

SESSION 1- ENGLISH PROFICIENCY- PARTS OF SPEECH

Introduction

To be an effective writer, one must learn about Parts of Speech. The Parts of Speech help readers and writers use a word in a sentence appropriately. Following example shows the composition of a sentence using different parts of speech:

e.g.: We will be studying the eight parts of speech so hold onto your hats!!! Wow!

○ We	= Pronoun
○ will be studying	= Verb
○ the, eight	= Adjectives
○ parts	= Noun
○ of	= Preposition
○ speech	= Noun
○ so	= Conjunction
○ hold	= Verb
○ onto	= Preposition
○ your	= Pronoun
○ hats	= Noun
○ Wow!	= Interjection

In the above sentence words like 'hold', 'hats' and 'onto' are just words, they don't really make something meaningful. But, when these words are assigned a role (a part of speech), and used in a sentence, we actually get something meaningful.

So, parts of speech are important because they show how words are related to each other. **8 Types of Parts of Speech**

1. **Noun**: A noun is the name of a person, place, thing, or idea. (man... Butte College... house... happiness) **Important Points:**

- Nouns are often used with an article (*the, a, an*), but not always.
- Proper nouns always start with a capital letter; common nouns do not.
- Nouns can be singular or plural, concrete or abstract.
- Nouns show possession by adding 's.
- Nouns can function in different roles within a sentence; for example, a noun can be a subject, direct object, indirect object, subject complement, or object of a preposition.

e.g.: The young **girl** brought me a very long **letter** from the **teacher**, and then she quickly disappeared. Oh my!

2. **Pronoun**: A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. (She... we... they... it)

Important Points:

- A pronoun is usually substituted for a specific noun, which is called its antecedent.
- In the sentence given below, the antecedent for the pronoun *she* is the girl.

e.g.: The young girl brought **me** a very long letter from the teacher, and then **she** quickly disappeared. Oh my!

- Pronouns are further defined by type:
 - I. personal pronouns refer to specific persons or things;
 - II. possessive pronouns indicate ownership;
 - III. reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize another noun or pronoun;

- IV. relative pronouns introduce a subordinate clause; and
- V. demonstrative pronouns identify, point to, or refer to nouns.

3. **Verb:** A verb expresses action or being. (jump... is... write... become)

Important Points:

- There is a main verb and sometimes one or more helping verbs. ("*She can sing.*" *Sing* is the main verb; *can* is the helping verb.)
- A verb must agree with its subject in number (both are singular or both are plural).
- Verbs also take different forms to express tense.

e.g.: The young girl **brought** me a very long letter from the teacher, and then she quickly **disappeared**. Oh my!

4. **Adjective:** An adjective modifies or describes a noun or pronoun. (pretty... old... blue... smart) **Important Points:**

- It usually answers the question of which one, what kind, or how many.
 - (Articles [a, an, the] are usually classified as adjectives.)
- e. g.:** The **young** girl brought me a very **long** letter from the teacher, and then she quickly disappeared. Oh my!

5. **Adverb:** An adverb modifies or describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb, but never a noun. (gently... extremely... carefully... well) **Important Points:**

- It usually answers the questions of when, where, how, why, under what conditions, or to what degree.
 - Adverbs often end in -ly.
- e. g.:** The young girl brought me a **very** long letter from the teacher, and **then** she **quickly** disappeared. Oh my!

6. **Preposition:** A preposition is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to form a phrase modifying another word in the sentence. (by the tree, with our friends, about the book, until tomorrow)

Important Points:

- A preposition is always part of a prepositional phrase.
- The prepositional phrase almost always functions as an adjective or as an adverb.

e.g.: The young girl brought me a very long letter **from the teacher**, and then she quickly disappeared. Oh my!

7. **Conjunction:** A conjunction joins words, phrases, or clauses and indicates the relationship between the elements joined.(and... but... or... while... because)

Important Points:

- Coordinating conjunctions connect grammatically equal elements: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet.

- Subordinating conjunctions connect clauses that are not equal: because, although, while, since, etc.
- There are other types of conjunctions as well.

e.g.: The young girl brought me a very long letter from the teacher, **and** then she quickly disappeared. Oh my!

8. Interjection: An interjection is a word used to express emotion. (Oh!...

Wow!... Oops!) **Important Points:**

- It is often followed by an exclamation point.
- e. g.:** The young girl brought me a very long letter from the teacher, and then she quickly disappeared. **Oh my!**

References:

1. <https://slideplayer.com/slide/8349799/>
2. <https://slideplayer.com/slide/14509714/>
3. <https://slideplayer.com/slide/8343215/>
4. <https://www.teflcourse.net/english-grammar-corner/parts-of-speech-in-english-grammar/>
5. <https://www.really-learn-english.com/importance-of-the-parts-of-speech.html>
6. http://www.butte.edu/departments/cas/tipsheets/grammar/parts_of_speech.html

SESSION 2 - ENGLISH PROFICIENCY - TENSES

Introduction

Perhaps the greatest challenge learners of English as a second language (ESL) will face is remembering the grammatical rules of all 16 verb tenses that describe actions happening in the past, present and future. On top of that, they must be able to use them in the correct situation!

The best way to tackle this seemingly impossible task is to fully understand the most basic of English verb

forms before worrying over the more complex ones. So, let's examine the four fundamental tenses you need to know:

What is a Verb Tense?

Verb tenses identify the time period when an action occurs. The verb 'walks' communicates not only how many people completed the action (it's singular), but also when it occurred. In this case, the tense is present. The person walks right now.

Interestingly, not all languages treat verb tenses the same way. In English, the ending on a verb communicates what tense it's in. ('Walk' becomes 'walks' and 'walked'.) In some cases, an auxiliary verb (a helping verb like will or need) is required as well. In Chinese, for example, a verb doesn't change its spelling depending on the tense. A separate word (or particle) is combined with the verb to explain when it occurred.

Types of Tenses

The simple tenses (past, present, and future) are the most basic forms, but there are 12 major verb tenses in English in all:

1. Present Simple
2. Present Continuous/Progressive
3. Present Perfect
4. Present Perfect Continuous/Progressive
5. Past Simple
6. Past Continuous/Progressive
7. Past Perfect
8. Past Perfect Continuous/Progressive
9. Future Simple
10. Future Perfect
11. Future Continuous/Progressive
12. Future Perfect Continuous/Progressive

1. Present Simple Verb Tense

When you use the present simple, you are using a routine. It's something that you always do every day, month or year. Or it's something that you never do. I, You, We, They: travel every day.

He, She, It: travels every day.

2. Present Continuous/Progressive Verb Tense

When you use present continuous, you are referring to what is happening right now. Also, it can be an action that is not yet complete.

I: am travelling right now.

You, We, They: are travelling right now.

He, She, It: is travelling right now.

3. Present Perfect Verb Tense

Although it's easy to confuse this verb tense with present simple, the main difference is that the action is complete for present perfect. In other words, you are looking at the result right now without any words referring to time.

I, You, We, They: have travelled to France.

He, She, It: has travelled to France.

4. Present Perfect Continuous/Progressive Verb Tense

In this verb tense, an action starts in the past but it's still continuing now. You have been performing the action and still are performing the action in the present.

I, You, We, They: have been travelling for a day.

He, She, It: has been travelling for a day.

5.Past Simple Verb Tense

For past simple, it includes a finished action and time.

I, You, We, They, He, She, It: travelled to France yesterday.

6.Past Continuous/Progressive Verb Tense

When you use past continuous, you are often using two actions. However, one action is not finished in the past, and another is complete, interrupting the other action.

I, He, She, It: was travelling by bus when the deer crossed the road.

You, We, They: were travelling when the deer crossed the road.

7.Past Perfect Verb Tense

This verb tense uses two actions at two different times. Before the second action occurs, the first action is complete.

I, You, We, They, He, She, It: had travelled by car when the bus arrived.

8.Past Perfect Continuous/Progressive Verb Tense

For colloquial English, we don't use past perfect continuous very often. But in textbooks, it's a bit more common. This verb tense has a complete action that happened before a second action. But in this case, you can describe how long.

I, You, We, They, He, She, It: had been travelling for one hour when the car broke down.

9.Future Simple Verb Tense

This verb tense is about planning things to do in the future. For example, what will you do tomorrow or next week?

Instead of using "will", you can use "going to" for future tense. But this lesson uses "will" for the future tense. I, You, We, They, He, She, It: will travel to France tomorrow.

10.Future Continuous/Progressive Verb Tense

The action is not complete when another action happens in the future. This is similar to past continuous, but it refers to the future.

I, You, We, They, He, She, It: will be travelling when you arrive.

11.Future Perfect Verb Tense

An action will be completed in the future before another is completed.

I, You, We, They, He, She, It: will have travelled to France by the time you arrive.

12.Future Perfect Continuous/Progressive Verb Tense

An action will be continuing in the future when it is interrupted by another action. This future verb tense often includes an indication of how long the action has been happening.

I, You, We, They, He, She, It: will have been travelling for one hour when you arrive.

References and Additional Resources:

1. <https://www.britishcouncilfoundation.id/en/english/articles/tenses-guide>
2. <https://www.thesaurus.com/e/grammar/what-are-the-basic-verb-tenses/>
3. https://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/grammar/tenses_table.pdf
4. <https://www.easypacelearning.com/all-lessons/grammar/1198-12-verb-tenses-table-learning-english-grammar-tenses>
5. <https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/verb-tenses.htm>
6. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/verb-tense-games-activities.html>

SESSION 3- ENGLISH PROFICIENCY -CREATIVE WRITING

Introduction

Creative writing is any writing that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic, or technical forms of literature. It is typically identified by an emphasis on narrative craft, character development, and the use of literary figure of speech or with various traditions of poetry and poetics. With creative writing one is able to express feelings and emotions instead of cold, hard facts, as in [academic writing](#). Both fictional and non-fictional works fall into this category. In the academic setting, creative writing is typically separated into fiction and poetry with a focus on writing in an original style, as opposed to imitating pre-existing genres such as crime or horror. Writing for the screen and stage—screenwriting and playwriting—are often taught separately, but fit under the creative writing category as well.

Types of Creative Writing

Your imagination starts to flow when you engage in creative writing. The majority of writing, by far, is creative. With it, you can pretend anything you want and help a potential reader do the same. Different types of creative writing are found in these writing categories:

- Blogs
- Essays
- Epics
- Novels
- Poems
- Screenplays
- Short stories
- Songs
- Television scripts

Let us delve deeper into 2 types of creative writing:

1. Blogs
2. Essays

What are Blogs?

A blog (shortening of “weblog”) is **an online journal or informational website displaying information in the reverse chronological order, with latest posts appearing first**. It is a platform where a writer or even a group of writers share their views on an individual subject. A blog is an online diary or journal located on a website. The content of a blog typically includes text, pictures, videos, animated GIFs and even scans from old physical offline diaries or journals and other hard copy documents. Since a blog can exist merely for personal use, sharing information with an exclusive group or to engage the public, a blog owner can set their blog for private or public access. Blog content can appear as posts on one continuous streaming page or posts on individual pages reachable through one or more pages set up in a list-style format as post title links, excerpts and related tags. All posts or links to posts are typically displayed to readers in reverse chronological order with the most recent content appearing first.

How to Write a Good Blog?

- Develop a writing style and tone appropriate to your subject material.
- Post often, even if your posts are short.
- Allow your readers to comment on your posts.
- Craft a headline that is both informative and will capture readers’ attentions.
- Use images to enhance your post
- Improve its flow of your blog by adding humour specially to explain complex topics.
- When Writing a Blog find your focus. Find out who are your target readers? Once that's settled, you can home in on a niche category (like this one focuses on writing) and be the expert on it.
- Be relatable, be yourself.

Examples of Blogs

<https://blog.hubspot.com/>

[Billboard - Music Charts, News, Photos & Video |](#)

[Billboardhttps://www.businessinsider.in/](https://www.businessinsider.in/)

[Harvard Business Review - Ideas and Advice for Leaders \(hbr.org\)](#)

What Are Essays?

According to Wikipedia, an **essay** is, generally, a piece of writing that gives the author's own [argument](#), but the definition is vague, overlapping with those of a [letter](#), a [paper](#), an [article](#), a [pamphlet](#), and a [short story](#).

Essays have traditionally been sub-classified as formal and informal. Formal essays are characterized by serious purpose, dignity, logical organization and length, whereas the informal essay is characterized by personal element (self-revelation, individual tastes and

experiences, confidential manner), humour, graceful style, rambling structure, unconventionality or novelty of theme.

How to Write Good Essays?

- **Introduction**

Attention Grabbing start. This could be a phrase, anecdote, a story etc. The introduction should give a brief explanation to the topic to be discussed

- **Body**

Elaborate your thesis, emphasise your viewpoints on the topic.
Describe how to overcome any shortcomings.

- Use analogies
- Try and touch a few cognate stories in one [pieceofwriting](#). Reveal the layers gradually. Intertwine them and arrange for a grand finale where everything is finally clear.
- Be on the side of the reader. Become their friend and tell the story naturally, like around the dinner table.
- Use short, punchy sentences. Tell only as much as is required to make your point vivid.
- Conjure sentences that create actual feelings.
- You may ask a few tough questions in a row to provoke interest, and let the reader think.

- **Conclusion**

Explain how the experience of the writer mirrors that of the reader and reflects the same values and beliefs. It also may stress on the lessons learnt.

Examples of Good Essays

- ✦ [BadFeministbyRoxaneGay](#)
- ✦ [TheCommonReaderbyVirginiaWoolf](#)
- ✦ [SlouchingTowardsBethlehembyJoanDidion](#)
- ✦ [NotesOfANativeSonbyJamesBaldwin](#)
- ✦ [FeelFreebyZadieSmith](#)
- ✦ [MySeditiousHeartbyArundhatiRoy](#)
- ✦ [MeTalkPrettyOneDaybyDavidSedaris](#)

SESSION 4- ENGLISH PROFICIENCY –READING COMPREHENSION

Introduction

Reading is a vital skill. It not only enhances knowledge, it also aids in business communication. Since communication is an exchange of information or ideas between sender and receiver, it can be challenging if the information is not clearly understood. A misunderstood text, especially, may lead to miscommunication. Reading is a skill that is important to nearly every job, whether it is a desk job or a marketing job, for an engineer, a researcher, a pilot or a doctor. It is an area which every professional should examine closely. By reading newspapers, journals and magazines they get to know about the recent procedures, styles, trends and even the customer's requirements. It's also necessary to read multiple business documents and other related materials and understand what they mean. Good reading skills are handy for an employee or a businessman. Therefore, it is recommended that students and employees spend an average of half their work time reading something or the other, and if they could improve their reading efficiency, they could greatly improve productivity.

