid thoughtless and impulsive words and actions. When in doubt, say nothing.

### 3.5 Scope of Business Etiquettes

In an organization, our basic concern is to create a smooth work environment where each person helps the others to carry on their jobs with ease. Every organization evolves its own set of norms of behaviour. This chapter describes the behaviour and customs that would be considered appropriate and acceptable in most business organizations/offices/workplaces across the modern 'educated' world (open to Western culture). Learning the rules of business etiquette will help you, as a professional, to act with ease in any business setting. Let us, therefore, consider some common situations in business and find out how to act appropriately. Generally speaking, business organizations set rules of etiquettes relating to the following:



**Notes**

"Good morning, I am Rahul Arora." This type of good self-introduction makes a positive first impression. Since first impression is long-lasting, a confident self-introduction while meeting others is very important in business. Many people fail to do so either due to shyness or because they consider it impolite. When you meet a person for the first time, you can make him/her comfortable by making it known who you are and why you are there. When you greet someone in a formal meeting, state your full name and official position at the very outset. This is not only a norm of business etiquette but also the first step towards cordial business relations.

When do you introduce yourself?

1. When you recognize someone but they do not recognize you.
2. At large gatherings: business or social.
3. When the introducer doesn't recall your name.
4. When you are being kind to someone who is looking uneasy in an unfamiliar setting.
5. When you meet a friend of a friend.

**Introduction to Self**

Self-introduction can give more trouble than anything else in the corporate area. Given the number of people we meet in a day, it can be the most important opportunity to make a positive impact on a potential client, partner or employer. Here is a four-step action plan to introduce yourself:

1. Extend a firm handshake, maintaining direct eye contact.
2. Say your first and last name and company name clearly (never give yourself a title, e.g., Mr., Ms., etc.)
3. Say something about yourself that creates a connection and is relevant to the target and the setting.
4. Repeat the person's name and say you're pleased to meet with him.

If your name sounds unfamiliar, speak your name slowly and clearly. If necessary, help either by speaking your name politely. This will create cordial relations. These days most business meetings begin and end with a handshake. A handshake should be immediately done after introduction by extending your right hand and firmly holding the other person's right hand very briefly. In modern societies, a handshake is a non-verbal communication of friendly dealing. Nowadays, in business as in society, there is no gender distinction. Hence, handshaking with young ladies is normal. Only, it is to be done by holding the right hand gently and very briefly. Sometimes, while parting, people shake hands by holding both the hands together or putting their left arm on the back or the shoulder of the other person to communicate the warmth that has developed between them after meeting each other.



When you fail to recall somebody's name, it is rude to directly ask the name of a person whom you have met earlier. Tact is necessary in such a situation. You should ask for the person's card before he detects your failure. You can say, "Could I have your latest business and/ or your telephone number?"

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### Introduction of Others

Before conducting a meeting, the persons involved need to know one another in terms of their names and professional status. The status conveys the role a person will play in the meeting or in negotiations.

1. A clear and complete introduction of the host and the visitors makes everyone feel relaxed and creates a congenial atmosphere for the deliberations.
2. Normally the most senior person among the visitors, or the host team, introduces the other members of his/her group present there.
3. The etiquette is that first visitors are introduced to the host. Then, members of the host group are introduced.
4. Do not introduce a senior to a junior. Instead, introduce the junior to the senior according, say Mr. Sharma (CEO), may I introduce Pooja Kapoor to you? Pooja has joined us as a Research Officer".

### Business Meals/Dining

In business, executives meet before or after the office hours. They also have formal occasions to be together at lunch or dinner parties during the process of making business deals. On such occasions, one should follow the cultural norms which set the unwritten protocol (rules) of behaviour as members of a company, group, or organization. They are not rules of discipline; they define the norms of appropriate behaviour as cultured members of a dinner. The executives should keep in mind that such business occasions are, in fact, business activities. Therefore, they should behave with a sense of responsibility. It is quite common to negotiate business at lunch or dinner. Such meals have their own code of behaviour. You should observe the code to get the best out of them. Business meals should not be considered as occasions for free drinking and dining. In this context, the following norms should be observed.

#### As a Host

1. As a host, invite the business guest personally, maybe over phone.
2. If possible, confirm the date, time and place in writing. In case the place is unknown to the guest, give clear directions to the place.
3. Apprise the invitee of your guest list.
4. Call the guest a day before the event to confirm the arrangements.
5. Check the guest's dietary preference.

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6. As a host, you should reach the venue a little ahead of the given time and personally check the seating arrangements with the hotel or restaurant.
7. Receive the guest personally outside the dining hall.
8. Ensure that the guest is comfortable going in to eat. Move in together with the guest to the dining table.
9. Request the guest to order soft drinks and dishes of his/her choice.
10. After the initial pleasantries, the host should open the subject of the meeting in a general form.
11. Business talk should be held in an informal and relaxed manner. But business discussion should not distract you from your role as the host.
12. Always ensure that the guest enjoys the meal as much as possible.
13. Business cards are usually exchanged at the end of business meals rather than at the beginning.

### As a Guest

1. As a guest you should stick to your own dietary preferences.
2. If you do not take something, you should feel free to refuse. If you are served, say beef or pork and you do not eat it, say so politely.
3. The same must be your attitude to drinks. If you are a teetotaler, decline the offer to drink politely.
4. Do not be eloquent on the harms of drinking. Just say, "Thanks, I would like to have some lime cordial or fresh lime soda (or whatever is your choice)."
5. Although, it is considered best to avoid drinking at business dinners, and, if however, you accept the drink, avoid drinking much. You can excuse yourself by saying "I have an early morning flight", or "I have to drive back", or "In fact, I never drink".
6. If you receive your dinner plate with too much food, do not worry. Just eat whatever you want and indicate that you have -finished by placing your knife and fork together in either "the four O' Clock" or "Six O' Clock" position on your plate.

### Table Manners

Business meals are formal occasions where participants often eat as their culture.

For example, many foreigners use cutlery items like forks, knives, spoons, etc. But Indians generally prefer to eat food with their hands. They use spoons as the only cutlery. Eating with the hand is just fine. But in case you are using knife and fork, you should know and follow the general rules of using cutlery in the correct manner.

1. The knife is always held in the right hand.
2. The fork is first held in the left hand with knife in the right hand.

3. Once the food is cut into pieces, the knife is kept on the plate and the fork is held in the right hand to put the food in the mouth. *Manners and Etiquettes*
4. When not used both knife and fork is placed on a side plate but never on the table.

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The major difference between Asian and European styles of eating is that in Asia, specially India and Pakistan, people often pick up a large piece of food and directly bite from it. This is never done by an American or a European. The food is cut into small pieces. Generally, Westerners eat with their mouths closed, whereas most Asians bite morsels and chew them. Their mouths remain partially open. These differences in styles of eating are not cultural. They are based on convenience and habits.

The best rule for anyone to follow is to:

1. Eat the way you are accustomed to.
2. Use whatever cutlery you have been regularly using, with elegance at formal business meals.
3. If you are comfortable eating with hands, use your hand.
4. If you need a spoon, ask for it politely.

### Interaction with Foreign Clients

Since the foreign clients belong to different cultures, they should be dealt with very carefully. Respecting cultural needs, religious beliefs, and the attitude of the foreign visitors, will go a long way in developing good business relations.

### Language

English is today a global link language. Yet Arabs, Japanese, Germans, French and Russians prefer to conduct business in their own language. A foreign visitor may not know English as well as we do. Therefore, use an interpreter, if necessary, for important business occasions. In addition, the following factors should also be kept in view:

1. Confirm with the visitor that he has no objection to the use of an interpreter.
2. Prepare documents in both languages, English and the language of the foreign visitor.
3. Learn and use some words of greetings and thanks in your visitor's language.
4. Apologies to your visitor for not speaking his language.

### Business Manners

While playing host to a foreign client, we should be very clear about the cultural norms, customs, habits, etc. in the foreign country. Some of the examples are cited below:

#### 1. American style of business meeting

- (i) Shaking hands during introduction is normal for men, but not so common among women.



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- (ii) Business cards are exchanged only when there is a need to do so e.g., to meet later.
- (iii) Punctuality is most important as a form of courtesy and business manners.
- (iv) Americans prefer breakfast meetings to develop close business relations.
- (v) They also have meetings over lunch.
- (vi) Americans prefer to call you by your first name. It is a common business practice. So you should not feel that he/she is taking undue personal liberty by using your first name.

**2. Japanese style of business meeting**

- (i) The usual greeting in Japan is a long bow and not a handshake. But Japanese businessmen generally greet their American and British counterparts by shaking hands and not with a bow.
- (ii) The Japanese exchange business cards on first meetings. The cards should be offered and accepted with both hands.
- (iii) Japanese business people should be addressed by using Mr./Ms before the name, and never by the first name.
- (iv) The Japanese dislike close physical contact. Therefore, never backslap or hold their elbow while chatting.
- (v) Japanese businesspeople are very particular about the hierarchy. Juniors must be obedient to their seniors in meetings. The juniors wait to be invited to speak and never openly disagree with their boss.
- (vi) Wives play little part in Japanese business life. A Japanese businessman usually prefers to be entertained on his own.
- (vii) Giving gifts is an important part of the Japanese business life. Gifts in pairs (e.g., pen and pencil set, cufflinks) are considered lucky. But gifts in fours are considered unlucky. The gift must be in keeping with the status of the person.
- (viii) Never send red greeting cards because red is used for funeral notices in Japan.

**3. Arabian style of business meeting**

- (i) The traditional greeting in Arab countries is "Salam-alayakum" (Peace be upon you) followed by a firm handshake. To show greater warmth and closeness, an Arab may embrace you while placing the right hand on the heart and the left hand on your right shoulder and kiss you on both cheeks.
- (ii) Social pleasantries usually precede business meetings. But do not enquire about health or family and avoid religious and political issues.
- (iii) Arabs conduct business meetings in a leisurely style. Therefore, remain patient if the meeting extends much beyond your expectation. Arabs extend and expect lavish hospitality.



- (iv) Never sit in a position that shows an Arab the soles of your shoes. Don't be surprised if your Arab guest removes his shoes in your office.
- (v) Offer refreshments to your Arab guest as soon as he arrives. But do not serve alcohol.
- (vi) Arabs eat with the right hand. It is impolite to gesture with the left hand and to point with the finger.
- (vii) With Arabs, gifts are a part of hospitality. Therefore, small gifts at dinners are offered as a token of good relationship. Expensive gifts are offered as tokens of gratitude for favours received. Avoid handkerchiefs as gifts as these are associated with tears and parting.
- (viii) Do not shake hand or offer a gift to your visitor's wife.

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**4. French style of business meeting**

- (i) French businessmen usually choose to speak in French with businessmen from other countries.
- (ii) They are very cordial, and greet you both while meeting and parting by shaking hands.
- (iii) Businessmen and businesswomen embrace and kiss each other on meeting and parting.
- (iv) Business is a serious and formal occasion for them.

**5. German style of business meeting**

- (i) German business meetings are highly formal and scheduled much in advance.
- (ii) Punctuality is of utmost importance among business norms and etiquette.
- (iii) Germans take pains in making themselves intelligible in English too, if required.
- (iv) People are addressed by their surnames. To show respect to senior businessmen they are sometimes called as "Herr Doctor". Similarly, businesswomen are always addressed as 'Frau' (a married or widowed German speaking woman, often used as a title).

**6. Italian & Spanish style of business meeting**

- (i) Both Italians and Spanish businesspeople take business occasions as part of social life.
- (ii) They are less formal than other Europeans.
- (iii) They are not fussy about punctuality at meetings.
- (iv) Personal welfare and family matters may precede the business discussion.
- (v) During the business meeting, there can be an excited exchange of words which leaves no trace on anyone's feelings as soon as the meeting is over.

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- (vi) They freely accept hospitality and gifts without linking them with their business deals.

**7. Dutch style of business meeting**

- (i) Dutch businessmen speak English fluently.
- (ii) Most of them are polyglots (speaking or writing several languages). They can, therefore, do business in several languages.
- (iii) They are relaxed in their approach to business meetings and personal relations.

**8. Indian style of business meeting:** As Indian business goes global, businessmen in India are realizing the need to prepare themselves for the duties of international hosts and also to groom themselves as global visitors by a judicious mix of modernity and tradition.

- (i) Indian business culture is eclectic.
- (ii) Shaking hands at a meeting or parting is a common practice.
- (iii) Indians have always been known for their hospitality. Visitors are always treated with utmost attention and respect.
- (iv) Business meetings are punctual, well-planned, and formally conducted and protocol of seniority is observed.
- (v) In matters of business-discussion, juniors always give precedence to their seniors. Many times, juniors wait for a signal from their senior to contribute to the discussion.
- (vi) Business cards are exchanged while parting, generally to indicate further contacts.
- (vii) Presentation of small gifts at the end of the meeting as memento is considered a goodwill gesture.
- (viii) Very important persons are received, at the threshold of the business-meeting venue, by senior persons and are usually presented with bouquets.
- (ix) They are also normally accompanied back to their vehicles and duly seen off.

As a host, it is your duty to see that guests from different countries are made to feel comfortable in a foreign environment. Their personal needs of smoking or drinking must be fulfilled and need special attention by you as a host.

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### 3.6 Interpersonal Business Etiquettes

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Interpersonal or dyadic communication is an integral part of business relation.

It links people together, be it in social business or professional life. In a conversation, the participant has to play the role of a speaker or a listener interchangeably. Very often,

we form an impression about an individual from the way he talks and the topic(s) on which he converses. *Manners and Etiquettes*

Most of us find it easy to converse with our friends, relatives and colleagues whom we like and trust. That is why conversation rarely finds a place in a programme of formal instruction. Since every professional is required to participate in this form of dyadic communication, let us briefly look at some of the important points to be borne in mind.

It is useful first to analyze your own conversation habits and then try to change them for greater effectiveness. Ask yourself questions such as the following for self-analysis:

1. Do I find it difficult to start a conversation?
2. Am I unable to pick a topic?
3. Am I unable to keep the conversation flowing smoothly?
4. Do I always agree with what others say or disagree with them all the time?
5. Do I frequently talk about myself, my family and my interests?
6. Have I a tendency to dominate every conversation situation?
7. Do I give the other participants a chance to speak?
8. Have I any mannerisms likely to annoy people?
9. Do I respect other people's time and interests?
10. Am I self-conscious about the language I use—grammar, pronunciation, articulation, etc.?

The answer that you get would prove useful both for formal and informal conversation. For effective interpersonal business relations, the following tips should be followed:

1. The conversation should be of interest to the participant and may begin with a topic in which both of you have some interests. As it flows into new channels adjust you to the comments and new points of view. Occasionally there would be spells of silence. These need not bother you because often during these spells new thoughts are generated.
2. Be always courteous and cheerful. Feel interest in what is being said.
3. Be alert to the attitudes that others may have and do not be surprised when you realize that the attitudes are likely to change.
4. Occasionally, call the person by name and look at him while speaking. If you speak the name aloud you would be generating more friendly feelings. To cap it all, take care of your language and oral demeanor.
5. Being dogmatic and argumentative may spoil your conversation, but it is useful to have a point of view.
6. Avoid pet and superfluous words and phrases. An analysis of your own speech may reveal that you have a fad for certain words or phrases (e.g. 'time frame', 'allergic',

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etc.). Avoid using them frequently in conversation. Similarly, expressions that smack of affection and exaggeration should be shunned.

7. The smooth flow of conversation is likely to be hampered if you deliberately use foreign words or use high-flown vocabulary to impress the listener. An overuse of words such as 'very lovely', 'wonderful', and 'excellent' may also mar the pleasant informal atmosphere in which conversation ought to take place.

### 3.7 Business to Business Etiquettes

Each member of a business is its ambassador in dealing with other business houses. Naturally he/she should follow the appropriate norms to maintain and enhance the image of the business he/she is representing.

#### 1. Respecting hierarchies

- (i) While dealing with persons from other companies, make your status clear through your business card.
- (ii) Know the status of the other persons.
- (iii) Use a level of formality appropriate to your respective positions.
- (iv) Decide on the most effective way to use your respective positions. Agree on the way communication and decisions are to be handled.

#### 2. Organizational loyalty

- (i) Always speak well of your company. You are a part of your company's activities.
- (ii) Never criticize your organization before people from other companies.
- (iii) Defend your colleague's action without offending the complainant.
- (iv) Promise corrective action on your colleague's/company's behalf.
- (v) Feel proud of your organization's achievements. Keep yourself fully informed of the new development points of your organization.

#### 3. Handling confidential matters

- (i) Keep confidential material in as few hands as possible.
- (ii) Keep records secure and use code names if it is necessary to protect the identity of the persons.
- (iii) Take copies of key documents with you to reduce the involvement of other staff.
- (iv) Respect any reasonable conditions imposed by the other party while giving you confidential information.
- (v) Do not leak other's secrets. In case your secrets are leaked, take it up with others immediately.



**4. Handling negotiations**

- (i) Make your company's position clear.
- (ii) Make the best of your case.
- (iii) Be prepared to respond in case the opposite party concedes a point.
- (iv) Be polite but firm.
- (v) Be prepared to compromise in case minimum terms acceptable to you are satisfied.

**5. Dealing with customers**

- (i) Treat all the customers well.
- (ii) Do not ignore the small customers and clients.
- (iii) Be fair in dealing with the customers.
- (iv) Execute the customer's orders promptly.
- (v) Handle customers' complaints urgently and with due care.

**3.8 Telephone Etiquette**

Telephone manners are very important in the present-day globalize words to create goal relations with others and also to raise company's goodwill. It may be noted that conversation over the telephone requires the use of verbal and non-verbal skills. Pleasant tone, sweet voice, clear articulation of words and proper intonation are examples of non-verbal skills. You should be able to convey your message not by words alone but through your speaking style too. Communication over telephone is invisible interpersonal communication. Therefore, the way you speak, hear, respond and hang up is as important as what you communicate. Bad telephone habits and lack of etiquette can spoil relations with other firms.

**General Considerations**

A telephone conversation continues through three stages. For an effective telephone communication, these stages need due attention and specific skills as discussed below:

- 1. Preparation for the call:** In business communication on telephone for receiving and making calls, our role as the receiver or as the caller requires an appropriate knowledge of the organization we represent, up-to-date knowledge of its activities, the knowledge of our section or the department, our products and services and the information regarding our customers. We should have a special pad and pen ready to jot down the important points emerging out of our conversation. As a preparation, an up-to-date telephone directory and a complete list of queries should also be kept ready.
- 2. Controlling the call:** The control over the call starts with lifting the receiver. We should promptly lift the receiver when we receive a call. We should lift it hearing

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three to four rings. A frustrating voice is not liked by anyone. We start making a call by greeting the receiver giving our own identity, may not be the name but indeed by giving the designation and the department we belong to. A friendly and cheerful tone shows our interest. It makes the caller respond immediately by revealing his or her identity. Using the caller's name in our conversation makes us sound friendly and helpful.

For a sound control, we should have our questions for the caller ready to extract all relevant information from the caller. We should try to avoid the caller waiting, holding or hanging on to the receiver. This hints at our positive treatment. Nor should we hold two conversations simultaneously. Even if these occurs, any interruption we should ignore that and continue paying attention to the caller or the receiver.

During a telephonic conversation, we should be particular about jotting down or informing names, phone numbers, addresses or other important details. We should also know how to conclude the conversation with an appropriate summary at the end. For transferring calls we should know our telephone system, the buttons to press for transferring calls. When transferring the call, we should inform him or her identity and purpose of the caller.

3. **Follow-up:** The final stage of telephonic communication deals with the essential follow-up with regard to the promises made. If we say that we would call the person back soon with the necessary information, we should do it. If any message has been jotted down from the caller, it should reach the person concerned. If the person concerned has to reply to the caller we should also find out whether that person has called back or not. We should reassure the waiting caller for some information that it will pass on to him or her soon.

### Receiving Calls

1. Lift the receiver promptly.
2. Reveal your identity.
3. Hold the mouthpiece properly.
4. If you do not know who the caller is, obtain his name and designation.
5. Even if the caller is annoyed, keep yourself cool.
6. Give the required information accurately. If it is not readily available promise to ring back and, of course, keep your promise.
7. If a wrong number call comes to you, do not abuse the caller or slam down the receiver.
8. Keep a jot pad and a pencil handy to note messages, if any.
9. Keep your telephone on your left hand side so that the right hand is free to write.
10. Take the message fully and correctly.

1. Have a personal telephone directory listing the telephone numbers which you have often to use.
2. If you are making a call for somebody else, follow his instructions.
3. Have all the material ready before you dial the number. It is bad manners to keep somebody on the line while you rummage through your files.
4. If you have to say a number of things, alert the listener by saying something like this: 'I want your opinion on two points. One, two.'
5. If you wish to leave a message, say so and give a few seconds to the receiver to get ready. Let your message be clear and accurate. If it is important, you may repeat it.

However amiable you may be, there are likely to be persons in your organization with whom you may not like to have any face-to-face interaction. Unless circumstances force you, you can use the telephone as a tool of contact. Similarly, if you find that an officer is busy interacting with others very often or for long periods and you have an urgent business to transact with him, telephone is the answer. Of course, you would have to decide in individual cases and situations when to use the telephone and when not to use it.

Some important guidelines for telephone conversation are as follows:

1. Cultivate a cheerful and friendly tone.
2. Modulate your voice.
3. Never sound hurried, flustered or impatient.
4. Enunciate your words clearly.
5. Do not use slang.
6. Speak distinctly. If you use a word which is likely to be misunderstood, spell it out.
7. Listen attentively to the caller. If the message is long, keep reassuring that you are listening by speaking words such as 'Yes', 'OK', etc.
8. Be courteous in all circumstances.
9. Do not engage your telephone longer than necessary.

### **Etiquette of the Telephone**

1. **Keep a pen and pad near your phone:** A call can come any time. Quite often, people do not have a pen and paper when answering a call. It is discourtesy to ask the caller to hold the line till you find pen and paper. Therefore, always keep a pen and pad handy right next to your phone.
2. **Greet and identify:** Greet the caller and identify yourself as well as your organisation. Greeting and identifying are essential in telephone conversation. In case you are busy in a meeting, tell the caller and return the call as soon as you are

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free. If someone else can better handle the call, transfer the call to the concerned person.

3. **Concentrate on the call:** While on telephone, concentrate on the conversation and all keep distractions out. Closing eyes while speaking on the phone, standing up and gesturing just as in face-to-face conversation are some techniques used to keep out distractions.
4. **Listen carefully:** Patient and empathetic listening is essential for effective telephone conversation. Wherever necessary, seek clarifications from the caller. In case of unavoidable interruptions, apologies, request the caller to hold on and get back as soon as possible.
5. **Take notes:** If the caller makes several points, it is not safe to depend solely on memory. Take notes on any follow-up action which you have promised to the caller. It is also necessary to write down the message you are taking for someone else. The details should indicate the caller, the time of the call, caller's contact number, your name and the message received.
6. **Cultivate a friendly tone:** A telephone conversation is a unique form of oral communication because only sound is involved. It is, therefore, very important to use a cheerful and friendly voice. The tone of voice should be lively and should reflect interest in the person you are speaking to. One way to improve telephone voice is to smile as you talk because it helps in creating a warm tone. Speak slowly and clearly. Do not eat, drink, smoke or read while talking on the phone.
7. **Avoid rambling:** You should be considerate to your listener by coming to the point quickly.
8. Use the caller's name during the conversation.
9. In case of any problem, project a tone that is concerned, emphatic and apologetic.

### Problems of Telephonic Conversation

In telephonic conversation, many problems arise due to unexpected mechanical problems and difficult callers. All these problems should be attended to properly as discussed below:

#### *Mechanical Problems*

1. Telephone System
2. Cross-Connection
3. Getting Disconnected
4. Bad Lines
5. Wrong Numbers
6. Difficult Callers



In today's highly globalized and competitive environment, the executives are expected to know the essential business etiquettes. Successful businessmen should understand the unwritten rules of business etiquettes. Every company has its own rules of appropriate business behaviour. It means for successful and rewarding business transactions, they must know how to conduct themselves at company meetings, parties and dinners. They must be aware of their company's culture and etiquettes. The company's culture and etiquettes refer to conventional rules of social behaviour and the rules of business transactions.

This chapter discusses general rules for business communication which includes integrity, manners, personality, appearance, consideration and tact. Every organization evolves its own set of norms of behaviour. This chapter also offers general rules for introducing self and others, attending business meals/dining as a host or guest. The chapter further suggests guidelines for courteous interactions with businessmen from different countries. To be successful in business, one should imbibe the norms and rules of one's workplace.

Interpersonal business etiquette and business to business etiquette are also discussed. Besides, this chapter also discusses the etiquette for holding telephone calls.

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### 3.10 Glossary

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- **Manners:** It means the patterns of behaviour. Selfish, boorish or undisciplined behaviour cannot lead to fruitful business relationships. Speaking or acting in a racist or sexist manner, and disloyalty to your company or colleagues are unacceptable business manners.
- **Controlling the call:** The control over the call starts with lifting the receiver. We should promptly lift the receiver when we receive a call. We should lift it hearing three to four rings.

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### 3.11 Review Questions

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1. Explain the concept of business etiquette. What are the basic rules of business etiquette?
2. Explain the business etiquettes of introducing yourself and others.
3. How should a host and a guest behave during business meals?
4. Write an explanatory note on business to business etiquettes.
5. What points should you keep in mind while doing business with foreigners?
6. Discuss the manners you would observe while receiving and making calls on telephone.

### Notes

English Communication 7. Give important rules of interpersonal business relations.

8. Explain the etiquette expected of a host when he invites clients over business meals.

## Notes

9. Why are business etiquette rules called unwritten rules?

10. Why are good manners necessary for good business?

11. Show how individual manners reflect a company's culture and etiquette.

12. Discuss the attitude of the following businessmen to the practice of giving gifts as mementos:

(i) Indians

(ii) Japanese

(iii) Germans

(iv) Americans

(v) Arabs

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### 3.12 Further Readings

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- Albert Mehrabian, "Communication without words," *Psychology Today*, Sept 2, 1968, pp. 53-55.
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# Conversation in Real Life Situations

Notes

**(Structure)**

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Importance of Soft Skills
- 4.4 Personal and Inter-Personal Skills
- 4.5 Developing Soft Skills
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- 4.11 Interview Skills
- 4.12 Introduction to Conversation Skills
- 4.13 Conversation Skills: Modes
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- 4.17 Further Readings

## 4.1 Learning Objectives

After studying the chapter, students will be able to:

- Discuss the importance and variety of soft skills;
- Differentiate between personal and inter-personal skills;
- Describe the activities that can be undertaken by learners to improve language skills;

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- Discuss the meaning and importance of listening;
- Describe the process of listening;
- Explain the various skills needed for an interview;
- Discuss the rules or maxims of conversations;
- Describe the different modes of conversation.

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## 4.2 Introduction

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This unit will introduce you to soft skills. To put it briefly, soft skills refer to personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. Soft skills extremely vital role in communication in business environment. This unit will discuss the importance of soft skills and how to develop them. The unit will also discuss personal and inter-personal skills.

This unit will discuss language skills. We are all born with the ability to learn language. Young children spend most of the first two years of their lives learning the basics of the languages spoken around them. This is an interesting process through which learning takes place without us knowing it. English is the universal language of business. To have the ability to speak with clarity and coherently is of utmost importance in business communication. The unit will examine the significance of communication in detail.

This unit will discuss one of the most important aspects of communication, that is, listening. The process of communication is a two-way process, with a sender and a listener. No communication is complete until the message is received by the listener. Effective listening means analysing sounds, organizing them into recognizable patterns, interpreting the patterns and understanding the message by inferring the meaning. Listening should not to be confused with hearing. Hearing is a physiological process which involves receiving the sound waves by the eardrum and transferring them to the brain. Listening is more than hearing. It involves the process of interpretation and inference.

In the previous unit, you learnt about listening skills. Here, the discussion will turn towards conversation skills. Conversation refers to interactive communication between two or more individuals. The development of conversational skills and etiquette is a vital part of socialization. The development of conversational skills in a new language is a frequent focus of language teaching and learning. The unit will introduce you to conversation skills. It will then go on to discuss conversation modes.

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## 4.3 Importance of Soft Skills

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The importance of soft skills in the world of business today can hardly be over-emphasised. Since businesses exist for the benefit of people and people constitute the



core asset of most business organisations, soft skills assume great significance. Soft skills are essentially skills of a qualitative nature that deal with people-related interaction. Soft skills are different from domain knowledge or subject-related expertise. Soft skills should necessarily supplement domain knowledge relevant to every business.

Soft skills are considered to be extremely valuable across corporates and businesses. Unlike the knowledge of specific subjects and expertise in functional domains, soft skills are of value irrespective of the functional area and nature of business. Soft skills relate to the behavioural skills and the ability to get along. Unlike subject or domain knowledge, these skills are not all learnt out of textbooks. While reading standard books may be helpful, soft skills are really picked up more from observation, participation, right exposure and on-the-job learning.

Soft skills are becoming increasingly significant in a variety of businesses today. Soft skills are as important as hard skills, and under certain circumstances become more valuable in business situations. Soft skills are not job specific, like the subject knowledge, and hence are broadly applicable across job titles and sectors. There is a growing realisation in the business and corporate circles that although hard skills are a necessary condition for the employee performance, they are by no means a sufficient condition. Businesses are increasingly looking for people who are not only skilled in terms of technical and subject-related knowledge, but also soft skills including communication skills and other people and interactive skills.

Work place demands are focussing more and more on people with a mix of hard skills and soft skills. People may have very good subject knowledge and very many academic degrees and certificates. They may have sound theoretical background and adequate conceptual clarity. But these by themselves are of not much use unless they are supplemented by a host of relevant people related skills like team work and relationship building, positive attitude, flexibility, self-confidence, time management and relevant communication skills.

### **Range and Variety of Soft Skills**

Soft skills are of large variety and are inclusive in nature. In a sense, all those skills which fall outside the hard skills category could be listed under soft skills. Soft skills include a host of personal attributes that count in business. Soft skills include broad categories such as personal skills, interactive skills, effective communication skills, social skills and self-awareness. Several skills which are grouped under managerial skills such as team building skills, motivational skills, time management skills and inter-personal skills can also be grouped under soft skills. The broad spectrum of skills, abilities, attributes and traits that together constitute soft skills are listed below.

1. Key Communication Skills – presentation skills, writing skills, listening skills, reading skills and negotiation skills.

## **Notes**

## Notes

2. Personal and Inter-Personal Skills.
3. Teamwork and Motivational Skills.
4. Time Management and Problem Solving Skills.
5. Leadership and Critical Thinking Skills.
6. Positive Attitude and Flexibility.
7. Adaptability and Dependability.
8. Emotional Intelligence and Self Awareness.
9. Initiative and Self Confidence.
10. Integrity and Trustworthiness.
11. Risk Taking Ability.
12. Commitment and Willingness to Learn.
13. Empathy and Sense of Humour.
14. General and Organisational Awareness.
15. Social Grace.

People need to have an array of soft skills to survive and thrive in the rough- and-tumble work place of today. One can add several more traits such as optimism, self-control and self-management, conscientiousness, likeability and friendliness. In short, all those traits and attributes that contribute to an individual's success in the organisational context merit inclusion under soft skills. Some of the basic soft skills have to be acquired even to become job ready and some more will be developed on the job. As people climb up the corporate ladder, their mastery over a host of soft skills is put to test. As the Stanford Research International study brought out, at the chief executive level, people skills become far more valuable than mere technical knowledge.

#### 4.4 Personal and Inter-Personal Skills

Soft skills and management skills have a lot in common. Obviously, managers in business organisations need necessarily develop a variety of soft skills to become effective. Management, in its quintessential sense, is concerned with productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. It refers to how well you do whatever you do. Management is described as the act or skill of dealing with people or situations in a successful way. Management is concerned with the productive and efficient use of resources. Such being the case, soft skills in fact get entwined with the management skills.

As Mythili Kesavasamy, Associate Professor, Asian School of Business, Thiruvananthapuram noted in her Business Line Club lecture (reported in Business Line, 20.12.2008), 'Soft Skills are among the most essential competencies in any aspiring manager's skill set. Yet, they are the hardest to acquire and the most difficult to practise

unless they become habits. Soft Skills include communication, time management, assertiveness, personal grooming, good telephone skills, business etiquette, team work, conflict resolution and even professional ethics.' *Conversation in Real Life Situations*

Talking about management skills, there are essentially eight types of skills which managers in business organisations would have to develop. These are:

1. Personal Skills
2. Inter-Personal Skills
3. Group Skills
4. Key Communication Skills
5. Planning and Time Management Skills
6. Decision Making Skills
7. Project Management Skills
8. Leadership Skills

As we can see, most of these are also grouped under soft skills. In other words, good managers should be proficient in soft skills. We have already discussed earlier in this book various facets of key communication skills in detail. Some other soft skills not covered at length earlier are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **Personal Skills**

Personal skills, as the name suggests, are skills specific to the person as an individual. These skills help the employee or manager deal with himself, or herself, before dealing with others. Personal skills help the managers manage or deal with the situations in a mature and competent manner. These skills are developed by people more from self-study, introspection and awareness, rather than through reading books and attending class room programmes. Personal skills and communication skills constitute a good foundation for building inter-personal and group skills. In Transactional Analysis, which is a subject that helps understand human personality, there is a very desirable state known as "I am OK – You are OK". This constitutes a positive approach and a sense of maturity in dealing with people and situations. Personal skills involve, among others, cultivating this positive approach. Other relevant skills would include developing self-awareness, managing personal stress and solving problems analytically and creatively. Personal skills, as we have noted, can be of wide variety. Cultivating them in a conscious manner enables the individual to function effectively as an employee, a manager or a useful member of the business organisation. Trustworthiness, flexibility, adaptability, self-confidence, professionalism, good work ethic, risk-taking attitude, positive approach, and a host of such relevant skills or traits add to a person's worth as an useful asset of a business organisation. Another set of worth-noting skills relates to the willingness and ability to

### **Notes**



**English Communication** learn as one grows up and assumes new responsibilities in business, as well as energy and enthusiasm at the work place.

