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THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Management Studies

BCOLA - 138
Business Communication

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MATERIAL PRODUCTION

BCOLA-138

CONTENTS

Communication is the lifeline of any business organization; it is beyond imagination that a business firm can survive without an effective communication network in this age of fierce competition. And when we talk about the business communication so many questions come to mind; it is verbal or non-verbal; if it is verbal, it is oral or written; if it is oral, what are the barriers and how can they be overcome? If it is written, how can or should a business letter be written in an attractive manner? Meetings constitute a necessary activity in a business organization. When we talk about the meetings, one should try to understand the related aspects, such as agenda, quorum, voting, proxy, minutes, etc. Some words are commonly used in the business jargon although people working in other fields may not be familiar with them. After completing studies, one explores the job market. It is necessary to know the correct way of writing an application letter and preparing the curriculum vitae.

You will study all these things in detail in this course, BCOLA-Business Communication.

BASIC CONCEPTS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Unit 1: **An Introduction to Communication**: defines communication and describes the importance and process of communication. It also explains barriers to communication and how they can be overcome and principles of effective communication.

Unit 2: **Types of Communication**: discusses various types of communication including verbal and non-verbal communications. It also explains effective non-verbal communication.

Unit 3: **An introduction to Business Communication**: discusses the concept and characteristics of business communication. It also describes various types of business communication and its role.

Unit-4: **Purpose of Business Communication**: discusses different purposes of business communication including its role in improving knowledge of remote workers and improving satisfaction and retention of customers. It explains how it helps in building a better image of the company and use of modern technology in business communication.

Unit-5: **Channels of Business Communication**: describes various types of channels used for the business communication.

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Unit-6: **Principles of Letter Writing:** describes basic principles of a business letter, its form and arrangement.

Unit-7: **Business Correspondence-I:** discusses essentials and style of a business letter. It also describes different types of business letters.

Unit-8:   **Business Correspondence-II:** describes the importance of publicity and public relations in business. It also explains different types of postal services.

Unit-9:   **Meetings-I:** defines meeting and explains its classification. It describes requisites of a valid meeting and rules governing meetings. Preparation of conduct of the meeting is also explained.

Unit-10:   **Meetings-II:** describes other aspects of meeting, namely motion, amendments, resolutions and interruptions. The voting procedure and writing of the minutes are also explained.

REPORT WRITING

Unit-11:   **Business Reports**: describes the meeting and importance of business report. It also explains the essentials of a good report and different types of reports.

Unit-12:   **Process of Writing a Report**: explains general guidelines for preparing reports and procedure of report writing. It also describes long and short reports.

Unit-13:   **Precis Writing**: defines precis and explains the characteristics of a good précis. It also discusses problem in writing a precis and gives some illustrations.

VOCABULARY FOR BUSINESS WRITING

Unit-14:   **Some Business Terms-I**: explains some business terms that are often used in business jargon but are not common in other fields.

Unit-15:   **Some Business Terms-II**: describes also business terms.

Unit-16:   **Words Often Confused**: clarifies and explains two or more sets of terms which are more or less pronounced alike but have different meanings.

Unit-17:   **Words Often Misspelt**: explains some English words which may be spelt incorrectly.

CONFERENCING AND PREPARING FOR JOB MARKET

Unit-18: Voice Mail, Video Conferencing and Conference Calls: describes the meanings and procedure of doing voice-mail, video conferencing and conference calls.

Unit-19: Preparing for Job Market: discusses different stages of the search of a job. It explains how the advertisement should be evaluated and how a good application letter can be prepared. It also describes the procedure of writing a good curriculum vitae.

UNIT 1   INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Structure

1.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- describe what is communication;
- elaborate the process of communication;
- discuss various barriers to communication;
- analyse how to remove barriers to communication and
- explain principles of effective communication

1.1   INTRODUCTION

In this age of globalization, the survival and progress of a business enterprise depend on the speed and efficiency of the communication.   Every business organization therefore, sets up an effective communication network for both internal as well as external interactions. Internal communication is necessary for the flow of information from top to bottom and vice versa, which ensures perfect coordination, whereas external communication boosts up procurement and supply activities.

In this era of Information Technology, the classical paper based communication methods have been replaced by much faster and effective Internet based communication techniques.
However, there may be some barriers to communication arising from personal, environmental, organizational and physical reasons. These barriers must be removed to ensure effective communication. While communicating, one should try to follow ten principles of effective communication.
 In this unit, you will read what is communication and how does it take place. You will also learn about various barriers to communication and how they can be overcome. You will also learn the principles of effective communication.

1.2   WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Oxford English dictionary defines communication as "imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium. …The successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings".

According to Harold D. Lasswell, an act of communication can be described in a convenient way by answering the following questions:

Who?
Says What?
Through which Channel?
To whom?
With what effect?

Communication involves two or more persons who exchange their views, ideas and plans by face to face interaction, such as in meetings or through media. In modern times the Information Technology (IT) has revolutionised the process of transmitting communication by making a variety of media available which are much faster and more effective than the older methods, such as letter writing or taking on classical telephone. Now people prefer to use smart phones, WhatsApp, Skype, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. for communicating. These channels are internet based.   The electronic mail (email) has replaced the classical letter-writing as it is not only much faster, but also provides the possibility of sending other documents as attachment files. Furthermore, if the same communication and documents are to be sent to many recipients, the copy (CC) of the mail can be sent to all by a click of the mouse.

The answer to who is the sender means the sender is the person or the party from which a message originates. Under different scenarios, a sender may have different status. Depending on the type of communication, i.e., internal or external the sender may be different as shown below in Fig. 1.1.
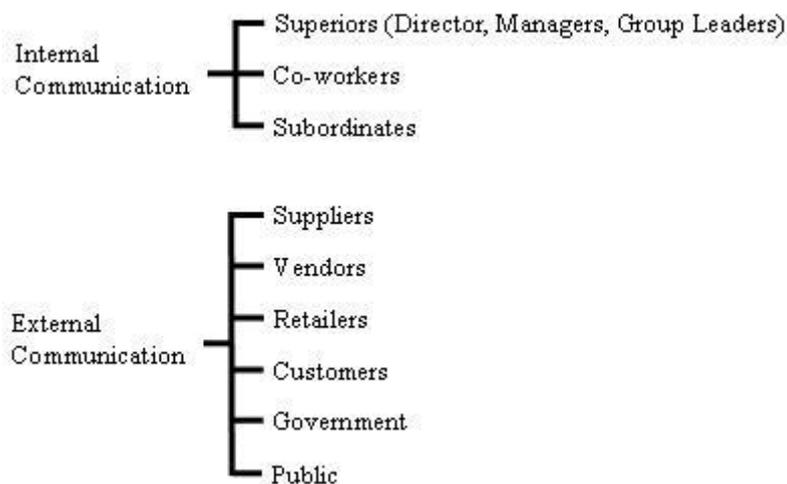

Figure 1.1: **Internal and External Communications in an Organization**

Thus a communication starts from the sender. In the context of a business enterprise, an internal communication may originate from the director or the manager or the group leader. It may originate from the lower level of the hierarchy such as co-worker or subordinate who may seek some information, clarification or seeking redressal of some grievance.

In the context of an external communication, the sender may be a supplier or a vendor seeking the order for the supply of raw materials. It may be a customer or a retailer who intends to send a complaint about the product purchased/ sold. Sender may be a person from the government department seeking information about the production/supply/tax returns, etc. Similarly, it may be a person from the public relations department of the organization seeking information about the new rules from a government department.

Depending on the direction of the communication, sender and receiver (described later) may exchange their status.

1.3   IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Globalization has induced fierce competition in almost every walk of life including business. Any organization cannot survive without an effective and vibrant communication system. Effective communication system establishes not only perfect coordination among the staff of the organization, but also enhances its ability to make contacts with its clients, seek their orders and comply with the same promptly. Through communication network, a company advertises its products more quickly, identifies new markets speedily, contacts its prospective buyers aggressively, and thus increases its turnover and profits effectively. In this scenario, employees of the company are also motivated, because a part of the increased profits may be given to them in the form of bonus and extra perquisites. Thus, a good communication system keeps everybody in high spirits.

The employers with good communication network succeed in delivering their instructions and guidelines to their employees in clear terms. Thus employees are energised and motivated and try to give their best to the organization. In the long run, they become valuable assets to the organization. The utmost relevance of an effective communication system was immensely realised during the COVID-19 pandemic when many national and international companies asked their employees from home online. A strong communication network in an organization contributes in the following five manners:

Building an effective team: When members of a team are able to communicate effectively and exchange their ideas freely, they develop mutual trust. It results in building an effective team environment.

Imparts everyone a voice: With effective communication system in place, everyone has the possibility of expressing his/her ideas and offer suggestions. It induces a sense of belonging and self-esteem.

Seed of innovation: Free exchange of ideas and suggestion lead to innovations and new strategies.

Fast remedial action: An effective communication network helps in identifying any malfunctioning in the system at any level and remedial action can be taken well in time. It boosts growth of the organization.

Perfect coordination: The cumulative effect of all the four factors described above is that there is perfect coordination from the management to the lowest cadre. They all work in unison seizing every opportunity for the benefit of the organization.

Check your progress A

1. Define communication.

    ----

2. Write any four internet based channels of communication.

    ----

3. List possible recipients in the external communication of an organization.

    ----

4. How does communication help in coordination?

    ----

5. Which of the following statements are **True** or **False**?

    (i)   Most of the communication methods these days are internet based.
    (ii)   A communication system helps only in external matters.
    (iii)   A good communication system induces trust among the teammates.
    (iv)   A good communication system helps management only.
    (v)   Communication is a two-way activity.

1.4   PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

You have learnt the concept and importance of communication. Let us now learn the process of communication. The process of communication can be depicted as follows:

Who Communicator	→	Says What Message	→	In Which Channel Medium	→	To Whom Receiver	→	With What Effect? Reaction
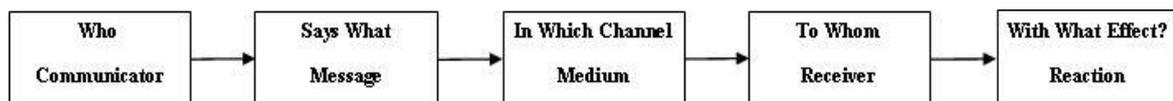
If we try to answer question of each box, different players/entities emerge in the whole cycle communication. Who communicates? It is the sender. Says what? It is the message. In which channel? It is the medium. To whom the message is sent? It is the receiver. With what effect? It is the reaction or reply of the receiver.

Now let us learn each step of the process of communication in more detail.

Sender: Sender is the person or the party from which a message originates under different scenarios a sender may have different status. Depending on the type of communication, i.e., internal or external the sender may be different as shown in Figure 1.1 in Section 1.2.

Thus a communication starts from the sender. In the context of a business enterprise, an internal communication may originate from the director or the manager or the group leader. It may originate from the lower level of the hierarchy such as co-worker or subordinate who may seek some information, clarification or seeking redressal of some grievance.

In the context of an external communication, the sender may be a supplier or a vendor seeking the order for the supply of raw materials. It may be a customer or a retailer who intends to send a complaint about the product purchased/ sold. Sender may be a person from the government department seeking information about the production/supply/tax returns, etc. Similarly, it may be a person from the public relations department of the organisation seeking information about the new rules from a government department.

Depending on the direction of the communication, sender and receiver (described later) may exchange their status.

Encoding: This step is not shown in the above sequence of events in a communication. It intervenes between message and channel. In fact, while sending the message in the digital form, it has to be converted into another language compatible with the electronic media. This change in the format of the message is called encoding.

Encoding means to convert information into codes. Code is the system of symbol, sign or letter used to represent the secret meaning. According to John Fiske, "coding consists of both signs and rules that determine how and in what context these signs are used and how they can be combined to form more complex messages". The code and system are inter-related, i.e. type of encoding depends on the media/channel being used for the transmission of the message.

Message: A message is the information, idea, thought or opinion the sender wants to send. Depending on the status of the sender within or without the business establishment, the nature of the message changes. The message from the director or manager or the group leader may be a type of order, suggestion, appreciation or warning. However, if the message is sent by a person of lower cadre, it may be a type of complaint or a request for the redressal of the grievance. A message from the vendor or supplier will be of the nature of query or reminder for the clearance of the pending bills. A message from the retailer will be a request for the supply of the goods or request for the sanction of higher margins in the sales. A customer may send a message complaining some defect in the products of the company. It is obvious that all these messages are business related.

Channel: A communication channel is the medium through which communication is sent to its intended receiver. In a business enterprise, utmost care is taken to set up appropriate communication channels so that information flows quickly and correctly within and without the organization. Using an inappropriate channel for interaction can lead to negative consequences including financial losses. Richer communication channels are used for complex messages to ensure clarity.

There are various types of communication channels. Let us learn them in detail.

1. **Face to face Communication Channel:** Over the years, this communication channel has become vey popular in big business organisations, because through this channel, manager(s) can communicate with the staff without calling them to one place, thus avoiding unnecessary disturbance and saving time. Video-conferencing have become very common these days, because facial expressions and tone of the speakers voice create the desired effects on the recipients. There are no chances of ambiguity, and if necessary, the speakers and the recipients can ask questions to each other and speak classifications. Several apps, such as Skype, Whatsapp are easily available for this purpose.

2. **Mobile communication channel:** Mobile communication channel using smartphone is preferred when a private or confidential message is to be communicated to an individual or a small group of persons. Unlike face-to-face channel mobile communication channel is less expensive and it saves on time.

3. **Electronic communication channel:** It includes e-mail, Internet, intranet and social media platforms, This channel can be used for one-to-one or one-to-group or mass communication. It is less expensive or even does not involve costs, as many companies such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. have made these media platforms available free of cost. However, while using these channels sender has to be careful for drafting/ posting messages, because inappropriate words can cause confusion or negative publicity.

4. **Broadcast media communication:** This channel include TV and radio. These types of media channels are usually used by the business organisations for advertising or promoting their products. The CEO of a global company may use this channel for addressing across the global sites. If a message is intended for a mass audience, a broadcast channel is usually used.

5. **Written method of communication:** Business organizations use this channel for announcing their policies, or for sending memos, letters, manuals, notices etc. Sometimes, written communications are sent for advertising the products. Recipients may respond through electronic channel or use written method of communication

Receiver: Receiver is the intended target of the business communication sent by the sender. After the message emerges from the channel, it is received at the receiver's end. In fact, after the emergence of the communication from the media, there are three stages before the receiver can respond:

1. **Reception of the Message:** Message reception is a key element of the business communication process, because, it can induce desired effect on the receiver, if it received properly. For example, if a business enterprise advertises its new product, it will attract the desired customers only if it is received by the customers as well as received by the audience in the right perspective. The research has shown that receptivity is a function of message, audience (i.e. receiver), source, situational and channel characteristics. The combined effect of all these factors determines how receptive a recipient is to a particular to communication.

2. **Decoding of the Message:** Decoding is the opposite of encoding, i.e. the encoded message is reconverted with a readable/understandable message. Communication is more effective if decoding matches clearly with encoding. For example, a business enterprise gives a visual advertisement of its product on TV. There are some actions in the advertisement intended to give some specific impressions on the viewer (Receiver). The advertisement will be successful only if the viewer is able to understand (decode) the message intended to give through these actions. Sometimes, the recipient may receive in different way from what the encoder was trying to communicate. This is called distortion and it occurs when there is lack of equivalence between the two sides.

3. **Understanding of the Message:** After the message has been received and decoded, it should be understandable by the receiver. As discussed above, the message should be framed in such a manner that it serves its purpose, i.e. it generates the impression on the receiver that it was intended for.

   As mentioned, above status of the receiver depends on the status of the sender and nature of the message. Thus, receiver may be a manager or a group leader or a subordinate employee in the organization. Outside the organisation, the receiver may be a supplier or a vendor or a retailer or a person in the government department.

Feedback: After the receiver has received the message, he/she sends the response. The analysis of the response in terms of the information sought by the sender is called feedback. For example, the management/ sender sends a message to the marketing in charge (Receiver) seeking about the performance of their new product in the market. The marketing officer after collecting sales data of their product and also of the other competitor's products, prepares a report and makes some suggestions (e.g. decreasing the price or giving some offer, such as buy one get two, etc.) and sends to the management (response).

Thus, the response or reaction of the receiver sent to the sender is the feedback of the whole process. It is the ultimate result of a sequence of events initiated by a message originated from the sender.
As mentioned earlier, depending on the type of the message, sender and receiver can exchange their positions. Thus, feedback can also be in both directions. In the above example, the response sent by the marketing officer to the manager is the feedback. If the manager again sends some suggestions or a new strategy to the marketing officer, it will also be called feedback.

Feedback is extremely important for making business communication effective. The progress of the business depends on useful feedbacks.

All the steps involved in a business communication as described above are depicted diagrammatically in Figure 1.2.
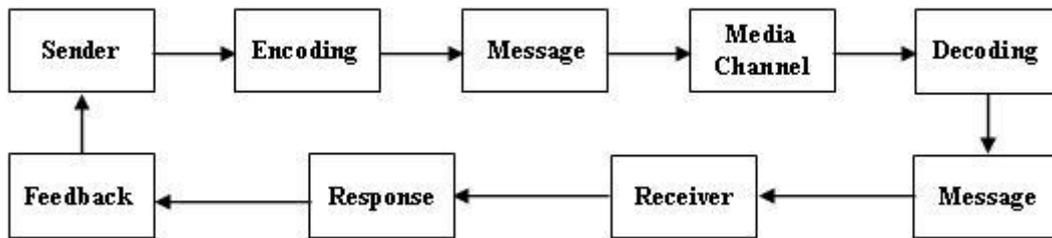
Figure 1.2: The Whole Process of Sending and Receiving a Message

Check your progress B

1.   How is decoding different from encoding?

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2.   What do you mean by feedback of the communication?

----

3.   What is decoding?

----

4.   Fill in the following:

(i)   Message reception is a ……………in the business communication process.
(ii)   The receptivity is a function of ……………., ……………., …………….,
         ……………. and ……………. characteristics.
(iii)   Decoding is the ……………. of the encoding.
(iv)   The message should generate ……………. on the receiver that it was intended for.
(v)   Feedback is the analysis of the ……………. sent by the receiver.

5.   Which of the following statements are "**True or False**"?

(i)   Sender and receiver of the communication can exchange their roles.
(ii)   Smartphone is a mobile communication channel.
(iii)   Sender is always the manager of a company.
(iv)   Decoding precedes understanding of the message.
(v)   The channel of communication is always digital.

1.5   BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

In the lexian of communication, barriers refer to specific reasons that can distort or prevent communication. It affects effective exchange of ideas, thoughts and information.