Types of Reading

Reading is not simple at all. It is not only about looking through the content, but also to understand and comprehend it.



Comprehension

Reading with comprehension helps in understanding the concept, grasping the important data and acquiring knowledge. As words may carry different connotations, the direct meaning or the applied meaning depends on the context, emphasis, etc. Therefore reading with comprehension assists in understanding the right meaning of words.

Techniques for Effective Comprehension

There are techniques for better comprehension:

- Read the passage to get its general meaning, and note down the main points.
- Read all the questions attentively and look for answers.
- Be precise and to the point in answering the questions.
- Be cautious about the usage of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

This ability can be acquired through intensive and disciplined practice.

Short Reading Passages

I. But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with the preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing; he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him. (from Shooting an Elephant by George Orwell)

1. The phrase 'preoccupied grandmotherly air' signifies
 - A. being totally unconcerned
 - B. pretending to be very busy
 - C. a very superior attitude
 - D. calm, dignified and affectionate disposition
2. From the passage it appears that the author was
 - A. an inexperienced hunter
 - B. kind and considerate
 - C. possessed with fear
 - D. a worried man
3. The author did not want to shoot the elephant because he
 - A. was afraid of it
 - B. did not have the experience of shooting big animals
 - C. did not wish to kill the animal which was not doing anybody any harm
 - D. did not find the elephant to be ferocious

II. Harold, a professional man who had worked in an office for many years, had a fearful dream. In it, he found himself in a land where small slug-like animals with slimy tentacles lived on people's bodies. The people tolerated the loathsome creatures because after many years they grew into elephants which then became the nation's system of transport, carrying everyone wherever they wanted to go. Harold suddenly realised that he himself

was covered with these things, and he woke up screaming. In a vivid sequence of pictures, this dream dramatized for Harold what he had never been able to put in to words; he saw himself as letting society feed on his body in his early years so that it would carry him when he retired. He later threw off the "security bug" and took up freelance work.

1. In his dream Harold found the loathsome creatures
 - A. in his village
 - B. in his own house
 - C. in a different land
 - D. in his office

2. Which one of the following phrases best helps to bring out the precise meaning of 'loathsome creatures'?
 - A. Security bug and slimy tentacles
 - B. Fearful dream and slug-like animals
 - C. Slimy tentacles and slug-like animals
 - D. slug-like animals and security bug

3. The statement that 'he later threw off the security bug' means that
 - A. Harold succeeded in overcoming the need for security
 - B. Harold stopped giving much importance to dreams
 - C. Harold started tolerating social victimisation
 - D. Harold killed all the bugs troubling him

4. Harold's dream was fearful because
 - A. it brought him face to face with reality
 - B. it was full of vivid pictures of snakes
 - C. he saw a huge elephant in it
 - D. in it he saw slimy creatures feeding on people's bodies

Answers:

Passage I - 1. D 2. B 3. B

Passage II - 1.C 2.C 3.A 4.A

References:

- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/baycollege-introbusiness/chapter/effective-communication-inbusiness/>
- <https://bizcommunicationcoach.com/how-to-improve-reading-skills-in-communication-business/>
- <https://virtual-strategy.com/2020/02/23/reading-and-writing-skills-for-businesscommunication/#:~:text=Reading%20and%20writing%20skills%20surely,and%20understand%20what%20they%20mean.&text=After%20you%20distinguish%20what's%20important,painly%20highlight%20it%20in%20documents>
- <https://bookpagez.com/blog/teacher-guide-comprehension-strategy-lesson-plans/>

SESSION 5- ENGLISH PROFICIENCY – ARTICULATION

We are often hear people appreciate others when they speak well, also termed as articulate well. In fact, how well we **articulate** becomes a measure of our perceived intellect, education or knowledge. **Articulation** is how clearly the **speaker** pronounces words. When some sounds are slurred together or dropped out of a word, the word may not be understood by the audience. To use proper **articulation**, a **speaker** must use their articulators: tongue, teeth, and lips. **Diction** and **enunciation** are other terms that refer to the same idea i.e. expression. Consonant and vowels are spoken with standard accepted precision, and serious students and speakers will strive to practice the clarity of their sounds. Proper diction is as integral to the English language as proper spelling, but it takes practice.

For being able to articulate well, one needs to pay attention to the following:

Vocabulary

To be able to articulate well a person also needs to have a good vocabulary. To build vocabulary, it is essential to read and listen to speakers on different subjects to learn more words and phrases. Over a period of time, they will naturally become part of a person's vocabulary.

Pronunciation

Proper **articulation** applied to a given word is that word's **pronunciation**. The pronunciation includes how the vowels and consonants are produced as well as which syllable is emphasized. For generations, speakers depended on “markings” (such as the International Phonetics Alphabet or similar Dictionary Symbols) to discover or decide how words were officially pronounced. One of the best ways to learn pronunciation is with online dictionaries which are readily available. One needs only to “look up” a word and select “play” to hear an audible recording of the official and precise way a word should be pronounced. A mispronounced word will destroys a speaker's credibility, and the audience's attention gets shifted to the incorrectly pronounced word rather than the message. The way we pronounce words and phrase our speech in English are evident from **accents and regional influences on our language**. An accent refers to the degree of prominence of the way syllables are spoken in words with the influence of the native language.

Vocal Quality

The quality of the voice, its **timbre** (distinctive sound) and texture affects audibility and can affect the articulation. Our voices are unique to each of us. It is a result of our physical vocal instrument, including diaphragm, vocal cords, lungs and body mass. Some examples of vocal quality include warm, clear, soft, scratchy, mellow and breathy. Each speaker should practice at maximizing the vocal effect of his instrument, which can be developed with vocal exercises. There are numerous books, recordings and trainers available to develop one's vocal quality when needed. The quality of one's voice is related to its range of pitch. Our vocal quality greatly impacts our delivery of speech and makes it interesting or dull and monotonous. We must therefore work on voice and tone of the **pitch** (highness or lowness) of the voice for impact.

Pauses versus Vocalized Pauses

While speaking, space between phrases, properly planted, gives the audience the opportunity to understand the structure of the speaker's sentences and paragraphs. It also gives time for the audience to "digest" crucial phrases. Generally, spoken sentences and paragraphs need to be simpler and shorter than what can be comprehended by reading. Pauses can help increase comprehension. However, pauses that are filled with "uh's, "um's," etc., which are called **vocalized pauses**, or **fillers**, should be avoided. They can be distracting and annoying, and give the impression of a lack of preparation if used excessively. The use of vocalized pauses may be the result of a habit that deserves an effort to be overcome. Avoid using phrases such as "Uh," "OK?," "y'know", "like..., I mean," "right?"

Suggested YouTube videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdtUjWb0O9w>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mp6-YRrVTwU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bY5ChVDRLus>

References:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/articulation-speech>
<https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/218897/pages/linkedtext54276>
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/publicspeakingprinciples/chapter/chapter-12-vocal-aspects-of-delivery/>

SESSION 6 & 7: PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE WRITING

7 Cs of Effective Communication

The **7 C's of Communication** is a checklist that helps to improve professional communication skills and increases the chance that the message will be understood in exactly the way it was intended.

1. Complete

The message must be complete and include all relevant information.

It helps develop proper understanding

Saves cost, time and energy

Puts the receiver in a comfortable position to make proper deductions. Helps the receiver to make proper decisions. Persuades the receiver.

2. Concise

The message must be precise and to the point.

Saves time and cost.

Focuses on the main idea

It is appealing

It is non-repetitive

3. Considerate

The sender must take into consideration the receiver's opinions, knowledge, mindset, background, etc. in order to effectively communicate. Makes message receiver oriented

Emphasizes on "You approach"

Entails positive reaction from the audience Facilitates better two-way communication

4. Clear

The message should be clear and easily understandable to the recipient.

Makes message easy to understand.

Complete clarity of thoughts and ideas enhances the meaning of the message Clear message makes use of exact, appropriate and correct words.

It avoids redundancy.

5. Concrete

The communication should be concrete, which means the message should be clear and particular, such that no room for misinterpretation is left.

Message is supported by facts and figures. It leads to objectivity

Concrete messages are not misinterpreted

6. Courteous

It implies that the sender must take into consideration both the feelings and viewpoints of the receiver such that the message is positive and focused on the audience.

It shows respect for the receiver. It is not at all biased. It is positive and focused on the audience

7. Correct

The message should be correct, i.e., correct language should be used, and the sender must ensure that there are no grammatical and spelling mistakes.

The message is exact and well-timed and makes appropriate use of language.

Correctness boosts confidence levels. It makes a good impact on the audience. It adds to the beauty of the message.

The Principles of Effective Writing

1. Brevity (Keep it short and simple)

Using short sentences makes it easier for the reader to understand the intended message.

Many writers forget that documents should only be as long as they need to be. We are conditioned to add fluff and explanation beyond what is necessary. We learn to use bigger words when smaller ones will do. We should all exercise brevity. Cut the fat. Cut the length. Trim down the words until you used every word you need to, and not a syllable more. Every long sentence can be broken down into several short, simple sentences.

Example: Incorrect: I like riding horses since horses are very energetic yet, at the same time, caring animals. While the sentence above is quite simple, it can be made even simpler and easier to understand by splitting it into shorter sentences. Correct: I like riding horses. They are very energetic animals. Horses are also very caring.

2. Use short and simple vocabulary / specific words / action words

Simple, clear, easy to read and understand, no excessive poetry. Build your vocabulary of ACTION WORDS (Accomplish, conduct, assign, complete, contribute, generate, identify, implement, plan, supervise, facilitate, complete, execute, delegate etc).

3. Write coherent sentences

Make sure each sentence is complete and devoted to one topic. Do not include information that is not related to the main topic of the sentence. Example: Incorrect: I like reading, horse riding, and I also work as a security guard. The sentence above is about one's hobbies. Yet, the last part, "I also work as a security guard", seems to be related to one's occupation (and not hobbies). Therefore, this last part does not belong to this sentence. A new sentence should be created to discuss one's occupation.

Correct: I work as a security guard. In my spare time I like reading and horse riding.

Prefer short sentences to Long, Compound, and Complex sentences.

4. Write coherent paragraphs (maintain consistency and continuity).

One paragraph is one unit of thought. Do not include sentences that are not related to the main thought into the paragraph. Example: Incorrect: My hobbies are reading and horse riding. I like reading novels and science fiction. I read at least one book every month.

Riding horses is another hobby that I enjoy. Every weekend I jump on my horse and steer

it into the desert. The desert in Arizona is quite different from the desert in New Mexico. The paragraph above discusses one's hobbies. This is the main topic or theme of the paragraph. The last sentence ("The desert in Arizona is quite different from the desert in New Mexico") deviates from this main topic. This sentence has to be removed from the paragraph.

5.Be specific

If one mentions something in writing, the reader needs to know exactly what is being discussed. Otherwise, do not mention this at all. Being specific does not mean increasing the length of the writing by adding many details. It is more about using precise terms and being factual.

Incorrect: Several organizational units are currently facing certain issues with respect to the new managerial approaches implemented by the new leadership.

There is much ambiguity in this message. The sentence above should be rewritten to include specific details.

Correct: The new President decreased budgets for the IT and Marketing departments. As a result, both departments laid off people and cancelled all new projects.

6.Structure the writing (Take care of the flow, thought process and paragraph structure)

Any written message should have a simple and clear logical structure. A well-structured message has a "built-in" roadmap for the reader to follow. This roadmap has enough signs and clues that help a reader to travel from start (no understanding of writer's ideas) to finish (complete understanding of the writer's ideas).

One should always put some thought into the structure of a paragraph or a report.

Example:

Question: Why do you like living in Murray?

Answer:

I like living in Murray because of (sub-point 1) great weather and (sub-point 2) wonderful people.

Explain the statement by breaking it down into two sub points and discussing each of the sub points in more detail. For each of the sub points, you can provide additional details to make your sub-points more understandable.

Explanation of sub-point 1:

It is sunny and warm in Murray all year around.

Murray has clear skies 300 days a year. Murray's average annual temperature is 20 degrees Celsius

Explanation of sub-point 2:

People are friendly and helpful in Murray.

People smile at me whenever I go out. People in Murray are always ready to help if I get lost in the city.

Conclusion:

The weather and people make Murray a perfect place to live in

I like living in Murray because of (1) great weather and (2) wonderful people.

First of all, the weather is great in Murray. It is sunny and warm in Murray all year around. Murray has clear skies 300 days a year. Murray's average annual temperature is 20 degrees Celsius.

Secondly, people are friendly and helpful in Murray. Strangers on the street smile at me whenever we make eye contact. When I get lost, people on the street are always willing to give me directions. Weather and people make Murray a perfect place to live in. Everyone should visit Murray.

7. Put important things first

The essence of the message should be stated upfront. The first part of the message should contain not only the main idea, but also a brief justification as to why the message is important. Clearly articulating the importance of the message can motivate the readers to understand and remember the message. All the details, clarifications and examples should follow the main message, not precede it.

Incorrect: It is easy to “bury” the main message among the numerous details. A reader may not have time or may not be patient enough to cut through a lengthy introduction. Thus, the main message will never be delivered. That is why the essence of the message should be provided up front. Correct: The essence of the message should be provided up front. Otherwise, the main message may never be delivered. It is easy to “bury” the main message among the numerous details. A reader may not have time or may not be patient enough to cut through a lengthy introduction.

8. Pay attention to spelling, grammar and capitalization

Why should anyone pay attention to a message from someone who does not know the correct spelling of the words he is using or simply does not care enough to proofread his or her text?

It is important to master some of the most important rules of grammar. These rules help deliver the message correctly. Grammatical errors distract the reader from understanding the intended message.

Capitalization is meant to show that a particular word or a group of words is special.

Typically, capitalization is used to show that certain words are proper nouns.

9. Know your audience.

Your greeting and sign-off should be consistent with the level of respect and formality of the person you're communicating with. Also, write for the person who will be reading it - if they tend to be very polite and formal, write in that language. The same goes for a receiver who tends to be more informal and relaxed. Feelings, relationship, point of view, purpose of the message, time available with the reader all need to be taken into consideration.