## Notes

Computer related awareness and ability to use a variety of gadgets also count for a lot as soft skills. Most of the organisations today work in a computerised and networked environment. People will be required to work on computers and laptops, and also use various gadgets such as i pads, smart phones, printers, photocopiers, etc. Anyone adept at these or those who are quick to learn these useful everyday technological and technical devices certainly enhance their job- readiness. While specific software and hardware skills and knowledge of computer languages, etc. can be counted as hard skills, general computer awareness and adaptability to a technological environment are crucial soft skills in today's business.

### Inter-Personal Skills

Inter-personal skills are distinct from personal skills. Personal skills relate to matters of the self. Inter-personal skills relate to dealing with others. Inter-personal skills are connected with relationships between people. Inter-personal relationships in an organisational context relate to building and maintaining relationships, gaining power and influence, managing conflicts, and the like. In reality, personal skills and inter-personal skills complement each other.

Personal skills and inter-personal skills are closely associated with intra- personal communication and inter-personal communication. The word intra means inside or within. Intra-personal communication means communication with the self. One cannot really communicate effectively with the outside world unless one masters the art of communicating with oneself. Inter-personal skills are relevant to both employees and managers. The larger and more heterogeneous the group with which the manager deals, the greater would be the need for varied inter-personal skills.

Businesses and organisations thrive on relationships. Modern corporates are described as networked organisations. Employees and managers who are proficient in dealing with various types of people effectively are always in demand. Inter-personal relations are particularly relevant for those working in service industries where personal interactions are extensive. Employees with good inter- personal skills can rise quickly in the organisational hierarchy and become effective leaders.

Inter-personal skills in business relate to relation-building, supportive communication, fostering a motivating environment, gaining power and influence, and successfully managing inter-personal conflict. Inter-active communication and inter-personal skills are closely linked to each other. Interactive communication relates to effective communication through the interactive forums.

Interactive forums of business communication include meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia and group discussions. These facilitate two-way



active deliberations and participative exchanges. They involve exchange of ideas by participants in groups. Like their counterparts in the Western world, Indian managers and executives too, in most organisations, spend a large part of their working day in meetings, conferences and other interactive forums.

## Notes

### 4.5 Developing Soft Skills

Since soft skills have become so crucial in the world of business, we shall now discuss the approach to the development of these soft skills. Let us start by understanding the meaning of skill.

A skill refers to a specific or particular ability. A skill also refers to the ability to do something well. When we say technical skill, we refer to the ability to apply the relevant technical knowledge in a given situation. When we refer to the marketing skill, we refer to the ability to understand markets and apply relevant marketing techniques. Soft skills, as we have noted, are of a wide variety. The skill or ability may take many forms – aptitude, competence, expertise, experience, mastery, talent, flair, proficiency, and so on. A skilful manager would be someone who has the ability or special training or proficiency to take up and accomplish his or her tasks with the desired results.

Managements in business organisations have to deal with new situations every day. Change, it is said, is the biggest constant. The issues, problems, competitive demands, and work-related pressures and challenges that confront the employees and managers in business are constantly changing. The operating environments are dynamic and evolving. That means, the range of business skills needed has to be viewed in this dynamic and fast changing context. The wisdom and practices of yesterday may not necessarily work well today.

New types of soft skills are assuming relevance. While the basic and time-tested skills would continue to be broadly relevant, new approaches, refinements and new skill sets have to be developed to cope with emerging situations. And of course, not all such skills can be learnt and mastered from the text books and in the class room lecture sessions. Every day work situations provide tremendous scope for managerial innovations and new initiatives and practices. Learning should be an on-going exercise. As Alvin Toffler, author of the best-selling book, *Future Shock*, aptly articulates, the illiterate of the future will be the one who cannot unlearn and relearn. That is why soft skills development becomes more challenging.

Today's worker is tomorrow's manager and tomorrow's manager is day after tomorrow's executive. That explains the need for cultivating a wide range of managerial skills. And, the good thing is that managerial skills of various types can be acquired and mastered. This makes skill development a desirable and an achievable goal for every prospective and current employee. There are so many skills and there is so much to learn

*English Communication* under each skill that no matter how much you already know, there is always something more to learn, know, apply and practice.

## Notes

Skill development does not happen overnight. It is a long-drawn process. There are no short cuts to acquire managerial soft skills. It is a long journey marked by new step by step accomplishments. That is why, at the senior and top management levels, and even at the level of CEOs, there are seminars, conferences and group discussions. At these higher levels, skill development takes place through self-study, exchange of ideas, and sharing experiences.

In skill development, the goal post keeps moving. The operating environment changes so fast that what we learnt yesterday may not be applicable today. That is why soft skill development calls for a mix of approaches. It comprises of different types of efforts. These include learning through study of books and literature, carrying out practical exercises, analysing case studies, learning by observation, sharing experiences, and very importantly, through actual exposure to real life experiences. Theoretical learning is just one step and is a necessary but not sufficient condition for mastering skills. Qualifications are essential but as one goes up the managerial and corporate ladder, exposure and experience are more sought after than theoretical knowledge.

We shall conclude with a very apt quote from Peggy Klaus, author of "The Hard Truth About Soft Skills". She notes, "Mastering soft skills takes persistence. It requires that you be mindful about yourself and your career. Mastering these practical and tactical skills doesn't magically happen overnight. It requires hard work, but the payoff can be tremendous."

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## 4.6 Language and Its Significance

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Language can be described as a vehicle of thought. It is a method of expression. It is a vocabulary with its usage being prevalent in one or more regions or countries. Spoken as well as written communication takes place through a language. Languages are of different kinds: spoken language, written language, body language, code language, sign language, Braille or language of the visually challenged and the more recent ones being machine language and computer language. Many languages have a long history. The Greek, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Chinese and the Indians are among those whose languages are centuries old.

The number of languages used in verbal communication is extremely large. It is said that the six billion people of this world speak about 6000 languages. Although this is true of the spoken languages, the number of written languages is much lower, with one estimate placing it at not more than 500. Further, within a language, there are sub-languages or dialects. A dialect is a form of speech peculiar to a district, class or group of people. It is a subordinate variety of language with a distinguishable vocabulary, pronunciation or idioms.



## Notes

Languages are also known for their features. There is a mother tongue, there is a regional language, an official language, a national language and a global language. Some languages are perceived to be easy. Some others are difficult to learn. Greek and Sanskrit are considered to be languages of the gods. French is described as a romantic language. Sometimes there is one script common to several languages. There are languages that are alive and growing and there are those that are becoming extinct. Greek and Latin, which were so popular several centuries ago, are in limited use today. Languages that absorb and adopt new words continue to grow. Greek and Latin are described as dead languages because they failed to absorb new words and lost their appeal. In contrast, the English language has immense appeal because it regularly takes in new words that are popularly used in other languages. Allah, bazaar, guru, bungalow, divan, durbar are some of the Hindi/Urdu words that have made their way into English dictionaries.

Most languages are region specific. The vocabulary and structure of a language are often dependent on history and environmental factors. There are more or less words depending upon what the environment offers. A language spoken in a desert will have more words that describe camels and deserts. A heavy snowfall region will have many words that describe the snow. Since languages are often region specific, link languages have evolved to facilitate inter-regional and cross-cultural communication. Apart from the spoken language, there are designated official languages to facilitate the flow of communication in government and administration. Many countries have only one official language. Countries like India, Canada and Switzerland have more than one.

When a language is not a native language but one adopted from outside, it acquires mixed characteristics. The widely used English language has variations from country to country. The Indian way of speaking becomes Indian English and the American way of speaking becomes American English. They stand apart from the original English which is also referred to as the Queen's English and is associated with England. Those who want to communicate effectively and reach out to other sections of people will have to familiarize themselves with the expressions peculiar to those types of languages. There are also other kinds of differences within a language, like the formal and the informal, language of the rich and the poor, the old and the young.

Each profession or subject will have a language with its own idioms, phrases, expressions and nuances. An expression or a particular word in one language may mean something very different in another language.

### **Idioms, Phrases and Slangs**

Idioms, phrases and slangs are an integral part of a language. English language has a fair share of these and an effective business communicator should be informed about these. Idioms are described as a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of individual words. For example, "to sail in the same boat" means to be in

*English Communication* the same difficult situation. Likewise, "birds of the same feather" means people who are alike. Idioms are of different varieties and are used widely in business communication. The proper use of idioms makes the written or spoken text more impactful.

## Notes

Phrases, likewise, are a group of words which have a particular meaning when used together. In fact, the word "phrase" is used to denote various types of expressions. Writers and speakers, over a period of time, develop their own favourite phrases and tend to use them often. Examples are "be that as it may", "sooner rather than later", "in a manner of speaking", "all said and done", etc. Phrases are so common that we keep referring to memorable phrase, catch phrase, etc. A particular way in which words and phrases are arranged when saying or writing something is called phraseology.

Words or phrases in common use that are generally considered in some or all aspects to be outside of Standard English are called slang. Slang consists of words and phrases that are either entirely peculiar to or used in some special context by some class or profession. Slang may also refer to abusive language. Slangs also vary depending upon cultures, although the language is the same. That way, we refer to British Slang, American Slang, Australian Slang, etc. It relates to the use of casual and inappropriate words. The use of slang diminishes the dignity of the language and should be avoided in formal business communication.

Spoken languages are often highly accommodative. Sometimes, people who have not mastered a particular language still attempt to communicate through a mixed language. This language is referred to as pidgin. Pidgin is a simplified form of a language, especially English, Portuguese or Dutch, where a limited number of words are used together with words from a local language. In other words, it is used for communication between speakers of different languages. There can be pidgin English, pidgin Portuguese and pidgin Hindi. The words and forms used here are simple and spoken by a person who does not speak the language well, or when the person is talking to someone who does not know the language, e.g. a Kannadiga, a Tamilian and a Bengali communicating with each other in pidgin Hindi. Pidgin is a language that people develop out of necessity. As noted, it develops when people who do not speak a particular language are required to communicate in order to live or work together.

The most important component of a language is vocabulary or word power. Since the expressions take place through words, vocabulary refers to all the words that a person knows or uses. Most of the popular languages possess a well-developed vocabulary. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, for example, gives around 80,000 references covering British English as well as American English. It also lists out a core vocabulary of 3,000 English words. Active vocabulary covers words that a person not only understands but also uses. Passive vocabulary, on the other hand, relates to the words which a person understands. To make an effective use of words while speaking and writing, the power to bring the right words into play assumes particular relevance.



## Notes

The world of words is wonderful and fascinating. Old and new, big and small, easy and difficult, every language has an abundant range of words. As the saying goes, it pays to enrich one's vocabulary or word power. Reading enables a person to increase word power. Such reading should be a conscious effort, with the intent to pick up new words, nuances or shades of meaning and the context in which it is used. Periodical or ongoing efforts to enrich vocabulary facilitate the communicator in developing his own distinctive and appealing style of writing and speaking. Any person who builds up an abundant source of active vocabulary will not be at a loss for words and, will therefore, be a forceful and impressive speaker. Great speakers master the skill of using the right words at the right time. Equally important, they refrain from using words that may cause hurt or have a scope for misunderstanding.

### Ability

For the language to be effective, an important prerequisite is abundant vocabulary or word power. Words are the very essence of written communication. Words translate thoughts and carry the message through to the reader. They lay emphasis as and when required. Since words have the potential to make or mar the language of the business communicator, this aspect has been dealt with in some detail in the following paragraphs.

English has emerged to be the predominant global language. In this inter-connected world, it is the language that people across countries strive to learn. Proficiency in writing and speaking English provides a distinct advantage to people in business. On the other hand, lack of fluency and command over this language is undoubtedly a disadvantage. Businesses today, as we have seen earlier, are no longer regional or national in character. People have to deal with people across regions and cultures. Good English is a must for good business. Mastering English is becoming more and more challenging because the language is not static, but keeps growing. The staggering wealth of English words is ever-expanding, mainly on account of the open arms with which it welcomes and adapts words from other languages.

The world of words, as we have noted earlier, is wonderful and fascinating. English language has an enormous stock of words. With new words being added constantly, the stock of usable English words keeps growing. The Global Language Monitor based in Austin, Texas estimated that as on 1, January 2014, the number of words in English was 10,25,109.8. The official website of the Oxford English Dictionary, however, tells us that the second edition of this 20-volume dictionary contains full entries for 1,71,476 words in current use, and 47,156 obsolete words.

Even if we accept the lower count, there is an abundant choice of words for the speaker or writer. This vast and growing reservoir of words offers, at once, both an opportunity and a challenge to the communicator. It is an opportunity because there is a tremendous choice of words available to the person. It is a challenge no doubt, for

*English Communication* the building up of word power calls for a systematic and ongoing effort, using familiar words and learning new words. One can easily spend one's lifetime learning new words, understanding their shades of meaning and effectively using all the words available.

## Notes

Words make the letter. A good letter writer should choose the words with care. To do so, one must necessarily build enormous word power. Every person keen on becoming an effective communicator should delve deeply into words and their meanings. Most of the words have many shades of meaning. The appropriate word or set of words depend on the context, tone and gravity of the message and also on the relationship with the person to whom it is addressed.

Much as one would like, it is not always possible to readily recall the exact word. As a result, one may often find oneself groping for the right word. Any person keen on building word power and using the most appropriate word in every piece of write up must take recourse to a standard English dictionary and also Roget's Thesaurus. Until a writer gets a fine command over English words, and even thereafter when a reconfirmation is required on the shades of meanings a word conveys, constant reference to these two sources would be immensely helpful. It is worth emphasizing that the author of this book has made umpteen references to these sources while writing this book. To make it clearer, let us take a look at a few words and try to understand all that they convey.

Take, for example, the word 'communication'. Roget's Thesaurus refers to the following shades of meaning:

Joining, Transfer, Inter course, In form action, Messages, Oral communication, Conversation, Epistle, Passageway, Giving, Social intercourse.

Each one of them is in turn elaborated under different sections with nouns, verbs, adjectives and exclamations associated with the word. One of the meanings of communication listed above is information. In turn, the word 'information' covers the following:

Enlightenment, Light, Acquaintance, Familiarization, Instruction, Intelligence, Knowledge, The know, The dope, The goods, The swoop (all slang), Communication report, Word, Statement, Mention, Notice, Notification, Intimation, Sidelight, Inside information, The low-down,

Tip-off, Point, Pointer, Hint, Indication, Suggestion, Suspicion, Inkling, Glimmer, Cue, Clue, Scent, Telltale, Implication, Allusion, Insinuation, Innuendo, Gentle hint, Broad hint and many more.

Let us take another word, 'satisfaction'. The thesaurus again refers to the following shades of meaning:

Adequacy, Satiety, Reparation, Fulfillment, Duel, Payment, Pleasure, Content, Reprisal, Atonement.

Out of these, let us take a look at the word 'content'. Again, this word could mean the following:

Content, Contentment, Contentedness, Satisfiedness, Satisfaction, Ease, Peace of mind, Happiness, Complacency, Bovinity, Self-satisfaction, Self-contentedness, Satisfactoriness, Sufficiency, Adequacy, Acceptability, Admissibility, Tolerability, Agreeability, Fulfilment, Tranquillity and many more.

Since vocabulary building is of immense value to a communicator, we are giving below some more examples of words and their meanings.

Take for example, the word 'piece'. It essentially means a small amount. There is a range of words to talk about this aspect. The communicator or writer should be in a position to choose the right word to go with the substance being talked about. The range of words relevant here are:

Piece, Bit, Chunk, Lump, Fragment, Speck, Drop, Pinch, Portion.

Similarly, when you want to say someone is fat, you have to choose the word most appropriate from the following range:

Fat, Overweight, Large, Heavy, Big, Plump, Chubby, Stocky, Stout, Obese.

Apart from knowing the word, it would also be desirable to know the various words belonging to that word family. Some examples of this are: Rely, Reliable, Reliability, Reliance.

Perceive, Perception, Perceptive, Perceptible.

There are also words whose meanings are close to each other. One should be clear about the fine difference that exists to be in a position to choose the right word. Some examples of such words are:

Condition, State; Classic, Classical; Altogether, All together.

All the above examples and many more such helpful suggestions are highlighted in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. The point to be noted here is that words in the English language have multifarious connotations and uses. There are words which convey the same meaning but each one perhaps has a context where it fits in perfectly.

Similarly, there are many words belonging to the same word family. A good writer must build up his word power in such a way that words of all kinds are on top in memory, or as an alternative, the writer has ready access to sources like the thesaurus. In the absence of a proper supply of words, the smooth flow of writing gets obstructed. Groping every time for the most appropriate word or even just a sufficient word causes frustration.

In letter writing or any other written communication, it is very essential that words are not frequently repeated. Repetition tends to irritate the reader. If you come across a particular word repeated again and again in a sentence and the sentences that follow in the same paragraph, the reader is likely to get a poor impression of the writing.

To be able to avoid repetition, the writer should have a good stock of equivalent words or synonyms. Synonyms are words identical and co-extensive in sense and usage with another of the same language.

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Ivor Brown, in his introduction to the third edition of Roget's Thesaurus, has beautifully summed up the significance of word power and its effective use for any good writer. He says, 'Words as well as ideas are the raw material and that he requires in good supply. But words can be the decoration as well as the tools of good writing. This does not mean that they should be splashed around recklessly: a good artist with the riches of his paint box at hand does not use them in a lavish or slapdash way. The artist considers, selects and blends tints to get both strength and delicacy in the finished picture. So it is with words. To have a copious supply and to use it with judgement is an excellent foundation for good writing and for the possession of what is called style.'

**Skills Selected Need**

Language is absolutely central to learning: without it, one cannot make sense or communicate one's understanding of a subject. In order to become an expert communicator, one needs to have knowledge of four useful language skills. Listening and reading are the receptive skills because learners do not need to produce language, they receive and understand it. These skills are sometimes known as passive skills. The productive skills are speaking and writing because learners are applying these skills in a need to produce language. They are also known as active skills.

- **Listening:** Listening is a receptive language skill which people usually find the most difficult. This often is because they feel under unnecessary pressure to understand every word. The listener has to get oriented to the listening portion and be all ears. The listener is also required to be attentive. These skills can be improved by focusing on making the learner listen to the sounds of that particular language. This would help them with the right pronunciation of words.
- **Speaking:** Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. We must take into account that the level of language input (listening) must be higher than the level of language production. This skill could be improved by understanding para-linguistic attributes such as voice quality, volume and tone, voice modulation, articulation, pronunciation etc. This could also be further enhanced with the help of debates and discussions.
- **Reading:** Reading is a learning skill. It helps you improve all parts of a language – vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and writing. It helps to develop language intuition in the corrected form. They help the students grasp the content and draw conclusions. The students should also make it a point to familiarize themselves with the jargons and new words by making reading a habit be it reading newspapers, articles, books, and so on.
- **Writing:** Writing provides a learner with physical evidence of his achievements and he can measure his improvement. It helps to consolidate their grasp of vocabulary and structure, and complements the other language skills.



## 4.7 Learner Centre Activities

This section will present before you a plethora of activities compiled from various sources to improve language skill of learners:

- Combining vocabulary with reading and writing activities, providing the students with different lexical information about the words under study
- By showing actual objects and showing models this is a very useful technique to teach vocabulary to the beginners, as it gives real experience and sense to the learners. The words like pen, chalk, table, chair, football, flowers, tomato, etc. can be taught in the classroom.
- **Real objects or models of real objects:** These are very effective and meaningful in showing meanings but in handling of real objects, a teacher must be practical and should not be superfluous. It is neither possible nor necessary to bring all the things in the classroom. Therefore, some words are to be taught by showing models. They are easily available in the market. They are inexpensive too. Hence, teacher should make frequent use of such models to teach vocabulary. For example, the words like tiger, brain, elephant, airplane, etc. can be shown to the learner.
- **Using demonstrations and showing pictures:** Teacher can perform some words. It can be fun and frolic. It makes the class student-centred. Teacher can act and learners try to imitate it. For example, the words like jump, smile, cry, nap, sleep, and dance can be demonstrated.
- **Miming works well with younger students:** You can mime out emotions and everyday activities to teach new words. This method can be practiced at ease. It can win the favour of the students as learners like dramatizations and can easily learn through them. Many situations can be dramatized or demonstrated. This works well with young students or students studying a foreign language to help introduce them to new concepts. After explaining new vocabulary, you can then ask the students to perform the actions.
- **Charts, pictures and maps:** These can be used to develop students' understanding of a particular concept or word. There are some good picture dictionaries available in the market. Teacher should make use of such dictionaries. For instance, using a picture of a 'fish', words related to the fish, such as gills, eyes, backbone, cold-blooded, water, big, small etc. can be taught. Zebrowska (1975:452) rightly says, 'Learners remember better the material that has been presented by means of visual aids'. Some words work well with pictures, particularly nouns. This can also be a good way to introduce blocks of related words, which is often utilized in foreign language classes, such as nouns and verbs related to the classroom or the house.

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- **Pictures:** Pictures can also be used in printable worksheets and flashcards, where pictures are matched to the word they represent.
- **Teaching vocabulary in context:** Words taught in isolation are generally not retained. In addition, in order to grasp the full meaning of a word or phrase, students must be aware of the linguistic environment in which the word or phrase appears. Setting a good context which is interesting, plausible, vivid and has relevance to the lives of the learners, is an essential prerequisite for vocabulary teaching as it helps in both engaging the attention of the learners and naturally generating the target vocabulary. Maintaining the context and making sure the language surrounding the context is easy to comprehend, the teacher should start eliciting the target vocabulary. Therefore, in selection of vocabulary, the teacher must be sure that the words or phrases chosen can be immediately incorporated into the students' linguistic range. Stahl (2005) stated, "Vocabulary knowledge is knowledge; the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition, but also implies how that word fits into the world."
- **Etymology:** Every word has its origin and its story of how it gets its current meanings. Because of its physical and meaningful origin, the etymology of a word is often found much easier to be comprehended than the bare linguistic symbol and its present semantic meanings. So, whenever we teach an English word that is completely strange, we can ask students to look it up in a dictionary or other reference books, and or surf on the internet to find its origin. The interesting stories behind a word's birth can be a very good reminder for students to remember the particular word. Thus, learning the etymology of a word will certainly promote students' comprehension of new words.
- **By drawing pictures:** It is an easy and quick technique of introducing vocabulary to the learners. For students, drawing can be a fun medium to explain vocabulary. It is not necessary that teacher must be an expert in drawing pictures accurately. He can draw rough sketches to make an idea clear. Basic sketches will often work well. You can even have students do their own drawings, which further reinforces their understanding of the vocabulary.
- **Comparative words and prepositions** can be made clear by simple sketches. Pictures of many types and colours can be used successfully to show the meaning of words and sentence.
- Drawings can be used to explain the meaning of things, actions, qualities, and relations.
- **Associated vocabulary:** If one topic consists of number of words, it is easy to teach these entire words altogether. For example, it is easier to teach words like orange, banana, grapes, lemon, pineapple, mango, and watermelon together

in the context of 'fruits' than to teach anyone of these words in isolation. Examples of lexical fields: Parts of the Face as: (a) parts of the face- forehead, brow, temples, nose, nostrils, bridge/tip of the nose, septum, mouth, lips, eyes, eyebrows, eyelids, eyelashes, chin, cheeks, jaw, and jowls.

- Using morphological analysis of words Morphology is the study of words in different terms, showing how words are broken down into smaller units, and how such units are recognized. That is to say, by using the analysis of morphemes of words, we can find out the meaning of words, even some of unfamiliar English words. It is estimated that there are over 600,000 English words concerned with the roots and affixes. But the roots and affixes are limited in numbers and simple in meaning. And the most commonly used roots and affixes are only 600-800 in number. By using the analysis of roots, affixes, and word structure, we can teach thousands of English words. For example: "hand/handle/handful/handicap/handsome/ beforehand..."

- **Dictionary:** It is an important tool in the teaching and learning of vocabulary.

Teacher should encourage students to search words in dictionaries. Therefore, the habit of its use should be inculcated right from the beginning. Gonzalez (1999) found that dictionary work was laborious but necessary, and that ESL college students need to be taught practical use of the dictionary. Exploring dictionary entries can be one important and effective component of understanding a word deeply. The entries can also help students determine the precise meaning of a word Allen (1983:82) perceives, 'Dictionaries are passport to independence and see them as one of the student - centered learning activities'. The following are some current recommended English - English dictionaries:

- ❖ Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary,
- ❖ Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English,
- ❖ Cambridge International Dictionary of English,
- ❖ Oxford Picture Dictionary.
- **Collocation:** It's a widely accepted idea that collocations are very important part of knowledge and they are essential to non-native speakers of English in order to speak or write fluently. Nattinger (1980) in Carter and Mac McCarthy (1988), "It teaches students expectations about which sorts of words go with which ones. Students will not go about reconstructing the language each time they want to say something" The term collocation generally refers to the way in which two or more words are typically used together. For example, we talk about heavy rain but not heavy sun, or we say that we make or come to a decision, but we don't do a decision. So, heavy rain and make a decision are

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often referred to as collocations and we say that heavy collocates with rain. Collocations include: Verb + Noun (e.g. break a code, lift a blockade) Verb + Adverb (e.g. affect deeply, appreciate sincerely) Noun + Verb (e.g. water freezes, clock ticks) Adjective + Noun (e.g. strong tea, best wishes) Adverb + Adjective (e.g. deeply absorbed, closely related)

- **Synonyms:** A synonym may be used to help the student to understand the different shades of meaning, if the synonym is better known than the word being taught. Synonyms help to enrich a student's vocabulary bank and provide alternative words instantly. These can be effective since they build on words and phrases that students already recognize. Use caution that you do imply that all the words have exactly the same meaning, since different words often are used for different connotations or to imply different meanings. The same procedure can be used to elicit synonyms. The teacher needs to highlight the fact that "true" synonyms are relatively rare and the answers will often be "near" synonyms. The students could make crosswords, word snakes or other puzzles for each other using these synonyms.
- **Play way:** method students were asked to bring daily five new words which were not familiar to them from the text-book. At the end of each session they were asked to tell the word, its spelling and its meaning in English. They were banned to see the notebook where these words were written. If they were not able to give the correct word its spelling and meaning, they were asked to bring new ten words next day. Such an exercise was fruitful for the learner.
- **Antonyms:** The students were asked to make lists of opposite words. Two groups were made; one group gave one word while the other group asked to give an opposite word to it. For example, sharp/blunt, rude/polite, flexible/rigid, generous/mean etc. One group gave word 'sharp' and the other group gave opposite word for it as 'blunt'. Marks were written on the board. They found it very interesting and memorized more words in order to win the contest. Thus, by play way method they can learn new words.
- **Words often confused:** The long list of often-confused words was made in the class and students were asked to use them in sentences from the brackets. Teacher should provide the meaning of such words, if necessary. For examples: adopt: adapt, beside: besides, principal: principle etc.
- **Homonyms / Homophones:** These are words of the same language that are pronounced alike even if they differ in spelling, meaning, or origin, such as "pair" and "pear". Homophones may also be spelled alike, as in "bear" (the animal) and "bear" (to carry). But this list consists only of homophones that are not spelled alike. ant/aunt eye/I ate/eight fare/fair bear/bare sea/see son/sun stationary/stationery steal/steel threw/through throne/thrown be/bee blew/



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- **Word Map:** Students work in small groups to learn connections among words by brainstorming and organizing words according to a map that they design or a blank one that is provided by the teacher. An example might be a key-concept word in the centre of the page with rays connecting related words. For example, when asked to give words they thought of when they heard the word "faithfulness", low-intermediate ESL students generated sixteen words or phrases: cat, friend, family, reliance, trust, dishonest, unfaithfulness, believe in friendships, bonds, obey, dog, friendly, sexual unfaithful, gossiping, marriage, love.
- **Thesaurus:** A kind of dictionary where the words of similar meanings, or synonyms / antonyms are arranged in similar groups. The main purpose of such reference works is to help the user "to find the word, or words, by which [an] idea may be most fitly and aptly expressed" – to quote Peter Mark Roget, architect of the best known thesaurus in the English language. Unlike a dictionary, thesaurus does not provide meanings or definitions of the words searched.
- **Teaching idioms:** An idiom is a phrase or expression in which the entire meaning is different from the usual meanings of the individual words within it. Idioms are fun to work with because they are part of everyday vocabulary. Students enjoy working with figurative meanings. They also enjoy finding out about the origins of idiomatic expressions, some of which are very old. Point out to students that idioms are often used in writing or speech to make expression more colourful and that some of the most colourful English idioms make use of animals or animal comparisons.
- **Phrasal verbs:** Teachers should include phrasal verbs in their classroom language as much as possible – and draw attention to these from time to time. There are many phrasal verbs in the English language and they are used in normal, everybody speech and writing. Phrasal verbs mean words consisting of a verb and a particle (preposition or adverb). The meaning of a phrasal verb is different from the meaning of each word if it was considered separately. Common classroom expressions incorporating phrasal verbs are: sit down, put your hand up, turn your papers over, write this down, cover the page up, look it up, hurry up and calm down!
- **Crossword puzzle:** Crossword puzzles offer an entertaining way of reviewing vocabulary. Students can do the puzzles in class in pairs, as a race with other students, or at home as homework.

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- The teacher can also design a "Word Puzzle," which is also called a "Word Cross", asking the students to cooperate in groups to find and circle the words that the puzzle contains. The teacher might also place several versions of the word in the puzzle, with only one of them being the correct spelling. The students must circle only the word with the correct spelling.
- **Word formation:** Teacher should encourage students to enrich and expand their vocabulary. There are different ways to expand the vocabulary of the students. By studying the morphology, we know that it not only concerns with the morphemes of words, but also the word-formation. In English classes, teachers should help students to get to know the processes of word-formation.
- **Morphological rules:** These reveal the relations between words and provide the means in formation of new words. That is to say, these rules determine how morphemes are combined to form words. Nowadays, teachers in colleges have paid much more attention to the teaching of the morphological rules of English word formation in their classes. But still we have a lot of work to do. The expansion of vocabulary in modern English depends chiefly on word-formation. According to Pyles and Algeo (1982), words produced through affixation constitute 30% to 40% of the total number of new words; compounding yields 28% to 30% of all the new words; words that come from shortening including clipping and acronym, amounting to 8% to 10%, together with 1% to 5% of words born out of blending and other means. So by analyzing the processes of English word formation, we can infer word-meanings and learn more new English words.
- **Reading the word:** Reading words aloud is also very beneficial. It makes a learner familiar with the word and also improves pronunciations of the learners. Sound can be an easy way to illustrate words that describe sounds, such as whistle, scratching, and tinkling. You can make the sounds yourself, or bring in tapes or CDs for students to listen to and write down the words that they hear. The situation can be made easy and interesting, if the teacher of English selects the vocabulary, grades the vocabulary and uses different techniques in the classroom. Teachers should focus on vocabulary, as it is the most essential aspect in any language and means of communication. We cannot express our feelings without words. Wallace (1982) states, 'Not being able to find the word you need to express yourself is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language' (p.9). Series, scales, systems. The meaning of words such as the months of the year, the days of the week, the parts of the day, seasons of the year, ordinal numbers, cardinal numbers, etc. that form part of well-known series can be made clear by placing them in their natural order in the series. If you have several gradable words to introduce at the same, you can

introduce them together on a scale. For instance, you can use frequency, such as always-often-occasionally or emotions in this way, with cheerful-happy-joyous-ecstatic.

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- **Role play:** Role-play is to create the presence of a real life situation in the classroom. It is important in the classroom communication because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicatively in different social contexts and in different social roles. The language applied in this activity is varied according to the student's status, attitudes, mood, and different situations. Blachowicz, et al., (2006) speaks, "Teachers can introduce some of the words which provide both definitional and contextual information about the words to be learned by making up a dialogue for students so that students can understand a further meaning and usage of the words."
- **Use video to produce target vocabulary:** Select a video segment that contains a series of actions or visual detail. Provide the learners with a list of target vocabulary words and ask them to construct a paragraph that incorporates as many of the words as possible. This activity is best done after the learners have seen the video. As they learn how to use more vocabulary properly, you will see an improvement in their writing and speaking. Teacher can also show a short film without sound and asking pupils to discuss what dialogue they would expect to hear. Showing a scene from a film without sound and asking pupils to use the facial expression to determine emotion.

Corder (1973:223) rightly observes, 'The more words one knows, the easier it is to 'learn' new words, because one has more associative link available'. There is no sure fire remedy or method to enhance vocabulary in a day or two.

A student's vocabulary bank can be enriched on a gradual basis and one should always show keen interest and enthusiasm in finding, learning and understanding new words. Teaching vocabulary through incidental, intentional, and independent approaches requires teachers to plan a wide variety of activities and exercises.

Richards said, "When vocabulary items are being taught to pupils, teachers need to consider how to teach these words to pupils based on the levels of ages, educational background and field of interest. The teacher also ought to recognize such sociolinguistic variables in which the words will be used."

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## 4.8 Importance of Listening

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As stated in the introduction, communication is essentially a two-way process. It is a process that involves at least two parties—the sender and the receiver or the speaker and the listener. The purpose of any communication is not achieved till the receiver receives the message which the sender puts across. There is often an expectation that the receiver



*English Communication* will not only receive the message, but also interpret it, understand it, use it and provide the requisite feedback about having received the message and acted on it. It is essential to note that sender and receiver are not always fixed permanent positions. One is a sender or a receiver for a particular piece of communication or message transmission. However, communication is by and large an interactive process and the roles are seldom fixed. A receiver becomes the sender and the sender becomes the receiver. Good communication, therefore, calls for listening skills. A good speaker must necessarily be a good listener.

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In an interactive communication, listening accounts for about 50 per cent of verbal communication. Both the parties keep changing their roles so that objectives of the communication are achieved in full, as intended. If it is an organized speech or lecture, listening should be full-time. That is why it is said that good listening is as much hard work as good speaking. While good listening leads to proper understanding, poor listening can lead to misunderstanding and incomplete understanding.

Are you a good listener? The importance of listening skills in business and work places is often under-estimated. Yet, the fact remains that at work places, on an everyday basis, you will have to listen to other people constantly: to your customers, your superiors, your subordinates and your associates. Good listening creates a positive environment and motivates the communicator. In order to be a good listener, it is necessary to appreciate the listening process and master the listening skills.