To understand the communication barriers systematically, they can be classified broadly into three groups namely, personal barriers, environmental barriers and mechanical barriers. Furthermore, each of these classes can be sub-classified as shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.3.
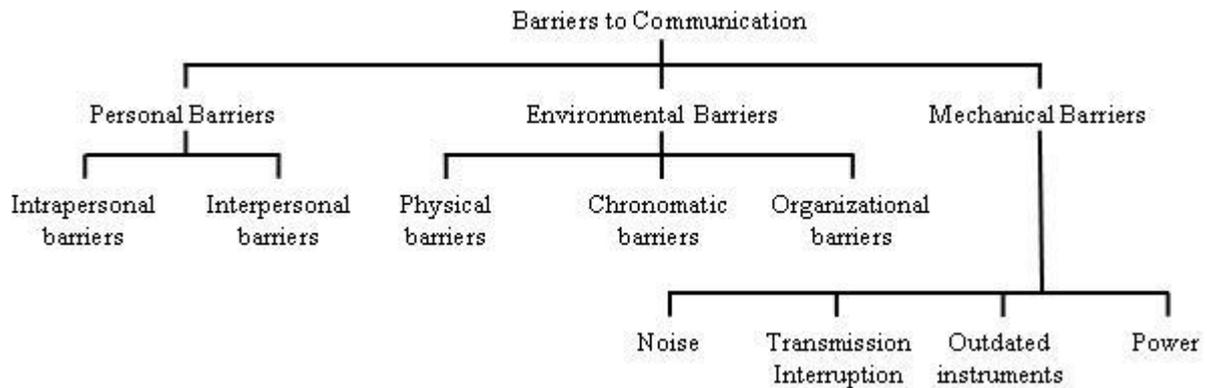

Figure 1.3: Classification of Different Types of Communication Barriers

1.5.1 Personal Barriers

Personal Barriers are of two types, namely intrapersonal barriers and interpersonal barriers. Let us learn them in detail.

Intrapersonal Communication Barriers

An individual's own limitations that pose hurdles in the communication are known as intrapersonal communication barriers. Intrapersonal barriers can be sub-classified under five categories as explained below:

1. Physiological Barriers: These are caused by a person's own dysfunctions. Some of the physiological dysfunctions are stammering, difficulty in hearing, poor personality, etc.

2. Psychological Barriers: These barriers include: mental and psychological disorders, such as shyness, nervousness, stage-phobia, etc. Some people suffer from inferiority complex and are not able to face and communicate with their superiors with ease. On the other extreme, a status – conscious superior does not feel comfortable while discussing some problem with his/her juniors.

3. Attitudinal Barriers: These types of barriers are the result of an individual's own attitude and assumptions built up over a period due to one's own socio-economic and cultural background. For example, certain people are introverts, whereas others are very social. They will communicate with different attitudes. Some people have huge ego and are not comfortable while communicating in the presence of many people.

4. Emotional Barriers: These barriers result due to one's emotions for certain situations. For example, some people are not comfortable while seeing an adverse situation and may start crying instead of communicating with other people to resolve the crisis.

5. Perceptual Barriers: Perceptual barriers are related to an individual's perception to certain situations. People coming from different backgrounds, namely educational, social, cultural and family, etc., have different perceptions to the same situations.

Interpersonal Barriers

Interpersonal barriers are outside an individual's own self. These barriers come between the sender and the receiver of the message due to various reasons. Sometimes these barriers can be corrected and sometimes they are outside an individual's control. Some of the reasons of interpersonal barriers are prejudices, misconception, disinterest, incorrect facts, anger, obsession with a certain outcome, etc. Some of the important interpersonal barriers are explained below:

1. Cultural Barriers: Diverse cultures have diverse sayings or phrases that reflect differences in values, customs and traditions. The phrases and sayings in a language convey a particular meaning in a context which may look odd in other culture. For example, in North America, people often say "The early bird gets the worm". which means that one who is prepared and prompt gets the reward. But if you want to convey the same meaning in Hindi, it will be said differently. For example the English translation of a popular Hindi saying is "Who is awake, he gets the reward". Thus while communicating, one has to be conscious of cultural sensitivities. In many multinational companies, multifunctional orientation programmes are organised for smooth communication.

2. Linguistic Barriers: Language and culture are inter-woven. As explained earlier, the sayings having the same theme are expressed differently in different languages. An effective communication is possible if one has control over a certain language. For example, when a Chinese speaks English, he may not be comfortable while communicating in English. The understanding of ethnic speech patterns is helpful for an effective communication.

3. Ethical Barriers: Ethical barriers are concerned with the situations where an individual's ethics come in conflict with his professional performance. For example, a salesperson in a retail showroom is under pressure to sell the products even if they are of inferior quality because his salary comes out of the profits of the sales. This kind of situation prompts the salesperson to persuade the customers to buy the products, even if it is necessary to exaggerate the usefulness of the product. Thus, his conscience or ethics may come in direct conflict with his professional work.

4. Hierarchical of Status Barriers: As mentioned earlier, some people have ego and are status-conscious and are not comfortable while communicating with their juniors. On the other extreme, a person of lower cadre may not communicate with his/her boss with ease. This type of barrier is very common in feudal societies.

1.5.2 Environmental Barriers

The communication barriers resulting from the outside factors are known as environment-based communication barriers. Some of these factors may be within the control of the organization and others may be beyond its control. These barriers may be further sub-divided into several categories.

Physical Barriers

Physical barriers to communication result from the environmental and natural conditions and include factors such as noise, technological problems, eco due to faulty design of the rooms etc. Thus, they can be further sub-divided into the following categories:

1. Noise: An unsuitable surrounding may be the reason of barrier to communication. For example, if a leader speaks in a rally, the noise from nearby traffic or even of the crowd will make him inaudible. Noise may be caused by faulty design of the rooms or sitting arrangements or poor condition of the furniture which cause eco and cracking sound of furniture. Due to this reason, the sender's message will be unclear and the same quality of message will be received by the receiver.

2. Technological Problems: The technological problems are associated with the poor quality of instruments used for communication. For example, there may be noise in the telephone lines or mobile connections due to which receiver does not get accurate message. Sometimes, internet connections are very slow or even disrupted and people are not able to communicate in the desired manner. Other technological reasons include: computer virus, delivery of spam, delivery of email in the spam box due to non-recognition of the sender, etc.

Chronomatic Barriers

The problem related to time such as delayed delivery of the message are known as chronomatic barriers. These barriers may be the result of physical distance between the sender and the receiver, different time zones of the sender and receiver of the message, etc. For example, if a manager of a multi-national company is placed in India and he/she wants to seek some important information from the head office in U.S.A., the time difference may cause hindrance in the immediate delivery of the information. For such situations, the meetings have to be planned much in advance.

Organizational Barriers

Organizational barriers may result due to several factors associated with a particular organization. Following are the main reasons of organizational barriers:

1. Poor communication facilities: It includes telephone, internet, WiFi, fax, computers, stationery, etc. If these facilities are not updated regularly, employees feel handicapped in effective communication.

2. Complex hierarchical structure: Sometimes the employees are not permitted to communicate with the outside agencies directly; instead, the prepared text of the communication is required to be routed through a complex hierarchical structure upward and then it is routed back downward to the concerned employee, who then sends it. This complex procedure is an organizational barrier and it affects the overall performance of the company. In many Indian public enterprises, this procedure is still followed, which affects their productivity.

3. Cumbersome rules: It is related to the previous point discussed above. In some organizations, employees are asked to use some pre-fixed communication mode to communicate. Among themselves also, they are allowed to communicate through certain media only. In other words, free flow of information in the organization is restricted, which delays the over communication.

4. Inefficient delivery network: In big organizations, letters and other outside material are received by the receipt section, and then these are redistributed to the concerned departments. If this delivery network is not efficient, the documents may not be delivered to the concerned departments, which may delay the response.

1.5.3 Mechanical Barriers

Mechanical barriers arise due to technical defect in the machinery and instruments used in the communication. Actually, mechanical instruments, such as computers, telephones, fax machines, etc. require continuous maintenance in the absence of which they create noise and cause disruption in the transmission of the communication. Tools used for personal use, such as hearing aids, amplifiers, signalling devices, Braille and special needs telephones, magnifiers, text-telephones and TDD (Telephone, devices for the deaf machines) are also included in the category and any defect in these instruments causes mechanical barriers. Power failure and internet disruption are mechanical barriers to communication. Besides, following types of interruptions can also be included in the category of mechanical barriers.

Transmission Interruption: The communications such as email, fax message, papers, mobiles, citizen band radios, VHF radios and satellite communications are transmitted in the form of digital signals. If there is any interruption in the transmission due to various reasons, the communication will be interrupted.

Outdated Instruments: As mentioned earlier, the instruments for communications require continuous maintenance and if necessary, replacement. However, in the absence of the availability of sufficient funds, these instruments are not changed which causes communication barriers.

Power Failure: Almost all the modern communication devices are electrically operated. Thus, a steady source of power with stable voltage is imperative for smooth communication. In developed countries, there is seldom any power failure. However, in under developed countries, particularly in remote areas, there is power failure causing communication interruptions.

1.6   HOW TO REMOVE COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

In the previous section, different types of barriers have been described. While discussing these barriers, the causes of each type of barriers were also discussed. Thus, if we consciously try to avoid these causes, barriers to communication can be overcome.

In this section, we shall briefly discuss how can these barriers to communication be overcome:

It is needless to overemphasize that in this age of globalization, an effective communication network is a prerequisite for the success of an organization. After understanding the reasons of different types of communication barriers, appropriate corrective measures are taken. Here we shall discuss various steps to overcome different types of communication barriers.

To Overcome Physiological and Psychological Barriers

If necessary mental health professional should be consulted to address, anxiety and phobia disorders. With continuous practice, under proper guidance and using appropriate aids, physiological barriers such as stammering, difficulty in hearing, etc. can be overcome. If there are situations that irritate you, you should withdraw with the communication for some time until you have controlled your emotions. Sometimes it is imperative to accept imperfection because you may not have control over the person you are communicating with.

To Overcome Interpersonal Barriers

Earlier we discussed that interpersonal barriers include cultural barriers, linguistic barriers, ethical barriers and hierarchical barriers. To overcome these barriers one should try to follow the following guidelines:

a) **Use of simple language** – One should try to use simple and clear words. At the same time, the tone and content of the message should be courteous so that it does not offend the receiver. Message should be brief pertaining to the actual purpose.

b) **Consistency of the message** – The message should be in consonance with the objectives, strategies, programmes and techniques of the organization.

c) **Try to be a patient listener** – While communicating verbally, the sender and the receiver are expected to be good listeners. They should have patience and positive attitude towards each other.

d) **Organising workshops for inter-cultural interactions** – In big organizations where people from different cultural backgrounds work, it is helpful to organize intercultural workshops where people get an opportunity to understand sensitivities of each other.

e) **Consult before communication** – While communicating internationally, it is helpful to consult the persons who are aware of the background of the receiver.

f) **Simpler hierarchical setup** – In western countries, status barriers are uncommon. Thus, the organizations working in India should try to adapt this type of culture where inhibitions of interactions between the people of different cadres are minimal.

To Overcome Environmental, Organizational and Physical Barriers

a) **Use of modern instruments** – Environmental and physical barriers can be minimized by introducing modern instruments of communication in the organization and establishing a system of continuous maintenance and modernization. The rooms should be designed which are eco-free and as far as possible, other infrastructure, such as furniture, audio-video aids, etc. should be modern.

b) **Effective inside delivery system** – An effective delivery system in an organization is essential so that written messages received in the reception section are promptly and judiciously delivered to the persons concerned.

c) **To overcome technical problems** – The technical problems can be overcome by establishing effective coordination with governmental and municipal authorities.

1.7   PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The American Management Association has identified essentials of effective communication. They are popularly called as the ten commandments of effective communication.

1.   **Clarity of ideas:** Before sending the communication, the sender should first clarify the ideas in mind as to what he/she wants to communicate. According to Terry the principle of effective communication is 'first to fully inform oneself.'

2. **Appropriate language:** The communication should be in simple language. Jargon and technical words should be avoided.

3. **Consistency:** A consistency in the communication should be maintained. One should try to avoid to give too many things at a time.

4. **Adequate information:** Communication should have complete information about the subject under consideration, because incomplete facts may create confusion and irritation.

5. **Proper time:** The communication should reach the receiver at the proper time. A late delivery of communication may lose its relevance.

6. **Draw attention:** The communication should be so worded that it draws attention of the receiver and he/she goes through it with attention.

7. **Touch of informality:** Although official communications are generally formal, a touch of informality here and there may create positive environment. Many problems can be solved amicably through informal channels.

8. **Consultation:** If necessary, one should not hesitate to consult appropriate authority before sending the communication.

9. **Perception of future:** Communicate with future as well as present in mind.

10. **Feedback:** The sender should seek feedback so that future action can be planned.

One should be conscious of these Ten Commandments while communicating others, to be effective and successful. A good communicator is a winner. Receiver orientation is the basic principle of effective communication. .

Check Your Progress C

1. What is meant by barriers to communication?

   ----

2. List any three commandments of effective communication.

   ----

3. List any three physical barriers.

   ----

4. List any three environmental barriers.

   ----

5. Fill in the gaps:

   (i) Mechanical barriers arise due to .... defects in communication instruments.
   (ii) Psychological barrier is an ------------ barrier.
   (iii) Status consciousness is prevalent in .... society.
   (iv) While speaking to people of other nationality, avoid ....
   (v) While communicating, try to be a good --------

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Communication can be defined as "imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium. …The successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings".

The process of communication occurs via sender, message, encoding, channel, has some specific purpose and may be directed to an individual or a group of persons. Encoding transmitted. The channel is the medium through which the communication is sent to its intended receiver(s),. In this age of IT a variety of channels are available. Depending on the need of an organization, an appropriate channel can be selected. After the message emerges from the channel, it is received at the receiver's end. It is then decoded, a process opposite to the encoding, so that it becomes understandable by the receiver. Thus receiver sends the response, which is then interpreted. The interpreted response is called feedback. Thus, feedback is the final result of the communication sent by the sender.

There are some barriers that can distort or prevent communication. It affects effective exchange of ideas, thoughts and information. The communication barriers can be classified broadly into three groups, namely personal barriers, environmental barriers and mechanical barriers. However, these barriers can be overcome by taking appropriate measures. There are ten commandments for effective communication.

1.9 KEY WORDS

Face-to Face Communication: It is enabled by apps such as skype and whatsapp. These days several news channels use this mode on communication, wherein the speakers and viewers can ask questions to each other.

Electronic Communication: In this mode speaker and receiver do not come face-to-face. But they can exchange communication fast. It is based on the use of internet. .

Decoding: It is the method used for converting the encoded message into the readable/understandable format

Feedback: It is the net result of a communication. This is, the sender receives the information sought through communication.

1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A	5.	(i) True, (ii) False, (iii) True, (iv) False, (v) True.
B	4.	(i) Key element, (ii) Message, audience, source, situational, channel,
		(iii) Opposite, (iv) Impression, (v) response
	5	(i) True (ii) True (iii) False (iv) True (v) False
C	3	(i) technical (ii) intrapersonal (iii) feudal (iv) slang (v) listener

1.11   TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain briefly the whole sequence of a communication with appropriate, illustration.
2. Describe briefly different channels highlighting specific utility of each of them.
3. What is meant by feedback? Explain your answer with the help of a suitable example.
4. You are the marketing manager in a company producing cosmetics. Your company is going to launch a new facial cream in the market. Write an e-mail to your marketing team inviting their suggestions so that your product captures the market.
5. What is meant by barriers to communication? Explain different types of intrapersonal barriers.
6. Explain how intrapersonal and interpersonal barriers to communication can be overcome.
7. Describe 10 principles of effective communication.

UNIT 2   TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Structure

2.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain different types of communication ;
- distinguish between verbal and non-verbal communication;
- describe different types of verbal communication;
- differentiate among different types of non-verbal communication and
- explain ways of effective communication.

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Communication is a societal activity; people in society exchange their thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, etc. through different manners depending upon the occasions, context, type of message, background of the interacting persons. For example, when a leader addresses a rally, he/she communicates mainly orally, but just to emphasise certain points, he/she may use gestures or facial expressions also. While teaching in the class, teacher communicates both orally and writing. Some times, agreement with a suggestion is indicated by nod of a disagreement may also be shown by moving head in both direction. A warning may be communicated in different ways, orally, in writing or over by facial expression.

There are all ways of communication. From this, it may be concluded that ways of communication can be broadly classified into two types: 1. Verbal communication and 2. Non verbal communication

Each of these types can be further sub-divided into different types . In this unit, you will read different types of communications.

2.2   VERBAL COMMUNICATION

In verbal communication words of a particular language are used for passing the message. For example, while teaching in a class teacher speaks, writes on the blackboard or some time,, he/she may use audio/visual aids, such as the power-point to explain/emphasise certain points. All these modes come under the category of verbal communication. Thus, verbal communication is of four types.

- Oral communication
- Written communication
- Visual and Audio visual communication
- Silence

Let us learn them in detail.

2.2.1   Oral Communication

In this mode, communication is done through spoken words. It may be face-to-face talk, telephonic talk, video-chat, television, radio or chat over internet, such as Skype or Whatsapp. Personal traits such as clarity of pronunciation, pitch, slang, volume, speed, etc. influence this mode of conversation. It is an effective form of communication.

For example, when the teacher teaches in the class, it is a face-to-face communication. During Covid-19 pandemic, classes were held online using Zoom, Google meet or Microsoft Team platforms. It is also face-to-face verbal communication as the teacher and students could see each other although they were not present in the class bodily. When two persons talk on Skype or Whatsapp, they communicate face-to-face verbally. In telephonic talk, the communication is verbal although it is not face-to-face as they cannot see each other.

Advantages of Oral Communication

There are certain advantages of oral communication mode which are stated below:
- High level of transparency and understanding
- Quick feedback
- Flexibility
- Time and other resources saving
- Helpful for teamwork
- Best for confidential exchange of information
- Quick resolution of disputes
- Receptive and encouraging
- Facial expressions and body language visible

Disadvantages of Oral Communication

But at the same time, there are some disadvantages also of oral communication mode which are stated below:
- Informal and no proof of decision, if any
- Poor personal traits, such as stammering, weaker command on language, slang, non-coherence visible
- Less authentic
- May consume long time in meetings
- Requires great attentiveness and receptivity
- No legal standing

Methods to Improve Oral Communication Skills

1. **Speak in a clear, confident strong voice**: one should speak in a confident, clear and strong voice so that it is audible to everyone in the audience. Keep the pace of your speaking average, not very slow not very fast. While speaking, face the audience.

2. **Be coherent**: One should speak coherently with concentration on your subject only. Try not to be distracted from your subject, try to prevent other thoughts at that time.

3. **Avoid using filler words**: It is better to pause for a second rather than using filler words, such "Yeah", "So", "Um", "Like" frequent use of filler words disturb coherence and distract audience.

4. **Be an active listener**: Verbal communication is a two-way process; you should therefore, be an active listener too. Try to understand a question/query quickly, because it looks odd to ask to repeat the question.