10. Avoid sexist wording.

Writers recognize the problems with sexist language, but finding solutions is not always easy. Many times, writing in a non-sexist way seems very awkward and disrupts the flow of the writing. The best way to deal with the problem is to re-write the entire sentence; in other words, express your idea in a different way.

Assumption: All subjects are male.

E.g.: When a student writes a paper, he must proofread carefully.

Such a sentence assumes that all students are male. To fix the sentence, we must include both genders in the category of "student." There are several ways to approach this.

An easy solution to this problem is to use "he or she" instead of "he." However, this technique can be deadly if overused:

When a student writes a paper, he or she should use the spellchecker on his or her computer.

The abbreviations "he/she" and "s/he" fall into the same category as "he or she." You can employ them, but sparingly; the same holds for the substitution of "one" for "he."

Overuse of these techniques makes the writing infuriating to read.

Recommended Solution A:

To solve the problem gracefully, try making the subject of the sentence plural:

When students write their papers, they should use the spellcheckers on their computers. The plural subject "students" now includes both genders, and the sentence retains its meaning without sounding awkward.

Recommended Solution B:

Another way to erase sexist language is to substitute a noun subject instead of a pronoun.

Example: Ask him to define the thesis.

Solution: Ask the writer to define the thesis.

11. Prefer active voice to the passive voice.

Because active-voice sentences are clearer, livelier, and often more concise than passive-voice sentences, most people prefer the active voice in their writing.

English verbs have two voices: active voice and passive voice. In active voice, the person acting is clear: "The manager wrote the report yesterday." The person acting is the manager.

In passive voice, the person acting isn't specified: "The report was written yesterday." It could have been written by the secretary, the manager, or Albert Einstein—we don't know.

The sentence is still in passive voice if the actor is specified later in the sentence: "The report was written yesterday by the manager."

Passive voice makes the writing unclear by keeping the identity of the actor secret. At times the identity is obvious, but often it isn't. Even if the reader has an idea of who the actor is, passive voice creates weak sentences that don't communicate immediately and emphatically.

12. Style and Grace

Achieve elegance in your writing by varying sentences and balancing length, structure, meaning, sound.

13. The you attitude

The 'you attitude' is writing style that emphasizes readers rather than the writer. Their desires, problems, circumstances, emotions and probable reactions are to be taken into consideration. Business letters must be written from 'you viewpoint' instead of 'I or we viewpoint'. You viewpoint emphasizes reader's interest and helps to win the reader's mind and attention.

Frequently Made Mistakes in Business Writing

Getting it right: The ten most common business writing mistakes and how to avoid them

1. Typos, poor punctuation and grammatical errors

Avoid careless mistakes at all costs. Check and then recheck and then ask a colleague to check again. Sub editing is difficult and another set of eyes often spots something that you haven't.

2. Management speak and buzz words

People are tired of reading about 'synergy' and 'high performance'. 'Cutting edge' or 'innovative' products and services are two-a-penny these days, so these words are a real turn off. Create jargon-free documents that are useful and speak directly to your reader.

3. Forgetting the reader

Rather than just focusing on 'getting it written', spare a thought for the reader first. What information do they want; in what form; with how much detail? What is the main message to leave them with? Plan and structure your document based on what the client needs. Only then should you begin to write it.

4. Long words and elaborate phrases

Clear and concise content gets a message across. Don't be blunt, yet keep your work simple and stick to the point. Intellectual doesn't have to mean incomprehensible.

5. Complex sentences

Write clear and straight forward sentences and avoid unnecessary punctuation, which may trip the reader up.

6. Poor planning

Decide what information is essential, what information is desirable and what information is not necessary. Then prioritize your work in that order.

7. Failing to make an impression

A strong introduction will grab the reader's attention; a good conclusion will leave a lasting impact.

8. Too much text

White space is good; it makes a document appear easier to read. Ideally a document should be 50 per cent text and 50 per cent images or white space. Too much text, a bad choice of fonts and font size as well as insufficient line spacing can prevent a reader from reading content.

9. Abbreviations: Certain abbreviations and acronyms may be acceptable and common knowledge within an organization, but don't take it for granted that anyone outside the organization will understand them. Clarity and explanation are not patronizing – it is both empowering and makes a document easier and more enjoyable to read.

10. Being vague

Quantify statements wherever possible. Don't make claims like, 'It is widely understood that...'. Say who understands it. Vague statements lack impact and are open to misinterpretation.

How to Write Bad News Messages?

Bad news messages are those messages that contain something unpleasant, unsatisfactory or negative, which may shock the user or give a little stress. In all cases, delivering these messages is more beneficial than not delivering, because it might clear the perception of the reader. Usually, it is not as easy to deliver a bad news message as delivering a good news message is. Though bad news messages are not pleasant, they are really important to moving forward, and below are a few conditions that might demand bad message delivery.

Informing the candidate about rejection of their job application and not to wait anymore

Telling the customers that shipment will be late due to a specified reason

Not providing requested information to queries because of restrictions

There are also many other cases in which bad news will be given. Generally, two types of strategies i.e. direct and indirect are used in delivering bad news messages, but mostly indirect is an excellent option to follow to organize the message. In an Indirect Pattern, there are four steps to be considered prior to writing the message.

These four parts are:

- Buffer,
- Reasons (relative to bad news)
- Clear information about the bad news, or giving the bad news
- A friendly, supportive and positive end

Buffers

Buffers play a vital role in preparing the reader for hearing the bad news and controlling the emotions. It emphasizes on developing a soft thought in the mind of the reader and

prevents the bad news from ruining the mood. The buffer does not mean giving good news to the reader in the beginning and that afterwards the reader gets angry while reading the bad news. It is trying to put the reader in the mood of accepting the bad news and to act very gently. There are some restrictions to be followed when writing a buffer as follows:

- Avoid saying no to the reader because getting entire bad news in the beginning may receive a negative response
- Don't use the tone, which makes the reader to know everything ?????
- Avoid using unnecessary sentences or irrelevant phrases
- Do not apologize

Reasons

Proper reasoning is the second step and the main part of the indirect pattern. After putting a nice buffer, introducing reasons will not be hard. In the reason part, the main cause of bad news is explained. Be concise and write to the point, so that the reader remains patient. Defining the appropriate reasons for making such a decision is important and also writing it effectively will make the reader understand the justification, fairness and logic of the decision.

Do not apologize to the reader. If there is not a single fault from the side of the company, then apologizing might create negative thoughts in the mind of the reader. Like good news messages, bad news messages also require the writer to keep a nice, influential tone, so that the message will be less stressful. Finally, building new tactics daily, and writing bad news with proper buffers and reasons helps to create a good relationship through effective communication.

Positive Ending / Closing:

After giving the bad news, now is the time to write some complimentary positive words to reduce the stress created by the news on the mind of the reader. It is up to the writer to write whatever seems good, but avoiding a couple of things will be of much benefit, such as:

Do not mention the bad news or refer to it again

Avoid doing unnecessary communication ??????

Avoid giving any expectations and close the matter.

Good News Messages – Types of Good News Messages (November 20, 2015 by Umar Farooq)

Probably people think that good news messages are easy to deliver as these messages have positive impact on the readers. In business communication, delivering messages possesses enough importance as it has a direct impact on business relations. No matter what, whether the message is good, bad or neutral, it should be delivered properly in a

complete formal structure and professional language. Good news messages carry positive news and by their nature they have a positive impact on a relationship. There are different types of good news messages and before sending good news messages, having sufficient knowledge about ways, forms and effects of the good news message can be really helpful. A Good News Message is a message which contains positive news and receives a professional response from the reader. Commonly, delivering these messages is very convenient because they contain the objectives that offer comfort to a reader and leave a pleasant thought. To enhance the beauty of these messages, writing in effective professional language along with decent words and formal structure are basic things that we need to know.

These messages should let the reader feel good, and understand what the reader has offered to deserve such a pretty message. In short, when delivering a good news message, the writer should possess a positive tone and write with positive words as far as possible. Whether the message is being delivered in writing or orally, it should contain a positive tone combined with natural thought.

Types of Good News Messages

There are multiple types of Good News Messages that include Thanks You Messages, Congratulation Messages, Recommendation Messages, Inquiries and Goodwill Messages. For making an impact, a message should be written according to its form. Further, each form contains various symbols and signs. Necessary information and importance of forms of good news messages is provided below to clarify the perception of forms.

Thank You Messages

In these types of good news messages, a message should be written in the form of Thank You because it is sure to receive a positive response as well as being good for strengthening relationships. Follow the structure and let the receiver feel important, as in:

- Start with good news
- Give additional information regarding what the receiver did that you are appreciating
- End with such compliments that leave an impact on the receiver

Congratulation Messages make a quick impression on the reader and create goodwill. The reader may not be sure about receiving congratulations, so this will surely earn extra points. Offer Congrats for a particular achievement. Show your sincerity by providing a few details.

Make an impact on the receiver with a good ending.

Recommendation Messages

These types of good news messages should be written with a good news strategy. Starting with an excellent introduction and ending with effective words

Introduce the candidate/job and the benefits

Mention facts related to the person/position

Offer to provide additional information and close the message

Inquiries Messages

The main aim of these types of good news messages is to ask information for specific services or products.

Clearly describe the request in the beginning

To get a positive response, do include sufficient details

Close after providing required details

Goodwill Messages

The actual purpose of writing a goodwill message is to form an excellent personal relationship with the reader and the reader should feel the importance of this message.

The goodwill message is required to be written in a professional way.

For encouraging the receiver to keep doing good work

To appreciate efforts of an employee

Thanking supplier for providing special services

For having long term support and a productive relationship

For saying thanks to the speaker

For accepting donations sent by the writer

To a business enthusiast, having knowledge about good news messages possesses huge importance, because delivering a good news message in an appropriate way may build an effective relationship with the reader.

Things to be Consider before Sending Good News Messages First of all, it is really important to know your audience. It allows you to choose the right way, style and format of writing. On the basis of audience, three things should be considered: Profession, Education, Age

A good form of writing is being sincere, writing everything in detail and easy to understand, not crossing the limits, putting satisfactory compliments and offering exactly what is promised. Avoid using informal words, and promising more than is possible may ruin the message or will make it ineffective.

7 Key Tips for Writing Etiquette

- **Be Clear & Concise:** When writing, whether it be an email, text, or business report, aim to be brief, concise, and to the point.
- **Use Proper Salutations:** Unless it's a close friend, don't start an email saying "hey". *Always address the recipient by their job title or position, especially if they are a higher authority.* This shows respect and acknowledgment of their accomplishments and they will be more likely to listen to you.
- **Avoid Negative, Sarcastic, or Overly-Humorous Tones:** It's extremely easy for misunderstandings to happen if your writing tone displays any of these
- **Avoid Emojis:** There is no reason to use emojis in your writing to appear professional.
- **Include a Conversational/Complimentary Closer:** *Once you complete writing your content, always include a conversational/complimentary closer.* Some common closers include: "Best Regards", "Best", "Regards", "Best Wishes", "Yours sincerely", "Yours faithfully" etc.
- **Respond in a Timely Manner:** Each type of writing has its own "unspoken" expected time of reply. *Unless you are given a deadline, aim to respond to others as soon as possible.* Remember, *time is money!*
- **Respect & Value Privacy -** always make sure that the information you share on the internet, even private messaging, is professional and respectful. Once something is on the internet, it's there forever.

Etiquette plays an important role in all cultures. The better you understand it and how to apply it, the more successfully you can thrive.

We live in a digital age where more communication is done by means of text, email, and instant messages. There is an art to writing effectively and getting your desired results. This includes writing in a way that will leave a positive impression on your recipients.

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SESSIONS 8 and 9 MEMORANDUM

Introduction

A memo, short for memorandum, is usually a small piece of written information used in business environments for interoffice communication. Its core purpose is to give instructions or serve as a reminder of events, actions or decisions. The primary motive behind memo writing is to broadcast information to a large group of people. It could be something as insignificant as informing the staff that the cafeteria will be shut for a couple of days or something significant like a change in the organizational structure. Some organisations use the memo format for short reports which are circulated within the organisation.

Traditionally, one would print out a memo and distribute it to the relevant parties inside the small business. Today, many people choose to send a memo as an email message.

Advantages

Some advantages of using a memo are as follows:

- They are a very cost-effective way of mass communication. And their transmission is also very cheap.
- Another advantage is its simplicity. They are very simple to write and understand.
- Memos tend to be brief and to the point. They also reach a lot of people. So, they are very time-saving as well.
- They also serve as evidence in case of a dispute

Usually, we write a memo for one of the following five reasons

- As a reminder
- Highlight an event or circumstance
- To recount an event
- Keep an official record of anything
- To pass information or instructions

Format of a Memo

When communicating with colleagues and other internal stakeholders through a memorandum, it is important to use the proper format. Understanding the correct memo format can help you communicate information more efficiently and professionally. Memos are distinguished by a header that includes TO, FROM, DATE and SUBJECT LINE. The order of the items can vary. Many organisations have their own style preferences on these issues. If not, the order listed above is the most common.

To: Include recipients' name. If there are several recipients it is acceptable to use a group name such as “All Employees” or “Personnel Committee Members”

From: Include your name and title

Date: Month Day, Year (The date on which the memo is distributed.)

Subject: Subject of the memo. Make it specific so that readers can immediately identify the topic

A memo requires no salutation

The flow of a memo should be as follows:

Introduction: Start with a direct and brief introduction that states the reason for writing the memo.

Discussion: Provide concise but detailed information to the reader

Conclusion: End with a clear closing and a call-to-action.

Most people prefer to leave the bottom of the memo blank. You do not have to add closing remarks such as “Sincerely Yours” or a from line, since it already appears at the top of the memo. Traditionally, the writer initials or signs first name only – Full signatures are almost never used – after or over their name on the FROM line of the original memo. Additional copies are usually left unsigned. Bottom notes, if needed, are added under the body of the memo and aligned with the left margin.

Some tips to help you write a memo

1. **Keep it crisp:** It is best to write in an extremely crisp, to the point, business-like tone. Memos are often used for internal company communications. You don't want to waste your colleagues' time with niceties or by being overly

conversational. Avoid using emotional language—such as, “I would be happy if everyone took turns cleaning the microwave in the break room”—because you might rub people up the wrong way. The same goes for writing IN ALL CAPS or using exclamation points, especially if the memorandum is conveying news that may upset people.