Listening attentively and completely is much more than a casual hearing. An attentive listener is the one who hears not just the words the speaker utters, but also the feelings and intent of the speaker. As Jiddu Krishnamurthy notes, an active listener is one who listens to the whole of what is being conveyed, not just part of it. Listening is a comprehensive act that takes place at different levels.

Ronald Adler and Jeanne Elmhurst, the authors of the book, *Communicating at Work* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 2005) note that listening takes place at four different levels as mentioned below:

1. Listening for Content
2. Listening for Feelings
3. Listening for Intent
4. Listening for Context

Therefore, listening is a comprehensive exercise where the keen and intent listener tries to listen not just to the content, but also to the feelings as well as intent and concerns of the speaker. Moreover, a good listener is always conscious of the context in which the speaker speaks and makes every effort to interpret the words and the content of the message within the overall context in which the speaker speaks out. Picking up words and interpreting them out of context is obviously bad listening.

## 4.9 Process of Listening

*Conversation in Real Life  
Situations*

### Notes

More than an act, listening is a process. It is a lot more than hearing. It starts with hearing but goes beyond. In other words, hearing is a necessary but not sufficient condition for listening. Listening involves hearing with attention. Listening is a process that calls for concentration. Hearing refers to the perception of sound with the ear. Hearing is a physical act. One hears a noise, whether one wants to or not. If hearing is impaired, a hearing aid is used. Hearing aids amplify the sound. Listening is more comprehensive than hearing. Listening is done not only with the ear, but also with the other sense organs. While listening, one should also be observant. In other words, listening has to do with the ears, as well as with the eyes and the mind. Hearing is physical, while listening is intellectual, involving both the body and the mind.

Listening is to be understood as the total process that involves hearing with attention, being observant and making interpretations. Good communication is essentially an interactive process.

Listening calls for participation and involvement. It is quite often a dialogue rather than a monologue. It is necessary for the listener to be interested and also show or make it abundantly clear that one is interested in knowing what the other person has to say. Good listeners put the speaker at ease. Indifferent and inattentive listeners, on the other hand, disturb the speaker and make it that much more difficult for him or her to reach out with the message. The listener can and should help the speaker in establishing a wavelength through which communication traverses smoothly.

The listening process can be understood best by looking at various words which are associated with listening. These are hearing, decoding, sensing, understanding, comprehending, filtering, absorbing, assimilating, empathizing, remembering and responding. Each one of these plays a role in making listening complete and effective. There is also another set of words which can be associated with the listening process. These are attentiveness, focus, willingness, patience, attitude and concentration. The process of listening, to be effective, should encompass all these. The process of listening involves the following:

1. Hearing
2. Decoding
3. Comprehending
4. Remembering
5. Responding

Together, these components ensure that the listening part of the communication process becomes meaningful and effective.

**Decoding up accountability:** Group discussion is of better quality when members are held accountable for their collaborative effort. Group accountability occurs when the next step relates to decoding. This involves sensing and filtering of the verbal messages. The group as a whole produces a consensus report and the conclusion outcome of the decision arrived at gets publicity as a group effort. Listening also involves filtering, whereby the

[illegible]

The message is then relayed to the next person in the group. Rules help in giving direction to the discussions, thus, rules are very important ingredients of a group discussion. The following 'Five Golden Rules' must be adhered to during a group discussion:

The next level of listening consists of comprehending or understanding. The filtered message assumes a meaning. This activity can also be described as absorbing, grasping

(ii) **Re-critical thinking** has not been understood what the speaker has tried to convey. The message received has been heard, sensed, filtered and interpreted. In doing so, the message received is distorted.

(iv) Restate what someone said if not clear.

**7. Role playing:** In a group discussion, as in everyday life, participants play different roles. Some may dominate the group while others are more passive.

roles. Some roles are 'positive' and contribute to the group, while others are 'dysfunctional' or 'negative' and interfere with the communication process. **Remembering**

This is a group dispersion factor consisting of the ages received an instant performance not in form another considerable amount by the self performance. Each participant

often, although the participant takes a split of the present, it's less many take place sometime in the future. Memorizing the message therefore has a greater significance. Remembering

(i) Roles which facilitate the tasks of discussing specific topics (Initiating future recall)

**Responding** Roles which facilitate the overall tasks of the group (Gatekeeping, i.e. ver-

Response of the listener may take place at the end of the verbal communication or even earlier (in the role which also provides feedback to the communication partner).

earlier. When it does, which helps provide feedback to the communicator, response is  
(encouraging, listening and tension relieving)  
towards the end. If however, there is a need to seek clarification or a need to empathi-  
-8.4. **Mutual evaluation:** The last 5-7 minutes of the group discussion shall be  
This may take the form of providing prompts

8. **Mutual evaluation:** This may take the form of praising, prompting or reassuring that the message is being well received.



## 4.10 Types of Listening

Group discussion can be defined as follows:

Conversation in Real Life  
Public Speaking Skills  
Situations

At listening is not of the same intensity. Good listening is that which passes all the five steps in action of above with positive results. Depending upon the extent to which listening becomes effective, it can be classified into three types. They are passive listening, opportunistic listening and active listening. They are passive where the receiver self-differ listening and active listening incorporated in order to reach a common goal". Thus, group discussion is an interactive group activity aimed at distilling a collective opinion acceptable to all members of the group. It is an activity where all members get frequent opportunities to generate and share their questions and ideas to arrive at a consensus.

### Passive Listening

Passive listening is a form of listening where there is no conscious effort to receive and absorb the message. Quite often, passive listening stops at hearing and

## 5.19 Characteristics of Group Discussion

Group discussion is a group activity carried out by participating individuals. It is an exchange of ideas among the individuals of a group on a specific topic. Listening in this instance is insufficient. The message is not absorbed and the passive listener will not be in a position to remember and recall the message at a future date. Passive listening takes place when the listener or receiver is constrained by various physiological and psychological factors. It is used as reliable, testing device—mainly as a tool to assess all the candidates in a group at one go—in order to select the best in comparative perspective. It also occurs when the speaker fails to meet the receiver's wavelength. Passive listening leads to misunderstanding on the part of the communicator who would be under the impression that the receiver has grasped the message as intended.

Group discussion is an informal discussion in which participants of the same educational standard discuss a topic of current interest. It means its aim is to find out the natural leadership level of the candidates. Strictly speaking, no one from the group or outside will be officially designated as a leader. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic.

Group discussion is always intentional. It means its aim is to find out the natural leadership level of the candidates. Strictly speaking, no one from the group or outside will be officially designated as a leader. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic.

Group discussion is not a debate. It means its aim is to find out the natural leadership level of the candidates. Strictly speaking, no one from the group or outside will be officially designated as a leader. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic. It is a free discussion in which all participants are free to express their views on the topic.

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### Active Listening

## 5.20 Types of Group Discussions

Active listening is the most desirable type of listening. In this case, the listener makes

There are mainly two types of group discussions. In this case, the listener makes contact with the speaker and group, discusses the message and absorb it through a participative process. The receiver of the messages shows regard for the speaker, concentrates on what is being conveyed, motivates and prompts the speaker, shows

### Formal and Informal Group Discussions

Formal discussions are easy for the speaker to meaningfully deliver the message. When we talk of listening skills, what is meant is the ability to listen effectively. When one listens actively, one not only comprehends the message, but is also in a position to remember and recall the same as and when required.

Formal discussions are easy for the speaker to meaningfully deliver the message. When we talk of listening skills, what is meant is the ability to listen effectively. When one listens actively, one not only comprehends the message, but is also in a position to remember and recall the same as and when required.

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Given the significance of performing at one's best at the interview, the preparation has to start well in advance and should cover many areas. The knowledge-related and subject-specific inputs apart, success in the interview calls for a positive orientation, high level of self-confidence, active listening, effective communication, pleasing disposition, noticeable interpersonal skills and the right temperament. In the following paragraphs, we look at the various aspects that need keen attention prior to, during and after the interview.

**Do Your Homework:** Preparation for the interview starts with good homework. Try to learn as much as you can about the organization. What is its line of business, track record, strengths and weaknesses, hierarchical structure, values and future plans? Then find out the details about the job on offer—number of vacancies, place of posting, remuneration package, work culture, job description and attributes sought and so on.

Make sure that the job on offer is what you are looking for, or at least what you will settle for. You should ask yourself the following questions. Are you qualified? Do you possess the skills required to take up the job on offer? Are you confident that you will measure up to the expectations of the company? Suitability for the job is very essential. In essence, the interview panel would be looking for candidates who match the job profile. Make sure that you collect the relevant details about the organization and the job on offer and that it fits your aspirations. If yes, start your preparation in right earnest. If not, do not waste your time and the interviewers' time. When the job on offer matches your expectations, seize every opportunity to provide the most important information about yourself and clearly show your enthusiasm and inclination.

**Anticipate Questions:** After learning the basic facts about the organization and the job, get ready to face the interviewers' questions. Put yourself in their shoes and try to anticipate questions. Questions will be of different types. They may be general or specific. They may be fact-related or opinion-related. They may be personal or professional. They may be knowledge oriented or attitude oriented. They may be primary or first time questions or follow-up questions. They may be hypothetical or leading questions. They may be easy or tough. They could even be tricky and provocative. The questions may cover the details you have mentioned in your application and resume. Think of all the likely questions and the right way of answering them. It would be a good idea to write down answers to questions you anticipate and expect to answer.

Broadly speaking, interview related questions fall into certain major categories as below:

1. Education and Academic Study
2. Work Experience
3. Job Knowledge and Skills



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4. Self-Assessment
5. Personality and Temperament
6. Organizations or Employers
7. General Knowledge and Awareness.

Some typical questions are as follows:

1. What would you like to say about yourself? Describe yourself.
2. Why do you consider yourself suitable for this job?
3. Why are you leaving your present job?
4. Why have you changed so many jobs?
5. What kind of a career are you seeking?
6. What will you do if you get a better offer?
7. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
8. Which are your noteworthy failures? What lessons have you learnt from those failures?
9. Are you prepared to work in any place?
10. Given your qualifications and experience, should you not be looking for a higher level position?
11. Why are you not seeking a job in line with the subjects you have studied?
12. In which extra-curricular activities have you excelled?
13. Describe your greatest accomplishment in college.
14. What significant contribution have you made in your previous jobs?
15. Why should we prefer you over somebody who has more experience?
16. Tell us three good reasons as to why we should hire you.
17. his job calls for high levels of initiative and hard work. Can you measure up?
18. How good are you in working under pressure? Can you handle stress?
19. How tech savvy are you? Are you comfortable working in a computerized environment?
20. How well can you work as a member of a team? Tell us how you have demonstrated your team working abilities.
21. What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in the next 5 or 10 years?
22. Why have you been without a job for so long?
23. Are you willing to work if we offer you a different/ lower level position?
24. What kind of books do you read, music you like and what is your favourite pastime?
25. What do you know about our organization?
26. Who are your role models? Why?



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- Standard setting:** This includes expressing standards for the group to use in choosing its content or procedures or in evaluating its decisions and reminding the group to avoid decisions that conflict with group standards. There could be questions based on your answers. The questions would normally cover your (1) academic qualifications, (2) work experience, (3) extra-curricular activities, (4) personal contribution, (5) subject knowledge, (6) general business awareness, (7) management skills, (8) health and stress, (9) likes, dislikes and biases and (10) ability to cope with higher responsibilities and stress.
- Following:** This includes going along with decisions of the group, thoughtfully accepting ideas of others and serving as audience during group discussion.

**Group Task and Maintenance Roles**

- Evaluating:** This includes submitting group decisions or accomplishments to compare with group standards or measuring accomplishments against goals. Remember, while it is helpful to anticipate the probable questions and prepare the answers, it is prudent to be in readiness to face unanticipated questions.
- Diagnosing:** This includes determining the source of difficulties and the appropriate steps to take next, and analyzing the main blocks to progress. **Don't Get Worked Up!** It is very necessary that the candidate keeps his/her cool when getting ready to face the interview. While some legitimate concerns are perhaps unavoidable considering what is at stake, getting unduly worked up should be consciously avoided. This is true of all important interviews, be they job interviews, promotion interviews or assignment selection interviews. Too much of tension and edginess starts showing up and gives a wrong message to the interviewer. The candidate should not get unduly worried about the type of preparations made by other competitors. Similarly, the candidate should not get tensed up about areas which have not been covered during the preparation. If you are composed and in control of yourself, you will think of the right

**Types of Non-functional Behaviour:** It helps you become more attentive, listen well and organize your thoughts better as you face the panel.

- Being aggressive:** This includes criticizing or blaming others, showing hostility against a group or some individual and deflating the ego or status of others. **Reach on Time:** Reach well in time for the interview. This is an obvious, yet very essential requirement. It gives you sufficient time to find the exact venue, get used to the ambience and be comfortable. Arriving late for the interview may lead to guilt feelings and put you at a disadvantage, besides creating an unfavourable impression on the interviewer. If the place of interview is in a city/area with which you are not very familiar, make sure to either visit the place earlier or start sufficiently early. Reaching late and entering the hall sweating profusely gives you a bad start.
- Blocking:** This includes interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent, citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem, arguing too much on a point, and rejecting ideas without consideration.
- Self-confessing:** This includes using the group as a sounding board and expressing personal, non-group-oriented feelings or points of view.
- Competing:** This includes vying with others to produce the best idea, to talk the most, to play the most roles, and to gain favour with a leader. **Physical Appearance:** Any interview is much more than a question-and-answer session. For the candidate, it is actually the challenge of marketing oneself. Given this reality, the overall impression a candidate makes on the interview panel assumes significance. The candidate makes the first impression on presentation of oneself. It is axiomatic that attire oft proclaims a man/woman, especially in a serious appointment like an interview. It is very necessary, therefore, that the candidate dresses well for the occasion. It may be a suit, a tie, a full sleeve shirt and other accessories that make the candidate look smart. Being well dressed for the interview gives the message that one is keen on creating the right impression. After reaching the venue, the candidate should otherwise disrupting the work and progress of the group.
- Seeking sympathy:** This includes trying to induce other group members to be sympathetic to one's problems or misfortunes, deploring one's own situation or disparaging one's own ideas to gain compliments or support.
- Special pleading:** This includes introducing or supporting suggestions related to one's own pet concerns or philosophies and lobbying.
- Horsing around:** This includes clowning continually, joking, mimicking, and otherwise disrupting the work and progress of the group.
- Seeking recognition:** This includes attempting to call attention to one's self by look at the mirror and make sure that he or she is presentable. Although what dress is appropriate for the particular interview may depend on the nature of the organization, loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, and unusual behaviour

category of the post, the climate and such other factors, it is very essential that the discussions. All members should be involved to assess the group's success in appearance is not casual covering the material and in diagnosing any difficulties which may have hindered it. There is one more reason why a candidate should dress well for the interview. That is on account of the level of confidence it generates for the candidate. Imagine an interview for a senior post where most of the other candidates are in a suit and you

## 5.24 Preparation of Group Discussion

are in your slacks. May be if you are really smart, you may still do well, but then it all depends on how the interviewer interprets it. It is important to be self-confident. While selection tools and techniques like tests, interviews, etc., provide good data about is always desirable to avoid the feeling that you are likely to be at a disadvantage for an individual, they fall short in providing real life data of how an individual would be performing in a real life situation, especially a group situation. Team work being a part of a tie, get used to it by practicing it well in advance. At the same time, if somebody is better dressed than you, let it not deter you from making your best effort. How you feel about yourself is what matters. Group discussion is a useful tool to ascertain these qualities and many organizations use GDs as a selection tool along with Personal Interviews, aptitude tests, etc. A GD is an activity where:

### Communication Clue

While facing job interviews, it is not just the questions that worry people, but also what 1. Groups of 5-10 candidates are formed into a leadership group, and are given a specific situation to analyze and discuss within a given time limit, which may vary between twenty minutes and forty five minutes, or 2. They may be given a case study and asked to come out with a solution for a problem, and be comfortable in your dress. Make sure you have a good posture as you face the 3. They may be given a topic and are asked to discuss the same.

**Preparing for a Group Discussion** Women in particular should note this and wear comfortably heeled footwear and dresses that are not too short. When in doubt, better While group discussion reflects the inherent qualities of an individual, appearing for it be overdressed than be under dressed. For both men and women, this conveys that you are a professional and are serious about your job. And, remember the saying, "you are

discussions never fully dressed until you wear a smile". Smile if you can. If not, at least be natural.

**Reading:** This is the first and the most crucial step in preparation. This is a never-

ending process and the more you read, the better you are in your thoughts. While you may read anything to everything, you must ensure that you are in good touch with current affairs, the debates and hot topics of discussion and also with the latest posture, alert look, firm handshake, not looking nervous, confident and clear voice and appropriate eye contact help create the right impression. Slouching, drooping, sitting with a hunched back, fidgeting, blinking and shaking the legs create a negative impression. When you are facing an interviewer, avoid negative body language and distracting gestures. Scratching your head, pursing your lips, smiling at your palms, reclining your back, picking your nose, and rolling your tongue are all best avoided. More than anything

Also look in front of you and make eye contact with the interviewer. This will help you to feel confident, is a sign of greeting and a firm handshake. This should be done well just before the group discussion starts, but

but neither too early nor too late. It is a sign of confidence and a sign of greeting and a firm handshake. This should be done well just before the group discussion starts, but neither too early nor too late. It is a sign of confidence and a sign of greeting and a firm handshake. This should be done well just before the group discussion starts, but



*English Communication* who has asked you a question. Be conscious of your mannerisms. Refrain from making statements such as 'You have got me wrong',

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'You have not understood me', 'What you are saying is not correct', 'It is impertinent' and the like. Don't look either grim or casual. Do not interrupt them when they are speaking to each other.

**Understand the Question:** Make sure that you have understood the question. This is possible when you are attentive. Active listening is very essential. Let the interviewer complete the question. Do not be in a hurry. Do not interrupt. If you do not interrupt, there is a possibility that the interviewer will give you some hints of what he/she is driving at. However, after the question has been put forth, if you are not clear about it, feel free to seek a clarification. In doing so, be polite. State what you have understood and seek a confirmation. For example, 'Sir, as I understand, you want me to...'

**Reply Earnestly:** Organize your thoughts quickly and give earnest replies. State whatever you know with confidence. Give correct facts and figures. Avoid mixing up figures. State clearly the lakhs, millions, the crores, the dollars or any other statistics unambiguously. Bring out not only your knowledge or depth of understanding of the subject, but also your attitude and concerns. As far as possible, use positive words. Use bright, sharp and appropriate words relevant to the discipline or profession. Be assertive, but avoid extreme positions. There are some questions in which it is possible to hold different views, which means that a very rigid, 'anything else is incorrect' type of statement is to be refrained from. Keep balance. Make your reply as brief or as long as the interviewer expects. For this, take the clue from the way the question is worded. When questions are tricky, take your time in organizing your thoughts.

**Confidentiality:** There are occasions when working in an organization, the employee comes into the possession of confidential information. Such information – whether it is product related, process related, performance related or client related – should not be leaked out to outsiders, especially competitors, for it harms the interest of the organization. Most companies ask their employees to sign a confidentiality agreement. Even otherwise, when an employee works for any organization, there is always an implicit promise of confidentiality. This promise of confidentiality, whether explicit or implicit, should not be breached. That means, in answering the interview questions, the interviewee should protect the interest of the current/previous employer and refrain from disclosing such confidential information. All ethically minded interviewers/ organizations do appreciate that and do not expect the interviewee to disclose any information that is organization-specific and confidential in nature. That apart, there would be a natural presumption that an employee who cannot keep things confidential for his current or previous employer is unlikely to do so about the future employers too. The candidate's credibility or trustworthiness takes a beating. The trick, therefore, lies in answering



questions in a manner that reflects the candidate's experience and accomplishments without leaking out confidential matters or offending the interviewers.

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**Be Sincere, Truthful and Well Mannered:** Answer what you know for sure with confidence. State when you are in doubt. Don't ever tell a blatant lie, hoping that it will go undetected. Admit that you don't know the answer, if that is the position. If you know part of the answer, state that in clear terms and if you are guessing the rest, state so. The interviewer accepts that you know some and do not know some, but no interviewer will accept deliberate lies. Credibility is important. Some interviewers will even encourage you to make false statements so that you talk yourself into a trap. Be sincere and truthful.

Impress the interviewer with your good manners. That is very important. Especially so when you are just out of the college and are facing your first job interview. Good manners counts a lot in dealing with colleagues, superiors, customers and other business associates. Manners make a man or woman look pleasant.

**Do Not Offend the Interviewer:** As an interviewee one should conduct oneself in such a way that the interviewer is not, for any reason, offended. Argumentation should be avoided. Be assertive without being offensive. If you disagree with the interviewer, or if you hold a diametrically opposite point of view, bring it out as your experience or understanding. Never ever unnecessarily correct the interviewer's observations or challenge statements. Remember, you are not keen on winning the argument if it means losing the interview.

If you want to create the right impression, do not interrupt your interviewer. Wait till he finishes talking, even if he has interrupted you. You create a good impression by being a good listener. A good listener allows the other person to finish what he or she starts telling. You stop talking when the interviewer starts to speak even when you are not finished.

**Do Not Brag:** Do state your achievements, contributions and strong points, as and when called for, but keep it in perspective. Avoid loud mouthing and pompous or boastful statements. Braggarts, or those who blow their own trumpets, do not find favour with the interviewers. Do not overstate your achievements. Gracefully accept your shortcomings and weaknesses. State the efforts you are making to overcome them, if there is an opportunity. Give due credit to the teamwork, favourable circumstances and such other factors that helped you perform well. Honest self-assessment always carries a favourable impression. At the same time, don't miss the right opportunity to mention your high points.

**Avoid Long Pauses:** Take your time to organize your thoughts and give your replies. When you are asked a question, you are not expected to reply immediately. A small pause as you mentally formulate your reply, in fact, results in well thought

English Communication 14 But another gesture is nodding with your pencil collecting your thoughts. The interviewer appreciates only the first and the second. These are regarded as truly unprofessional and communication breakdown and result in an awkward situation. Keep the conversation going. Sometimes the panel members will offer hints and tips which will be of help in collecting your thoughts. Make the best use of such gestures. Know when and how to keep the conversation going from your side. For example, there are some open-ended questions where the answer should be much more than a yes or a no.

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13. Shoulders should be square and drooping indicates low self-esteem or unsure feeling.

There are many people who are highly intellectual but fail to make it big only due to their unwillingness to change and learn the right norms in body language. Being

an Open-Ended Question is a key to success.

- Do you think you are suitable for this job?

## 5.29 Four Cs of Effective Group Discussion

- Are you good at team work?

Following are the four Cs and the strategies required for them for a group discussion:

### 1. Cohesion

- (i) You have changed your jobs frequently.
- (ii) Women are less likely to take up such jobs.
- (iii) Obviously, in all such cases, the interviewer will be looking for some positive and logical back-up statements rather than just a mere affirmation.
- (iv) Grab Opportunities: Interviewers generally follow a set pattern. They start with the candidate's academic and professional background before coming to job-specific and knowledge assessment questions. Quite often, the questions get progressively tougher. Even a candidate who is very good at other of easy and tough questions. The candidate should grab the opportunity and make it a point to score more on the easy questions.
- (v) Among the panel members too, some ask general questions while some others persevere and ask probing questions. The candidate should be alert enough to take advantage of the opportunities as and when they show up. There may be breaks in between on account of tea breaks, telephone calls and consultations among the panel members. The candidate can make use of such breaks to review earlier replies and especially what was missed out. The candidate may elaborate on the earlier replies and make such additional points as are to his or her advantage when the interview resumes. An alert candidate makes it a point to grab any such opportunity.
- (vi) negotiating roles and adhering to them
- (vii) reminding peers not to interrupt each other
- (viii) organizing, summarizing and concluding
- (ix) offering feedback and summarizing comments.

### 2. Coordination

- (i) As an interviewee, it is your responsibility to clearly bring out how your academic background, job related knowledge and skills, and expertise and experience can add value to the organization. Sincerity and little opportunity to make it easy for the interviewer to appreciate your suitability and enthusiasm. Just because something is already mentioned in your resume, do not presume that the interviewer has read that. On your part, highlight your strengths and capabilities with reference to the job requirements and interviewer expectations.
- (ii) Use Wit and Humour: Interviews need not necessarily be very serious affairs. Interviewers are normally required to conduct interviews of numerous candidates in a tin
- (iii) complaining, justifying

### 3. Creativity

- (i) offering and sharing ideas and opinions
- (ii) elaborating other's ideas
- (iii) complaining, justifying



9. **Withdrawing:** This includes acting indifferent or passive, not participating, especially towards the end. A candidate who, even while answering the questions well, daydreams and whispers to others, uses wit and humour naturally scores high in the interview. In doing so, however, proper discretion is called for. A candidate should avoid telling irrelevant jokes and anecdotes, and maintain decorum and seriousness associated with the interview process. Humorous

Public Speaking Skills  
Conversations in Real Life Situations

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## 5.26 Roles People Play in Group Discussion

anecdotes associated with great personalities like Mark Twain or Bernard Shaw which, broadly speaking, participants play the following familiar roles in a group discussion.

- **Mr. Brains/Plan:** Mr. Brains brings in a lot of substance and comes up with if opportune, the interviewee may also mention some relevant quotes of famous wide interpretations of the topic.
- **Downside:** It is difficult to stop him/her because he/she is preoccupied with Remember, however, that this is not a must. Don't spoil your chances by using a bad topic discussion as opposed to group discussion. He/she is happily oblivious joke or stale humour.
- to simple things like who is sitting next to him/her. At the end of the group

### 4.12 Introduction to Conversation Skills

discussion, if you happen to ask him/her whether the person sitting next to him/her was a boy or a girl, the answer would most likely be "I do not know".

Conversations involve personal interactions between two or more people about something of interest. In other words, conversation is simply talking to someone else, usually informally. Keeping a conversation going is something of an art, and one which

- **Shopkeeper:** This is the salesman, who can sell anything, has the gift of the gab, a very strong ability to relate to people and be at the centre of things.
- **Downside:** The shopkeeper does not usually come up with original thoughts many seem to lack. However, there are certain rules that can be followed to develop him/herself. He/she needs Mr. Brains.

- **Watchman:** A watchman's role is to maintain order in the group; usually his content contribution is low. Preoccupied with directing the group process, such

### The Rules of Conversation

as controlling the entry and exit of participants' views, he/she is crucial for

- **Conversation is a Two-Way Street:** The first and most important rule of conversation is that it is a dialogue, not a monologue. One must try to achieve meeting time commitments made to the panel and in ensuring consensus.
- **Critic:** The critic criticizes everybody's points without contributing anything new.
- **Be Friendly and Polite:** Smiling, and being nice, takes an individual a long way in conversational terms. It is rather obvious to state that everyone would rather chat to someone friendly and pleasant.
- **The Butcher:** The butcher does great service to the group by enhancing the quality of content by not letting participants get away with just about anything.
- **Respond to What They are Saying:** To properly respond to a person requires Such a participant is most welcome in a group that has one or two aggressive meaningful listening, one cannot just switch off, and think about what one is going to say next.
- **The Spectator or the Passenger:** The spectator is involved in the proceedings but plays a limited role. His/her contribution is very limited and does not affect well, it moves naturally from one person to the other. However, if one or both the outcome of the group task.
- **Use Signalling to Help the Other Person:** When a conversation is flowing are finding it more of a struggle to 'chat', it is useful to employ 'signals' to show the other person that it is their turn to talk.

## 5.27 Role of the Conductor of Group Discussion

The conductor of a group discussion has a distinct role. He or she is the chief person who gets you the passport of further interviews. The role of the conductor is at a senior

There are basically four modes of conversation. These are debate, dialogue, discourse level. He plays a silent referee to the goings-on at the group discussion. It is with a lot and diatribe.

of experience and expertise at conducting such discussions that he is in the position to observe.

1. Debate is a competitive, two-way conversation. The goal is to win an argument or convince someone, such as the other participant or third-party observers.



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2. Dialogue is a cooperative, two-way conversation. The goal is for participants to exchange information and build relationships with one another.
3. Discourse is a cooperative, one-way conversation. The goal to deliver information from the speaker/writer to the listeners/readers.
4. Diatribe is a competitive, one-way conversation. The goal is to express emotions, browbeat those that disagree with you, and/or inspires those that share the same perspective.

In the following lines, we will focus our attention on dialogues. Most often our means of communication as we communicate with others is dialogue. Dialogue can be simply defined as an oral communication when two or more people take turns to put forward their points of view, along with non-verbal cues, to often reach a conclusion. Think about a classroom situation when the teacher enters the class and starts a topic with few general questions for the students. Students respond to the question and then the teacher sums up the discussion along with his or her point of view. It is an example of a dialogue. Or you are going for an interview and there you are asked questions on your subject, on general topics, on your strengths, your career plan, etc. It is a dialogue between you and the panellists in the interview board. Or as you finish your classes, your friend and you are discussing about going for a movie, it is also an example of a dialogue. Or suppose the President of a nation has visited India and is engaging with some bilateral treaties with the Indian counterpart, then it can only be possible through dialogue. Thus, dialogues can be of various kinds depending on the context. But what is significant in a dialogue is that each party that enters into the field of communication in a dialogue has the space and time to put forward his or her point of view. In that sense, dialogues are democratic in nature, where individuals get chance to have their say unlike a monologue where the single person takes over the talking because of his or her privileged position and others are mere receptors of the communication.

The most important facet of a dialogue is taking turns—that is, the speaker is not always a speaker; but speaks for a while and then allows the other person to come up with his or her ideas, queries and responses. Dialogue is a democratic means to come to a conclusion. These days we see that a lot of emphasis is also put forward by different institutions and companies to initiate dialogues with their customers/prospective customers as it is beneficial for a company or an institution to do so.

### Grice's Cooperative Principle

In this context, it is to be remembered that when a dialogue is taking place, it is usually on a topic or an idea and not disconnected remarks. If you visit a marketplace where each individual is speaking to another, the conversations of all the people are not a dialogue. Thus, when we talk about dialogue, it essentially signifies that there are certain codes which are followed, as suggested by Grice. Grice writes, 'Our talk exchanges do not

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normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, of cooperative efforts, and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. According to Grice, when the speakers or participants are getting involved in a particular conversation, then there has to be a direction of the whole conversation. Therefore, whenever a conversation is happening, we have to always respect certain rules pertaining to it to make it a successful one. It is termed by Grice as the Cooperative Principle, in which he proposed four Maxims or rules of conversation. Acting in accordance with these Maxims will, according to Grice, yield results consistent with the Cooperative Principle. The Maxims are:

- Maxim of Quantity
- Maxim of Quality
- Maxim of Relevance
- Maxim of Manner

By Maxim of Quantity what Grice meant was the information that we provide in the process of a conversation. According to Grice, we should neither provide nor contribute more information than what is needed for the current conversation, nor should we provide less information than what is needed for a successful conversation. By Maxim of Quality, he meant that ethical part of the conversation where we should neither talk about what we believe to be false nor should we talk about something if we lack adequate evidence. In other words, we should always base our statements on evidence and should not talk about something just because we think it can be like that. The Maxim of Relevance refers to the fact that when we are conversing, we should keep in mind that we should never talk about something that is not a part of the conversation. In other words, we should be relevant and to the point so that the conversation becomes a meaningful one. By Maxim of Manner, Grice meant that we should avoid obscurity of expression, avoid ambiguity and be brief and orderly, that is we should be short, systematic and simple in our expressions so that the other person in the conversation understands the topic being talked about directly and has no problem in comprehending whatever the speaker is saying.

Grice's four maxims are commonsensical things. Most of the times, when we are conversing, we keep all these four factors in mind. And when we do not do so, we usually are not able to converse or the conversation ends in a misunderstanding among the participants. Let us take an example to illustrate how the four maxim works in a conversation.

We are assuming that two friends, Sachin and Saurav, are meeting after a long time, and we are trying to form two set of dialogues which can happen between them; first, where they are following the four maxims, and second when they are not following it.