Essentials of Oral Communication

The following are the essential factors that one should follow to be effective in oral communication:

1. **Clear pronunciation:** The message should be pronounced clearly, otherwise the receiver may not understand the words of the sender.
2. **Brevity:** A brief message is considered the most effective factor since receiver's retention capacity is limited in oral communication. The sender should be as brief as possible.
3. **Precision:** The sender should ensure exactness of the message. Only relevant issue should be included in the message and that too with accuracy.
4. **Conviction:** The sender should believe in the facts that are being communicated to others. The oral presentation should evince confidence of the sender.
5. **Logical sequence:** The sender should present the message logically. The points to be spoken first and what should follow to convey the meaning and motives of the sender effectively to the receiver need to be looked into.
6. **Appropriate word choice:** Words are symbols. They have no fixed or universal meanings. The meanings of words at that moment are in the mind of the sender. Therefore, the sender should select the words which are suitable and understandable

to the other party and those which convey exactly the same meanings as the sender wanted.

7. **Use natural voice:** Natural voice conveys integrity and conviction. It is advised to use natural voice in oral communication.
8. **Communicate with right person:** It is essential to know whom to communicate. If you communicate a right message to a wrong person, it may lead to lot of problems. Be sure in recognizing the right person to communicate with.
9. **Do not get guided by assumptions:** Never assume that your listener has knowledge already on the subject matter. You may be wrong many times in such assumptions. You can be good only when you are confident in your message without any omission.
10. **Look for feedback:** When communicating, if you are smart enough in collecting feedback verbally or non-verbally, you can quickly alter the message, if necessary.
11. **Allow to ask questions:** It is important to give freedom to the receiver to rise questions whenever he feels ambiguity or confusion. In a way, the communicator should encourage the receiver to ask questions. Such questions are opportunities to clarify doubts.

2.2.2 Written Communication

In this method, communication is written in words or symbols and is transmitted via e-mail, letter, memo, etc. In recent years, many social media platforms based on Internet are available, where written communication is posted. This mode of transmission is meant for mass circulation, instead for an individual written communication is most commonly used in business and its contents, vocabulary, style, precision and clarity are very important achieving its objective.

Advantages of Written Communication

The written communication has several advantages:
- It is a permanent record and can be used as reference in future.
- The sender can write and re-write to make it error free before sending.
- The presence of the sender and the receiver is not required.
- Sometimes there are complex matters that cannot be talked over in a satisfactory manner. In the written communication, complex matters can be explained.
- Being a written document, there are no chances of misconception.
- The message can be sent to a large number of people .

Disadvantages of Written Communication

The written communication has some disadvantages too:
- It is time consuming.
- If the sender does not have good command on the language, he/she has to struggle to write the message.
- A poorly written communication may create poor impression.
- Feedback is not instant.
- There is no personal touch.

Principles of Written Communication

The following are the six principles of written communication.:

1. *Clarity:* Written communication requires clarity of thought and clarity of expression like using simple words, active construction, avoiding ambiguity and Jargon, using simple sentences, etc.

2. *Completeness*: The writer needs to check the completeness of the message. He should verify whether all questions are answered in the message or not.

3. *Conciseness*: Brevity is very important for effective writing. The writer should include only relevant facts and avoid repetitions.

4. *Consideration*: This principle advocates that the writer should convey respect to the reader in his writing. It is always better to emphasize positive and pleasant facts. The writings should reflect the integrity of the writer.

5. *Courtesy*: According to this principle, courtesy will be observed through promptness in writing and giving replies, avoidance of imitating expressions, sincere apology for an omission and generous thanks for a favour.

6. *Correctness*: According to this principle, the writer should give correct facts in the message. The message should be sent to the reader at the right time and in the correct style.

Written communication is accurate and serves as a permanent record. One can reach a large number of people through this media simultaneously. You can also fix responsibility to the people though this communication. However, written communication is much time consuming and more expensive when compared to oral communication.

2.2.3   Visual and Audio Visual Communication

It has been pointed out above that written or oral communication alone has certain limitations which may create poor impression on the recipient and the desired result is not achieved. In order to overcome this difficulty, many business organization now use various visual aids, such as pictures, progress charts, maps, graphs, etc. These communication pictures in aid to the oral presentation can create powerful impression, as a proverb goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words". Sometimes, presentation of statistics in words alone is not sufficient to create the desired impact. For example, in a meeting of the company directors, CEO wants to emphasise that sales of the company products increased four times over this time last year, his words alone may not get the desired attention. But he/she also displays a bar graph depicting growth in sales figures, it will have dramatic effect on the audience.
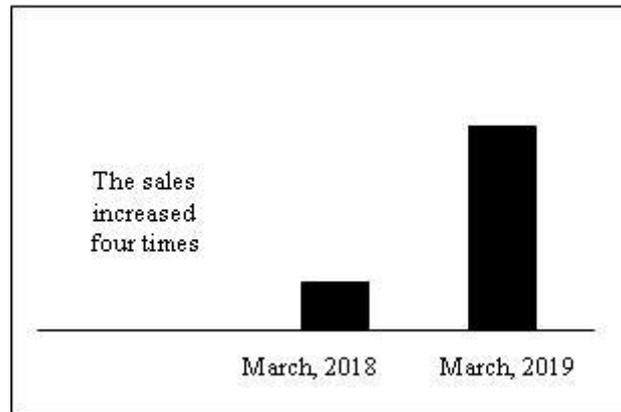
Figure 2.1: Use of Bar graph in Aid of Spoken Words

But in such presentation, care should be taken that there is no contradiction between words and the picture.

Audio-visual communication is a combination of sight and sound. Now big business organizations use this mode of communication extensively particularly for training programmes, publicity, mass education and mass propaganda. Short telephone are frequently used to popularize their production and for advertisement on TV. The working of a new product, such as instrument or software can be effectively demonstrated with the help of this mode of communication.

Advantages of Visual and Audio Visual Communication

There are certain advantages of visual and audio visual communication mode which are discussed below:

- **Popular:** Technological development has facilitated audio-visual communication to become very popular.
- **Supports oral communication**: The use of graphs, pictures and diagrams etc. makes the communication more attractive and easily graspable.
- **Easy presentation of complex data**: Complex data can be presented in an easy and understandable manner in the form of graphs, pictures and diagrams.
- **Helpful for rural clients**: Visual and audio visual communication is very helpful particularly for the rural population where the percentage of the illiterate and semi-literate people is higher. They can understand the information presented visually in a better manner.
- **Saves time**: It saves time as a large number of people can see the presentation at the same time.
- **Decision making is quicker:** As the data are presented visually, they can be understood and followed more quickly. The queries can be clarified during the presentation itself. It makes the decision making process quicker.
- **Helpful in publicity:** Attractive designs influence the people and facilitate publicity.

Besides advantages, there are some disadvantages also which are described below:

- **More expensive:** Preparation of designs, graphs, etc. involves higher expenses because it requires special software and skilled persons.
- **Time consuming:** The process of preparing visual presentation requires more time.
- **Some times more complex:** Presentation of complex data through graphs and bar diagrams may make the presentation cumbersome. As a result, it may be difficult for the audience to understand.
- **Infrastructural problems:** Many institutions and organizations may not have adequate facilities for an effective presentation of video communication. Due to lack of facilities, it may not be possible to prepare high quality of audio-visual aids.

2.2.4   Silence

Although it may look odd, silence is also a mode of communication. It is defined as a way of communication without words, sign of signals. Apparently, this mode of communication may appear to be without any action, but in fact, it is not necessarily inaction. It can mean a person is anxious or fearful of speaking. Silence may be an indication of agreement, dissent, anger or frustration. Sometimes, silence is rather a golden way of communication, because it may save yourself from embarrassment or losing your job. For example, your boss expresses his opinion about a certain event to which you do not agree. If you contradict him, he may feel offended. Under such a situation, silence is the best way of communication. In day-to-day happenings, you come across many such situations, when it is better to keep silence.

Advantages of Silence Communication
There are some advantages of silence communication as given below:

- **Saves from embarrassment:** As mentioned above, silence sometimes may save from embarrassment. For example, if you do not agree with the opinion of your boss, it is better to keep silence rather than contradicting him/her.
- **Self-control:** Silence may be a sign of self-control when somebody talks in an offending language.
- **Attracts appreciation:** Silence may be appreciated by the people under provocative circumstances.
- **Gives time to think:** When faced with a challenge, silence gives the time to think about the possible response.
- **Sometimes more effective:** Abraham Lincoln remarked, "The more a man speaks, the less he is understood". Therefore, as a manager, you should understand the language of silence.

Disadvantages of Silence Communication
There are some disadvantages also of silence communication:

- **May be misunderstood as shyness:** People may get the impression that you are a shy person.
- **May infer as lack of confidence:** People may think that you do not have confidence.
- **People may bully:** By considering silence as a sign of weakness, people may bully.

- **May be misunderstood as sign of intrigue:** Silence may be taken as a sign of intrigue, because it is difficult to judge about a person who keeps silence. You are required to interpret the language of silence.

Check Your Progress A

1.   What is oral communication?

        ------

2.   List three advantages of audio visual communication.

        ------

3.   What is written communication?

        ------

4.   Give two advantages of silence.

        ------

5.   Fill in the blanks.

        (i)   While delivering a lecture, be an active …………. too.
        (ii)   One gets a quick …………. in oral communication.
        (iii)   In written communication, one has the advantage to …………. it before
                sending.
        (iv)   Video …………. the oral communication.
        (v)   Silence is …………. of communication under certain situations.

2.3   NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The communication without using words, such as gesture, body language, facial expression is called non-verbal communication.   Often non-verbal expression supplement the verbal communication, but it may be the only one as mentioned earlier, while giving a speech in a rally, leader often uses gestures, to emphasise certain points. But the teacher may allow a student to enter the class simply by gesture. Non-verbal communication is of the following types:

2.3.1   Body Language (Kinesics)

To communicate with body language is called *Kinesics Communication*. It is a form of non-verbal communication. Kinesics may be defined as the study of the body movements,

gestures, facial expressions, etc. as a means of communication. Kinesics is communicating by body movement without uttering any word. It is perhaps the most often used non-verbal communication. The founder of kinesics, Birdwhistell defined it as "Facial expression, gestures, posture and gait, and visible arm and body movements". He argued that all body movements convey meaning. Some Kinesics movements and their implied meaning are shown in Fig. 2.2.

Tired

Source: Art of living

Sorry

Source:Dictionary.com

Please

Source: Baby Sign Language

Listen

Source: iStock

Figure 2.2: Some Kinesics Movements and their Meaning

2.3.2   Facial Expressions

Face is the most expressive part of the body. The types of facial expressions distinctly reveal happiness, sadness, fear and anger (Fig. 2.3).
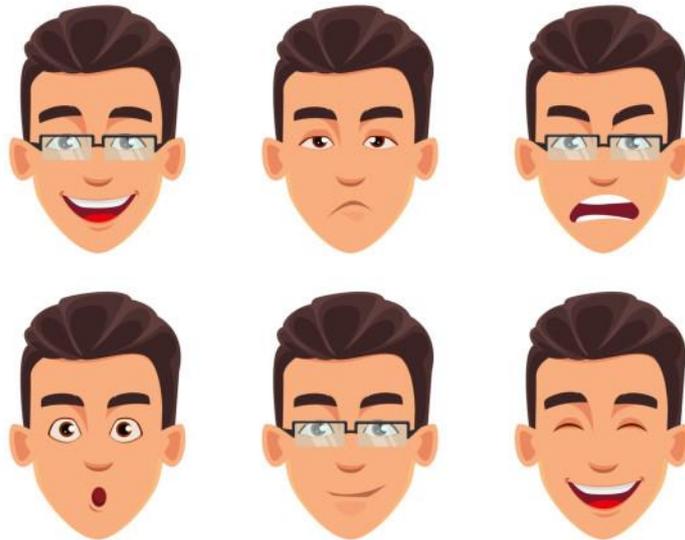
Figure 2.3 : Facial Expressions

The expressions and their meaning are almost universal across cultures. You can see all these expressions on the face of a body on different occasions. From the facial expressions of a speaker, it is possible to infer whether he is confident, excited, angry, shy, confused or tired. A slack face of the speaker may indicate that he is not comfortable with his speech.

2.3.3 Posture

Posture is the way a person stands or sits. The posture of a person while speaking indicates his mental state (relaxed, confident, attentive or impatient). A lot can be inferred about the social standing of a person by observing his/her posture.

An open posture displays friendliness, warmth, and positivity. In open posture, one sits straight, feel spread wide open and palm facing outwards. A relaxed facial expression with good eye contact shows receptivity. On the other hand, a closed posture displays boredom, indifference and negativity. In this posture, one sites in a hunched forward position with crossing legs, showing the back of the hands with clinched hands.

In a confident posture, one walks straight with full height, holding head high, keeping gaze at eye level and pulling shoulders back with relaxed legs and arms. A confident posture is a sign of authority and leadership. Hunched shoulders with incoherent walking indicate lack of confidence and low self-esteem. Some postures are shown in Fig. 2.4.

designed by freepik.com

Source: freepik.com

Figure 2.4: Postures

2.3.4   Gestures

Gesture is another non-verbal communication in which bodily parts of the body particularly hands and face, move to communicate message, either in place of, or in conjunction with speech. There are three main types of gestures: adaptors, emblems, and illustrators. Adaptors are touching behaviour and movement that can be targeted towards the self, objects or others. In general it results from anxiety or uneasiness. Emblems are gestures that serve the name purpose as a word.

A hitchhiker's raised thumb, or the "Ok" sign with thump and index figure making a circle with other three figures sticking up are the examples of emblems.

Illustrators are the gestures to indicate the size or shape of an object. Illustrators are used subconsciously and are largely involuntary. Another example of illustrators is to make gestures while speaking on telephone although the other person is not seen.

2.3.5   Touch (Haptics)

Haptics is the notion of interaction through touch. The non-verbal form of communication, touch, carries ethical and moral implications in educational practice (Simons 2014). A pat by the teacher on the back of the student is a sign of encouragement and it is many times more powerful that a verbal communication. Geng (2011) emphasises that touch can be an

effective tool in order to control students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Haptics is the study of the non-verbal communication that is transmitted via the sense of touch. Touch may be of several types, such as functional, professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth, etc. At the functional-professional level, touch is related to a goal meaning some specific action. But at the social level, socially sanctioned touching behaviour helps initiate interactions. For example, a handshake is a sign of welcome with warmth, but a prolonged handshake may be inappropriate. A pat on the shoulder or back of a junior colleague is a sign of congratulations or encouragement. Thus, touch may have different connotations on different occasions and between people from different backgrounds.

2.3.6 Proxemics

It refers to the study of human space and distance in communication. While taking to an unknown person, we keep a safe distance and if come closer, we feel uncomfortable. But while conversing with a friend, this space, shrinks. Thus, there are different space depending on the relationship between the persons communicating. In general, there are four types of space people use while communicating.

(i) **Public Space (12 Feet or more):** This is the least personal of the four zones, and is typically used when a person is delivering a formal speech. A powerful or high-profile person, such as CEO of a company maintains this distance.

(ii) **Social Space (4-12 Feet):** It extends from 4 feet to 12 feet away from the body. This distance is optimum for professional or social conversation, but not for the personal or intimate communication. Normally while conducting Board's meetings, this space is maintained, because it reduces the possibility of any impropriety. In fact, in the classrooms, this space is maintained which provides better chances of the interaction of students with the teacher. After the class, students interact with the teacher standing four to five feet away, keeping them in the other part of the social zone, typical for professional interactions. However for discussing some personal problem, student may come in the inner part of the social zone of the teacher.

(iii) **Personal Space (1.5 – 4 Feet):** This is also known as "Personal Space Bubble". It starts from the body and extends to four feet. This is the zone for communicating with friends and close acquaintances. Although two persons talking to each other are quite close, still they talk friendly but not intimately. This is the reason why even friends feel uncomfortable if they spend too much time in this zone. In fact, this zone is divided into two subzones. The outer personal zone extending from 2.5 to 4 feet is useful for private conversations. With the people who are not interpersonal close. Professional private conversations usually take place in this zone. The inner-personal zone extends from 1.5 to 2.5 feet and is reserved for the people who are interpersonally close or are trying to be close. In this subzone, people can touch other while talking displaying their closeness.

(iv) Intimate Space

If people come closer than 1.5 feet, they enter intimate zone. This zone is reserved for closest friends, family and intimate partners. A breach of this space can be comforting in same context, but may be annoying and frightening in others.

2.3.7 Appearance and Artifacts

In non-verbal communication appearance also plays an important role, because the first impression on the other person created by how one looks. Appearance has two components: physical characteristics and the artifacts i.e. how the body is covered on adorned. Factors, such as height, physique, shape, weight, etc. contribute to making the physical appearance attractive or otherwise. Although to some extent, one does not have control over these aspects, research shows that an attractive personality has distinct advantage in initiating a communication. Natural physical disadvantage can be some extent overcome by covering the body with attractive clothes and other artifacts, such as jewellery, visible body art, hair style and other political, social and cultural symbols. According to a research, these changes may induce others to get involved in communication.

It is important to wear clothing appropriate to the occasion. Your credibility can be determined by how you dress. Equally important is well fitting and appropriate fitting clothes. When buttons pucker, you draw attention to your body size exceeding your clothes allotment. The choices we make in the colors we wear, clothing, hairstyle and makeup are all a means of nonverbal communication. Colour psychology has demonstrated that different colours can invoke changes in mood. Physiological reactions of others, their judgment and interpretations can be altered by our appearance. For example, if a woman attending an academic conference wears a highly colourful heavy saree with lot of jewellery, she will be an object of attention with ridicule. On the other hand, if the same woman attends a wedding party in a very simple saree without jewellery, again she may be looked down. Thus, one has to choose artifacts according to the occasion. Physiological reactions of others, their judgment and interpretations can be altered by our appearance.

2.3.8 Paralanguage

Any non-verbal action that supports words is called paralanguage, which is also known as vocalic. According to a study, up to 90 per cent of communication is nonverbal. Getting one's message across is made easier through voice inflection, facial expression and body gestures.

The Scottish academic David Abercrombie commented that while we speak with our vocal organs, we converse with our entire bodies. Linguistic scholars have concluded that communication goes far beyond the words we speak and into the realm of inferred messages and vocal qualifiers. "The boundaries of paralanguage," says Peter Matthews, "are (unavoidably) imprecise."

David Abercrombie remarked, "We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies. ... Paralinguistic phenomena occur alongside spoken language, interact with it, and produce together with it a total system of communication. . . . The study of paralinguistic behavior is part of the study of conversation: the conversational use of spoken language cannot be properly understood unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account."

Owen Hargie, Christine Saunders, and David Dickson commented, "Paralinguistics is commonly referred to as that which is left after subtracting the verbal content from speech. The simple cliche, language is what is said, paralanguage is how it is said, can be misleading because frequently how something is said determines the precise meaning of what is said."

For example, while speaking, we may change our tone, accent, pitch, whisper or shout, emphasise certain words. All this comes under paralanguage. Thus paralanguage refers to the non-verbal elements of communication made advertently or inadvertently while speaking.