2. **Present the main point:** It is always better to be straightforward and to share information as quickly as possible. The memorandum’s message should start with a declaration of purpose: “I am writing to inform you...” “The purpose of this memo is to...” Then summarise the information relevant to the matter at hand. You can close the memo with a call to action, repeating the request you made at the beginning of the memo.
3. **Run a grammar and spelling check:** Make sure to give the grammar and spelling in the memo a thorough check. Also choose easy-to-read fonts such as Times New Roman or Arial.
4. **Length of a memo:** Less is more as far as a memo is concerned. Get to the point quickly so that people can take the action you are asking of them. If your memo does run over one page, it’s best to split the memo by using headings to make it easier for people to understand.

Some memo samples

Example 1

To: All Staff
From: Raj Malhotra, Manager - RM
Date: May 27, 2010
Subject: Inappropriate use of time on Google Doodle games

It has come to my attention that many in the office have been spending time on the Google home page microgames. This memo is a reminder to use your work hours for work. According to a recent article, the estimated daily cost of people collectively playing these games instead of working is over \$120 million—which is calculated based on the daily average increased time spent on the Google home page (36 seconds). If these estimates are applied to our 600 office employees, this results in a nearly \$700 weekly loss.

This is a conservative estimate considering the extensive discussions that occur about beating the office’s current high score. The extra cost quickly adds up.

I encourage a fun and competitive environment, and I recognize that we certainly won’t be profitable if you are unhappy or dissatisfied with your jobs. This is just a reminder to be careful with your use of company time.

Example 2

To: All employees
From: Bridget Paul, VP, Production Department
Subject: Periodic Factory Maintenance
Date: September 21, 2017

I'm writing to inform you that the next periodic factory maintenance will start on September 27, 2017, and last for the next three weeks.

As we continue to create new products and increase our production volume, we feel it is necessary to keep our facilities in the best conditions to ensure conducive working conditions for our staff, meet customer expectations and hit our revenue targets.

During the periodic maintenance, we will shut down one factory each week and increase the shifts at the two operational facilities to meet our production quotas. We have made adequate arrangements for overtime bonuses and already discussed with heads of departments and team leaders on ways to maintain staff efficiency and productivity within the period of maintenance.

If you have concerns or questions regarding the scheduled factory maintenance, kindly contact the human resources department. Meanwhile, we are sorry for any inconvenience that may result from this operation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Example 3 (Lengthy memo)

To: Kelly Anderson, Marketing Executive

From: Jonathon Fitzgerald, Market Research Assistant

Date: June 14, 2007

Subject: Fall Clothes Line Promotion

Market research and analysis shows that the proposed advertising media for the new fall lines need to be reprioritized and changed. Findings from focus groups and surveys have made it apparent that we need to update our advertising efforts to align them with the styles and trends of young adults today. No longer are young adults interested in sitcoms as they watch reality television shows. Also, it has become increasingly important to use the internet as a tool to communicate with our target audience to show our dominance in the clothing industry.

Internet Advertising

XYZ Company needs to focus advertising on internet sites that appeal to young people. According to surveys, 72% of our target market uses the internet for five hours or more per week. The following list shows in order of popularity the most frequented sites:

- Google
- Facebook
- Myspace
- EBay
- iTunes

Shifting our efforts from our other media sources such as radio and magazine to these popular internet sites will more effectively promote our product sales. Young adults are spending more and more time on the internet downloading music, communicating and researching for homework and less and less time reading paper magazines and listening to the radio. As the trend is for cultural icons to go digital, so must our marketing plans.

Television Advertising

It used to be common to advertise our products on shows like *Friends* and *Seinfeld* for our target audience, but even the face of television is changing. Young adults are tuning into reality television shows for their entertainment. Results from the focus group show that our target audience is most interested in shows like *American Idol*, *The Apprentice*, and *America's Next Top Model*. The only non-reality television show to be ranked in the top ten most commonly watched shows by males and females 18-25 is *Desperate Housewives*. At Blue Incorporated, we need to focus our advertising budget on reality television shows and reduce the amount of advertising spent on other programs.

By refocusing the advertising efforts of our new line of clothing, we will be able to maximize the exposure of our product to our target market and therefore increase our sales. Tapping into the trends of young adults will help us gain market share and sales through effective advertising.

Example 4

To: Fintech sales team

From: Janet Underwood, Head of Sales

Date: May 20, 2018

Subject: Sales quota achievement

I am writing to congratulate you on the commendable efforts and energy you put into delivering on your team's sales quota for the last quarter.

Your team showed exemplary product knowledge, customer service, negotiation skills and collaboration that is worth emulating by other teams and departments in the company.

Thanks for your dedication and commitment to excellence. We will send your bonus checks and letters of commendation by the end of the week.

Congratulations on this achievement!

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SESSION 10 - LETTER WRITING

Introduction

Communication plays a vital role in all facets of a business today. The success of any organization depends on the ability of managers and employees to communicate effectively not only with each other, but with people outside the organization as well. This communication occurs in many forms. It can be informal or formal, written or spoken.

The focus of this topic is letter writing. Corporate executives write letters to their colleagues, people in other organizations, customers, suppliers etc. By writing effective letters they achieve various business goals such as maintaining liaisons with stakeholders, getting a new project, or successfully running operations. To increase both your and your organization's productivity, it is important that you pay attention to various components of the letter such as its structure, layout, form and language.

Format of Business Letters

Business letter should be typed and printed on good stationary and preferably on a letterhead. It gives a good impression and draws attention in the first visual itself. The neat font style and font size with the desired space between the paragraphs makes the business letter legible. In short, the appearance of a letter is as important as the content that follows.

•**The Heading**

Most organisations use letterheads for business correspondence. It contains the writer's address and the date of the letter. The writer's name is not included and only a date is needed in the headings on the letterhead stationery.

Example:

SunVin Training Solutions
267, Ghokle Marg, Mumbai – 400 058

Phone no: (022) 23732447

Fax: (022) 25454534

Email: sales@sunvin.com

•**Dateline**

Sample 1: 13 March 2014

Sample 2: March 13, 2014

•**The Inside Address**

This lists the person's name and business address that you are writing to. The inside address appears after the date on the left-hand side of the page. It should follow this format:

Name

Title (if applicable)

Name of business or company

Street or postal address

City or town, state or province, pin code or postal code

Country name (if applicable)

Example:

Ms Sangeeta Rao
Vice President
Sunvin Training Solutions
267 Ghokle Marg
Mumbai – 4000 028

• **The Salutation**

The salutation directly addresses the recipient of the letter and is followed by a comma.

Example:

Dear Mr. Kumar, (formal)

Dear Sir, or Madam/Ma'am, (if the person's name is not known)

• **Body of the Message**

State the main business, purpose, or subject matter right away. Let the reader know from the very first sentence what your letter is about. Remember that when business people open a letter, their first concern is to know what the letter is about, what its purpose is, and why they must spend their time reading it. Therefore, avoid roundabout beginnings. If you are writing to apply for a job, begin with something like this: "I am writing to apply for the position you currently have open. "

• **The Complimentary Close:**

This is where the letter ends. Make sure to have an appropriate sign-off. Use "Yours faithfully" when you begin a letter with "Dear Sir/Madam," and use "Yours sincerely" when you know the person's name to whom you are writing.

• **The Signature Block**

Usually, you type your name four lines below the complimentary close and sign your name in between. Whenever possible, include your title or the name of the position you hold just below your name **Example:**

Your name typed: Ms Satya Daval

Your title typed: Director of Human Resources

• **End notations**

Just below the signature block are often several abbreviations or phrases that have important functions. They are as follows:

Enclosures: To make sure that the recipient knows that items accompany the letter in the same envelope, use such indications as "Enclosure," "Encl.," "Enclosures (2)." For example, if you send a resume and writing sample with your application letter, you would do

this: "Encl.: Resume and Writing Sample." If the enclosure is lost, the recipient will know. **Copies:** If you send copies of a letter to others, indicate this fact among the end notations also. If, for example, you plan to send a copy to your lawyer, write something like this: "cc: Mr. Sumit Raheja, Attorney.

Sessions 11 & 12: Letter writing

‘A bad beginning makes a bad ending.’ – Euripides

A well written piece is like a tasty snack. It can be an article or even a business letter. It should essentially serve your purpose.

Letter writing is essential to many business tasks: it may be for selling a product by mail, answer queries from potential customers, or either just make or accept an offer in clear, binding terms. A well-constructed letter can help you to win new business and to improve and develop a relationship with clients.

All good writing follows the same principles - you must have already finished learning ‘Principles of effective writing.’ Business letters are formal letters, unlike personal letters written to friends or family.

The good advice you can always count on is to ‘be clear, be brief and be human.’

How should you begin your letters?

All of you would have read letters that begin something like – ‘with reference to,’ ‘my letter dated,’ ‘with respect to’ and something like – ‘we beg to state,’ ‘I humbly acknowledge.’

You can trace the origins of these beginnings to the times of the British in India. The letters which begin like this are false starts and waste the time of readers, as these beginnings add little value. For example:

Dear Mr.Raj,
We refer to your recent application, in which you requested a substantial rise in remuneration. We wish to advise that the matter is under consideration.

Notice how stilted and pompous this reply is, and when Mr. Raj receives this letter, he may have to read it more than once to understand its meaning.

How then should the application be acknowledged?

If it’s a small organization the reply might read like this.

Dear Raj,
Your application for a salary rise is before me now. I will make a decision early next week after reviewing sales figures and accounts. I will let you know what the decision is as soon as I can.
Yours
Swati

If the organization is a large one, where the applicant and the HR manager don't know each other, then the reply may read like this –

Dear Mr. Raj,

Sub: Application for salary increase

The Board of Management, which regularly reviews salaries, will be meeting at the end of this month. Your application will be considered then, and I will let you know the Board's decision as soon as possible.

Regards

Swati

It is always better to avoid elaborate and meaningless acknowledgements of a letter. The letter should be reader oriented and get to the point quickly. You may remember many emails and letters you had skipped because they were too long or the sender did not stay on the most important message to be conveyed. It is necessary that you remember, while writing for business, that time is of utmost value and you must prioritize the reader's interests always.

This will ensure that your letters will be read every time.

Think before you write

You must know what you want to achieve, before you begin a letter. Some important points to consider may be:

- Read more than once any previous letter received by you from the person you are writing to. Make a note of all the information like facts and figures.
- The main purpose of the letter – is it to inform, instruct, clarify or reject a request? Be firm about the reason to write/why you are writing.
- Is there a secondary purpose too? Should you suggest an alternative, propose a new idea, etc.?
- Set aside a time to write as it needs good planning and concentration.
- It is a good practice to make notes as you plan. This helps you to think clearly and be natural while you write the letter.

Plan your letter

The main text of the business letter has three parts, which are usually fixed. You can use them to plan your letter.

- Reasons for writing the letter
- The facts that you are presenting
- What do you expect the reader to do for you?

In some letters there may be an extra part - for example if you are following up for payment of services.

- What would the consequences be in the event of not receiving a response to your letter?

The draft of the letter

Now you are ready to draft your letter. Get to the point straight away. Say what you have to say, and remember the best letters are the ones which give the most information in the shortest time and are easy, simple to read.

Opening:

Be clear and get to the subject matter in the first paragraph you write. Convince the reader why he/she should read your letter.

The body of the letter:

The basic rule is to follow the three parts of the letter, given earlier – your reason for writing, the facts that you are presenting, what you want the other person to do for you. Present the facts in a logical order.

Keep your sentences and paragraphs short.

It helps to separate out items:

Example-

1. We are launching a new range of skincare products, which are plant based and cruelty free, and we are giving a twenty percent discount to our existing customers in the first two weeks
2. We are excited to announce our new range of skincare products.
 - Plant based and cruelty free
 - Discount offers for existing customers
 - Offer of twenty percent discount in the first two weeks

The letters written to convey bad news have to be written with extra care. Convey the unpleasant information as early and as directly in the beginning of the letter. Offer your sincere apologies if required and be willing to suggest options to decrease the discomfort caused. Use the personal touch by addressing them by their names and be sympathetic and understanding. Be careful enough to not overdo it, and stay firm.

This gives you a good foundation to start writing letters confidently.

Sessions 13 &14: Claims/complaints and responses

You may have to write letters of claims/complaints and adjustments at some point of time in your workplace. It is always better to speak in person or on the phone in the first place. However, if you should write then be tactful about it.

A letter sent by a customer to a business or agency to identify a problem with a product or service is known as a claim letter. It is also known as a letter of complaint.

A claim letter is written to put forward a request for adjustment, such as a refund, replacement, or payment for damages. A reply to such a claim letter is called an adjustment letter.

A claim letter should generally contain the following elements-

- (i) Give a clear explanation of what has gone wrong. You must give complete information so that a quick identification of the defective product or faulty service is possible. In the case of a product, details such as the exact date of

purchase and arrival, the amount paid, order number, colour, size, model number, make, etc. are helpful in making a re-check by the supplier easier.

- (ii) Explain the inconvenience caused or the loss suffered as a result of the mistake or defect.
- (iii) Make an appeal to the reader's sense of fair play, honesty, reputation or professional pride with a view to motivating him/her to take necessary action promptly to rectify the situation. Be wise not to accuse or use bad language or get aggressive.
- (iv) Be willing to suggest what adjustment you would consider fair.

A threat, or hinting what you would do in case your claim is not accepted, may lead to unpleasant situations.

The characteristics of a good claim letter is one where you are clear with unmistakable language.. A poorly written claim letter is likely to be given little consideration.

If you plan to write a claim letter which will definitely receive a response, follow the steps given below-

1. State precisely what is wrong.
2. Make it easy to trace by providing definite dates, invoice numbers, etc.
3. Make an attempt to suggest a remedy, or adjustment.
4. Address the person by name who you think is responsible for attending your claim.

Addressing letters of claim

Dealing with complaints

Needless to say, how you answer a complaint depends entirely on whether you think it is justified or not. If you are not sure, it is better to buy some time.

Some general principles for handling letters of claim are-

Always address the complainants by name.

See to it that it is signed by an important person with a good rank, eg; the sales director or senior manager rather than a junior executive. This will greatly help to smoothen the ruffled feathers.

Thank the person for bringing the matter to your attention.

Avoid blaming the complainant or your company.

Be sympathetic and understanding.

Offer a complimentary product or service and make sure the relationship is not strained.

Sometimes it becomes important that a downright apology is given in response. Admit your mistake, explain the reason compellingly and explain what you action you will take to resolve the matter.

Look at the following example of a response letter to a claim received. Here the claim is fully accepted and a favourable situation is created.