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- bring more knowledge, a broader array of experiences and increased creativity to the decision-making process. Groups are more likely to gain participation from larger number of people, and the result is greater 'buy-in' and support for the decision.
- Saurav:** Hello, I was in Mumbai. What about you? How are you doing?
- 2. Ensures better compliance of decisions:** Since decisions are arrived at through participation of all members of the team, better compliance is ensured as compared to single man decisions. Thus, group discussion elicits commitment by all members to implement the decision.
- Saurav:** I was working in an Ad Agency in Mumbai. I left the job there and am searching for a job here.
- 3. Ideas can be shared, tried out and generated:** An important advantage of GD is possibility of sharing ideas and trying out different ideas. This may also lead to generation of new ideas.
- Sachin:** Ok. Take my Number-9800000000. Be in contact. I am in a hurry now. Have to go. Do drop in to my place over the weekend.
- Saurav:** Surely. I will. See you then. Take care.
- 4. GD has many professional applications:** In professional field and in work place, GD has distinct advantages. For instance, GDs in the workplace enable management to draw on the ideas and expertise of the staff. It also leads management to acknowledge staff as valued members of the team. When the dynamics are right, groups provide a supportive and nurturing environment for any professional.
- Sachin and Saurav Not following the four Maxims:**
- Sachin:** Hi, what's up? Where were you so many days?
- Saurav:** Another professional application of GD is to take benefit of functional Specialization of each participant.
- 5. GD increases knowledge, comprehension and understanding:** There is not a single event or issue on earth that is completely understood by anyone person.
- Saurav:** Do you know any Ad Agency here?
- Sachin:** No, why?
- Saurav:** Every one of us analyzes and interprets an event with different prior knowledge and experiences, with different viewpoints, biases and insights. Though we can comprehend an event as it happens, yet a deeper comprehension is more likely to occur when we discuss our opinion with others.
- Sachin:** Let's go and have a coffee?
- Saurav:** Where are you staying?
- 6. Capacity building with more resources:** GD put more resources at the disposal of the group. It utilizes resources of all the members. A joint endeavor makes it possible to tap into those resources which are beyond the capacity of any single individual. Thus, capacity building is another advantage of group discussion.
- 7. GD develops communication skills:** Group discussion provides an opportunity for participants to express their views, to listen to others, to challenge and defend their positions, to negotiate and to reach a consensus. It also helps in developing communication skills. It provides a platform for participants to express their views, to listen to others, to challenge and defend their positions, to negotiate and to reach a consensus. It also helps in developing communication skills.
- 8. GD develops critical thinking skills:** Group discussion provides a platform for participants to express their views, to listen to others, to challenge and defend their positions, to negotiate and to reach a consensus. It also helps in developing critical thinking skills.
- 9. Provide various opportunities:** Group discussions provide opportunities for problem solving. Through group discussion, the participants have the opportunity to



(v) using prosodic features to enhance effectiveness of communication, e.g. intonation, pitch, tone, rhythm, tempo, stress, volume, syntax, vocabulary, to write good dialogues. But basic-level dialogue writing is all about following certain codes of writing, namely, **proximity, posture, body posture** and **Gee's Cooperative Principle**. While writing

- (i) **Dialogues are usually very short.** So keep in mind to write short sentences. It should be similar to the way you speak.
- (ii) **persuading** through logic and arguments.
- (iii) **Dialogues have to have three distinct parts—Welcoming, main conversation and good bye.** Keep that in mind while writing dialogues.
- (iv) **summarizing**
- (v) **Dialogues should be conversational in tone.** Therefore, one should follow the oral communication characteristics. While writing dialogues keep in mind that

### 5.30 Essential Skills for Effective Group Discussion

- Always remember the context in which the dialogue is happening. The context of the dialogue matters as two people conversing in a formal atmosphere would manage to be team players. In fact, managers always work in teams. At the beginning of his career, a manager works as a team member and later, as a team leader. Management aspirants who lack team skills cannot be good managers.
- 1. Team player:** This is the most essential personality trait because it is essential for the dialogue matters as two people conversing in a formal atmosphere would manage to be team players. In fact, managers always work in teams. At the beginning of his career, a manager works as a team member and later, as a team leader. Management aspirants who lack team skills cannot be good managers.
- 2. Reasoning ability:** Reasoning ability plays an important role while expressing opinions or ideas in a group discussion. One must lend logical support to his/her arguments. The logic must be concrete. If it is easily refutable then the argument will get weakened. This will also show that the person is not having any clarity of mind. Another important thing is that one should always give the justification first and the stand later. If you were to state your stand first chances are that the others for example, disagree with your stand with little or no counter to contradict you even before you can state all the reasons why you have taken that stance. In this situation, (She/he will only get an impression of what you think and not which with which other leaders). Here a leader will not in a good while both of them are in a hurry to state their stand. (Both of them shake hands).
- Sachin (surprised):** Hi, what's up? Where were you for so many days?
- Saurav (tendering his right hand for handshake):** Hello, I was in Mumbai. What about you. How are you doing? (Both of them shake hands).
- Sachin (in a cordial tone):** I am doing well and presently working in a call centre in Gurugram. And what discussion will be on all its nuances and try to reach the objective.
- Saurav:** I was working in an Ad Agency in Mumbai. I left my job there and am searching for a job here.
- Sachin (in an inviting tone):** Ok. Take my Number-9800000000. Be in contact. I am in a hurry now. Have to go. Do drop in to my place over the weekend.

## Notes

**Sachin:** Take care, bye. **Saurav:** Bye. Greeting is the act of welcoming or saluting someone on meeting them. A greeting is usually the first verbal communication you make with the person you meet. It could very well set the tone of the ensuing conversation. Some people are very particular about being greeted properly. Older generation find it very disappointing when the younger generation does not aptly show them the respect that they feel they deserve. Similarly, people holding a high position in the society or workplace feel that their subordinates do need to greet them properly in order to reinforce the respect of the office that they hold.

**What is a Response?**

Response, in this case, is the answer to a greeting. When someone greets you, it becomes your obligation to return the wishes. If it is rude to not greet a person aptly, then it would be ruder to not give a proper response to a greeting.

The importance of greetings in daily life can hardly be overstated. Learning how to greet is important as it helps us to understand how to function in a society, establish and maintain personal relationships.

**Table 4.1: Greetings and their Expected Responses**

Greeting	Expected Response
Good morning	Good Morning to you too
Good evening	Good evening
Good afternoon	Good afternoon
Good day	Good day to you too
Good night	Good night and sweet dreams
Hello	Hello
Hi	Hi there
How do you do?	Fine, thank you
How are you doing?	Fine and how are you doing?
How is everything?	Fine and How is everything at your end?
How's everything going?	Great and what about you?
What's up (man/dude/bro/their name)?	Pretty good (man dude/bro/their name)
Good to see you.	Same here.
How are things (with you)?	Very well, thanks
How's it going?	Fine, thanks.
How's life been treating you?	Not bad. How about you?
What's cracking?	Nothing much
It has been a long time	Indeed, it has been a long time
It's been too long	Yes, it's been too long



What have you been up to all these years?	I've been hanging in there
It's always a pleasure to see	The pleasure is all mine
Long time no see	Yes, No see long time
Where have you been hiding?	That's what I've been wondering about you
It's been ages (since I've seen you)	Yes, I have missed you
How've you been?	I have been well, thanks

### Stages in Greeting and Responding To a Greeting

**Stage 1: Decide**—Decide whether you really wish to greet or respond to the greeting of the person or not. Rather than giving him/her a half unwelcome greeting, it is advisable to ignore him/her completely as if you have not seen or noticed him/her. Ideally, such a situation should not arise.

**Stage 2: Content**—Be sure of what you are going to say to the person. Do not mix two different greetings or responses. It will cause unneeded pauses or stammering in extreme cases.

**Stage 3: Delivery**—Deliver your greeting or response as per what you had decided before. If you fail to do so, then you shall not only appear to be dumb in front of the person but also may lose confidence in greeting or responding to a greeting in future.

**Stage 4: Response**—You should expect a response to your greeting from the other person. Wait for 5-6 seconds for the person acknowledge your greeting or respond to it.

**Stage 5: Conclusion**—After you have received an acknowledgement from the other person, you may move on to your path or strike a conversation with the person if you so wish.

### Rules To Be Followed While Greeting or Responding To a Greeting

The following rules should be followed while responding to a greeting:

- Approach the person confidently with a genuine smile on your face. A smile is a universal language and understood everywhere. The smile should be broad but not too much. A wry smile or a smirk may actually communicate a negative message such as a scoff, scorn or rebuke.
- Maintain a proper eye contact for at least 5-6 seconds with the person but do not continue to do so for long because this may make him/her conscious. Your eyes should focus on the area of his/her face between his eyes and tip of the nose. Most people are not able to make a proper eye contact. This is an unwanted psychological handicap. One can get over it by practice.
- With a complete stranger, maintain a distance of at least 60 inches. The proximity can decrease with the increase in the closeness of your relationship with him/her. You can be at a distance of 40 inches from a close acquaintance.



## Notes

- In case you are shaking hands with the person, then ensure that your handshake is firm, straight and confident. A limp handshake or a handshake that is too tight are most unwelcome and thus, avoidable.
- With due respect to the noise pollution around you, your voice should be audible to the person but not too loud. Please avoid talking loudly in a crowded situation. If possible go to the person and greet him.

### Importance of Greetings and Responses

We need to understand that when we greet people or respond to their greetings, we are actually wishing for their well-being and hope that they will have a good time. For instance, if you meet a person who responds to your 'good morning,' with a line such as, 'Who said it was good?', the response, if taken seriously, besides being rude, is very hurting. We are not categorizing the morning as 'good', rather we are simply wishing that it should be a good morning.

### Meeting People and Introducing Yourself

What would you do when you meet someone for the first time? We usually greet the other person properly as per the demands of good etiquettes.

After greeting the person we tend to introduce ourselves.

### What is an Introduction?

An introduction is a formal presentation of one person to another, in which each is told the other person's name and other relevant details.

### Why do you need to be good at introductions?

In an introduction, the person you are giving the introduction to, expects you to be honest, knowledgeable and confident. If you show dishonesty, ignorance or lack of confidence then you shall lose credibility that will be very hard to earn back. As the saying goes— 'First impression is the last impression.'

What details should be known to you about the person you are introducing? The details that should be known are as follows: Name, age, address, contact number, e-mail id, religion, caste, height, weight, qualifications, experience, family background, conveyance, languages known, marital status, number of dependants.

### Precautions

Let us study some of the precautions one needs to take in an introduction.

- **Be properly dressed:** There is an old saying, 'Clothes maketh a man'. The person you are introducing yourself to or introducing someone else to should see you and the person you are introducing, properly dressed. Your attire should

make a good impression on the person. This will make him/her more receptive towards you and the person you are introducing. A simple attire with limited accessories like ear-rings, bracelets, can make a better impression than an overtly high fashioned and loud coloured clothing. Make sure that your clothes are clean free from any types of cuts torn parts.

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- **Physical ailments and deformities:** At the initial stage of the introduction, do not refer to your or the person's (whom you are introducing) deformities or ailments even indirectly. Many people do not find it acceptable if you start with a statement like – 'You must be Mr Hardy. Sir, I've heard a lot about you and your rise to success despite your blindness.' This is not a compliment. It is rude and unacceptable. Many people who are physically challenged, want to lead a normal life and not be reminded of their deficiency. Similarly do not start by – 'Madam, I know that he is looking a bit dull today because of the cold he has caught but he is quite well qualified otherwise.' Ailments and physical deformities should only be discussed with a physician or Doctor.
- **Avoid untidy habits:** During an introduction, do not engage in untidy habits such as picking your nose, tapping your feet, scratching your hair, rubbing your face. They may appear nauseating and repulsive. Identify such bad habits and try to get rid of them as soon as possible.
- **Keep cool, do not freeze:** We find this advice on top of jam bottles— to keep the jam bottle in a cool place like a refrigerator but not to freeze it in the freezer. The same holds true in case of an introduction. You need to look reserved and confident but if you overdo it then you may appear to be snobbish and rude. One would like to be introduced to or by a gregarious yet respectable person. So, this balance needs to be maintained.
- **Mind your language:** Use of foul language and abusive words are unacceptable in decent society. They should be avoided despite the knowledge that the person to whom you are introducing yourself to is known to use such a language or is comfortable with it.
- **Open mindedness:** To a great degree, have an open mind for the person you are taking introduction from. Beware if you have been advised from reliable sources regarding the harmful qualities of the person but courtesy demands that you give the person a chance to prove your sources right or wrong.

### 4.14 Summary

The importance of soft skills in the world of business today can hardly be over-emphasised. Since businesses exist for the benefit of people and people constitute the core asset of most business organisations, soft skills assume great significance. Soft

skills are considered to be extremely valuable across corporates and businesses. Unlike the knowledge of specific subjects and expertise in functional domains, soft skills are of value irrespective of the functional area and nature of business.

## Notes

Soft skills are of large variety and are inclusive in nature. In a sense, all those skills which fall outside the hard skills category could be listed under soft skills. Soft skills and management skills have a lot in common. Obviously, managers in business organisations need necessarily develop a variety of soft skills to become effective. Personal skills can be of wide variety. Cultivating them in a conscious manner enables the individual to function effectively as an employee, a manager or a useful member of the business organisation.

Language can be described as a vehicle of thought. It is a method of expression. It is a vocabulary with its usage being prevalent in one or more regions or countries. Languages are also known for their features. There is a mother tongue, there is a regional language, an official language, a national language and a global language.

When a language is not a native language but one adopted from outside, it acquires mixed characteristics. The widely used English language has variations from country to country. Idioms, phrases and slangs are an integral part of a language. English language has a fair share of these and an effective business communicator should be informed about these.

A dictionary is an important tool in the teaching and learning of vocabulary. Teacher should encourage students to search words in dictionaries. Teacher should encourage students to enrich and expand their vocabulary. There are different ways to expand the vocabulary of the students. Reading words aloud is also very beneficial. It makes a learner familiar with the word and also improves pronunciations of the learners. Role-play is to create the presence of a real life situation in the classroom. It is important in the classroom communication because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicatively in different social contexts and in different social roles.

Communication is essentially a two-way process. It is a process that involves at least two parties—the sender and the receiver or the speaker and the listener. The purpose of any communication is not achieved till the receiver receives the message which the sender puts across. In an interactive communication, listening accounts for about 50 per cent of verbal communication. The listening process can be understood best by looking at various words which are associated with listening. These are hearing, decoding, sensing, understanding, comprehending, filtering, absorbing, assimilating, empathizing, remembering and responding.

Passive listening refers to inert or indifferent listening. There is no conscious effort to receive and absorb the message. Active listening is the most desirable type of



listening. In this case, the listener makes conscious efforts to listen attentively, decode the message and absorb it through a participative process. *Conversation in Real Life Situations*

Interviews need not necessarily be very serious affairs. Interviewers are normally required to conduct interviews of numerous candidates in a time-bound manner. This results in certain tedium or wariness for the interview panel, especially towards the end.

Conversations involve personal interactions between two or more people about something of interest. There are basically four modes of conversation. These are debate, dialogue, discourse and diatribe. Most often our means of communication as we communicate with others is dialogue.

Dialogue can be simply defined as an oral communication when two or more people take turns to put forward their points of view, along with non-verbal cues, to often reach a conclusion. According to Grice, when the speakers or participants are getting involved in a particular conversation, then there has to be a direction of the whole conversation. Whenever a conversation is happening, we have to always respect certain rules pertaining to it to make it a successful one. It is termed by Grice as the Cooperative Principle, in which he proposed four Maxims or rules of conversation.

The Maxims are:

- Maxim of Quantity o Maxim of Quality
- Maxim of Relevance o Maxim of Manner

Dialogue writing is a craft which can be learnt very easily. One needs to be a close observer of human relationships as well as have a good command over the language to write good dialogues. The importance of greetings in daily life can hardly be overstated. Learning how to greet is important as it helps us to understand how to function in a society, establish and maintain personal relationships.

An introduction is a formal presentation of one person to another, in which each is told the other person's name and other relevant details. To a great degree, have an open mind for the person you are taking introduction from.

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## 4.15 Glossary

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- **Professionalism:** It means the combination of all the qualities that are connected with trained and skilled people.
- **Adaptability:** It means the quality of being able to adjust to new conditions.
- **Etymology:** It is the study of the history of words, their origins, and how their form and meaning have changed over time.
- **Idiom:** It refers to a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words.

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- **Non-verbal communication:** It is the non-linguistic transmission of information through visual, auditory and tactile channels.
- **Braggarts:** It means someone who proudly talks a lot about himself or herself and his or her achievements or possessions.
- **Diatribes:** It is a forceful and bitter verbal attack against someone or something.
- **Dialogue:** It means a conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or film.
- **Debate:** It means a serious discussion of a subject in which many people take part.
- **Rapport:** It refers to a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.

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#### 4.16 Review Questions

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1. What are the different types of soft skills?
2. What is the difference between personal skills and inter-personal skills?
3. How can soft skills be developed?
4. Describe the various skills that a manager in a business organization needs to develop.
5. Write a short note on idioms, phrases and slangs.
6. What is vocabulary?
7. What are synonyms? Give examples.
8. Analyse the significance of language.
9. Describe the skills needed to become an expert communicator.
10. Explain some of the activities that can be undertaken to improve language skills of learners.
11. What are the four levels of listening?
12. What is passive listening?
13. Examine the process of listening.
14. Discuss the different skills required during interview.
15. What are the rules of a conversation?
16. What is a diatribe?
17. Mention the precautions to be taken in an introduction?

18. What is the importance of greetings?
19. Examine the four maxims of conversation.

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#### 4.17 Further Readings

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## Notes

## Public Speaking Skills

**(Structure)**

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- 5.38 Nature of Interviews
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## Notes

## 5.1 Learning Objectives

After studying the chapter, students will be able to:

- Understand the tips for good public speaking;
- To know what a presentation is and how it differs from a lecture or a written report;
- To know about six great helpers in presentation;

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- To learn the tips about team and seminar presentation;
- To know the meaning, types and objectives of group discussion;
- To be an effective participant in a group discussion;
- To understand role playing in group discussion;
- To learn 4 Cs of effective group discussion;
- To understand essential skills for effective group discussion;
- To note the Do's and Don'ts of group discussion;
- To understand the meaning, nature and types of interviews;
- To learn the art of conducting interviews;
- To know how to successfully attend interviews;
- Understand the importance of body language;
- Explain the different types of group discussion.

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## 5.2 Introduction

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In business organizations, presentations and public speaking by the executives and other personals are regular features. No matter what the area of responsibility is or what type of organization is for which you are working, you have to give a presentation or speech sooner or later. You may be asked to talk to colleagues, clients, suppliers for the general public. You may be asked to speak for 15 minutes or one hour. Hence, public speaking and presentation skills are very much essential for professional excellence. Technical skills account for 22-25% of professional excellence and rest depends upon soft skills that include public speaking and presentation skills. Speaking effectively and making an effective presentation is a skill that can be learnt, studied and polished. In this chapter, guidelines are discussed in learning the techniques/skills of making presentations and public speaking.

The group discussion is a personality test, most popular with public/private sector undertakings, government departments, commercial firms, IIMs, universities and other organizations, used to screen candidates, after the written test. It is a part of oral communication. The entire study of communication would remain incomplete if there was no analysis of the system of group discussions. To judge the abilities of students prior to their entry into any organization, the communication skills of each one of them are tested. The ones who qualify at this level are further subjected to rigorous interviews where, under pressure, their responses are measured.

Group Discussion (GD) is an activity that calls for application of a variety of communication skills such as speaking and listening, questioning, giving and receiving constructive feedback, presenting information and effective use of non-verbal



communication. Group discussion is an important aspect of consensus-building exercise in everyday communication but it is more significant in a corporate environment. In fact, many of today's companies rely entirely on team work and group interactions. As a manager, instead of just blindly forging ahead, it is always a good idea to solicit your group's input. Achieving success in this endeavour however, needs skill. That is why companies are looking for people who can interact successfully in groups and make useful contributions working together. A group discussion is a great way to validate and generate new ideas. Discussions are not only productive; they're also fun.

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In the process of selection and recruitment, interviews play an important role. Interview is a formal mechanism through which the recruiters or the companies or the organizations are able to find the employees who are the most suitable to the jobs for which the interviews are held. An interview is widely used not only in employee's selection, but also for placement, orientation, disciplinary action, exit or separation, counseling and general problem solving.<sup>1</sup> An interview reveals the views, ideas and attitude of the person being interviewed as well as the skills of the interviewer. Both the interviewee and the interviewer must be well prepared for the interview. Interviews are always goal-oriented, with the aim to assess suitability and make a selection. In this chapter, an attempt is made to discuss the meaning of interview, its types, tips on preparing for interviews and other fundamental aspects relating to an interview.

People may achieve much by acquiring knowledge and skills but lack leadership and communication skills. Some of the highest achievers may rarely speak unless they have been asked a direct question and, even then, their responses may be limited. Group Discussion can be used as a vehicle to encourage thought and to practice a wider range of skills, specifically communication and problem solving skills that may be required in their future working life. Companies make use of this technique to filter people in an interview. When a large number of interviewees turn up for the interview this becomes the most important round for screening people. In Group Discussion, companies shortlist only those people who have necessary skills like listening skills, a proactive attitude and leadership qualities but at the same time he/she should be a team player and possess people skills.

Groups Discussion is an important dimension of the job selection process. Any job requires employees to work with others for effective functioning. Therefore people skills are an important aspect of any job.

### 5.3 Public Speaking

Public speaking is a talk given to a large gathering whose content is light. It is given on occasions like an anniversary or an inauguration. Its purpose is usually to encourage, appreciate, congratulate or entertain; it is followed by applause from the audience.

## Notes

Persons in responsible positions must be good speakers as there are many occasions when they are required to address an audience. Being able to speak well is an asset in any profession. Speaking skill can be cultivated and developed with some knowledge of the formal aspects of public speaking, and with practice.

The most important requirement for public speaking is its preparation. Even persons who have natural skill in speaking need preparation to deliver a good speech.

#### 5.4 Characteristics of Good Public Speaking or Good Speech

1. **Clarity:** Clarity is the first main characteristic of a good speech. Your speech should be eminently successful in conveying to the audience the ideas, emotions, facts or arguments, you want to express.
2. **In the manner of an informal talk:** A good speech is closer to a personal and informal chat between two close friends. When deliver speech, there should be a perfect rapport between you and the audience.
3. **Speech should be vivid and concrete:** The speech should be vivid including in it concrete facts easy to comprehend and visualize.
4. **Makes the speech brief:** The concentration of an average audience does not last more than twenty or twenty-five minutes. Therefore, an ideal speech should not exceed than this, unless the audience is motivated by certain interesting facts during the speech.
5. **Speech should be interesting:** Quotations, anecdotes and humorous touches often make a speech very interesting. The quotations should be familiar and accepted by experts only be used. Anecdotes should be new, brief and in good taste. Humour should be typical, spontaneous and gentle.
6. **Audience-oriented:** A good speech is always being audience-oriented. For delivering audience oriented speech, one should consider:
  - (i) Whether the audience is general public or specialized?
  - (ii) How large is the audience?
  - (iii) What is the age group of listeners?
  - (iv) What are their social, religious, political and economic views as well as prejudices of the listeners?
  - (v) What would be the response of the expected audience?

Preparation work has to be done in four stages, viz:

  - (i) Finding out the environment in which the talk is to be delivered.
  - (ii) Preparing the text and the required visuals.
  - (iii) Taking care of speaker's physical appearance and personality.
  - (iv) Practicing delivery of the talk.

Speeches are difficult for most of us. The techniques can be adopted to improve the public speaking.

### Notes

- 1. Selection of the topic for speech:** Your first step in formal speech making is to determine the topic of your presentation. In some cases, you will be assigned a topic, usually one within your area of specialization. In fact, when you are asked to make a speech on a specified topic, it is likely to be because of your knowledge of the topic. In some cases, your choice of topic will be determined by the purpose of your assignment, as when you are asked to welcome a group or introduce a speaker. In your search for a suitable topic, you should be guided by three basic factors. The first is your background and knowledge. The second basic factor is the interests of your audience. The third basic factor is the occasion of the speech. Your selection should be justified by all three factors.
- 2. Preparation of the speech:** After you have decided what to talk about, you gather the information you need for your speech. This step may involve searching through your mind for experiences or ideas, concluding research in a library or in company files, gathering information online, or consulting people in your own company or other companies. In short, you do whatever is necessary to get the information you need. When you have that information, you are ready to begin organizing your speech. Although variations are sometimes appropriate, you should usually follow the time-honored order of a speech: introduction, body and conclusion.
- 3. Guidelines for the introduction of the speech:** The introduction of a speech has much the same goal as the introduction of a written report: to prepare the listeners (or readers) to receive the message. But it usually has the additional goal of arousing interest. Unless you can arouse interest at the beginning, your presentation is likely to fail. The techniques of arousing interest are limited only by the imagination. One possibility is a human-interest story, for storytelling has strong appeal. Humour, another possibility, is probably the most widely used technique. Other effective ways for gaining attention at the opening are by using quotations and questions. In addition to arousing interest, your opening should lead into the theme of your speech. In other words, it should set up your message as the examples above do.
- 4. Guidelines for organizing the body of the speech:** Organizing the body of your speech is much like organizing the body of a report. You take the whole and divide it into comparable parts. Then you take those parts and divide them. You continue to divide as far as it is practical to do so. In speeches, however, you are more likely to use factors rather than time, place, or quantity as the basis of division because in most speeches, your presentation is likely to built around issues and questions that are subtopics of the subject. Even so, time, place, and quantity subdivisions are possibilities. You need to emphasize the transitions between the divisions because,



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unlike the reader who can see them, the listeners may miss them if they are not stressed adequately. Without clear transitions, you may be talking about one point and your listener may be relating those ideas to your previous point.

5. **Conclusion remarks of the speech:** Like most reports, the speech usually ends by drawing a conclusion. Here you bring all that you have presented to a head and achieve whatever goal the speech has. You should consider including these three elements in your close: (1) a restatement of the subject, (2) a summary of the key points developed in the presentation, and (3) a statement of the conclusion. Bringing the speech to a climatic close—that is, making the conclusion the high point of the speech—is usually effective. Present the concluding message in strong language—in words that gain attention and will be remembered. In addition to concluding with a summary, you can give an appropriate quote, use humour, and call for action.

## 5.6 Importance of Public Speaking

In an organization, there is always a paucity of effective speakers who can positively speak about business. Lack of this ability makes public to see business in a negative light. Poor presentation of business managers to the outsiders can be a cause of business failure. Hence, it is through external communications that business presents its message to the public. There is a need in business for persons that can effectively present organizational viewpoint to the outsiders.

Public speaking is important in many different ways, because it encompasses so many aspects of our lives, we will consider public speaking from the standpoint of the individual, the organization, and society in which, we live.

### The Individual

When you apply for a job, the employment interviewer evaluates you on the basis of certain characteristics. Your ability to communicate is one such characteristic, and it comes across clearly in an interview. Your ability to communicate not only influences whether you are hired but it determines your progress on the job. Employers realize that it is the ability to communicate that often separates an exceptional employee from the average ones. Being able to organize your thoughts and give a public speech is another significant determinant of your personal and professional success. When you speak and others listen and respond to your comments, it affects the way you see yourself and how others see you. Being able to give an effective public speech enhances your self-esteem; you feel good about yourself.

### The Organization

It has been said that an organization is only as good as the individuals who comprise it. It could also be said that an organization communicates only as effectively as do its

individual members. Business has been blamed for many of the problems facing society. Such issues as the effects of automation upon employment and discrimination in hiring must be addressed by people speaking for business organizations. The energy crisis, product liability, and the use of nuclear energy represent other important problem areas. Much anti-business sentiment is due to public unawareness of the business position on such matters. There is a need in business for people who can effectively present the organizational viewpoint to the public. The average business organization does a poor job of acquainting the public with its contributions to society. From a communication standpoint, it does not matter how pure the motives of the organization are. What the matter is, what the public knows about such things and how the public responds to this knowledge of a company's activities. Unless the public is made aware of what business is doing and why, the bet of intentions on the part of business will be of no avail. Only through effective external communications can business present the information that is most likely to result in a desirable image. One of the most important and effective formats in which to present that information is the public speech.

## Notes

### The Society

We live in a society in which the free expression of ideas is not merely tolerated, but encouraged. Issues are analyzed and point of views are presented in many different formats. Newspaper editorials, town hall meetings, and discussions (or arguments) are a few settings in which opinions are aired on those subjects about which the participants feel strongly. Our society thrives on this free expression of ideas, for it is through such interchange that a balanced perspective is maintained. When a certain point of view ceases to be expressed, however, perhaps for the lack of someone willing and able to speak out, that viewpoint no longer influences society. It is often through public speaking that ideas are presented for public evaluation. This was as true in the preliminaries to the Declaration of Independence as it is today in election campaigns at all levels. It is as evident at an annual meeting of stockholders' as at a monthly union local meeting. For lack of an effective speaker, a good idea may fail to get consideration. A lack of articulate opponents may result in the passage of legislation of little merit. Continuation of our free society requires willing and articulate people of every view.

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## 5.7 Need of Public Speaking

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### Information

When you try to teach the listeners or to explain something to them, your general purpose is to inform them. The best example of such an informative speech can be a classroom lecture. These are intended to change the certain believes or aptitudes of the listeners. A persuasive speech helps to get a covert response. A covert response is not

*English Communication* readily apparent to the speaker or to an observer to apprise the listeners with something completely new to them. Informative speeches update listeners who are already having some knowledge about the subject.

## Notes

### Persuasion

Another general purpose of public speaking is to persuade the listeners. Persuasion aims to change the beliefs or aptitudes of the listeners. A persuasive speech helps to get a covert response. A covert response is not readily apparent to the speaker or to an observer. When a union leader tries to convince the fellows that the union have the fellows interest at heart, he is seeking a covert response, i.e., acceptance of an idea. On the other hand, persuasive speech helps to get an overt response. It is a response that is observable and measurable.

### Entertainment

Another purpose of public speaking is to entertain. This means to apprise the listeners with something completely new to them. Informative speeches update listeners who are already having some knowledge about the subject. Above are the general purposes for making a speech but there can be infinite number of specific purposes for making it. It all varies according to the order to develop and it can be an impediment between the speaker and the audience.

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## 5.8 Modes of Delivery in Public Speaking

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There are four main modes of delivery used in public speaking:

1. Impromptu
2. Extemporaneous
3. Memorized
4. Manuscript

The impromptu speech is delivered with little opportunity to prepare. Its main virtue is that it is spontaneous; its main shortcoming is that it is usually not well planned. When you are urged "say a few words" without any advance warning, what results is an impromptu speech.

Extemporaneous speaking is somewhat more formal than impromptu speaking. You have an opportunity to plan, and the resulting speech is better organized than an impromptu speech. You will usually rely somewhat on notes, but you will not read to the listeners. Most public speeches are delivered extemporaneously.

A memorized speech allows for a well-planned expression of ideas. When presenting a speech from memory, however, speakers have tendency to lose a certain amount of naturalness and sometimes sound and look quite wooden. The possibility of forgetting the speech is another negative aspect of the memorized speech.



Manuscript speaking is relied on for more formal occasions. Speaking from a manuscript, you are able to be very precise, and you can carefully control the exact message the listeners receive. Of course, it generally takes longer to develop a manuscript speech, and frequently the manuscript becomes a barrier between you and the listeners.

## Notes

## 5.9 Checklist for Effective Public Speaking

The ability to speak effectively depends upon some traits and qualities. It is also dependent upon communication situation. The following is a checklist of features that are frequently associated with effective speaking skills.

1. Self-confidence
2. Knowledge of the topic
3. Understanding of the audience
4. Proper articulation
5. Pleasing voice quality
6. Sincerity
7. Emotional control
8. Fluency
9. Friendliness
10. Reasoning
11. Sympathy
12. Open-mindedness
13. Humility
14. Responsiveness
15. Awareness
16. Humour
17. Forcefulness
18. Spontaneity
19. Tactfulness
20. Intelligence

## 5.10 Checklist for Discussion Skills

Discussions are important means of exchanging information and taking decisions. A good communicator should be skillful in discussions. This requires mastery of discussion skills. The following is a checklist for discussion skills:

1. The participant should take initiative as it is one of the leadership qualities.

Notes

2. A person taking part in the discussion should be a good listener.
3. The participant must know his subject matter thoroughly.
4. A participant must state his points in discussion with conviction.
5. A participant should use simple and short statements in discussions for achieving efficiency.
6. A participant should be deliberate and slow in presenting his points.

Besides the above, following points should keep in mind for enhancing discussion skills.

1. Provide opportunities to others to speak in the discussions.
2. Substantiate your point.
3. Do not speak loudly in the discussion.
4. Do not adopt a negative stance.
5. Have a control on body movements.
6. Strictly follow the principle of the communications.
7. Use your analytical skills in presenting your points.

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### 5.11 Essentials for Reducing Stage Fear

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1. Select a topic in which you are genuinely interested.
2. Learn as much as possible in advance about your audience and about the setting in which you will speak. The more advance knowledge you have on these matters, the less uncertainty you will feel.
3. Prepare your speech thoroughly. Lack of preparation is a major cause of stage fright.
4. Write your main points on a note card to avoid forgetting.
5. Practice, but do not memorize.
6. Space out your practice sessions. Rather than practicing for two hours the day before your speech, practice for shorter periods for six or seven consecutive days.
7. Each time you practice, go through the entire speech. In this way, you will get a feel for the whole message.
8. Throughout your preparation, always keep yourself to apprise the listeners with something completely new to them. Informative speeches update listeners who are already having some knowledge about the subject.
9. While awaiting your turn to speak, sit in a relaxed, even limp position.
10. While waiting your 'turn', breathe deeply.
11. Know your introduction especially well. This will ease you into your speech.
12. Refer to your note card when necessary.

13. Focus your thoughts on your message and the response you are seeking rather than on yourself. *Public Speaking Skills*
14. Use gestures and movement to emphasize important points and your tension will be reduced during the speech.

Notes

## 5.12 Presentation Skills

A presentation is essential for the students, researchers and working managers in today's fast moving business environment. If presentation is effective, it creates a good impression about the speaker and it clearly communicates the information. The presentation also reveals the attributes of the personality of the speaker, i.e. confidence, fluency, style and conducting discussion and debates. Business presentation differs from public speaking.<sup>3</sup> (Refer Table 5.1)

**Table 5.1: Difference between Business Presentations and Public Speaking**

Points of Difference	Business Presentations	Public Speaking
Aim of speaking	To give the audience what they know they need	To give the audience what they believe they want
Type of audience	Generally homogenous in terms of their knowledge, area of academic or professional interest etc.	Mostly heterogeneous
Expectations of audience	Complete details about the topic	Do not expect a lot of details
Amount of information	More	Less
Level of interaction	More, as the audience wishes to understand the topic thoroughly	Less, as a general understanding is desired by the audience

A presentation is a live mode of sharing information with a select audience. It is a form of oral communication in which a person shares factual information with a particular audience. We can define presentation as an oral activity using visual electronic aids to discuss new ideas and information with a specific audience in an impressive and convincing manner.

## 5.13 Features of Presentation

1. A presentation is not a lecture. Classrooms lectures have well defined educational objectives. Students raise questions and answer questions put by the teacher. A classroom lecture is ideally a two-way communication process. But presentations are one-way, initially. The audience sits through listening, watching, and taking notes.