Often paralinguistics was considered as the "neglected stepchild" in language studies, linguists and other researchers have recently demonstrated greater interest in the field. The rise in recent decades of non-face-to-face communication through email, text messaging, and social media led to the use of emoticons as a substitute for paralanguage.

Not all cultures interpret these [nonverbal](#) cues the same way, which can cause confusion when people of [different backgrounds](#) are trying to communicate.

For example in India, speaking loudly conveys authority and speaking softly conveys submission. But on the other hand, Indians are often perceived as brash for their loudness by Europeans. In India also, people of different regions speak with different pitch.

2.4   EFFECTIVE NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

You have learnt the verbal and non-verbal communications. Let us now learn how the non-verbal communication can be improved.

It is not only what you say that is important, but it is how you say it that can make the difference to the recipients. Nonverbal messages are an essential component of communication in the communication process.

One should be aware of nonverbal behaviour in the communication process for three major reasons:

- An awareness of nonverbal behaviour will allow you to become better receiver of messages.
  For example in U.S.A., one expresses his/her appreciation by showing thumb upward, whereas in India, it is used to request for a lift.
- You will become a better sender of signals that reinforce your idea of communication or intention of communication.
  For example, these days, emojis have become very popular while responding to the messages on Whatsapp, e-mail, etc.
- This mode of communication increases the degree of the perceived psychological closeness between yourself and receiver.
  For example, sometimes an emoji conveys your response to a message better than words.

Bovee, Thill and Schatzmen have suggested the following to improve non verbal communication skills.

A.   Pay close attention to non verbal signals

1.   Avoid giving conflicting signals.
2.   Try to be as honest as possible in communicating your emotions.
3.   Smile genuinely. Faking a smile is obvious to the observer.
4.   Maintain the eye contact your audience expects.

5.   Be aware of your posture and of the gesture you use.
6.   Try to use appropriate vocal signals while minimizing unintentional messages.
7.   Imitate the appearance of the people you want to impress.
8.   Respect your audience's comfort zone.
9.   Adopt a handshake that matches your personality and intention.
10.   Be aware of varying attitudes towards time.
11.   Use touch only when appropriate.

B.   Interpret nonverbal signals carefully.

1.   Be aware that people may give false nonverbal cues.
2.   Remember, few gestures convey meaning in and of themselves.
3.   Consider nonverbal signals in the context of situation and culture.

Check Your Progress – B

1.   What is haptics?

       ------

2.   Give an example when silence may be a preferred way of communication.

       ------

3.   Define paralanguage.

       ------

4.   What is difference between silence and non-verbal communication?

       ------

5.   Fill in the blanks.

       (i)   To communicate by body language is called …………
       (ii)   The four types of facial expression distinctly reveal ………., …..……, ……....., and …………..
       (iii)   In a confident posture, one walks …………., holding head ………., keeping gaze at ………… level and pulling shoulders …………..
       (iv)   Haptics is the study of non-verbal communication that is transmitted via ….......
       (v)   Personal space ranges from …………. to …………. feet.

2.5   LET US SUM UP

Communication may be of two types: Verbal communication and non-verbal communication. In verbal communication, message is communicated in the form of words. It can be in oral, written, video and audio-video and silence forms. Non-verbal type of communication includes body language, gestures, facial expression, etc. Although non-verbal communication often supplements verbal communication, it may be the only one also. Body language is called kinesics Posture of a person while speaking indicates his mental state, relaxed , confident, attractive or impatient. Gesture is another body language using particularly hands and face. Haptics is the study of the non-verbal communication that is transmitted via the sense of touch. Proxemics refers to the study of human space and distance in communication. There are four types of space people follow while communicating: public space, social space, personal space and intimate space. Appearance and artifacts also play some role in non-verbal communication. It is important to wear clothing appropriate to the occasion. Your credibility can be determined by how you dress. Equally important is well fitting and appropriate fitting clothes. When buttons pucker, you draw attention to your body size exceeding your clothes allotment. Color psychology has demonstrated that different colors can invoke changes in mood. Physiological reactions of others, their judgment and interpretations can be altered by our appearance

   Any non-verbal action that supports speech is called paralanguage also known as vocalic. Linguistic scholars have concluded that communication goes far beyond the words we speak and into the realm of inferred messages and vocal qualifiers. Not all cultures interpret these nonverbal cues the same way, which can cause confusion when people of different backgrounds are trying to communicate.

2.6   KEY WORDS

Personal Traits: Some characteristics of a person.

Coherently: Logically connected or consistently.

Precision: Accuracy

Statistics: Numerical facts or data

Contradictions: Inconsistency, i.e. opposite.

Boredom: Weariness, without interest.

2.7   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A   5   (i) listener,   (ii) feedback, (iii) response, (iv) Supplements,
           (v) the best way.

A   5   (i) Kinesics,   (ii) happiness, sadness, fear, anger   (iii) straight, high, eye,
           and back,   (iv) touch   (v)   1.5 to 4.5 feet

2.8   TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by oral communication? Discuss its advantages and disadvantages. How can oral communication skills be improved?

2. Describe visual and audio-visual communication with suitable examples.

3. How does silence facilitate verbal communication? Explain some situations when silence is the golden way of communication?

4. Discuss proxemics. Explain different types of space with the help of suitable examples.

5. "Paralanguage is a non-verbal communication, but it is always used in conjunction with a verbal communication". Elaborate.

UNIT 3   AN INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Structure

3.0   Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- state the concept of business communication;
- define business communication;
- describe the characteristics of business communication;
- discuss the types of business communication;
- explain the importance of business communication and
- describe the role of business communication.

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Business is such an enterprise wherein a number of stakeholders, such as employers/employees, suppliers, retailers, etc. have to work in unison for its success. For effective coordination, they have to share their ideas, challenges and experiences, etc. The process of doing all these actions is called "Communication". In fact, communication is the life-line of an organisation as it keeps on going and makes the organization vibrant.   All living being communicate in their own manner. A baby communicates by crying while the birds communicate by chirping. Thus, communication is a sign of life.

Communication involves two or more persons who exchange their views ideas and plans by face to face interaction, such as in meetings or through media.   In modern times the Information Technology (IT) has revolutionised the process of transmitting communication by making a variety of media available which are much faster and more effective than the older methods, such as letter writing or taking on classical telephone. Now people prefer to use smart phones, WhatsApp, Skype, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. for communicating. These channels are internet based.   The electronic mail (email) has replaced the classical letter-writing as it is not only much faster, but also provides the possibility of sending other documents as attachment files. Furthermore, if the same communication and documents are

to be sent to many recipients, the copy (CC) of the mail can be sent to all by a click of the mouse.

In view of the availability of many new channels of communication, on the one hand persons in an organization or enterprise can communicate more quickly and more effectively, while on the other hand, it becomes the responsibility of the managers of the organisation to make available modern words of communication to its employees and other stake holders.

In this unit, you will learn about the characteristics, importance in various fields of business communication.

3.2   CONCEPT OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

If the communication is related to the business activities, it is called business communication, i.e. when two or more parties communicate in relation to the business affairs, it is termed as the business communication
The concept of business communication is not just a message or a conversation, instead its connotations extend beyond it and cover many aspects. It is a complex thing and in simple words it is the lifeline of an organization. In fact, it covers almost everything in the workplace, communication among individuals and teams, planning of any activity, implementation of the strategy and reporting of the success. Unlike personal communication, business communication always has an end goal.

Rentz and Lentz defined the business communication concept as "transactional, i.e., in business, people communicate with the purpose of completing a task, collecting data for planning a strategy and finally accomplishing the business goals". Meyer and Land stated that "the business communication concept is a way to differentiate between the outcomes that work and those that do not. Perspective of a possible outcome of a strategy is an integral part of the business communication concept".

Louis A. Allen conceptualized business communication in the following manner:

"Communication is the sum total of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding".
.

In the words of *Brennan*, "Business Communication is the expression, channelling, receiving and interchanging of ideas in commerce and industry".

W.H. Newman and C. F. Summer Jr. put it like this: "The exchange of ideas, news and views in connection with the business among the related parties is called business communication".
In his book Communication in Business, *Peter Little* defines communication as follows: "Communication is the process by which information is transmitted between individuals and / or organizations so that an understanding response results."

In the words of William Scott, "Organizational communication is a process which involves the transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of selecting actions which will accomplish organizational goals".

Lumen Learning leaves nothing to chance, saying that business communication "is used to promote a product, service, or organization; relay information within a business; or deal with legal and similar issues. It encompasses a variety of topics including: consumer behaviour, advertising, public relations, corporate communication, research and measurement, reputation management, and event management."

On the basis of the above observations, **business communication** can be defined "**as a process in which business related ideas, plans, strategies, messages, etc. are exchanged among different stake holders, namely manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, buyers and government agencies, etc.**" Effective and speedy business communication is imperative for the success of an enterprise.

Thus "any exchange of information concerning business between two or more stakeholders is business communication".

In this age of globalization and fierce competition, business communication regarding the new products plays an important role in influencing and capturing the markets and attracting the customers. For example, if a company launches a new model of its car, it will have to adopt multi-pronged strategy to popularise its model. Each strategy will be based on extensive use of different modes of business communication. It will use visual media, such as TV for advertising it. At the same time, it will use social media, such as Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. to bring it to the notice of the consumers. On the other hand, it can send e-mails, SMS, etc. to the potential customers.

In recent times, space research is emerging a new field of not only enterprise but also of business. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is also playing a leading role in this field by launching satellites of a number of countries on commercial basis for different purposes, such as climate monitoring, communication, etc. The effective communication network is absolutely necessary in this endeavour for monitoring different stages of the launching rocket. Recently, American space research agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) sent a space craft Perseverance for exploring the surface of Mars (Figure 3.1). From these examples, you can imagine the importance of communication.

Source: Photo gallery of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
Figure 3.1: Perseverance on the Surface of Mars

Another example illustrating immense use of communication is International Space Station (ISS) (Figure 3.2).

The **International Space Station (ISS)** is a modular space station (habitable artificial satellite) in low Earth orbit. It is a collaborative project of USA, Russia, Japan, European Union and Canada. Astronauts visit ISS and stay there for doing research. They are in constant touch with their space research organizations on Earth.

3.3   CHARACTERISTICS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Business communication can be distinguished from the general communication in many respects. Let us learn them.

(i)   **It is formal** – A business communication has a specific goal. It is written in a set of formal format stressing on the purpose of the communication. For example, if a book seller in Chawari Bazaar, Delhi writes a letter to the Modern publishers, Meerut for sending five copies each of the books published for B.Com (Hons.), they will give the list of the books along with their titles and names of the authors.

(ii)   **There are no personal feelings or emotions** - As business communication is not between two friends or family members, instead it is between two persons connected through business dealings, there is no personal feeling or emotion. In practice, imaginary or unnecessary information is avoided. The business related information should be specifically highlighted in a straightforward manner.

(iii)   **It deals with business related matters only** – It is also related to the earlier ones in the respect that in the communication only business related matters are mentioned and no personal information is given. For example, if you want to communicate about the new launch of your product, highlight the features, utility, price, etc. so that the customer may get overall impression about the product.

(iv)   **It is objective** – As mentioned earlier business communication has a certain objective or goal and the whole matter is focused on explaining that particular objective. For example, as given in point (i) the objective of the book seller to procure the books for B.Com and therefore in the letter this objective is focussed by giving the list of the books.

(v)   **It is in a certain format** – As mentioned in point 1 business communication is written in a certain format. The detailed formats of different types of business communications are described in units 6 and 7. You should practice the writing style of the business letter.

(vi)   **It gives or elicits some information** – As business communication is objective, it touches the specific point e.g., if a retailer wants to know the features of a new product of the company then the production manager will describe only those features of the product. If on the other hand marketing manager wants to know the response of

the customers for their new product, the marketing team will give only that information in their response. The information should be complete.

(vii) **It may be kept as legal evidence if some dispute arises in future** – Business communication being formal is a legal document having the signatures of the concerned persons. The dispute may arise in future while transacting the business matter. The letter can be used as a proof if needed in legal cases.

(viii) **In order to elaborate certain points, tables, graphs, photographs, etc may be used** – Business communication includes the relevant information desired. For example, if the marketing manager wants to know the weekly performance of the product in the market the sales person may use table or bar graphs, etc. for giving the relevant information. This may enhance the comprehensibility of the business communication.

A business communication has following characteristics:

1. **Objectivity**: Business communication has a definite object, which is instrumental in initiating it. Thus while sending the communication this object should be the central point. Impractical imaginary, unnecessary and repetitive information should be avoided. Frank, fair and complete information should be provided.

2. **Clarity**: There should be absolute clarity of the language, clarity of the objective clarity of channel and medium in business communication. Any type of ambiguity may defeat the purpose of the communication. For example, if the book seller in the previous example does not give the titles and names of the authors of the books, the supplier will be confused about which books are to be sent. Thus in the absence of the clarity, there may be confusion and the purpose of the business communication will be defeated.

3. **Brevity**: Business communication should be concise, getting to the main points only. Long sentences and big words which may distract attention of the receivers from the mass point should be avoided. The sentences should be written in such a manner that the business related complete information is communicated.

4. **Factual**: A business communication should contain facts and figures. If required, one should not forget to mention important date, place, time etc. For example, a ladies' garments store discovers that its order to the supplier for the supply of ladies gowns has not been complied with. In the letter to the supplier unless the date, order number and catalogue number of the items are mentioned, the supplier will not be able to find which order was not complied with.

5. **Practical**: In business communication, one should be practical while explaining why, how, when and the like queries. Unnecessary detail, impractical and imaginary plans should be avoided. For example, if the retailer in the above case writes to the supplier to supply the items which are not included in their catalogue, it will be an unpractical request and the supplier will be helpless.

6. **Persuasive and courteous**: Language of the communication should be persuasive and courteous. It may persuade an employee to perform his/her duties in a better way. Or a customer to buy a product or service, etc. Courteous attitude generates goodwill towards the organization. For example, the manager of a wholesale outlet finds that a particular retailer has not cleared its outstanding bill and sends a letter to the retailer, it will be helpful if a sentence like this "You are a valued customer of ours and we have always enjoyed our business relations with you. Probably due to oversight our previous bill number XYZ dated 20.1.2019 amounting to rupees 15,000/- is still pending at your end. It will be helpful if you could please clear it at an early date.", is included in the business communication.

7. **Pervasive**: Business communication is the life-blood of an organization. It, therefore, pervades all the sections, namely purchase, manufacture, marketing, sales, finance, personnel, innovation, etc. Furthermore, it percolates through all managerial levels. All the departments of the organization as well as all the levels of the employees are to be communicated frequently. The optimum level of communication enhances the efficiency of the organization.

8. **It is dynamic**: The means, types and tone of the business communication are dynamic and change in accordance with the changing situations. At times, manager has to adopt assertive style, while at other times he/she may be cooperative or even persuasive. A manager has to communicate differently while attending a meeting, taking an interview, briefing a subordinate, negotiating a deal or resolving dispute. Thus business communication is not static; instead, it is dynamic and contextual.

9. **It is continuous**: In fact, in an organization, business communication is a continuous process. After an objective is achieved, business communication is initiated for the next objective in a chain. For example, after the workers have been recruited, next communication will be initiated for their training.

10. **It is circumstantial**: In an organization, the tone and content of a business communication are determined by circumstances. Different marking strategies are adopted at different occasions. Pre and post budget strategies may be followed at the time of the festivals. Obviously, business communications would be different under these two circumstances.

11. **It may be internal or external**: Organisational activities can be broadly grouped into two categories: internal and external. The formal includes primarily the administrative functions, such as production, training, instructions, meetings, planning etc. while the search for the new markets dealing with other companies, government, vendors etc. come in the latter category. Thus, business communication depends on the internal or external activities.

12. **Specific**: At a time, business communications is for a specific activity or purpose. In case multiple objects are included in a communication, it may lose its effectiveness and may distract attention of the receiver(s).

Thus, business communication plays an important role in smooth functioning of an organization. It is an important tool in the hands of the managers of an enterprise, and if used judiciously, it contributes positively to its growth. It is very much useful in communicating with internal employees as well as the external persons. It is a very good tool in educating the stakeholders about the development of the organization.

Check Your Progress A

1. Define business communication.

   ----

2. Write four characteristics of business communication.

   ----

3. Fill in the blanks:

   (i) Communication is the …….. of an organisation.
   (ii) Communication involves………….
   (iii) The classical letter-writing has been replaced by …………..
   (iv) Some of the modern channels of conversation are ………………..

4. Which of the following statements are "**True** or **False**"?

   (i) Business communication is the exchange of business related ideas between two parties.
   (ii) The business communication is informal.
   (iii) The business communication is dynamic.
   (iv) The business communication is always external.
   (v) The business communication is factual.

3.4 TYPES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The management of a business organization has to carry out the activities within an organization and outside the organization. Activities within the organization include : coordination among different departments, planning strategies, scheduling production, guidance and training of the staff, disbursement of salaries and bonus, etc, welfare scheme of the employees and related matters, whereas the activities outside the organization include: procurement, contacting the customers and retailers, coordinating with the government agencies, etc. Thus on this basis, business communication can be broadly classified into two categories, namely internal communication and external communication. Let us learn them in detail.

3.4.1 Internal Communication

Internal communication may be defined as the transmission of information among all the members i.e. all the sections of a business enterprise. For example, the CEO of a company announces bonus to all the employees. He/she will send this information through internal

communication channel. It flows vertically from top to bottom or bottom to top and horizontally and diagonally. Thus internal communication flows in the following ways: Let us learn them in detail.

1.   **Downward Flow:** In this pattern, communication flows from the higher hierarchy to the lower one, i.e. management transmits the work related schedule, planning and other information to the workers. The managers/ supervisors use this mode of internal communication generally for the following purposes:

   - Transmitting work-schedule
   - Informing company's mission and objectives
   - Giving job-instructions
   - Giving feedback about the employees' performance.
   - Instructing about concentrating on a particular area, if necessary.

   Letters to employees, circulars, notices, organizational publications, etc. are some of the examples of the downward communication.
   A downward communication is depicted in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Downward Communication

It may be noted that the communication originates from production manager and reaches the worker through assistant production manager and production supervisor.

2. **Upward Flow:** Communication that flows from the lower level to the higher hierarchy is known as the upward communication. The workers send information pertaining to their problems and performances to the higher-ups. It is a sort of feedback to the instructions sent by the management to the workers. It is used by workers for sending their ideas and suggestions to the management. In a good organization, workers are encouraged to share their problems, ideas, dissatisfaction if any, through upward mode of communication. Thus, managers are acquainted with workers' job feelings and experiences towards their jobs, supervisors, colleagues and if necessary, timely action can be taken.

Upward communication includes performance reports by the supervisors for promotion of the workers, grievance redressal, suggestions, etc. For example, if the workers in the production department feel that their working conditions are not satisfactory, they want to bring it to the notice of the CEO. Sending this communication is an upward flow of communication.