Dear Sreeja,

I am writing in answer to your letter of 9th July.

Let me apologize on behalf of Fast & Quick Courier Services, for the delay in the delivery of your regular monthly parcel. The parcel seemed to have been sent to a different delivery centre by mistake. This became apparent when the parcel wasn't picked up by the delivery personnel and remained in the store room for three days.

As a result of this incident, a new sorting procedure has been put in place by us. We hope that you received your parcel intact.

Please accept our offer to deliver your next monthly parcel at a reduced rate. The details will be mailed to you. We hope to serve you well and to your satisfaction in the future too.

Best regards

There may be instances when the only practical possibility is a partial acceptance of the claim. You would deal with such a situation by answering positively to the claim letter and offer your sympathies. Promise to settle the damages but firmly state that a total replacement of the product or service will be against the company policy. End on a positive note and express genuinely that you value the customer.

There is another rather trying situation wherein the claim is rejected. It is necessary that you deal with such instances with a lot of patience. The letter can be written in a passive voice/tone and further discourage any communication on the same matter.

The letters of rejection should be written with a lot of tact which convey that you don't agree with the complaint.

Dear Ms. Simran,

Thank you for your letter of 8th July, where you have expressed your disapproval of the treatment given to you and your friends at our restaurant.

I was distressed to know that our loyal customers had been treated in this way. I had ordered an immediate inquiry. I have spoken to the manager and two of his waiters who were working that evening. I have to say that their account differs from your report of the incident.

The high spirited behaviour of you and your friends celebrating your success is understandable. But the customers around who had checked in for a quiet evening were not very pleased with the singing and dancing.

The manager assured me that no more force was applied than necessary to persuade your group to leave. The waiters have been polite but firm in their behaviour and this has been confirmed by the manager.

I therefore regret that I cannot agree that you were treated badly by our staff. I shall of course be happy to hear anything else you wish to say on the matter. We hope you continue to choose our venue in the future too.

Regards

Manish Sharma

Session 15 : Email writing

Basics of an email

Emailing is the primary method with which you keep in contact with your customers in business. Though it seems simple, if done incorrectly it can seem very daunting.

Make sure you have a professional sounding email address.

The structure of an email is –

1. **Subject line** – It should introduce the subject of the email and help to focus the attention of the reader. It should be as clear and as specific as possible.

Ex: Requesting a product catalogue

Ex: Postponement of the meeting

2. **Greeting** - Keep it formal and not too familiar. Mind the Mr and Ms always. If you are not sure, then use their work titles like Professor, Director, CEO etc

3. **Email Text**- This contains all the details. Remember not to make it too long. Long emails are usually not read in full. The blocks of text discourage the reader to read the email fully. Include essential details and keep it brief. Divide the text into paragraphs of three to four sentences. Keep the requests to one or two. Do not blame or complain, and keep it professional.

4. **Closing** - Add regards or best regards, nothing more at the end. Sign with just your name in full, no title. Add any contact details the reader may need to know.

Always proof read before you send the email. If you are in your first job, it is always better you get your colleague to read some important emails you may have to send.

Be brief in what you write and use your own words and message. Remember, the principles of effective writing hold good even in email writing. Don't use flowery language for professional emails. Do not clutter the email with unnecessary words. Be consistent with your style.

Be courteous in your messages and read it several times to make sure you are using the tone and expression you want to use. You have to get familiar with the features of Gmail, Yahoo or whichever platform you choose to send emails from.

And last but not the least, use the online writing services to practice and improve your email writing skills. The email is here to stay because it is extremely convenient to share very little or a huge amount of information. So, train yourselves to write good, professional emails that will essentially be read.

Email writing remains a critical skill today and will continue to be important in the near future.

Session 16 &17: Agenda and Minutes of a meeting

Meetings are conducted for various reasons. It can be for sharing information, taking decisions, brainstorming or for reviewing business activities.

There are four main kinds of documentation needed for meetings:

1. The notice of the meeting
2. Agenda of the meeting
3. Any material to be circulated before the meeting that needs to be read, like reports
4. Minutes of the meeting

Notice of the meeting

The notice of the meeting has to be sent to all the members who have to attend the meeting. It is usually sent on email these days. You should ensure each member gets the notice/invitation of the meeting. The notice contains details like names of the members, the kind of meeting to be held, date, time and venue of the meeting and the name of the person who has called for the meeting. The agenda of the meeting is usually enclosed with the notice.

Agenda of the meeting

Meetings are made effective with well planned agendas. It is like a road map which tells the members where they are going. It is a good practice to limit the points to only those which can be properly covered in the meeting duration planned.

A formal and lengthy meeting may include the following items in the agenda:

1. Election of chairman and officers
2. Secretary's reading of notice of the meeting
3. Secretary's reading of minutes of last meeting

4. Matters arising from last meeting
5. Chairman's opening remarks
6. Matters adjourned from previous meeting
7. Motions- with names of proposers and seconders
8. Any other business
9. Date of next meeting
10. Vote of thanks

The agenda should contain the important and complicated matters at the top of the list. Structure each category or section of the agenda to ensure a logical order of development. Long meetings should be essentially planned with a break. The venue should be inspected ahead of the meeting. Ensure that all the members have received the meeting notice and arrive well in time at the venue.

Special agendas: The chairman may have a special copy of the agenda with a large right hand margin. This helps to jot down notes and reminders before and during the meeting.

Specimen agenda of a staff training meeting of a large company:

Notice of meeting

A meeting will be held on 10th July, 2020 at 3:30 pm in the board room.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of meeting held on 1st July, 2020
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Correspondence
5. Report on computer training session
6. Recruitment of language coach
7. Need for admin assistance
8. Any other business
9. Date, time, and place of next meeting

Minutes of the meeting

The minutes are kept for several reasons –

*Minutes serve as a proof of the meeting, the discussions and the decisions reached.

*Serve as a reference for the absentees of the meeting

*The action points taken up by the members become commitments and can be followed up to ensure completion.

The minutes have to be recorded soon after the meeting. They have to be clear and concise. The recording should be as it is and not include any analysis or interpretation of the discussions held.

The minutes are recorded in the same order as in the agenda. They have to be proof read by at least one more person other than the one who has written them down. A copy of the minutes has to be circulated to all the members who were invited to the meeting. The minutes can be formal or informal in nature, preferably formal.

Find below a template to record the minutes of a meeting:

Organization/Committee Name

Meeting Minutes

Date

Opening

The regular meeting of the Organization/Committee Name was called to order at time on date in location by Facilitator Name.

Present

Attendee names

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

Open Issues

Summarize the discussion for each existing issue, state the outcome, and assign any action item.

New Business

Summarize the discussion for new issues, state the next steps, and assign any action item.

Agenda for Next Meeting

List the items to be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at time by Facilitator Name. The next general meeting will be at time on date, in location.

Minutes submitted Name

by:

Approved by: Name

Session 18&19: Report writing

Writing reports

A report can be anything from a two-line handwritten memo or a bound volume with hundreds of pages. The key principle of report writing is identifying the key facts of a particular topic and then presenting them in a logical order.

Writing a report involves a lot of research and arranging the information in the most reader friendly way. The report you write, with its detailed information, its conclusions

and recommendations, provides the basis for decisions. The report usually covers certain clearly defined topics - to investigate a particular product, or an event, company or a proposal. This dictates the kind of report it should be:

I An investigation or examination report, in which the investigation details and findings are described

II A recommendatory report, in which the writer suggests a course of action based on his/her findings.

III A progress report, in which the writer investigates the stages of progress, let's say in a long term coaching programme.

Your report should present and analyse facts and evidence that are relevant to the specific problem or issue of the report brief. You must acknowledge and reference the resources throughout, in accordance with the preferred method of your organisation.

Features of a well written report are:

- You must understand the purpose of the report brief and adhere to its specifications;
- You must gather, evaluate and analyse relevant information;
- You have to structure material in a logical and coherent order;
- You should present your report in a consistent manner according to the instructions of the report brief;
- You have to make appropriate conclusions that are supported by the evidence and analysis of the report.

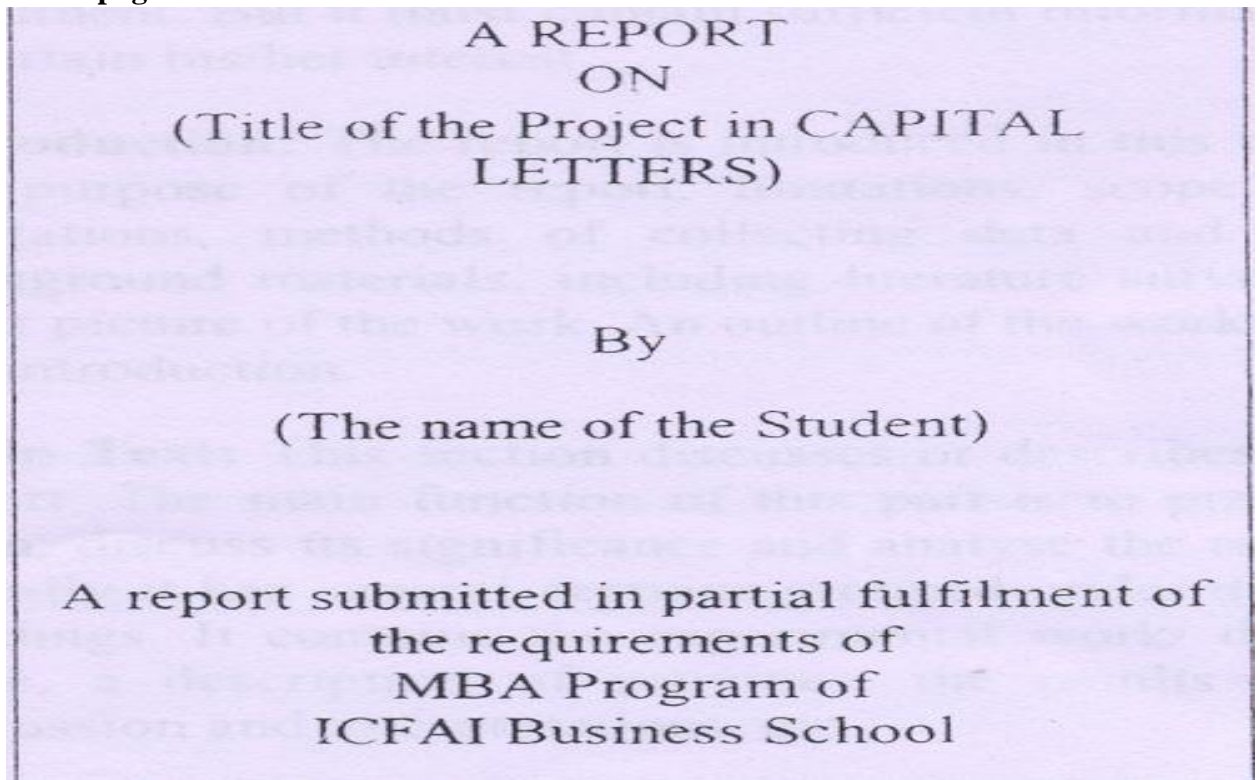
And you are expected to make thoughtful and practical recommendations where required.

If your report is a formal and lengthy one, then it may contain the following components:

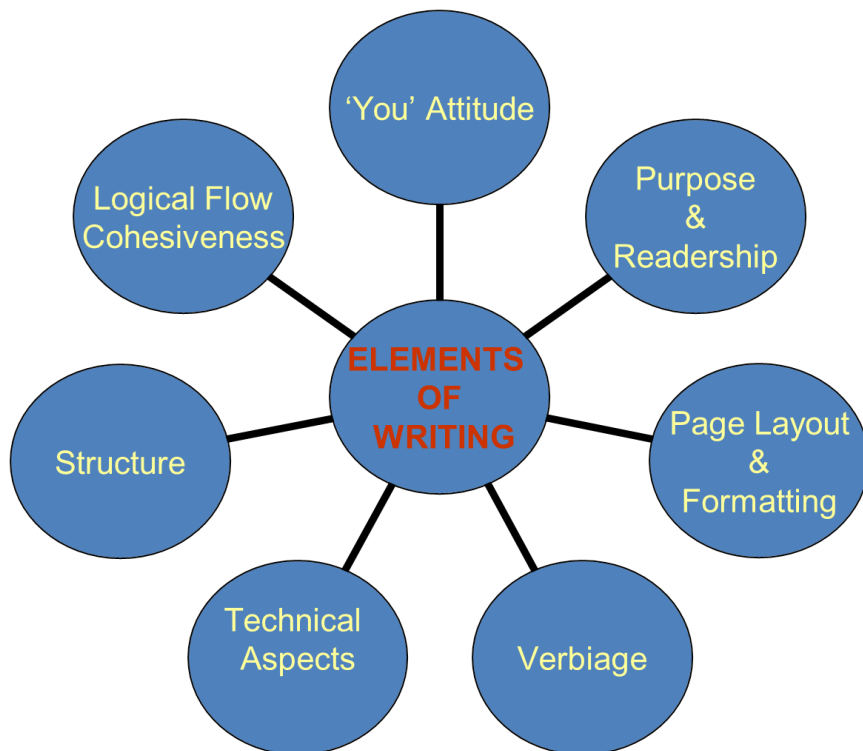
- Cover page
- Title (title page)
- Acknowledgements (terms of reference and objectives)
- Abstract/ Executive Summary
- Table of contents
- Table of illustrations
- Introduction
- Main Text
- Findings
- Suggestions/Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Appendices
- References

- Glossary

Cover page



Elements of writing



Some tips to write a report:

Your report has to be reader oriented. Write it from a reader's perspective, keeping in mind the reader's background and need for the report. Remember the purpose, i.e. why are you writing the report - has it addressed everything?

Usually the format of a formal report comes with instructions. The instructions specify the font size, font, margins and spacing. Make sure you follow all the specific formatting directions. Otherwise, you may risk the report being rejected and you may have to re-do it.

The structure of the report is very important. Make it easy for the reader to find information. It must have a logical flow. For example: the findings should lead to the recommendations and not vice versa.

Make sure you explain all technical terms used and avoid abbreviations. The language has to be simple to understand. Do not add unnecessary information and thus increase the length of the report.

Make it brief and concise by using the good writing principles.

The stages of report writing:

Planning your research: Gather the necessary information. You may have to visit libraries, interview people, conduct experiments, take surveys and browse certain websites.