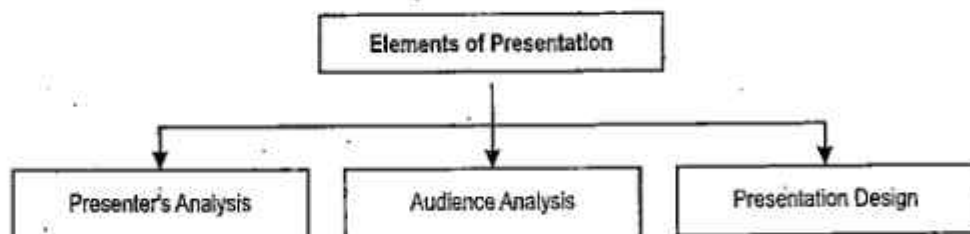


## Notes

2. The focus is on persuading the listeners to buy the ideas that are shared.
3. A presentation has a well-defined format. The audience sits through the delivery without interrupting the presenter and after the completion of presentation, the audience is invited to ask questions or seek clarifications.
4. A good presentation must cover the following aspects:
  - (i) There should be a clear structure with an introduction, discussion, and end.
  - (ii) The facts and figures should be visually present in tables, graphs, and charts.
  - (iii) The different colours should be used to make the presentation of the contents attractive.
  - (iv) The presenter should show an understanding of the audience's needs and level of understanding, while discussing his/her ideas.
  - (v) Humour and anecdote should often employ to create a good relationship with the audience.
  - (vi) Questions should be given serious attention and must regard as an essential part of presentation.

### 5.14 Elements of Presentation

An efficient presenter prepares the presentation with great care as his/her main purpose is to convey the message effectively. It involves proper prior preparation and planning. There are three fundamental elements of a good presentation.



1. **Presenter's analysis:** As a presenter, you need to focus on the following aspects, before making the actual presentation.
  - (i) Identify your purpose-achieve
  - (ii) Analyze your audience
  - (iii) Identify the need
  - (iv) Collate your information
  - (v) Design your communication
  - (vi) Time your presentation
  - (vii) Decide on the visual aids to be used
  - (viii) Study the location.

The presenter as 'self', plays a key role, in making the presentation a successful communication.

## Notes

**2. Audience analysis:** Before making presentation, audience analysis is very necessary. In this context, the following points should be noted.

- (i) Get an idea of the number, nature, needs, level of knowledge, and likely attitude of the audience.
- (ii) Determine the language of delivery and selection of inputs.
- (iii) Understanding the audience's needs.
- (iv) Never consider your audience to be a hostile group.
- (v) Always look for some smiling faces among the listeners.
- (vi) Make eye contact with them.
- (vii) Remember the purpose for which you are addressing your audience.

Also, keep in mind that different persons attending your presentation may be looking for different information related to your topic, according to their own interests or needs. Therefore, define the focus and scope of your presentation at the very outset.

**3. Designing your presentation:** Think of a presentation in terms of a journey; designed to take an audience to a pre-planned destination. Use this analogy to identify the key points of your message, prioritize them and all allocate each one an appropriate time slot. Nearly all presentations should fit into a simple structure. This comprises four clearly identifiable parts and timing of each part too:

- (i) Introduction (Tell them what you're going to tell them)- 3 minutes
- (ii) Main Body (Tell them)- 15 minutes
- (iii) Conclusion (Tell them what you have told them)- 2 minutes
- (iv) Questions & Answers (Discussion session)- 10 minutes

A good guide for the breakdown of a presentation is the 10/80/10 rule—whereby the introduction and conclusion are allotted 10% of the presentation time, with the main body comprising 80%. For example, a 30 minute presentation would have a 3 minute introduction and conclusion and main body lasting 24 minutes. This formula can be applied to any length of presentation—as it reflects a good breakdown from the audience's perspective.

It is usually best to plan your presentation to have a question and answer session at the end. This will enable you to deliver your message and then end strongly with a clear and concise conclusion, before entering the relatively unpredictable area of tackling questions from the floor.

### 5.15 Ten Steps to a Successful Presentation

There are ten basic steps which need to be kept in mind at the time of making a presentation. How successful one is at the end of the delivery is contingent upon the amount of labour that has gone into the seven preparatory stages.

Table 5.2: Ten Steps to Successful Communication

Steps	Purpose
1. Consider the occasion and objective	Know the sphere and concretize ideas
2. Make audience analysis	Meet demands of the audience
3. Know about the location	Acquaint yourself with the venue, organizers, etc.
4. Decide the mode and manner of presentation	Secures the attention of the receivers
5. Prepare the script	Make a confident presentation
6. Preparation of (i) Visual aids (ii) Handouts (iii) Feedback forms	Should: Generate interest Increase retention Assess competence
7. Rehearse	Brings perfection, instills confidence
8. Consider personal aspects	Be presentable in appearance
9. Overcome nervousness	Be fearless and effective
10. Make the presentation	Enables sharing of ideas, information and knowledge

Notes

### Consider the Occasion and Objective

It is important to know the occasion for which the presentation has been organized. The person who wishes to make the presentation must know his proper sphere and the purpose he wants to fulfill through his presentation. What is that, one aims to achieve at the end of the presentation, should be crystal clear. One should not stray or move away from the main point or focal area. The more one centres round the thrust area, greater are the chances of the results being positive.

### Make an Audience Analysis

It is most important for any speaker to understand for whom the presentation is meant. An audience is not just a gathering of people; it has a collective identity of its own. The presentation must be in a form and style that suits and interests the audience and the content and tone should also depend on the nature of the audience. The age, sex, nationality, educational background and experience of the audience present, have a great relevance to the presentation.

As an example, while considering the age factor of the audience, these clues can be used:

Children love to listen to stories and dramatic presentations; teenagers are responsive to new ideas and like informative presentations and senior citizens like to be reminded about the good old days.



## Get Acquainted with the Environment/Location

The speaker should be familiar with the physical environment. The size of the room, the seating arrangement, speaker's position vis-à-vis the platform or podium, setting of the mike, lighting and ventilation, positioning of the visual aids, etc., should be well planned out and observed in advance.

Notes

## Decide the Manner and Mode of Presentation

The speaker should decide whether he wishes to achieve the objective by a formal presentation or a non-formal one. The speaker may select any of the following modes of presentation:

1. **Reading:** A written script may be used to present the whole matter. It helps to maintain accuracy, but eye contact may be lost in the process. Very few speakers can master this art of reading as well as maintaining frequent eye contact with the listeners.
2. **Memorized Presentation:** If the memory power of the speaker is to read aloud well, he may memorize the whole presentation and not use any written material, but in case, the speaker forgets in between, it leaves a very bad impression and spoils the effect of the presentation. The best method in this case is to make some brief notes, and refer to them in between, to maintain a smooth presentation.
3. **Extemporaneous presentation:** In this case, the speaker does not memorize the whole presentation, word by word. Rather, he takes some ideas in his mind and in a logical order, presents them in his own words. A mental recap helps.

## Plan out the Presentation: Preparation of Script

The most tedious and arduous task is the preparation of the script. A lot of effort goes into the preparatory stage of making a presentation. This would become clear if you were to compare your presentation to the tip of an iceberg, 90% of which is invisible and only 10% is visible. While preparing the script, the speaker has to keep in mind:

1. Length of the script, depending on the time available for presentation.
2. Style of presentation, conversation style or formal speech, simple and lucid or impressive and explanatory.
3. Humour, making the talk more interesting and lively, to engage the audience more fully.

**Format of a presentation/composition of the script:** A rough plan for any presentation may be made as follows:

1. **Opening:**
  - (i) Introductory remarks.
  - (ii) Stating the objective of the presentation.

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- (iii) Creating a rapport with the audience.
- (iv) Drawing the outline of the presentation.

**2. Middle:**

- (i) The main body of the presentation.
- (ii) Examples and visual aids.
- (iii) Explanation of the topic in points, as per their priority.

**3. Closing:**

- (i) Giving a clear message of the presentation.
- (ii) Summary of the presentation.
- (iii) Inviting queries.
- (iv) Thanking the audience and organizers.

Presentation could naturally follow a six-tier process. Preparation should also be done according to this sequential arrangement.

1. Ice-breaker
2. Opening
3. Need for a new idea(s) or its delineation
4. The idea
5. Accruing results/benefits
6. Summary/conclusion.

**Preparation of Visual Aids, Handouts and Feedback Forms****Visual Aids**

It is always better to prepare visual aids much in advance of the presentation. Leaving them for the last moment can on certain occasions force the speaker to rush through the entire procedure. As visual aids are used as supports to the presentation, error in the same can leave a poor impact in the minds of the audience. Whatever, we see we tend to believe more emphatically and it leaves a greater and longer lasting impression. So, in order to make the presentation more effective, the speaker must make use of visual aids like charts, chalk boards, film slides, transparencies, diagrams, maps and pictures.

**Handouts**

Handouts should be prepared meticulously and carefully. They should be given to the participants prior to commencing the session so that they can come prepared at the presentation with focused queries. The time which would be otherwise spent in generating questions would be saved if this strategy is observed. These handouts should be extremely well prepared as the participants are going to take them back after the

session and probably share the same with friends and colleagues. A sloppy performance will expose the speaker in a poor light. The quality of the presentation plus handouts, to a great extent, determines your acceptance in the midst of the participants.

### **Feedback Forms**

Feedback forms should have also been prepared well in advance, so that they can be handed to the participants at the end of the presentation. Points which need to be elaborated in the feedback form are:

1. Information about the audience.
2. Level of acceptance of the speaker.
3. Scope for improvement.
4. Inadequacies, if any, in the presentation.
5. Expectations from the presentation.
6. To what extent were they met.
7. Gains from the session.
8. Scope for further interaction.
9. Grading of the speaker on various parameters such as, delivery, ideas, use of visual aids, handling the group, empathy, listening, etc.
10. Suggestions, if any.

### **Rehearse the Presentation**

Making presentations is not simple. It is extremely important for us to realize the sanctity of rehearsing to improve the quality of the presentation. Unless and until the presentation has been rehearsed adequately, the speaker should not venture forth to make a presentation. The more you rehearse, the better is your performance in front of an audience. In the initial phases, rehearsal is important to do away with the element of fear. In the later stages, it helps in brushing up the style of presenting and reveals your self-confidence. If this art is perfected, it can lead to acclaim and recognition, if not, it will reveal the speaker in a poor light. So it is required that one works hard for positive results.

### **Consider Personal Aspects: Physical and Body Language**

The audiences first see the speaker, and then listen to the presentation. A presentable, clean and impressive appearance is of utmost importance for the speaker. Formal clothes, proper hairstyle and a good dress sense make the overall appearance of the speaker acceptable.

Confident voice and posture, effective eye contact and meaningful gestures make up a good body language, which also plays a vital role in the presentation.

### **Notes**



Body support is one of the silent modes of communication which needs to be polished and perfected so that it enhances the overall effect of the presentation. Some of the negative repercussions of body language are:

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1. nervous pacing,
2. excessive movement/rubbing of the hands,
3. covering the mouth while speaking,
4. using a pen or pencil as pointers,
5. lack of eye contact,
6. fidgeting, etc.

**Overcoming Nervousness**

Even an experienced speaker, in the beginning of his speaking career, must have faced the problem of nervousness. "butterflies in the stomach", "increased heartbeat", "shaking legs", "shaking voice", and "forgetfulness" are the most obvious signs of nervousness.

The speaker can overcome nervousness by:

1. Taking few deep breaths in and out.
2. Making himself/herself comfortable with the audience.
3. Boosting his own self-confidence.
4. Proper practice before the final presentation.
5. Giving proper pauses for relaxation.
6. Moving about among the audience.
7. Taking help of the visual aids.

**Making the Presentation: Do it!**

Everything about the presentation is ready and so is the speaker. The only thing left is to face the audience in a confident and positive manner and leave a mark on them. When the speaker is in the process of finally presenting the matter to the audience, he needs to be extremely careful about the introduction and conclusion of the presentation. While commencing, one thing needs to be kept in mind: capture the attention of the audience right at the start by making the opening, spell binding.

Even during the presentation, the speaker will have to put in a lot of efforts to mould them to his way of thinking. Different strategies could be adopted for the same: Quiz, music or game. These are commonly known as "ice breakers".

Variety in the manner of presentation of material by incorporating variations in the pitch and volume is important. Emphasis should be laid on the right words and at the right moment. Together with this, the use of pauses cannot be neglected. If used correctly, their impact can be long-lasting. Pauses at correct junctures also give

the audience time to think and absorb all that is being said. It serves a dual purpose:

- (i) reveals that the speaker is thinking, modulating and speaking impromptu; and
- (ii) gives the listeners time to absorb the spoken material.

The speaker should keep in mind the fact that the conclusion or the grand finale is his show. How he conducts it, will determine if he will be accepted by the audience. The presenter should keep the time factor in mind and reserve the last ten or fifteen minutes for the summary where he winds up his presentation, incorporating all ideas and suggestions made in the course of the presentation. In other words, the sender should be sensitive to the unspoken dictates of time and audience. He should know where and when to stop.

## Notes

### How should you deliver the Presentation?

1. **Do not read:** A presentation is essentially an oral face-to-face communication. It is basically in the form of a well-structured discussion with an objective of making the audience understand the concept. To discuss your ideas, you should not read them out, neither from the screen nor from anything written out by you. It is a common mistake to just repeat by reading out what the audience has before them projected on the screen. What you should do is to explain what is there on the screen. You can draw the audience's attention to the points projected, numbers, and figures shown on the screen. But the purpose should be to explain them and not merely read them out.
2. **Use "you attitude" to ensure audience involvement:** Tell the audience how your information is going to bring value to them. How do they stand to gain from the presentation? Why should they listen to you? Answer that question to be able to make your presentation relevant to the needs and interest of your listeners. All such considerations act as motivation raisers. They ensure the audience's involvement in your delivery of the presentation.
3. **Give the outline of the content:** In the beginning itself, tell the audience the outline of the content of your presentation. This will help them know the contents of the presentation. They will also be able to know the direction of your argument.
4. **Tell them what next:** Your listeners may not remember links and transitions you move through in your arguments/presentation. You alone know when you move from one stage or step to another step. You should, therefore, help your audience know that you are introducing a new point so that they follow your sequence.

### Six Great Helpers in Presentation

To enhance one's presentation skill it is absolutely imperative to secure the help of the six great helpers – the five W's and the one H. The concept of incorporating them as extremely useful tools in the art of writing fiction was first propagated by Rudyard

*English Communication* Kipling. Subsequent to this, experts in various disciplines realized their need in specific areas. Communication too, incorporated them as helpers to explain the basic concepts of presentation and interaction. These are as follows:

## Notes

### Why

The purpose of presentation must be clear to the speaker. It is necessary to be aware of the real reason for making a presentation. If it is of a frivolous nature, where the basic intent is furthering and cementing of social relationships, problems do not arise. However, if the thrust is on intersection oriented presentation, care must be taken to concretize ideas with correct emphasis at appropriate junctures. Let us address some queries which might help us in streamlining our purpose.

Why am I making a presentation? What is the real reason for conveying my message? What does the audience stand to gain from my presentation? In other words, a personal brainstorming session prior to formulation of ideas in a logical sequence is necessary. This could be done by listening to all ideas and thoughts that crowd the mind. Sorting or prioritizing them in order of importance or manner of presentation can be done at a later stage. In the initial phase, it is important to list down all ideas. Next, one should attempt to guess the reaction of the listener: what would you achieve or aim to achieve through an effective and efficient transmission of your message – a change of attitude or belief, or an increase in knowledge on the part of the listener?

Having answered this query, your purposive message is formulated, which could be:

1. **To inform:** Provision of information could be in the form of details, facts and figures.
2. **To persuade:** Adoption of face saving devices or politeness tactics such as "please", "thank you", etc., will be effective.
3. **To persuade:** Usage of talk tactics such as, name dropping or use of power or position to force the co-interactant into accepting your point of view often helps in exercising your influence over the audience.
4. **To educate:** Provision of all facets of the issue should be discussed, so that there is greater comprehension on the part of the receiver.
5. **To empathise:** This means observance of an empathetic attitude. Empathise with the interactant and to feel or at least indicate that similar feelings are being shared. It could be verbal, i.e., in the form of expressing condolence or concern or it could be non-verbal, such as clucking of the tongue or putting an arm around the shoulder to show concern.
6. **To entertain:** Usage of strategies, such as humour, narration of anecdotes, short quizzes or music will elevate the mood and break the monotony of the presentation.



## Who

Who is my listener? Knowledge about the co-participant goes a long way in meeting communication demands. This is somewhat similar to an interviewee getting familiar with the organisation to effectively answer probable questions relating to the organisation. Similarly, the personality, education, age, status, and knowledge level of the listener helps in deciding the format, tone and manner of presentation. For example, speaking to a group of young executives could entail a lecture-cum-demonstration methodology. For that matter, a lively and active encounter with the speaker would be the need/expectation of a young audience. On the other hand, a boring presentation would amply suit a moronic boss. One important question which you should keep in mind at the time of making a presentation is: to gauge the reaction of the participants towards the content of the message prior to commencing the presentation. The response of the participants would be contingent upon their knowledge of the subject. If their information level is high. You would be forewarned to go through your presentation minutely.

## Notes

## Where and When

These imply the place and the context. After your message is formulated, try and visualize the position of your receiver. Where would he be when he receives it? The format and tone of your message should change in accordance with the place where it is going to be delivered. For example, if a need so arises to talk of a hike in the pay structure, the place of broaching the issue is bound to make a difference. Let us take an example of talking to the boss.

1. **At the work place:** It is always transaction-oriented, i.e., geared towards the accomplishment of a particular task.
2. **At home:** It is a combination of transaction and relationship oriented (i.e., furthering and cementing of social relationships) communication.

While the first situation is extremely formal and precise, in the other, it is casual and can range from formal to informal depending on the relationship you share with the co-communicator. While an informal relationship can bypass certain unwarranted slips, a formal relationship can land you in a soup. The relationship shared by the sender and receiver is contingent upon the exact positioning of your message in the context of communication.

## What

This obviously focuses round the subject matter on the message. What exactly, do you wish to communicate and what is the need to do so? The answer to these queries can be determined by studying the profile of the audience. This will help to gain insight into their anticipated responses. Sufficient information about the listener would enable you

*English Communication* to discern between the essential and redundant areas of the material to be presented and it prepares you for what needs to be used or done away with at the time of presentation.

## Notes

### How

How do we achieve the right effect? To what purpose can we use the five W's so as to secure the undivided attention of the audience? We can achieve this effect by the tone at the delivery which we adopt to deliver the message. How would you organize the points? They should be organized in the order of importance, the main point followed by subsidiary points. While organizing the issues to be discussed, the needs of the audience should necessarily be kept in mind.

Organisation of the details in order of importance is in itself not sufficient. Certain other factors also need to be kept in mind. Primary among them is the use of words. Which words would be most effective? Which of them should be used and which ones avoided? Colloquial(s) and slang(s) should be religiously avoided. Though the temptation may be great to display one's knowledge or use of superfluous words, restraint should be exercised, as this can affect the quality of the presentation and make it sound boring and monotonous. In place of these, you could use precise, simple and non-technical words.

**Table 5.3: Six great helpers in Presentation**

Helpers	Determining Functions
1. Why	Purpose—to inform, persuade, influence, empathise, entertain and sympathise.
2. Who	Attributes of listener—personality, age, education, status, knowledge and anticipated response.
3. Where	Place—formal or informal.
4. When	Context/time.
5. What	Subject matter—scope and need.
6. How	Strategies to be adopted—Words, pictures, slides, transparencies—which ones need to be incorporated or deleted.

Next is the tone, where sufficient emphasis with adequate pauses will have a long lasting impact on the receiver. Together with the tone and the words used, which are equally important, the selection of the appropriate medium for communication of the message should also be kept in mind. You could use pictures or visual aids as helper to communicate your message. The message is always better received if it stimulates and appeals to both the visual and auditory senses.

### Conclusion Remarks

It is really not all that difficult making presentations in front of a large gathering if a few factors are kept in mind. Primary among them is the attitude towards the situation as

well as the audience. You definitely need to be positive. In case there is even an iota of doubt regarding the stance to be adopted towards the participants, you must remove or substitute it. The speaker should emerge as an assertive communicator, whose thought, process is positive as evidenced through his body sport or oral presentation.

The speaker has to break the ice and gain acceptance. If he can succeed in doing so, the presentation is a success and the speaker's skills, laudable. It needs a lot of effort but once a positive start has been made, the going is not all that tough, as the audience will themselves endeavour to make the entire session a successful one.

## Notes

### 5.16 Team Presentations – A Few Tips

Another type of presentation you may be asked to give is a group or team presentation. Group presentations require individual speaking skills plus planning for collaboration. To the following adaptations, you should give special thought in your team presentation.

1. You will need to take special care to plan the presentation—to determine the sequence of the presentation as well as the content of each team member's part. You also need to select carefully supporting examples to build continuity from one part of the presentation to the next.
2. Groups should plan for the physical aspects of the presentation too. You should coordinate the type of delivery, use of notes, graphics, and styles and colours of attire to present a good image of competence and professionalism. And you should plan transitions so that the team will appear coordinated.
3. Physical staging is important as well. Team members should know where to sit or stand, how visuals will be handled, how to change or adjust microphones, and how to enter and leave the speaking area.
4. Attention to the close of the presentation is especially strategic. Teams need to decide who will present the close and what will be said. If a summary is used, the member who presents it should attribute key points to appropriate team members. If there is to be a question and answer session, the team should plan how to conduct it.
5. Teams should not overlook the need to plan for rehearsal time. Teams should consider practicing the presentation in its entirety several times as a group before the actual presentation.

These points may appear trivial, but careful attention to them will result in a polished, coordinated team presentation.

### 5.17 Seminar Presentation

A seminar is more informal than a meeting or a conference. A seminar is held within an organization. Seminar is a formal gathering of people who have assembled together to



*English Communication* exchange views and experiences with one another on a specified topic. They converse, consult and discuss the specified topic in detail to conclude a common understanding on the subject matter.

## Notes

At the end of the seminar, the chairman of the seminar should summarize the main points of the discussion and the conclusions reached, if any. He has to evaluate and indicate the success of the group to develop a sense of achievement. Finally, the chairman should thank the participants for their contributions. Accurate recording and editing of conference discussions are necessary.

After the seminar, a report should be prepared on its proceedings. Copies of the report may be sent to the concerned authorities. Such follow-up action is necessary to achieve the purpose of the seminar.

The success of a seminar depends largely on the mental attitudes and behaviour of the participants. In order to make significant contributions, participants should observe the following rules:

1. Be well-prepared.
2. Observe the participants.
3. Speak at the right time.
4. Control your emotions.
5. Be accommodating.
6. Be brief.

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### 5.18 Meaning of Group Discussion

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A group discussion is a discussion among participants who have an agreed topic.<sup>1</sup> A group discussion allows you to exchange information and ideas, and gives you the experience of working in a team. In the work place, discussions enable the management to draw on the ideas and expertise of the staff, and to acknowledge the staff as valued members of a team. Group discussion help summarize the ideas and information that a group of people may come to hold as a group, rather than the information held by the individual members. Each participant can stimulate ideas in the other people presence, and through a process of discussion, the collective view becomes greater than the sum of the individual parts.

The word group discussion has two components; group and discussion.<sup>2</sup> This means that for an ideal group discussion to take place, two conditions are required; (a) an ideal group, and (b) an ideal discussion. An ideal group is a collaborative group having composition that fits well with its defined purpose. An ideal discussion is one that is aimed at synthesizing various viewpoints in such a way that it is acceptable to all. Discussion is an oral exploration of a topic, object, concept experience that leads to consensus. It is therefore neither conversation nor debate.

Group discussion can be defined as follows:

*"A Group discussion (or GD as it is commonly called) may be defined as an extended communication often interactive among participants who have an agreed (serious) topic. Group discussion is a group process or team building exercise where views of different team members are incorporated in order to reach a common goal".* Thus, group discussion is an interactive group activity aimed at distilling a collective opinion acceptable to all members of the group. It is an activity where all members get frequent opportunities to generate and share their questions and ideas to arrive at a consensus.

## Notes

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### 5.19 Characteristics of Group Discussion

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1. Group discussion, as the name itself indicates is a group activity carried out by participating individuals. It is an exchange of ideas among the individuals of a group on a specific topic.
2. It is used as reliable, testing device—mainly as a tool to assess all the candidates in a group at one go—in order to select the best in comparative perspective.
3. Group discussion is an informal discussion in which participants of the same educational standard discuss a topic of current interest.
4. It is also known as leaderless discussion. It means its aim is to find out the natural leadership level of the candidates. Strictly speaking, no one from the group or outside will be officially designated as leader or president or chairman or anything of the sort. Even the examiner or supervisor who launches the discussion will retire to the background. No one will participate or intervene in the deliberations of the group.
5. Group discussion is an exploratory exercise.
6. Group discussion is always intentional.
7. Group discussion is not a conversation.
8. Group discussion is not a debate.

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### 5.20 Types of Group Discussions

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There are mainly two types of group discussions:

#### Formal and Informal Group Discussions

##### Formal Discussions

These are formal and are led by the chairperson. Participants indicate a desire to speak in a predetermined way. They wait for permission to speak and there are no interruptions. This is a large group activity.

Notes

In this context, turn-taking comes from cues such as body language, intonation, eye gaze, and knowledge of the social courtesies. This is a small group activity and all participants need to be visible to each other. Children need to learn the courtesy of turn-taking and rules exist to ensure this happens.

### **Real and Simulated Group Discussions**

#### **Corporate Group Discussions (Real Group Discussions)**

These are those that take place in corporations and business organizations. These group discussions are organized to arrive at a consensus decision on an issue that affects everyone in an organization.

#### **Simulated Group Discussions**

Group discussion has become a popular simulation technique as a potentially effective way to improve communication skills. Simulated group discussions are also conducted as personality test of the aspirants prior to their entry to various institutes and organizations.

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### **5.21 Objectives of Group Discussion**

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A group discussion may have any of the following objectives:

1. To arrive at a consensus,
2. To get feedback,
3. To solve a problem,
4. To collect ideas,
5. To understand the situation,
6. To learn and train, and
7. To inform and explain.

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### **5.22 Purpose of Group Discussion**

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Following are the main purposes behind holding a GD:

1. **To increase learning and understanding:** GD is always aimed at discussing an issue or a topic in order to increase group's understanding regarding that issue or topic. For this reason, group discussion is not desirable when everyone understands a particular topic. On the other hand, it is not possible if nobody understands. Thus, for a GD to take place, there should be some who understand a particular issue and others do not (as it commonly happens). When this is the situation, those who think they understand may find, while trying to explain, that they don't understand as



well as they thought they did. By the same token, those who thought they didn't understand, may in the process of GD perceive the answer to their own question.

2. **To provide for exchange of information and ideas:** Another purpose of group discussion is to provide for healthy exchange of information and ideas from a variety of perspectives. Different people have expertise in different fields; have different way of thinking and way of putting things. GD helps in mutual learning and sharing through exchange of information and ideas.
3. **To generate ideas:** When people from different backgrounds, having different experiences, opinions and insights interact with each other, some entirely new ideas may be generated in the process. It is also very likely that a new 'synthesis' will emerge that will incorporate viewpoint of all and yet will be different from each viewpoint.
4. **To arrive at a consensus decision and elicit commitment:** The purpose of a group discussion is to discuss an issue until the group arrives at a collective opinion acceptable to all members of the group. Thus, GD is an effective tool to elicit commitment of all members to implement the decision.

### 5.23 Essentials of a Group Discussion

There are certain essential features of group discussion. A group discussion cannot be successful in absence of these essential components. Briefly stated, it should be a good group and there shall be a good discussion. The following components must be taken into account to ensure an effective and successful GD:

1. **Group structure:** This is first important ingredient and includes two factors:
  - (i) **Size:** Generally speaking smaller the size of the group the better. But if the given task/ purpose or topic is extraordinarily challenging, a larger group may be necessary because it increase the chances of high level thinking. If this is not the case, then the group shall be kept small, as it ensures better participation of all.
  - (ii) **Ethnicity and gender:** Ethnicity and gender consideration are also important while constituting a group for a discussion. A multiethnic setting of a group can provide better opportunities for participants to learn from the variety of rich experiences. Similarly, numerous studies have found that boys and girls interact differently. Thus, it is better to mix gender in a group.
2. **Group task (purpose and time limit):** The purpose or the task at hand must be clear to all the members of the group. In addition, the topic of discussion shall be relevant and lively. A group that collaborates well will not generate deeper thinking if the purpose is unclear or the topic is not interesting. Setting time limits is an important factor. Generally it is seen that trouble starts when a group is given too much time. This leads to too much purposeless talk.

## Notes

3. **Group preparation and participation:** All individuals of the group must be prepared for the event. Lack of preparation on part of the group members results in poor quality of discussions. Unless (almost) every group member is well prepared, the discussions will flounder. Lack of preparation is one of the most common causes for lack of participation. When an individual member is unprepared, he will try to find places to hide.
4. **Group accountability:** Group discussion is of better quality when members are held accountable for their collaborative effort. Group accountability occurs when the group as a whole produces a consensus report and the conclusion outcome or decision arrived at gets publicity as a group effort.
5. **Planning and organization:** There are two steps which together can appreciably increase the quality of learning (and the enjoyableness) of all group discussions. These are thoughtful planning and organization of the discussion. All members should know the date, time, venue and agenda of the discussion well in advance.
6. **Rules:** Rules help in giving direction to the discussions, thus, rules are very important ingredients of a group discussion. The following 'Five Golden Rules' must be adhered to during a group discussion:
  - (i) Let everyone participate.
  - (ii) Be critical of ideas, not people.
  - (iii) Agree to disagree.
  - (iv) Restate what someone said if not clear.
  - (v) Listen to everyone (even if you don't agree).
7. **Role playing:** In a group discussion, as in everyday life, participants play roles. Some roles are 'positive' and contribute to the group, while others are 'dysfunctional' or 'negative' and interfere with the communication process. For a group discussion to be fruitful, all of the 'positive' roles must be performed by one or another member—but not always by the same member. Each participant should be performing most or all of the necessary roles at one time or another. We can think of these roles (or activities) as being of three types:
  - (i) Roles which facilitate the tasks of discussing specific topics (Initiating, restating, summarizing).
  - (ii) Roles which facilitate the overall tasks of the group (Gatekeeping, i.e. verbal traffic management and timekeeping)
  - (iii) Roles which help maintain a cooperative and open atmosphere in the group (encouraging, listening and tension relieving).
8. **Mutual evaluation:** The last 5-7 minutes of the group discussion shall be left for mutual evaluation. This is the most important activity for the success of the

discussions. All members should be involved to assess the group's success in covering the material and in diagnosing any difficulties which may have hindered it. Again, this will require openness and tact on the part of all members, and a commitment to improve the process of communication.

## Notes

## 5.24 Preparation of Group Discussion

While selection tools and techniques like tests, interviews, etc., provide good data about an individual, they fall short in providing real life data of how an individual would be performing in a real life situation especially a group situation. Team work being an integral part of the BPO work profile, it is important to ascertain group and interpersonal qualities of an individual. Group discussion is a useful tool to ascertain these qualities and many organizations use GDs as a selection tool along with Personal Interviews, aptitude tests, etc. A GD is an activity where:

1. Groups of 8-10 candidates are formed into a leaderless group, and are given a specific situation to analyze and discuss within a given time limit, which may vary between twenty minutes and forty five minutes, or
2. They may be given a case study and asked to come out with a solution for a problem.
3. They may be given a topic and are asked to discuss the same.

### Preparing for a Group Discussion

While group discussion reflects the inherent qualities of an individual, appearing for it unprepared may not augur well for you. These tips would help you prepare for group discussions:

1. **Reading:** This is the first and the most crucial step in preparation. This is a never-ending process and the more you read, the better you are in your thoughts. While you may read anything to everything, you must ensure that you are in good touch with current affairs, the debates and hot topics of discussion and also with the latest in the IT and ITES industry. Chances are the topics would be around these. Read both for the thoughts as well as for data. Also read multiple viewpoints on the same topic and then create your point of view with rationale. Also create answers for counter arguments for your point of view. The electronic media also will be of good use here.
2. **Mocks:** Create an informal GD group and meet regularly to discuss and exchange feedback. This is the best way to prepare. This would give you a good idea about your thoughts and how well can you convince. Remember, it is important that you are able to express your thoughts well. The better you perform in these mocks, the better would be your chances to perform on the final day. Also try to interact and



participate in other GD groups. This will develop in you a skill to discuss with unknown people as well.

## Notes

**During the Group Discussion**

Some of the qualities assessed in a GD by the panelists are:

1. **Leadership skills:** Ability to take leadership roles and be able to lead, inspire and carry the team along to help them achieve the group's objectives.
2. **Communication skills:** Candidates will be assessed in terms of clarity of thought, expression and aptness of language. One key aspect is listening. It indicates a willingness to accommodate others' views.
3. **Interpersonal skills:** People skills are an important aspect of any job. They are reflected in the ability to interact with other members of the group in a brief situation. Emotional maturity and balance promotes good interpersonal relationships. The person has to be more people centric and less self-centered.
4. **Persuasive skills:** The ability to analyze and persuade others to see the problem from multiple perspectives.

GD is a test of your ability to think, your analytical capabilities and your ability to make your point in a team-based environment. These are some of the sub-skills that also get assessed with the skills mentioned above:

1. Clarity of thought
2. Group working skills (especially during a group task of case study discussion)
3. Conflict handling
4. Listening and probing skills
5. Knowledge about the subject and individual point of view
6. Ability to create a consensus
7. Openness and flexibility towards new ideas
8. Data based approach to decision-making
9. While, it is not possible to reflect all these qualities in a short time, you would do well if you are able to show a couple or more qualities and avoid giving negative evidence on others.

**5.25 Role Function/Role Playing in Group Discussions**

The members of an efficient and productive discussion group must provide for meeting two kinds of needs—what it takes to do the job and what it takes to strengthen and maintain the group. What members do to serve group needs may be called functional roles. Statements and behaviours that tend to make the group inefficient or weak may

be called non-functional roles. A list of the kinds of contributions that are performed by one or several group members is given below: *Public Speaking Skills*

## Functional Roles

### Task Roles

Task roles are the functions required in selecting and carrying out a group task.