An upward communication is depicted in Figure 3.4.
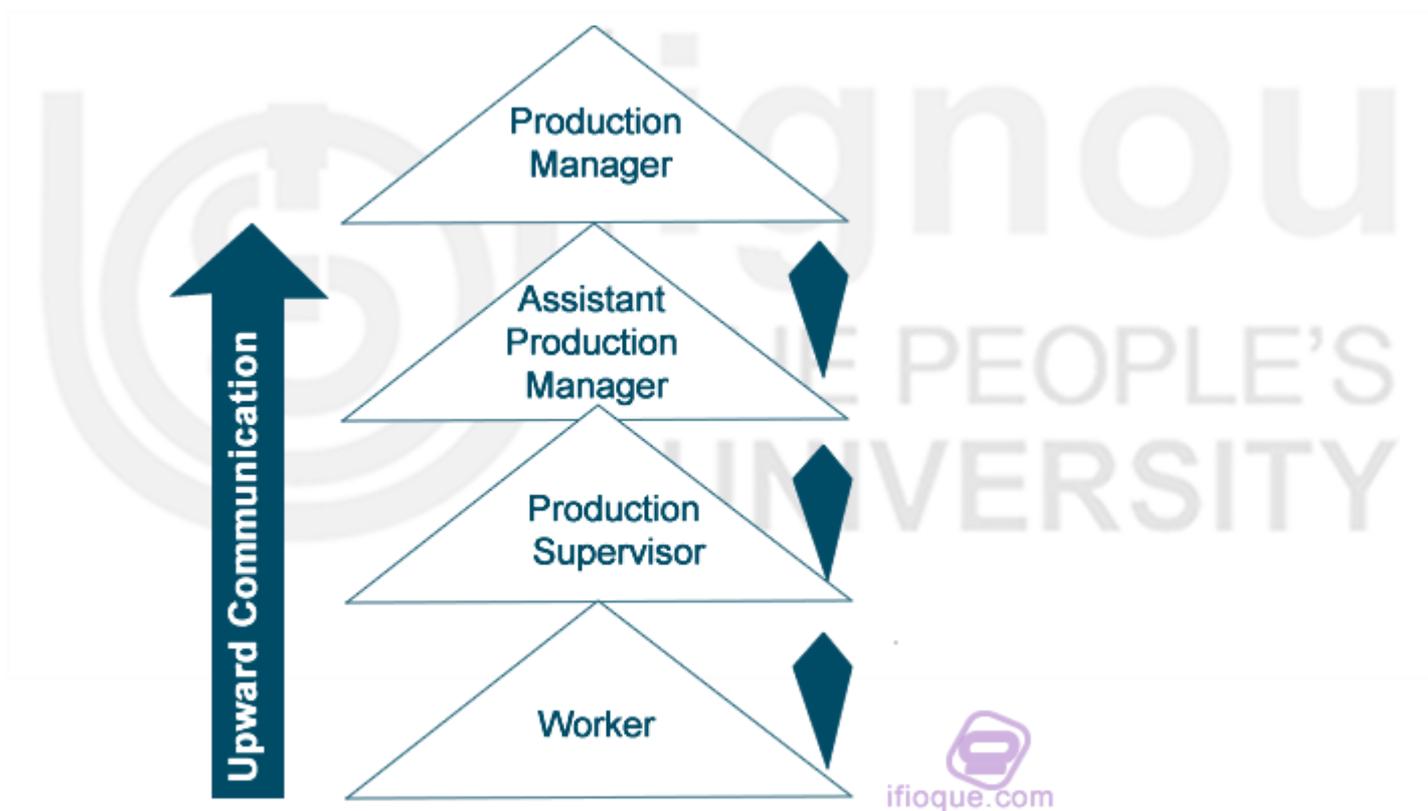

Source : IFIOQUE.com

Figure 3.4: Upward Communication

It may be noted that the communication originates from the worker and reaches the production manager through production supervisor and production assistant manager.

3.   **Horizontal Flow:** It is also known as lateral communication.   In this mode, communication flows among the employees at the same level of hierarchy in an organisation. For example, if a group/team meeting is to be held for planning strategy for a particular project, the members can be involved via video-conferencing. Likewise, if managers of various sections hold a meeting, it is the horizontal communication. There are several advantages of horizontal flow of communication:

- A problem in a group can be sorted out quickly.
- Inculcates team feeling.
- It creates harmonious environment in a group.
- It saves time.
- It encourages knowledge/experience sharing among colleagues.
- Sometimes it helps in resolving inter-departmental problems.

An horizontal communication is depicted in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Horizontal Communication

It may be noted that the communication originates from the purchase manager and reaches the sales manager through production manager and quality control manager or vice-versa. All belong to the .same level of hierarchy.

4.   **Diagonal Flow**: It is the interaction between the manager of one department with the workers of the other department in an organization. For example, manager of the training department communicates with the workers of the marketing department for updating them with the strategy for launching a new product.

A diagonal communication is depicted in Figure 3.6.
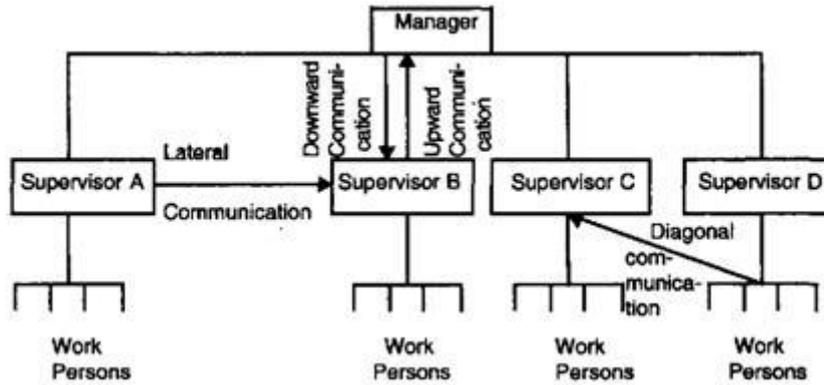
Figure 3.6: Diagonal Communication

It may be noted that the communication originates from the work persons of the department D and reaches the supervisor C, head of the other department.

3.4.2 External Communication

It refers to communication by company supervisors and workers with outside individuals or agencies in connection with company's work. As a general rule, external communication is more formal, and usually it is done on business letter head. For example, manager of the procurement department may communicate with the suppliers, vendors, manufacturers, whereas marketing manager may communicate with retailers. Managing directors may communicate with the Bank Managers for seeking loan for the company or may communicate with the government for raising capital in the form of shares and debentures.

Objectives of the External Communication

Depending upon the type of business, there may be different objectives of external communication. Some of the common objectives are the following:

(i)   **To create positive corporate image**: External communication is used to create a good image of the business organization nationally and internationally depending on its area of operations. A positive image includes its sound financial position, quality of products, integrity in financial transactions, etc. A good image attracts the customers on the one hand and financial institutions give loans, etc. easily. For example, a part of the annual speech of the Chairman, Reliance Industries is reproduced below.

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RELIANCE) - Chairman Speech

Company chairman speech

Dear and Esteemed Fellow Shareowners

At the outset it is my pleasant duty to inform you that recently your Company has successfully completed the Rights Issue of 53124 crore. It was oversubscribed 1.59 times cumulating to an overall commitment of over 84000 crore. With feelings of pride and humility I would like to let you know that this was the largest Rights Issue in the last10 years globally by a non-financial institution and the largest ever in India. Your Company thus created a new landmark in the history of India's capital market.

One of its significant features was that the public portion was also subscribed 1.22times reflecting their widespread and unwavering confidence in RIL's vision of the future. The Rights Entitlement (RE) was actively traded with the prices always being higher than the intrinsic value and these healthy premia were a reflection of the broad-based interest in the Rights Issue. I convey my profuse and profound thanks to all of you both domestic and foreign public shareholders for your overwhelming response to the Rights Issue.----------------
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Source: Business Standard

(ii) **Identification of new markets**: External communication provides avenues for products and services. It establishes a smooth chain of supply of its products to wholesalers and retailers. Thus order from the retailers can be procured directly and the same can be complied with swiftly.

(iii) **Customer satisfaction**: Through external communication, a business enterprise remains in constant touch with the consumers of its products. It can know their likings and disliking and can modify its products accordingly. It can also invite their suggestions about the innovations in the products.

(iv) **Relation with the suppliers**: Production and procurement are interrelated. Thus, external communication helps in indentifying appropriate suppliers and vendors, negotiating terms and conditions and if necessary, procuring the raw material on a priority basis, for example prior to the festive seasons when demand for its products may increase.

(v) **Relation with the government**: External communication helps in maintaining continuous contact with the governmental agencies in connection with the exports and imports and also for seeking necessary clearance for raising capital.

(vi) **Related with financial institutions**: Through external communication, contacts are maintained with the financial institutions, such as banks, insurance companies, etc. in connection with the exports/imports and for seeking loans.

(vii) **Relation with shareholders**: Directors provide information about the performance of the company to the shareholders. They can also contact directors for seeking information. Some quotes from director's dialogue with the shareholders are shown below in the box.

Director's Dialogue with Shareholders

"It's important for the board to understand the company's investor relation program. If management only contacts shareholders when there's a crisis, that's not good."

"After proxy seasons, we (directors) met with major shareholders who voted against our say on pay. Those conversations were useful, and sometimes surprising."

"A director who is meeting with a shareholder should listen more than speak."

"I found that meeting with large shareholders was very informative and healthy. I would tell other directors: Don't be afraid of doing it and don't avoid it."

Source: Catherine Bromilow et al. The Corporate Board, 2014

Thus, external communication plays crucial role in achieving organizational goals, namely high performance, increased sales and hence the profits. It is a very good tool for creating favourable image of the organization.

Check Your Progress B

1. What is internal business communication?

   ----

2. What is meant by vertical communication?

   ----

3. Write four objectives of the external communication.

   ----

4. What is diagonal mode of communication?

   ----

5. Which of the following statements are **"True or False"**?

(i)   Vertical business communication takes place between managers and vendors.

(ii)   Business communication deals with multiple tasks.

(iii)   Horizontal communication takes place among the members of a team..

(iv)   External business communication is used by the directors to inform the shareholders.

(v)   Business communication is used only when dealing with external agencies.

3.5   ROLE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

As emphasised earlier also, business communication plays an important role in the smooth running of a business enterprise. In this era of globalization, effective communication network is an imperative requisite for any business organization. A modern communication system establishes not only perfect coordination among the staff of the organization, but also enhances its ability to make contacts with its clients, seek their orders and comply with the same promptly. Through communication network, a company advertises its products more quickly, identifies new markets speedily, contacts its prospective buyers aggressively, and thus increases its turnover and profits effectively. In this scenario, employees of the company are also motivated, because a part of the increased profits may be given to them in the form of bonus and extra perquisites. Thus, a good communication system keeps everybody in high spirits. Let us learn about some important functions of business communication.

1. Movement of Information: The communication helps in transmitting various types of information within and outside the organisation. The information may be in the digital form or in the form of posters, letters, brochures, etc. The internet based technologies make the movement of information very fast and the management can remain in touch with the employees and also with the outside agencies. Thus, a continuous chain of movement of information is maintained in a vibrant organization.

The success or failure of a business organization depends to a great extent on how fast and effectively a particular information moves. It is of utmost importance that the management is able to share the information with its employees and clientele within a reasonable span of time. For example, if a company launches a new product, its marketing team should be well-informed about the new innovations and features of the product. Likewise, the feedback given by the marketing team should be conveyed to the concerned persons in the shortest possible time. Thus, it is evident that irrespective of the size of a business organization, fast and effective movement of information within the business premises and also with the external stakeholders is of paramount importance. It generates long-term growth, profitability, and sustainability of the business. So, it can be emphasized that out of the various business strategies, the strategies adopted for the movement of the organizational communication should be given desirable importance for ensuring the success of the business establishment in the long run.

Thus, a continuous chain of movement of information is maintained in a vibrant organization.

2. Smooth Running of Organization: As emphasised above, an efficient communication network keeps an organization running smoothly and efficiently. A free, coordinated and efficient movement of information acts like a lubricant which makes the enterprise run frictionless and without any contradictions. An effective vertical and horizontal communication system keeps all the stakeholders well informed and prepared for any new development. Through communication, management keeps the entire establishment active

and motivates the employees to achieve set goals. According to G.R.Terry, "Communication serves as the lubricant fostering smooth operation of the management process".

To elaborate the point, an example may be cited. Suppose a rival company launched a new product in competition. A well-prepared marketing team will speedily analyse its different aspects, such as innovative features, price, etc. and will communicate the information along with its suggestions to the management, which may constitute a team to take stock of the situation and suggest appropriate measures. This planned strategy will then flow downward to the persons concerned and soon company may be in a position to face the competition heads on.

3. Proper Planning: It is related to the previous point. As elaborated above by citing an example that an effective and fast movement of information in an organization helps in better planning. The managers get new ideas from different websites and can plan accordingly to face new challenges. For implementing strategic plans effectively, management relies upon the inputs of a wide range of people including marketing strategists. Management science educator Theo Harimann commented, "Only through good communication a company's policies and practices be formulated and administered."

4. Helpful in Decision Making: In a business organization, after a group of workers have worked on a project, it is found highly beneficial if decisions are made by taking views of a majority of the members. The group-based decisions often offer the potential of achieving better outcomes than the decisions made by individuals working in isolation. Members with diverse perspective views provide the group with a comprehensive view of both opportunities and threats. In a group, the information gathered can be interpreted in different manners and effective communication facilitates to make it possible to discuss and analyse these perspectives from all angles and finally arrive at a decision that appears to be most appropriate. Thus, communication is helpful in decision making process in an organization.

5. Basis of Cooperation: In a business organization, after a group of workers have worked on a project, it is found highly beneficial if decisions are made by taking views of a majority of the members. The group-based decisions often offer the potential of achieving better outcomes than the decisions made by individuals working in isolation. Members with diverse perspective views provide the group with a comprehensive view of both opportunities and threats. In a group, the information gathered can be interpreted in different manners and effective communication facilities make it possible to discuss and analyse these perspectives from all angles and finally arrive at a decision that appears to be most appropriate. Thus, communication is helpful in decision making process in an organization.

6. Basis of Coordination: You are aware that the communication ensures free flow of information and suggestions in an organization. These two aspects ensure coordination i.e. all the persons involved in a particular project are well-informed about the planned strategies for achieving certain goals. Free flow of information vertically as well as horizontally, generates new ideas and plans which are then circulated among all the stakeholders removing possibility of any confusion at any stage. They have a clear understanding of the organizational goals, the line of action and situation of the work. They work in perfect coordination for achieving these goals.

7. Effective Public Relations: Public relations play an important role in developing a favourable image of a company in the eyes of public, investors, consumers and other stakeholders. Public relations experts are hired by business organizations to achieve this

goal. Effective communication is an important component of developing public relations. Two way communications between the organization and the public must flow unhindered. The receiver namely public, investors, employees, wholesalers, retailers and other stakeholders must be impressed upon by the credibility of the organization. It is necessary that the public relations department understands the feedback of its target audience and the same should be forwarded to the concerned departments in the organization. Through effective communication network, public relations department establishes a vibrant communication link between the organisation and its intended target group. Furthermore, public relations department establishes an effective and vibrant liason with the Government departments to follow and implement different policies for the progress of the organization.

8. Effective Leadership: An effective and vibrant leadership is a must for the success of an organization. Fast movement of information contributes a lot to enhance leadership capabilities, because the leaders are well-versed with the latest developments in the field of the organization. Leaders know how to communicate with different stakeholders in an organization including employees, customers, investors, etc. Each group may require a different communication style and leadership style. With the help of a good communication network, good leaders are able to adapt speedily how to communicate with a particular group. Leader identifies the audience and its preferences and interests and then adjusts communication style accordingly. Thus a leader may have to switch from an authoritative style of communication with the employees to an inspiring style with stakeholders.

9. Maintaining Harmony: A harmonious atmosphere in an organization is a key factor in achieving its objectives. Effective communication helps in creating and maintaining harmony. Two-way communication helps to develop mutual understanding and cooperation. As discussed earlier, through downward communication, the management sends its words of appreciation besides instructions, directions, advice to their subordinates. On the other hand, through upward communication, the subordinate staff can acquaint the management with their grievances, complaints, suggestions, etc. In case some misunderstanding arises at some stage, it can be resolved speedily through fast communication. A mutual dialogue creates harmony and trustworthiness in the organization.

Check Your Progress C

1. What is movement of information?

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2. List four roles of business communication.

   ----

3. How does business communication help in maintaining harmony?

   ----

4. How does business communication contribute to effective leadership?

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5. Which of the following statements are "**True** or **False**":
(i) Two-way communication ensures coordination in an organization.
(ii) Public relations department deals only with the public.
(iii) A leader adapts the communication style to the target group.
(iv) Only downward communication keeps harmony in an organization.
(v) Business communication makes decision making process faster.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

The concept of business communication is not just a message or a conversation, instead its connotations extend beyond it and cover many aspects. It is a complex thing and in simple words it is the lifeline of an organization. In fact, it covers almost everything in the workplace, communication among individuals and teams, planning of any activity, implementation of the strategy and reporting of the success. Unlike personal communication, business communication always has an end goal. In this age of globalization and fierce competition, business communication regarding the new products plays an important role in influencing and capturing the markets and attracting the customers.

Business communication can be distinguished from the general communication in many respects. For example, it is formal and there are no personal feelings in it. It deals with business related matters only and has a certain objective. It gives certain information or elicits it. Business communication can be broadly classified into two categories, namely internal communication and external communication. The business communication plays an important role in the smooth running of a business enterprise. In this era of globalization, effective communication network is an imperative requisite for any business organization. A modern communication system establishes not only perfect coordination among the staff of the organization, but also enhances its ability to make contacts with its clients, seek their orders and comply with the same promptly.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Dynamic: Any activity that adapts to the current situation.

Electronic-email: A mail sent through Internet.

Facebook and Twitter: These are the social media platforms on which people can share

thoughts.

Factual: Any documents that can be verified by facts.

Fostering smooth operation: To contribute to an uninterrupted functioning of the

organization.

Maintaining Harmony: To create cordial environment.

Skype: It is a communication app based on Internet.

Whatsapp: It is a communication app based on Internet.

3.8   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A	3	(i) lifeline	(ii) two or more persons		(iii) E-mail	(iv) Whatsapp, Skype
	4	(i) True,	(ii) False,	(iii) True,	(iv) False,	(v) True.
B	1	(i) False,	(ii) True,	(iii) True,	(iv) True,	(v) False.
C	5	(i) True,	(ii) False,	(iii) True,	(iv) False,	(v) True

3.9   TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1.   Define business communication.

2.   Explain main characteristics of business communication.

3.   "Communication" is the lifeline of a business organisation". Elaborate.

4.   Giving suitable examples, explain the following features of business communication

   (a) Objectivity
   (b) Brevity
   (c) Factual
   (d) Practical

5.   Explain how does effective communication system help in creating a harmonious environment in the organization.

6.   You are the project manager of a company which wants to establish a retail outlet in a metro city. Write the draft of an e-mail to be sent to your subordinates inviting their suggestions on four specific points.