Prepare and store notes: As and when you collect information from your research, classify your information clearly under labels so that you can use it easily and effectively later on. You could use index cards, note pad, notebooks, or your laptop.

Questionnaires: Some reports may require that you conduct surveys. Reach out to subject experts and quality resources to prepare your questionnaires. Keep the language and questions simple, put them under proper sections. See that your questionnaire is well balanced so that you collect quality data.

Drafting: Remember the structure of the report while drafting. Write the sections of the report as you decide/determine are comfortable and logical. For example, the cover page, acknowledgements, table of contents and illustrations can be written at the very end.

Check the rough draft now and see if you have covered

- A description of your investigation and the research methodology used
- Your findings
- Interpretation of your findings and explanations

Now you are ready to make a final draft by including all the sections of the report. You may make one or two drafts and get them reviewed by your friends or colleagues.

When your final draft is reviewed and edited, write the report. Jump straight into writing, so that every bit of information you want to include is fresh in your memory. Follow the format given.

Use good quality paper if you have to submit a bound copy.

One of the first formal reports you will write is your Summer Internship Report. Now that you have a good idea about the what and how of a report, continue to look for more information on report writing. It is one of the important skills you need while working in the corporate world.

Session 20: Business Proposals

What is a business proposal?

Business proposals are written to bridge the gap between the business and potential clients. The primary purpose of a business proposal is to get the potential clients to do business with you. It is a written document sent to a prospective client. It is accompanied by a cover letter.

There are two types of proposals –

Solicited and Unsolicited

Solicited proposals are requested by the prospective client for a particular product or service. Whereas an unsolicited proposal is sent to a prospective client even when there is no request, probably because the business knows that the product or service will be of use to the prospective client.

A **Request For Proposal (RFP)** is sent by the prospective client or company asking the seller to send the business proposal. A company may invite other companies to send a business proposal when it wants a problem to be solved.

To be written effectively, both solicited and unsolicited proposals follow the same steps. They contain a statement of the problem, the solution and the pricing.

Contents of a business proposal:

1. Title page
2. Table of contents
3. Executive summary
4. Statement of problem
5. Solution
6. Credentials
7. Pricing
8. Terms and conditions

You have to create responsive proposals, which means you must do your homework thoroughly before writing business proposals. It is not enough for the proposal to be visually appealing to the prospective clients. Do not forget to include all the key points of the client's needs. You may have to meet the prospective clients before writing the proposal so that you can ask the right questions and craft the exact proposal which will clinch the business deal.

Example of a cover letter to go with a business proposal

Dear Pet – lover,

Taking care of pets is extremely satisfying but comes with its own challenges. There are too many pet supplies in the market which makes your choice difficult.

And how safe are these treats, ready foods anyway?

Pets Forever has the answers to all your questions. Not just flashy advertisements but real and safe supplies for your precious pets. Our products are a result of careful research by a team of experts in pet care.

Please go through our brochure and find everything you needed, all in one place. We deliver to your doorstep too.

Place your order and be at peace. Pets Forever is here to take care of all your loving pets' needs.

Regards

Kira

Business Communication - Session 21

CV and Application

A résumé is a persuasive summary of an individual's qualifications for the purpose of employment. Résumés commonly contain the applicant's name, address, mobile number, education and experience. Activities and honours should be included, and references if required.

Purpose of writing a Résumé

A résumé is prepared with the objective of summarizing a description of oneself, as it relates to the job one is applying for. It is a brief factual document.

If an individual is in the job market, having a well written résumé makes one look organised and well prepared. If an individual is employed, having a résumé makes it easier for an individual to take advantage of the opportunities that may come up. If it is a student writing a résumé, drafting the dream résumé will help set goals and achieve them.

Parts of a Resume

- Name; Email; Mobile number
- Objectives – some institutes do not insist on this
- Education / Qualifications.
- Work experience.
- Summer Internship Program
- Skills/ Accomplishments/ Interests/ Personal values
- Achievements/ Awards/ Service Activities
- Personal information.
- References if required.

Preparation of a Résumé

Career Objective – if required

A career objective can be included if one is focused on a particular type of assignment and/or profile. Sometimes this helps the employer in identifying the specific areas of the organization where you can contribute.

However, when giving an objective, do not make it vague. An ambiguous objective is certain to be counterproductive.

Some examples of properly drafted objectives are given below:

1. “... An entry level management assignment in the marketing of financial products in banking industry....”
2. “... An assignment which involves financial analysis in investment banking...”

Education/ Qualifications

In the case of students who have no/very limited work experience, qualifications will be a major selling point and may precede experience. Qualifications could go beyond academic accomplishments. One should highlight anything which furthers the achieving of career objectives.

Here are some recommendations regarding what to include under the heading Education.

1. Include school names, locations, dates attended, and degrees of certificates earned.
2. Insert abbreviations for your degrees; most employers or their human resources department are familiar with major degree citations.
3. Decide whether to include your grade-point average. Certainly if it is high, it should be included. If your grade-point average is low, omit it.
4. Most recent degree appears first, in your case the MBA/PGPM

Follow the instructions of your Placement Department at all times.

Work Experience

List your jobs in reverse chronological order i.e. put the present or most recent one first. Keep in mind the following points:

1. Give the name, locations, and dates of employment for each company.
2. Insert you position and title, if any, beside each company.
3. Use verbs that show your major accomplishments while working for each company; be precise about the results of your work experiences.

Summer Internship Program (SIP)

As students, very few of you have any experience. The only business/management experience/exposure would be in the Summer Internship Project (SIP) or Management Research Project (MRP). One should clearly describe the project. While describing the project one should answer the following questions:

In which company/organization did you undertake the project?

1. What was the aim of the project?
2. What did it involve? (In terms of business functions/processes/concepts).
3. What were the achievements or how did your project contribute to the company?
4. What skills did it involve and how do they relate to the job for which you have applied?

Know Your Accomplishments

Record accomplishments. What may be trivial to you may be important to the employer.

Know Your Interests

Analyzing your interests, preferences, and attitudes can help you determine the type of job in which you can use your skills.

Know Your Personal Values

Values, and what you seem to get from them, can also be applied to a job.

Achievements, Awards, Service Activities

Receiving any award deserves mention in a résumé. Additionally, do include offices held, athletic accomplishments, published materials, fluency in foreign languages, speaking awards (debate, extemporaneous contests), professional fraternities, student organizations, and community services that involve working with people.

Personal Data (Optional)

Common inclusions under personal data include health, hobbies, physical skills, travel.

References (Optional)

- Limit your list to two individuals; provide information about how they may be reached via phone or E-mail.
- Avoid including relatives as references.
- Choose individuals such as former work supervisors, professors, teachers, colleagues, or business friends.
- Be sure you have the permission of the individual whose name you use as a reference.

Formatting

There is no standard format. But, the key is to keep it simple. Some of the points to be borne in mind are as follows:

1. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms.
2. Be careful of spelling mistakes.
3. Word-process your Résumé. Use a standard font. Do not use fancy fonts (unless applying for jobs which require a high degree of creativity or you are including graphics). Use of italics should be restricted.

4. Section headings, names may be typed in bold.
5. The layout on the page should be balanced. Leave sufficient margins.
6. Print your Résumé on a laser printer. Use good quality paper.
7. Your Résumé should always be accompanied by an application/covering letter.

Business Communication- Session 22

CV and Applications

When applying for a job opening, Résumés are sent with a cover letter or an application. Applications clarify the purpose of sending the Résumé. Applications are written in one's own individual style, unlike Résumés, which are in a telegraphic style and without any emphasis on grammar. An application serves the purpose of arousing enough interest in the employer to read the Résumé.

Guidelines for Drafting Applications

Some tips for drafting applications are discussed below:

1. Try to include details which do not appear in the CV.
2. It should be based on facts.
3. It should be addressed by name e.g. Mr J Prasad or Ms M Singh
4. The salutation should preferably be '*Dear Mr Prasad*' or '*Dear Ms Singh*' rather than '*Dear Sir/Madam*'. This indicates the motivational level of the applicant and the interest taken to research the company, with the intention of joining it.
5. The application should mention your accomplishments, and also your personality traits and attitudes. For example: calm, dependable, time management skills, leadership skills.
6. Be short: The application should not be more than one page.
7. Quality: Make sure that you proofread the application thoroughly. There must be no spelling or grammatical mistakes.

Format of the Application

In the first paragraph, the applicant should gain the employer's attention. This can be done by drawing attention to the key requirements of the job and stating that you meet them. For example

“Please refer to the assignment advertised in Times of India dated 11 June 2021, which calls for good interpersonal skills. I have long-term experience in handling small teams in a variety of situations which call for excellent inter-personal skills”

Or

“Please consider me for an entry level position as an assistant team leader in marketing of mutual funds. I am an MBA with Marketing and Finance as my dual specialization from IBS Gurgaon”

Sustaining Interest of the Employer

The middle portion of the application summarizes (does not repeat) the skills set, experience, and personal attributes, and draws the employer’s attention to the Résumé. Not repeating the contents but summarizing them is an art, which must be practiced.

For example, *“I have made positive contributions to ITC India while I was engaged in a Research Project with the company, which involved a lot of marketing skills both online and in the field.”*

Closing of the Application

In the final paragraph, the applicant could request an interview and end the letter on a positive note, e.g. “I request an interview where I can have the opportunity to discuss my suitability for the job. Or “I shall be available for an interview on 30 June 2021.”

Points to be remembered while drafting the application

The following points should be remembered:

1. Does the opening of the application arouse interest?
2. Does the application motivate the employer to refer to the Résumé?
3. Is there adequate interpretation of the facts which are likely to be included in the Résumé?
4. Is the application brief and concise, or too lengthy?

Business Communication -Session 23

Public speaking - Effective use of Para-Verbal, Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

Overview of the Chapter

1. Basics of Presentation

Words (7%), Tone (38%) and Body Language (55%) - from Prof Albert Mehrabian

Basics of Presentation Skills

To prepare an effective presentation, one needs to think about the following:

- 1. Topic**
- 2. The Audience**
- 3. The reason/occasion**
- 4. The Venue**
- 5. Selection of the Material**
- 6. Organization of the material**
- 7. Finalizing the tools for presentation**
- 8. Rehearsing the presentation**
- 9. Delivering the Presentation**
- 10. Responding to Questions**

Deciding the topic of the presentation is dependent on the purpose of the presentation. There can be either a single purpose or multiple purposes for a presentation. The topic is chosen based on the purpose. For example, if a Marketing Head of an organization plans to address his sales team a day prior to a mega event in which the plan is to launch the company's new product, then the purpose is to motivate his/her team members.

Purpose of Presentation

- ✓ To Inform**
- ✓ To persuade/motivate**
- ✓ To educate**

Once this part of the presentation is clear to a presenter, then he/she can start collecting the material to be used in the presentation. For a presenter, material availability in this age of the internet is not a big problem. What is difficult is selecting the most appropriate content and then organizing it in such a manner that one can capture and hold the audience's interest. To keep the audience's interest, the next step for any presenter is to prepare and finalize the aids that would be used during the presentation. One of the final steps in planning a presentation is to rehearse the organized speech.

The next step in this process is for the presenter to deliver the presentation. Delivering a presentation to the public using effective verbal, para-verbal and nonverbal communication skills is an art which not everyone possesses. The good news is that delivering a good presentation can be learned.

To become an effective presenter it is important to understand and decipher the role of:

- 1. Para-Verbal Communication Skills.**

2. Verbal Communication Skills

3. Non-verbal Communication Skills

Effective verbal skills indicate that the speaker has good command over usage of words, sentences, written texts, verbs and adjectives, as well as the extent to which he/she can comprehend meanings, produce synonyms and antonyms, know the meaning and use of words, complete sentences with words omitted based on the word context, and have a critical view of written speeches.

The skills required to understand the intricacies of the language, vocabulary, sentence formation etc are skills which are partly inborn in the sense that each person has his/her mother tongue inside him/her as a living organism, and learns it in a subconscious and non-systematic way every moment of his/her life through interaction with other people.

Non-Verbal Skills

Non-verbal communication, especially body language, refers to communication without words and instead can consist of using postures, gestures, eye contact and facial expressions. For a speaker, it is important to work in a manner that they build upon the trust of the audience and body language plays a strong role in achieving this goal. The desired effect on the audience is a result of this trust. The non-verbal communication message with the verbally communicated message within a speech increases the audiences' rapport with the presenter. If a speaker's non-verbal communication is lacking, then it generates tension and confusion in the audience.

Non Verbal Communication is the process of presenting meaning without the use of words either written or spoken. In this kind of communication, people interact through the use of facial expressions, hand movements, body language, postures, and gestures.

Non-verbal communication is used to express emotions and interpersonal attitudes, and used in greetings to showcase personality. Non-Verbal communication matters the most during oral presentations (55%), followed by tone of voice (38%), and words, though considered as most important, carry very little weightage (7%). Overall, non-verbal communication is very important to public speaking due to the fact that, as humans, we trust non-verbal communication the most. Actions speak louder than words.

To further understand this challenging aspect of communication, broadly speaking there are eight types of nonverbal communication:

1. Space,
2. Time,
3. Physical characteristics,
4. Body movements,
5. Touch,
6. Paralanguage
7. Artifacts,
8. Environment

Business Communication- Chapter 24

Presentation Skills-Technical Presentation

Learning Objectives

Chapter overview:

Science and technology has come a long way and so, from explaining the content to an audience through chalk and board to using sophisticated info-graphics, we have indeed taken a big leap. A famous quote states that a picture is worth a thousand words, and so, to engage the audience more, we use graphics/pictures/images/animation /graphs charts and designs as per the

requirement of content. This not only helps the presenter to present his/her ideas, it also helps the audience to understand the content better. So in a way we can say that a presentation slide is an architectural presentation of a rather complex and imaginative idea. Not only has this brought the imaginations of the presenter and audience closer together, it also removes any barriers of communication in terms of misrepresentation and misunderstanding.

Salient features of a well-designed Presentation:

- ◆ It has a clear structure with a proper Introduction followed by discussion and a conclusion
- ◆ The presentation always matches the requirements/needs of the audience and their level of understanding
- ◆ Facts and figures are visually presented in graphs/tables/charts to make a lasting impact on the audience
- ◆ It always has a logical flow starting from the general to specifics i.e. easy to complex, main to sub parts, problem to solution etc.
- ◆ It always has uniformity in design/color scheme and in fonts
- ◆ It always elucidates the content and helps the presenter, and does not replace the presenter

Planning your Presentation Visuals

Any presentation has three major elements

- The presenter
- The audience
- Specific content and objectives to be achieved

A trained presenter will always keep all these three aspects in mind while planning a presentation. A presentation is not mere speaking before an audience for some time and reflecting the knowledge the presenter has of the subject matter. Rather a presentation is closely understanding the need and requirements of the audience and meeting their expectations or the expectations the presenter was aware of beforehand. So a presentation requires prior preparation and planning.