1. **Initiating:** This includes getting things started, suggesting new ideas, and suggesting new definitions of the problem, trying a new attack on the problem or introducing new material.
2. **Giving and asking for information:** This includes offering facts or generalizations sharing understanding of a topic, giving information freely, soliciting everyone's input and gathering information.
3. **Giving and asking for reactions:** This includes stating opinions and reactions, sharing feelings about what has been said, getting reactions from all group members and seeking clarification of values, suggestions or ideas.
4. **Restating and giving examples:** These result in the presenter of the original idea getting feedback. Restating clarifies ideas. Examples reinforce meaning and aid understanding; they aid in the search for accurate statements and in understanding an idea.
5. **Confronting and reality testing:** This includes challenging ideas and information. Often groups allow misinformation and misstatements to pass by out of politeness. Learning takes place when ideas are challenged (politely, of course). Try to envision how a proposal might work and, if adopted, how an idea will work in the real world.
6. **Clarifying, synthesizing, and summarizing:** This includes clarifying ideas and previous statements, and pulling together related ideas or suggestions after the group has discussed them. Clarifying, synthesizing, and summarizing help provide closure.

### Group Building and Maintenance Roles

Group building roles are the functions required in strengthening and maintaining group life and activities. This includes encouraging and supporting, being friendly, warm, and responsive to others, encouraging all members to contribute, agreeing with and accepting the contributions of others, praising others for their ideas, and supporting ideas of others, especially of those who may be less aggressive in speaking out.

1. **Gatekeeping and timekeeping:** This includes trying to make it possible for another member to make a contribution to the group by saying, "We have not heard from ABC yet", or suggesting limited talking time for everyone so that all will have a chance to be heard, or limiting the discussion on a topic to an agreed upon time limit.

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2. **Standard setting:** This includes expressing standards for the group to use in choosing its content or procedures or in evaluating its decisions and reminding the group to avoid decisions that conflict with group standards.
3. **Following:** This includes going along with decisions of the group, thoughtfully accepting ideas of others and serving as audience during group discussion.

**Group Task and Maintenance Roles**

1. **Evaluating:** This includes submitting group decisions or accomplishments to compare with group standards or measuring accomplishments against goals.
2. **Diagnosing:** This includes determining the source of difficulties and the appropriate steps to take next, and analyzing the main blocks to progress.
3. **Testing for consensus:** This includes tentatively asking for group opinions in order to find out whether the group is nearing consensus on a decision and sending up trial balloons to test group opinions.
4. **Mediating:** This includes harmonizing, conciliating differences in points of view, and making compromise solutions.
5. **Relieving tension:** This includes draining off negative feeling by jesting or pouring oil on troubled waters and placing a tense situation in a wider context.

**Types of Non-functional Behaviour**

1. **Being aggressive:** This includes criticizing or blaming others, showing hostility against the group or some individual and deflating the ego or status of others.
2. **Blocking:** This includes interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent, citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem, arguing too much on a point, and rejecting ideas without consideration.
3. **Self-confessing:** This includes using the group as a sounding board and expressing personal, non-group-oriented feelings or points of view.
4. **Competing:** This includes vying with others to produce the best idea, to talk the most, to play the most roles, and to gain favour with a leader.
5. **Seeking sympathy:** This includes trying to induce other group members to be sympathetic to one's problems or misfortunes, deploring one's own situation or disparaging one's own ideas to gain compliments or support.
6. **Special pleading:** This includes introducing or supporting suggestions related to one's own pet concerns or philosophies and lobbying.
7. **Horsing around:** This includes clowning continually, joking, mimicking, and otherwise disrupting the work and progress of the group.
8. **Seeking recognition:** This includes attempting to call attention to one's self by loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, and unusual behaviour.



9. **Withdrawing:** This includes acting indifferent or passive, not participating, daydreaming, and whispering to others. *Public Speaking Skills*

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## 5.26 Roles People Play in Group Discussion

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Broadly speaking, participants play the following familiar roles in a group discussion:

- **Mr. Brains/Plan:** Mr. Brains brings in a lot of substance and comes up with wide interpretations of the topic.
- **Downside:** It is difficult to stop him/her because he/she is preoccupied with topic discussion as opposed to group discussion. He/she is happily oblivious to simple things like who is sitting next to him/her. At the end of the group discussion, if you happen to ask him/her whether the person sitting next to him/her was a boy or a girl, the answer would most likely be 'I do not know'.
- **Shopkeeper:** This is the salesman, who can sell anything, has the gift of the gab, a very strong ability to relate to people and be at the centre of things.
- **Downside:** The shopkeeper does not usually come up with original thoughts him/herself. He/she needs Mr. Brains.
- **Watchman:** A watchman's role is to maintain order in the group; usually his content contribution is low. Preoccupied with directing the group process, such as controlling the entry and exit of participants' views, he/she is crucial for meeting time commitments made to the panel and in ensuring consensus.
- **Critic:** The critic criticizes everybody's points without contributing anything new.
- **The Butcher:** The butcher does great service to the group by enhancing the quality of content by not letting participants get away with just about anything. Such a participant is most welcome in a group that has one or two aggressive elements in it.
- **The Spectator or the Passenger:** The spectator is involved in the proceedings but plays a limited role. His/her contribution is very limited and does not affect the outcome of the group task.

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## 5.27 Role of the Conductor of Group Discussion

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The moderator at the group discussion has a distinct role. He or she is the chief person who gets you the passport of further interviews. The role of the conductor is at a senior level. He plays a silent referee to the goings-on at the group discussion. It is with a lot of experience and expertise at conducting such discussions that he is in the position to observe.

Notes

## Notes

In order to arrive at a judgment, especially that involves human resource, it is crucial that one keeps a healthy mind and an unbiased opinion. Several times the appearance or persona of a person is quite contrary to his beliefs. A person projecting a very appealing appearance may not have very deep thoughts or does not possess the qualities of the making of a leader. The moderator should hide his personal opinions of the subject and look for soft skills excellence among the participants. Many a times, the conductor is called from outside or offers a guest service so that people in company or management school are not partial and also to avoid mind sets. He ideally does not form the panel of committee or board and also does not interview the person. This is an ideal situation as one can easily be influenced by the speaking capacity of a person and pulls him up in the interview too.

A fact sheet of several scores is handled by the conductor of the GD and he scores them on the basis of points or tick marks whichever is stipulated by the committee. There are marks on body language, politeness, leadership and relevant articulation. Actually, each person is given a chance and in an event when a person is monopolizing the conversation, the moderator offers to intervene through a short sentence wherein the people who have not spoken are urged to talk. This is the true mark of an experience evaluator. Group discussion or GD is also an elimination round. Keeping emotions high or imbalanced mental state will cause problems and the company or school will further incur the result of a wrong recruit. The conductor of GD should be well read about current affairs and general happenings. It is very essential to update oneself about new things and technology. The crowd participating in the GD is very well informed and updated with all sorts of corporate and general knowledge. It is vital for the conductor to choose topics that allow debate.

Aggressive group discussions are a natural trend these days as professionals are mostly assertive. Each participant is looking for a chance to be heard and that his ideas appear saleable. All of them are vying for this one chance to be short-listed. This is why the role of moderator is extremely essential in offering a topic. It is also advisable to write the topic on the white board for all of them to comprehend. Ideally, GD is spontaneous and sometimes the conductor gives a two minute time for the participants to jot down the points and opinions.

Ultimately the jury is the conductor and surely needs to work with a balanced mind, informative knowledge and having an eye for recognizing initial talent.

### 5.28 Body Language during Group Discussion

There are many group discussion tips that one needs to gather. Though a personal experience is the best you can relate to. Gathering information of body language principles, dressing style and usage of words can be done by noticing peers or participating on the podium level. Following are some cues for effective body language:

## Notes

1. Make it a habit to speak publicly and take part in extempore speeches and on the stage activities. This will expose you well to stand in front of the crowd and hold fort.
2. Body language is something which people rarely talk about but expressions speak the most. Many times we can gauge by a smile or a frown about the words that are not expressed by the tongue.
3. If you always had a very formal look and a prim and proper image then there is a need to sober down. Too much of high headed assertiveness and you will end up making people avoid you.
4. At the same time, prior to a group discussion you can be friendly with others but judge them as acquaintances. This kind of decorum is required for being a professional.
5. Do not divulge personal details and be general in your opinion.
6. Do not brag about your achievements and be to the point when questions are asked.
7. It is true that eyes are mirror of the soul. The facts about negative emotions, confusion, not understanding, lying, distracted, disinterest and anger are very well expressed with eyes. If you look away in airy-fairy manner, it clearly suggests you do not comprehend the topic of group discussion. If you are looking around desperately with shifty eyes, it also indicates you are looking for help and cues to speak something. If you feel alienated, which you have made obvious by taking the corner most seat, then you have to express well with clear eye contact with the moderator as well as the other participants.
8. Eyebrows need to be relaxed; quizzical looks and raised eyebrows are dramatic and can be interpreted in the wrong manner.
9. The biggest problem is what to do with your hands and toes. Drumming the hand rest or picking for treasures on the chair is disgusting. This clearly indicates a restless attitude and unable to concentrate feeling.
10. Toes if pointed to the ground indicate anxiety. If you are habitual of playing an imaginary flute with your fingers or holding your fists tight these are well noticed by the other observers in the jury. Practice a formal smile and please be natural.
11. Wear comfortable clothes and be yourself. If the interiors are not air conditioned, sweating can be uncomfortable and also unsightly. Wear a good pair of shoes and socks. If it is a rainy day and your dress is smudged, be natural as the interviewee definitely understands your peril. Hence, choose a drip easy garment and choose open sandals. Arrange your file well and avoid all accidents.
12. Do not cross your arms or your legs.
13. Stop tap-dancing or pulling your cheek.



*English Communication* 14. Another gesture is doodling with your pen or sticking it constantly all over your face especially the chin and cheek. These are regarded as truly unprofessional and noticed by peers.

## Notes

15. Shoulders should be square and drooping indicates low self-esteem or unsure feeling.

There are many people who are highly intellectual but fail to make it big only due to their unwillingness to change and learn the right norms in body language. Being natural and sincere is the final key to success.

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### 5.29 Four Cs of Effective Group Discussion

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Following are the four Cs and the strategies required for them for a group discussion:

#### 1. Cohesion

- (i) asking for or offering help/ideas
- (ii) giving praise and encouragement
- (iii) joking and making humorous comments
- (iv) giving others a chance to talk
- (v) accepting all group members questions and contributions
- (vi) listening attentively to each other
- (vii) adhering to topic
- (viii) helping group to reach decision
- (ix) employing the cooperative principle of sincerity.

#### 2. Coordination

- (i) calling for group attention
- (ii) responding positively to others' ideas and contribution
- (iii) giving instructions
- (iv) negotiating roles and adhering to them
- (v) reminding peers not to interrupt each other
- (vi) disagreeing politely and tactfully
- (vii) offering feedback and summarizing comments.

#### 3. Creativity

- (i) offering and sharing ideas and opinions
- (ii) elaborating other's ideas
- (iii) explaining, justifying

- (iv) learning to recognize and use open-ended questions to get more information from others *Public Speaking Skills*
- (v) using prosodic features to enhance effectiveness of communication, e.g., intonation, pitch, tone, rhythm, tempo, stress, volume, syntax, vocabulary, vocal effects, fluency, facial expressions, eye gaze, stance, posture, touching, proximity, gesture, body position.

## Notes

### 4. Consensus

- (i) appealing to rules
- (ii) persuading – through logic and arguments
- (iii) agreeing
- (iv) summarizing
- (v) suggesting compromise.

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## 5.30 Essential Skills for Effective Group Discussion

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1. **Team player:** This is the most essential personality trait because it is essential for management to be team players. In fact, managers always work in teams. At the beginning of his career, a manager works as a team member and later, as a team leader. Management aspirants who lack team skills cannot be good managers.
2. **Reasoning ability:** Reasoning ability plays an important role while expressing opinions or ideas at a group discussion. One must lend logical support to his/her arguments. The logic must be concrete. If it is easily refutable then the argument will get weakened. This will also show that the person is not having any clarity of mind. Another important thing is that one should always give the justification first and the stand later. If you were to state your stand first chances are that the others in group who disagree with your stand will interrupt to contradict you even before you can elaborate on the reasons why you have taken that stance. In this situation, the evaluator will only get an impression of what you think and not how you think.
3. **Leadership:** There are three types of situations that can arise in a group discussion:
  - (i) A group discussion where participants are unable to establish a proper rapport and do not speak much.
  - (ii) A group discussion where participants get emotionally charged and the group discussion gets chaotic.
  - (iii) A group discussion where participants discuss the topic assertively by touching on all its nuances and try to reach the objective.

Here, a leader would be someone who facilitates the third situation at a group discussion. A leader would have the following qualities:

- (i) She/he shows direction to the group whenever group moves away from the topic.

Notes

- (ii) She/he coordinates the effort of the different team members in the group discussion.
- (iii) She/he contributes to the group discussion at regular intervals with valuable insights.
- (iv) She/he also inspires and motivates team members to express their views.

It must be kept in mind that being a mere coordinator in a group discussion does not help, because it is a secondary role. One should be able to contribute to the group discussion with ideas and opinions and should also try and steer the conversation towards a goal.

4. **Flexibility:** Another ability or personality trait that is revealed during group discussions is the extent to which a person is open to others ideas as well as to the evaluation of one's own ideas. That is what flexibility is all about. An important thing to remember is that one should not start a group discussion with a stand or conclusion. By taking a stand, you have already given your decision without discussing the topic at hand or listening to the views of your team members. In such a case if you stick to your stand, you are seen as an inflexible, stubborn and obstinate person and if you change your stand, you are seen as a fickle-minded or a whimsical person.
5. **Assertiveness without being aggressive:** For success in any group talk, it is important to be assertive without being aggressive. One must put forth his/her point to the group in a very emphatic, positive and confident manner. Participants often confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness. Aggressiveness is all about forcing your point on the other person, and can be a threat to the group. An aggressive person can also demonstrate negative body language, whereas an assertive person displays positive body language.
6. **Initiative:** In group discussions, the capacity of an individual to take initiative is very important. But it is generally observed that this tenet is taken too seriously by the participants. This sometime leads to an embarrassing situation in the very beginning when each participant tries to take the credit for initiating the talk and discussion begins with a chaos and ends without any conclusion (unless someone gives it a direction). Thus, initiative shall be taken only if one is well versed with the topic. If a person starts the topic but fails to contribute at regular intervals, his initiative will not be considered as a leadership quality.
7. **Creativity:** An idea or a perspective which opens new horizons for discussion on the group discussion topic is always highly appreciated. If a participant puts across a new idea convincingly, such that it is discussed at length by the group, it can only be positive.



8. **Inspiring ability:** A good group discussion should incorporate views of all the team members. If some team members want to express their ideas but are not getting the opportunity to do so, giving them an opportunity to express their ideas or opinions will be seen as a positive trait. It is also to be kept in mind that if a participant is not willing to speak, one should not go out of the way to ask him to express one's views. This may insult him and hamper the flow of the group discussion.
9. **Listening:** An individual should possess good listening skills. One must try and strike a proper balance between expressing one's ideas and imbibing ideas of others. While listening she/he must show signs of active listening rather than passive hearing. A speaker must never be interrupted. In a group discussion, it is vital that everyone gets a chance and is allowed to speak. Otherwise the entire discussion becomes meaningless and irrelevant.
10. **Knowledge and awareness:** Together with leadership qualities, the individual should also be well-read and well-versed with both the micro and macro environment. Awareness about your environment and thorough knowledge of the subject matter helps a lot in group discussions.
11. **Polite language and decent behaviour:** Group discussions are certainly slightly more informal as compared to interviews, but that does not mean that one can treat the discussion that happens as something that happens in one's living room. One must maintain a controlled and cool temperament. One should always retain politeness and never be blunt or rude. One should not make statements like—No! You are wrong! You have no idea what you are talking about. One should put across his points very politely. For example, more polite way of disagreeing is to say—'You may be correct, but I feel....' As far as 'I know it's not true ...' etc.
12. **Respect the other participants:** Contradicting someone's point of view is always valid. However, showing total disrespect or laughing at some other participant is just not right. Remember that the discussion has to remain friendly and cordial.
13. **Meaningful contributions:** It is important to contribute as much as one can to a group discussion. But one must also remember that a group discussion, not a lecture, where only one person talks and everyone listens. The second important thing to bear in mind is that making just 'any' sort of contribution is not enough. The contribution has to be meaningful. This means the quality of what one says is more important than the quantity.

### 5.31 Advantages of Group Discussion

There are various advantages of group discussion. These can be stated as follows:

1. **Better quality of decisions:** When individuals work together with others in a group to make decisions, the quality of decisions is generally better because groups

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- bring more knowledge, a broader array of experiences and increased creativity to the decision-making process. Groups encourage greater participation from larger number of people, and the result is greater 'buy-in and support for the decision.
2. **Ensures better compliance of decisions:** Since decisions are arrived at through participation of all members of the team, better compliance is ensured as compared to single man decisions. Thus, group discussion elicits commitment by all members to implement the decision.
  3. **Ideas can be shared, tried out and generated:** An important advantage of GD is possibility of sharing ideas and trying out different ideas. This may also lead to generation of new ideas.
  4. **GD has many professional applications:** In professional field and in work place, GD has distinct advantages. For instance, GDs in the workplace enable management to draw on the ideas and expertise of the staff. It also leads management to acknowledge staff as valued members of the team. When the dynamics are right, groups provide a supportive and nurturing environment for any professional endeavor. Another professional application of GD is to take benefit of functional specialization of each participant.
  5. **GD increases knowledge, comprehension and understanding:** There is not a single event or issue on earth that is completely understood by anyone person. Every one of us analyzes and interprets an event with different prior knowledge and experiences, with different viewpoints, biases and insights. Though we can comprehend an event as it happens, yet a deeper comprehension is more likely to occur when we discuss our opinion with others.
  6. **Capacity building with more resources:** GD put more resources at the disposal of the group. It utilizes resources of all the members. A joint endeavor makes it possible to tap into those resources which are beyond the capacity of any single individual. Thus, capacity building is another advantage of group discussion.
  7. **GD develops communication skills:** Group discussion develops communication skills of all the members of the group. It does so by providing them the challenge as well as opportunity to express their opinions clearly and to voice their doubts.
  8. **GD develops personality:** Personality is person plus ability. Group discussion develops various abilities of the team members. These include development of flexibility and cooperative attitude. Through group participation members can develop tolerance of individual differences and ability to respond appropriately. GD also trains the participants in art of compromise which is an important life skill to develop.
  9. **Provide various opportunities:** Group discussions provide opportunities for problem solving. Through group discussion, the participants have the opportunity to

learn from others and to speculate and hypothesize. They also have the opportunity to experience different roles and responsibilities.

10. **Fulfils various psychological needs:** The process of group discussion fulfils various psychological needs of the participants.

- (i) **Feeling of involvement and empowerment:** Participants feel involved and empowered. They experience being part of a group decision making process.
- (ii) **Urge to develop relationships:** Group discussion provides for an occasion where participants can satisfy their natural urge to develop relationships.
- (iii) **Entertainment needs:** Group discussion also fulfils the desire for entertainment. This is why group discussion is often considered as a creative way to problem solving. In group discussion, problems are solved in a tension free environment that unleashes creative potential of the participants.

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### 5.32 Limitations of Group Discussions

The methodology of group discussion suffers from following limitations:

1. **Time constraint:** Time constraint is one of the most troubling limitation of a GD. Group discussion is always time bound activity. Time constraints may affect discussion opportunities. For an effective and fruitful outcome, the time pressure must be minimal. There must be no emergency in progress. But since this is seldom the case with group discussion it often ends without much achievement.
2. **Wastage of time:** Group discussion involves a lot of wastage of time. Group discussion takes a great deal of time and psychological energy. Much of the time must be spent just to organize and plan a group discussion and then to maintain the group.
3. **Interaction does not guarantee learning:** There is no doubt that group discussion guarantees interaction. But interaction in itself does not always lead to learning. For an interaction to translate into a learning experience, certain conditions must be fulfilled such as: (a) the participants must have knowledge, understanding and maturity; (b) the participants must be willing to learn from others and not just to show off their own knowledge.
4. **Not good for dispensing information:** Group discussion is good so far as the aim is to widen the views and perspectives on a particular topic but GD method cannot be applied for dispensation of new information.
5. **Effectiveness of a GD is a dependent factor:** Effectiveness of a group discussion cannot always be guaranteed. It depends on a number of factors such as knowledge, understanding, maturity and skills of the participants. It also depends on appropriate questions and mannerism.



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6. **Possibility of dominance of negative roles:** In a group discussion, there is always a possibility that the discussion will either end up in a conflict or get off the track due to negative roles played by some participants. Some may not participate while others may try to dominate. Thus, a group discussion, if not managed well can turn out to be a counterproductive activity.

7. **Not suitable for large groups:** If a group is large, a group discussion in real sense of the term can not happen for the simple reason that not everyone will get a chance to express his/her opinion. Group discussion is effective when group is small and manageable.

Sometimes the topic to be discussed is made known to the participants beforehand so that they can ponder and formulate the views before the discussion starts. And sometimes the topic is announced after the participants have assembled. In this case, a few minutes are allowed for thinking and preparation. The participants generally sit in a circle round a table so that each participant is able to observe the expression and make eye contact with the others.

### 5.33 Common Group Discussion Mistakes

Here's a list of the most common mistakes made at group discussions:

#### Emotional Outburst

Rashmi was offended when one of the male participants in a group discussion made a statement on women generally being submissive while explaining his point of view. When Rashmi finally got an opportunity to speak, instead of focusing on the topic, she vented her anger by accusing the other candidate for being a male chauvinist and went on to defend women in general.

*What Rashmi essentially did was to:*

1. Deviate from the subject.
2. Treat the discussion as a forum to air her own views.
3. Lose objectivity and make personal attacks.
4. Her behaviour would have been perceived as immature and demotivating to the rest of the team.

#### Quality vs Quantity

Gautam believed that the more he talked, the more likely he was to get through the GD. So, he interrupted other people at every opportunity. He did this so often that the other candidates got together to prevent him from participating in the rest of the discussion.

1. Assessment is not only on your communication skills but also on your ability to be a team player.

2. Evaluation is based on quality, and not on quantity. Your contribution must be relevant. *Public Speaking Skills*
3. The mantra is "Contributing meaningfully to the team's success." Domination is frowned upon.

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### Egotism (Showing Off)

Krishna was happy to have got a group discussion topic he had prepared for. So, he took pains to project his vast knowledge of the topic. Every other sentence of his contained statistical data—"20% of companies; 24.27% of parliamentarians felt that; I recently read in a Jupiter Report that..." and so on so forth. Soon, the rest of the team either laughed at him or ignored his attempts to enlighten them as they perceived that he was cooking up the data.

1. Exercise restraint in anything. You will end up being frowned upon if you attempt showing-off your knowledge.
2. Facts and figures need not validate all your statements.
3. Its your analysis and interpretation that are equally important – not just facts and figures.
4. You might be appreciated for your in-depth knowledge. But you will fail miserably in your people skills.

Such a behaviour indicates how self-centered you are and highlights your inability to work in an atmosphere where different opinions are expressed.

### Get Noticed – but for the Right Reasons

Srikumar knew that everyone would compete to initiate the discussion. So as soon as the topic – "Discuss the negative effects of India joining the WTO" – was read out, he began talking. In his anxiety to be the first to start speaking, he did not hear the word "negative" in the topic. He began discussing the ways in which the country had benefited by joining WTO, only to be stopped by the evaluator, who then corrected his mistake.

1. False starts are extremely expensive. They cost you your admission.
2. It is very important to listen and understand the topic before you air your opinions.
3. Spending a little time analyzing the topic may provide you with insights which others may not have thought about.
4. Use a pen and paper to jot down your ideas.
5. Listen! It gives you the time to conceptualize and present the information in a better manner.

Some mistakes are irreparable. Starting off the group discussion with a mistake is one such mistake, unless you have a great sense of humour.

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Sumati was very nervous. She thought that some of the other candidates were exceptionally good. Thanks to her insecurity, she contributed little to the discussion. Even when she was asked to comment on a particular point, she preferred to remain silent.

1. Your personality is also being evaluated. Your verbal and non-verbal cues are being read.
2. Remember, you are the participant in the GD; not the evaluator. So, rather than evaluating others and your performance, participate in the discussion.
3. Your confidence level is being evaluated. Decent communication skills with good confidence are a must to crack the GDs.
4. Focus on your strengths and do not spend too much time thinking about how others are superior or inferior to you. It is easy to pick up these cues from your body language.
5. Knowledge is strength. A candidate with good reading habits has more chances of success. In other words, sound knowledge on different topics like politics, finance, economy, science and technology is helpful.
6. Power to convince effectively is another quality that makes you stand out among others.
7. Clarity in speech and expression is yet another essential quality.
8. If you are not sure about the topic of discussion, it is better not to initiate one. Lack of knowledge or wrong approach creates a bad impression. Instead, you might adopt the wait and watch attitude. Listen attentively to others, may be you would be able to come up with a point or two later.
9. A GD is a formal occasion where slang is to be avoided.
10. A GD is not a debating stage. Participants should confine themselves to express their viewpoints. In the second part of the discussion, candidates can exercise their choice in agreeing, disagreeing or remaining neutral.
11. Language use should be simple, direct and straight forward.
12. Don't interrupt a speaker when the session is on. Try to score by increasing your size, not by cutting others short.
13. Maintain rapport with fellow participants. Eye contact plays a major role. Non-verbal gestures, such as listening intently or nodding while appreciating someone's viewpoint speak of you positively.
14. Communicate with each and every candidate present. While speaking, do not keep looking at a single member. Address the entire group in such a way that everyone feels you are speaking to him or her.



### 5.34 Do's and Don'ts of Group Discussion

As a student and later as a professional, you may have to take part in a group discussion. Follow the guidelines given below in the form of Do's and Don'ts.

#### Do's

1. Be as natural as possible. Do not try and be someone you are not. Be yourself.
2. Define the topic or the issue.
3. A group discussion is your chance to be more vocal. The evaluator wants to hear you speak.
4. Take time to organize your thoughts. Think of what you are going to say.
5. Seek clarification if you have any doubts regarding the subject.
6. Work out various strategies to help you make an entry, initiate the discussion or agree with someone else's point and then move on to express your views.
7. Opening the discussion is not the only way of gaining attention and recognition. If you do not give valuable insights during the discussion, all your efforts of initiating the discussion will be in vain.
8. Your body language says a lot about you—your gestures and mannerisms are more likely to reflect your attitude than what you say.
9. Language skills are important only to the extent as to how you get your points across clearly and fluently.
10. Be assertive not dominating; try to maintain a balanced tone in your discussion and analysis.
11. Analyze topic's scope and implications.
12. Initiate and generate the discussion.
13. Listen to the views of others intently.
14. Encourage and provide reticent members to speak.
15. Intervene forcefully but politely, when the situation demands.
16. Summarize views of the others before presenting your point of view.
17. Be brief and to the point in the presentation of your views.
18. Concede to other's points of view, if they are reasonable.
19. Try to lead the group to a definite conclusion.
20. Emphasize the points you consider significant.
21. Look at, and address, all the members of the group.
22. Speak with proper pronunciation.
23. Help the group conclude the discussion within the allotted time.

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*English Communication* 24. Maintain a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere throughout the discussion.

25. Summarize the main view points at the end.

26. State the conclusion reached.

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27. If you have a group of like-minded friends, you can have a mock group discussion where you can learn from each other through giving and receiving feedback.

### *Don'ts*

1. Don't be assertive in presenting your views.

2. Don't dominate the discussion.

3. Don't monopolize the discussion.

4. Don't make any personal remarks.

5. Don't jump to conclusions.

6. Don't enter into dyadic discussion.

7. Don't speak continuously for a long time.

8. Neither raise your voice too high nor speak too softly.

9. Don't speak in monotone.

10. Avoid using speech mannerisms and time-fillers.

11. Don't use aggressive gestures.

12. Neither recline in your chair nor lean forward.

13. Don't ignore any member of the group.

14. Don't lose your cool if anyone says anything you object to. The key is to stay objective: don't take the discussion personally.

15. Always be polite. Try to avoid using extreme phrases like: 'I strongly object' or 'I disagree'. Instead try phrases like: 'I would like to share my views on...' or 'One difference between your point and mine...' or "I beg to differ with you".

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## 5.35 Supporting Expressions

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We would now like to list a few expressions which you can use while participating in a group discussion.

### 1. Expressing your opinion

I am of the view..... I feel..... I think..... so far as I am concerned.....

### 2. Defending your opinion

Let me restate what I mean..... I repeat what I said earlier because..... What I am trying to say is ..... The point made by ABC really supports my view..... This is what I was trying to suggest.....

**3. Asking the opinion of others**

What is your opinion..... Do you have any opinion on this matter.... What do you feel about this.... Do you have any comments on this suggestion.....

**4. Agreeing with others**

I fully agree... I hold the same opinion..... That's right, I also think so .... This point is well taken. I endorse this viewpoint.....

**5. Disagreeing with others**

I don't agree.... I don't think so... I am afraid I feel differently..... you can't say that... Oh no, this is not the issue..... That's not the issue.....

**6. Expressing certainty**

I am sure that.... I am absolutely certain..... I have no doubt that.... There's definitely....

**7. Making suggestions**

I suggest that first we.... Let's start with.... What about.... May we then.... Why don't we....

**8. Insisting**

Let me emphasize this point..... I have to say again that.... I must draw your attention again to what I said earlier..... I am afraid I have to insist on... I reiterate.....

**9. Giving in**

I concede.... I take that back... All right, then.... You are right, I withdraw..... I now see the point.... I accept your modification.....

**10. Interrupting**

Could you stop for a while.... Just a minute... May I butt in here.... Could you clarify this point.... Before you go on let me.....

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**5.36 Meaning of Interview**

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The term 'interview' has been derived from the **French** word '**entre voir**' that means 'to glimpse' or 'to see each other'. Interview is a face-to-face interaction between two persons for a particular purpose, that is, for employee selection, for placement, appraisal and counselling and problem-solving. It means a meeting for obtaining information by questioning a person or persons. In this way, an interview is a classic example of communication that takes place through "the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols".

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**5.37 Definition of Interview**

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An interview can be defined as an oral tool to test a candidate's traits for employment or admission to a premier institution of learning. Being an oral test, it calls for your skills



*English Communication* of oral and non-verbal communication to support your performance before a panel of experts.

## Notes

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary provides the following definitions of interview:

*"An interview is a conversation between two or more people (the interviewer and the interviewee) where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee".*

*"A formal meeting in person, especially one arranged for the assessment of the qualifications of an applicant".*

*"A private meeting between people where questions are asked and answered about somebody's life, opinions etc."*

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### 5.38 Nature of Interviews

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An interview has a wide variety of uses in business and corporate-related jobs. Job applicants are hired on the basis of interviews. Employees who experience personal problems may be given counselling through interviews. In many organizations, managers regularly evaluate the performance of their subordinates through schedule appraisal interviews. Disciplinary interviews are conducted with workers who are involved in job-related problems, which lead to indiscipline in organizations. Through an exit interview programme, a company makes efforts to learn the reasons why employees leave.

When new employees join, they are often oriented to their duties through an induction interview. Even through the interview, the management of an organization can acquire and transmit much of the information required for efficient operations. A large number of employment interviews have resulted in the selection of unsuitable individuals, counselling interviews often do not resolve problems, and disciplinary interviews may not result in changed behaviours. Hence, business people no longer believe that anyone who can carry on a conversation can conduct an effective interview.

Although one usually associates the interview with such functions as selection, counselling, and appraisal, the range of the interview process extends much further. No matter how well-educated a new jobholder is, that person does not possess all the information necessary to succeed at the jobs. Success will be strongly influenced by the jobholder's ability to elicit accurate and thorough information from co-workers. Being able to recognize and ask the right questions is all important. In fact, interview is not only common in business but it is also used in several walks of life. Doctors have been criticized for years on the basis of their inability in interviewing skills. They are often accused of dominating conversations with patients and of overusing medical terminology and thereby confusing patients.

In today's fast changing business environment, one must have interviewing skills in order to contribute to the changing needs from its executives in the form of selecting people, collecting opinions of the customers and several other purposes. The importance of these skills also extends to all other occupational and social arenas. The desired information motivates the interviewee to co-operate. Because the interview has a predetermined purpose, it is more formal than a conversation. Interviews are clearly structured. They comprise of an opening, a body and a closing, and the participants have specific roles. In contrast, many conversations appear formless. Conversations may involve an exchange of information, but the exchange is a universal and essential characteristic of an interview.

### 5.39 Purposes of Holding Interviews

Interviews are held for various purposes. The following are the main purposes of interviews:

1. **Selection:** Interview helps to select a right person for a right job. Through an interview, the potentialities of interested recruits are assessed.
2. **Promotion:** For assuming capabilities and competencies required for higher positions, interview is the most potent tool.
3. **Performance appraisal:** Through interviews, performance is appraised. Feedback regarding performance may be communicated through interviews.
4. **Exit opinions:** When a person leaves, the exit opinions are invited through exit interviews to determine a person's reasons for leaving the organization. This helps the organization to build a better work climate.
5. **Counselling:** Interviews help individuals to develop themselves through counseling. For counselling, useful information is extracted and requisite feedback data is also transmitted back.

Besides, there can be other purposes also like:

1. Admission interview of a candidate for admission to a course in higher education/professional training.
2. Interrogation of a person by the police about some happening.
3. An interview given by a celebrity in a question-answer session to a selected audience.

### 5.40 Essential Features of Interview

We have seen above, there are different purposes for which we have interviews. But all of them have the following features in common:

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1. There is a definite purpose, and it is known both to the interviewer and the interviewee.
2. Both the parties need to prepare for the communication event.
3. All interviews are prearranged. The only possible exception is the dismissal interview.
4. There are at least two participants in the event—an interviewee and an interviewer. But in common practice, there is one interviewee facing more than one interviewer.
5. There is clear exchange of information. The information exchanged may or may not be kept secret.

### 5.41 The Structure of an Interview

Like every communication event, an interview has a rather well-defined structure. In other words, we can say that an interview is a formal communication event, the aim and outcome of which is understood by both the parties. They have, therefore, to proceed accordingly. Both the parties mutually to take care of the three stages—beginning, middle, and end, just as in a presentation the speaker alone has to manage these stages. Each of these stages requires effective communication skills as stated below:

#### 1. Opening/Start

- (i) Introduction
- (ii) Statement of the purpose of the meeting.
- (iii) Making the other person comfortable.
- (iv) Creating an atmosphere of relaxed open-minded approach, commitment to the purpose stated above, and preparing to start discussing things frankly.