UNIT 4   PURPOSE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Structure

4.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

* discuss main purpose of business communication;
* explain how business communication can be used for guiding and counselling;
* describe how optimum use can be made of the resources and
* explain how management can be made more efficient.

4.1   INTRODUCTION

You have learnt the meaning and definition of business communication and its characteristics. As mentioned there, it is the lifeline of an organization and it serves multidimensional objectives. In the hands of the management, it is an important tool, which, when used judiciously, can enhance the efficiency and productivity of the organization. When a business communication is transmitted, its purpose is specific. In this age of globalization, it is imperative to keep the remote workers of an organization abreast with the latest developments in its field of operation. It is necessary to build a positive corporate image of a business enterprise. The Information Technology has revolutionised the way business communication is sent. Now business houses try to remain in constant touch with their potential customers. To achieve this, a number of modern technologies have been launched by IT giants and business enterprises are taking full advantage of this. In this unit, you will learn about all these developments.

4.2   PURPOSE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

 In the previous unit, you read about the concept of business communication and how it is integrated with the functioning of a business organization. In this age of globalization, it is beyond imagination that business can be carried out without an effective and uninterrupted communication between the top hierarchy and sub-ordinates, between the organisation and

the outside agencies. Business organizations with a large number of employees spread over a large part of globe have to establish and maintain an efficient and fast mechanism of business communication. The purpose of business communication is as follows:

1.Giving Information: For the success of an enterprise, it is imperative that staff is kept well informed with the latest developments, internally and externally. It is achieved through business communication. Thus, giving information is one of the main purpose of business communication. There should be free flow of information from top to bottom and vice versa. A timely transmission of the information to the concerned person or section can put the things right well in time and business enterprise can be saved from losses. For example, if a person dealing with marketing receives a complaint about the quality or malfunctioning of a product manufactured by the company, he/she would immediately communicate the information to the higher-ups in the management, who would transmit the information to the production department and the information would percolate to the lowest level. Thus, defect in the product in question would be set right well in time and the company would be saved from losses. Some time back, a general complaint was received about the battery of a branded smartphone and the company had to replace the defective batteries. Another example can be cited of Toyota vehicles. The company introduced "The Five-Why Process" for solving the manufacturing problem. The intent of the process is to reach the root cause of the problem and not merely the superficial symptoms are corrected. The CEO of the electric car manufacturing company TESLA, Elon Musk says that he owes his success to a 3-step problem solving trick. It works like this: First, you identify and define your assumptions; then, you break down the problem into its fundamental principles; and lastly, you create new solutions from scratch. In such situations, business communication plays an important role by sending the information to the concerned sections.

2. Giving Suggestions: For smooth running of an organization, it is necessary that new ideas and plans should be shared. Thus, another important purpose of business communication is giving suggestions and soliciting suggestions. Even a worker working at the lowest echelon may have an innovative idea and if solicited, he/she may give a worthwhile suggestion. In many organizations suggestion boxes are placed at some places inviting suggestions of the employees and the customers. The workers are being encouraged to communicate their suggestions, which inculcates sense of belonging in them. Thus, suggestions and ideas should flow from top to bottom and bottom to top. Two examples of inviting suggestions from the employees and customers are shown below:

Example 1: Suggestions Invited from the Employees

In our ongoing efforts to cut production costs, we turn to you who are closest to the production process to make suggestions on how we can be more efficient without compromising quality. Please place your written ideas in the box provided in the break room. We will select the five best suggestions and give those who submit them gift certificates for dinners for two at the Springfield Inn. We will appreciate your best ideas to help us with this problem.

Source: Writeexpress https://www.writeexpress.com/sugges10.html

3. Motivation: Business communication is considered as one of the effective methods by which managers can motivate their subordinates and workers. As mentioned above, if workers are invited to communicate their ideas, they develop a sense of self-worth and are motivated. Good managers know how to lace their communication with right amount of appreciation and recognition so that the receiver is motivated to give his/her best. Sometimes appreciating good work motivates the workers much more than giving them monetary benefits. CEO of Apple, Steve Jobs remarked, "My job is not to be easy on people. My job is to take these great people we have and to push them and make them even better".

A sample of motivation letter is reproduced below:

Sample Motivational Letter To Employees

Dear all,

I am glad to inform you that that the Chicago sales team has surpassed the gross margin revenue projected for the year 2019. At the beginning of the year, the company set projections for each regional team in the west US.

I need to acknowledge that as a result of the mentorship provided by the sales team to the regional managers they have won big deals with higher gross margins. As we had promised, all of the winning teams are to be awarded for their achievements.

Thirty-five members of the Chicago sales team will go for a retreat in Germany, which the company has gladly accepted to finance. Also, due to their exemplary performance, each of the team members will receive seven per diems while on the Germany adventure.

This initiative has the support of Mr. Hesitings, the company's regional manager. The manager also believes that doing so will motivate other teams to perform even better in the coming period and receive even greater rewards.

I am glad to inform you that the Germany trip will take place on the 5th of September and it's expected that the team members will be back to work on the 14th of September.

In their absence, the New York team will cover their tasks as well as any urgent and arising matters.

I also take this time to not only acknowledge the success of the Chicago team but to appreciate the hard work that each team has put in place to realize their target.

Mr. Holdings has also congratulated the Miami, San Diego and New Jersey team for their exceptional performance. In so doing, he has awarded each of the groups atwo day paid leave.

Kind regards,

Signature

James Brown
senior sales manager

4. Training: Training the employees to acquire proficiency in specific skills is an integral part of business organization and communication plays a vital role in this regard. The relevant information is collected from different websites and after due dissemination, the same is communicated to the trainees for their vocational training. It involves lecturers, demonstration, practical and discussion and communication is integral to each of these. Furthermore, queries of their trainees are collected through communication and their level of achievement are also assessed through it. In fact, communication is an important link between the trainers and the trainees.

Check your progress A

6. Write three purposes of business communication.

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7. How does business communication help in motivation?

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8. Give an example of guidance by the use of business communication.

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9. Give examples of increase in management efficiency by the use of business communication.

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10.   Fill in the blanks.

(vi)   Communication serves ……………. objectives in a business organization
(vii)   There should be ……………. of information from ……………. and ……………..
(viii)   Inviting suggestions from worker ……………. sense of ……………..
(ix)   Good managers know how to ……………. their communication with right amount of ……………
(x)   The training material can be collected from …………….

5. Guidance and Counselling: Guidance and counselling are two activities that are part of an institution, which may be educational or training imparting establishment of a business enterprise. Guidance is a process of helping an individual to discover and develop his potentialities, thereby making optimum contribution to the organization he is working for. Counselling is specialized service of guidance, wherein a counsellor is in direct touch with an individual to offer him necessary assistance to change his attitude and behaviour and control his emotions. Thus, guidance may be for an individual or a group of trainees, whereas, counselling is directed to an individual modulated to his/her needs. In other words, guidance is broader and comprehensive, whereas counselling is narrow and individualistic. In the modern age of business environment, guidance and counselling have become an integral part of an organization from providing the needed information and assistance to improve the understanding of self and to adapt to the new environment. Business communication in this regard is very useful, because the required information and assistance can be communicated speedily to the individual or a group of employees, the subordinates of a business enterprise often need guidance and advice of the superiors for better job performance. Business communication is a convenient medium for keeping the workers in touch with their superiors continuously and there can be speedy communication of directions and orders.

6. Appreciation and Warning: Appreciation and warning are the two apposite sides of the strategy followed by the management in a business organization; if the former does not work, then only the latter is used.

In fact, appreciation is related to persuasion and motivation discussed earlier. A business communication by the manager laced with a few words of appreciation creates a feeling of

self-worth in the worker and he/she is motivated to work harder. It requires minimal efforts, costs practically nothing and does not need much time. Employees appreciation creates harmonies atmosphere at the work places.

Thus, it may do wonders if you use words such as "Great Work", Thanks for your efforts" in your business communication, to your subordinates.

Warning is the last resort adopted by a business communicator. Unlike persuasion, motivation and appreciation, strong words are communicated in warning. It is used only when other types of communication do not have the desired effect on an errant employees. Warning may have different connotation, such as, "a word of caution", "to admonish", "to advise strongly". To rebuke some are with a threat of punishment in case of repetition", etc.

7.Resource Utilisation: Another important purpose of business communication is "resource utilisation". It is a challenge for any industry to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of resource utilization. The term "resources" can refer to a number of different types of assets, but most important of these is the people, i.e. the workers. In the context of business communication, resource utilization means that the workers are working on the projects that are relevant to the company's strategic goals. The skills and capabilities of the workers should be properly and adequately recognized and then utilised. Often organizations over commit their people resources, which affects their reputations and growth. A particular worker should be assigned that project only, on which he has sufficient skill and expertise. Besides, the projects to be undertaken, it should be identified well in time, so that your people resources do not remain unutilised or under utilised. Business organizations have to strive continuously to improve the planning and scheduling of their resources thereby increasing productivity at lower costs. During the production process, unexpected events may derail the original plan. For example, machinery failure, under-or over estimation of the processing time, new project arrival, delay or shortage of material, shift in priority, etc. are some of such unforeseen contingencies and for the optimum resource utilization, it is always better to keep some alternative plans ready.

8.Increases Management Efficiency: The management in an organization is just like heart in the human body; if it pulsates rhythmically, all sections in the organization also discharge their functions in tandem. As mentioned in the preceding unit, information technology has revolutionised the way and speed of communication. Now many apps and software are available, both commercially as well as in public-domain (free of cost) which are routinely used in the organizations to increase management efficiency through instant communications. Information technology may be extensively used for this purpose. Some of these technologies are described briefly here.

Electronic mail (Email): It has become widely used method by the management to communicate with the staff. Auto-reply, out of office reply, and other settings make this mode of communication instantaneous. Spam, filters, remove unnecessary messages. Employees are encouraged to write descriptive subject lines (which is highlighted in the incoming main) so that the manager can take immediate action, if necessary.

Smart phones: The latest smartphones incorporate almost all the features of the computers and the managers can be in constant touch with their employees via number of apps, such as Whatsapp, Skype, Facebook, Instagram, etc. even when they are out of office. Some companies have developed their own apps and managers can control and scrutinize the latest

development in the fields of their interest. They can view documents on their phones and send the reply instantaneously.

Project management software: some companies have developed project management software, such as Microsoft Project, Basecamp software and Zoho Office Suite. The use of this software increases the efficiency of the management. By the use of such software, project managers can plan project schedules, assign resources, monitor progress, keep a tab on the budget and analyse the workloads. The project managers is in constant touch with whom he/she can share all the information, which saves time and paper work.

Collaborative software: This software is also known as collaboration software or groupware. Similar software has been developed by many other companies marketing under different names. The use of this software has been developed by many other companies marketing under different names. The use of this software by managers enables to share, process and files, documents and other data among several users. Thus on a specific issue, management can direct the concerned employees to take immediate action. It rules out communication gap and saves times.

As mentioned earlier, IT has revolutionised the process of communication and so many softwar4e, based on internet are available; the company can choose a software according to its specific needs.

4.3   COMMUNICATION FOR IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE OF REMOTE WORKERS

In this age of globalization multinational companies have their business activities in many countries, and therefore, their workforce is spread over the whole world. Remote teams are the future of business world. According to the Global Mobile Workforce Forecast Update, more than 40% of the world's working population will be mobile by 2022. In the developed countries like U.S. and Europe, this figure can soon reach 75%.

In this scenario, business communication acquires a very important place. All this workforce is expected to be well informed about the strategies, production as well as marketing and the new products of the company so that they can interact with their clients with confidence. Thus through business communication, these workers can be in regular touch with the top management. Of course there will be many challenges like coordinating across time-zones, overcoming language and cultural barriers, etc. Only an effective business communication can coordinate all these factors to make the remote teams work in cohesion.

Following steps are taken for sharing of knowledge with remote workers:

1. **Collecting information:** Each member of the team is encouraged to collect the new information relevant to their project from various sources including public domain websites. The information collected in this way is transferred to the central dashboard where it is updated. This is done continuously.
2. **Filter and sorting out:** Not every information so collected is relevant and useful. A central team filters this information and transfers the relevant information to another pool.

3. **Sharing of information:** The authorised persons, team leaders, managers and strategists of the company are allowed to access this central pool of information freely. There is an inherent understanding that useful information would be shared with other members of the team. In this way, the latest information percolates to the lowest cadre if necessary.
4. **Use of digital tools:** Now many tools, such as Slack software, Anders Pink, Google Docs, Trello are available, some of which are in public domain. These tools can be used effectively for sharing information efficiently.

4.4   COMMUNICATION FOR IMPROVING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND RETENTION

An important purpose of business communication is to improve customer satisfaction which results in customer retention. An effective communication makes it possible for the customers to give their feedback about the products of the company. If there is any complaint, it can be addressed quickly enhancing customer satisfaction. The satisfied customers are not only retained by the company but they also spread a positive image of the products of the company in their community, thus increasing the number of customers. The second aspect is that the employees who face customers are well equipped with the required information and are in a position to satisfy the customers.

The following systematic steps are used for improving customer satisfaction:
1. **Seeking feedback from customers:** This is an important step. By conducting regular surveys, feedback of the customers is collected about the products of the company.
2. **Follow-up action on the feedback:** The company should act on the feedback and carry out the sought for innovations and modifications in their products/services. At the same time, efforts should be made to improve the maintenance and grievance redressal services.
3. **Follow-up with the customers:** The customers should be apprised with the changes/improvements made in your products/services on their recommendations. By this action, customer will feel elated and may develop an emotional bond with you.
4. **Offer multi-channel support:** The customers should be encouraged to interact with your public relations department through multi-channels, such as Skype, WhatsApp, E-mail, phone, etc.

4.5   COMMUNICATION FOR BUILDING A BETTER COMPANY IMAGE

For attracting the customers around the company's brand, it is necessary that the company has a positive image in the society. A number of examples can be cited when customers go by the name of the company because they are confident that its products are of satisfactory quality. Business communication plays a crucial role in building the positive image of the company. In this digital age, various media platforms are accessible which are used effectively by a business organization to create its positive image. Besides, consumers can be directly contacted via mobile channels for seeking their feedback about the products – services of the company so that the complaints, if any, can be addressed speedily. All these efforts contribute to developing a positive image which results in higher turnover.

Following five steps will help to build a better image of the company**:**

1. **Presence on social media platforms:** The company should utilise various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Linkedin page or Tweeter, because many individuals or groups of people access these platforms to get acquainted with new consumer goods and services.
2. **Creating own website:** Now many companies have their own websites where they promote their new products and services. Your website should be attractive, dynamic, and contain updated industry news or company information. It should be updated regularly. A provision should be created on the website where visitors can leave their reviews. This website should be just like a window of a big departmental store which is brushed up daily and is decorated at the time of festivals.
3. **Positive corporate culture:** In this age of globalisation, good corporate image also plays a crucial role in establishing business partnership. Multinational companies prefer to deal with those companies that have good corporate image. Thus, it is crucial that you treat with your employees with fairness, because they spread word about your reputation, good or bad.
4. **Farsighted leadership:** Develop a farsighted leadership who can lead their teammates from front. These leaders should be capable of promoting your products/services aggressively through different means, such as SMS, E-mails, webinars, industry news, analysis, research, white papers, etc. This all helps in building a positive image because it educates the audience and not just solicits them.
5. **Active executives:** The executives of the company should participate actively in business conferences, journalistic interviews, industry roundabouts. When the people see CEO of a company at a conference, they are impressed.

4.6   COMMUNICATION THROUGH MODERN TECHNOLOGY.

Now, it is well known that the new generation of customers is tech-savvy, spending their much time on smartphones. If a business organization intends to engage with this generation, it has to adopt all the means to make maximum utilization of these mobile-oriented techniques.   An effective infrastructure of business communication is capable of harnessing all these avenues and spread the message about their products and services.

In fact, in these times emails, intranets, etc. have become outdated. In its place, new software solutions have been developed which make it possible for the companies to apprise the potential customers about the latest consumer goods and services. Business communication, in particular, has seen some of the greatest advancements due to technological developments.

Some of these technologies and their utilization in business communication are the following:

1. **Smartphones and Apps:** The development of smartphones has altogether revolutionized business communication. Many companies and even the retail stores have developed their own "Apps" which can be downloaded on the smartphones and the customers can interact with the concerned companies/retail stores directly, search for their required items and place order. The companies/retail stores can also send the information about their new products/services and offers to the customers directly**.** Some examples of the companies and retail outlets using their own apps are:

    Amazon: Amazon has become a household name, and its mobile app has a great deal to do with the status it has established.

Domino's Pizza: The company uses tracking technologies to inform customers about the status of their pizza order – whether it is on the preparation stage or in the process of delivery.

easy.Jet: It is a British airline that enables travellers to manage their flights directly on its app.

iFood Assistant: It is Kraft's corporate mobile app that offers a wealth of dish recipes based on Kraft food products.

L'Oreal Makeup Genius: The cosmetics company L'Oreal ventured into the augmented reality (AR) space to give customers a chance to try out its products through the Makeup Genius app.

Midland Medical: As a distributor of medical supplies, Midland Medical needed to speed up its inventory receiving process, so it could respond to customers' queries with just a quick look at its database.

MLB.com: The app allows users to watch and listen to the games in real time. Users can also check the app's archives and follow their favorite team as the app shares the latest news, game standings, and other stats. The app caters to Android, BlackBerry, and iPhone users with the same functionalities across platforms.

MY ASICS: It is an equipment and apparel company which offers customized training plans and helpful content that users can take advantage of. In turn, the company receives valuable insights and feedback about the kind of products or services that fitness enthusiasts want.

thetrainline: The thetrainline mobile app is for users who prefer to book train tickets in advance. Once they have a confirmed booking on the app, they can just pick up their tickets across UK train stations. The app also gives users a chance to find the best fares and save their favorite journeys to make it easy for them to book their next trip.

2. **Chatbots:** This device is able to communicate with the customer during his/her browsing the website of the company. It can deal with thousands of complaints and queries at a time and come up with intelligent answers. They are much more efficient and are more tenacious than humans.

3. **Artificial Intelligenc:** The artificial intelligence (AI) based assistance, such as *Alexa, Siri,* etc. is the new-age business communication technology. It is expected that in the coming years, AI communication may replace up to 50 per cent of human communication jobs worldwide. It is fast, reliable, and can leverage user behaviour. Interestingly, AI is capable of mapping the brain of a user, utilizing the stored patterns, and giving a better user interface.

4. **Google's Duplex:** Google launched two versions of Duplex. The first Google I/O 2018, Duplex can make phone calls for you to complete tasks like set up a dinner reservation, book an appointment or check business hours. If you say, "Hey, Google, book me a reservation at ABC Restaurant," Duplex will leap into action to place the call on your behalf. The second Google expects Duplex on the web to be available later this year in the US and UK on Android phones to assist with rental car bookings and movie ticket purchases.