- A presenter should take following steps to prepare for the presentation:
- Identify the purpose and goal of giving presentation (WHY am I giving the presentation?)
- Analyze the audience and their needs (WHO am I giving the presentation to?)
- Collate the relevant facts/information (WHAT do I need to tell them about?)
- Design and organization of collated information (HOW am I presenting?)
- Time/duration of presentation(WHEN - 5 minutes or 30 minutes, morning or evening)
- Decide the medium of presentation (AV/Video/PPT/Info-graphics etc. etc.) HOW
- Location (WHERE am I presenting?)

After identifying the purpose of the presentation and analyzing the needs of the audience, a presenter needs to decide upon the content and how that content needs to be presented.

Choosing the right visuals for your content and your Audience: Keeping in mind the audience and data that you have, you need to critically plan how you will present this information so that the audience quickly and clearly comprehends the concept and retains it for a longer duration.

You should always understand that a Presentation is an oral form of communication and the audience in most of the cases is someone who is aware. If you are giving a presentation on the financial analysis of a company, the right way to represent the idea is in a Year on Year comparison in the form of a graph or table. However, if you are giving a presentation on a product for its launch before the prospective customers, it would require different features like visuals of the product and experience sharing of users. A 3d presentation of the product or a video of the product would be more liked by an audience as it will expose the product in a quasi-natural form. Similarly, if your objective is to present a complex cycle/idea in simple form before the audience, a flow Chart will be a more appropriate tool to present the idea.

Planning the Visuals

In selecting visuals to represent the idea, you should review the information that you want to present through the visuals. Do remember the rule that visuals are to make your life easy while presenting and are not going to replace you.

While planning you should always keep in mind the Size of Visuals and Types of Visuals (Graph/chart/table/Picture/Word Art/video)

Presentation Software

Microsoft PowerPoint is the dominant software used to create visual aids for presentations. Learn to use it well, including the special features outside of basic templates that can really bring a presentation to life. Also -

[Microsoft Office](#), Design.Keynote, Google Slides, Prezzie, Info-graphics, Adobe Presenter, Holograms, Pictographs, other visuals like videos and animation

Checklist of effective Presentation with Visuals

A. Planning

- ✓ Your message should get the focus, not the visuals
- ✓ Select visuals carefully with a balanced approach
- ✓ Use your time wisely so that you have time to rehearse your presentation
- ✓ Let simplicity be your guiding force

B. Structure

- ✓ Structured slide with bullet points are easy to create
- ✓ Free form slides give you freedom to be creative

C. Design effective Slides

- ✓ Avoid the slides loaded with information - less is more beautiful
- ✓ Use colors to emphasize, not to distract
- ✓ Limit colors per presentation, 4-5 only; choose either complementary or contrasting palette
- ✓ Use decorative artwork judiciously
- ✓ Use only relevant pictures and artwork

Create effective slide content:

- ✓ Choose appropriate size and type of font that is readable
- ✓ Limit the amount of text on a slide - 7*7 rule
- ✓ Use slide transitions which are subtle with minimum distractions
- ✓ Use hyperlinks and action buttons to embed outside files in the presentation
- ✓ Incorporate multimedia elements that can help you engage the audience

Self-Image and Handling PI

What is self and self-image?

Every individual has a self-image and that is a mental picture of the physical appearance of the entire individual. When an individual thinks about herself/himself, then the image that comes up is very important. This image may be a very positive one or an extremely negative one - it depends on the self-esteem of the person. The idea is for everyone to develop a healthy image of one's self and love themselves as they are. This is what will create a positive self-image and a confident personality.

Self-Esteem

Creating a positive self-image is essential for the self-esteem of a person. Some of the ways to create a positive self-image are to give a pep-talk to oneself to begin with, and never let the inner critic take command of the situation and feed negative thoughts. It has been proved by psychologists that self-appreciation, if conducted genuinely, helps in boosting the morale and it takes no more than 2 minutes to build that into your daily routine. One of the biggest traps that a human being finds herself/himself in is that of comparison with others or being in company of those who are not supportive of the actions being undertaken. Loving yourself for all the right reasons and having a positive self-image is one of the greatest ways to enhance self-esteem.

Hence Self-esteem is a thought process in which individuals accept themselves, with both the good and not so good aspects of inner and outer self. The feeling of respect that one has for oneself helps in providing good treatment and respect to the self. This is very important for each individual because only when someone loves and respects oneself wholly, then others frame positive opinions about them.

Handling Personal Interviews with Confidence and high Self Esteem

Employees always prefer hiring people who are confident in their interview, and for this they have multiple ways to judge this. The candidates must know that besides working or having a positive self-esteem, it is also important to showcase their qualities in the personal interview. Some of the ways to establish and showcase confidence in any interview for freshers can be through: Eye Contact, Body Positioning/ Language, Expressions, Gestures, Rate of Speech, Listening well, Researching thoroughly.

1. **Eye contact** - Good eye-contact with the recruiter or the panel of recruiters should be maintained, both while listening to them and also while responding to their questions. It is important that while answering, the candidates should look at the selectors rather than sideways. Looking away from the recruiter is a clear give away.
2. **Body Language/Positioning**
Sitting and standing tall is a sign of confidence. Especially for interviews, one should enter with an erect posture. When seated in front of the recruiter, the arms should be on your sides and not crossed. Sit tall and do not slouch. In order to look and feel confident, one should take space to sit rather than making themselves smaller. While sitting never cross your arms as that is a sign of a defensive attitude.
3. **Don't fidget**

Fidgeting with your fingers or with a pen is a sign of nervousness. A little nervousness during the personal interview is not worrisome, but this nervousness should not be displayed through movements such as tapping of feet or fingers, or sweating.

4. Smile and keep the expressions positive.

Smiling is a sign of confidence. Those who appear super serious mostly have a frown on their face. It is important to have a relaxed expression and comfortable look on the face. When asked a question, a candidate can take time, think for a moment or two before responding or deciding what to say. A Smile also helps build rapport with the interviewer. Remember, you are never fully dressed without a smile.

5. Practice your handshake

A warm and strong handshake is a sign of confidence. Always make sure that your handshake should not be like a ‘dead fish’ or limp, because this indicates lack of confidence. A firm handshake, which is neither too strong nor too weak, is to be practiced before one appears for the interview.

6. Rate of Speech

One should neither speak very slowly nor very fast while responding to the interviewer’s questions. One should keep in mind that once your response is out you can’t make any changes. So listen carefully, pause to think and then respond in a calm and composed manner. Using some good connectors to begin your answer such as ‘This is a good question...’ is also a good strategy to remain in control of your rate of speech. You can rephrase the interviewer’s question or ask them to repeat the question if you haven’t understood the question. It will also help in giving the appropriate response and will keep your confidence high.

7. Listen Well

Listening well is an art and also a sign of a confident attitude. It is important to remain comfortable and conversational during an interview. If one is confident, then the candidate is able to listen well and respond after listening to the question. One needs to focus on what the interviewer is asking so that the responses are appropriate.

8. Research Thoroughly

Research the sector, the company and the job profile that is being offered by the company before you go for the interview. Nothing can provide more confidence than the preparation that one can do before appearing for an interview. Questions such as ‘Why should we hire you?’ or ‘What do you know about us?’ give the candidate an opportunity to show their seriousness and readiness to work for the organization.

High Self Esteem and Confidence

To sum it up, during the personal interview the candidate needs to display two aspects of their personality: Competence and Confidence. It is important that the candidates do their homework well by knowing their strengths and their unique qualities. They should be able to talk about their participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and the learning from these participations. The candidate should also know their ‘Unique Selling Propositions’ and how they will be a resource to the company.

Candidates can develop a smooth style by staging mock interviews with a friend or recording the answers on the phone or tablet and then evaluating themselves.

Tasks that candidates need to complete to prepare for a successful job interview:

1. **think ahead about questions you will need to answer**
2. **boost your confidence by thinking about your strengths and preparing thoroughly**
3. **polishing your interview style by practicing**
4. **present a professional image with business-like clothing and good grooming.**

Business Communication - Session 26

Handling Group Discussion: Brainstorming Process and Technique

What is Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a name coined for a situation in which a group or a team uses a certain technique to find a solution to a problem by participating enthusiastically in sharing as many ideas as possible. In this method, the focus is on quantity and people are motivated to think freely and suggest as many spontaneous new ideas as possible during the session.

The Benefits of a Group Brainstorm happens from the fact that unrestrained and spontaneous participation in these discussions lead to creative thinking, emergence of new ideas, sharing of views and opinions and finally solving specific problems.

Rules of Brain Storming

Four rules to follow during Brainstorming, that one should respect and follow in the group for ideation, are as follows:

1. Focus on quantity not quality
2. Defer Judgement
3. Welcome farfetched ideas, and
4. Build on ideas.

The idea behind Brainstorming sessions is that when the team sits down to capture ideas, the plan is to look for abundance of ideas. It's like entering the no-holds bar where the participants should not withhold any ideas because it is easy to pick good, impactful ideas from a large pool rather than from a limited number. The process should be clear to each team member that no idea, small or big, is to be shot down in the initial stage so that maximum participation is possible. This is a stage where neither is the idea appreciated nor is it rejected.

Brainstorming Techniques

There are a variety of ideation techniques which will equip the teams with tools to generate fresh and compelling ideas in large quantities, and some of them are:

- Brainstorming techniques
- Conducting brainstorming sessions
- Mind mapping ideas
- Forced ranking
- Storyboarding
- Card sorting
- Asking tough questions
- Reverse brainstorming
- Stages of problem-solving

Some of the well-know and often used techniques are as follows:

Brainstorming methods (Techniques/ Types)

Are you an effective brainstormer? Does the process of brainstorming feel like an opportunity or more like a chore? Chances are if you don't enjoy the process of brainstorming, you've probably been using the wrong brainstorming technique. That's right—there are distinct brainstorming methods.

Just as there are different learning styles and different workflow preferences, each of us has a method of brainstorming that works best for us. Whether or not you're a veteran brainstormer, this article will help you unpack different brainstorming tools, learn the advantages and shortcomings of each, and select a technique for yourself and your team. With every method of brainstorming, the most important thing to remember is to follow the rule of **quantity over quality**. Brainstorming is aided by accepting all ideas, however seemingly unrealistic or irrelevant they might be. The goal is to create a large enough pool from which to pull the best ideas or combine ideas for the best solution or strategy.

Brainwriting

One of the techniques of Brainstorming is 'Brainwriting' in which the group members are asked to anonymously share their ideas by writing on post-it notes or index cards. The benefit of this technique is that each member can be spared facing personality bias and his idea cannot be repeated by others. Another benefit is that those who are introverts also get to share their ideas. One of the main benefits of Brainwriting is that ideas can be collected and then later the participants can begin a discussion.

Six Thinking Hats

Edward De Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' technique is another way of holding a brainstorming session. The use of different coloured hats helps the participants to think together on the same topics from different perspectives.

'5 Whys' analysis

In the 'Why Analysis' technique, the team members ask why over and over again to get to the bottom of the problem. This technique of Brainstorming encourages each team member to have an open dialogue and get answers which help in the ideation process.

Star bursting

This technique is the 5WH process wherein the ideation on a certain topic follows a sequence of **who, what, where, why** and **how** for any new idea under consideration.

Place your main idea at the center of a star diagram, labelling each point of the star with those 5WH questions. Next, develop a series of questions about your idea for each point. Star bursting is popular among brainstorming methods because of its exploratory nature: One question triggers another question, and before you know it, you have the beginnings of a solid strategy within the answers to those questions.

Mind mapping

Mind maps is a brainstorming technique in which the ideas are not linear in direction but non-linear in nature. The process begins with a topic or an idea in the centre and then all the team members give inputs regarding the topic so that ideas branch out and a good number of thoughts are contributed by all the participants.

Role storming

This is a very strong brainstorming technique in which one decides to play someone else's role and comes out with ideas which someone else might present. So one puts himself in someone else's shoes while presenting ideas. The central concept behind Role storming is to promote new ideas by playing someone else's role.

Conclusion

For ideation and effective discussion, adopting a variety of techniques brings out the creative juices of the team members. In order to get some of the best ideas out, a team's quantity is preferred over quality. The process allows each and every one to be brave and contribute views and ideate efficiently for the sake of reaching the best solutions.

Business Communication- Session 27

Presentation Skills: Presenting Self & Handling Personal interviews

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the idea of "self" in reference to self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy.
2. Tips to prepare and present oneself in a Personal Interview.

Just as our perception of others affects how we communicate, so does our perception of ourselves. But what influences our self-perception?

Let's explore self-concept, self-esteem, and their impact on self-presentation.

Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the overall idea of who a person thinks he or she is. If I said, "Tell me who you are," your answers would be clues as to how you see yourself, your self-concept. But each person's self-concept is also influenced by context, meaning we think differently about ourselves depending on the situation we are in. You might consider yourself laid back, traditional, funny, open minded, or driven, or you might label yourself a leader or a thrill seeker. In other situations, our self-concept may be tied to group or cultural membership. For example, you might consider yourself an Indian, Bengali, Marathi, South Indian etc.

Our self-concept is also formed through our interactions with others and their reactions to us. This reflective process of building our self-concept is based on what other people have actually said, such as "You're a good listener", and other people's actions, such as coming to you for advice. These thoughts evoke emotional responses that feed into our self-concept. For example, you may think, "I'm glad that people can count on me to listen to their problems." We also develop our self-concept through comparisons to other people. Social comparison theory states that we describe and evaluate ourselves in terms of how we compare to other people.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem refers to the judgments and evaluations we make about our self-concept. While self-concept is a broad description of the self, self-esteem is a more specifically an evaluation of the self. If I again prompted you to “Tell me who you are,” and then asked you to evaluate (label as good/bad, positive/negative, desirable/undesirable) each of the things you listed about yourself, I would get clues about your self-esteem. Generally, some people are more likely to evaluate themselves positively while others are more likely to evaluate themselves negatively.

Self-Efficacy

It refers to the judgments people make about their ability to perform a task within a specific context.