#### 2. Middle/Main Body

- (i) Aim at exchange of information.
- (ii) Keeping the discussion to the point.
- (iii) Listen attentively and patiently.
- (iv) Keep eye-to-eye contact.
- (v) Give carefully thought out answers.
- (vi) Make sure to cover the agenda.
- (vii) Take care that interruptions, if any, are polite.
- (viii) Seek clarification, if needed.

#### 3. Closing

- (i) Summing up the discussion/exchange of information.
- (ii) Describing the action decided upon.



- (iii) Avoiding a hurried or abrupt ending.
- (iv) Closing on a positive note.
- (v) Exchanging feelings of gratitude, thankfulness for favour of interview, etc.
- (vi) Confirming the worthwhileness of the interview/communication event/meeting.

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## 5.42 Chronology of the Interview

Going through almost a common sequence, most selection interviewers follow the following chronology:

### 1. Introduction (2 to 5 minutes)

- (i) Causal talk
- (ii) Smile, handshake, etc.

### 2. Company Information (5 to 10 minutes)

### 3. Candidate Assessment (10 to 30 minutes)

- (i) Qualifications
- (ii) Achievements
- (iii) Questions

### 4. Conclusion (3 to 5 minutes)

- (i) Interviewer determines and suggests when a response will be forthcoming.
- (ii) Candidate tries to summarize his/her qualifications, reaffirms interest (1 to 2 minutes).
- (iii) Candidate may ask a few questions.

## 5.43 Types of Interviews

A job interview is your chance to show an employer what he/she will get if you are hired. That is why it is essential to be well prepared for the job interview. Preparing means knowledge about the industry, the employer, and yourself. It means paying attention to details like personal appearance, punctuality, and demeanour. Knowledge is your best weapon. Before you research the industry and the company and even before you practice answering the questions you might be asked, you should have some general information about job interviews. Let us start by going over the different types of interviews you might face.

### Employment/Job Interview

The purpose of a typical employment interview is to evaluate an interviewer who is applying for a post in the organization. The applicant may be an outsider who has

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applied for a post in the organization and is thinking of joining it. He may be a current employee who is seeking a transfer to another position or city within the organization. In such an interview, the interviewer attempts to learn about the applicant's educational qualifications, his past experience, his personal goals, his knowledge and his achievements in similar type of work. However, the applicant too, has a purpose. His purpose is to evaluate the position of the organization, its potential as a satisfying place to work. While the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee, he also observes his behaviour, his interest in the job, his maturity and communication abilities. Although it is very difficult to assess the real potential of the applicant in the interview lasting a few minutes only, yet it is vital to get as much relevant information as possible from the interview both in terms of facts and in terms of the interviewee's attitude and behaviour.

Regarding the role of the applicant in 'Employment Interviews' he must make a thorough self-analysis, in order to be able to respond fully to questions on topics such as personal strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, failures, goals, abilities and reasons for being interested in the job. He should also be prepared to ask such questions about the organization and the job as opportunities for advancement, support for part time education, etc.

**Promotion Interview**

Persons due for promotion are interviewed even if there is no competition. The interview is likely to be informal and serves as induction into a new team, with new responsibilities. In such cases, the capabilities desired are matched with capabilities attained. As the person is already working in the department, his interview will be focused primarily on job profile and the ability to handle new assignments and situations, which may evolve after occupying the higher position. Clarifications about nature of duties, responsibilities and expectations are made during a promotion interview. If there is competition for promotion, the interview helps in the selection process and may also serve as an opportunity for a discussion of career opportunities for each candidate.

**Orientation Interview**

The purpose of orientation interviews is to acquaint the new employee with his job and with the organization. It is also to establish a positive relationship between the employer and the employee. It is said that the first impression is the last impression. The initial attitudes and perceptions formed in this interview strongly influence the employee's motivation and morale on the job. They also give a lasting impression of employee's personality on the employer. In this type of interview, it is always the interviewer who plays the important role, therefore he must make ample preparation for the purpose. He must provide to the interviewee a copy of job description; he must give instructions relating to parking, insurance and other benefit programmes, information on company

policies, office space and devices such as computers, calculators and telephones equipments. He must also introduce the culture of the organization; its traditions, values, etc. He must introduce the employee to people who will assist him in his training and further orientation. He must also give to the employee initial specific tasks to perform. This is not all. The manager conducting such an interview must provide information that the employee needs, at the same time clearly stating performance expectation from him.

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### Reprimand Interview

Reprimand means to criticize anyone severely for making an undesirable statement or action. In such cases, the manager summons the employee to his room and talks to him in his formal capacity. A reprimand is a form of disciplinary action likely to be presented by the employees.

A reprimand interview has three-fold aim:

1. To improve the work performance.
2. To prevent the recurrence of such offences.
3. To protect other employees from the malaise of anti-organizational behaviour.

### Preparation for reprimand interview

1. Make sure that you possess all the relevant facts of the case. Take time to investigate the matter fully as possible, before the employee is called for interview. In the absence of facts, the reprimand will look to be arbitrary and can damage your image.
2. Keep in mind the kind of person you are going to deal with. Plan first, what you are going to say or do during the interview. Don't deviate from original plan.
3. Do not reprimand in public; ensure full privacy during the interview.

### During the process of interview

1. Go straight to the point.
2. Be precise and exact about the offence.
3. Don't lose control over yourself.
4. Don't enter into unnecessary arguments with the employee.
5. Allow the employee to present his case fully.
6. Don't accept justifications or excuses.
7. Make it clear that the purpose of the reprimand is not to disgrace the employee, but to help him to improve his performance.

### After the interview

After the interview, keep a watch over the employee's behaviour. Find out how far the reprimand interview has been successful. If necessary, take up a follow-up action.



**Notes**

An appraisal interview is one of the methods of periodical assessment of employees. There are other methods like completion of self-assessment forms and assessment by supervisors. But annual appraisal interview is the best method for judging employees' attitudes. A face-to-face confidential talk is an opportunity for both, the employee and the supervisor to discuss several issues. This interview is more a discussion than question-answer. The focus is on the career development of the employee, shortcomings, areas which need improvement; areas which can be further strengthened, training needs, job enrichment and opportunities for promotion, etc., may be discussed at the interview.

The following points may be kept in mind to make the appraisal interview successful:

1. The manager should allay the fears of the employee with his friendly attitude.
2. He should first talk about the plus points of the employee's performance and compliment him. This will help in motivating him.
3. Shortcomings should be pointed out in a very calm and objective tone. Criticism should be followed by positive suggestions.
4. The employee should be allowed to present his side, the problems and suggestions, in a cool atmosphere. The managers should try to understand the problem and offer help.
5. Makes clear the future target to be achieved before the employee.
6. The employee should also display a positive attitude. He should try to understand where exactly he had gone wrong and assure the manager to improve his performance in future.

**Grievance Interview**

A grievance interview gives an opportunity to the employee to bring a complaint to the management voicing his grievance with the functioning of the organization. The interview is less formal at the preliminary stage and most grievances are resolved at the time of the interview.

There are certain difficulties that come in his way of such interviews.

1. When an employee appears before his boss, he may not be able to express himself fully and clearly due to the exalted status of the later.
2. The other difficulty comes when the interview becomes a test of strength between the two parties. In such an interview, both the employer and the employee should try to establish a climate of open ways. Only then can the interview provide an opportunity for counseling and resolving the grievance.

The approach of the employer should be clinical or curative rather than 'legalistic' and punitive.

## Stress Interview

## Notes

Stress interviews are still in common use. One type of stress interview is where the employer uses a succession of interviewers (one at a time or *en masse*) whose mission is to intimidate the candidate and keep him/her off-balance. The ostensible purpose of this interview is to find out how the candidate handles stress. Stress interviews might involve testing an applicant's behaviour in a busy environment. Questions about handling work overload, dealing with multiple projects, and handling conflict are typical.

Another type of stress interview may involve only a single interviewer who behaves in an uninterested or hostile manner. For example, the interviewer may not make eye contact, may roll his eyes or sigh at the candidate's answers, interrupt, turn his back, take phone calls during the interview, or ask questions in a demeaning or challenging style. The goal is to assess how the interviewee handles pressure or to purposely evoke emotional responses. The key to success for the candidate is to de-personalize the process. The interviewer is acting a role, deliberately and calculatedly trying to "rattle the cage." Once the candidate realizes that there is nothing personal behind the interviewer's approach, it is easier to handle the questions with aplomb.

### Example stress interview questions

1. **Sticky situation:** "If you caught a colleague cheating on his expenses, what would you do?"
2. **Putting you on the spot:** "How do you feel this interview is going?"
3. **Popping the balloon:** "(deep sigh) Well, if that's the best answer you can give ... (shakes head) Okay, what about this one ...?"
4. **Oddball question:** "What would you change about the design of the hockey stick?"
5. **Doubting your veracity:** "I don't feel like we're getting to the heart of the matter here. Start again—tell me what *really* makes you tick."

Candidates may also be asked to deliver a presentation as part of the selection process. The "Platform Test" method involves having the candidate make a presentation to both the selection panel and other candidates for the same job. This is obviously highly stressful and is therefore useful as a predictor of how the candidate will perform under similar circumstances on the job. Selection processes in academic, training, airline, legal and teaching circles frequently involve presentations of this sort.

### Exit Interview

An exit interview is an interview conducted by an employer of a departing employee. They are generally conducted by a relatively neutral party, such as a human resources staff member, so that the employee will be more inclined to be candid, as opposed to worrying about burning bridges. For this reason, some companies opt to employ a third

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party to conduct the interviews and provide feedback. The purpose of an exit interview is usually to gather data for improving working conditions and retaining employees. Several things can be accomplished in an exit interview. The organization can:

1. Find out the precise reason for the employee's decision to leave. If there has been any misunderstanding or ill-feeling, there is an opportunity to clear it. It is better for an organization's public image to maintain good relations with past employees.
2. Get feedback on employee's attitudes to and opinion of the organization's policies. An employee who is leaving has no fear of the boss's displeasure and is likely to express his opinion of the organization's employee relations, public relations, sales policies, etc., quite freely.
3. Check all the details and information in the employee's personal record file to make sure that they are up-to-date.
4. Give the final pay cheque, or information about when it will be ready and how it will be handed over.
5. Give information about accrued benefits like sick leave or earned leave which has not been used by the employee. The employee will also have made some calculations and may be anxious to know if the boss concurs.
6. Give information about Provident Fund, Group Insurance or any other benefits, and how and when the dues will be paid.
7. Check that all books, manuals, tools, equipments which were issued to the employee have been returned.

When the exit interview is handled carefully and tactfully, it can be an asset to the organization.

### Correctional Interview

A correctional interview is conducted to take corrective action or disciplinary measures against an employee who has violated standards of conduct or disrupted organizational cooperation or who has seriously failed to meet job performance requirements. It is very difficult to conduct such an interview because the employee and the employer both are likely to be on the defensive. Another difficulty in such an interview comes because most of the employers or managers do not want to reprimand employees for fear of counteraction or for the sake of personal relations.

Correctional interviews should be conducted when both the parties are calm. If a mediator or some representative of the employee or some union leader is also allowed to attend the interview along with the employee, it might prove useful. Presuming that he is guilty, the manager in such an interview should not accuse the employee openly. If he doubts what the corrective measure can be, he should not state it openly. The employee should be given opportunity to express his feelings frankly.



A common type of job interview in the modern workplace is the **behavioural interview** or **behavioural event interview**. This type of interview is based on the notion that a job candidate's previous behaviours are the best indicators of future performance. In behavioural interviews, the interviewer asks candidates to recall specific instances where they were faced with a set of circumstances, and how they reacted. Typical behavioural interview questions:

1. "Tell me about a project you worked on where the requirements changed midstream. What did you do?"
2. "Tell me about a time when you took the lead on a project. What did you do?"
3. "Describe the worst project you worked on."
4. "Describe a time you had to work with someone you didn't like."
5. "Tell me about a time when you had to stick by a decision you had made, even though it made you very unpopular."
6. "Give us an example of something particularly innovative that you have done that made a difference in the workplace."
7. "What happened the last time you were late with a project?"

A bad hiring decision nowadays can be immensely expensive for an organization – cost of the hire, training costs, severance pay, loss of productivity, impact on morale, cost of re-hiring, etc. Structured selection techniques have a better track record of identifying the soundest candidate than the old-style "biographical" interview.

**Informational Interview**

An Informational Interview is a meeting in which a job seeker asks for advice rather than employment. The job seeker uses the interview to gather information on the field, find employment leads and expand their professional network. This differs from a job interview because the job seeker asks the questions. There may or may not be employment opportunities available. The term was coined by Richard Nelson Bolles, author of the best-selling career handbook, *What Color Is Your Parachute?*

Informational interviews are initiated by the job seeker. There are many avenues the job seeker may pursue to obtain the informational interview. Career and social networking, newspaper want ads, job boards, placement services, company websites, human resource contacts, job search engines, and professional recruiters.

While the job seeker initiates the interview, he must follow the basic guidelines for interview etiquette. He must arrive promptly, dress appropriately, prepare informational questions, and make a good first impression.

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A case interview is a job interview in which the applicant is given a question/situation/problem/challenge and asked to resolve the situation. The case problem is often a business situation or a business case that the interviewer has worked on in real life.

After the applicant is given information about the case, the applicant is expected to ask the interviewer logical and sequential questions that will enable the applicant to understand the situation, probe deeper into relevant areas, gather pertinent information and arrive at a solution or recommendation for the question or situation at hand.

Case interviews are mostly used in hiring for management consulting and investment banking jobs. Firms use case interviews to evaluate analytical ability and problem-solving skills; they are looking not for a 'correct' answer but for an understanding of how the applicant thinks and how the applicant approaches problems. During case interviews, interviewers are generally looking for the following skills:

1. Numerical and verbal reasoning skills,
2. Communication and presentation skills,
3. Business skills and commercial awareness.

Candidates are often asked to estimate a specific number, often a commercial figure (such as market size or profitability). Candidates are expected to demonstrate reasoning rather than produce the exact answer.

A case interview can also be conducted as a group exercise. Here several candidates are given some briefing materials on a business problem and asked to discuss and agree upon a solution. The interviewers normally sit around the exterior of the room as silent observers. They assess candidates' communication and interaction as well as analytical thinking and commercial awareness.

### **Structured, Semi-structured and Unstructured Interviews**

A structured interview (also known as a standardized interview or a researcher-administered survey) is a quantitative research method commonly employed in survey research. The aim of this approach is to ensure that each interviewee is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. This ensures that answers can be reliably aggregated and that comparisons can be made with confidence between sample subgroups or between different survey periods.

Structured interviews are a means of collecting data for a statistical survey. In this case, the data is collected by an interviewer rather than through a self-administered questionnaire. Interviewers read the questions exactly as they appear on the survey questionnaire. The choice of answers to the questions is often fixed (close-ended) in advance, though open-ended questions can also be included within a structured interview.

A structured interview also standardizes the order in which questions are asked of survey respondents, so the questions are always answered within the same context. This is important for minimizing the impact of context effects, where the answers given to a survey question can depend on the nature of preceding questions. Though context effects can never be avoided, it is often desirable to hold them constant across all respondents.

A **semi-structured interview** is a method of research used in the social sciences. While a structured interview has formalized, limited set questions, a semi-structured interview is flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored.

However, the specific topic or topics that the interviewer wants to explore during the interview should usually be thought about well in advance (especially during interviews for research projects). It is generally beneficial for interviewers to have an interview guide prepared, which is an informal "grouping of topics and questions that the interviewer can ask in different ways for different participants". Interview guides help researchers to focus an interview on the topics at hand without constraining them to a particular format. This freedom can help interviewers to tailor their questions to the interview context/situation, and to the people they are interviewing.

**Unstructured Interviews** are a method of interviews where questions can be changed or adapted to meet the respondent's intelligence, understanding or belief. Unlike a structured interview they do not offer a limited, preset range of answers for a respondent to choose, but instead advocate listening to how each individual person responds to the question.

The method to gather information using this technique is fairly limited, for example, most surveys that are carried out via telephone or even in person tend to follow a structured method. Outside of sociology, the use of such interviews is very limited.

### **Panel Interview**

Interviews are taken by forming a panel of experts or interviewers who are expected to ask questions depending upon the purpose and plan of the interview. The panel represents experts from different backgrounds. Sometimes, different panels are constituted to test specific potentialities or traits of candidates. You should try to remain calm and establish rapport with each member of the panel. Make eye contact with each member of the panel as you answer his/her question.

### **Problem Interview**

A problem interview is a meeting with a problem employee. An employee whose performance or behaviour is unsatisfactory in spite of warning represents a problem. An interview is more likely to suggest a solution than warnings and notices.



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The reason for the employee's poor performance can be found out in a face-to-face talk; it may be domestic problems, ill health, lack of training or dissatisfaction with the job, failure to adjust to the environment, etc. Many organizations have facilities for counselling staff, the employee may be offered a session with the counselor. If the employee's behaviour is unsatisfactory, the interview can be used for giving a clear understanding of what is expected, and what will be the consequences of unacceptable conduct.

### **Group Interview**

In a group interview, several job candidates are interviewed at once. The interviewer or interviewers are trying to separate the leaders from the followers. In any group, there is a natural process that takes place where the group stratifies into leaders and followers. The interviewer may also be trying to find out if you are a team player. The type of personality the employer is looking for determines the outcome of this interview. There is nothing more to do than act naturally. Acting like a leader if you are not one may put you into a job for which you are not appropriate.

### **Screening Interview**

Your first interview with a particular employer will often be the screening interview. This is usually an interview with someone in person or on the telephone. He/she will have a copy of your resume in hand and will try to verify the information on it. The human resources representatives will want to find out if you meet the minimum qualifications for the job and, if you do, will be passed on to the next step.

### **Walk-in-Interview**

When a company is urgently in need of employees, it may conduct walk-in-interviews. Normally in pharmacy companies, these interviews are very common. The applicants have to come and attend the interviews in a hotel or some specified place in big towns at a very short notice. When a company is urgently in need of filling the vacancies, they prefer walk-in-interviews. Those who meet the minimum requirements are allowed to appear for interview. Not much scrutiny of applications takes place in this type of interviews.

### **Mock Interview**

For prospective job seekers, sometimes imaginary interviews are organized. This is very popular in coaching schools and business schools. Before appearing for the final interviews, business schools may prepare their students on how to face the real interviews during the visit of the companies in the campus.

## Telephone Interviews

It takes place if a recruiter wishes to dwindle down the number of prospective candidates before deciding on a shortlist for face-to-face interviews. It also takes place if a job applicant is a significant distance away from the premises of the hiring company such as abroad or in another state.

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## Technical Interview

This kind of interview focuses on problem-solving and creativity. The questions aim at your problem solving skills and likely show your ability and creativity. Sometimes these interviews will be on a computer module with multiple-choice questions.

## Personality Interview

This form of interview evaluates you as an individual in terms of your response to certain situations set before you. The emphasis is not on what you answer, but on how you answer. The whole range of non-verbal communication skills are brought into play to demonstrate you as an "all round personality".

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## 5.44 Fundamental Principles of Interviewing

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Most employment decisions are based on interviewing the applicant. However, most interviews do not provide us with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

As a consequence, most hiring decisions are based on who the interviewers like best. To conduct more effective interviews, follow these principles:

1. Ask questions that allow the candidate to do at least 70% of the talking. For the most part, avoid questions that can be answered by a 'yes' or a 'no'. The best questions are ones that make the candidates recount their past experience.
2. Phrase your questions so that the desired or 'right' answer is not apparent to the applicant.
3. Ask only one question about one subject at a time.
4. Ask the easy questions first so as to make the applicant feel comfortable.
5. All questions should be directly related to finding out about the applicant's ability to do the job, not about his/her personal life.
6. Spend the entire time writing and recording the candidate's answers and any assumptions you are making.
7. Interviews are generally a poor place to test the candidate's skills, other than the skill of being interviewed. Some interpersonal skills can be tested, however, through the use of role-playing with the applicant.
8. While you are writing, not occasionally to let the applicant know you are listening.

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9. If the applicant does not respond right away to a question, wait. Give him/her time, while you add to your notes.
10. Follow up: ask the person to tell you more, to give more details.
11. Ask the candidate to describe his/her past behaviour in the kind of situations he/she will encounter on the job.
12. Alternate between easy non-threatening questions and more difficult pointed ones.
13. After you have asked the candidate all your questions, allow him/her time to ask you any questions he/she might have about the job.
14. Close the interview by asking the candidate if there is anything he/she regretted saying, any answer they would like to change, or anything he/she would like to add to his/her previous statements.
15. Spend at least 30 minutes reviewing your notes after the interview and identifying any key qualities that you feel you have not adequately tested. These become objectives for subsequent interviews or for assessment experiences.

### 5.45 Preparation for Interviews

Understand that interviewing is a skill; as with all skills, preparation and practice enhance the quality of that skill. Preparation can make the difference between getting an offer and getting rejected. There is no one 'best' way to prepare for an interview. Every interview is a learning experience.<sup>3</sup> Initial preparation requires recent assessment of skills, interest, values, and accomplishments; a re-assessment and updating of one's résumé; and research on the targeted company/organization and position. Preparation also includes actual practice of typical and targeted interview questions. Final preparation includes details of dress and appearance, knowledge of the location of the interview, what to expect, and protocols for follow-up.

1. **Self-assessment:** When one is unemployed or fearing lay-off, the time is right for reassessing current skills, talents, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and work values. In addition, it is clearly time to re-examine accomplishments and achievements, particularly those that may be relevant to a prospective employer. Keeping an ongoing file to maintain items such as articles, congratulatory letters, 360 evaluation and descriptions of successful activities as they occur is recommended. In the course of daily business life, one often forgets those notable successes.
2. **Track and leverage your accomplishments:** You have been instructed to list your career accomplishments. Accomplishments are the points that really help sell you to an employer—much more so than everyday job duties, and you can leverage your accomplishments for job search at all stages of the process: resume, cover letter, and interview. Use the following prompts to brainstorm all those remarkable things you did. Try to list some accomplishments that set you apart from other job candidates.



- (i) In each job, what special things did you do to set yourself apart? How did you do the job better than anyone else did or could have done?
- (ii) How did you take initiative?
- (iii) How should you prepared well for this interview?
- (iv) Were you promoted? Rapid and/or frequent promotions can be especially noteworthy.
- (v) How did you leave your employers better off than before you worked for them?
- (vi) Did you win any awards, such as 'Employee of the month'?
- (vii) What are you most proud of in each job?
- (viii) Is there any material you can use from your annual performance reviews? Did you consistently receive high ratings?
- (ix) Have you received any complimentary memos or letters from employers or customers?
- (x) What tangible evidence do you have of accomplishments—publications you have produced, products you have developed, or software applications you have written?
- (xi) Think of the 'PEP Formula—profitability efficiency, and productivity How did you contribute to profitability, such as through sales increase percentages? How did you contribute to efficiency, such as through cost reduction percentages? How did you contribute to productivity, such as through successfully motivating your team?

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**3. Updating your resume:** The accomplishments file serves as a springboard to reassessing your resume. The file contains content for selective resume inclusion, if we assume that a resume must be accomplishments-based rather than descriptive of one's responsibilities, and then the file serves to jog one's memory about recent notable activities.

- (i) Bare-bone the resume by removing all superfluous and/or irrelevant material, all articles (a, an, the), and work at getting it onto one page.
- (ii) Use functional headings to help focus the reader on what you have done and what you can do for the prospective employer. Be absolutely certain it is error-free.

Let us now assume you have a specific interview lined up.

- (i) Depending on the available time, use every possible means to learn all you can about the company and position.
- (ii) Refer to books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and any reference materials useful for investors and job-seekers.
- (iii) Visit the company's website as well as competitor's sites.

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- (iv) Use investors website to learn what is happening now in the news with this company and its competitors.

4. **Re-assessing your resume:** Even if you have sent your best-yet resume, review it thoroughly and know everything that is on it. Be prepared to discuss supplementary experiences that might be important to this employer. Focus on experiences you feel are most relevant and match them to the employer's needs. Practicing typical and targeted interview questions is essential. Be able to answer the following basic questions:

- (i) Why are you interested in this field?
- (ii) Why are you interested in this company?
- (iii) Why are you interested in this position?

Be prepared to discuss anything on your resume. Be prepared to answer questions/issues you really do not want to answer. For example:

- (i) your greatest weakness
- (ii) your lack of related experience
- (iii) your lack of leadership experiences
- (iv) your record of job-hopping.

5. **Prepare questions to ask:** These questions should reflect your research on the company and position, and should never include questions whose answers are readily available in company literature or website. Do not ask about salary or benefits.

6. **Follow-up:**

- (i) Send a thank-you note within 24-48 hours of your interview.
- (ii) Send one to every person who interviewed you.
- (iii) E-mail is acceptable, but follow protocols for formal business correspondence, which is always more formal than typical e-mail.
- (iv) Use the thank you note to reiterate your interest and to emphasize your specific qualifications for the position.

### 5.46 Factors Contributing towards Successful Interview

Many factors contribute towards success in an interview. Some of these are enumerated below:

1. **Dressing for the interview:** Appearance is very important and good grooming is essential. Your hair should be neat and stylish. Your nails should be well manicured and clean. Men's nails should be short. Women's nails should be of a reasonable length and polished in a colour. Also for women, the make-up should not be heavy. Perfume should be avoided as some people find certain scents offensive.

2. **Establishing rapport:** Since the interviewer's job is to make sure that not only your skill, but your personality as well is a good match; you must establish rapport with the person interviewing you. That begins the instant you walk in to the door. Let the interviewer set the tone. Nothing is as awkward as offering your hand and having the gesture not returned by the other person. Therefore, you should wait for the interviewer to offer his/her hand first, but be ready to offer your hand immediately. Some experts suggest talking at the same rate and tone as the interviewer. For interviewer is speaking softly, so should you.
3. **Body language:** Body language gives more away about us than speech. Eye contact is very important, but make sure it looks natural. A smiling, relaxed face is always inviting. Hands resting casually in your lap rather than arms folded across your chest also are more inviting. If you normally move your hands around a lot when you speak, tone it down some. You do not want to look too stiff, but you do not want to look like you are a bundle of nervous energy.
4. **Answering questions:** Speak slowly and clearly. Pause before you answer a question. Your answers seem less rehearsed and it will give you a chance to collect your thoughts. Keep in mind that a very brief pause may seem like an eternity to you. It is not. Prepare answers to some basic questions. Do not memorize the actual answers, but become familiar with how you will answer the questions.
5. **Asking questions:** Usually towards the end of the interview, the person conducting it will ask you if you have any questions. You should have some. You should ask about what a typical day would entail. You could ask what special projects you would be working on. As in every other aspect of the job search, you are trying to show the employer how you can fill their needs. By asking about a typical day on the job or special projects, you are putting yourself in the job and showing the employer how you will satisfy the employer's needs. Do not ask about salary, benefits, or vacations, as those all imply "what will you, the employer, do for me?"

### 5.47 Important Non-verbal Aspects at the Time of Interview

Many interviews fail because of lack of proper communication. Communication is more than just what you say. Often it is the non-verbal communication that we are least aware of, yet it speaks the loudest. Following are the top five non-verbal signals, ranked in order of importance, when it comes to interviewing:

#### *Eye Contact*

1. If you have a habit of looking away while listening, it shows lack of interest and a short attention span.



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2. If you fail to maintain eye contact while speaking, it shows lack of confidence in what you are saying; it may also send the subtle indication that you may be lying.
3. Do not just assume you have good eye contact. Ask. Watch. Then practice.
4. Ask others if you ever lack proper eye contact. If they respond that they have noticed, ask if it was during speaking or listening. Take note. Then sit down with a friend and practice until you are comfortable maintaining sincere, continuous eye contact.

**Facial Expressions**

1. Take a good, long, and hard look at yourself in the mirror.
2. Look at yourself as others would. Then modify your facial expressions.
3. First eliminate any negative overall characteristics that might exist, and then add a simple feature that nearly every interviewee forgets—a smile, a true and genuine smile that says that are a happy person and delighted to be interviewed by the company.

**Posture**

1. Posture sends the signal of your confidence and power potential.
2. Stand tall, walk tall, and most of all, sit tall. This is not said to offend short people. Height is not what is important, posture is.
3. When you are seated, make sure you sit at the front edge of the chair, slightly leaning forward, intent on the subject at hand.
4. Your best posture is to always be leaning forward slightly.

**Gestures**

1. Contrary to popular belief, gestures should be very limited during an interview.
2. Do not use artificial gestures to supposedly heighten the importance of the issue at hand. It will merely come off as theatrical.
3. When you do use gestures, make sure they are sincere and meaningful.

**Space**

1. Recognize the boundaries of your personal space and that of others.
2. For most Americans, it ranges between 30-36 inches. For most of us, merely the awareness of our personal space is enough to consciously prompt us to stand firm.
3. If you have a smaller than average personal space, make sure you keep your distance so that you do not intimidate someone who possesses a larger personal space.

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**5.48 Attending the Interview**

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At the time of interview, you should give positive clues to the interviewer. Some of these are like punctuality, neat physical appearance, cheerful expression, pleasant manners,

presence of mind, positive attitude and clear and confident voice. These would generate a receptive attitude towards you. And, as a result, you are likely to be listened to with greater interest and attention. We now give a few practical hints. If you act upon them, you would have better chances of winning the race.

1. Reach the venue in time and wait patiently for your turn.
2. Be brief and spontaneous in your responses.
3. Present the relevant matter in an organized way.
4. Support your views with mature and proper arguments.
5. Use humour in your answers, if possible.
6. Be honest in referring to events, situations and experiences.
7. Be your usual self to feel at ease with the situation.
8. Listen carefully to the interviewer's questions, statements and comments.
9. Be perceptive of the signals that the body language of the interviewer may give.
10. Speak in a conversational style, avoiding pedantic verbosity.
11. Ensure that your body language does not show any oddities such as blinking of the eyes, raising the eyebrows, playing with the keys or pen in your pocket, putting the fingers in front of your mouth, etc.
12. Exhibit utmost courtesy both in manners and speech.

To avoid a negative impact, you should take certain precautions; these are listed below:

1. Do not give irrelevant information.
2. Do not give excessive details about the topic under discussion.
3. Do not try to change the topic of discussion.
4. Avoid hasty generalizations.
5. Do not give any evasive reply in a bid to hide your ignorance.
6. Avoid long pauses while speaking.
7. Do not keep smiling all the time.

## 5.49 Guidelines for the Interviewee

1. **Be prepared for the interview:** Just as the interviewer has to plan out the event in advance, in much the same way, the interviewee has to be prepared for it too. As he has no control over the event, he has to be more careful at every step. He has to face an interviewer or a board of interviewers. He must therefore, be very clear about the purpose of the event. If it is going to be an interview, he has to be well prepared for questions in his area of interest, his present position, the position

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he has applied for, the nature of the organization, its history, current activities, etc. His knowledge on all such questions will impress the interviewers. However, he must be prepared for the unexpected.

2. **Have presentable appearance:** Everybody appreciates a pleasant personality. In an interview the concerned person's appearance is a part of the message. Since an interview is a formal occasion, the interviewee must be formally dressed. Anyone having conventional standards of neatness is likely to have a definite advantage over one casually dressed for an interview.
3. **Show interest by making effective use of body language:** Keeping eye-to-eye contact with the interviewer at once, shows that the interviewee is genuinely interested in the event and is keen to participate in it. He should also sit in a correct, confident posture, be straight, balanced and not stiff in the chair offered. The hands should be neatly locked in the lap or be comfortably placed on the arms of the chair.
4. **All the questions must be correctly and completely answered:** Since the primary aim of an interview is to exchange information, it should be done effectively.
5. **Never try to bluff:** If the interviewee is not clear about a suitable answer to a question, there is no harm in admitting it. One must never try to bluff. Be honest.
6. **Be polite:** Politeness is indispensable in every situation.
7. **Avoid talking too much or making boastful statements:** The interviewer is intelligent enough to find out the interviewee's intelligence and suitability for the job.
8. **Avoid criticism of the previous employer or anybody else:** Negative statements are usually registered.
9. **Do not forget to thank the interviewers for having spared time for you:** Granting an interview is indeed a favour.
10. **Do not hesitate to ask any questions** to seek clarification regarding the company profile, service, conditions etc. It will not only satisfy your curiosity but also give the interviewer an idea of your confidence and interest in the organization. But such questions should come only towards the end of the interview and when you feel, you are likely to get the job.

A successful interview is one in which both the parties—the interviewer and the interviewee—actively participate. The interviewer asks certain vitally important questions arranged according to his plan. The interviewee, on his part, gives satisfactory answers to all of them. The interviewer seeks information, the interviewee gives information. At some stage in the process, most probably towards the end, the interviewer may also seek some information that the interviewee will gladly give. In this way, the purpose of the interview, mutually understood, is fulfilled. Moreover, both the parties must be unbiased, impartial and scientific in their approach to the entire event.



A lot of care is to be taken by the interviewers in order to make the interview effective.

A few aspects regarding interview process are as follows:

Notes

1. **Arrangement of place, time and questions:** The interviewer must himself decide the unnecessary questions which will not fulfill the purpose of an interview. He must ask questions in interviews keeping in mind the purpose of the interview. He should decide the best time and place for conducting the interview. Simultaneously, he should also keep in mind the arrangements, which the interviewee prefers. In some progressive organizations, for some positions, even the interviewer's home or office would not be suitable. The interviewer must be prepared to suggest an alternative setting. The interviewer must confirm the arrangement by telephone before the interview.
2. **Acquiring job-related information and general knowledge:** In the age of information, it is only the well-informed interviewer who can conduct an effective interview. Therefore, the interviewer must read books and magazines. He should talk to people in order to learn about the positions to be filled, responsibilities involved in the job and the interviewee as well. He should list special vocabulary words or technical jargons, which may be used by the interviewee. He should also try to list at least a few controversies connected with the topic.
3. **Assessing interviewee's attitudes:** The interviewer should prepare a list of questions, which can measure some positive as well as negative attitudes of a person while conducting the interview. He should list the difficulties, which these attitudes might create. He should also describe the ways with which he could overcome these difficulties.
4. **Prepare opening remarks:** The first impression lasts long. The first few questions may unsettle an interviewee in the beginning itself. Therefore, the interviewer must write out opening remarks, including the first question or questions he might ask while conducting the interview. Efforts should be made to remind the person about the purpose of the interview.
5. **Recording the proceedings of the interview:** The interviewer will decide whether he will write down or tape-record responses during the interview. It will help him to take a better decision on the performance of the candidate during the interview. So, the interviewer should list materials, which he will need for the purpose. If possible, the interviewee should be informed about the recording of the proceedings of his interview.