5. **Blockchain:**. It is like AI and stores all the data of the communications and transactions (B2B, B2C, etc.) in a single database. This way, digital business information is merely distributed/communicated rather than being copied.

6. **Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) Technologies:** The application of these technologies has been recently extended to business communication. With the

use of these techniques, AR and VR tours of the potential customers can be conducted for the businesses.

7. **Internet of Things (IoT) Technology:** The IoT is based on the concept that all the digital devices (ipad, smartphones, etc.) can be interconnected with the help of internet using mediums such as WiFi, Bluetooth, WiMax, and so on. This helps businesses enterprises communicate worldwide, with their own employees or partners, firms, and customers.

8. **LiFi Technology:** It is a recent technology that uses light emitting diodes (LEDs) for transmitting signals. It is anticipated that with LiFi, it will be easier to have fast Internet connectivity which will change the way businesses communicate. Furthermore, LiFi is also eco-friendly, as it uses visible light from LEDs. It is labelled as a "green technology".

From the above description, it is evident that in coming years, the way business communication is conducted will undergo revolutionary changes and the business enterprises have to keep pace with these changes to remain in the main stream. The current pandemic has led to drastic changes in the communication methods at the workplace as well as with the outside world. Now virtual or online conferences, often known as webinars have become common to interact with the employees and the outside world. New platforms like 'Zoom', 'Google Meet', etc have been made available to individuals and organizations.

Check your progress B

1. Name two digital tools that are helpful in improving the knowledge of remote workers.

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2. Name three IT methods used for building a positive image of the business organization.

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3. Name three strategies used for the retention of customers.

   ----

4. Which of the following statements are **True** or **False** ?

   i) An effective communication keeps the remote workers informed about the goals of the organisation.
   ii) Customer satisfaction and retention is an important purpose of business communication.
   iii) Business communication does not contribute to building a better company image.
   iv) The new generation is tech savvy.
   v) Current pandemic has made new channels of communication available.

4.7   LET US SUM UP

Business communication plays a very important role in the smooth running of an enterprise. A business communication has a specific purpose and is transmitted to a particular person or a group of persons, these are different purpose of sending a communication. Giving information to the employees of an organization is one of the main purpose of business communication. For example, a timely information about the quality or defect of a product to the persons concerned can save the manufacturing companies from losses. Another important purpose of the communication is giving a soliciting suggestions. It is considered as one of the effective methods by which managers can motivate their subordinates and workers. A communication laced with right amount of appreciation can motivate and the workers to feel self-worth. Training of the workers is another important purpose of the communication. The relevant information is collected from different websites and after due dissemination, it is communicated to the trainees. Guidance and counselling are two activities that are part of an institution. Communication in this regard is very useful and the information is transmitted to the individual or group of employees.

Appreciation and warning are integrated; if the former does not work, the latter is used as the last resort. Warning may be communicated in different connotations from a word of caution to a threat of punishment. Business communication is used for optimum utilisation of the resources. Through communication, planning and scheduling of the resources can be planned well in advance thereby increasingly productivity as lower costs. Unexpected events can also be resolved speedily through communication.

The IT has revolutionised the process of communication and a number of communication technologies are available which increase efficiency. Internet based technologies, such as e-mail, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Skype are effectively used these days. Some software, such as project management and collaborative software are not routinely used by the management to share the documents, files and other data among the team members.

An effective business communication is imperative for keeping the remote workers informed about the new developments. For a successful business, the organization needs a positive image in the society. For building the positive image, company uses various digital media platforms. The new generation is tech savvy spending their much time on smartphones. The big organizations are making maximum utilization of the mobile-oriented techniques for popularising their products and service. Some of these techniques are: personal apps, Chatbots, Artificial Intelligence, Googl's Duplex. Blockchain, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) Technologies, Internet of Things (IoT) Technology and LiFi Technology. It is expected that in coming years, many new technologies will be available for business communication. The Covid-19 pandemic has made new digital platforms available for virtual meetings.

4.8   KEY WORDS

Information Technology: Internet based different communication methods.

Counselling: Specialised assistance by an expert to an individual to manage his thought, behaviour and emotions.

Appreciation: To recognise and admire the contribution of a person.

Resources: Different components for running the functioning of an organization. They may be living, such workers and managers, or non-living, such as machinery, raw material etc.

E-mail: Internet based method of sending and receiving messages.

Project management software: A software developed by Microsoft companies. It is used for planning and implementing different activities in a project.

Collaborative software: A software similar to project management software, it is used for sharing, processing and managing the files in a group.

Zoom: A digital platform for virtual meetings.

Google Meet: A digital platform for virtual meetings.

4.9   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A   1.   (i) Multidimensional,   (ii) Free flow, top to bottom, vice-versa,
              (iii) Inculcates, belonging,   (iv) lace appreciation,   (v) Websites.

B   4.   (i) True   (ii) True   (iii) False   (iv) True   (v) True

4.10   TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1.   Describe any four important purposes of business communication giving suitable examples.

2.   "Soliciting suggestions from workers inculcates a sense of belonging". Elaborate giving appropriate illustration.

3.   "Appreciation and warning are the two inter-related strategies of the Management" Explain in the context of business communication.

4.   Discuss how business communication is useful in the optimum utilization of the resources.

5.   Discuss how business communication increases management efficiency.

      (a) Explain how knowledge of remote workers of an organization is improved.
      (b) Discuss different measures used for building a positive image of an organization.

6.   Describe modern technologies used for business communication.

UNIT 5   CHANNELS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Structure

5.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

*   state the meaning of channel of communication;
*   classify different channels of communication;
*   distinguish between formal and informal channels of communication;
*   explain channels on the basis of direction of communications;
*   discuss channels for different ways of expression and
*   describe channels at different level of business organisation.

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In Unit 4, you learnt about the purpose of business communication, which includes giving information, improving knowledge of remote workers, improving customers' satisfaction, building a better image of the company, etc. In this unit, you will read about different types of channels for business communication in detail.

Communication channel is the medium or means through which the message sent by the sender travels to the receiver. For example in Television, you must be seeing and hearing different events on different channels. Channel combines audio signal with a video signal; together and they convey the message to the audience. In radio, channel has only audio signal. Similarly while speaking or writing, we use a channel to convey a message. Thus, television is an audio-video channel, whereas radio is only a audio channel. There are other channels, such as telephone, voicemail, public address system, Invoice Internet Protocol (VoIP). There are only written channels, such as letters, memorandum, invoices, blogs, tweets, e-mails etc. The choice of the channel depends on type of communication , i.e. whether it is verbal or non-verbal; if it is verbal, whether it is face-to-face or audio, and if it is non-verbal, whether it is written in the form of hard or it is in the electronic form. It also depends on the size of the business organization and areas of its operations; i.e. whether it is big or small, national or multinational. Depending on all these factors various types of

channels are available. The Information Technology has made various channels and communication platforms available depending on the need of the business organization. An appropriate channel for communication can be selected. The choice of the channel in business communication has important ramifications, because if a proper channel is not selected and the message is not delivered in time or it is delivered in a distorted form, business organisation may suffer not only financial losses, its corporate image may also be blurred. In this unit, you will learn the factors influencing choice of a channel and classification of channels.

5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The following factors help in choosing a channel for the communication:

(i) **The nature of message**: Before choosing a channel, it is utmost important to critically assess the nature of the message. In this context, think over the following points:

- Is the message formal or informal?
- Is it necessary to keep a record of the message for future reference?
- Is it urgent?
- Is it confidential or sensitive?
- Is it general or specific?
- Is it for an individual or a group?
- Is the individual a peer, a higher-up, or someone you lead?
- Is it for your team or the whole company?
- Is it one-way or two-way communication, i.e.is a response expected?

After considering the above factors, it becomes easy to choose a channel. For example, a formal business communication whose reference may be required in future and whose response is required, should be sent through a verbal channel preferably in the written form. But in case, it is urgent also, an electronic mail (e-mail) may be better. If it is not formal, but is urgent, a Whatsapp message can be sent or a telephonic talk will also be ok. Another example may be cited here: a marketing personnel of the company is negotiating the price of an instrument with a buyer, who is insisting on a price lower than the quoted price, for clinching the deal, marketing personnel needs a nod from his manager. Therefore, he would like to provide detailed information to his manager. At the same time, he would require feedback from the manager for further negotiations. In such a case, a video-chat may be preferred. In case it is confidential and is for one person, a telephonic conversation will be most appropriate.

(ii) **Purpose of the message**: While considering purpose of the communication, following factors should be considered

- Is it for motivation?
- Is it for sharing of information?
- Is it for socialisation?
- Is to control your subordinates?
- Is it for the training of the staff?
- Is it for placing an order for the grocery?

After considering these points, one may choose an appropriate channel. For example, if it is for the motivation or for the training of the staff, a face-face channel, such as audio-video channel would be preferred. In case it is just for sharing an information, a telephonic conversation may be preferred. But if an order is to be placed for a pizza or grocery, an app of the concerned supplier may be used through smartphone.

(iii) **Is the interaction with the receiver required**? If yes, face to face channel will be better. For this purpose, Whatsapp or Skype can be used.
(iv) **Is it about showing some features of device**? In this case, visual aids will be helpful to impress upon the recipient of the message. As described in the previous unit, in recent years, several such channels including Artificial Intelligence, Googl's Duplex. Blockchain, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) Technologies, Internet of Things (IoT) Technology and LiFi Technology have been developed. .
(v) **Size of audience**: It is one person or a small group or a large audience. As mentioned earlier, for one to one interaction, channels such as telephone, Whatsapp, Skype can be used. But if the message is for a mass, audio-visual channel is preferred.
(vi) **Background of the audience**: It is very important factor in choosing the channel. Is it a group of managers, or subordinates or teammates? Are they well informed about your products or you are going to introduce your products for the first time? Are they of urban background or from rural background? For a meeting of the managers where you are going to discuss company's progress and achievements, audio-visual channel would be preferred where you can explain your points with the help of graphs, bar diagrams, etc. When you are making publicity of your products particularly in the rural area, a channel such as Power Point will be most appropriate where you can show attractive slides of your products including their popularity in the urban areas.

5.3 ORGANISATIONAL BASED CHANNEL

In an organization, there are primarily two types of channels – Formal and informal. Let us learn them in detail.

Formal:
Formal communication is transmitted through pre-defined formal channel set by the organization. Formal communication is typically sent by top management to various departments that forward it to the respective lower level employees. It follows organizational procedures. Formal communication channels include goals, policies and procedures of an organisation. It has following characteristics:

(i) It occurs within the organizational framework.
(ii) It maintains formal rules of communication.
(iii) It is used for planning, controlling and organizing the activities.
(iv) Authority can be delegated to subordinates through formal communication.
(v) It has written record and can be used as evidence.

An example of formal communication is given in Figure 5.1.

316 Colonial Pkwy
Esterhazy, NM 87101

July 30, 2017

Ms. Ginny Clark
Overwatch Villa
7419 Bubble Net Road
Baleen, WA 98101

Dear Ms. Clark:

Hope you're doing well. I'm Miranda Lawson, Director of Marketing at Mass Airlines, and I wanted to share some marketing ideas with you that could benefit both of our companies.

Whenever our flight crews fly into the Seattle area, they overwhelmingly prefer staying at the Overwatch Villa, but there is often no vacancy. If the Overwatch Villa were to permanently reserve a block of rooms for our crew members, we'd be happy to promote the Overwatch Villa in our in-flight magazine at a significant discount.

To demonstrate what a Mass Airlines and Overwatch Villa partnership could look like, I've enclosed three sample ads created by our graphic design team. These samples should prove that we're eager to highlight the Overwatch Villa for the millions of passengers we serve each year. If you'd like to discuss this in further detail, I can be reached at 575-555-9255, or at mlawson@massairlines.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Miranda Lawson
Director of Marketing, Mass Airlines

Enclosures: Three samples of print advertisements.

Source: GCF, LearnFree.org
Figure 5.1: A sample of the formal communication

There are several advantages and disadvantages of the formal communication.

Advantages

The formal channel has many advantages which are listed below:

1. **Permanent record: A** copy of the formal communication is always maintained in the record and can be used as a reference or evidence. For example, a company clinches a deal on a certain price and delivers the consignment. But after receiving the item, receiver refuses to pay the settled price. In that event, the company can go to the court of law and can use formal communication as a legal proof.
2. **Increases efficiency:** As it is used by following predetermined rules and format, it increases the overall efficiency. In the above example, the bill having the negotiated price would be sent to the receiver. No other formalities are required and thus time will be saved.
3. **Inculcates discipline:** The formal communication system inculcates discipline in the workers as they follow formal order carefully, because otherwise it may invite disciplinary action.
4. **Better coordination:**. Formal communication induces coordination among the staff as they have to follow written instructions.
5. **Ease of delegation of authority:** If need be, authority can be delegated to the subordinates through this type of communication. For example in the above case, the marketing manager would delegate his/her authority to the sales person to negotiate the price and clinch the deal.
6. **Free from mistakes:** As formal communication has to follow well-defined rules and regulations, there are lesser chances of mistakes in exchanging information within the employees. In the above case, as every document would be a formal document, there are no chances of confusion.

Disadvantages

In spite of many advantages, formal channel has some disadvantages too, which are given below.

1. **Slow:** As the draft of the communication has to pass through many officers and get approved by them before it is sent, it is slow.
2. **Wastage of time:** Due to a lengthy process of approval, much time is wasted.
3. **Suppresses ingenuity:** As it has to follow set rules and regulations, the ingenuity of the employees to give suggestions out of the box is suppressed.
4. **Inflexibility:** As the communication follows set rules and regulations, there is no flexibility.
5. **Lack of personal touch:** Many matters are amicably settled just due to personal understanding and relations. But there is no scope of personal touch in the formal communication.
6. **Escapism:** In case of an unpleasant decision or ambiguity in the rules, people shirk their responsibility and try to escape.

Informal:

It is a non-official, non-structured route of communication. Through informal communication, good relationship is fostered by the company. Through informal discussion, mutual understanding and solidarity are strengthened in a team. Employees give feedback through informal channel to their supervisors. It has following characteristics:

(i)   It is fostered through social relationship. No superior subordinate hierarchy comes in the way. A team manager can invite his team-mates to lunch for celebrating success of the project.

(ii)   It is a two-way channel, i.e. both exchange their ideas/experience etc.

(iii)   It does not have a definite path, i.e. conversation is beyond restriction of the organisation and can proceed in multi-directions.

(iv)   There is a possibility of distortion of the communication. It may take the form of rumour also.

(v)   It is a better way of resolving disputes, on many problems cannot be solved through formal channels.

(vi)   It motivates employees, as they feel being given importance.

There are some advantages and disadvantages of the informal channel.

Advantages

The informal channel has some distinct advantages which are as follows:

1. **Encourages ingenuity:** Employees are encouraged to make suggestions and new approach.
2. **Increases efficiency:** As the employees can freely exchange their opinions, their efficiency is enhanced in solving a problem.
3. **Establishes cordiality:** In informal communication, personal relations play a major role, which creates mutual understanding and cordiality.
4. **Saves time:** As it has not to pass through a long protocol, it is fast and saves time.
5. **Solution to problems:** Before formalising a particular line of action, the management can involve the staff to know their problems, conflicts and complaints and the like. In this way, a mutual agreeable approach may be followed.
6. **Induces sense of belonging:** As the employees are involved in decision making, they develop a sense of belonging for the organization.

Disadvantages

In spite of many advantages, informal channel has some disadvantages also as shown below:

1. **No legal evidence:** Informal communication does not have any legal standing.
2. **May create confusion:** As informal communication does not follow set rules and regulations, there are chances that the intended message is distorted.
3. **No secrecy:** As the informal communication is finalised after discussing with several people, its secrecy is not maintained. In the case of confidential matters, it is not desirable.
4. **Incomplete information:** For informal communication, a particular person is not responsible. Under these circumstances, the information may be incomplete. It may cause delay in the execution of the project.
5. **Induces irresponsibility:** For the mistakes in an informal communication or its incompleteness, a particular person cannot be held responsible. This may lead to irresponsibility on the part of the employees.
6. **May cause rumours:** As the informal communication does not follow set rules and regulations, people may speculate about it, which becomes a matter of rumours.

5.4   DIRECTION BASED CHANNEL

On the basis of direction of communication channels are classified in three categories, namely downward, upward and horizontal.

Downward:

The channel used for transmitting communication from top to bottom of the hierarchy in an organisation is known as downward channel. It is sometimes called lower level communication also. Downward communication has following objectives:

(i)   To communicate goals, new strategies, information about specific targets to the lower level of the business organisation.
(ii)   To communicate job instructions, or guidelines.
(iii)   To announce decisions, promotions.
(iv)   To seek performance feedback.
(v)   To invite suggestions.
(vi)   To motivate staff.

To elaborate the point, an example may be cited here. The CEO of a company decides to establish a new manufacturing unit urgently and he/she wants to depute the staff from the existing staff temporarily before new recruitments are made. For this purpose, he/she will ask heads of the various departments to suggest the names of the appropriate persons who could be relied upon and could be deputed.
A sample of downward communication is shown in Figure 5.2.
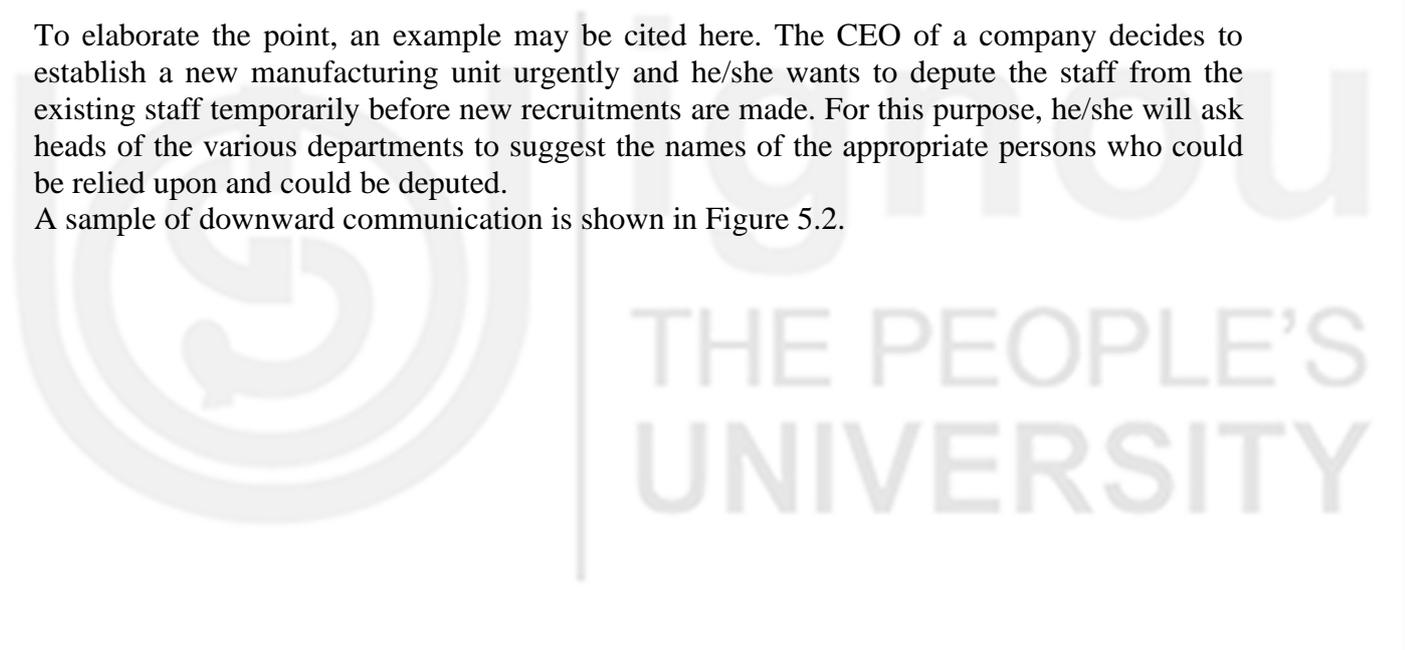
Woodland Apparels Limited

Dated: 16.08.2004

To Mr. Sree Nanda Das S/6.