Presenting the self successfully in an interview situation is a byproduct of the Self Concept, Self Esteem and Self Efficacy.

Be it the first interview one is appearing for or the 10th in the career span, there would always be a few do's & don'ts to be followed to crack it successfully. Some of them are given below:

1. Learn to introduce yourself

You have to train before the interview and conduct a little research on how your speech sounds. Introducing yourself is an essential part of it and you have to prepare very well to make the first impression. You have to start with your name and make a recruiter remember it. Besides, you must find some personal information about an interviewer. Learn his or her name too and repeat it for a few times at the meeting.

2. Appropriate dressing

Your clothes shouldn't take the entire attention and make a bigger impression than a conversation. Don't choose too bright accessories, dresses, suits, etc. Select something neutral to wear. Your shoes have to be closed. It will be good to find out more about the corporate culture of the company and put on something that fits it.

3. Prepare to impress with words

Learn some power words that include win, develop, communicate, manage, produce, etc. Use them to talk about your former position and prepare to support them with facts. Remember that there are candidates who are ready to show their results and be proud of them. Speak about your achievements.

4. Ask questions

Employers like it when candidates ask questions about the company. It is the signal you're interested in this job and you really want to become a member of their team. Ask about the company, your duties, time-table, corporate life, study, etc. but not too much.

5. Body language

You have to be open and friendly but not shy. Don't demonstrate closed positions like crossed arms or legs during the interview. You also shouldn't invade someone's space. The best way is to relax and be confident.

6. Previous job

Don't provide negative comments about your former employer or colleagues. Even if they are true, a recruiter will pay attention to your attitude and behaviour. Don't give too much information in this connection.

Business Communication- Session 28

Team Presentation Skills

Session Sub-Topics:

- **Presentation Goals**
- **Tips for Preparing & Delivering the Presentation**
- **Managing Q & A**

What is the goal of a presentation?

It is to persuade, to inform, to inspire – fundamentally it is a way to communicate. Presenting ideas in a persuasive manner to the key stakeholders of your business is a challenging task. To be an effective and credible presenter, one must be able to explain concepts clearly, in simple language, and emphasize key points that make a difference to the decision-making process. The way in which the recommendations/issues are presented can make or break a presentation.

One of the most important aspects of preparing and delivering presentations is shaping both content and style to fit your audience.

A good presenter should be able to do the following:

- The presenter has to explain clearly
- The presenter must be confident
- The presenter should inspire and grab attention; boredom can set in otherwise
- The presenter must be able to convince the audience
- The presenter should be able to clarify doubts and concerns
- Proper presentation aids have to be employed - go high tech if possible. Using animation, audio, video footage and graphics, is more the norm rather than the exception.

In certain academic and business situations, the situation may require a group presentation rather than a solo one.

Key elements to be kept in mind whilst preparing for a team presentation:

- Does your team presentation present your company as a whole in a beneficial way?
- Is there a balance of speaking assignments, expertise, and seniority?
- Do prospects and clients get the sense that working with *this* team is going to be a productive and enjoyable experience?
- Most important of all, how do *you* come across as a team to the audience?

Here are some basic pointers to keep in mind while preparing team presentations and coming across as a cohesive team which presents with maximum impact and influence, rather than giving the impression that your team hasn't taken the time to prepare and think strategically.

- 1. Team Selection for a Great Performance.** When choosing a team for a presentation, it is important to think how the group will fit together in terms of styles, personalities, expertise and speaking ability.
- 2. Focus on your Purpose:** Mediocre teams deliver content; great teams zero in on their purpose. Know how to stay fully focused when speaking to the audience on your subject.

3. **Give your presentation a narrative, a theme:** Think in terms of the *concept or insight* that needs to be communicated. For instance, think of the "headline" that will appear in tomorrow's (imaginary) newspaper. Your team's job is now to put together a presentation that makes that headline possible.
4. **Tell Your Organization's Story.** From an ordinary presentation to a wow presentation, what better way than to tell a great story. It could be related to your customer, your industry, the product or service, even your understanding of your client's needs.
5. **Body Language and Nonverbal Communication.** Audiences are most likely to respond positively to open, dynamic speakers who convey the feeling of being at ease with their bodies. The setting, combined with audience expectations, will give a range of movement. Record your practice sessions to see how you speak and what does your body language convey.
6. **Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse!** Rehearse your delivery, your content structure, your handover, your body language, practice answering questions from the audience. Rehearsing how the team looks, sounds, and presents themselves *as a team* will enable you to achieve the impact you are looking for with stakeholders.
7. **Handovers-** It is especially important to rehearse handovers from one presenter to another.
8. **Structure your content and assign roles:** Plan and structure your content and delivery in such a way that the audience benefits from contrast and variety. For example, if one speaker presents a lot of facts and figures, the next could follow with some colourful images. This helps keep your audience engaged.
9. **The First Person:** Have a strong leader to kick off the presentation effectively and to move things along.
10. **Be clued up and fully informed:** Everybody on the team has to make it his or her business to totally understand what is being presented and not just their respective slides.
11. **The Team:** When they are not presenting, the rest of the team should support their colleague by paying attention and looking involved in what is being said. Show appropriate reactions e.g. nodding or smiling at relevant points! Be supportive and encouraging towards colleagues who are particularly nervous about presenting.
12. Remember **the impression** you create with the audience counts for a great deal. Interact with the audience. Glance at the audience now and again to show you are in touch with them.
13. **Handling the Q&A** – Demonstrate a united front and back each other up throughout, and especially at question time. Anticipate the likely questions and decide in advance which team member will respond. Carry documentation and relevant reports to support the presentation.

Business Communication- Session 29

Giving and receiving Feedback

Learning objectives: after studying this chapter you will be able to

- Explain and adapt to your audience, and develop an authentic rapport with the audience
- Learn to establish credibility and handle difficult situation during presentation.

Follow up of Presentation or Feedback

All good speakers involve their audience as much as possible including the handling of question-answer and giving and receiving feedback and follow-up

Skills related to follow-up include:

- Creating an evaluation form to solicit feedback from attendees
- Interpreting feedback from evaluations and modifying content and/or delivery for future presentations
- Organizing a database of attendees for future presentations
- Interviewing key attendees to gain additional feedback

While fielding questions, you may request the audience to ask you clarifying questions. When you ask for questions, genuinely show them that you are ready to listen to the real concerns of your audience, and the solution that you offer reinforces your main message. However, you can generalize, as necessary, to suit the situation.

Practice some of the following strategies to make a Q/A session effective –

Pause before answering: This gives you time to reflect and quickly evaluate the best response, along with creating an impression of a thoughtful presenter.

Be Honest: Admit when you do not know the answer, and do not oversell your own idea - it may backfire. Explain that you would like to get back to them later.

Show appreciation: this allows you to create an emotional bond with your audience. You can do so by sincerely appreciating the importance of a question, and validating the question

Be concise and re-frame the question to match your agenda: when your listener asks you a question that can derail your agenda, find ways to tactfully redirect the conversation to the main agenda.

When delivered effectively, feedback can:

- Improve performance;
- Aid in learning;
- Help individuals understand their strengths and deficits;
- Allow learners to implement strategies to strengthen and improve their practice; and
- Ultimately improve outcomes.

Given the potential positives, it is important that giving feedback becomes a priority in our practice. Feedback in academic settings, however, remains a challenge for many. We can all remember a time when we have given or received some poorly delivered feedback.

Giving Feedback

Feedback Models

There are many different feedback models available, and there is no ‘right way’ to give effective feedback. Which model you choose to utilize will depend on the feedback recipient and the situation.

1. The Feedback Sandwich approach

This feedback tool consists of three components:

1. Begin with positive feedback;

2. Then, introduce constructive or negative feedback; and
3. Close with specific feedback that builds up the learner's trust and comfort.

The feedback sandwich aims to minimize any detrimental effect the negative feedback may have on the individual and ensures that the learner is not discouraged (Matua et al 2014).

2. Situation, Behavior, Impact Feedback Tool

This tool allows the learner to reflect more on their actions whilst understanding precisely what you are commenting on and why, as well as what needs to change.

1. Begin by identifying the situation the feedback refers to;
2. Then define the specific behaviors you want to address; and
3. End by describing how their behaviors impacted you or others.

The situation, behavior, impact tool offers the learner a chance to reflect on the situation from another perspective, and an opportunity to discuss strategies for improvement with you (Mind Tools 2017).

Characteristics of Effective Feedback

Any of the above models can be used to deliver feedback, however, to be effective, the feedback must display certain characteristics.

Specific, Accurate, Objective, Timely, Usable, Desired by the receiver, Checked for understanding:

Receiving Feedback:

Learners need to have an active role in their own feedback conversation. If a learner doesn't implement feedback provided by an educator, the educator should consider the following.

- ✓ How was the feedback delivered?
- ✓ Was the learner able to contribute their perspective?
- ✓ Were they able to have a hand in devising goals that will enable them to enact the feedback and improve their performance?

Negative Feedback

When receiving negative feedback, there can be a tendency for some learners to become defensive.

Feedback can challenge the learner's views about themselves: it can create a sense of discomfort, which can then cause them to become defensive, and not only challenge the feedback provided, but also the credibility of the individual providing the feedback.

The Feedback Environment

As a presenter, it is important to build a safe feedback environment within which listeners feel comfortable and supported. It needs to be an environment where feelings can be discussed, especially when mistakes are made and there are feelings of shame or guilt (Cox 2016; Van Der Leeuw 2014).

Some of the tips to give and receive feedback effectively

- ✓ Build trust if you are giving feedback
- ✓ Make good eye contact with receiver

- ✓ Serious voice tone
- ✓ Be empathetic and show genuine concern for the welfare of receiver
- ✓ Choose to give negative feedback personally in a personal space and congenial environment
- ✓ Choose to publicly admire people for their positives
- ✓ Sound just, fair and logical with evidence and proof
- ✓ Use humour and an indirect method to give negative messages

Receiving Feedback

- ✓ Be calm and exercise great listening abilities
- ✓ Try to understand a different view point
- ✓ Be open-minded
- ✓ Do not react immediately and do not become overprotective of your idea or stance
- ✓ Do not sound passive and defensive
- ✓ Accept and critically apply what is being said with a cool mind and move on, retain what benefits you most

Business Communication - Session 30

✓

Technology Enabled Communication

✓

Overview: Only a few hundred years ago, the mode of communication was direct communication or by sending letters. Then came telegrams and telephones as an urgent need to communicate with people who are far off was felt strongly. This very need of communicating with people who are spread across the world is urging people to invent newer methods of connecting with people on so many different platforms. We can say that the last 20 years have offered numerous platforms for communication to people. Not only individuals, even businesses have this earnest desire to be connected with customers 24 X 7 and this has been made possible by the technology today. Today, conditions are such that the businesses that have embraced the internet have boomed while others have started to disappear.

Following are some modern communication methods that businesses are using to connect with their customers

Dedicated Hashtags on Social Channels

If you receive a high volume of social media communication from fans and customers, offering suggested hashtags is a great way to sort the messages for quick response. If you have some recurring post or follow-up questions, request users to flag it with a request hashtag. This way the right person at your business will find it quickly and be able to respond. We must understand that speed of communication and timely replies will hold on to your customers. This is a great advertising tool to showcase your customer service efficiency. Turning the catchphrase from your latest marketing campaign into a hashtag can help you spread your message at viral speeds.

Live Chat on Website

A pop-up chat box and Kahoot on your website are perfect ways to engage with your customer for marketing complex products and services. Consumers visit your website as they are looking for some quick information about price and features, but get confused due to the variety of options available. That is why some financial service providers use the chat option as a solution, and to give a customer the feel of visiting a live store. This feature lets customers clear their doubts and make a decision, along with giving your sales staff the contact and background of the customer.

Live Video Call

Video chat is a great option to build relationships with your customers as it offers a sense of immediacy. It is easy to work on a video call because our eyes are picking up information that is otherwise impossible over a phone call, noticing all the non-verbal clues.

Opt-in Text messaging Notification

Bombarding your customer with text messages and unwanted phone calls is a sure way to frustrate and eventually lose them. However, if used judiciously, text messages can be a great way to break big news or reminding your customer.

Auto call back option during Long Hold

People absolutely despise waiting on hold on a phone call. This is again a very easy way to shoo them away from your business. Introduce an automated callback feature which allows the customer to hang up the phone, and they will be reached back by the Customer Care department in a while. This is a no brainer and can easily be resolved by PBX Solution.

24 hour customer/tech Support

Giving your customers a 24 X 7 number which is active so that they can call to reach you at any time is a huge value addition to the business. It is a big differentiator and shows your dedication to customers. Customers value the human connect.

Post Sales Follow-up mails:

Technology has made it quite easy, and cost saving, to follow up with customers after sales. The follow up does not have to be too much - just show the customer that you care and open an avenue for future sales. For example, a mail or message with their name that just wanted to make sure that a new product is working as per the expectations of the customer. And are you happy with your purchase? A message like this will help you keep your customers and help build your brand and relationships.

Social media Personality

Virtually every company has understood the importance of social media presence, but only a few have really taken advantage of such platforms like Facebook, twitter, Instagram and YouTube. These platforms are not the place for sanitized corporate language - these are the place to express your company's personality. We see that nowadays, companies have created a virtual personality to resonate with the youth joining social media campaigns, and involving celebrities and even giving away free samples, or create real life brand representatives by promoting their stories online.

Skype:

Skype is down-loadable software that enables users to make free calls and send messages via the internet. The service also provides video calling, allowing users to interact face to face.

Instant Messaging: Instant messaging is a great tool for communicating within teams via the internet by short messages and audio messages delivered immediately. Some companies are adopting IMs as a tool for official communication in place of e- mail as it is less cumbersome. MSN, Yahoo, Facebook and so many others are offering Instant messaging tools for their users.

Twitter:

Twitter is a popular social media platform. It is unique in that users can tweet from any device. Twitter revolves around the idea that people stay updated and express themselves in limited text space. Nowadays we see twitter has emerged as a battleground for so many issues, be it trolling celebrities or raising the concerns of the exploited. We see even government bodies and officials keeping a tab on what is trending on twitter, and solving the issues if some concerns are raised.

Conclusion

Technology has empowered people in reaching out to customers and we almost can reach out to anyone anywhere in the world. All these tools, if used effectively, can make/create an image for a brand/celebrity. These are new battlefields, and you need to sharpen your weapons to fight and win this war.

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