**Notes**

On becoming a senior professional, you may be asked to interview candidates for a job in your organization. There are certain specific guidelines in the form of DO's and DONT's given below to help you conduct an interview effectively.

**DO's**

1. Analyze carefully the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the job.
2. Study the resume of the candidate to assess his attainments to the requirements of the job.
3. Frame in your mind (or even write) basic questions you would like to ask.
4. Ask only one question at a time.
5. Use precise expressions and plain language.
6. Repeat the question if the candidate so desires, explaining to him clearly what you want to know.
7. Be patient, allowing time to the candidate, to warm up and become interactive.
8. Establish a rapport and encourage him to give his best.
9. Be courteous, polite and amiable but firm and professional.
10. Listen carefully with interest to the responses of the candidate.
11. Keep environment flexible.
12. All in all, try to understand what the candidate is and to find out what he knows.

**DONT's**

1. Do not ask a series of questions.
2. Do not put the same question to different candidates.
3. Do not elicit unnecessary details.
4. Do not ask questions to impress the candidate or to display your knowledge.
5. Do not ask highly personal questions.
6. Do not continue asking questions on one aspect or topic for a long time.
7. Do not put any question when the candidate is answering a colleague.
8. Do not at any stage lose your temper or raise your voice.
9. Do not become excited or emotional during interaction.
10. Do not use slang or uncommon abbreviations.
11. Do not permit the candidate to make flippant remarks.
12. Do not make any comments that may make the candidate feel small or that may hurt him.

There are different types of questions being asked by the interviewers during the interview. Following are some important types of questions:

**Open-ended Questions**

Open-ended questions allow the interviewee much freedom to answer. An open question is broad in scope and usually requires more than a few words in response. When one asks an open question, he is specifying the topic to be covered. The interviewee may decide on the quantity and the type of information to be provided. However, open-ended questions are not all alike. They may differ in their degree of openness.

The following questions are open-ended:

1. Introduction about yourself.
2. What are you seeking in a career?
3. How do you feel about the present candidates?
4. What do you like about in your present job?
5. Tell me how you feel about this problem.
6. Why did you apply for this job?

**Advantages of Open-ended questions**

1. Provide the interviewer greater opportunity to observe.
2. Considered non-threatening because they are usually easy to answer.
3. Suggest interest by the interviewer.

**Disadvantages of Open-ended questions**

1. Take more time.
2. More difficult to record or the information is difficult to qualify.
3. Make controlling the interview more difficult.

**Close-ended Questions**

These questions are somewhat restrictive in nature and generally call for a brief and limited response. By using close-ended questions, the interviewer limits the options of answers available to the interviewee. The following questions are moderately close-ended because they call for only a brief bit of information:

1. Who is Dr. Manmohan Singh?
2. How many papers one has studied in the MBA programme?
3. For what reasons does he wish to leave?

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- English Communication*
4. How would he rate the present government in terms of concern for the unemployed: very concerned, neutral, or unconcerned?
  5. Does he consume alcoholic beverages?

## Notes

### *Advantages of closed-ended questions*

1. Require less training of interviewers.
2. Take less time.
3. Make it easier for the interviewer to exert control.
4. Make tabulation of the answers easier.

### *Disadvantages of closed-ended questions*

1. Provide too little information.
2. Sometimes inhibit communication.
3. Provide little opportunity for the interviewee to offer additional information.
4. Choice may be vague.

## Neutral and Leading Questions

When one asks a neutral question, he makes no attempt to direct the interviewee's response. Because neutral questions do not exert any pressure, they may elicit more accurate responses. Neutral questions are phrased so that possible responses are not indicated and alternatives are presented in a balanced fashion. These are typical:

1. Why is he leaving the company?
2. Whom does he think responsible for the problem?
3. Which one of the following sports does he enjoy in his participation the most—baseball, football, basketball, and tennis?

**Leading questions**, on the other hand, enable the interviewer to obtain accurate information quickly by guiding the interviewee in a certain direction. They are especially useful when trying to verify factual information. Leading questions are sometimes regarded negative because, when used carelessly, they may result in biased responses. These are a few leading questions:

1. Whether he has a driving license or not?
2. Does he possess a telephone or not?
3. Does he believe that most students are overworked?

## Loaded Questions

A loaded question is even stronger in direction than a leading question, which may be somewhat subtle. A loaded question tends to be hard hitting. Some interviewers use loaded questions to create stress by using language likely to draw an emotional

response or by inquiring topics about which the interviewee feels strongly. No need exists in most interviews for loaded questions. They should be left to skilled interviewers for the exploration of emotional issues. These are examples of loaded questions:

1. What do you think of the government's foolish waste of the tax money?
2. Do you mean to tell me that you have no work experience? (Asked of a new college graduate who has been rejected by other interviewers for lacking experience)
3. How do you like the company's ridiculous policy about vacations?

### **Mirror Questions**

A mirror question reflects an interviewee's previous answer with the intent of drawing additional information. Through its use, more information can be obtained without biasing the interviewee's responses. When the interviewer believes that a response is incomplete, he may draw the interviewee out more by simply restating that response. This is called mirroring a response. When the interviewer does it, he must do it. He has to try to get the interviewee to elaborate on a particular topic. Mirror questions are employed in these examples:

1. **Interviewee:** I liked my last job a lot. The pay was good. I would still be there if it were not for my problems with my immediate supervisor.
2. **Interviewer:** Problems with your immediate supervisor?
3. **Interviewee:** You will see that I do good work so long as people do not instigate me.
4. **Interviewer:** Instigate you?

### **Probing Questions**

A probing question is stimulated by the interviewee's previous response. Some interviewers prepare a schedule, or list of questions, in advance. No probing questions could be included in such a list, as they are unplanned. For example, if a job applicant says, "In my present job, I had to learn how to assume responsibility," the interviewer might then ask probing questions such as these:

1. Exactly how does one assume responsibility?
2. How much responsibility does one assume?
3. Why did one have to learn that?

Through probing questions, the interviewer may elicit important information that had not been anticipated.

### **Pauses**

Although it is not actually a question, it may serve the same purpose. When the interviewer wants the interviewee to elaborate, he may simply remain silent. The pause is the most

## **Notes**

*English Communication* neutral approach of all, because it does not structure the answer or even suggest a topic for discussion. At some point, his pause may turn into an embarrassing silence, which the interviewee will find threatening. With experience, however, the interviewer will become comfortable and proficient in the use of pauses to stimulate the interviewee.

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**Table 5.4: The Communication Behaviours of Successful Interviewees**

Behaviour	Unsuccessful Interviewees	Successful Interviewees
Statements about the position	Had only gauge ideas of what they wanted to do; changed "ideal job" up to six times during the interview.	Specific and consistent about the position they wanted; were able to tell why they wanted the position.
Use of company name	Rarely used the company name.	Referred to the company by name four times as often as unsuccessful interviewees.
Knowledge about company and position	Made it clear that they were using the interview to learn about the company and what it offered.	
	Made it clear that they had researched the company; referred to specific brochures, journals or people who had given them information.	
Level of interest, enthusiasm	Responded, neutrally, to Interviewer's statements: "OK", "I see". Indicated reservations about company or location.	
	Expressed approval of information provided by the interviewer non-verbally and verbally: "That's great" Explicitly indicated desire to work for this particular company.	
Non-verbal behaviour	Made little eye contact; smiled infrequently.	Made eye contact after smiled.
Picking up on interviewer's cues	Give vague or negative answers even when a positive answer was clearly desired ("How are your math skills?").	Answered positively and confidently and backed up the claim with a specific example of "problem solving" or "toughness".



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Response to topic shift by interviewer	Resisted topic shift.	
	Accepted topic shift.	
Use of industry terms and technical jargon	Used almost too technical jargon.	
	Used technical jargon: "point of purchase display", "NCR charge", "two-column approaches", "and direct mail".	
Use of specifics in answer	Gave short answers – words or less, sometimes only one word; did not elaborate. Gave general responses: "fairly well".	Supported claims with specific personal experiences, comparisons, statistics, statements of teachers and employers.
Questions asked by interviewee	Asked a small number of general questions.	
	Asked specific questions based on knowledge of the industry and the company. Personalized questions: "What would my duties be?"	
Control of time and topics	Interviewee talked 37% of the interview time; initiated 36% of the comments.	Interviewee talked 55% of the total time, initiated subjects 56% of the time.

**Source:** Based on research reported by Lois. Einhorn, "An Inner View of the Job Interview: An Investigation of Successful Communicative Behaviours," *Communication Education* 30 (July 1981), 217-218; and Robert W. Elder and Michael M. Harris, eds., *The Employment Interview Handbook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), 300,303,327-28.

### Describing Group Discussions

- Normally groups of 8-10 candidates are formed into a leaderless group and given a specific situation to analyze and discuss within a given time limit.
- The group may be given a case study and asked to come up with a solution for a problem.
- The group may be given a topic and asked to discuss it.

### Types of Groups Discussion

- Panel: In a panel discussion, a small group of individuals (from three to five) who are knowledgeable about a particular subject discuss the topic among themselves

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in front of an audience. Panel participants make no formal presentations and change ideas through conversation.

- Dialogue: This method is very similar to a panel discussion but only two individuals take part in discussing the subject in front of an audience.
- Symposium: In a symposium, a small number of speakers who are knowledgeable about a particular subject make short presentations in succession. These presentations usually range from five to fifteen minutes each.
- Forum: This form of discussion allows for participation by the audience. There are several types of forums. The most common are.
- Open forum: Members of the audience are allowed to participate at any time during the meeting.
- Panel forum: Members of an audience hear a panel discussion and are then allowed to ask questions or to comment on the subject under discussion.
- Conference forum: Members of the audience are allowed to question. Discuss or comment after the dialogue.
- Lecture forum: After a formal presentation by a knowledgeable speaker, audience members are given the opportunity to question, comment, seek clarification, or discuss the information presented.
- Buzz Session: The audience is divided into groups of six to eight people to discuss relevant questions posed by the leader. One individual from each group may be asked to summarize the group's discussion and report to the entire audience.

### Qualities Looked for in Group Discussion

GDs are held with a particular purpose in mind. It may be to select a suitable candidate for a job or suitable candidate as student for admission to a particular course. In any of these cases, the aim is to select a person owning distinct leadership qualities. There are certain qualities, which are looked for during a GD.

### Qualification to be Possessed

#### 1. Leadership qualities:

- (i) Taking initiative
- (ii) Ability to give direction
- (iii) Taking the group along
- (iv) Listening
- (v) Goal Fulfillment

**2. Knowledge of the subject matter:**

- (i) Presentation of details.
- (ii) Error-Free Presentation

**3. Analytical ability:** Use of arguments, example, logic –how effectively are the same related to the subject matter.**4. Clarity of thought:**

- (i) Distillation of essentials.
- (ii) Abandonment of essentials

**5. Conviction and flexibility:**

- (i) The strength with which the argument is posited.
- (ii) Flexible in approach to topic.

**Guidelines & Helpful Expressions**

Skills required for a Group Discussion:

- Leadership Skills
- Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Persuasive Skills
- Problem Solving Skills
- Conceptualizing Skills

**Leadership Skills**

Ability to take leadership roles and lead, inspire and carry the team along to help them achieve group's objective. In today's business climate, organizations are interested in team players rather than individual contributors. During the Group discussion the panel essentially evaluates the candidate's potential to be a leader and also his/her ability to work in a team. Remember that companies are typically on the look out for candidates who will inspire to lead and succeed and for that you need to be a good team player.

**Example:** To be able to initiate the group discussion or guide the group especially when the discussions begins to lose relevance and try to encourage all members to participate in the discussion.

**Communication Skills**

The participating candidates will be assessed in terms of clarity of thoughts expression and aptness of language. One key aptitude is listening. It indicates a willingness to accommodate others views.



**Example:** To be able to use simple language and explain concepts clearly so that it is easily understood by all. You actually get negative marks for using esoteric jargons in an attempt to show off your knowledge.

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### Interpersonal Skills

Reflected in the ability of the individual to interact with other members of the group in a brief situation. Emotional maturity and balance promotes good interpersonal relationships. The person has to be more people centric and less self-centered.

**Example:** To remain cool even when someone provokes you with a personal comment, ability to remain objective, ability to empathize, non-threatening and more of a team player.

### Persuasive Skills

Ability to analyze and persuade others to see the problem from multiple perspectives without causing resentment among group members.

**Example:** Whilst appreciating someone else's point of view, you should be able to effectively communicate your view without overtly causing offence to the others person.

### Problem Solving Skills

Ability to come out with divergent and off beat solutions and use one's own creativity.

**Example:** Whilst thinking of solutions, don't be afraid to think of novel solutions. This is a high-risk, high-return strategy.

### Conceptualizing Skills

The ability to grasp a situation, take it from the day to day mundane problem level and apply it to a macro level.

**Example:** At the end of a discussion you could probably summarize the findings in a few sentences to present an overall perspective.

**A note of caution:** Can we acquire all the skills overnight or can we put up a show? A Group Discussion is a simulated exercise where you cannot suddenly put on a show since the evaluators will see through you easily. The purpose of the article is to sensitize you to these issues so that you can develop yourself with time.

**Table 3.1: Strategies for GDs**

Do's	Don'ts
KISS – Keep It Short and Simple	Speak loudly
Follow principles of oral Communication	Adopt a negative stance
Make even contributions	A casual look
Conclude periodically	Flay hands
Deliberate and slow in delivering your points	Talk too fast

Adhere to principles of politeness Provide opportunities to others to speak

*Public Speaking Skills*

Substantiate your point with examples and not the other way round

Table 3.2: Body Posture for GDs

Position Significance

Push your body to the back of the chair Keeps you alert

Keep your hands on your lap right Indicates that you are a logical person

Keep your legs stationed firmly on the ground; right and left intertwined beneath the chair Keeps you firmly positioned

Hand movements should be restricted Indicates that you do not need hands as props when speaking

Notes

### Discussion Techniques

Group Discussion is not a debate in which you either oppose or support the topic. There are no clear cut positions or stands to be taken. GD is a continuous discussion, a live interaction, in which you examine a subject/problem from different angles and view points. As a participant, you may disagree with or support the other's point of view or bring in a new point of view. This should not be done by showing disrespect for the other person, even if you do not accept his/her point of view. Courtesy in discussions indicates our level of culture and sophistication.

Some techniques or guidelines to be followed by the Group Discussion participants are as follows:

- How to join the discussion:
- I'd like to raise the subject of....
- What I think is.....
- In my opinion.....
- If I had to say a word about it.....
- I feel strongly that.....
- May I make a point about.....
- To support what some other participant has said:
- I'd like to support the view point of Mr. A about.....
- I completely agree with Mr. B about the point.....
- To support disagreement:
- I would like to offer a different viewpoint....
- Please allow me to differ here.....
- I think differently on this issue.....
- I do not agree here, in my opinion.....

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- To make a point very strongly:
- I am convinced that.....
- You can't deny that.....
- Anybody can see that.....
- It is quite obvious that.....
- To bring a discussion back to the point:
- Perhaps, we could go back to the point.
- Could we stick to the subject, please.....
- I am afraid; we are drifting away from the point.

Your analytical ability and your verbal and non verbal skills of communication give you a competitive edge over others.

### Listening in Group Discussions

In Group Discussions, only speaking is not essential, but listening has its own vital importance. Only a good listener can be an effective speaker and can bind and convince the group with his opinions. In GDs, Listening is also a participative act. Listen to what others have to say. Do not listen with a desire to refute. Listen to assimilate and analyze; then speak to express your thoughts in the light of thoughts of others.

Do not interrupt, but try to join in the discussion tactfully.

Finally, if you really want to stand out, do not try to dominate by demolishing other participants.

### Group Discussion Tips

We would like to share some tips to give you the edge during your Group Discussion.

- Be as natural as possible. Do not try and be someone you are not. Be yourself so the employer gets to know the real you.
- A Group Discussion is your chance to be more vocal. The point of interest to the evaluators is to hear you speak.
- Take time to think of what you are going to say-if allowed, take a piece of paper and a pen with you and jot down your thoughts before verbalizing them. This could help you create the right framework for your discussion.
- If you have any doubts regarding the subject or about what another team member has said, ask for clarification.
- Don't start speaking until you have clearly understood and analyzed the subject.
- Work out various strategies to help you make an entry: initiate the discussion or agree with someone else's point and then move on to express your



views.

- Do not be swayed when you are told that opening the discussion is the only way of gaining attention and recognition. If you do not give valuable insights during the discussion all your efforts of initiating the discussion will be in vain.
- The score you receive will depend not only on your verbal communication but also your non-verbal skills. Your body language says a lot about you-your gestures and mannerisms are more likely to reflect your attitude than what you say.
- Language skills are important as they reflect a balanced tone in your discussion and analysis.
- Be patient; don't lose your cool if anyone says anything you object to. The key to stay objective: Don't take the discussion personally.
- Always be polite and try to avoid using extreme phrases like: I strongly object or I disagree. Instead try phrases like I would like to share my views on. Or "One difference between your point and mine".
- Brush up on your leadership skills, motivate the other members of the team to speak and listen to their views. Be receptive to others' opinions and do not be abrasive or aggressive.
- If you have a group of like-minded friends you can have a mock group discussion where you can learn from each other through giving and receiving feedback.
- Do build a rapport with group members.
- Do maintain a sense of humor while facilitating.
- Don't let one or a few members of the group monopolize the discussion.
- Don't create the impression that you are an expert on the topic (even if you are an expert)

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### Group Discussion: Learning from Mistakes

So you feel that this group discussion is going to end up like the others – on interview call? Possibly a rejection letter? If you do your group discussion is a lost cause even before you attend it. If you have attended even one group discussion in the past, think about what mistakes you may have committed and list these mistakes on paper make sure you do not repeat them. To help you crack your fear of failure here's a list of the most common mistakes made at

### Group Discussions

Pavithra was very offended when one member made a statement on women generally being submissive while explaining his point of view. When Pavithra finally got an

*English Communication* opportunity to speak, instead of focusing on the topic she accused the other candidate being a male chauvinist and went in to defend women in general.

This example highlights some of the common mistakes made during a Group Discussion.

## Notes

- Deviating from the subject.
- Treating the discussion as a forum to air your own views.
- Losing objectivity and making personal attacks.
- This kind of behavior is perceived as Immature and is demodulating for the rest of the team.
- Sheila believed that the more she talked the more likely she was to be evaluated positively very opportunity. She did this so often that the other candidates got together to prevent her from participating in the rest of the discussion.
- You are being assessed not only for your communication skills but also for your ability to work as a team.
- Your contribution to the discussion must be relevant.
- The evaluation will be based on the quality of your contribution rather than the quantity.
- The aim of a Group Discussion is to get various members of a team to express their opinions before coming to a consensus. Avoid dominating the discussion and encourage the rest of the team to contribute.
- Vijay was happy to have got a Group Discussion topic he had prepared for. During the discussion he took pains to communicate to the others his vast knowledge of the topic. Every third sentence contained statistical data – “33.3% of companies... 27.26% of employees felt that... I recently read in Fortune that... Soon, the rest of the team either laughed at him or ignored his attempts to enlighten them. The evaluator felt that Vijay was making up the data.
- Even if our knowledge of the subject is encyclopedic, you will end up being frowned upon by the panel and the group if you attempt to show off our knowledge.
- You need not validate all your statements with facts and figures.
- Your people skills are more important than an in-depth knowledge of the subject.
- Being a show off indicates how self-centered you are and only highlights your inability to work in an atmosphere where different opinions are expressed.
- Sharief knew that all the participants would compete with each other to initiate the discussion. As soon as the topic, “Discuss the negative effects of liberalization on the Indian economy” was read out he began talking. In his anxiety to be the first to start speaking he did not hear the word “negative” in the topic. He began

discussing the ways in which the country had benefited from liberalization, only to be stopped by the evaluator, who then corrected his mistake.

- It is very important to listen and understand the topic before you air your opinions.
- Spending a little time analyzing the topic may provide you're with insights which others may not have thought about.
- Listening gives you the time to conceptualize the data so you can present the information you have in a better manner.
- There's nothing worse then getting noticed by the evaluator for starting off the Group Discussion with mistake.
- Madhavi was very nervous. She noticed that a couple of other candidates were exceptionally good and because of her insecurity she contributed little to the discussion. She was sure she did not stand a chance against the others. Even when she was asked to comment on a particulars point she preferred to keep mum.
- Your personality is also being evaluated. Your body language may reflect your low confidence.
- Participate in the discussion rather than evaluating others and your performance. You are the participant not the evaluator.
- Your Language skills along with your self-confidence are what you will be evaluated on.
- Just having one of them is not going to get you the job.

Focus on your strengths and do not spend too much time thinking negatively as it will have negative impact on your self-confidence. The evaluator will pick up these aspects from your body language.

## Extempore

"Extempore" or "ex tempore" refers to a stage or theatre performance that is carried out without preparation or forethought. Most often the term is used in the context of speech, singing and stage acting.

## How to Make an Effective Extempore Speech

Well basically its about projecting confidence and telling what you know in a short span of time.

Firstly, your body language should convey the fact that you are not shaky about coming to stage .One should feel the confidence within oneself

Secondly, you should know a few facts about the topic you are going to talk about. For this its a good idea, if you go through the daily newspapers and have a general

## Notes



*English Communication* understanding about things. Then its all about talking effectively without stuttering and good posture. Your body language should project good confidence. At the same time you also shouldn't appear smug.

## Notes

Well, when it comes to content, its better if you organize your points and tell them in a systematic manner. Its good if you mention most of the points without going much deep in to any of them.

Its always better to limit your speech to the time allotted for one speech, especially if its a competition.

### Body Language

Now a little detail in to the body language you are going to need to get it right.

Well, if its a competition, you will have to walk up to the stage. Now the judges are going to notice you.

You should appear extremely confident (not smug) as you walk up the podium.

Adjust the mike to your setting and make eye contact with the judges and the audience.

Now its time to start. Start slowly but confidently, that's the point.

Now it is better if you keep your head slightly raised because this makes you feel confident.

Its good if you use hand gestures while stressing important points but don't overdo it.

### What to Talk

Its always good if you start your speech with a quote or by describing a scene.

Select the quote which suits your topic (obviously), but some quotes go with a number of topics.

Now, its always good if you have a couple of good quotes in your arsenal.

About describing a scene, what I mean is to describe a dramatic scene...like a running commentary.

Now when it comes to the body, you need to first define what you are going to mainly speak about. But if its topics like terrorism which all people understand, then you don't have to.

After this you elaborate depending on your topic and based on how much time you have.

Finally you conclude by telling about how we should all try to achieve a common goal and things like that.

Now the topics that might come for a competition greatly depends upon what level of school or college you are.

Competitions conducted at interschool or intercollege festivals especially in arts and humanities colleges will be of higher standard and more specific.

The more specific a topic is, the more difficult it is likely to become. For example, take a topic like "Chandrayaan-India's Moon Mission" is more likely to benefit competitors who know about the topic. This again stresses the importance of general knowledge in tackling such competitions. Where as a topic like "INDIA IN THE 21st CENTURY" will be an easy topic on which all competitors will have points to highlight.

## Notes

### What to do just before the Competition

Well normally for most competitions a short time of upto 5 minutes would be allotted to each candidate before his/her speech.

Its wise to carry a paper and pen with you to write down points during this time.

This will help you organize what you are about to say and also gives you some confidence which has a boosting effect on your performance

You just need to jot down the main points on paper, but remember never look at this paper in front of the judges even if you forget the points.

## 5.53 Summary

Presentations and public speaking play a very significant role in business environment. Hence, when planning for presentations or public speaking, you must take care to define their purpose and relate them to the audience's interests. In this chapter, we have discussed public speaking and presentation skills.

Public speaking is a talk given to a large gathering. The present chapter offers characteristics and tips of good public speaking. Importance and need of public speaking for the individual, the organization and the society are also discussed. Impromptu, extemporaneous, memorized and manuscript are modes of delivery in public speaking. Besides, checklist for effective public speaking; checklist for discussion skills and essentials for reduce stage fear are also discussed.

Further, in this chapter, we concentrated on imparting presentation skill to enable you to make effective presentations. These skills can be further developed by paying attention to preparation, delivery techniques, and the art of handling audience's response. The presentation is a form of oral communication. Its success depends on the presenter's preparation, his clarity of purpose, understanding of audience needs; his ability to structure the information, choose proper visual aids, and perform by involving the audience's interest and responding to their questions with ease and forthright honesty. Features, elements of presentation, ten steps to a successful presentation and a few tips on team presentation are also discussed. Finally, the present chapter throws light on seminar presentation.

## Notes

Group discussion is an integral part of business communication. Group discussion enables the organizational members to share information, discuss a problem, and arrive at a solution. Too often, companies do not feel the impact of a meticulous group discussion until they lose business due to the group's inability to arrive at a decision. In the present chapter, the group discussion at a length is discussed.

The group discussion is a personality test, most popular with public/private sector undertakings, government departments, commercial firms, IIMs, universities and other organizations, used to screen candidates, after the written test. It is a part of oral communication. The entire study of communication would remain incomplete if there was no analysis of the system of group discussions. In this chapter the characteristics, types, objectives and purposes are discussed.

While selection tools and techniques like tests, interviews, etc., provide good data about an individual, they fall short in providing real life data of how an individual would be performing in a real life situation, especially a group situation. The preparation of group discussion, role playing, role of the conductor of group discussion is also discussed.

Besides, the four Cs, advantages, limitations, common group discussion mistakes, do's and don'ts of group discussion and supporting expressions in group discussion is also discussed.

An interview is a formal meeting in which a person or persons question, consult or evaluate another person or persons. An interview reveals the views, ideas, and attitudes of the person being interviewed as well as the skills of the interviewer. The term 'interview' has been derived from the French word 'entre voir' that means 'to glimpse' or 'to see each other'. An interview has a wide variety of uses in business and corporate related jobs. Purposes of holding interview are discussed in this chapter which comprise selection, promotion, performance appraisal, etc. The structure of an interview comprises opening, middle and closing, which is also discussed in this chapter.

The present chapter offers a subsequent list of different types of interviews which includes employment interview, orientation interview, reprimand interview, stress interview, exit interview, behavioural interview, informational interview, and case interview, etc. This chapter also discussed the fundamental principles of interviewing. Interviews like any other formal business activity require a lot of preparation and it applies both to the interviewer and the interviewee. There is no one 'best' way to prepare for an interview. Rather, there are specific and important strategies to enhance one's chances for interview success. The present chapter also discusses the skills of preparation for interview and factors contributing towards successful interview.

Important non-verbal aspects at the time of interview like eye contact, facial expressions, etc., are discussed in this chapter. Besides, this chapter also discusses the basic practical clues and guidelines for attending the interview. The present chapter



throws light on the interview process and specific guidelines in the form of do's and don'ts for conducting an interview.

Interviews are becoming increasingly complex for both the parties with a growing variety of questions being asked to check the various kinds of skills required for increasingly demanding job profiles. The questions now range from technical to social to behavioural issues and the candidate has to present a balanced picture in almost all of the aspects being tested. This chapter offers the types of questions asked by interviewers during the interview which comprise open-ended questions, close-ended questions, neutral and leading questions, loaded questions, mirror questions, probing questions etc. Besides, in the end, the chapter also discusses the communication behaviours of successful interviewees based on the research reported by Lois Einhorn.

Group Discuss can be used as a vehicle to encourage thought and to practice a wider range of skills, specifically communication and problem solving skills that may be required in future working life. Companies make use of this technique of filter people in an interview. In Group Discussion, companies shortlist only those people who have necessary skills like listening skills, a proactive attitude and leadership qualities but at the same time he/she should be a team player and possess people skills. Any job requires employees to work with others for effective functioning. Therefore people skills are an important aspect of any job.

Skills required for a Group Discussion are: Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Persuasive Skills, Problem Solving Skills and Conceptualizing Skills.

GD is a continuous discussion, a live interaction, in which you examine a subject/problem from different angles and view points. In Group Discussions, only speaking is not essential, but listening has its own vital importance. Only a good listener can be an effective speaker and can bind and convince the group with his opinions.

"Extempore" or "ex tempore" refers to a stage or theater performance that is carried out without preparation or forethought. Most often the term is used in the context of speech, singing and stage acting.

## 5.54 Glossary

- **Group Discussion:** Group Discussion is a continuous discussion, a live interaction, in which you examine a subject/problem from different angles and view points.
- **Extempore:** Extempore or "ex tempore" refers to a stage or theater performance that is carried out without preparation or forethought.
- **Communication Skills:** To be able to use simple language and explain concepts clearly so that it is easily understood by all.

## Notes

- **Leadership Skills:** To be able to initiate the group discussion or guide the group especially when the discussions begins to lose relevance and try to encourage all members to participate in the discussion.

## Notes

**5.55 Review Questions**

1. What is public speaking? What are the characteristics of good public speaking or good speech?
2. What is public speaking? Discuss the tips for good public speaking.
3. Discuss the importance of public speaking and its need.
4. What are the modes of delivery in public speaking? Discuss the checklist for effective public speaking.
5. What is public speaking? What the essentials are for reducing stage fear?
6. What is presentation? What are the elements of presentation?
7. What according to you is a presentation? What are the characteristics of a good presentation?
8. Briefly discuss the strategy for team presentation.
9. Briefly discuss the strategy to improve discussion skills.
10. What is presentation? Discuss the strategy for team presentations.
11. What do you mean by a seminar? How it is organized?
12. What is a group discussion? Discuss its types and characteristics.
13. What are the objectives and purposes of a group discussion?
14. How will you prepare yourself for a group discussion?
15. What are the four C's of group discussion?
16. Explain the essential skills for effective group discussion.
17. Discuss the advantages and limitations of group discussion.
18. What common mistakes people do while participating in group discussion?
19. What are the Do's and Don'ts of a group discussion? Discuss the supportive expressions too.
20. What is an interview? Discuss the nature of interviews.
21. What are the essential features and structure of interview?
22. What are the purposes of holding interviews and its chronology?
23. Discuss different types of interviews, describing clearly the purposes for which they are held.
24. What are the fundamental principles of interviewing?
25. In what way would you prepare yourself if called for a job interview?

26. What kinds of questions are generally asked in interview? Give examples to illustrate your answer. *Public Speaking Skills*
27. Differentiate between the communications behaviours of successful and unsuccessful interviews.
28. Write short notes on the following:
- (iii) Orientation interview
  - (iv) Reprimand interview
  - (v) Stress interview
  - (vi) Structured interview
  - (vii) Case interview
  - (viii) Informational interview
  - (ix) Pauses

Notes

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### 5.56 Further Readings

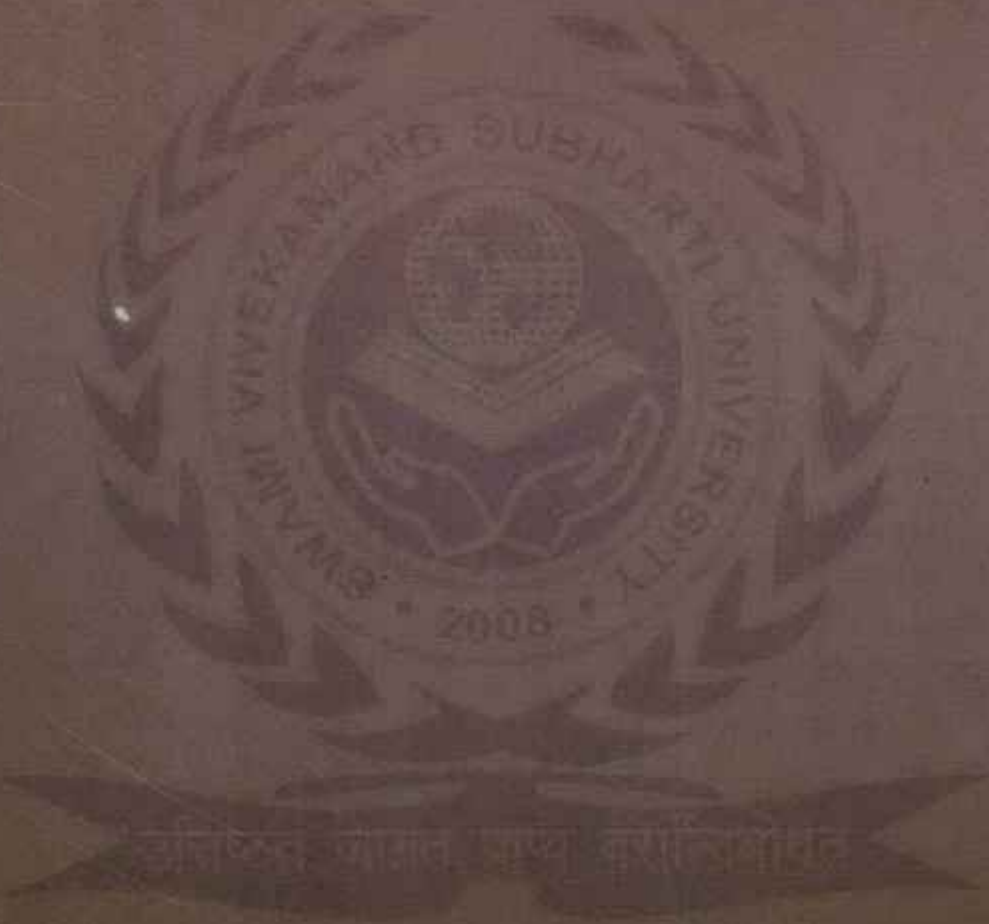
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