Late Maran Chandra Das Village Udur,

P/o. Ulukhola, District- Ghazipur.

Subject: Transfer of Services.

Dear Mr. Sree Nanda Das,

Please be informed that the Management has decided to transfer your services from Woodland Apparels Ltd. to Islam Trading Consortium Ltd., Head office with effect from 1st August 2004. All other terms and conditions of your service will remain unchanged.

On behalf of Management

Signature

(A.K. Moinuddin Ahmed) Chief of Administration

Copy to:

i. Accounts Section, WAL, Factory

ii. Accounts section, WAL, Head office,

iii. Accounts section, ITCL, Head office,

iv. Personal File

Head office: Toynbee Circular Road, "Nirala Bhaban" (3rd Floor) .Motijheel C/A Dhaka- 1000. Phone: 9562352, 9558348, And 9563250, Fax: 9561862, E-mail: itc@bdcom.com, itcl@bttb.net.bd Factory: Plot M 4/3 Section- 7 Mirpur Dhaka-1216, Phone: 9004652, 9005780, 9007381, and 8015042, Fax: 880-2-8018456

Source: www.businesscommunicationarticles.com

Figure 5.2: A sample of downward communication

Upward:

It refers to the communication by the lower level workers to the higher-ups in an organization. It is known as upper level communication also. Upward Communication has following characteristics:

(i)   To make the leader and management aware of the problems and exceptions to set routine.
(ii)   To convey idea and suggestions
(iii)   To make the management aware with the performance of individuals and departments
(iv)   To convey grievances and disputes of the workers.
(v)   To send financial and accounting information, such as cost, payments to be received, interest on investments, levies, etc.

As an example, workers in the production department feel that the machinery they work upon has become obsolete and it would in the interest of not only the company but also for their safety, if the old machinery is replaced by the new one. They would channel their suggestion to the higher hierarchy through their group leader/manager.

A sample of upward communication is shown in Figure 5.3.
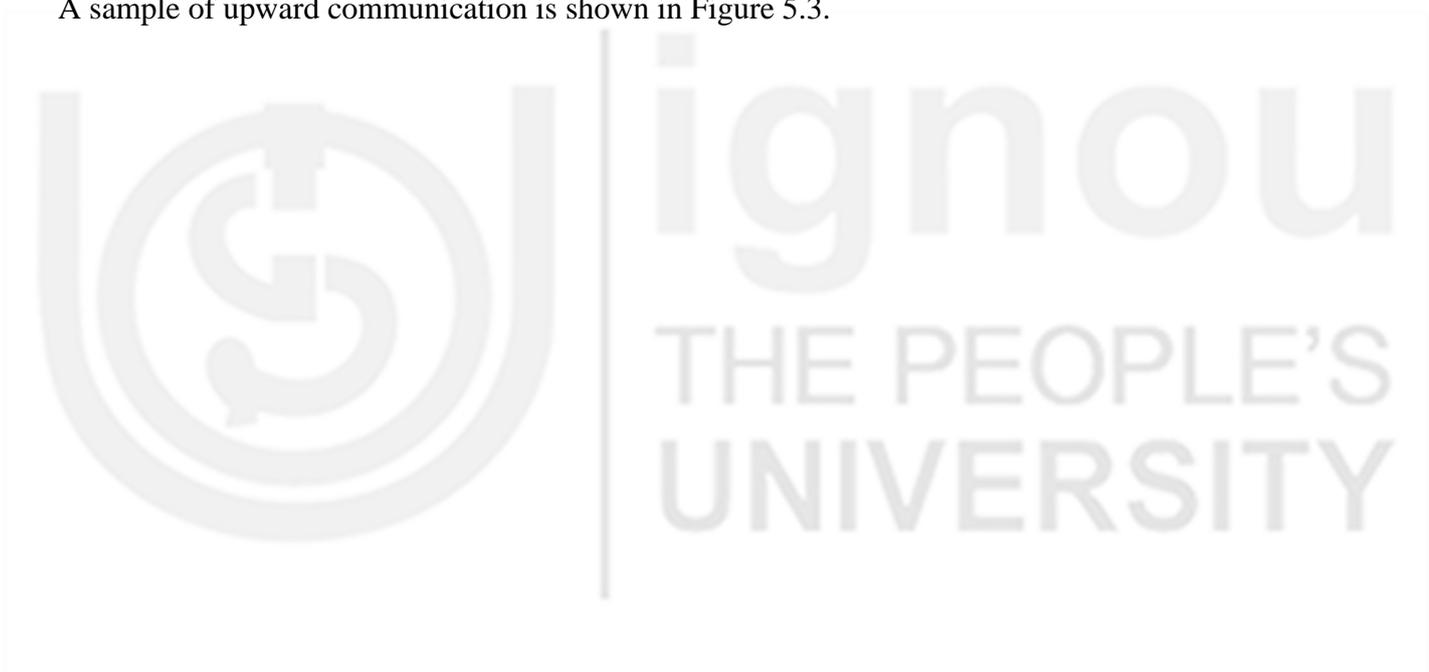
Upward Communication example

11 May, 2004

The Chairman
Islam Trading Consortium Ltd.
9/A, Toyenbee Circular Road, Nirala Bahaman (3rd Floor)
Motijheel C/A,
Dhaka, 1000

Subject: Prayer for fixation of my salary as per appointment letter vide ref.
No. Itcl .OH/128/2002/023 Dated: 04-06-2002

Sir,

Kindly refer to the above, noted subject.

I joined as Adviser (Accounts & Finance) on 1ˢᵗ July, 2002. After my joining I have been trying hard with the help end co-operation from Management and Colleagues to reestablish total accounting system through Accounting Software.

I belief the Management has observed the development of total Accounting System of the Company.

As you Know, I have been working here for last twenty three (23) months and I never got nor claimed for any extra benefit from the management although the Chairman of the Company had committed to increase my salary after successful completion of the probationary period.

Now, I would like to remind you to take action to fix up my salary as per terms of my appointment letter Dated. 04-06-2002 for which* act of kindness I shall be obliged.

Your faithfully,

A. K. Khan
Adviser (Accounts & Finance)
Enclose: Photocopy of Appointment letter

Source: www.businesscommunicationarticles.com
Figure 5.3: A sample of upward communication

Horizontal:

The channels used for communicating among the persons of the same rank are known as horizontal channels. It is used to the business organization of greater size and complexity. It can be formal or informal, but basic purpose is coordination among different departments in an organization. Horizontal communication may be one of the two types:

(i)   Intradepartmental: These messages are exchanged between members of the same department or division.

(ii)   Interdepartmental: These communication facilitates execution of joint projects in which more than one departments of an organization are involved Horizontal communication has following advantages:

   a.   It improves coordination and understanding
   b.   Free exchange of views
   c.   Time Saver

For example, the marketing department has the possibility of receiving a bulk order provided the quoted price is lowered and the order is complied with on an urgent basis. In this case, head of the marketing department will contact head of the finance department to enquire about the possibility of lowering the price and also head of the production department to enquire about the availability of the said item in sufficient quantity.

A sample of horizontal communication is shown in Figure 5.4.

Tanni Textiles Ltd.
24 Motijheel, Dhaka-1000. 1st March 2004

Manager
Human Resources Department.

Sub: A request for skilled salesmen.

Dear Sir,

We are going to increase our sales in the Dhaka region in the coming month. Now we need 50 skilled salesmen to serve our purpose.

I would appreciate it if you take all steps to appoint the mentioned salesmen. Truly yours,

Md. Suvro Khan
Sales Manager

Source: www.businesscommunicationarticles.com

Figure 5.4: A sample of horizontal communication.

Check your Progress A

1.   What is horizontal communication channel?

        ----

2.   Write two distinctions between formal and informal channels.

        ----

3.   Write two disadvantages of the formal communication channel.

        ----

4.   The workers in the production department want bonus. Which channel will they use?

        ----

5.   Which of the following statements are "**True or False**"?

        (i)   A formal message follows rules of the organization.
        (ii)   An informal communication can be even between the manager and a worker.
        (iii)   Job instructions are given through upward communication.
        (iv)   Grievances and disputes can be conveyed through downward communication.
        (v)   An appointment letter is always sent through written channel.

5.5   EXPRESSION BASED CHANNEL

On the basis of ways or means of expression, business communication channels are of two types: Oral and Written:

Oral:
 Oral channels are used for the transmission of spoken words. They include: telephone, mobile phone, video-chat, mobile conferencing, in-person presentation, face to face interaction, speeches, lectures, etc.

Commonly used oral channel are as follows:

Face-to-Face or Personal Communication: This is one of the richest communication channels that can be used within and without an organisation. Some Apps such Sky Crew, WhatsApp make it possible. It is particularly helpful because physical presence, body language and tone of the speaker's voice help the recipient to interpret the message. There are no chances of ambiguity as sender and recipient face each other and clarify any point if it is not clear. The speaker can know whether recipient has understood his/her message and can ask the question to ensure it.

Broadcast Media Communication: Television, radio, loudspeakers fall in this category of media communication channel. These media are used while addressing a mass audience. The business organizations use these channels while advertising their products. Loudspeakers are used in the annual general meetings of the company. The CEO of a multinational company can address his global sites by having a television feed broadcast.

Mobile Communication Channels: A mobile communication channel is used when a private or urgent message is to be communicated to an individual or small group. It this case, both options, i.e. face-to-face or audio are possible. As the recipient is in direct conversation with the speaker, he/she can interpret speaker's tone along with the message.

These days, mobile communication channels have become quite popular for placing the orders for grocery, making reservation in trains, bus, etc. and buying tickets for the theatre.

Electronic Communication Channels: These channels include e-mail, internet, intranet, social media, platform, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. This channel can be used for one-to-one, group or mass communication. Although it loses personal touch, it is more effective. However, while using this channel, ambiguity, sarcasm must be avoided, unless it is necessary.

In business enterprises, e-mail has become quite popular as they can send information about new arrivals and their discount offers by a click of mouse to a large number of customers at a time.

There are many advantages and disadvantages of the oral business communication.

Advantages

Oral communication has many advantages. In a recent survey it was found that more than 55% of the executives preferred oral communication. Main advantages of the oral communication are as follows:

1. **Immediate feedback:** The speaker gets immediate feedback about the reaction of the receiver, i.e. whether he/she is agreeable with what the speaker proposes or he/she disagrees. The tone of speaking of the receiver also gives the impression of his/her reaction.
2. **Time saving:** It saves time as no draft of the communication is prepared, processed and finalised. In case of the work-load being high, the executive often prefers this mode of communication.
3. **Personal touch:** Oral communication has a personal touch. When two persons talk, they first enquire about the wellbeing of each other, which creates an environment of cordiality.
4. **Saves costs:** It saves costs as in this mode of communication, no paper, pen, computer or stamp, etc. are used.
5. **More effective**: As the executive speaks, his/her personality and executive powers are reflected during the conversation. The tone, assertiveness, pitch and intensity of the voice convey the feelings.
6. **Flexibility:** Depending on the situation and demand of the other party, more attractive terms, conditions, price, etc. can be offered immediately. Thus, oral communication is flexible.
7. **Maintaining secrecy:** When it is a conversation between two persons, confidentiality can be maintained.

Disadvantages

In spite of many advantages, oral communication has some disadvantages also. Main disadvantages are as follows:

1. **No record:** No record is normally maintained of the oral communication.
2. **Misunderstanding of the word**: Sometimes due to technical fault or otherwise, the actual message is not understood, which may create misunderstanding and main goals of the organization may be defeated.
3. **Incoherent speech**: Sometimes the sender is not able to speak coherently due to weak command on the language or slang. In such cases receiver may not understand the meaning of a message and confusion may be created.
4. **Possibility of omitting main subject**: Sometimes during the talk, the speaker may deviate from the subject and may forget the message altogether. So, expected result may not be achieved.
5. **Expensive:** A long oral communication, particularly over long distances, may be expensive.
6. **Delayed decision**: In spite of oral approval, the party may insist for written communication. In this way, decision making is delayed.

An example may be cited here which illustrates both advantages and disadvantages of the oral communication. Salesmen of two companies negotiate with an educational institution for the supply of an instrument. Head of the institution insists on a lower price. The salesman of company A has access to higher-ups on mobile and seeks their permission which is given orally. On the other hand, salesman of company B writes to the higher-ups for seeking the permission. They accept the offer, but the written permission reaches the salesman very late. The company A has already succeeded in clinching the order.

Now let us look on another aspect. In the case of company A, there is no written document about the permission for the lower price. Due to some confusion, the boss of the salesman A refutes that he ever gave his consent for the lower price. Obviously, there would be much problem for the poor salesman.

Written:

It includes letter, policy documents, memos, brochures, manuals, notices and announcements, etc. Advertisements in newspapers and magazines also come in this category. The recipients can contact the organization through other channels in case additional information is sought for.

It may be added that e-mails discussed under electronic communication channel is also a written communication channel, only difference being that it is written in the digital form, whereas other communications described above are in the form of hardcopy. Formal business communications, such as recruitment letters, contracts, budgets, quotations, etc. are always in the written form.

Written message has many advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages

As mentioned earlier, written channel has several advantages which can be listed as follows:

1. **Permanent record:** The documents of written communication form a permanent record, which can be referred whenever needed. It can be produced as a legal evidence in the court of law.
2. **Easy to preserve:** In contrast to the oral and non-verbal communication, written message can be preserved for a long time. If need be, important information can be retrieved from the preserved documents.
3. **Better way of presenting complex matters:** Complex project reports are better presented in the written form, which can be explained with the help of graphics, bar diagrams, etc.
4. **Prevention of wastage of time and money:** As the written communication is centred on the main issue, it prevents wastage of time and money.
5. **Can be delivered to many persons at a time:** The written message can be sent to many persons at a time. For example, the e-mail of the message can be sent to a large number of clients/employees with a click of mouse. Now it has become a preferred mode of sending written message.
6. **Accurate presentation:** Through written communication, the managers can present the information in an accurate and clear manner. There are no chances of ambiguity and confusion.
7. **Possibility of correction before sending:** The written message can be checked and corrected before sending.
8. **Reflects image:** A well drafted message typed on an attractive letterhead of the company and sent in a good quality of envelop conveys good images of both the person and the organization.

Disadvantages

In spite of many advantages, written communication has some disadvantages also, which are given below:

1. **Takes longer time:** Drafting and preparation of the written communication take much time. Thus, it is a time consuming channel. It costs valuable time of both the writer and the reader.
2. **More expensive:** It is an expensive mode of communication channel as it requires not only paper, pen, ink, computer, etc. but also the staff who prepares it.
3. **Delayed response:** In this mode, response is delayed as draft of the proposed reply is first prepared, which is then approved by a chain of the executives. Thus it takes much time before the written response can be sent**.**
4. **Difficult to maintain secrecy:** As the written message passes through a chain of the persons before it is sent, it becomes difficult to maintain its secrecy.
5. **Delay in decision making:** It is obvious that due to various reasons, written response is delayed which causes delay in decision making.
6. **Cost in record keeping:** Maintaining and preserving the written documents involve extra costs.

If we look at the example given above, the salesman will have no problem as everything will be in black and white.

Check Your Progress B

1.   Write two advantages of the oral communication.

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2.   Write two disadvantages of the oral communication.

        ----

3.   Write two advantages of the written communication.

        ----

4.   Write two advantages of the mobile communication device.

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5.   Fill in the blanks:

        (i)   In oral channel .... is quick.
        (ii)   Face-to-face is the .... communication channel.
        (iii)   E-mail is .... channel.
        (iv)   Loudspeaker is .... channel.
        (v)   Policy documents are sent through .... channel.

5.6   LET US SUM UP

Communication channel is the medium or means through which the message travels to the recipient. Choice of the channel is determined by many factors, main of which is the type of message. Business communication channels can be classified on several basis, namely organizational structure, direction and way of expression. In an organisation, there are primarily two types of channels – Formal and informal. On the basis of direction, communication are of three types – downward, upward and horizontal or lateral. Downward communication flows from the top level of the hierarchy to the lower level of the staff, whereas upward communication originates from the lower level to the higher-ups. In horizontal communication, personnel of the same rank communicate.

On the basis of way of expression, communication are of two types – oral and written. Oral channels have many advantages, such as, fast, quick feedback, mutual understanding, etc. There are different types of oral channel, e.g. face to face, broadcast media, mobile communication channel. Written channels include e-mail, letters, memos, etc. Written channel has the advantage that it can be preserved as a proof.

5.7   KEY WORDS

Electronic or Digital Form: Involving or using numerical digits expressed in a scale of notation, usually in the binary system, readable and manipulable by computer. It cannot be touched. It is also called soft copy.

Ramifications: Consequences.

Feedback: A reaction or response to a communication.

Background of the Audience: It can be a several types for example, on the basis of education, on the basis of profession, on the basis of social status, etc.

Foster: To promote the growth

Interdepartmental: Between different department.

5.8	ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A   1   (i) True,   (ii) True,   (iii) False,   (iv) False,   (v) True

B   1   (i) Feedback,   (ii) Richest   (iii) Electronic or written,
             (iv) Broadcast media (v) Written

5.9	TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss classification of business communication channels giving appropriate examples.

2. Distinguish between the following"

   (a) Formal and informal channels
   (b) Downward and upward channels
   (c) Oral and written channels
   (d) Electronic and hardcopy communication channels

3. Explain different types of oral channels of communication giving suitable examples.

4. When will you select the following communication channels:
   (a) Face-to-face
   (b) Broadcast media
   (c) Mobile

5. What do you understand by written channel? Discuss its advantages and disadvantages.

6. You are salesman of a company and have been deputed to negotiate price of an instrument manufactured by the company. The buyer is insisting on a price lower than offered by you. You want to contact marketing manager. Which communication channel you would use to contact manager. Justify your answer.

7. You are a CEO of a multinational company which channel you would prefer to use while addressing staff of your company around the globe. Support your answer with reasons.